

AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGH SOCIOCULTURAL LEARNING: A CHALLENGE FOR STANDARDS IN THE  
ELEMENTARY ART CLASSROOM

By

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(Under the direction of Dr. Richard Siegesmund)

**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates how aesthetic development (Eisner, 2002; Efland, 2003; Siegesmund, 2000; Dewey, 1938) and sociocultural experience (Bingham, 1995; Kasten, 1993; Vygotsky, 1934/1978; Rogoff, Turkianis, & Bartlett, 2001; Caldwell, 2003) promote cognitive development in the multiage elementary art classroom. Imbedded in this discussion is the significance of care (Noddings, 1995) in relationships and the curriculum. At the crux of this inquiry is the following question: are state mandated standards in art the best way to benchmark our expectations for students' learning? This study describes, analyzes, and evaluates a classroom devoted to teaching elementary children about aesthetic experience, aesthetic development and care through sociocultural learning.

This is a teacher research study of an art classroom in Northeast Georgia. The students in this study consisted of eleven third graders and eleven kindergarteners. Within the multiage classroom, three buddy pairs were featured. Two of these buddy pairs were evidence of successful multiage learning. The third pair underscored some of the pitfalls.

Narrative research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) methods illuminate the stories of the children within this study. How these stories can claim to be educational research is more fully illuminated by Barone & Eisner's (1997) theory of arts-based research.

The findings in this study suggests aesthetic development through sociocultural learning leads to accelerated learning as compared to what is mandated in state standards. When in the presence of care, learning to attend to relationships with others moves from an intrapersonal aesthetic experience to interpersonal sociocultural learning. How we place emphasis on understanding emotions, feelings, and senses in the art classroom is educationally significant. In the elementary art classroom children can learn to use their feelings and senses in conjunction with others to develop aesthetically.

**Index Words:** Sociocultural learning, aesthetics, aesthetic experience, aesthetic development, care, zone of proximal development, more capable peers, standards, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, cognition.

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## DEDICATION

When I asked my kindergarten class, “What is a family?”  
One little girl raised her hand and exuberantly said, “It’s a group of love!”  
I dedicate this dissertation to my group of love:

Zach, John, Chris, Hannah and Ben

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questions and provided me with a dance aesthetic that helped me see things in an alternative light.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### Preface

*I believe that imagination is more important than knowledge.  
That myth is more potent than history.  
That dreams are more powerful than facts.  
That hope always triumphs over experience.  
That laughter is the only cure for grief.  
And I believe that love is stronger than death.*

Robert Fulgham (1989, p. viii)

#### Statement of the Problem

This study began with one set of questions related to how children learn in an art classroom through mixed age mentoring, zones of proximal development, and from more competent peers (Bingham, 1995; Caldwell, 2003; Kasten, 1993; Rogoff, Turkanis, & Bartlet, 2001; Vygotsky, 1934/1978). These questions relate to new interest in sociocultural learning that has gained increased attention in the last decade (Bingham, 1995; Caldwell, 2003; Kasten, 1993; Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlet, 2001). Sociocultural learning is defined as how we are taught through the societal nature of our families, cultures, communities, and schools. Some of these ideas have been explored before in the one-room schoolhouse, the educational innovations in the curriculum championed by Maria Montessori, and in the elementary schools of Reggio Emilia (Caldwell, 2003). However, in addressing my questions related to how children learn in the art classroom, a larger more troubling question arose: Are standards the best way to benchmark our

expectations for students' learning? The rich, robust learning that emerged from my classroom was gratifying. However, it was discouraging that my own knowledgeable and seasoned peers had objected to my attempting such a curriculum and pedagogy as standards clearly showed my curriculum was developmentally "inappropriate." For example, one of my colleagues insisted that I was making my curriculum too rigorous by including concepts that she would wait until fifth grade to teach. In short, if I had followed the experts' advice and stuck to the standards, I would have dumbed-down my teaching. This realization left me wondering if standards were just a simple way of regulating the curriculum content and student learning outcomes.

Standards are now state mandates for every discipline in school. They describe what students should know and be able to do. The concept of having standards is appealing. Eisner (1998) suggests educators, administrators, and parents believe they imply "high expectations, rigor, things of substance" (p. 176) and to do without them would be folly. Finding uniform goals that facilitate careful monitoring of a student's education may seem to keep education neat and efficient. However the standards may prove to be only a superficial effort to improve cognitive learning. After all, no one expects a standard appliance to be excellent. At best, it is only adequate.

The county where I conducted this study places heavy emphasis on educational standards for each K-12 grade. The county is interested in measurement. Administrators want to compare test scores of students from one classroom to another, and they want to compare their students to other schools, other states, and other countries. Eisner (1998) finds this kind of standard measurement questionable. He asks:

But why should we wish to make such comparisons? To give up the idea that there needs to be one standard for all students in each field of study is not to give up the aspiration to

seek high levels of educational quality in both pedagogical practices and educational outcomes. Together, the desire to compare and the recognition of individuality create one of the dilemmas of social meritocracy: the richness of a culture rests not only on the prospect of cultivating a set of common commitments, but also on the prospect of cultivating those individual talents through which the culture at large is enriched. (p. 180)

Additionally, Eisner suggests that putting a “one size fits all program into effect” (p. 180) dampens our cultivation of difference. Through our quest about excellence, the standards movement is trying to squelch our prized diversity and create the same learning outcome for every student.

My concerns for teaching and curriculum focus on the developmental characteristics of growing children. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, children have been grouped in like-age classrooms. For over a hundred years American education has deemed this practice a good idea for promotion, measurement, and ensuring the child learned the basics. Eisner suggests that if one observes children sampled from ages 5 to 18 the variance in human developmental growth increases with time. This means that children develop at their own speed and as they age there are wider and wider variances in intellectual learning.

I wonder if we may be placing too high a value on standards. I wonder if we are losing sight of the more important issue of cultivating aesthetic development through social experience among students in classrooms, in schools, and in larger communities. Aesthetic development is defined as our expanding ability to attend critically to fine-grained distinctions in our world. Attention to such distinctions may not increase standards-based learning, but could it create schools that value experience, critical thinking, care, inquiry, empathy, and imagining new

possibilities? Aren't these things at least as important as getting the answers right on high-stakes tests?

### Questions Teachers Pose

As an art teacher, I have spent many hours reflecting on my own teaching practice. My dreams about the children and college students I teach are constantly invented and reinvented. I question my performance as a teacher and wonder if I will facilitate, handicap, my students in reaching their own unique potentials. Will I teach in a way that their learning might be meaningful? Will I create situations that allow my students to acknowledge their own feelings while also cultivating their own aesthetic development? These reflective energies tend to consume me as I am planning for my students. There is always a better story to teach. There is always a better strategy to help students learn more deeply. There is always a better way to motivate learners into caring deeply about what they are doing. Learning and feeling are deeply intertwined (Eisner, 2002). If I remain cognizant of my students' sensual feelings when they make art, I am taking an important step in discerning how to guide them in understanding the choices they make in connecting thinking, learning, and feeling in their art-making. This type of critical thinking leads to cognitive growth (Siegesmund, 1999; 2002). Through attention to the nuances of art making, students can understand the ways they create meaningful individual expressions.

My curricular attention to the sensual stems comes from the work of H. S. Broudy (1987) and his argument for attention to feelingful response. Broudy's concern for the aesthetic dimension of art making was core to the creation of Disciplined Based Art Education (Clark, et al, 1987). In turn, DBAE created the model that established the role of aesthetics within



comprehensive art education. Even though Broudy was a principal architect of DBAE, the reiterations of this curriculum model for art education, as expressed through state and national standards, pay scant attention to Broudy's concern for the intersection of feeling and thinking.

I wonder about my students' feelings while they are making art; not so much in the emotional sense, but in the manner in which our feelings are affected by our senses. Can these aesthetic feelings increase students' cognitive abilities? Siegesmund (2000) asserts that understanding what a student feels through his/her senses while engaging in art-making is the provenance of aesthetics and is a crucial step in a child's cognitive development.

### Teaching Aesthetic Experience Through Sociocultural Learning

How does one delve deeply into the aesthetic feelings of 24 children in an art classroom? Traditional art classes have children working independently on individual artwork among a group of like-aged children. While in process, children are not encouraged to discuss their work with others, nor are there huge cognitive leaps to be gained from another child who is the same age. Much of the time artwork is simply copied from a like-aged peer who has a few more technical or cognitive art skills, or copied from the teacher's artwork, or worse yet, the art exemplar itself. Artwork is usually made and discussed on an individual basis, often excluding other students in the class from the conversation. The modeling of art techniques and art know-how becomes the task of the teacher because most like-age children in a self-contained classroom have similar abilities. Therefore, I question whether limiting a classroom to children of like-ages does not constrain a child's aesthetic development. Children working in groups of older and younger learners may experience a better development of their own sensory feelings, mental images and concepts, care, and aesthetic experiences. Might children more rapidly reach their fullest potential by working in this manner?

Combining children of multiple ages and abilities in one classroom is not a new educational concept. There were educational benefits to the one-room schoolhouse; it was in no way an impaired educational model that was created solely from economic necessity (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Learning in the home and the neighborhood is also multiaged and socially based. Vygotsky (1934/1978) shifted our focus on learning to a social activity rather than one characterized by internal and private struggles of an individual. According to one study of a regular classroom, students who were involved in multiage learning did as well or better in such areas as study habits, social interaction, self motivation, cooperation, and attitude toward school (Bingham, 1995). Studies of academic achievement showed students from multiage classrooms performing as well or better than those from single-grade classrooms (Bingham, 1995; Kasten, 1993). Despite inconsistencies in many studies, those that report significant achievement outcomes for students in multiage classrooms over those in like-age classes exhibit gains in language and mathematics<This sentence doesn't seem to make sense. The sentence indicates that studies reporting significant achievement outcomes exhibit gains in language and mathematics. I'm not sure what you're trying to express here. Are you discussing the study or the students?} (Gutierrez & Slavin, 1992; Nye et al., 1995). Kinsey (2001) suggests that inconsistencies are largely due to conflicting definitions of multiage classrooms. In studies looking at long-term effects, advantages for multiage students have been shown to increase the longer students remain in multiage classrooms (Veenman, 1995). According to Kinsey (2001):

Advantages in the academic realm are supported by consistent reports across studies of specific benefits of multiage grouping in the area of socioemotional development.

Students in multiage classrooms demonstrate more positive attitudes toward school,

greater leadership skills, greater self-esteem, and increased pro-social and fewer aggressive behaviors, compared to peers in traditional graded classrooms. (p. 1)

Kinsey further purports that these socioemotional developments lead to increases in student achievement outcomes in multiage classrooms (Kinsey, 2001). What a student experiences while making art with an older and more capable peer may be practiced as an effective teaching and learning strategy.

It is important to understand that there are different mechanisms for learning. In recent work in the area of the arts and cognition, Eisner (2002) and Efland (2003) separately concede that cognitive ability is made up of biogenetics and sociocultural influences. In other words, how we come to know (cognize: the manipulation of words and symbols) as individuals has to do with two modes of mental processing: first, the genetics/physiology we were given at birth, and second, our cultural influences. However, I suggest there is a third mode of mental processing that is centered on aesthetic experiences. Aesthetic development, which is largely dependent on experiences in the affective realm that deal with our senses, is a separate and equally important mode to cognition. Aesthetic development is not part of a biogenetic mode or part of a sociocultural mode. It is in reconceptualizing aesthetic education as different from appreciation that one of the central distinctions of this study emerges. Furthermore, I suggest that aesthetic development is most practically addressed in the art classroom through socio-cultural learning.

### **Teaching Outside the Box**

*The purpose of this study is to investigate how aesthetic development and sociocultural experience promote cognitive development in the multiage elementary art classroom. Embedded in this discussion is the significance of care in relationships and the curriculum. In order for*

teachers to have a firm grasp on understanding how children learn so that we can encourage accelerated growth, we need to acknowledge that there are many factors that influence thinking and learning. I have compartmentalized these factors into three categories: 1) the brain that we are born with; 2) how we learn from groups of other people and cultures; and 3) how we attend and experience our thoughts about the world around us.

Our brain, or the biogenetic neural activity that is inherent, includes things that are innate. We have created measures of how smart children naturally are or how gifted they might be by use of instruments such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales (Roid, 2003; Stanley, 1990; Terman, 1916;). The Stanford-Binet Intelligent Scales now include comprehensive coverage of five factors: fluid reasoning, knowledge, quantitative reasoning, visual-spatial processing, and working memory. The test also measures the ability to compare verbal and nonverbal performance. Other models of intelligence exist. Howard Gardner (1983) suggests that some people are born with a natural proclivity for certain intelligences such as musical, mathematical, naturalistic/science, linguistic, visual spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal, and kinesthetic skills. In the 1990s, attention was given to the chemical and physiological issues within the brain itself that may influence how we learn. Cognitive neuroscientists like Antonio Damasio (1994) have studied how brain damage, physiological brain development, hormones, and natural chemicals produced by the body can change the way we learn, affect, and think.

Schools traditionally value how well a child performs on these standardized tests. Students who perform highly on these tests are considered a benchmark for designing school curriculum. In other words, schools want children to know information like children who score highly on high stakes tests, so they design curriculum as a transport for teaching test information. This is what teachers and administrators call teaching to the test.

Howard Gardner (1983) has contributed to the biogenetic theory by claiming that some children are born with genetic or inherent neural differences in how they learn. Six of the eight multiple intelligence theories claim that children are born with a special proclivity. But there are two intelligence theories that suggest there may be other influencing factors to cognition aside from our biogenetic makeup. The first is Gardner's theory of interpersonal intelligence. This theory takes into consideration children who excel in interpersonal skills and have high proclivities for conversation and learning from others. In other words, this child learns socioculturally. Eisner (2002) and Efland (2003) make this clear in their treatises on cognition. The second theory is Gardner's theory of intrapersonal intelligence. Children who excel in intrapersonal skills learn from internal cognitive means. This suggests that learning includes affective feelings and emotions and other mental activities, and is astonishing to consider.

Damasio (1994) expands on our understanding of Gardner's intrapersonal intelligence by suggesting that cognition is shaped, gained, and influenced by our emotions and feelings. Damasio further suggests that without healthy emotive brain functions, our ability to cognize effectively is seriously impaired. For Damasio, the intrapersonal is not a separate intelligence, but an essential form of neural processing in which all forms of rational thinking are embedded. This work provides compelling evidence that aesthetic experience, which deals in emotions and feelings, is a fundamental part of the theory of cognition.

Until we fully recognize and develop measurements that include sociocultural and aesthetic experiences on intelligence tests, I do not believe that we can accurately measure cognition. But maybe measuring intelligence would be a moot point if we ask students, for example, to demonstrate, critique, create, analyze, and apply their learning instead of answering rote questions on standardized multiple choice tests. We might have to re-imagine how we

articulate what a child knows. This could lead to a curriculum that teaches for understanding rather than one that teaches to a test.

In addition to biogenetic factors, how we learn is also dependent on our sociocultural influences. Our families, language, customs, culture, and communities play important roles in how we learn (Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlet, 2001). The use of language (symbols and metaphor), as well as behavioral conditioning through social activities and schooling, are also large factors (Bingham, 1995; Eisner, 1998; Kasten, 1993; Rogoff, Turkanis & Bartlet, 2001). What we learn from people we know and how we go about teaching others makes a difference in how we learn.

Sociocultural experience in recent years has impacted how we think of learning and the construction of curriculum. Teachers are likely to include group work or group problem solving in their curriculum (Johnson, 1993). Independent and public schools are again exploring multiage learning in their curriculum. Most notable are schools that practice curriculum innovations developed in the elementary schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy (Caldwell, 2003). .

Aesthetic experience makes up the third category that promotes cognition. When we engage in experiences that involve our senses, feelings, and emotions, we have the opportunity to attend to the fine-grained nuances and qualities of the world around us. Some of us do this naturally. These individuals—who associate an emotional reaction to close empirical attention (intrapersonal intelligence)—tend to be artists and poets. However, everyone can develop this capacity by learning to closely observe the world around us. Through aesthetic experience, learners are challenged to think with both symbols and qualitative relationships. These two modes of thought can elevate learning to its highest levels (Dewey, 1934).

When teaching is conflated to teaching for the test, teachers get trapped in a narrow definition of learning. Achievement is reduced to test scores. This study is an example of

teaching outside this box because it considers the types of learning children might demonstrate when teachers are allowed to explore aesthetic and sociocultural approaches to curriculum.

### **Challenging Standards**

Georgia mandates a set of standards that students must master in order to do well on tests such as the CRCT, ITBS, Cogat, and other high-stakes tests. With the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (2002, H.R. 1), students must pass specific tests not only to be promoted into the next grade, but also so that their teachers will not have a failing mark. With so much riding on these tests, schools have resorted to devising curriculum that adheres to the state standards. Therefore, subjects are taught in rote fashion in which children learn the answers to the tests, and critical thinking is left by the wayside. In most cases there is no time to fit anything else into the curriculum. Teachers rush to fill the children full of answers. Ask questions and regurgitate the answers. How do they do this? They teach children games, tricks, songs, sayings and flashcards to memorize large amounts of information. This gets the job done, but children are not challenged to think, deduce or solve problems.

The visual arts standards come the closest to engaging students in deeply pondering issues, yet they still do not require students to use emotive skills like caring, imagining, perceiving, using nonverbal language, or working in other forms of representation or symbol making. They leave out altogether two of the three categories that scaffold and elevate learning: sociocultural experience and aesthetic experience.

In the state of Georgia, there are currently no high-stakes tests that assess art. There are state standards in art, but they are minimal standards that do not challenge a curriculum. Because art is not tested, art teachers have more freedom to develop their own curriculum. They are not

required to teach to a test. In this study, I took the opportunity to exceed standards by focusing on aesthetic development and sociocultural experience.

### **Rationale and Significance**

How children learn in a multiage art classroom is a personal interest of mine. My own children are three years apart. While they were growing up, I watched how they interacted with one another. I saw how they taught each other, and I often encouraged them to play with other children who were not the same ages. I recall playing and learning situations with my own three siblings. Not only did the four of us play together often, but children ages 5 to 15 in my neighborhood used to hang out together. I applied my first lipstick with a teenager down the street who took me under her wing. When I was ten, I would often play or read to a 6-year-old while her mother worked inside.

After I began a teaching career, I conducted a teacher research study within my own classroom. The class consisted of high school students and first graders (Kelehear & Heid, 2002). Learning with an older or younger learner had bidirectional benefits to both learners. Students benefited from the work with older and younger learners socially, academically and morally. In this context, we found students exhibited genuine and reciprocal concern for another student, the teacher, and the curriculum. Students learned to care about one another.

Attention to how we learn in relationship to others was first explored in psychology through the work of Lev Vygotsky (1934/78). While working as a teacher and researcher, Vygotsky noticed students were able to work beyond their development level if they were given guidance from a more experienced person. Vygotsky (1934/78) called this the zone of proximal development, and defines this process as:



The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

By combining Vygotsky's research on learning with a more capable peer with Bingham's research on multiage learning in the art classroom, we can come to a better understanding of how students learn through sociocultural and aesthetic experience. I found that by emphasizing aesthetic experience with sociocultural learning environments (combined with attention to caring relationships) students were able to exceed the narrow learning outcomes envisioned by the standards.

So why did I engage in this study after I had conducted a similar study and after all my research and coursework at the Ph.D. level? And why did I want to become a teacher again and teach this class instead of following a traditional research pattern of finding three teachers to observe? There were questions I did not ask in my first study that I was hungry to answer. These new questions arose while I further investigated this topic during the coursework in my doctoral program. More importantly, I wanted to do this study myself. I did not want to sit in the back of a room and be a non-participant in the lives of some students as in traditional university practice. I wanted to experience this study aesthetically and socioculturally just as much as I wanted my students to experience it. I wanted to learn right alongside the children from the point of a teacher-researcher. I needed to be a co-constructor of knowledge with my students. This had to be my classroom. I wanted to interact with my own students, to hear their stories, make art, ask questions, and empathize with them (Phillips, 2003). Through an experience we have the capacity to learn. Through this experience, I am able to tell this story in the same rich detail as it occurs.

I also wanted to contribute to the few voices that inquire about their own in-depth experiences as teachers and researchers in their own classrooms. There is a vast need for teachers to become researchers in their own classrooms. After this dissertation is completed, I expect there to be more questions that I will want to investigate. This topic will be a major focus of my professional life, and I will encourage this level of research with my own students.

### **Research Questions**

I am interested in what students learn, think, and feel while they are engaged in aesthetic and sociocultural experiences. At the elementary school where I taught, I wanted to learn if the sociocultural and aesthetic art classroom is conducive to thinking and learning through care. This study was designed to further my research questions:

1. If care is defined (Noddings, 1995) as the students' reciprocal capacity to attend to each other, then how might an art teacher introduce care as an educational objective into her elementary art classroom?
2. If aesthetic experience is defined (Dewey, 1934) as how we critically attend to fine-grained distinctions in our world, then in what ways do the inclusion of such practices in the multiage art classroom support the development of care?
3. When we provide aesthetic experiences (Dewey, 1934) in the multiage elementary art classroom, what evidence is there that students have opportunities for accelerated learning as measured by state-mandated standards?
4. What kinds of curricular opportunities for aesthetic experience designed to promote caring and content acquisition among multiage learners are currently provided in an art classroom?

5. What are the characteristics of multiage student collaborations in an elementary art classroom?

To answer these questions, I have conducted a qualitative arts-based research study that examines my own multiage art classroom at an elementary school in Georgia. I have created narrative portraits from my student's experiences, interviews, artwork, and writings to come to a better understanding of my research topic.

During this study I kept a journal, took pictures of my students and their artwork, and videotaped both my own teaching and the students working together. After the data collection was complete, I decided the best way I could help the reader of this dissertation to know my students and come to understand what they were feeling in my art classroom was to paint a picture with words; to narrate a story.

Someone once told me that a good movie script was life with all the boring parts taken out. Although parts of the story about my students' experiences are in narrative form, much of the story reads like a script because I captured important conversation. Are the boring parts removed? All I can tell you is that the year that I spent teaching these children art was far from boring. Every day these children delighted me. I laughed with them, I made wonderful and imaginative art with them, and I worried about them when I wasn't with them. I grew to love them all and I miss them horribly as I begin my full time work at the university level.

## CHAPTER II

### **Theoretical Framework: Conceptions Of Aesthetic Development**

#### **Introduction**

I walked by the sink at clean-up time today. We had finished a painting lesson, and I sent two girls to the sink to begin cleaning up their brushes. Gloria, a third grader, was holding her paintbrush full of blue paint, and Sandy, a kindergartener, was at the sink ready to wash out her paintbrush full of yellow paint. I paused when I heard the two talking.

Gloria said, “When I hold my brush under the water, the paint will run out. You hold your paintbrush under the water underneath mine, and we will see what color we get. Okay?”

“Okay” said Sandy

“Do it when I say go. Okay?”

“Okay.”

“Ready, set, go!”

The two girls inserted their brushes into the running water, and immediately the two colors began blending in both the cascading water and in the swirling vortex at the bottom of the sink. .

Sandy smiled and excitedly said, “Look what we made! It turned green! Wow, that’s really neat!”

“Yeah, pretty cool! Gloria replied. “But look how neat the colors look as they go down the water. It looks like a greenish bluish waterfall.”

The two girls stared for a moment in silence at the colors flow into the sink and turn into a beautiful eddy of color. Because we work so tightly with our time, I usually do not let children stand at the sink. However, this aesthetic moment full of meaning and message seemed important so I let it happen.

When the water ran clear, I told the girls they needed to finish cleaning up. This colorful moment, this educative opportunity, is what John Dewey (1934) would classify as having an experience. And it is this kind of experience that Maxine Greene (1995) insists invites imagination and is the best that schooling can offer children.

(Journal entry, September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003)

## **Aesthetics**

There is a lack of consensus on the definition of aesthetics as a discipline of study. It can be a subjective, elusive, and thinly veiled term. George Dickie (1997) refers to aesthetics as “an untidy discipline” (p. 109).

Coined first by Baumgartner in the eighteenth century when he described the science of sensory cognition, aesthetics eventually came to represent a branch of philosophy emphasizing the study of beauty and the study of art. The etymology of the word, however, is derived from two Greek words, *aisthetika* and *aisthanesthai*. *Aisthetika* means things perceivable through the senses, and *aisthanesthai* means to perceive or feel (Diaz, 2002). Intertwined with theories of beauty, the concept of aesthetics immediately began to be associated with a kind of cultish belief in good taste-and sublime experiences. In the twentieth century, aesthetics has focused on the learning processes of responding to, making, and knowledge of art (Abbs, 1991).

We often think of aesthetics as our personal reaction to art. Aesthetics is more than this. Aesthetics is the branch of philosophy that allows us to analyze the way we look at art and the world around us. It prompts us to ask, “What defines art? How does art play a role in our lives? What makes us respond to art?” However, as we see in the story at the beginning of this chapter, aesthetic thinking and understanding can be so much more. We are engaging in aesthetic thinking when we use our perceptions and imagination to gain insight into what we might feel and understand about the world (Greene, 2001). An aesthetic experience is the result of being deeply affected by sensory perception. In this instance, it can increase our cognitive abilities. Through sensory perception, we are prompted to reflect and think (Eisner 2002; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Parsons & Blocker, 1993; Siegesmund, 2000; Smith, 1991). When we reflect on aesthetic experience, aesthetic understanding evolves.

Parsons and Blocker (1993) offer a traditional definition of aesthetic understanding by suggesting that aesthetics examines the conceptual problems of art and the way we think about them. I suggest that aesthetics needs to be seen much more expansively. As an art teacher and researcher, I have come to recognize that art offers a unique opportunity for aesthetic understanding, one rooted in direct experience.

John Dewey (1934) suggests that aesthetic refers to how we critically reflect on objects we experience, whether it is art or, as the opening story suggests, how we attend to the world through cleaning brushes full of tempera paint. The arts play an important role in bringing about the transformative moments of ordinary life that disclose the extraordinary. What is especially important in understanding aesthetics is that, at its core, we are engaging with the world and the wonder of life. Cultivating this sensitivity is not a simple task, yet art educators are compelled to create an atmosphere of critical inquiry and visual perception to teach our subject well. By

learning to attend to the smallest nuances of art and of life, we transcend to a higher plane of existence and a deeper presence within ourselves and within our world. We transcend to a plane that releases imagination, passions, curiosity, and extraordinary circumstances (2001). In that transcendence, understanding is gained.

For Gloria and Sandy, the attention to the aesthetic moment of watching paint blend and flow down the drain was important. Even though the instructional time had ended, and it was time to clean up, I realized the moment was exciting to them. Educationally, I needed to let them unfold the surprise and to attend to the experience. Gloria, the more capable peer (Vygotsky, 1934/78), helped Sandy, as well as herself, travel into a realm of adventure, to think about things she might not have thought about on her own, to enter into a new perception, and to seek understanding. Their imaginations were released by cultivating awareness, by doing, watching, and creating “what if” possibilities. In my mind, cultivating a child’s aesthetic experiences may be as important as developing scientific theorems or increasing reading skills. Although the Georgia State Standards, under the standard of Artistic Knowledge and Skills, ask students to mix primary and secondary colors by first grade, the closest standard that asks students to look at mixing colors as an aesthetic expression is in high school (See Appendix A). Standard # 12 in grades 9-12 asks students to identify how the elements of art and principles of design function to create expressive or visual qualities. In my classroom, a kindergarten student was exploring this secondary school standard even though there is no sustained attention within the elementary standards that adequately encourages students to experiment with color, promote aesthetic experience, and recognize visual qualitative relationships as an aesthetic understanding. There are no standards that ask students to be fully present when they are viewing art or interacting

with their world. The Georgia QCC expects students to follow a prescribed way of knowing and prescribed way of doing.

### **Aesthetic Experience**

While a work of art is noted for the aesthetic experience it is capable of producing, any form, whether made by human hand or made by nature, may yield aesthetic experience. Through aesthetics, we learn to attend to the qualitative relationships, within the form (Dewey, 1934). There is potential for an aesthetic experience for any individual who learns to reflect on his/her encounter with his/her world. In this way, learning in the arts means learning to reflect and thus extend learning. Recognition of visual qualitative relationships is a form of rational inquiry in which we use our senses, imagination, technique, and appraisal (Eisner, 2002).

In order to clarify the term aesthetics, it is useful to compare it to its opposite term – *anesthetic*. An anesthetic is something that deadens our senses; conversely, an aesthetic is something that promotes our senses. Our sense of smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing are embedded into our bodies in such a way that when a sense is stimulated it is felt and we are moved emotionally in varying degrees. For example, children are often moved when they first see the changing colors of the leaves in the fall or when they glimpse the first snowflakes of the winter. Not only are their visual senses heightened, but also other sensory interactions of the moment can be stimulated. Essentially, their complete sensory repertoire becomes more accessible and alive.

The association of emotions and sensory feelings is at the core of aesthetic experience. Susanne Langer (1962) writes, “When the activity of some part of the nervous system reaches a critical pitch the process is felt” (p. 9). An aesthetic experience is so palpably felt that a symbolic



metamorphosis—the translation of sensory perception and feeling into meaning—occurs (Langer, 1951).

Cognition, aesthetic experience, and emotions are inextricably tied to our mind and body (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). How we reason, learn, and think have direct correlations to interpretations of our sense systems of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and vision. Recent cognitive neurological research has increasingly studied the connections between our brains and body, our mind and feelings (Damasio, 1994, 2003).

This new direction in cognitive science that links emotion and thought is at odds with the cognitive scientific traditions of the twentieth century. Although the study between emotions and cognition was widely debated in the nineteenth century, twentieth-century thought turned to positivist empirical research (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 1999). During this time, cognitive scientists insisted on removing emotion from all aspects of scientific experiment. Not until the early 1980s has the study of cognitive science begun to recognize that cognition and emotions need to be studied together.

The work of Antonio Damasio (1994, 2003), a cognitive neuroscientist at the University of Iowa, sheds important light on this link by suggesting that rational thought is not dispassionate. Damasio argues the neural systems in the brain that focus on reasoning and decision-making are inextricably linked with the areas of the brain that process emotion and feeling. Through his work with patients who suffered brain damage to the area of the brain that guides our senses and emotions, he has determined that emotions are an essential part of cognition.

Although twentieth century cognitive science sought to separate feeling and thinking, progressive educators during this same time insisted on the linkage between these two dimensions, although this often brought charges that progressive education was unscientific.

As an example of the progressive interest in mind and feeling, Dewey (1934) emphasized the student's reaction to the doing and undergoing of an art experience. Undergoing is at the heart of the reconstruction of experience. When a sculptor carves a block of marble, she must undergo the effect of each chisel mark. She is aware of her relationship with the chisel and her hands. Her previous experience tells her how tightly to grasp the tool to make the most precise cuts. While she makes each cut, the area is qualitatively determined, but the entire work is affected by each mark. The experience of the artist is joined in perception, and so this relationship has meaning.

Likewise an art viewer can also undergo the experience of the artist (Dewey, 1934). The art viewer does not need the knowledge and skills that it takes to create a marble sculpture, but he/she can undergo the perception of experience by studying the relationships of qualities in the final artwork. Only by increasing one's skill in perceiving can one *undergo* the aesthetic experience with a work of art.

The process of undergoing becomes a learning goal. It is not enough that the student understands or appreciates why an object is beautiful. Instead the student must discover how relationships are cultivated and forms are shaped. The student begins to order visual elements, seeing their connections. Through discerning connections, a Gestalt or "a-ha" moment — an aesthetic experience — is possible.

Dewey (1934) believed that an intensified or educative engagement with the world was important to creating an aesthetic experience. He implied that ordinary experiences could be

shaped into an aesthetic or artful manner and thus become an aesthetic experience. This requires being fully present, whether we are looking at art or at something ordinary. Similarly, Eisner (2002) says attentiveness is the critical feature of aesthetic experience:

Although the arts function as paradigms through which aesthetic experience can be secured, aesthetic experience is in no way restricted to what we refer to as the fine arts.

Virtually every form that can be experienced, from sound, to sight, to taste and touch, can yield aesthetic forms of experience if we learn how to attend to them through an aesthetic frame of reference. (p. 231)

In the case of Gloria and Sandy, the mundane experience of washing out a paintbrush at the end of the art lesson took on an aesthetic quality as they carefully examined the two colors of paint dancing around in the flowing water— only to intermix and swirl around in the bottom of the sink before they escaped down the drain. The students' close attention was clear as they carefully orchestrated applying the water. The girls were present in the moment. Unplanned as it was, they knew the moment cannot be haphazard; they needed to be fully attuned for the aesthetic moment to fully reveal itself. The girls' encounter with the water and paint is a powerful and intimate part of their art education. But it took a more experienced peer, like Gloria, to help Sandy frame the encounter aesthetically. Through her conversation, Gloria helped Sandy attend to the perceptual qualities of the experience.

For Sandy, expressing what she was thinking when she saw what happened to the colors as they mixed together was challenging. Expression is the social part of this dimension. Transforming sensory experience to symbolic form, she transformed what she captured with her eyes into verbal language by stating, "Look what we made! It turned green! Wow, it is really pretty!" Sandy began her experience intrapersonally. It was in her own inward reflection. She

began to interpersonalize the information, as she understood it verbally with her buddy, and in the process, she extended her experience and understanding. This experience was a cognitive experience for both Sandy and Gloria. In reality, Sandy is conducting an experiment. She probably had a hunch that yellow and blue make green, but it is only after the trial that she can articulate this in words. The experience helps Sandy translate her visual thinking into another symbol system—verbal language. Gloria observed Sandy’s use of language. Even if Gloria cannot verbally repeat that yellow and blue make green, she has witnessed this moment of naming. This is an important cognitive event. The young girls’ vision of swirling paint will likely remain an important picture in their minds’ eye. The interplay of colors and water was an exquisite sight. Through this experience, they saw that yellow and blue make green. Equally important, the girls will remember the warm caring feelings that emerged from their attending to each other (Noddings, 1995). The girls became each other’s audience when they shared the social part of their cognitive experience and understanding.

This theme tends to re-emerge several times during the course of my study. Later we will see children become engrossed in the qualities of their artwork, symbolic representation, and communicating within a visual symbol system.

When teachers learn to attend to the qualitative relationships, both interpersonal and intrapersonal, that children may experience in an art classroom—and learn to allow for those experiences—we provide powerful opportunities for children to learn in deep and meaningful ways.

## **Aesthetic Experience as a part of Aesthetic Education**

A central problem of teaching aesthetics in a philosophical and experiential sense is defining the content of aesthetics as a subject. In defining the content, we are confronted with the central questions of how to describe the role of aesthetics in the curriculum, how to find curriculum models, and how to educate teachers in a basic understanding of aesthetics. With these important considerations in mind, the task of definition is not easily done. There are narrow definitions of the scope and sequence of aesthetics. Many programs conflate a curriculum of aesthetics to arts appreciation.

Aesthetics has also developed many pathways other than the one championed by Dewey, Langer, and Eisner. For example, there is an analytic branch of aesthetics that attempts to express ideas of beauty and artistic worth through mathematical formulas. According to Diaz, many art education programs do not train art teachers well enough to feel comfortable with the subject. Although I do not think that art teachers need to become aestheticians, I do think that they need to have a basic foundation of aesthetic knowledge, particularly the concern with experiential meaning as defined by Dewey, Langer, and Eisner.

In both the National Art Standards and in the Georgia State Standards, there are provisions for students to study aesthetic understanding and for teachers to teach it in some form. This presence in the standards stems from twenty-five years of effort by educators and philosophers to define the role of aesthetics in art education

The history of aesthetics in art education as a viable component to the curriculum begins with Manuel Barkan. During the Cold War, education in America came under serious scrutiny when the Soviet Union was first in the space race by successfully launching the satellite Sputnik. As a result, the Woods Hole Conference of 1959 was organized to discuss and recommend ways

to improve curriculum for school children in the areas of science and math. To many people in the United States, the public school system's failure to teach mathematics and science rigorously had left students unable to compete internationally. At the conference, a psychology professor from Harvard University, Jerome Bruner (1960; 1977), suggested that learning would improve if curriculum were structured by learning in disciplines. Bruner (1960; 1977) writes, "Any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" (p. 33). When students learned the disciplines, mathematics and science in particular, in a manner similar to how professionals and researchers practiced them, then students would begin building structures of knowledge at an early age, preparing them for more advanced learning as they progressed through school. It is also interesting to note that this position came as a direct challenge and contradiction to some of Dewey's proposals, in which student interests and inclinations came before the focus on the nature of the disciplines. Schooling needed rigor and standards, and the Woods Hole conference, by replacing the overdependence of progressive education with a more structured pattern to the learning process, offered a way to fix schools. As a result, the nation would become stronger and brighter as it educated a new citizenry of scientists and mathematicians at an early age (Bruner, 1960; 1977).

Barkan (1962) took Bruner's words literally, and considered the possibilities for art education. At the time of Barkan's publication, *Transition in art education: Changing conceptions of curriculum and theory* (1962), the National Art Education Association's view on the nature of the discipline was encapsulated in the policy statement "art is less a body of subject matter than a developmental activity" (as quoted from Henry, 2002). Barkan's new thoughts for art education laid the foundation for many changes in art education for the forty years since (Henry, 2002). In his work, Barkan did not discuss aesthetics as a subject that should be taught in

the classroom. He did, however, set the stage for making it a prominent part of art education by addressing its cognitive nature of sensory perception (Diaz, 2002).

Barkan continued his concepts for art education at The Pennsylvania State Conference in 1965. The conference aimed to discuss art education with the intent of stimulating research and improving curriculum development. At this time, Barkan felt that art education was faltering because curriculum had not adequately incorporated the knowledge of the aesthetician and art critic. Consequently, he proposed that research and development centers for aesthetic education be established. In his summarized findings, he endorsed art as an intellectually honest and rigorous discipline composed primarily of studio production, art history, and art criticism. In keeping with the notion of adding rigor to school subjects by returning to the disciplines (as recommended by the Woods Hole Conference in 1959), the professional artist would be the best source and model for teaching art in the classroom (Diaz, 2002).

In his anthology *Aesthetics and Criticism in Art Education* Ralph Smith (1966) broadened the scope of aesthetics and art education by including the disciplines of visual and performing arts. In these additions, notable in their inclusion in the new *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Smith incorporated aesthetics, philosophy of art, and criticism into the practice of teaching art by the professional artist rather than a trained art teacher. As editor of the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Smith pushed teaching art as the professional artist might perform it and thus continued to add rigor to the field.

Barkan refined his ideas from the Penn State Conference and teamed with Laura Chapman to write the Phase I report for the federally funded Aesthetic Education Program where Barkan initially served as director (Henry, 2002). Because of ill health, Barkan resigned and Harry Broudy assumed the leadership for the program.

In 1970, Barkan, Chapman, and Kern produced a guide to improve curriculum development in aesthetic education in the areas of dance, music, theater, literature, and the visual arts. This effort began Phase II of the Aesthetic Education Program under the direction of Stanley Madeja at Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory (CEMREL). The articulated goal of this publication was to “increase the student’s capacity for experiencing aesthetic qualities in the arts and the general environment” by “providing opportunities for aesthetic experience and opportunities to build the skills and knowledge necessary for significant aesthetic encounters” (Barkan, Chapman & Kern, 1970, p. 9). This guide provided a definition for aesthetic experience as any experience that was valued intrinsically.

For the next ten years, the effort to develop a curriculum for aesthetic education struggled amidst a failure among educators, professors, artists, and other policy makers to build a consensus as to the nature of its meaning. Broudy (1977) realized that aesthetic education offered a unique form of cognition through perception that no other discipline could achieve. Yet, he was unsuccessful in building a core curriculum around this idea. It was considered a form of enrichment or "educating the whole child" rather than an autonomous discipline. Aesthetic education remained more a part of teacher preparation than a curriculum subject for students to master. However, when there was a defined curriculum, aesthetic education was often associated with art appreciation: leading students into valuing “great works of art.” This valuing came to be associated with concepts of connoisseurship, opening the field to allegations that aesthetic education was deeply embedded in a cultural power system that excluded voices outside the official “art world”(Diaz, 2002).

The early 1980s saw a significant paradigm shift in art education. Dwaine Greer (1984) formally suggested structuring visual art curriculum around four disciplines: studio production,



art history, criticism, and aesthetics. Greer called this approach Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE), and it was vigorously promoted by the Getty Center for Education and the Arts. This approach presented a broad view of art and emphasized art in the general education of all students from kindergarten to high school. Through DBAE, art could be viewed as a subject with academic rigor and structure and thus could be taught in a manner similar to other school subjects. There would be written goals, aims, and objectives, a sequential curriculum and appropriate evaluation methods (Clark, Day & Greer, 1987). Today, 48 states have adopted the discipline-based art education approach as a key element or foundation of their standards.

The Georgia Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) in the Fine Arts is such an example. The QCC was approved in 1998 and is adapted from the *National Art Standards for Arts Education*. The QCC Fine Arts standards are currently used today in Georgia.

As is the case in Georgia, aesthetics is present as one of the strands or components of various state standards. Nevertheless, many of the problems that have plagued the practical implementation of aesthetics in the art curriculum remain. In particular, at what age do certain types of aesthetic experiences become "developmentally appropriate, " and can a child's readiness for aesthetic experience be accelerated through well-crafted curriculum and pedagogy?

### **Distinguishing Aesthetics and Art Criticism**

When one examines state standards, aesthetics and art criticism often are treated as one concept within a given strand, suggesting that the two are interchangeable. This misunderstanding over the distinguishing characteristics of each concept can be found in the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). Because the role of aesthetics is not clearly defined in

the state standards, art teachers may find it easy to ignore aesthetics or reduce it to simply judgment about works of art (Diaz, 2002).

According to Erickson (1986), aesthetic content in the art classroom should emphasize aesthetic experience and expressionism as well as issues of classification for the arts. (p. 15) If we were to use the skills of the philosophical aesthetician, we would approach aesthetic understanding as critical thinking. Critically thinking about art includes such skills as listening to others, making fine-grained distinctions within a frame of reference, problem solving, questioning, assessing, drawing conclusions, and imagining (Eisner, 1998). Eisner provocatively suggests that if the foundation of the art curriculum is engaging children in thinking critically, then aesthetic education with should include sub-areas of emphasis such as criticism, art making, and art history.

Diaz (2002) found that aesthetics and criticism were often confused within the QCC. The distinguishing characteristics between aesthetics and criticism are closely related. Aesthetics involves highly selective fine-grained distinctions within an intrapersonal paradigm. This can best be revealed by how a child manipulates visual media. This manipulation can be as simple as the act of intentionally blending colors while washing brushes. It is visual and exploratory. The act of criticism is making what is seen, heard, interpreted, and appraised public, or interpersonal, through language. The distinction is between expressing inward emotional feelings nonlinguistically through attention to qualities in visual media, and communicating those feelings in discussion, writing, or other symbolic forms. Criticism is the means of translating aesthetic experience into aesthetic understanding.

## **The Current State of Aesthetic Education**

Today most states have embraced the DBAE approach to art curriculum by including the art history, aesthetics, art criticism, and art production into educational state standards. Oftentimes, however, aesthetics for children is conceptually reduced to simply making judgments of what is good and bad art. For example, the Quality Core Curriculum has a standard under critical analysis and aesthetic understanding that require kindergarteners to "express preference for one of two or three art reproductions" (Georgia QCC visual arts kindergarten 14). This type of aesthetic response is still deeply grounded in appreciation. In response to this cultural appreciative approach to aesthetic education, others in the art education field have begun a new movement by teaching for a more critical stance to art making and social reconstruction. Henry (2002) suggests that art education is still engaged in transition. She writes, "Postmodern thought, feminist perspectives, and multicultural concerns are but a few of the contemporary issues that influence today's emerging art educators"(p. 52). To this list of contemporary issues, I might add the advances in cognitive science that stress the links between feelingful response and thinking. This theme of aesthetic education needs to be brought to the center of art education curriculum—not buried away as a minor subtopic.

The purpose of the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) is to provide a framework for building a curriculum and creating individual courses. These standards provide for sequential art teaching and learning, even though ambiguity exists regarding what aesthetics is and how to go about teaching it.

The glossary in the 1998 QCC defines aesthetics as an attempt to offer guidance as to how it should be used and taught in the classroom:

*Aesthetics*: is the philosophy concerned with determining the nature and value of art; it is a means of interpreting the deepest of human expressions. Methods of inquiry that allow for the examination of complex ideas in structured sequential ways provide the basis for aesthetic education. (QCC, 1998, p. 1627)

Although this is an adequate working definition of aesthetics, Diaz (2002) points out that there are many inconsistencies in the standards between the glossary, the individual strands, and lesson plans provided. Diaz cites frequent instances of confusion in how the term aesthetics is properly applied. For example, student self-evaluation is sometimes categorized as an aesthetic activity and sometimes as a criticism activity. Diaz asserts:

The inconsistencies and ambiguities that exist in the guides readily available to art teachers can be a source of confusion to teachers with insufficient training in aesthetics, making it difficult for them to distinguish aesthetics from criticism and serving as an ineffective tool for teachers seeking guidelines. (p. 31)

This confusion surrounding aesthetics may be soon repaired. Currently, there is a movement underway to revise the 1998 Georgia Quality Core Curriculum in the Fine Arts. The issues of aesthetics and criticism and the difficulty of classroom teachers to deal with these concepts in substantial and meaningful ways should be key points of concern in this revision. This dissertation is a contribution to the conversation that is already in progress. As the next revision of the Georgia State Standards approaches, a clear definition and understanding of the role of aesthetics focusing on experiential meaning should be included at all grade levels and stressed as a primary aim of instruction.

## **Aesthetics and Art Production**

Many times, an art program is judged on the variety of materials to which the children are exposed. It is not uncommon for art teachers to do a painting lesson one day, a drawing lesson the next, and papier-mâché the following week. Although children are at first stimulated by the array of media, Eisner (1997) laments that children are seldom able to engage in the kind of mastery that may allow deeper aesthetic understanding. Developing skills takes time. When students and teachers focus on product production and do not attend to understanding processes, they do not gain the kind of competencies that build confidence and insight (Eisner, 1997). In my own experience, children often prefer to do something new each time they come to my art classroom because new materials and ideas are fresh and exciting. They often ask, “What are we going to do today?” as if we should do something new every time they come to art. Working in one medium and the same project for several weeks requires that students learn at a deeper level than working with fresh new media each class meeting. Students frequently resist such sustained efforts as the deeper understanding and extended attention to details requires much effort on their part. Many children want to believe that art is “just for fun.” Eisner writes, “The assumption that making art projects will automatically yield high level critical abilities is questionable” (p.26). If a teacher chooses only to confront issues of making art without the “why” or “how come” questions attached to the process, then art making for children might become a series of assembly line techniques. Eisner (1997) writes, “If arts education is about anything, it is about helping students to become alive to the aesthetic qualities about art and life in the worlds in which they live” (p. 27). Indeed, art can make us think about subjects, imagine possibilities, and experience emotion and in turn nourish our mind and spirit. For these reasons, my curriculum is built on six lessons a year so that my students can gain deep knowledge of their subjects, learn to

attend to the fine-grained qualities of the artworks, and learn to manipulate media in an expert fashion. When students have a sense of control over the media, they can begin to explore aesthetic dimensions of work. And a sense of control can be as simple as Gloria and Sandy's timing the placement of their paint-loaded brushes under running water. For deeper understanding and an aesthetic appreciation, a child has to have enough familiarity with a medium to project imaginatively what might happen—to ask “what if?”

### **Toward a New Working Definition of Aesthetics**

Constructing meaning from aesthetic experience requires critical thinking. As stated previously, Eisner lists the educational objectives for this goal as including listening to others, making fine-grained distinctions within a frame of reference, problem solving, questioning, assessing, drawing conclusions, and imagining (Eisner, 1998b). Concurrently, there is a movement in general education to have this type of critical thinking, based on aesthetics, taught in every school subject (Wang, 2001). Schools in some Georgia counties have hired teachers as specialists to teach these types of critical thinking skills. Moreover, in Alabama, Birmingham City Schools has recently grouped three schools to study the affects of teaching aesthetics in the general classroom (UAB Education Outlook, Spring 2003). These schools are teaching aesthetics by helping students to engage and attend to any encounter that they have with the world. It would seem that there is a growing concern over the interest in the appropriate treatment of aesthetics in art classrooms.

Despite these efforts, without significant on-going staff development for art teachers and general education teachers alike, I remain skeptical of general classroom teachers achieving the ability to teach aesthetics as critical thinking. This skepticism underscores the importance of

introducing critical thinking through aesthetic experience in pre-service instruction for both general classroom teachers and art specialists. However, I am encouraged that many schools and administrators are beginning to understand the value of teaching an arts-based approach to thinking in the general curriculum. I will also be encouraged if teachers and administrators understand the connection to both aesthetics in the art classroom and critical thinking in the general classroom. Aesthetic education need not be exclusive to the art classroom. Eisner (2002) suggests:

Although the arts function as paradigms through which aesthetic experience can be secured, aesthetic experience is in no way restricted to what we refer to as the fine arts...Aesthetic experience, therefore, is potential in any encounter an individual has with the world. One very important aim of arts education is to help students recognize that fact and to acquire an ability to frame virtually any aspect of the world aesthetically. (p. 231)

When students learn how to attend to the fine-grained qualities that each discipline conveys, learning is elevated (Eisner, 2002).

Aesthetic education can begin when a child is very young, and the arts are only one way to provide vehicles for capturing aesthetic experiences. Aesthetic education requires attention, and it need not be an education reserved for only art teachers. Rather, it can be a part of the general education across the curriculum. If the education of children consists of questions and reflection about what they see, hear, feel, and experience, they will learn to answers such questions with insight, sensitivity, and intelligence (Eisner, 1997). This is not only a hallmark of effective art teachers, but also of the effective general education teacher. Good teachers maintain a constant vigil to help create meaning in these experiences.

Maxine Greene (2001) suggests that teachers must initiate students into what it “feels like to live in music, move over and about a painting, travel round and in between the masses of sculpture, dwell in a poem” (as quoted from Read, 1969, p. 302). I would also suggest, however, that we teach our students to pay heed to and use his or her senses and his or her feelings to understand the qualities of what is perceived in everything. Students begin to embrace authentic and meaningful learning as they come to realize they are the agents that create these experiences, and they do not need something that an artist delivers to the classroom for passive appreciation. By creating and studying how art relationships are formed with other *people* in the classroom, in the *places* where others live, at their work and play, and with the *things* that are important to those people, they begin to know both themselves and others in more powerful and meaningful ways. Their world becomes a world of interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction— a place where aesthetic understanding can be authentic understanding. In this type of sociocultural learning, aesthetics enables students to engage deeply in both their personal and interactive learning, and that is a standard to which we can all aspire.



## CHAPTER III

### **Theoretical Framework: Conceptions of the Social Nature of Learning**

#### **The Thing You Must Remember**

*The thing you must remember is how, as a child,  
you worked hours in the art room, the teacher's  
hands over yours, molding the little clay dog.  
You must remember how nothing else mattered  
but the imagined dog's fur, the shape of his ears  
and his paws. The gray clay felt dangerous,  
your small hands were pressing what you couldn't  
say with your limited words. When the dog's back  
stiffened, then cracked to white shards  
in the kiln, you learned how the beautiful  
suffers from too much attention, how clumsy  
a single vision can grow, and fragile  
with trying too hard. The thing you must  
remember is the art teacher's capable  
hands: large, rough and grainy,  
over yours, holding on.*

-Maggie Anderson

#### **Introduction**

I imagine that we can all conjure an image in our mind's eye, a childhood place where some of the most important lessons of life were learned. Memories serve both to inform our future and to add meaning to our present day. My image is a one-acre tract of land with frontage on a lake just outside of Bellingham, Washington. My parents bought the property

in 1963 with the intention of later building a cabin. I have fond memories of watching my mother pour over cabin plans, trying to decide on the kind of cabin that would suit our young family of six.

The dream cabin was never built. Perhaps the money was an issue or my parents just lost interest; I never did know nor did I ever care. For me, the land and the lake were a child's paradise.

Nearly every weekend during the drier months of the Pacific-Northwest summer, we camped at the property and slept in an Adirondack<sup>1</sup> my dad built. We grilled hamburgers on an open campfire and ran amuck through the mossy, fern-laden, verdant forest. We picked huckleberries, salmonberries and dug fern roots, which tasted like licorice. We made forts in the densest part of the woods, and we swung on vines that hung from some of the larger trees. We slept in like the dead in the clean fresh air, tucked into a sleeping bag on a bunk in the Adirondack.

I never imagined the old trunk and root of the tree that lay on its side at the water's edge had probably been cut by lumberjacks seventy-five years before. It was easily five feet in diameter and at least ten feet long. Cut from the virgin North American forest, I only knew that it made a great play place for my sister and me. We had to wade into the water to climb onto the log. The top was worn and flattened from exposure to years of the elements, and it was covered with three or four different kinds of soft green mosses. Small, scrubby, bonsai-like trees peppered the top of the trunk and lichen and several species of mushrooms also had an affinity for the slow-decaying log. To my younger sister and me, the log was a tiny forest fit for fairies. We spent hours creating a comfortable home for these imaginary creatures.

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<sup>1</sup> An Adirondack is a large three-sided structure with the fourth side open to the elements, a roof and 4 or 5 bunks for sleeping.

We created tiny ponds in the depressions of the wood, a place for fairies to bathe. We made small cottages lined with moss for a place for fairies to rest. We created gardens and paths to connect the homes and lined them with fences made of hemlock cones or clear agate stones we found in the lake. We found small white stones, bird feathers, dried grasses, reeds, tiny freshwater clamshells, and various colored berries. I don't remember putting anything man-made on the log. All our riches were found within our enchanted environs. We decorated the fairyland with the many natural found objects that struck us as having unusual or beautiful qualities. My sister and I spent hours in silence working, sculpturing, and grooming the log. Each new weekend brought the chore of cleaning up bits of pine needles or other "intruders" that had blown onto the log's green carpets before we once again started adding to the beautiful place. Once in awhile my sister would look up and say, "I have to go look for something." She would return later with some driftwood bleached from the sun, or a dozen small white stones collected from the pebbled beach. We silently set about extending paths, creating another set of steps or adding decorations to the outside of one of the cottages. Sometimes, she would return with long silky spider webs and declare that she would put them in the trees where the fairies could find them for making their clothes. Could Puck himself have wandered here? Perhaps the fairy queen herself, Titania.

**Puck**                      *How now spirit, whither wander you?*

**Fairy**                      *Over hill, over dale,  
Thorough bush, thorough brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Thorough flood, thorough fire,  
I do wander everywhere,*

*Swifter than the moon's sphere;  
And I serve the fairy queen,  
To dew her orbs upon the green.  
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:  
In their gold coats spots you see;  
Those be rubies, fairy favours,  
In those freckles live their savours:  
I must go seek some dewdrops here  
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.  
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:  
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.*

Act II, Scene I, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*  
William Shakespeare

One morning we found a tiny tattered insect wing trapped in one of the huckleberry shrubs. The tiny transparent wing was probably from a dragonfly, but we were convinced that it had belonged to an old fairy that had died while trying to get to the fairyland. We set about creating a fairy tomb and then held a wake and funeral fit for any fairy princess.

Our discoveries on the log touched our senses, and here we found some of our earliest experiences of aesthetics. There is potential for an aesthetic experience for any child with an interest in learning how to encounter the world, who wants to learn to attend to the qualities of his/her lived-in environment. The fairyland experience, for my sister and me, brings clarity to what it means to perceive something. To Dewey (1934) perceiving is first attending to sensory experiences of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch and then to make sense of those senses—to partake of their meaning. Perceiving is more than just recognizing the object. Perceiving means

to engage the object, to be present with it, to have an experience with it, and we then may have an aesthetic experience coming from such an interaction. On this simple fallen log, my sister and I were engaged with making a work of natural art, but we were also learning to perceive the qualities of natural found objects and interpret them into meaning.

The fairyland was damp and musty smelling. The combination of mosses, lichens, and pine needles gave the playscape a deep earthy smell that I can recall to this day. The sun cast shadows on the bonsai-like trees, and the interplay of light created patterns, textures, and shapes that enhanced the vision of the fairyland. Our experiences and our decisions were shaped by our emotions and feelings towards this place, by our attention to building and collecting the things we were making, and by our attending to each other.

Emotions and feelings are inherently a part of our mind and body (Damasio, 2003; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Not only do we consider emotions and feelings important to cognition, emotions and feelings also allow us to reason and imagine through our sensual perceptions of touch, taste, sight, and sound. Damasio writes: “Feelings are the perceptions of a certain state of the body along with the perception of a certain mode of thinking and thoughts with certain themes (p. 86)”. Damasio describes this mode of thinking as a style of mental processing of mental images.

My sister and I were captivated by our imaginations, our feelings, our perceptions, and our fascination with this secret place. We were also captivated by the care and the love we felt toward each other and the fairyland we were creating. Although it might be expected that two sisters connected by blood would naturally care for one another, I am fairly certain that this is not always the case. Care is a relationship with bidirectional benefits and obligations for both persons (Noddings, 1992). When we care for one another we communicate care to both. To enter

into a state of care involves a commitment deeper than just being connected by genes. It requires an emotional connection, and it involves another person or in some cases an inanimate object. According to Noddings, without care learning is not likely to take place. Without care we would have a difficult time perceiving, imagining, feeling, and being part of a social group – all necessary elements to learning. Without care, the potential for meaningful aesthetic experience is diminished and learning opportunities that stem from the social structure are lost.

Caring for people and things is not innate (Noddings, 1992). We learn to care for others through observation and modeling. Learning to care is relational, requiring continuous development in the presence of others. It requires understanding each other's beliefs, understanding the importance of improving and preserving our community, families and environments. It requires asking existential questions of each other, raising our moral lives, and it requires shared dialog in order to discuss issues of interpersonal relationship.

To this day, my sister and I often talk about the time we spent making the fairy place. We talk about caring about each other. We talk about caring for that fallen log and the materials that we collected to make that log a beautiful place for fairies to play and rest. We discuss this utopia we tried to create together where art and fairy life could coexist. Together we carefully considered each qualitative relationship of the natural things we found from the tiniest little ringed rocks to how the tiny red huckleberries enhanced the color of the green garden. We observed that most of the time these considerations were done wordlessly, but often battles would ensue if we disagreed on a color choice or whether qualitative relationships of the found objects were inferior to what the fairies deserved. But somehow it always worked out. We learned the give and take of making qualitative choices with another person, and we learned the give and take of the social experience of our relationship.

Although we certainly had no way to articulate it at the time, my sister and I engaged in a multiage mentor relationship in a sociocultural setting (Vygotsky, 1934/78). A similar scenario is often the case in families where older and younger children play together. Sociocultural learning theories assume that our conscious reality is socially constructed through relationships with other people and the internalization of culture. Sociocultural learning emerges from the manipulation of language symbols and metaphors including thinking, reading, writing, and speaking with others in our own particular cultural environment. It also includes the use of body language and our daily activities. Not only do others teach us the basic instructions of how to live, but we are also taught language, signs, symbols, care, and empathy. With empathy we find one key element of the sociocultural experience. Empathy is defined as the ability to identify with and understand another person's feelings (Eisner, 2002). The extent to which we can put ourselves into another's shoes affects qualitatively the nature of the social interaction.

My sister and I found aesthetic experiences while teaching each other about our new discoveries of colors, textures, and shapes. The forest became a place of heightened awareness where we constructed meaning directly from what we saw, heard, smelled, and felt. Each new visual discovery invited a lengthy story, and new decisions about how to complete the fairyland unfolded.

I am also convinced that making this fairyland, in some way, influenced my sister's decision to study theater. When I recently discussed this with her, she agreed. She has designed the sets for at least five productions of Shakespeare's *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, and directed the show three times. If a personal aesthetic experience such as the one described here can resonate that loudly in a child's life, then helping children to find experiences that add to their aesthetic oeuvre must be educationally significant (Greene, 2001). The importance of

aesthetic education is to build the capacity to imagine, to think outside of the box, to ask “what if” questions, and to ask these questions in a complex and compelling way.

I think about our fairyland and vivid, visual snapshots appear in my head. They are still as real as the last day I was there. When I think about how we constructed our masterpiece, I realize that we had no formal or verbal plan for what we were making. We began the project letting the materials and our newfound knowledge of the qualitative relationships of the material lead the way. We were well into the construction before we decided that it was a place for fairies. Mental images and concepts built the fairyland and mental images and concepts of my perceptions of the place are still with me. More recently I have come to recognize that my sister and I were at times working in non-linguistic ways as we worked to make meaning of our social world.

Siegesmund (2000) introduced the term *reasoned perception* as the cognitive skill of “structured, systematic, nonlinguistic thought” (p. 4). He suggests that developing thinking skills outside of language is not new. Artists have long thought in concepts that are incapable of being expressed in words. His theory suggests that nonlinguistic experiences produce nonlinguistic thought. Siegesmund asserts:

Thinking in qualitative relationships can occur in a structured and coherent fashion without the use of language or symbols. Within the mind, different relationships can be explored and tested. Conceptions can be altered, extenuated and adumbrated. Judgments of preference can be made. Using reasoned perception it is possible to identify distinctive differences in nonlinguistic qualitative relationships and render nonlinguistic and linguistic judgments about these relationships. (p. 5)



My sister and I made judgments of qualitative relationships while making decisions about materials and placement of features and in deciding who would be best for doing the work. Sense impressions were entwined with emotion, care, learning together, and our sensory perceptions.

For two children playing and creating in the woods, our art became an expression of our *knowledge* about our feelings. It was not the basic expression of those feelings itself (Langer, 1953). We built our fairyland by wordlessly converting the world of our felt experience into an empirical world that we knew. Once built, my sister and I could make fine-grained adjustments to this world through language. We have now both become teachers and artists. My sister teaches gifted children and theater. She has continued to teach me things about art, children, qualitative relationships, aesthetic experience, and caring about one another inside the classroom and out. As I have reflected on these reminiscences during the last few years of my graduate work, I have found myself thinking about my fairyland experience and have wondered why this experience and others like it have been so formative and important to my cognitive and artistic development.

Not unlike many teachers, nearly everything I do in my classroom today stems in some way from my experiences as a child. Experiences are important to children as a way to enhance their aesthetic and social education along with increasing cognition. But how do we make aesthetic experiences occur for children who do not own a lush, green piece of property? Was my experience a unique opportunity, a happy accident of contingencies that came together in one specific time and place, or was it indicative of educational experiences that we can strive to create through curriculum and pedagogy? Can we create these kinds of experiences in a classroom? What kind of pedagogy must be present in order for a child to have this kind of experience? And how does the child construct meaning from his/her own experiences to add to his/her cognition? My aim is to utilize my personal experience in my own classroom and these

questions to frame a larger context of inquiry. Additionally, I expect to learn that the art classroom is an effective place for students to develop their cognitive abilities by encouraging sociocultural learning, caring, and aesthetic experience.

### **What Thinking Is: Modes of Cognition**

Learning researchers have long studied cognition as if it were a process only contained in the mind of the learner (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999). Positivist scientists such as Thorndike, (1913) Watson, (1913), and Skinner, (1950) have largely ignored the sociocultural world as a contributor to intelligence. Equally as disturbing, cognitive scientists in the past have not considered emotions, feelings, senses, mental images, and concepts as contributors to learning. The early scientists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century believed that emotion and feelings contaminated the data. Trying to measure cognition when intermixed with emotions served simply to confuse the researcher. Pure thinking, they believed, could only come from the biogenetic brain (Bransford et al, 1999). In other words, how our brains are hardwired at birth significantly determined our cognitive abilities. This examination of thinking perceives the brain as isolated in a box. Through drill and exercise it can be stimulated, but learning is a disembodied activity. This logic remains strong as we consider the continued emphasis exemplified in educational practice by the categorization of how smart children are by how well they perform on standardized assessments such as Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) Exams (Roid, 2003) and the Cognitive Abilities Tests (Cogat) (Thorndike & Hagan, 1993). Such a view also results in concern for the content of curriculum. What are the stimulants that will be applied to the brain? This focus on the content of curriculum is found in the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum Fine Arts Standards.

It has only been within the last few decades that cognitive scientists have begun to realize that the mind cannot be separated from the influence of the body or the cultural environment in which the body lives and learns (Bransford et al, 1999). Eisner (2002) defines culture as both anthropological and also as a medium for growing things. Our culture in the anthropological sense is determined by our interaction with family, neighbors, schools, and community. To culture something, in a scientific method, is to encourage it to grow. A doctor cultures bacterium on an agar plate to study the colony it makes to determine what kind of bacteria it is. Not unlike the scientific “culturing,” Eisner points out that schools engage in both methods of culture. Following his lead, we can assume that the effective school is one that recognizes and encourages culture as a shared way of life *and* as a means to encourage young minds to grow. This shared and experiential process found in school is called sociocultural learning.

### The Three Modes

The body provides sense and perceptual experiences influenced by emotion, and the environment provides cultural experiences and language. These two factors, along with our biogenetic make up, influence how we think, how we learn and how we go about teaching others. We are just now beginning to understand that our biogenetic minds are not located in antiseptic containers but are housed inside a sensory body, which exposes us to perceptions and feelings about the world around us.

We cannot dismiss the fact that neural networks, our environment, and our bodies affect how we become aware of problems, process information, and arrive at critical assessment. All three sources are important and deserve close attention for their curricular implication. None of the modes stands entirely alone and independent of the other two. As such, cognition is a product of how these three modes work together. This dissertation will focus primarily on the aspects of

cognition that emerge when we connect the emotion and feeling of aesthetic experience with sociocultural experience. I will further argue that caring (Noddings, 1992) is the binding thread between these three modes that elevates and extends cognitive processing.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the modes of learning within cognition. Our environment (sociocultural experience) affects how we think about things by influencing our emotions (aesthetic experience). Likewise, our emotions and feelings may be heavily influenced by our brain's neural networks and physiological brain conditions.

The brain is the foundation for learning and a healthy brain is biologically predisposed to learn. Neuroscientists study the anatomy, physiology, chemistry and molecular biology of the nervous system with great interest in discovering how brain activity relates to learning. According to Bransford et al. (1999) "at birth the brain has a relatively small number of trillions of synapses" (p. 104). The brain gains about two-thirds more synapses after birth until adulthood. We have long thought through much of the twentieth century that the brain, at birth, was a blank slate (*tabula rasa*). It was further thought that language was necessary for abstract thought and without abstract thought a baby could not have knowledge (Bransford et al, 1999). More recently it has been discovered that through complex methods infants and very young children do indeed form complex ideas and show definite positive biases for learning in different kind of ways and with different proclivities. Along that line of thinking, Gardner (1983) describes his theory of multiple intelligences as enumerating natural proclivities toward innate abilities in areas such as music, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, math, linguistics, naturalist, and visual spatial learning. These are innate abilities that are genetically produced. Understanding how genetics influences cognition is important. Intellectual abilities such as multiple intelligences

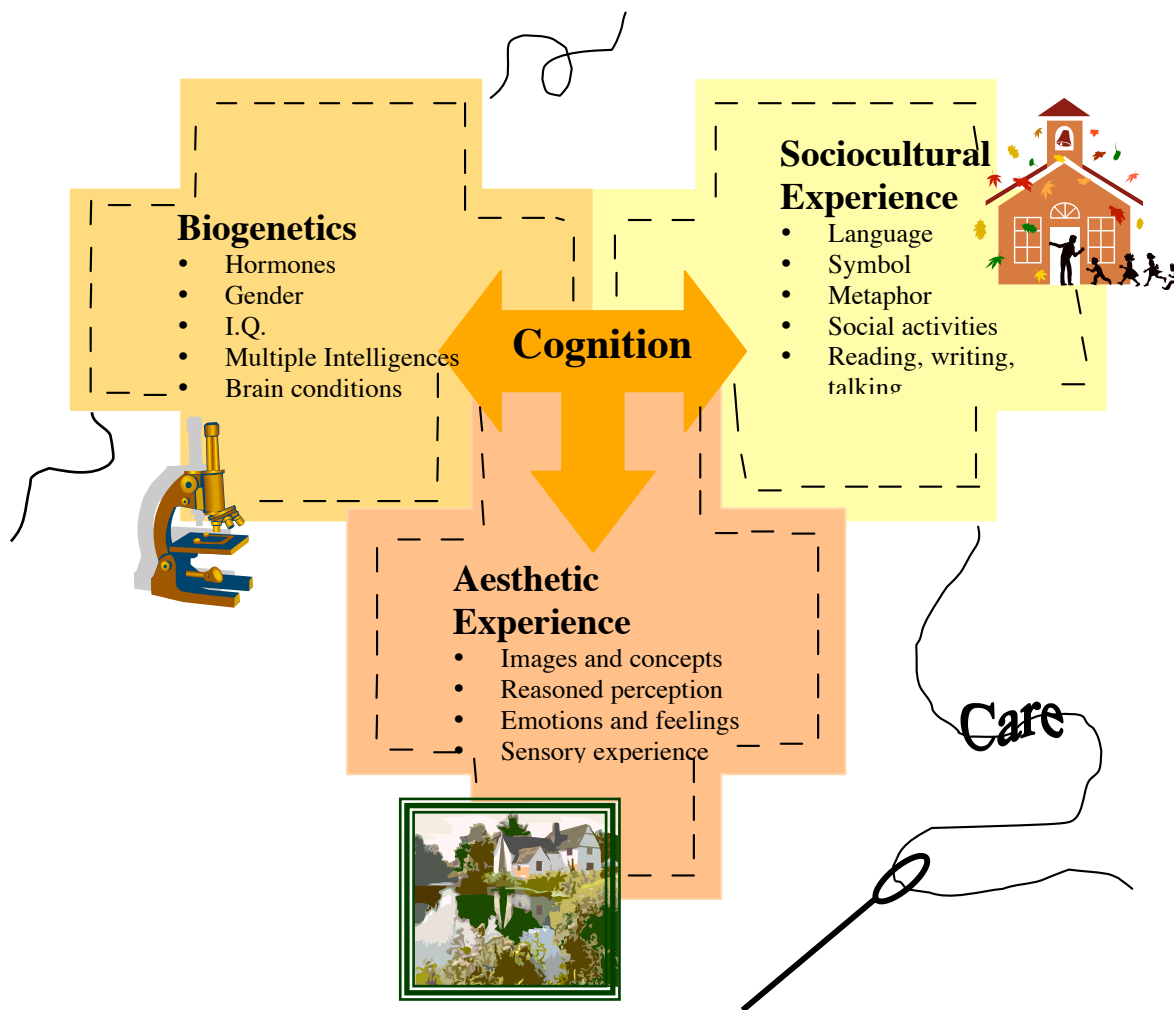


Fig. 3.1 *Modes of Cognition*

(Gardner, 1983) and Intelligence Quotients (I.Q.) (Roid, 2003) are an important contribution to learning, but not sufficient by themselves.

There are clearly physiological brain conditions that modify the way we learn or even hamper learning. Chemicals, hormones, and conditions of the brain affect the way we learn and think. People who have disorders of the brain such as learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, autism, hyperactivity, bipolar disorder, or even brain damage often are forced to learn in unique or limited ways. As discussed earlier, Antonio Damasio (2003) researched the case history of an individual who sustained frontal brain damage in an accident. This area of the brain deals with emotions and feeling. The subject no longer had emotional responses. Robbed of this crucial human ability, the patient was not able to make critical judgments and decisions. Although his ability to reason was not impaired, his ability to reason within a functional context was gone.

Barring brain conditions and other abnormalities, the healthy brain may have certain genetic proclivities to allow the individual to learn to be a wonderful dancer, a great mathematician or a fantastic orator, but without two other modes of learning (sociocultural and aesthetic experiences), those genetic proclivities would likely be under-developed. In other words, the genes and physiological neural networks may be present for the child to learn to play the piano, but if they are never exposed to a keyboard, the child will be unlikely to learn to play. If they never hear an etude, attend a concert, or take a music lesson, they may never develop a physiological disposition. The biogenetic brain, sociocultural experience, and aesthetic experience all play a part in teaching and learning.

### **Learning in Relationships: Sociocultural Experience**

Vygotsky's (1934/78) work explores the role that our social nature plays in our learning processes. Vygotsky's notion of sociocultural learning theory suggests that our world is socially

constructed through relationships. We ultimately begin to internalize these relationships, and those associations guide our decisions and our actions.

In a social context, we interact with other human beings, in part, as an effort to learn language for communication, but we also learn the rudiments of social mores and folkways through understanding how to survive. Virtually helpless at birth, we rely on others to feed us, care for us, and teach us to communicate so that we can learn and appropriate what others already know. Each of our sociocultural contexts is as individual as a fingerprint. We grow up in different families, we have different experiences in school, and we live in different communities, states, and countries. The process of sociocultural experience is one mode of learning that occurs between an individual's biogenetic mind and what he/she experiences in his/her environments or cultures.

### Zone of Proximal Development

An important theory about sociocultural learning is described through Vygotsky's (1934/78) zone of proximal development. Vygotsky's theories are based on learning as a social context involving mediation between two or more people where the tools of the culture such as language, signs, symbols, and metaphor are used. While working as a teacher and researcher, Vygotsky noticed that students were able to work beyond their developmental level when they were given guidance from a more experienced person. Vygotsky (1934/78) called this the zone of proximal development and defines this process as:

The distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

Age is not the determining factor for whether the more capable peer becomes the teacher. This more capable peer can mean anyone who has skills, which are more advanced than the individual learning the task at hand. That person could be a student, teacher, parent, or mentor—even if the more capable peer is younger than the learner.

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development examines how context facilitates understanding. Specifically, when students work alone they often have fewer skills for problem solving than when they are working with an older or more capable peer. The more capable peer can help the student explore different, and often new, ways to solve problems through trial and error or through approximations of existing schema. For example, if new learning is conceptually close to what a student already knows and understands then the student more readily internalizes the information. If, however, the new material presented is significantly different from what is already known, then the student will encounter more difficulty in capturing the new information. In this case, a more capable peer can assist the student in identifying new pathways of understanding. More capable peers can select different strategies to enhance the student's ability to internalize new and difficult material (Rogoff, Turkani & Bartlett, 2001).

When more capable peers help students generate alternative solutions to problems, they are supporting deeper understanding. Afterwards, the more capable peer and students alike grow in confidence and are willing to engage more difficult material. Once he/she has mastered the task with assistance, the learner is now able to do the problem solving for him/herself.

Learning in zones of proximal development does not happen by spontaneously teaming a more capable peer with a less capable peer. Wink and Putney (2001) suggest that just grouping students together and hoping that they will help each other is not enough to ensure positive



outcomes for learning. They suggest that there are two problems that thwart sociocultural activity: safety and regression.

- **Safety:** Working together involves risk. Students must move out of their comfort zones to problem solve. In order to do this, the relationship between the more capable peer and learner must be secure.
- **Regression:** If the learner can progress within the zone of proximal development, he/she can certainly regress too. Even if the relationship with the more capable peer is secure, if the task itself is not properly positioned in a zone of proximal development, then the student can regress. Regression can also occur if the task is appropriate, but the student does not feel comfortable within the sociocultural setting.

I will show in the next chapter an example of regression where the student is comfortable within the mentoring relationship, but insecure within the overall sociocultural context.

Noddings (1992) would assert here that in order for the learners to feel secure about their learning and in order to prevent regression, there must be an element of care between the mentoring pair. Care from a peer enables learners to feel safe and supported when confronting new knowledge.

Schools can create the potential for such sociocultural learning through multiage classrooms. In the next section, I will discuss how utilizing more experienced peers in a multiage environment encourages learning in important sociocultural ways.

### **From Theory to Practice: The Multiage Classroom**

The multiage classroom, while similar in size to a normal classroom, is a self-contained group of children who represent two or more age or grade levels. For this study, a more capable

peer is older (a third grader) who has had more art experiences than the younger student (a kindergartener), thereby providing the means for the zone of proximal development to be put into action.

A multiage classroom is essentially one cohesive classroom that utilizes the same curriculum at the same time, acting as one classroom unit. Often, for economic reasons, i.e., less cost, split classrooms are created where teachers are required to teach two independent classrooms and two different curricula. Generally, the ideal multiage classroom is a randomly picked, balanced grouping of children from a diverse student population, which is supported by parents and administrators (Kasten, 1993).

The multiage classroom was the first model in the development of public education. As late as the early part of the twentieth century, one-room schoolhouses accommodated children of varying ages learning together in one large classroom. Although often derided as “old-fashioned,” the one room schoolhouse offered many educational amenities that are not offered today. First, children often remained with the same teacher and same class for a number of years, creating continuity in the child’s learning. Second, teachers often paired older students to teach younger students as a way of managing learning tasks and enabling students to keep up with work in the primers (Tyack, 1995). This kind of education created learning with zones of proximal development. Kasten (1993) writes:

Older students served as role models for younger students, challenging them intellectually and socially. And there was no apparent ceiling on the content taught, discussed or overheard within the room, which benefited older students by design and younger students more incidentally. Almost universally, adults who were products of one-room schools have fond, positive memories of their early schooling. (p. 5)

In various settings outside tradition public school classrooms, multiage sociocultural learning is an accepted part of learning and living. Multiage after-school social interactions in neighborhoods where children play together are examples of sociocultural learning. Clearly, children of multiple ages use this educational space to learn the essential intricacies of social behavior. Families employ sociocultural learning when multiage siblings play together and learn from one another. Work environments usually have many people of various ages. More experienced workers are needed to guide and mentor new trainees into the new work environment.

Kasten (1993) and Bingham (1995) demonstrate that the multiage classroom is a viable and equally effective organizational alternative to the classroom of like ages. Both completed longitudinal studies in multiage and like-age classrooms. They found students in multiage settings tend to do well in social aspects of education such as study habits, social interaction, self-motivation, cooperation, and attitudes toward school. These aspects of student psychosocial and affective development were higher than students in like-age classrooms (Bingham, 1995). In both studies, students from multiage classrooms perform as well or better academically than those from single grade classes (1995).

Although recent research points to the effectiveness of the multiage classroom, the one-room schoolhouse was abandoned during the twentieth century efficiency movement (Tyack, 1995). Schools today group children of like ages in one classroom with one adult in charge of their education. Instruction follows in a sequential fashion to accommodate the large numbers of children and large numbers of learning types (Rogoff, 1990). By grouping children in like-age classes, we assume that children within approximately one chronological year of each other will have similar needs and abilities. This line of thinking tends to treat an education for children as

an assembly-line production. Indeed, its beginnings are closely linked to the industrial revolution and attempts to model education on industrial production (Bingham, 1995). The assembly line school promises to be efficient, economical, and get the job done (Tyack, 1995). However, the reform of the single age classroom did not evolve from any basis in research (Kasten, 1993). While there was no evidence that single-age classrooms improved learning, grouping children within like ages helped schools keep tabs on how a student was progressing and also encouraged standardized assessment. This standardized assessment became the foundations for the standards movement (Tyack, 1995).

There are potential negative consequences of grouping children of like ages into one classroom. It may invite comparison, competition, and an increase of aggression (Eisner, 1997; Kasten, 1993). Interestingly enough, Pratt (1986) observed this same behavior in other higher order primates when they are grouped for extended periods of time. Allowing children of multiages to work together allows children to excel at their own pace. There would be no need to compare students with each other because diversity of ability becomes commonplace in the classroom. Kasten (1993) and Bingham (1995) both suggest that multiage classrooms tend to show more nurturing, altruistic behavior, support, and care than the single-graded classroom. In other words, students in these classrooms exhibit care toward one another within the everyday academic learning.

### **Seeing Vygotsky Through Gardner: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Skills**

Wink and Putney (2001) suggest that Vygotsky's zone of proximal development combines two of Gardner's multiple intelligence's (interpersonal and intrapersonal). According to Gardner (1983), interpersonal intelligence is how we communicate with others, and

intrapersonal intelligence is attention to our own subjective reactions. These two skills extend the understanding about how students learn from one another in a sociocultural environment. From a Vygotskian perspective, learning begins as an *interpersonal* (in conjunction with others) process of meaning making about what is being learned. For example, there is talk, shared ideas, reading, writing, and an enculturation of two people. A student works with others making interpersonal exchanges. Later, the new knowledge becomes more individualized. It becomes an *intrapersonal* process as the learner begins to internalize and reflect on this new information. The process allows the student to make sense of the task so that the next piece of learning can then be added to the schema (Vygotsky, 1934/78). This process begins again when the two students work together creating a cycle of sociocultural cognitive learning. I would also suggest that cognitive learning may begin as a nonlinguistic intrapersonal experience and can also be developed to aesthetic understanding through an interpersonal communication. In other words, it does not matter if the learning experience begins interpersonally or intrapersonally, they are both cognitive learning.

This sociocultural process involves highly complex learning abilities. Students add new knowledge to their existing mental schemas and increase their mastery of knowledge through application and practice. In these informal settings, students feel free to experiment and to test or recombine what they have learned in new settings and situations. A sign that one fully understands what has been learned is linking knowledge from one learning environment to another, from one discipline to another, or from one situation to another. In this manner, sociocultural learning fosters the transfer of learning.

Vygotsky supported the belief that learning could only occur with the acquisition of language. Although language may contribute to learning, learning is not limited to language.

Given what we now know about how our sensory system nonverbally contributes to thinking through feeling, we can say that cognition is formed by both linguistic symbolic manipulation and nonlinguistic experience. The study of intrapersonal and interpersonal exchange helps us begin to recognize that learning can occur independent of language. Drawing on this recognition, and the potential for confusion among terminology, in this study I will refer to the members of the sociocultural group who have not attained skills at hand as the *primary learners*, and I shall refer to the more skilled members of the sociocultural group as the *secondary learners*. Because skill is so varied from person to person, the primary and secondary learner often reverse their roles during the learning process as a kind of give-and-take relationship. While one peer may be the primary learner during one lesson, the role can reverse, perhaps for just a moment, and then the primary learner becomes the secondary learner and vice versa. This phenomenon is dependent on the skills of each learner, and it is sometimes difficult to witness the subtleties—but it can happen regardless of age discrepancy between learners.

### **Successful Sociocultural Classrooms: Mentoring**

Mentoring with a more experienced teacher is an important element of supporting new teachers both professionally and personally (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1993; Denmark & Posden, 2000). When we are examining ways to support at-risk students, finding a peer-mentor can be a significant strategy for re-connecting the at-risk student to the school culture. Mentors, whether student-to-student, student to teacher, or teacher to teacher build a sense of community and trust, in a school. Through multiage mentoring, students develop a strong sense of community. They are more likely to act morally, develop positive social habits, have emotional competencies, be academically motivated, and develop a sense of care and empathy for others

(Kelehear & Heid, 2002). Even though mentoring often involves only two people, it remains an important type of sociocultural learning that helps support the notion of a learning community. Importantly, mentoring offers bidirectional benefits to both the primary learner and the secondary learner because, due to the nature of the collaborative relationship, both parties have something to offer each other.

Mentoring is different from tutoring. Tutoring often has one party who delivers knowledge and skills (the teacher) while the other person is the recipient (the student). More specifically, the mentoring relationship often encompasses the academic, social, and emotional elements in a relationship, while tutoring frequently focuses on imparting knowledge from the teacher to the student. Mentors call on elements of caring, sociocultural experience and aesthetic experience to cultivate and develop the relationship. Frequently, and as a sort of secondary benefit, students perform better in academic pursuits (Kelehear & Heid, 2002).

### Reggio Emilia Schools

Reggio Emilia is a town in Italy where, as early as 1820, governmental service began supporting families and young children. The Reggio Emilia preschools were founded after World War II by parents who saw a need for early childhood education. Progressive education ideas were beginning to emerge worldwide, as theorists John Dewey and Celestin Freinet provoked a need to change the way schools managed learning (Caldwell, 2003). The learning approach to Reggio Emilia has evolved through the influence of such educators as Susan Issacs, Maria Montessori, Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, John Dewey, David Hawkins, Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, Gregory Bateson, and Jerome Bruner (Caldwell, 2003). This approach to teaching advocates a successful multiage learning process.

Many educators, including Howard Gardner (2003), have held Reggio Emilia schools as exemplary model of childhood education. The Reggio Emilia approach to education is committed to the creation of conditions for learning that will enhance and facilitate a child's construction of his or her own powers of thinking through the synthesis of all the expressive, communicative, and cognitive languages (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998).

Collaborative group work is considered valuable and necessary to advance cognitive development. Children are encouraged to dialogue, critique, compare, negotiate, hypothesize, and problem solve through group work. Within the Reggio Emilia approach multiple perspectives promote both a sense of group membership and the uniqueness of self. Additionally students in Reggio Emilia schools are not put in a particular grade. The students learn together in small groupings with three to five years' age difference.

Today, Reggio Emilia schools intertwine the arts into curriculum. Art instruction occurs everyday. Most schools have an *artiste* or *artista* that is used as a guide and expert.

The Reggio Emilia approach has nine essential elements. Note these elements do not focus on what the child is to learn; they focus on the roles that the child, the teacher, the parent, the learning environment, and the school must play to create a successful sociocultural learning experience:

- *The child as protagonist* – All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in constructing their own learning.
- *The child as collaborator* – Children learn in relation to other children of varying ages, family, teachers, and the community rather than each child in isolation.



- *The child as communicator* – Focus on symbolic representation, including words, movement, all kinds of visual art, dramatic art, and music. Reggio Emilia believes that this leads to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills, and creativity.
- *The environment as a third teacher* – Utilizing space encourages communication and relationships. There is beauty in the design and organization of a school.
- *The teacher as partner, nurturer, and guide* – Teachers facilitate children's exploration of themes, work on short and long term projects, and guide experiences of joint, open ended discovery and problem solving.
- *The teacher as researcher* – Teachers work in pairs and maintain strong collegial relationships with all other teachers and staff. Teachers see themselves as researchers as they document their work with children, whom they also see as researchers.
- *The documentation as communication* – Careful consideration and attention is given to the presentation of the thinking of children and the adults who work with them.  
  
Documentation serves many purposes including parental awareness, teacher understanding, evaluation, children understanding the value of their own work, creating an archive that traces the history of school, and process of learning.
- *The parent as partner* – Parent participation is essential. This helps ensure the welfare of the child. Ideas and skill that the family brings to the school create a cohesive and well-integrated school.
- *Organization as foundational* – Organizational skills appear at every level. Collections, arrangements, and care of materials as well as preparation of nutritional school lunches reflects the complexity and order of the universe, it is not neat and tidy; it evolves and is flexible.

This approach to learning is a solid example of applied progressive and constructivist teaching philosophy.

### **Aesthetic Experience Through Sociocultural Learning**

According to Lewis (2004), student success depends in large part on three qualities of teaching: content knowledge, pedagogy, and *strong relationships among students*. Lewis found that consistent improvement in teaching and learning essentially depends on these factors.

Recognizing the significant role of strong relationships among children in supporting student success, how to elevate cognition is a necessary question at all grade levels. For any teacher, and for the art teacher in particular, attention should be focused on engaging students in aesthetic experience through sociocultural learning. Art is particularly well suited for this task as it is a form of self-expression arising from cultural production (Wilson, 1982). Through visual self-expression acquisition of language is facilitated, which in turn enables a higher level of consciousness (Efland, 2003). Thus, aesthetic experience is a means of elevating cognition (Eisner, 2002). Eisner suggests that there are six ways in which the arts accomplish this task:

1. The arts make us think. Thinking by definition is cognitive.
2. The arts make us notice the world more deeply.
3. The arts provide permission to engage in imagination for new possibilities.
4. The arts have a high threshold for ambiguity, uncertainty, and exercise judgment, free from rules. The arts help us to believe what we feel.
5. The arts provide a method for inscribing a semi-permanent place for ideas.
6. The arts allow us to explore our interior landscapes, our intrapersonal spaces. (p. 9-11)

By engaging in these cognitive functions in the arts, we are attending to the world around us and connecting to aesthetic experience. By engaging in sociocultural experience, we are extending our understanding of these experiences by communicating with others through symbol processing (Langer 1953). In communication with others, aesthetic experience is processed through symbolic language in discussions, informal conversations, and arguments. Therefore, an art classroom that is engaged in authentic aesthetic experiences, and is also concerned with bringing these experiences into aesthetic understanding, will also be engaged in authentic sociocultural practices.

Efland (2003) argues for the sociocultural foundation of arts learning. He suggests that authentic learning is grounded in a social context that relies heavily on language and symbol processing operations. We derive meaning about who we are and engage in authentic learning by socially constructing meaning through communication with others. Efland further suggests:

The mind is thus not in the head, but emerges in the social interactions of individuals, and it is through these that knowledge of cultural norms and practices is both constructed and acquired. Sociocultural cognition also views knowledge as a constructive process.

Knowledge as cultural content also consists of symbolic tools (language) that enable social interaction to take place. In addition, knowledge is likely to be organized around social purposes, for example work, and occupations, or around problems of confronting society rather than disciplines. Learning is a process of construction but it is also enculturation through which growing individuals become initiated in to their society. (p. 53)

Children who engage in aesthetic experiences through sociocultural learning are cognitively engaged in three ways. First, they reflect intrapersonally about their own aesthetic

experiences with art. Second, they make careful considerations about art through interpersonal communication about their aesthetic experiences. Third, they deepen both their interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge by contemplating how others may have experiences with art. Aesthetic experience through sociocultural learning is authentic learning. It invites meaning making and elevates cognition.

### **Sociocultural Learning in the Art Classrooms**

Efland (2003) suggests that Vygotskian philosophy has at least three implications for learning in the arts:

1. Learning, like the study of art, should not be studied in isolation but seen in relation to its social context.
2. Language and other cultural symbols are tools that enable human development to advance. Culture is made through the use of symbols.
3. Learning entails the internalization or enculturation of cultural knowledge. Therefore, the focus of instruction should be on sociocultural readiness to learn rather than on domain knowledge. (p. 49)

Efland (2002) argues that knowledge becomes meaningful when it is linked to the social situation in which it arises. More specifically, sociocultural learning has important contributions to working together in small groups or pairs in the art classroom. Efland proposes a curriculum designed to include time for students to work together as one approach that enables meaning making. This is in contrast to the classic method of instruction in the art classroom—one student, one project. When students pair or work in groups, they tend to share ideas, compare and

contrast their own prior knowledge, and find commonalities in their learning tasks. Their learning becomes significant. Therefore, sociocultural pedagogical methods are important.

### Situated Learners

Like Efland, Eisner (2002) imagines a model of social learning in the art classroom. In small groups in the art classroom, children learn not only academic principals of the curriculum, but models of behavior, conversational understanding about each other's work, and other shared social norms. They learn in context of an arts-based sociocultural environment. To use Lave and Wenger's term, classrooms become places for situated learning (1991). Situated learning focuses on learning within specific and distinctive social situations. Classrooms that use this type of model might not look like a typical and traditional classroom. Learning would be much more sensory (Eisner, 2002). Students would spend their time in small groups grappling with a problem to be solved. Students would be allowed a trial-and-error time so that judgments could be made. This mode of learning challenges students to succeed and to take more risks by providing support and guidance from peers. Eisner (2002) suggests that these types of classrooms would look more like life; they would be "more real" (p. 95). Eisner further suggests that as situated learning is modeled on real-world applications, it is more likely that the student may transfer his/her knowledge to other situations outside of school. Increased potential for transfer of learning is highest when learning has authentic contexts.

### Communities of Learners

Students learn from each other and their teachers. Teachers learn from students as well as from each other. When such relationships are actively nurtured, a community of learners (Wenger, 2002) is fostered. In communities of learners everyone in a school is both a learner and responsible for helping others to learn. This is different from a learning community where people

may be just in a group learning a particular task without the belief that we learn from everyone in the group. Classrooms that cultivate the concept of communities of learners as a learning strategy extend sociocultural learning. The teacher is as much a learner in the classroom as the students.

A community of learners explicitly adapts the belief that each individual in the school has the potential to be the more capable peer. A younger student may be the more capable peer to the older student; a student may be the more capable peer to a teacher. There are more opportunities for understanding a wider variety of people and cultures. All of the individuals in the classroom engage in opportunities to increase sociocultural experiences by sharing language, social activities, and care.

By exploring knowledge and abilities of others, we are exposed to ideas, image concepts, and sensory experiences and ideas that may not be available when working alone. When we are required to work with others we are engaging in empathetic lessons in a communion with cohorts and teachers. If we are given opportunities to think, talk, listen, laugh, and engage in learning processes with others, we learn to empathize with the other, conceptualize thoughts and feelings of others as well as their own and return the care to others. In this manner, children learn to care about each other and the subjects that they are studying (Noddings, 1992).

The art classroom is an exceptionally conducive place for communities of learners to work effectively. There are several reasons that the art classroom is so conducive for communities of learners to flourish.

1. Students usually work at tables. This makes a natural group setting.
2. Many projects can be designed to utilize small groups of 4 to 5 students.
3. Problem solving projects work well in the art classroom and also with small groups.

4. Rules in the art classroom can be adjusted to allow students to talk about their work as a cohesive group.

If this is done well, more students may show intellectual competence and intellectual diversity. Eisner (2002) describes what such a classroom might look like:

Classrooms would look different than they do now, roles for students would differ, and students would use one another as resources. There would be a sense of community and cooperation, a shared enthusiasm in which the language of the field—in this case the language used to discuss the arts—would become the educational coin of the realm. The technical language related to the arts would become a shared mode of discourse. In some ways the climate and the discourse would be closer to the climate and discourse of groups that share a hobby or interest; discussion with peers around a common interest is a source of pleasure and a demonstration of competence. Students would take pleasure in sharing enthusiasms. (p. 95)

Although classroom strategies that embrace communities of learning should be largely student based, the teacher's role in the learning community classroom remains important.

#### The Teachers Role in Communities of Learning

When the classroom consists of a community of learners, the teacher is as involved with learning as are his/her students. The teacher is the primary craftsperson for the classroom curriculum. If lessons proceed in a problem-based learning style, the teacher may give guidance as the more capable peer. When a teacher is perceptive enough to understand that problems have many answers—and that he/she does not always have all the answers—then a community of learners will often have surprise findings. In learning communities, learning outcomes become primarily the responsibility of the learner, not the teacher (Eisner, 2002). Acting like another

learner, what the teacher brings to the classroom from his/her social background is as influential and important as any other student. What a student brings may be just as important as what the teacher has planned. Therefore, the teacher must recognize a moment when students have made a meaningful shift in the focus of the lesson and be prepared to guide or follow this new course. Maintaining a learner status instead of the traditional authoritarian status will allow a mutual trust and respect from the whole learning community. How a teacher influences a class with her personal excitement, willingness to learn, commitment, and care will also determine much of the success of her class. It is also the teacher's role to help students understand that learning is not assessed by speed in completing a task (Eisner, 2002). It is important to encourage students to practice applying their knowledge repeatedly and in varying contexts. Practicing reading, practicing the piano, or practicing making coil pots is how we become proficient at what we do.

In a community of learners teachers allow students time to elaborate and then evaluate their answers. Teachers provide time to allow students to think critically about their answers, reflect on their work, and assess their outcomes. Through the use of scrapbooks, portfolios, and other authentic assessments, students can see their own progress over time. Shared discussions in the community of learners also offer an important opportunity for reflection and growth. In this context, language as a function of sociocultural learning contributes heavily to students' learning.

### **The Role of Language in Learning**

Vygotsky (1934/1978) theorized that cognition was dependent on language. As a person's language developed, there were improved opportunities for deeper thinking and learning. He claimed, "using language is a cognitive function and a cultural tool for advancing our thinking" (p. 85). Language and learning worked together to make meaning (Wink & Putney,



2002). Within the field of art education, theorists suggest that that cognition is advanced both by language and visual nonlinguistic thinking (Arnheim, 1969; Eisner, 1994; Siegesmund, 2000).

Visual thinking can function as signs, symbols, and forms of representation (Eisner, 1994).

Visual signs and symbols are a part of language, and as such part of the sociocultural dimension of interpersonal intelligence. However, a form of representation is an achievement of intrapersonal intelligence. Eisner (1994) defines a form of representation as:

The devices that humans use to make public conceptions are privately held. They are the vehicles through which concepts that are visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile are given public status. This public status may take the form of words, pictures, music, mathematics, dance and the like. (p. 30)

Because of their personal sensory nature, forms of representation are rooted in bodily metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). They are manifestations of aesthetic experience. They are a critical gateway to aesthetic understanding and use of language.

With language we can engage in a conversation about our own perceptions. We can relate what we see and hear, how our body is reacting to stimuli and what kind of feeling we have when we are presented with sensory or emotional experiences. In other words we can talk about reasoned perceptions and aesthetic experiences. Through language—the application of a symbol system—we achieve aesthetic understanding.

Signs and symbols are tools of language. Forms of representation are tools of non-symbolic, nonlinguistic thinking (Siegesmund, 2000). Metaphors are tools that allow for the manipulation of signs, symbols, and forms of representation. Metaphor forms an important link between the symbolic and sensory, non-symbolic thinking.

### What is a Sign?

Langer (1951) asserts that a sign, or signal as she calls it, is like a footprint. The footprint is a sign that tells us that someone has just walked close by. A sign is comprehended if it makes us notice or think about the object or situation with which it is associated. When the river outside my apartment turns muddy, it is a sign that it has rained somewhere upstream. It is associative.

### What is a Symbol?

A symbol conveys a concept. Without being directly associative, a symbol converts a concept into a form that can be understood by others. A symbol is more challenging cognitively than a sign because it is abstract in its representation. When my son John was two and a half, I took him to a park to play. When the time began to wane that afternoon, I coaxed John away from the sandbox by suggesting that we get some ice cream before we go home. He immediately stood up and got out of the sandbox, spurred on by my bribe. We walked back to my car down a path that was landscaped with rather large pine-bark mulch. Suddenly John stopped and picked up a piece of pine bark shaped like a long skinny triangle. He held the long tip of the triangle in his hand so that the base was up and then said, “Mommy, can we get ice cream like this?” He then started licking an imaginary scoop of ice cream that sat on top of the bark in his hand. I immediately knew what he was referring to because his ice cream cone sign was so explicit. “I think you would like to have an ice cream *cone*,” I asserted. By telling him the word he was looking for was “cone,” I exchanged the visual sign for a more complex linguistic symbol. I, the more capable peer, was leading my son into a more complex form of thinking. John's brown triangle was a sign that was visually associative with a cone. The word “cone” however, had no clear associative connection to the waffle that is shaped to hold a scoop of ice cream. Thus using the word “cone” rather than finding an associative sign is a higher achievement of thinking.

## Forms of Representation

Eisner writes, “Forms of representation are means through which the contents of consciousness are made public” (2002, p. 8). When I was visiting one school, I saw a very young student painting a yellow sky over a beautiful flower garden. Most of the other students in the class were painting blue skies on their painting. “How come you are painting the sky that bright yellow?” I said to her as I watched her paint. “Because yellow is such a sunny happy color and I want my painting to feel happy”, she replied without looking up at me. This child was expressing her feelings through a qualitative representation of the yellowness of the color. The child was visually aware—although she had no language to express this—that yellow is a bright color that reflects light. She associated a bright, reflective color with feeling happy. This psychological connection was not necessarily culturally mediated.

Langer asserts that our knowledge and understanding is much more skilled than our ability to explain what we know. Many times I have asked students to answer a question and they have replied, “I know the answer but I just can’t put it into words.” For this reason, allowing alternate forms of representation is vital and necessary for children to learn to make meaning through expression. According to Eisner (2002), helping children to make meaning by expressing what they want to say is one of the most important things we can do in the teaching field.

When my youngest son was to perform at a Suzuki sharing, it was Lilly’s turn to play “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Having just come from a ballet lesson, the little girl and her sister were in their leotards and tights. The youngest of the two girls got up to play her violin while the other sister stood to the side of all the parents and proceeded to dance to her sister’s music. Clearly, she was making up the choreography as she was going, but the qualities of each

movement and her negotiation with those qualities in her young body precisely fit the music and expressed exactly what she was feeling at that moment. We all watched Jo Beth while we listened to Lilly play the violin. She twirled at the fast parts and used her newly formed skills to select other qualities for the slower parts. We all enjoyed Jo Beth's spontaneous and public expression of her privately held conceptions expressed in a form of representation called ballet (Eisner, 1994, p. 39). However, beyond the aesthetic enjoyment, Jo Beth's dance was an achievement of mind. She created a logical correspondence of the tone and rhythm of music to her own movement. She created qualitative equivalence, which Eisner and Dewey contend is thinking of the first rank.

#### What is a Metaphor?

One of the most important ways we logically infer is through metaphor. A metaphor is created when we associate two things to create a new meaning (Langer, 1953). Such associations can happen non-linguistically through forms of representation, or through visual or linguistic systems that utilize signs and symbols.

Experience is needed to make necessary connections in language, meaning, and metaphor making. Metaphors draw meaning from the social and cultural underpinnings of our own environments. Our bodies, our senses, our perceptual and motor systems play an extremely important part in how we mindfully create both nonlinguistic and linguistic metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). In turn, metaphors are vital to our ability to understand advanced symbolic concepts.

## Caring as the Binding Thread for Learning

Maxine Greene (1995) suggests that education ought to be “an invitation into the art of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, each conditioned by a different perception of the world” (p. 156). The invitation to knowledge is the first step in the process of learning. However, we can best learn to “recognize the voices” that are conditioned by a different perception of the world through a secure and safe sociocultural experience. Nel Noddings argues that the essential element to building such a fertile educational environment is care (1992).

By its very nature, learning is multi-relational. For learning to occur, care must be present among three relationships. The teacher creates care relationships between the curriculum, herself, and the students. The student creates care relationships between him/herself, the teacher, and the curriculum. And the curriculum fosters a care relationship between the teacher, itself, and the students. Additionally, students will create care relationships with each other (see Figure 3.2).

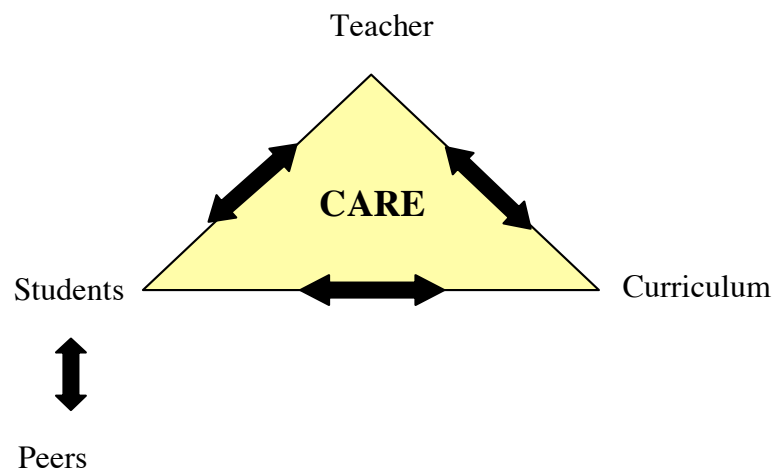


Fig. 3.2 *Care in the Classroom*

Noddings argues that a teacher's willingness to care about a student is essential for learning to occur; however, a learning environment is not defined simply by the relationships of the teacher to the student. In addition, students need to care for other students. When a sense of caring permeates the learning environment, then an atmosphere of community, collaboration, and trust emerges.

Similarly, Noddings (1992) discusses the importance of the returned care of another human being to complete the cycle and create a truly caring atmosphere. But, what about caring for inanimate things such as curriculum? Encouraging students to forge connections between experiences and the subject matter is important in learning to care for objects and ideas. One could ask if care is really returned by objects and ideas? Noddings suggests that people do feel a form of responsiveness from ideas or objects with which they are intimately connected. Imagine what Einstein might have felt from the equation  $E=MC^2$ , or how Michelangelo might have felt towards the pure marble when he was carving the Pieta. It is a kind of sincere cherishment of things and ideas.

Perhaps caring cannot be taught at all through the rigors of a canned curriculum. Certainly reciting vocabulary words, as many character education curricula would suggest, would not be an authentic way of teaching care. If teaching care through curricula does not exist, how do we evaluate whether or not children are employing it in the classroom? I suggest that we engage in caring relationships by modeling behavior and actively listening to each other. This is how we become open to receptivity. For example, when a relationship enters a point of receptivity, the one caring attends non-selectively to the care-receiver. One becomes engrossed in the other's plans, pains, and hopes, which are not his/her own. The recipient then responds in some positive way, such as a smile, or a nod. This response completes the relationship, and it models how the change in roles might be achieved.

Noddings believes caring to be a universal attribute of humanity; however, she further states that the type of caring varies across time and cultures. Showing how to care for others encourages students to interact with other students and consequently supports moral development through empathy. I refer to empathy as self-awareness and openness to our own emotions so that we in turn can read and respond to the feelings of others, sympathize with other people's feelings, and appreciate differences. Students who interact with each other in the art classroom will have the dual benefit of developing art understanding and interpersonal awareness. This interaction captures the nature of sociocultural learning.

I have come to the conclusion that care is the thread that binds the three cognitive modes of learning: biogenetics, aesthetic experience, and sociocultural experience. This binding relationship is bidirectional. Care allows the cognitive modes of aesthetic experience and sociocultural experience, but aesthetic experience and sociocultural experience also allow care. This is the curriculum—the course to be run—in my classroom. I did not find these ideas in the state-mandated standards or the ABC standards.

## CHAPTER IV

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

My students love to hear stories. In fact, they cannot get enough of them. I told a new story about the Greek heroes and gods at the beginning of each class. The students know how a story goes, how a story ends, and they seemingly never tire of hearing the same story over and over. Often, after hearing a Greek myth for the first time, the children would say that they heard it before. “Yes,” I would say, “you probably have. Some cartoons and movies retell the story in different forms.” One little boy spoke up and said, “They must be pretty important stories if they have been told for thousands of years.”

“They are important!” I stressed to him. “They are stories that teach us something. People have been learning things from stories for a very long time.”

“What kinds of things?” he said.

“Well, for instance, how to do the right thing. We learn morals from other people. Do you remember Pandora’s box?”

He furrowed his brow and said, “Yeah, she was the girl who didn’t keep her promise and let all that bad stuff out of her box.”



“That’s right! But stories also help us to realize the truth about things, too. When we retell stories and examine them carefully, we can understand what is really happening more deeply” (Reflective class journal, September 26, 2003).

## ***Methodology***

### **Teacher Research and Knowledge**

This is a teacher research study within my own classroom of multiage children. Students from a third grade class and students from a kindergarten class were combined for 11 class periods in order to be taught an arts unit of instruction that included four lessons on symbolic thinking. One third grade student and one kindergarten student were grouped into "buddy" pairs, with the older student mentoring a younger student. Throughout the study, the socio-cultural dynamics between the pairs, and between the students and myself, were a primary focus of the research.

According to Cochran-Smith & Lytle (1993), “Teaching is a highly complex, context-specific, interactivity in which differences across classrooms, schools, and communities are critically important” (p. 6). Yet there are very few documents that include the, “...voices of teachers themselves, the questions that teachers ask, and the interpretive frames that teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices” (p. 7). Cochran-Smith and Lytle suggest there are a small number of coauthored studies that include a teacher and university researcher, but most research is authored singly by university researchers for academic audiences. The small number of teachers that have conducted research on their own pedagogy exhibit a wide selection of “systematic, self-critical enquiry” (p. 7).

Since the 1950s the term "action research" has been used to encompass the self-reflective nature of teachers in order to develop a more critical stance to pedagogy. Paolo Freire (1970/1996), advocates utilizing action research as a means of achieving social change. Cochran-Smith and Lytle prefer to use the term "teacher researcher" as a kind of self-reflective teacher practice that is not necessarily oriented to an explicit social agenda. Instead, a teacher researcher focuses on the improvement of instruction and the achievement of educational objectives as specified by the individual teacher.

This is a teacher research study. My emphasis will align with Dewey's (1904) suggestion for teachers to integrate their theories about their own teaching into emerging theories of teaching and learning. I enter into this study as both a teacher and student of my own classroom.

### **Researching Lived Experience**

I am researching children in their real life experiences in my multiage elementary art classroom. Experience as defined by Dewey (1934), is the continuous process of interaction with our environment and its conditions. Experience happens every day, all day. It can be as simple as putting our hands to the wheel of car to drive it out of the driveway. Having *an* experience, according to Dewey, is different. Having *an* experience results when we let the encounter run "its course to fulfillment" (p. 35). Dewey suggests:

A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory; a problem receives its solution; a game is played through; a situation, whether that of eating a meal, playing a game of chess, carrying on a conversation, writing a book, or taking part in a political campaign, is so rounded out that its close is a consumation and not a cessation. Such an experience

is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience. (p. 35)

Dewey further suggests that having *an* experience involves an intellectual and emotional aspect to the encounter. The experience results in contemplation, ruminations and reflection. It may also make us feel some sort of sensation or passion. Having an experience has a unity that one can name, such as *that* lesson, *that* artwork, *that* friend. Along with these terms, the experience must also be rounded out with aesthetic quality.

When I relate what Dewey suggests to my own classroom, I want to emphasize that I specifically looked for particular situations with children who were having *an experience* with their art, the curriculum or their buddy. There is no clear signal that alerts an impartial observer that a child is having *an experience*. Identifying these moments requires attention to nuance, honed by years of teaching. Nevertheless, this is not an overly ambiguous phenomenon. Put simply, I carefully considered children who attended to their work through emotions or thought. In my estimation, experience can be observed. As a connoisseur of teaching, I know it when I see it. This awareness compels me to research it.

This creates an interesting conundrum for my art classroom and art teaching in general. What is the value of emotional engagement with thinking? How do we know children are learning? How do we measure this kind of learning? Many teachers would agree that children are learning through having an experience, but how does this compare with teaching that is traditionally executed to prepare students for standardized tests? Even in the art classroom that is currently exempt from state or national standardized testing, the state fine arts curriculum standards do not mention the need to structure instruction around experience. The type of emotional, thoughtful engagement with learning that I seek to promote and study is not

necessarily a feature of an art classroom. Through this study, I hope to explore more fully the benefits (and the pitfalls) of teaching in this manner.

### **Feminist Orientations**

Through much of the 20th century, teaching was regarded as a mechanized activity. University researchers were interested in ways to make teaching more efficient and cost effective. The teacher was regarded as a robot that was praised when the latest educational reform was implemented exactly as the university researcher had designed it. This attitude toward the teacher (usually a woman) and teaching began to change in the 1980s. I admire the research of Grumet (1988), Hankins (2003) and Behar (1993/03). All three authors offer apposite views on feminist teaching theory that I respect. Grumet describes experiences of actual women who teach and encourages readers to nurture the active engagement of children in a shared quest for knowledge. Hankins honest love for children, teaching, and narrative, inspires the storied aspects of my own writing. Behar's story of one woman allows the reader to feel empathy toward real feminist issues and ethnographic research. I would like to emulate their feminist orientations to the classroom and my research in this dissertation. Specifically, I will attend to my own belief that being a woman gives me elevated insight to many aspects of teaching. I believe my knowledge of and closeness to my students affords great insight and allows me to write descriptively about them. I am also empathetic towards my students' thoughts, dreams, and aspirations. I feel that I am able to put myself in their shoes so that I can understand their culture, their families, and their school life. Attention to these dimensions of feminist pedagogy contests old structures of classroom teaching.

I incorporated new curriculum and pedagogical structures into my classroom so that I could reflect on them through teacher research. I have specifically attended to each of the dimensions of feminist pedagogy by remaining actively engaged with my students, remaining empathetic to their needs as learners, and cultivating stories that reflect honest observations in order to structure my curriculum.

Traditional education implies that the purpose of going to school is simply for the students to be able to regurgitate what they have been told by their teachers (Bransford, Cocking & Brown, 1999). As high stakes tests become increasingly mandated, classroom curriculum is fundamentally designed to *teach to the test*. These conventional teacher-centered pedagogies detract from a classroom's ability to provide a forum in which to engage students as knowledgeable, critical thinkers. Our classrooms still largely reflect our society as a whole: patriarchy (one authoritative figure) as the primary structure of everyday life (Grumet, 1988).

I fully embrace the notions of Grumet, Behar and Hankins that teaching has a long association with femininity. That is to say, teaching is about relationship building and process, not just "end driven." My sense of pedagogy and curriculum is strongly influenced by my gender. I also recognize that I am in a trap. I work in a profession whose workforce is composed of a majority and of increasing numbers of women; yet the profession supports a male dominated patriarchal system. My research will not ever allow me to ignore that I am a female, or that I was raised by a patriarchal father. I am a mother, and I am a wife.

### **What is Arts-Based Inquiry?**

What methodology is required for the kind of study that I have conducted? Why should one method of inquiry be adopted over another? Feminist methodologies of inquiry into the

classroom stress qualitative research (Behar, 1993; Grumet, 1988; Hankins, 2003). These methodologies stress narrative: telling stories. As the introduction to this chapter suggests, when we retell stories and examine them carefully, we can understand what is really happening more deeply.

I teach with stories nearly every day. I tell them, I read them, and I reflect back on them. Since I have conducted research on everyday lived experience of human children in an art classroom, stories structure how the data has been collected and how it will be reported.

Stories help the learner to understand meaning through the use of metaphor, parable, implication, interpretation, simile, allegory, figure of speech, and image. Stories teach logic, consequence, sequencing, outcomes and imagining. Stories do teach us something, and if we want to learn from them then they must be examined carefully and reflected on critically so that we can understand more deeply. Clandinin and Conley (2000) suggest:

If we understand the world narratively, as we do, then it makes sense to study the world narratively. For us, life – as we come to it and as it comes to others – is filled with narrative fragments, enacted in storied moments of time and space, and reflected upon and understood in terms of narrative unities and discontinuities. (p. 17)

## **Narrative as Research**

Stories are an accepted form of presenting research data in the social sciences. Geertz (1988), Bateson (1994), Coles (1989), Czarniawska (1997) and Polkinghorne (1988) demonstrate how narrative presentations of qualitative data can be adapted from other disciplines. Geertz (1988), through a retrospective look at his work in anthropology, reminds us that we cannot look at one event at one time and make sense of the event. Change is key to understanding. Events

change and so does the researcher. The event must be nested within a whole period of time and that period of time changes. We are also reminded that our position is of extreme importance. If we shift our position, then our knowing also shifts. Our knowing may also shift when the event shifts over time. What we know at one point in time may not be the same when we view the event in another point in time. Geertz asserts that what are most important for capturing an event are “tableaus, anecdotes, parables, tales: mini narratives with the narrator in them” (p. 65).

Bateson (1994), an anthropologist, is tentative toward traditional findings. In her view, all writing should be open to revision. Like Geertz, Bateson’s work is about change, the change that comes from learning. As learning is not fixed, the stories that the researcher tells cannot imply finality. Narrative allows us to think in metaphors (Bateson, 1994; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002; Lakeoff & Johnson, 1999) and learn through stories. The story form is the most appropriate way that research should be expressed.

Coles (1989), writing from the field of psychology, learns about life through the storied experiences of his psychiatric patients. Although he does not depict a sense of change like Geertz and Bateson, he encourages teachers through the stories he weaves to listen and trust in life. Coles creates stories that build relationships between the reader, author, and text to illuminate the individual case of a patient and the life lessons to drawn from that case (p. 13). Coles' teaching texts suggest that by listening closely to our own teaching and those we teach we become connoisseurs of our own practice.

Czarniawska (1997), an organizational researcher and Polkinghorne (1988), an academic researcher and psychotherapist, suggest that we can borrow themes, theories, metaphors and terms from other disciplines to encourage new meaning in our own disciplines. This helps us

connect research with practice. These two researchers feel that sometimes research is out of touch with the actual practice of the field.

Polkinghorne (1988), suggests that narrative inquiry can come in two forms – descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive narrative describes a sequence of events in order to make the account meaningful. In explanatory narrative, there is a more casual approach. Here, narrative is used to supply necessary explanations to connect the events.

From these examples drawn from disciplines throughout the social sciences, it is possible to see narrative as a powerful method for presenting research data.

### **From Narrative to Arts-Based Research**

Narrative research illuminates the stories we tell, but how those stories can claim to be educational research is more fully illuminated by Barone and Eisner's (1997) theory of arts-based research. According to Barone and Eisner, arts-based research encompasses the “presence of certain aesthetic qualities or design elements that infuse the inquiry and its writing” (p. 73). In order to clarify this statement Barone and Eisner identify seven features of arts-based educational inquiry. They are:

#### *1. The creation of a virtual reality*

The measure of “good art” is its ability to pull us into an alternate reality. A work of art engages us in the dynamic realities that move us into a virtual setting. This is the hallmark of good writing. The virtual world is often ascertained by describing subtle but significant human activities in a context that the reader can identify with. Often the reader shares some of the same qualities of the characters or circumstances of the setting, which



lend credibility to the story. Reading my stories about the children in my own classroom may make the reader feel that real time is suspended and that they are living vicariously through my classroom and or students. The reader may make judgments about his or her own practice of teaching or experiences in the classroom as a child. The result of such a close experience with my classroom may create a new set of meanings for the reader. Perhaps what is created is a fresh way of looking at things. Maybe the reader has a new “perspective, paradigm and ideology” (p. 74). In the case of this study, you should feel that you are moving away from holding this manuscript while you are sitting in a chair, into my classroom full of children who are grappling with the meaning of making art.

## *2. The presence of ambiguity*

We entice readers into the virtual reality by not telling the entire story verbatim. Carefully placed gaps in the story allow the readers to further their own imaginations by filling in the open places. Eisner and Barone compare the difference between authors who allow their readers to further their imaginations while reading an epic style of writing. Epics are designed to shut out other voices so that there is no interpretation on the part of the reader. I would like to invite the reader to enter into a dialog so that there may be a diversity of meanings and interpretations.

## *3. The use of expressive language*

Similar to the presence of ambiguity, language that is metaphorical and suggestive allows the reader to fill in personal meanings. Language that is used like this is not exacting and absolute. Rather it is representative, expressive and suggestive (Barone &

Eisner, 1997). Metaphorical comparisons help the reader to visualize and feel things not only in their minds but also through their bodies by way of their senses.

#### *4. The use of contextualized and vernacular language*

When an author uses a contextualized language, he/she is describing human phenomena in “thick description” (Geertz, 1973). Context is necessary for the reader to understand the intricacies that are involved with the characters place, period of time, and event. When describing this context, the use of vernacular language allows the writing to move from a study that is scientific or philosophical to a non-technical language that is connected with lived experiences (Barone and Eisner, 1997). In this way, language shifts away from research that is difficult to understand for the non-researcher and becomes more available or reader participatory.

#### *5. The promotion of empathy*

Arts-based research promotes a feeling of empathy towards its subjects or characters. The writer achieves empathic feelings for the reader “by the contribution of contextualized, expressive and, vernacular language.” (p. 77) Through this language, the reader can reconstruct his/her own life and vicariously live through the characters. The reader takes on a new perspective when he/she has the ability to explicitly live in the life of the character. When a new perspective is achieved, the reader can empathize with what the character is feeling and thinking.

#### *6. Personal signature of the researcher/writer*

The writer's personal signature is determined through his/her particular thesis. This controlling theme establishes what the author leaves out and what he/she chooses to put in the writing. The thesis is personal. It is only formulated through negotiations between the author and the observable facts under study. Barone and Eisner suggest that no two theses are alike even when the study is about the same person, cultural setting or event; therefore, each arts-based writing becomes the author's signature.

#### *7. The presence of aesthetic form*

Characteristics of traditional, quantitative research are usually standardized. They follow a prescribed form, whereas arts-based methods follow forms that have broad similarities but do not tend to have a recommended form. This is most indicative of arts-based research that is in story forms. Eisner and Barone suggest that stories of the western traditions ensue with a problem or dilemma that becomes interesting.

Complications arise and the plot thickens. At the end of the story there is a resolution. Eisner and Barone (1997) suggest: "When readers re-create that vision, they may find that new meanings are constructed, and old values and outlooks are challenged, even negated. When that occurs, the purposes of art have been served" (p. 78).

What is important in the shaping of the story is the reshaping of experience. An arts-based inquiry study creates a new vision of educational experience. With this new vision, readers can construct new meanings. As a consequence, old viewpoints and attitudes are confronted and possibly reexamined.

## **Establishing Myself as a Connoisseur**

Eisner's version of arts-based research is educational criticism (1997). To be a critic of an educational setting, one must have a deep understanding of the situation. Eisner suggests that the researcher must be a connoisseur who can make fine-grained distinctions and tease subtle nuances from complex interactions. According to Eisner (1998), the word *connoisseurship* comes from the Latin word *cognoscere*. This word means “to know”.

I am validated as a connoisseur of this discussion because of my experience and research in this area prior to this study. As a high school teacher and an elementary teacher, I have designed and implemented lesson plans for older and younger learners who work together in the art classroom. I have served as a supervising university professor. I have co-authored an article on the benefits of mentoring in the art classroom (Kelehear & Heid, 2002), and I have conducted a teacher research study on the benefits of mentoring with a higher education for generalist teachers and elementary art teachers. Additionally, I served as a research assistant evaluating data on several classrooms that used mentoring relationships as a strategy for learning art (Siegesmund, R., Heid, K., Thibeault, M., & Hatch, S., 2003).

I have also read, written, and studied learning theories that pertain to this study for the last four years as a full time masters and doctoral student. These experiences provided me a lens for making critical judgments.

## **Validity of the Study**

Eisner (1998) writes, “There are some who believe that what is personal, literary, and at times even poetic cannot be a valid source of knowledge” (p. 107). He cites three sources as

evidence for validity in an arts-based approach supported by educational criticism: 1) referential adequacy, 2) structural corroboration, and 3) consensual validation.

*Referential adequacy* is the degree to which a study clarifies a subject and delivers a more multifaceted and refined perception of the questions. This compares to Feldman's stages of description and analysis in his method of art criticism. Referentially adequate criticism not only describes the nuance and qualities of the empirical world and its subjects, but the comportment of the individuals and their interactions. Eisner suggests:

If criticism does not illuminate its subject matter, if it does not bring about more complex and sensitive human perception and understanding, it fails in its primary aim. It is this aim that underlies referential adequacy. (p. 114)

*Structural corroboration* identifies “recurrent behaviors or actions” (p. 110), images, writings, conversations or any other theme-like characteristics that help the reader to understand that what is going on is typical to the situation and not unique or some kind of happenstance. Like the third and fourth stages of Feldman's method of art criticism, this involves interpretation and evaluation. The researcher finds themes. As with the qualitative research concept of triangulation, several different kinds of data are useful to structurally corroborate a claim. This joining together of evidence gives credibility to the research argument and confidence in the conclusions.

Not only is it important to use multiple types of data to support a finding, Eisner suggests that it would be prudent to use evidence that negates the theory and challenges the interpretation when the conclusion is offered. Providing enough evidence to be convincing to my readers and my committee will be of utmost importance.

*Consensual validation* is described by Eisner as “agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics of an educational situation are right” (p. 112). Put simply, consensual validation is the agreement among experts about at least one of the permutations. If I asked another researcher to describe what happened in my art classroom, he/she may note a different set of observations than those I present in this study. For example, another researcher may have selected three different case studies than the ones on which I have chosen to focus. Nevertheless, consensual validation suggests that we could expect similar thematics to emerge, even if specific details change. If the study is valid there will be far more instances of thematic agreement than not. Thematic agreement does not necessarily mean mirror image correspondence. Coherence, not duplication, is the issue. Eisner suggests:

Consensual validation in the arts and humanities is not secured by seeking consensus among critics, but by considering the reasons critics give, the descriptions they provide, the cogency of their arguments, the incisiveness of their observations, the coherence of the case, and, undoubtedly, the elegance of the language. (p. 112-113)

This study must pass one final test question: how does it contribute to the improvement of art education and education in general? I suggest that this study will contribute to the conversation on how children learn. Specifically it will investigate the interrelationships of aesthetic experience, sociocultural experience, and caring in the elementary art classroom. Ramifications of this study may produce different views on art curriculum, pedagogy in the art classroom, the use of state standards, arts assessment and the developing minds of school age children. But this will only happen through consensual validation. This work must be presented in a format where others can work with these ideas. This will have to take place through my own

teaching at the university level, writing, and conference presentations. By using a methodology of educational criticism, I am committed to continue to present these ideas to broader audiences.

### ***Project Design***

This study required that I return to teaching. I had to imagine the necessary conditions for conducting the study and then convince a principal to hire me *and* approve my research. I had to hope that my skills as an art teacher and recommendations from other colleagues might compel the principal to “risk” hiring me. These necessities made the research bewildering and ambitious.

For my study to be successful, I would need to be in a school with at least two art teachers. The second art teacher would have to be willing to exchange part of her younger class with part of my older class of students so I could achieve a multiage classroom. All of this was hypothetical as I began planning. Once hired, I had to make detailed plans with the University of Georgia’s internal review board and also with the review board in the county where I taught.

Recruiting a co-instructor was an important part of this research. I needed the following: a colleague who worked close to me; a colleague who taught during the same part of the day as I did; a colleague who taught children younger than my students so that I could create the multiage dimension of the study; and as a final requirement, a co-instructor who reflected critically on her own teaching and was eager to imagine new ways of teaching art. Although this other teacher would not be a formal part of my study, she would have to cope with the same innovative learning environment that I created. She would need to be much more than a good sport.

Then came the larger task of planning for these children, getting to know them and actually conducting the study. Since the study began the first week of school, in August, I was overwhelmed with planning for the students in my study; getting to know a new school,

remaining a participant in my research, finding time to plan not only this study but all the other classes as well, and creating a systematic process for data collection.

### **The Research Site: The County**

The study took place in a large county in eastern Georgia. Twenty years ago the county where my school is located was mostly farmland. Today it is a suburb of the state's most populous city with a median home price of approximately \$175,000. During the period between 2002 and 2007, the Board of Education has built or will build 18 new schools. Simultaneously, the Board has provided additions to 44 school sites. It is a huge county in square miles compared to Georgia's 158 other counties. The county has over 600,000 residents. The county is still growing; there are 130,000 students this year. The school board expects to add another 6,000 students next year and to continue this kind of increase for the next five years. It is a true case of "build it and they will come" as the superintendent said in his opening remarks before school started last August, 2003.

The Georgia State Standards is called the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). My assistant principal spoke with pride about how a group of educators employed by the county rewrote the QCC's to create a more rigorous curriculum (personal communication September 18, 2003). What developed became known as the ABC standards<sup>1</sup>. Each ABC strand contains a short description and references to the originating QCC. The ABC strand then contains the more exacting expectation for the county teacher. The ABC standards are not static; they continue to grow each year with new strands (i.e. new requirements for teachers) being added.

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<sup>1</sup> ABC Standards are a pseudonym.



Although Georgia ranked last in the nation for SAT scores in 2003, the county where I taught excelled the national average by as much as 80 points in some schools.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the most wealthy and conservative counties in Georgia. My county is very concerned with accountability and test scores. Children must take more than three tests a year such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Cognitive Abilities Test, Criterion Reference Tests and the Open Door Test (a pseudonym). This last assessment is the county's own high-stakes achievement test offered each year throughout a child's school career. Brutal and punishing on children, as evidenced by the exhausted, nervous, and somber children that came into my classrooms in the spring, the tests take away time from regular classroom instruction for a week at a time and three weeks altogether in the month of April.

During the course of this study, I will refer to the school district where I taught as "my county". The school where I taught will be known as North Georgia Elementary School. Additionally, the student participant names and teacher names have been coded with pseudonyms throughout this dissertation.

### **The Research Site: The North Georgia Elementary School**

North Georgia Elementary School is a mere five years old. It was built on some of the most inexpensive land that the county owns. When you arrive by car you look down into a large crater and view the school's rooftop, the dozen trailers and the large asphalt parking lot. There is no way to stand back far enough to view the façade in its entirety. It is not exactly Horace Mann's vision of a city on the hill. Although the school is built with efficiency and economy in mind, it has a feeling of strength and sturdiness that mimics the construction of heavy cement

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<sup>2</sup> Not all the schools excelled beyond state scores at this rate. The more rural the school was within the county the more it seemed to be on an even par with other Georgia schools.

blocks and bricks contained in the building. This strength is also reflected in the brilliance of the teachers and administrators that care so much for this place. These professionals do embody Mann's dream of the transformative power of education.

When you enter North Georgia, one of the first things you notice is the children's art covering the walls. There is not one inch of wall space left when the children's art show goes up. The variety of artwork is as diverse as the children we teach. The children at my school range from kindergarten through fifth grade. At last count, there were 1,111 students enrolled, and the majority of students are not transitory in nature. Most often students who begin in kindergarten tended to remain through the fifth grade. Although the school has a largely white population (72.5 %), there is a growing diversity in the student body: African Americans 9%, Asian 9%, Hispanic 6.2%, Multiracial 2.5% and Native American .2%. Only 9.5 % of students were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

In many ways, in this time when some school districts are terminating art and music programs, it is remarkable that the county where I teach chooses to vigorously support arts programs in its curriculum. My school and county provide a sequential art and music curriculum for students beginning in kindergarten through the fifth grade. The support for arts continues into secondary schools. When students in my county get to middle and high school, they are able to take courses such as jewelry making, painting, pottery, graphic design, theater design, lighting design, architecture, ballet, salsa, marching band, music theory, composition, and orchestra. One school is opening a lab this year that will concentrate on the art of media, animation, graphic design and recording.

Even during testing season, my school attempted to continue students' access to the arts. My school worked out schedules so that children could continue taking art at least once a week.

However, from a day or two leading up to the test followed by a couple of days afterwards, the children simply were too distracted and fatigued by the standardized test to apply any energy to art. It was as if they had put in the time to study for the tests for eight months and in the ninth month the tests were finished and so were the children. I noticed that after the children were finished with their tests, they were basically finished with school. I had a very difficult time keeping the students on task after the tests were finished. The tests were conducted for three straight weeks in April. About five full weeks of art instruction were lost due to this “mentally checking out of school” attitude. I resorted to one-day projects that held the students captive for short periods rather than requiring lengthy lessons that required students to extend their thinking.

Due to the high emphasis on testing in the spring, and the disruptions it causes before and after the actual test period itself, I focused on completing my research in the fall semester. Despite the supportive atmosphere for art education in my school and in my district, standardized testing made it impossible to teach a substantive unit of instruction in the spring. I had to settle for less ambitious learning outcomes. Therefore, I started immediately at the beginning of school when students were fresh and before other academic or scheduling demands might begin to distract student's attention from this project.

There are two full time art teachers at my school. Actually there are three teachers and two full-time positions. I share the day with another half-time art teacher who teaches in the mornings. In this study, she is Ms. Jones. The full-time teacher with whom I collaborated in this study is Ms. Smith. Although the majority of all art teachers are solitary teachers in their schools, we are fortunate to have an art team. I have never felt like I was on my own at my school. We can bounce ideas off of one another, encourage new ideas, and generally help our art program to be more accountable. It is a wonderful situation for promoting the visual arts in our school.

## **The Theory of Constructivist Learning Environments**

For most children, the art classroom is a place that is exciting and fun. Children come to class excited about what they are going to do and prepared to make art. When they see me in the halls, they ask me what they are going to do that day. They respond with smiles and excited body gestures. They also care about me as their teacher, and they care about what they are learning. I get hugs when the children come into the art classroom and lots of hugs when they leave. My children tell their generalist teachers that they love art and look forward to days that are set aside for art class. All of the generalist teachers of children that I teach have told me that their students love to come to art. When I see children in the lunchroom, they light up like tiny light emitting devices and nearly break their arms waving to me from across the room. They beg, "Please let us have art today!"

I attribute the enthusiasm that children have in my art classroom not only as a reflection of my curriculum, but also a reflection of the constructivist-learning environment that I have created. Wilson (1996) characterizes a constructivist-learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities" (p.5). He emphasizes learning environments as opposed to instructional environments in order to encourage "a more flexible idea of learning", one which emphasizes "meaningful, authentic activities that help the learner to construct understandings and develop skills relevant to problem solving" (p.3).

Honebein (1993), suggests seven pedagogical principles for what a learning environment may look like:

1. Provide students with experiences.

2. Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives.
3. Maintain the authentic learning tasks.
4. Student-centered learning process---students set goals for learning.
5. Provide for collaboration.
6. Use multiple modes of representation.
7. Encourage metacognitive and reflexive activities.

Savery and Duffy (1996) attempt to link the theory of constructivism with the practice of instruction. Savery and Duffy have derived instructional principles from constructivism. They suggest:

- Learning should be relevant
- Instructional goals should be consistent with the learner's goals.
- Cognitive demands and tasks in the learning environment should be consistent with cognitive demands and tasks for the environment for which the learner is being prepared.
- Teacher's role is to challenge the students' thinking.
- Students' ideas should be tested against alternate views through social negotiation and collaborative learning groups.
- Encourage reflection on the learning process. (p.137)

If we expand Wilson's and Honebein's idea of what a learning environment should be, with what the learning environment looks like in my art classroom, you will see some similarities. They are:

1. I developed a curriculum rich in aesthetic and sociocultural experiences.
2. The lesson plans included multiple perspectives for each objective.

3. Students learned tasks that were related to their own lives.
4. The classroom was multiage and provided for an older and younger learner that worked together constantly.
5. The students set their own goals that were discussed with their buddies.
6. Students were encouraged to represent their understanding and feelings through various art works and media, writing and discussion.
7. Students reflected on their work through discussion and were able to analyze their own learning.

To my mind, the essential element for profound student learning is making the learning environment challenging. This can be controversial, especially with highly articulated standards like the ABCs. These standards clearly spell out what is expected of children at each grade level. One of the teachers at North Georgia told me that some of my lessons were not developmentally appropriate. I disagreed; I felt that I pushed my students to higher levels of thinking when I challenged my students thinking with complex art materials, stories, and concepts. However, this approach did conflict with ABCs.

Let me invite you into the physical space of my art classroom.

### **Learning Environment: The Classroom at North Georgia**

Describing the classroom in a sequential frame, starting from a wide angle view of the entire classroom, and progressively focusing in on details, can help me offer a narrative that moves from the theory of learning environments to the practice of teaching in the art classroom. As a cameraman enters the room, join with me in a view of my classroom.

The art room is laid out in a basic rectangle. One door at one end enters from the hall. The other door enters into the other art teacher's classroom. The large storage closet is connected

to the classroom and has wall-to-wall heavy-duty shelves for storage. The storage room also contains a kiln and several easels.

As the camera moves from left to right, the tables form a modified horseshoe around three sides of a large 9x12 foot navy blue rug with white dots. This rug is where the children sit when they first come into the art room. They are invited to sit wherever they choose as long as they are not touching anyone else. This is the magic blue carpet where instruction begins. Not only is this carpet a place where we sit quietly and learn about art but it can magically transport us to any country in the world when we take a magical ride in the sky above the clouds. We plot our ride on the large world map, stapled to the bulletin board in front of us, as we ride across the globe to visit different countries and find out about the art that they make. We can also travel to a country where a particular artist lives. It is on this rug that we sit “crisscross applesauce” next to our friends to listen to stories and poems, look at posters and books, or talk about the art that we see. I find this first ten minutes with the children invaluable. It is the time for students to center themselves into the art room, readjust to atypical rules, and reacquaint with their senses. It is here that they learn artists’ names, make associations, learn directions and discover the symbol systems of art. From the vast store of books and images I have on the shelves behind me, I can put my fingers on many images that the children may inquire about if the conversation takes off in other directions.

With over 700 children walking through my doors each week my room must, first of all, be well ordered. The ability to find any child’s artwork at any given notice may mean the difference between tears or smiles. I store all the artwork together by class in flat file drawers next to the sink and on shelving with the teachers’ names clearly marked on each bin in the storage room. Seven is an important number in my classroom. I have seven tables in my room. In

the middle of each table are the art supplies for the four children who sit at the table. I keep seven baskets of crayons, seven bowls of oil pastels, seven baskets of clay tools, seven trays containing several colors of paint, seven scissors bins, seven marker containers, and seven pencil holders. Above each table hangs a paper shape. There are seven shapes altogether including a purple trapezoid, a blue square, a red freeform, a green rectangle, a pink oval and a yellow circle. The children learn to recognize their own tables by looking above the table at the hanging shapes. I dismiss seven quiet tables of children one at a time when it is time to leave.

My desk was once neat but now it is quite messy. Actually, it is well ordered in its messiness, if there is such a thing. I will always boast that I can put my hands on anything in a flash if needed. Ms. Jones desk is next to mine and sits at a right angle. The corner of two walls and the two desks create a small square space for us. The design creates a feeling of an office, a kind of a sanctuary. Many children feel that they should be invited into my office area. Against the wall in back of our desks is the computer, and overhead is a large T.V. On my desk there are stacks of paper with scribbled down ideas and notes and lots of different kinds of pens and markers. I have all kinds of tools for drawing, and I have paperwork that has yet to be completed. There are also stacks of flash cards in various stages of completion. I find that playing card games and using simple manipulatives, such as a game where students learn about different textures, are wonderful strategies for learning new terms and definitions. I use manipulatives for learning art terms such as the primary and secondary colors or the elements and principals of design.

I am known as an art pack rat. I save the smallest and most menial items. My cupboards and storage closet are filled with shoeboxes containing of all sorts of things. I figure that there is always something that should be saved because a child in one of my classes may be able to turn



that something into something else. One box is full of beads that I have collected at garage sales. Another contains bits of fur and leather for mask making or any other ideas that the students come up with. Other boxes that are kept in the storage room are full of markers, pens, paintbrushes, pencils of every kind, costumes, hats, irons, hot plates, tools for clay and many other necessary items an art teacher might need.

### **The Study: Designing a Constructivist Learning Environment**

The study required matching multiage students in a single classroom. Typical school organization and curriculum are not geared to support multiage classrooms. Working out the schedule so that students could work with a buddy eleven times was difficult. It required much more planning and energy on my part to work with a combined classroom of kindergarteners and third graders. Habits rooted in traditional patterns of schooling, both mine and the students, had to be overcome. I had to get used to the day-to-day reality of working with a multiage class. Somewhere towards the end of the nine weeks (around the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> week), I realized that it had become much easier to work with mixed ages. All of a sudden it became much easier to figure out what the students needed in terms of directions and guidance and how to go about achieving the best outcomes for the lessons that I wrote. The students seemed to enter into this same realization. In the process, I found that I very much liked working with mixed ages of children. The students and I seemed to fall into a sense of ease that permeated the whole classroom.

### **Curricular Goals**

Children come to my classroom to learn about art through modes of aesthetic and sociocultural strategies. Making things is certainly an important part of what my classroom is all

about. The students leave my classroom having made some things with a more experienced peer and in the process learned to attend to the world around them. Through art making, young children engage an array of symbols and forms of representation that no other subject can match. Engaging in the use of symbolism and forms of representation encourage language development, thinking, higher mental processes and problem solving, and ultimately cognitive development (Eisner, 1994). With these things in mind, I have implemented an art classroom that would provide a place and a curriculum to stimulate and encourage cognitive development in my art students.

### **The Lessons**

Activities were planned for collaborative learning. Questions about students' feelings while making art were always at the forefront of each lesson. Children wrote in their journals and were constantly asked to reflect on what they were making.

For this study I designed an art unit of instruction that would center on the big idea of symbolic thought. I wanted the lessons to include rich experiences in the sociocultural and aesthetic modes of cognitive learning. I felt it was important that I develop the lessons rather than follow a canned experience so that the study reflected on my teaching, my lessons, and my thoughts in an elementary art classroom. See Figure 4 for further explanation of sequencing of the lessons and the amount of days that I spent on each lesson.

I taught four main lessons in the nine weeks I conducted this study. Two actual lesson plan examples can be found in Appendix I. The lessons are explained in richer terms when I discuss the children in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. There were four main lessons.

### ***1. Self Portrait Rene Magritte Lesson***

The self-portrait lesson was intended to help students find their own identities and find symbols that represented themselves. The lesson utilized *Georgette*, 1937 as an art exemplar by Rene Magritte. The painting depicts a woman's reflection in an oval mirror with finger waves in her light brown hair. She is smiling directly at the viewer, as if she knows the viewer very well. The mirror with the woman's reflection is placed in a blue sky as if it is floating amongst white puffy clouds. Symbols or small icons float in a ring around the mirror (see Figure 6). From this lesson there are several objectives that relate to the symbolic self-portrait theme:

- To associate themselves as artists and symbol creators.
- To create meaning from important objects and events in their lives.
- To identify and explain proportion in the human face.
- To participate in collaborative art making.
- To demonstrate color mixing techniques

### ***2. Animal Mix-up Lesson***

The lesson on mixed up animals engaged the children in thinking about creating unfamiliar animals by putting together animals that were well known. It was also intended to help the children get used to thinking about making art in collaborative ways rather than individually. It also was a precursor to the larger synectic lesson. As such, it was designed to warm up the children to the concept of blending: blending the familiar into the strange.

During the lesson, I asked each student to think of one animal. Then I asked the students to make a whole new animal by mixing or blending them with their buddy's animal. To give the children an idea of what I was getting at, I first showed them several mix and match books.

These books have a spiral bound format. Each page is split into two or even several parts so that they can be flipped individually to create a whole new creature or as shown below, a sandwich (*1000 Silly Sandwiches*, Alan Benjamin, 1995).



*Fig. 4.1 - 1000 Silly Sandwiches by Alan Benjamin, 1995. A mix and match book we used for the mixed up animal lesson. This page says, “This soggy sandwich has mayonnaise and marbles, ravioli and rubber bands and raspberries and roaches.”*  
Copyright 1995

The objectives for this lesson were:

- To create an animal that has never been seen before
- To participate in collaborative learning
- To utilize another person’s ideas in creating an artwork

### ***3. If... Synectic Lesson***

The next lesson was designed to allow children to elaborate a story by using synectics. Synectics comes from the Greek word *synetikos* and means to join together different and apparently irrelevant elements. Synectic methods are metaphorically based techniques for bringing elements together in a search for new ideas or solutions. The basic idea of synectics is to make the strange familiar or make the familiar strange. Although this technique has been used for large think-tank businesses to glean new ideas for making innovations, it can also be used in the art classroom to gain new insights or perspectives on an already familiar idea (Starko, 1998). The objectives for this lesson are as follows:

- To juxtapose incongruent images or sensory impressions in order to create new things.
- To solve authentic problems.
- To justify selections between two or more possible choices.
- To describe, analyze, and interpret Sarah Perry's book, *If...*(1999).

### ***4. Andrew Henry's Village Lesson***

The last lesson involved symbolic thought by encouraging the students to create their own village. I read the book *Andrew Henry's Meadow* by Doris Burn (1963) to the students. From this story and the artful pictures by the author, the students set about building their own village in miniature. This lesson became the most important lesson for the entire study. The students made this village into a virtual reality by shrinking themselves into tiny people and engaging in the implicit play. The objectives for this lesson were:

- To conceptualize alternate realities.
- To participate in collaborative learning.

- To demonstrate individuality through personal choice.

As a part of this project, the children built their own clubhouses within the village they had constructed. At this point, I read *The Big Orange Splot* by Daniel Pinkwater (1993). This book encouraged individuality in the students and led the students to alternate symbolic thoughts.

### **Timeline for the Study**

The study took place over a nine-week period with eleven class periods where I had the third graders and kindergartners together. This limitation was due to the structure of the schedule of my school. I would have loved to have the children for more time. This was as much contact as I could squeeze from the reality of an elementary school that was totally supportive of this project. This research project could not have occurred at all in a less supportive environment.

All children at my school switch through a nine-week A, B rotation where they take art for half the first semester and music the second half of the semester. After the winter break, they go back to art for nine more weeks. So the third graders who participated in this study in the fall, I saw again in the spring. I did not see the kindergartners again as in the spring they all returned to Ms. Smith.

During the nine-week rotation, students do not come to art everyday. The schedule permits the students to take art only three days out of a seven-day rotation (see Table 4.2). This permits all the children in the school to take a total of 18 days of art in the fall and 18 days of art in the spring, for a total of 36 days of art. During this study, I was able to see the third graders by themselves a total of seven times. I was able to work it out to see the children with their buddies a total of 11 times. Given this limited number of contacts, I determined that a close investigation of three selected student pairs during a nine-week rotation would be an appropriate sampling for

this research. But I also noted that my planning for data gathering would need to be exacting, for there was a relatively concise time to observe students working together in their pairs.

I was able to see the buddy pairs on the fourth and the sixth day of the rotation. This allowed an extra day to see the third graders alone without the kindergarteners. The regularly scheduled kindergarten class was Ms. Smith's art class that I divided. Although it would have been nice to meet with the kindergarten class separately too, no empty periods in my schedule existed. As it turned out, I could not swap my third graders for Ms. Jones kindergarteners on the second day of the rotation because the kindergarteners were at P.E. not art. The schedule simply did not permit me to meet with them any other time except the fourth and sixth days of the rotation.

I found the time with the third graders to be very productive, as we planned the lessons together so that we would be ready for our buddies the next time we had art. We talked about active listening as a means of paying close attention to what others are saying and feeling. For example, we practiced telling a story while a partner looked directly in our eyes to signal that he/she was listening. Students learned to nod their heads and repeat some sentences back to the speaker. In this way, the speaker understood that his/her partner was listening. Learning to attend to a buddy or anyone who is part of a relationship where there is care, is an important part of learning aesthetically and socioculturally (Greene, 2001; Noddings, 1995). We talked in depth about caring about each other, and how one cares for someone, and how that care is returned. For example, I read *The Best Loved Doll* by Rebecca Caudill (1962/97). This story tells the story of Betsy, a young girl who has several very beautiful dolls. Betsy is invited to a doll party where there will be prizes for different categories of dolls, such as "best dressed" and "oldest". Three of Betsy's dolls would most certainly win an award. After much thought Betsy chooses to take the

doll that she cherishes the most, a slightly ragged doll that obviously would not win any awards. However, the host at the party recognizes this unique quality in Betsy and quickly creates a surprise award for the doll. She is awarded the “Best Loved Doll”. The simple story relates, in one way, how we can learn to care for someone by looking for traits that are not so recognizable. We talked about this story in relationship to our buddies. We talked about how Betsy cared for her doll as we can care for our buddies; and if we do, that care will be returned.

This time proved to be very important. Once the buddies met with each other, their relationships with their younger charges became their own. Put simply, I was only hoping that the skills that they learned in their exclusive class would somehow emerge when they were with their buddies. I had no control in molding or shaping the outcomes of their time together once the younger buddies entered the art room.

By the second day of art, the third graders knew the names of their buddies even though they had not met. Each student spent the period making a card to send to his/her buddy. Writing and drawing notes to their buddies became an endeavor that the students really loved over the next weeks. The children spent any free moments drawing and writing notes to their buddies during the days that they could not meet with them. It became a way of communicating with their buddies on the days that they worked solely with the like-age class.

I found that this writing opportunity was important, and I kept a special table for paper and markers so that students could freely access art materials when they were finished with their lesson for the day. Most of the children felt a sense of loss when their buddies were not in the art room with them. They would ask, “Why can’t our buddies be here every time we have art?” (Personal communication, Sept. 26, 2004) Or, “I really miss my buddy. I wish that we could work with them every time we have art” (Personal communication Oct 1, 2004).



 = Third Graders only       = Multiage Buddy Class

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
August 11 1	12 Overview 2	13 3	14 Note Writing 3 <sup>rd</sup> graders worked on self portraits 4	15 5
18 Juice and games Meet buddies day 6	19 7	20 1	21 Active Listening 2	22 3
25 Portrait Lesson Drawing Faces 4	26 5	27 Portrait Lesson Painting Lesson 6	28 7	29 1
September 1 School Out Labor Day	2	3 3	4 Portrait Lesson Symbols Lesson 4	5 5
8 Mixed up animals 6	9 7	10 1	11 Note Writing 2	12 3
15 Synectic Lesson 4	16 5	17 Synectic Lesson 6	18 7 Car Rider Line Interview	19 1
22 Planning 2 Car Rider Line Interview	23 3	24 Village Lesson 4	25 5	26 Village Lesson 6 Car Rider Line Interview
29 7	30 1	October 1 2 Planning	2 Village Lesson 3 Car Rider Line Interview	3 Village Lesson 4 Car Rider Line Interview
6 5 Car Rider Line Interview	7 Village Lesson 6 Car Rider Line Interview	8 7	9 Staff Development	10 Staff Development

- Blue numbers denote the day in the rotation 1-7
- Black numbers denote the date.
- Eleven days with buddies and 7 days without buddies.
- Lessons were 45 minutes each meeting day.
- Car Rider Line Interviews in Red

Table 4.2 - Calendar for the nine-week study

## **Collection of Data**

Data collection took place during regularly scheduled class times. While this study was conducted, I relied primarily on observational field notes, journal writing; and artifact findings such as video tape, tape recordings, still photography, and student artwork. These documents form the basis for my findings while working with the multiage children in my classroom.

Field notes were taken during class times and while I talked to the children in the car rider line. I only had time to jot or scribble a few notes while I was teaching and reserved time for fleshing out my journal writings after school was over. The notes that I hurriedly jotted down while I was teaching or in the car rider line served as my memory joggers so that I could write more fully after school.

I found joy in writing about my children. My daily “journal time” became an occasion where I could reflect on the day’s events. I began looking forward to the hour or so that I could sit down and write about the day’s happenings and then critically reflect on what transpired that day. I found that I reflected on my teaching, on my students, on their art making, on their conversations, on their expressions, on my colleagues, on my principal, and on state standards among other things. The journal was a powerful ally in pushing me to remain open and objective as I engaged in the research.

Additionally, I relied heavily on photographs, videos and tape recordings. These artifacts helped recall events within the classroom so that interviews conducted with students could be compared to the student’s perceptions and my own feelings. Photographs and videos provided insight to the students’ body language and helped me recall events.

Data from semi-structured interviews with teachers was on an informal basis in the workroom or the hallways or whenever I had a free moment, and they did, too. Twice, I recorded

a five-minute informal interview and transcribed the dialog. The semi-structured interviews with children took place during regularly forty-five minute scheduled class times and while children were waiting to be picked up from school. One semi-structured impromptu interview took place at the PTA open house with one set of parents. This interview was not taped and only recorded in my journal.

The car rider line proved to be my greatest source for talking and recording semi-structured interviews. It was late in the study before I figured out that the six children that I chose to highlight in this dissertation were all car riders. They did not have to hurry out the door at the end of school to catch a bus. Instead they went to the back of the school and waited until their parent picked them up. Some children waited up to 30 minutes. I ran out to the car rider line at the end of the school day at the expense of leaving my room a wreck so that I could get a few extra minutes with my children.

I was able to meet the students in the car rider line seven times for about ten minutes each visit. Sometimes, I would find the buddies sitting together, and sometimes I found children sitting by themselves. School was over for the day and students seemed relaxed and ready to talk. I sat with them on the ground, asked questions and listened to children talk about their art making, their experiences with their buddies and what they thought about while they were making art. It was the car rider line that seemed to elicit the most complex and insightful comments from the students. I developed only two semi-structured questions to avoid controlling and shaping the words of the students being interviewed and thereby avoiding a patriarchic practice of a dominating interview. I would begin the interview with the two questions and then let the natural flow of conversation go from there. The questions were: How did you like art today? Do you like to make art with your buddy?

While I taught each lesson, I left a video recorder rolling. Many of the conversations recorded in this dissertation are transcribed conversations from the videotape. The video camera was set up in the corner of the room and aimed at the students as a whole. Only occasionally did I move the camera in a particular direction or zoom in. Movement and body language were not often evident on videotape unless the activity of interest happened to be in the camera's view, but voices were heard quite audibly.

Only twice did I use a tape recorder to record conversations of children during an art lesson. It proved to be too unwieldy. I was a participant in this study, and I first and foremost needed to be a good teacher. Getting bogged down in the classroom by carrying around a tape recorder, managing a video camera, or writing notes was difficult. After a couple of attempts, I hung a still camera around my neck, jotted down notes as events happened, and simply turned on the video camera before each class. I reserved after school time for the car rider line, journal writing, taking pictures of the student artwork, looking at still shots, and reading their notes. During two lessons, I was especially interested in getting a good look at the children's faces and body language so I paid a professional filmmaker to come to my classroom and videotape the lessons. He was able to move around the room and zoom in close with his powerful camera so that I got some really useful footage. I transcribed only the videotape that I felt was pertinent to my study, but I watched all of the footage and took notes.

I also spent a good deal of time shooting pictures of my students' artwork so that I could send their artwork home. I used this artwork to draw conclusions about what the students were learning and how they were going about making the art.

Still photography was abundant; I took in excess of 300 pictures, an average of 30 pictures every time the buddies met. I took pictures of the students constantly. I was able to use

these artifacts to draw important conclusions. This mode of data collection seemed to be the easiest and most plentiful artifact gathering that I could do during the actual class time.

The full-time art teacher who taught in the adjoining classroom is known as Ms. Smith. Ms. Smith was in and out of the classroom making observations on an informal basis, but I asked her to make more formal observational notes on two different occasions during the data collection stage of this study. Ms. Smith discussed these observations during semi-structured interviews. Again, I began the conversation with two questions: How do you think this multiage idea fared for you? Would you ever like to try it again?

I further requested interviews from each of the generalist teachers of the student participants; that is, the generalist teacher of the third graders and the generalist teacher of the kindergarteners. They will be known as Ms. Doe (third grade) and Ms. Edwards (kindergarten).

<b>Teacher Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
Ms. Jones	1/2 time art teacher
Ms. Heid	1/2 time art teacher
Ms. Smith	Full time art teacher
Ms. Doe	Kindergarten generalist teacher
Ms. Edwards	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade generalist teacher

*Table 4.3 – Teachers and Positions*

According to Glesne (1999), establishing a rapport with the participants is of vital importance to qualitative inquiry. I realize that the quality of my interactions with my participants has directly impacted my research. I have attempted to monitor these relationships by constantly re-examining my own subjectivity. I reread my journal writings, and transcriptions, and have tried to remain cognizant of my participant's body language and willingness to participate in order to ensure trustworthy research. As a teacher myself, I also realize that I am a

highly involved human being with a keen interest in my dissertation subject and my students. As Glesne puts it, “being attuned to your subjective lenses is being attuned to your emotions.” (p. 105) I do not believe in research where feelings are suppressed; nor do I think it is wise to suppress my own feelings during the course of this research. Instead, I chose to use my feelings to inquire into my own perspectives and interpretations in order to shape new questions through examining of my assumptions (Glesne, 1999). Because I am the designer, implementer, and teacher of this curriculum and class full of students, I consider myself to be an active viewer participant in this study.

### **Selection of Case Studies**

I did not know the children of North Georgia Elementary School because I was a new teacher to the school. Remaining cognizant of the need for children to be with like genders at this age, I grouped boys with boys and girls with girls, but I did not take any other characteristics into consideration. As a result, there were several buddy groups that were of mixed race and mixed sizes. One buddy group had a kindergartener who was physically bigger than the third grader.

My initial thought was that I would end up focusing this study on more girls than boys since girls at this age tend to be excellent teachers and little mothers. I imagined that the girls would more readily “play school” and take their little charges under their wings and teach them all they need to know. Although this happened in nearly every case with the girls, it was the boys who delighted and surprised me with their abilities and desire to teach, care, and mentor each other.

I chose three buddy pairs out of a class of 11 third graders and 11 kindergarteners (27% of the participants). It took about three class periods before I arrived at my decision to study

Lawrence and Timmy, John and Damon, and Jackie and Tony. I chose to study the first two buddied pairs because they seemed to emulate and capture the essence of my research questions. Additionally, they seemed to shed the most light on how my research questions could be answered. Two pairs of students worked together extremely well. They shared ideas, they cared about one another, and they seemed to respect the other as older and younger learners. They also came up with extremely imaginative ideas. The students were exemplars of multiage learning and thinking in qualitative symbolic relationships.

The third case study illustrates a less successful moment in multiage teaching. Jackie and Tony demonstrate what happens when children are too immature to make connections. I include this narrative because I think it is important to describe some of the pitfalls of multiage learning. Teaching is not always perfect; nor can it be captured in neat categories. Sometimes, the things that we plan do not, plain and simply, work out. Children may be too young in their maturation: they may not catch on to make it through the first step; or they may not learn in a style that you choose for them. Multiage learning was not inappropriate for this buddied pair. It just didn't work as well as it could have.

### *Analysis*

#### **Approach to this Inquiry**

If children can gain meaning from stories I tell or storybooks that I read to them in my classroom, then it would make sense that writing narratives as research would also create meaning. I used the data I collected: still pictures, videos, conversational transcriptions, journal writings, and art work to construct the stories that actually happened in my classroom.

The approach to this inquiry follows Eisner's (1998) discussion of educational criticism. Educational Criticism involves the act of reconstruction so that an audience's "perception is increased and understanding is deepened (p. 86)." According to Eisner, the critic can only achieve this by becoming an educational connoisseur. Eisner suggests:

Criticism depends upon awareness of qualities and their antecedent, and contextual conditions for its content: One can be a great connoisseur without being a critic, but one cannot be a critic of any kind without some level of connoisseurship. (p. 86)

Whenever anyone makes a judgment, connoisseurship and criticism (for better or worse) are exhibited. According to Eisner, the two go hand in hand.

Eisner (1998) suggests that four dimensions shape educational criticism: *description*, *interpretation*, *evaluation*, and *thematics*. These dimensions are used to organize a critic's thoughts for whatever has been observed or experienced.

The first dimension, *description*, allows the reader to live vicariously in the pages of the text through the artistry of the expressive text. Eisner purports that the success of description is not the embellishment of the literary work. It must be epistemological in order to be worthy of adequate educational description.

The second dimension is *interpretation*. Eisner regards this dimension as explaining the meaning of the theory. Eisner (1998) suggests:

Educational critics can work with a heuristic conception of theory. When critics work with theory, they use it as a tool for purposes of explanation – not to meet the rigorous tests for the 'true experiment,' but to satisfy rationality, to deepen the conversation, to raise fresh questions. (p. 95)



The interpretation of my classroom will not be the result of any single incident. What you will see are patterns derived from the observation of my students.

The third dimension is *evaluation*. Evaluation is vital for what has been observed. The educational critic not only has the task of describing, interpreting, but also appraising or evaluating what has happened. Eisner suggests that without the ability of the educational critic to determine whether or not the schools practice is educational there would be no value judgments.

*Thematics* is the final dimension Eisner discusses. Eisner defines a theme as a “pervasive quality” (p. 104). A classroom can have many pervasive qualities, and they can generate multiple themes. Identifying the recurring messages that pervade the situation, about which the critic writes, allows a distillation of the qualities and provides a synopsis of the necessary attributes.

The approach to analysis in this study will follow the four dimensions of educational criticism that have been described – *description*, *interpretation*, *evaluation* and *thematics*. I will begin my narrative with Lawrence and Timmy, followed by John and Damon, and finally Jackie and Tony. The order of the telling will help the reader frame a sequential story.

## CHAPTER V

### **Aesthetic Development and Care in a Multiage Classroom**

**Lawrence and Timmy**

#### **Introduction**

It was 11:15 AM. I scanned the room once more to check my art materials, art exemplar, books, manipulatives, and teaching aids. Everything seemed to be in place. I glanced at my lesson plan once more and shook my head. As usual, I had over-planned this 45-minute period. I get too excited when I am planning for my students. There is just so much that I want them to experience. Moreover, I worry about down time. I don't want there to be any time that children will be wondering what to do next. I quickly walked to the door where 22 third graders were lined up against the wall excitedly waiting to come in the art classroom.

The third graders stood and stared at me with wide-eyes full of expectation. Their eyes followed me, and they listened for guidance. They were obviously a little nervous about this new idea that I had presented to them on the first day of art. A few days before, I told them that I was going to split their class during their art period. Half of their class would join the art teacher next-door, Ms. Smith, and half would stay with me. I also told them that during this very same period, Ms. Smith had a kindergarten class. Half of Ms. Smith's kindergarten class would work

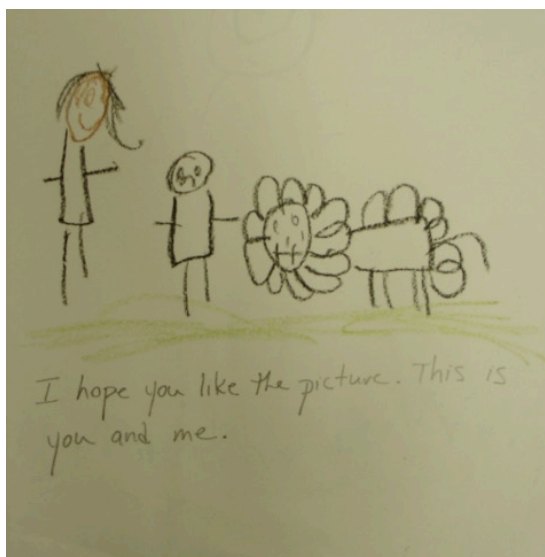
with the third graders in my classroom, and the other half of the class would stay in their own art classroom. We would do this for the next nine weeks.

I greeted the children with a smile and an enthusiastic, “Hello! Are we ready to meet our new buddies?” Not really sure of this new adventure, a few responded with a tense nod. Even though these third graders knew their buddies’ names, they seemed unsure of how this day would transpire. On the first day of art class, I had taken the time to explain to them that they would have a younger buddy to work with for the next nine weeks. They learned their buddies’ names and spent both their first and second day of art class making a card that introduced themselves to their buddies and invited their new kindergarten friend to join us. Writing and drawing letters to their buddies ended up being an endeavor that the students really loved doing over the next weeks. In the weeks to come, the children would spend any free moment drawing and writing notes to their buddies. On a seven-day rotation, the children were able to work together twice. Out of the entire nine weeks, the children met with each other eleven times. On the days when they worked solely with their like-age class, these visual and literary notes became a way of communicating. Each child received between three and five cards from his or her buddy during the nine-week period.

I found this writing opportunity was an important aspect of my data collection. I kept a special table for paper and markers so that students could access art materials when they were finished with their lesson for the day. Most of the children felt a sincere sense of loss when their buddies were not in the art room with them. They would ask, “Why can’t our buddies be here every time we have art?” Or, “I really miss my buddy. I wish that we could work with them every time we have art” (personal communication, September, 22, 2004).



*Me and my buddy by Kate*



*I hope you like this picture by Josh*

*Figure 5.1 - First day of class: Students' notes to their buddies incorporating images and text. These examples of free writing are evidence of my curriculum working through the shared aesthetic development and caring. The children are voluntarily exploring linguistic symbolic meaning.*

The students who were staying with me entered the room and sat right down on the magic blue carpet. The other eleven children walked with me to the opposite door. I knocked on the door to see if the kindergarten buddies were ready. They were. Ms. Smith had worked with me to prepare her children for what was going to happen. Two days before the exchange, the kindergarteners had already received their first note from their third grade buddies. The eleven kindergarten students were standing by the door ready to come in and now greet their third grade buddies. Many of them carried the glorious cards that they received and wore smiles on their faces. They were bubbly and bouncing with excitement. I turned around to see the expression on the third graders. They were all on their knees peering over the art tables, trying to get a glimpse of their new buddies.

I passed the eleven third graders to Ms. Smith, saying, “Have fun, we will see you in a few minutes!” I then received her 11 kindergarteners. I closed the door between the two rooms and asked each kindergarten child his/her name, one by one. “Who has Jean?” I smiled and said. Patty rose to her feet and walked over to Jean, took her hand and sat back down on the carpet. “Who has Nelly?” I said. “Right here! Me, Me, I have Nelly!” Kathy exuberantly said as she clamored to her feet and strode purposefully to claim her buddy. Everyone giggled a little and seemed to relax. The nervousness seemed to dissipate. Thank goodness for Kathy.

I continued until all the buddies were claimed, and they were all sitting quietly on the magic blue carpet. Although it took a few minutes to get the two classes organized, I began the lesson on schedule. I planned two short games that would help the students to get to know one another and ease some of their nervousness. We all sat in a circle to play a name game. . The game is played by having a leader introduce him or herself to the rest of the class. He or she then tosses the ball to someone else. The next person has to introduce him or herself and then introduce the person who tossed the ball. This took about ten minutes. After this game, we played a game called shadow. The children divided into their buddy pairs and decided on a leader. The leader makes movements and the buddy has to follow those movements as if they were a shadow. After a couple of minutes the buddies exchange being the leader and follower. This game took about five to seven minutes. After the games, we shared some juice and animal crackers. The juice and crackers quieted the children and prepared them to listen. They had been rather excited after the games ended. Food is a form of shared fellowship, and in symbolic and real terms, it creates nourishment for the body and mind. I re-gathered the children on the carpet and read them a story, *If...* by Sarah Perry (1995), while they were eating.

This book ended up being one of the children's favorites; they could not get enough of it. The narrative is very simple. Each page begins with the words: "If..." and follows with something like "cats could fly..." The author is also the illustrator. Perry has created full-page images that tickle anyone who sees them. Her images are highly textured and exceedingly representational. She creates the pastel images with local color so that they become believable, even though they could not possibly be real. For example, the "if cats could fly..." image depicts two Siamese cats with birdlike wings flying through a clear blue sky. The children giggled into their juice cups as they listened to the story and looked at the images. All too soon, it was time to go. By the time our story was finished, our 45 minutes was at an end. Already I could see that the buddies were becoming fast friends. Some were holding hands, some were whispering and some were patting their buddies on the back or shoulder telling them that they would see them soon. Already, the class was leading me into my educational aims of aesthetic development and caring. It seemed that the shared laughter, games, juice, and cookies helped introduce these students to the notion of the aesthetic development through the care that they were giving to one another.

### **Getting to Know You**

I begin my story with Lawrence and Timmy. These two students exemplified how students might teach each other in a multiage setting. Both students assumed the role of effective teachers and learners. Oftentimes, Lawrence was the traditional teacher, but sometimes Timmy surprised me by becoming the teacher himself. Lawrence and Timmy hit it off, plain and simple. They were fun to watch because they got along so well and liked each other so much. They were respectful of one another. I suspected when I saw them together that I would eventually choose to write about the two of them.

Lawrence was a third grade child who was well liked by his peers. His companions looked up to him as a great friend and scholar. He seemed to be a natural-born role model and leader for his peers. He always entered my classroom ready to learn and was always eager to know just what we were going to do that day. Lawrence came into my classroom with many well-developed skills for caring for friends and younger children. For example, his sensitivity and listening skills seemed far more advanced than many others in his class. He was not disruptive. He also seemed excited to make art even though his technical skills were not quite as developed as many of his classmates. Lawrence's younger brother was also in one of my classes, and he was equally well adjusted and liked. Lawrence demonstrated a high degree of sophistication in his relationships with fellow peers and his brother. From these facts, we could imagine that Lawrence's home life was in many ways supportive and nurturing.

Lawrence was a beautiful child inside and out. Sometimes, I looked at him and thought that he could be a model for children's clothing. His skin was the color of mocha. He had big, round, brown, inquisitive eyes and full soft pink lips. His dark curly hair was cut very short. His hair was reminiscent of styles of much-older people, but it seemed to fit Lawrence. He was tall for his age. Much of the time he walked around with his hands in his pockets looking at the small details of the art room and slowly taking in information. He was aloof yet knew how to have fun. His smile seemed to light up a room.

Lawrence was the barometer of the classroom. He often dictated the atmosphere or mood of the classroom. His classmates deferred to his judgment. "What does Lawrence think?" Other students always seemed to say when I presented a question. With that, all the other members of the class would turn their heads to look at Lawrence's response. I could not tell whether it was hero worship or simply a realization that Lawrence had good answers. However, his strong

influence appeared to encourage the successful dynamics of this class. When Lawrence laughed, it was okay for us all to laugh; he made such good judgments in timing. Lawrence appeared to be aware of his role as a classroom leader. Often he was like a second teacher in the room who assisted with classroom management. However, he did not have to yell or shush his classmates. He only had to look at a rowdy boy or girl, and the child would often quickly correct the disruptive behavior.

I paired Lawrence with Timmy. Timmy was a kindergartener with inquisitive skills. He was a fair-skinned child with dark hair and brown eyes. Bright and articulate, Timmy was a kindergartener of average to above average academic and artistic skills. He was a good listener, and his attention span could go the whole 45-minute art period without needing a break. Timmy was not loud, nor did he have a need to be the center of attention. It turned out to be a good match. Although Timmy was very quiet, he was not shy around Lawrence. It was difficult for me to get to know Timmy apart from Lawrence because he did not come to my classroom other than when it was buddy day. I did not have the opportunity to see Timmy , interact with his regular classmates in his own classroom as I did Lawrence.

### The Color Mixing Lesson

Our art lessons began with creating self-portraits. The objectives of this lesson for the children were to: 1) to associate themselves as artists and symbol creators; 2) to create meaning from important objects and events in their lives; 3) to identify and explain proportion in the human face; 4) to participate in collaborative art making; and 5) to demonstrate color mixing techniques. Using Rene Magritte's portrait of his wife, *Georgette* (1937), as an art exemplar, the self-portraits were first drawn with pencil on a large sheet of paper and then painted with acrylic paint. Embedded within this lesson was an additional lesson on mixing color. Teaching children



to aesthetically develop a sense of color mixing was the goal of this lesson. Learning to adjust color and to see color qualities and variations is extremely important. It is much like learning a new language. Mixing color requires distinguishing between subtle nuances of shades and tints and learning to tweak their qualities to get exactly the right hue. This skill required aesthetic development. It could not be learned in one lesson. It required trial and error and lots of experience.

In my experience, very young children can learn these fine nuances with exposure and experience. The ABC standards, however, only required students in kindergarten to mix primary colors and nothing more, so these kindergarteners were learning advanced lessons right alongside the third graders. The standards for children in third grade required the students to learn to mix intermediate colors, tints and shades, but in a very formulaic way. The ABC standards did not expect children to experience color nor to develop their aesthetic senses about color. What follows is my description about the color-mixing portion of the self-portrait lesson, I will describe the actual self-portrait lesson more fully in the next chapter.

The children entered the classroom and sat in a circle on our carpet while I went over the important parts of color mixing. I began by talking to the children about mixing primary and secondary colors, tints and shades. I put large pieces of paper in the middle of our circle, and I began mixing little blobs of paint. First, I mixed primary colors to get secondary colors. Then, I mixed a primary with a secondary color to get a tertiary color. For example, I mixed red and yellow to get orange (two primaries). Then, I mixed yellow (a primary) and orange (a secondary) to get yellow orange. Learning the names yellow-orange, blue-violet, yellow-green, etc. took practice, but the children began getting used to the idea of saying yellow-green instead of green-yellow. Once this idea was mastered, I moved on to mix white into different colors to get a

tint and black into different colors to get a shade. For example, a tint of red is pink and a shade of red is maroon.

There is always something mysterious that happens when mixing colors. I loved to demonstrate this mystery with the children because no matter how many times they mixed color, or how good they were at mixing color, the results were always fresh and the children delighted in the process. For example, when they mixed primary yellow with primary blue, it always surprised the children (and myself) that such a lovely shade of green was made. I noticed that most of the older children knew the answers to all the questions I presented about mixing colors up to this point. They knew the primary colors, red, blue and yellow, which was a part of the ABC standards for kindergarten. And they could readily respond to what they might get when mixing two primary colors such as red and yellow (orange), blue and red (violet) and blue and yellow (green). Orange, violet and green are the secondary colors. But they were not so savvy about mixing intermediate, or tertiary colors. Potentially confusing for the children was that *intermediate* and *tertiary* are interchangeable terminology. The ABC standards used the term intermediate, although most textbooks used the term tertiary. I thought it was important for students to learn both terms. The concept of mixing intermediate and tertiary colors does not appear in the ABC standards until the third grade. Since the children were beginning the third grade, it was not surprising that this was a new concept. That they knew primary and secondary colors was an indication that these students had received a standards-based education up to this point. The third grade students caught on quickly and mastered the concepts easily.

But surprisingly to me, so did the kindergarteners. Even though the ABC standards required the concepts of tertiary colors be taught in third grade, I found that kindergarteners were mastering the concepts at the same rate as the third graders. The third graders were acting as

more capable peers and accelerating the rate of learning for the entire class. I only asked that the older children allow their younger buddies time to think about what might happen. Then, if they didn't understand, the third graders could try to explain it to them. To my surprise, many of the children deferred to their buddies without much coaching from me. Furthermore, when I posed questions about what would happen when a primary and secondary color were mixed, rather than shouting out the answers as they usually did in their single-age, competitive classrooms, the third graders turned to their buddies and got them involved with the results. I was moved by their natural ability to do this. Two things happened. First, the natural instinct of being the first to be recognized by the teacher was diminished in both ages. Instead, the older buddies who knew the answers to my questions waited, talked to their buddies, and encouraged them to raise their hand. Second, the third graders took a level of responsibility for teaching their buddies. I heard Lawrence ask Timmy, "What do you think happens when you mix black with any other color? Do you think it gets dark or light?"

This was effective peer teaching. They talked to one another about all the possibilities and results of what could happen when two known colors were mixed together to make an unknown. The younger children gained new information, and the older children gained a deeper understanding of the information they had already acquired—with time to spare to think critically about the present information. This lesson cemented Lawrence's knowledge about color mixing and served as an effective strategy for introducing and teaching his younger buddy what happens when mixing something as simple as primary colors. The ABC standards do not require students to begin color mixing primary colors until first grade. These children were working comfortably one or more grade levels ahead of schedule, according to the ABC

standards. Also important was that they took time to listen to one another. Lawrence and Timmy sat close together, looked each other in the eye and took turns speaking.

When I finished talking about mixing primary and secondary colors, tints and shades, I asked the students to begin naming the new intermediate colors. They all seemed very stilted in their responses. They called the new shade of green, just green. When I pointed out that if the secondary color was already called green then how could the intermediate shade of green be called green too? In other words, mixing blue (a primary color), green (a secondary color), and black (to make a shade of green) could not be the same color as mixing blue and yellow. It was a very different color. I quickly mixed the colors together. I held up the new intermediate shade of green next to the secondary color green. Recognition of the difference was immediate. Although the new color was in the green family, there was a distinct difference that was easily seen when I held them up side by side. I wanted them to name the new color with a name that seemed right to them.

It was Lawrence who finally spoke up and said that the green shade could be called forest green because it reminded him of the deep dark woods. Lawrence looked at the blue green shade that was created by mixing blue, green and black and then made a connection to a deep green forest (an aesthetic intrapersonal experience). Of course, Lawrence needed to have had an experience with a forest to make the connection. He was able to articulate the metaphor that represented the color into language to help the class, his buddy, and me, understand that why he chose the name for the new color (a sociocultural interpersonal experience). He created a metaphor—although he could have also just as easily articulated this metaphor by using this newly mixed color to paint a scene of the forest. Through this symbolic naming Lawrence had

moved from aesthetic experience to aesthetic understanding, thus demonstrating the process of aesthetic development.

This imaginative leap set the whole class into a color naming spin. We came up with corn yellow, pumpkin orange and heart red. Someone spoke up and called one shade of violet “purple mountain majesty.” That was when I knew they understood.

Although Lawrence's achievement was an individual accomplishment, he modeled aesthetic capabilities for all of the other children, including those who were struggling with this concept. Additionally, more capable peers could be teachers and work with these students on a one-to-one basis.

Furthering this discussion, another child said that another shade of green looked like pond water. His buddy responded by saying, “What is pond water?” His buddy carefully explained that it was water that was kind of greenish, and frogs and tadpoles loved to live in it because they could hide. Using language full of metaphors requires experience, understanding and knowledge of terminology (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Having a more-experienced peer to help less-experienced peers become more familiar with terms, language, and metaphor making had cognitive value. This was an example of young children generating their own authentic metaphors and doing so in small groups so that everyone was engaged in the lesson—it wasn't just Lawrence moving ahead while everyone else was struggling. It was a case of teaching for aesthetic understanding through sociocultural experience.

When Timmy spoke up and said that a particular shade of blue should be called “Lawrence Blue,” we all looked at Timmy for an explanation. Most children respond with sky blue or ocean blue. Lawrence was not wearing blue nor were his eyes blue. Thinking that Timmy was exhibiting some real fondness for his older buddy, I delved deeper. “Tell me why you would

call this Lawrence Blue, Timmy,” I said. Timmy exuberantly replied, “Well just look at him!” he said. Everyone turned to look at Lawrence. There sat Lawrence smiling from ear to ear with his tongue sticking out. Clearly he had just finished eating a blue raspberry sucker and his tongue was a neon shade of blue. The whole class broke up and laughed while Lawrence just sat there grinning and patting his buddy’s shoulder. Timmy was exploring the possibility of metaphor. Timmy's “Lawrence Blue” was rooted in immediate empirical sensory data. He saw Lawrence's blue tongue. He associated the immediate sensory response with the color I was holding. Even if it were not a very good match, Timmy was involved in metaphor making.

The environment of care that was created in the classroom encouraged this brainstorming on Timmy’s part. This environment came from the older children who encouraged the younger children to try new ideas, reinforced in noncompetitive environment. These attributes of care in the classroom that came from peers served to cement the learning that was taking place. That learning was taking two forms—the robust demonstrations of aesthetic understanding by the third graders and the willingness of the kindergarteners to play with this higher-order thinking skill.

Use of symbols and symbolic thinking in art do not appear in the ABC standards until fifth grade. Under the strand *Perception and Analysis*, it states that students will “recognize how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message” (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-25). Clearly these third graders and kindergarteners were using an advanced form of symbolic language and understanding in the metaphors they were making. Although I doubt that they could describe how they were making metaphors in art class, they were definitely capable of understanding the meaning behind the metaphors. In the multiage class I taught, third graders and kindergarteners did not need to wait until fifth grade to engage in

topic of symbols and ideas to communicate a message. The only requirement was that they have enough experience in their schemata to be able to recall associations. I will discuss symbolic representation further in the next chapter.

After the funny “Lawrence Blue” metaphor, Timmy was encouraged to take on a more active part of his relationship with his buddy. This event also encouraged other buddy pairs to treat their buddies more as co-learners and mentors. I noticed a real turning point in the relationships between the buddies. They become genuine friends, and they seemed to be caring for one another. Specifically, I noticed that note writing increased, and the children began telling me about buddy sightings. It was so exciting to them when they saw their buddy in the halls or at the mall.

The children went on to paint their portraits with their new color mixing knowledge. This lesson is explored in the next chapter. I will discuss how John and Damon used the self-portrait to learn to think symbolically. After working for three days on our self-portraits, we began our lesson in synectics. This marked the fourth day we worked together with buddies.

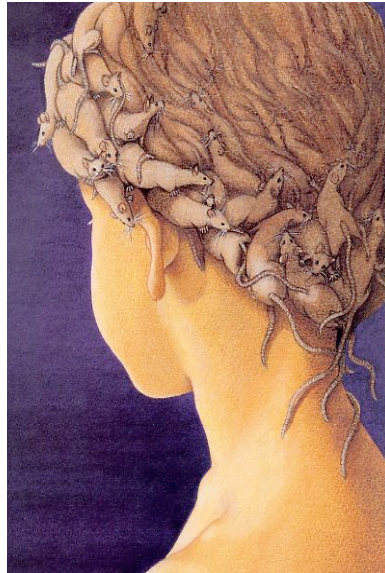
### The Synectic Lesson

The word synectic comes from the Greek work *synetikos*, which means to put two familiar things together to make something unfamiliar. To introduce this synectic idea, I showed the students several mix-and-match books (see Chapter Six) and then I again read the book *If...* (Perry 1995), which modeled a different synectic idea on each page. One synectic idea, “If mice were hair...” showed the back of a girl's head with neat little mice all lined up in an elegant coiffure. This page usually started the students squealing. “Imagine how that would tickle?” I always say to the giggling children, which always makes them shiver more. Other favorite pages are: “If caterpillars were toothpaste...” and “If toes were teeth...” The book ends with the words,

“If this is the end then dream up some more...” These delightfully funny and squeamish words and illustrations delighted the children and set up a plan for creating our own pages to elaborate the book.



*“If cats could fly”*



*“If mice were hair”*



*“If caterpillars were toothpaste”*

Figure 5.2 - *These are three pages from Sarah Perry’s book “If...”*  
Copyright 1995

After reading the book, I created a table with ten categories across and ten categories down. I asked the children to name ten animals across the top and ten different inanimate objects going down. The children then choose a row and a column to find out what kind of animal they were to depict for their “If...” page (see Table 5.2).



	Gorilla	Rat	Dolphin	Horse	Butterfly	People	Chick	Bunny	Bee	Cat
Rainbow										
TV										
Radio										
Guitar										
Building										
Bell										
Chair										
Crayon										
Train										
Car										

Table 5.3 - *Synecletic chart. The gray line is how Lawrence and Timmy got "If Bees Were TVs..."*

In this assignment, I was attempting to raise aesthetic awareness. The successful completion of this lesson required the imaginative projection of feeling onto both a living creature and an inanimate object. That projection required a sense of empathy. To successfully complete this lesson, students would have to find a visual language to communicate their feelings. These objectives did not fit into the ABC standards at all. I found no standards that defined empathy and care and how to use it in an art classroom.

For their additional page to *If...*, Lawrence and Timmy chose a bee and a TV. Their caption read: "If bees were TVs..." I wasn't sure how this venture would turn out. I feared that the children would create their own ideas and not consult with one another before the image was drawn on the paper. I was amazed to find that Lawrence and Timmy brainstormed together, planning their image. I saw them talking and making some notes in their journals before a final image was drawn. Most of these notes were little sketches on paper or in their journals. They worked out several ideas on scrap paper before arriving at a single idea. I gave each child a large piece of paper on which to create their visual image for their synectic idea. Some of the ideas other children created were: "If a dolphins played the guitar" and "If people were buildings."

We began with exercises that encouraged the students to think about what made the two things unique. “What would a bee look like? What would it feel like? What would it taste like? Who has ever felt a bee?” I prompted the students to think about qualities of each synectic piece so that they might infuse them into their artwork. The children drew pictures of these ideas. Lawrence and Timmy drew some stripes, some legs, a stinger, some eyes and antenna. Lawrence created little hairy bee bodies and legs that had sections to them rather than straight unjoined legs.

The result of these exercises provided some concrete points to assist Lawrence and Timmy in visualizing what a TV bee might look like. They were given two known concepts and had to create something that had never been created before. Neither one of the students had ever seen or heard of a bee that was a TV. Both had experiences with TVs and both had experiences with bees, but not put together. They got right to work talking about what they each perceived in their minds. They explored their feelings about bees and they explored their feelings about TVs. Lawrence told Timmy what it felt like to be stung by a bee. He also told Timmy that bees had yellow and black stripes. A TV has a large screen and knobs and, of course, needed to be able to play. Timmy most often played the role of the less capable peer in this lesson, but once in a while he would assert himself and tell Lawrence something insightful and teachable. Once I heard him say to Lawrence, “Not all bees make honey, Lawrence, just honey bees” (Personal communication, September 15, 2004).

Putting the TV and the bee together required much thought. How would they unite the two objects? They reviewed their feelings associated with their prior experience with the two objects, then they began drawing what “If bees were TVs...” they might look like. The concept that they held in their heads was embodied into an expressive form in the new synectic creation.

I suggest that the sequence of thinking that Lawrence and Timmy underwent to complete this assignment was a cycle of visual inquiry (Siegesmund. 2000; see figure 5.4). In a cycle of visual inquiry, the lesson moves in a clockwise direction from perception (in this case the physical features of bees and TVs) to conception (the feelings engendered by bees and TVs), to expression (the visual image that synthesizes perception and conception) and then reflection (the ability to describe in words what has been accomplished). Students can certainly double back at any point, and reflection can come at anytime during the cycle. Reflection can occur during perception, conception, expression, or reflection. Students may also adjust their thinking at anytime and go back to the beginning of the cycle, even at the end of the project, if they need to revisit what they have perceived. The student might need to change or elaborate the concept of what they have expressed. Students move through this cycle of inquiry by attending to the feelings that are invoked by their perceptions.

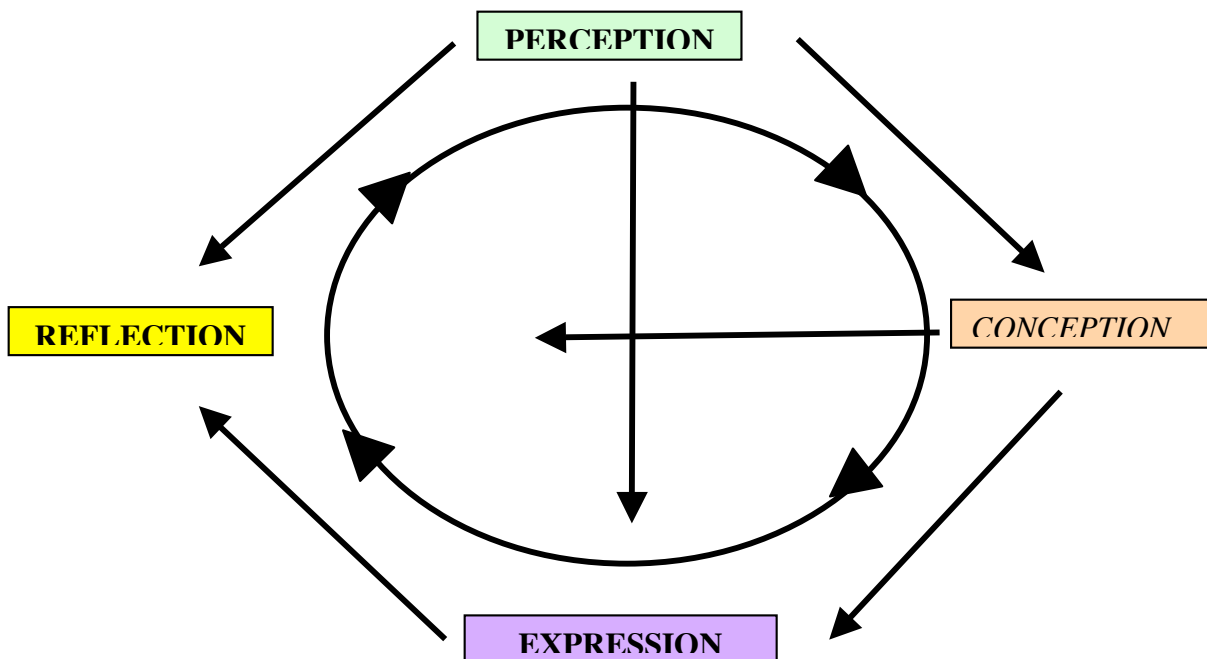


Figure 5.4 - *The visual cycle of inquiry*

In the case of bees, Lawrence had more experience with these insects because one had stung him and because he was three years older. Timmy depended on Lawrence to elevate his knowledge about bees. Lawrence and Timmy engaged in a conversation that allowed them to move in a clockwise direction, yet the two children also liberally moved about the cycle. They doubled back and jumped around in their conversation as they came to terms with the image they finally achieved.

I overheard Timmy and Lawrence talking about the bees as TVs artwork and asking questions. Timmy said, “My bee has lots of legs” and indeed, it had more than the requisite six. Lawrence said, “Bees are insects and have six legs.”

Timmy looked at his artwork, counted the legs and said, “Oh. But mine has more, okay?”

“Yeah, that’s okay. I like your bee”

“Does it tickle when they crawl on you?”

“I don’t know, they might sting you if you let them!”

“What does it feel like when you get stung? Does it hurt?” Timmy inquired.

Lawrence reached over and gave Timmy a little tight pinch. “It kind of feels like that!”

Timmy reacted “Ouch! Well, that isn’t too bad,” he relented. Lawrence pointed, “You could put a stinger on him right there.” Timmy picked up his paintbrush and with a quick swoosh the bee had a stinger. Timmy smiled as he appraised his work. (transcription from audiotape, September 16, 2003)

This lesson was designed to help the children explore aesthetic mental images. The students did not have a preconceived concept or any experience with the synectic idea that there were such things as “bees as TVs”. The images and concepts had to be completely developed in



Figure 5.5 - *Lawrence (right) takes the time even while painting to point out something about his artwork to his buddy.*

the mind of the child before they could be put on paper. This was very important. Lawrence and Timmy's intrapersonal aesthetic experiences and interpersonal aesthetic understanding through sociocultural exchange demonstrated aesthetic development. The children elaborated, enhanced, and extended their intrapersonal aesthetic ideas by discussing and critiquing them with their buddies. They did this by articulating thoughts through language, metaphors, and symbolic representations. This was accelerated aesthetic development through sociocultural learning.

For Timmy, the youngest of the pair, the experience in the art classroom was cognitive. Sociocultural learning promoted recalling events, conversation, and sensory memories of aesthetic experience. On one occasion in the car-rider line, Timmy told me that he really liked his buddy and his buddy liked him. When I asked him what he liked about art the most, he replied that he liked making things with Lawrence the most. He said, “Lawrence helps me make my pictures.”

“How does he help you make your pictures?” I inquired.

“Sometimes he shows me how to make something, sometimes he asks me what I am making.”

“Like what?” I said.

“Like...um, liiiiike, like how to make a bee! He put eyes and legs on my bee...and some yellow stripes.”

“Do you show him what to make, too?”

“Sure, I showed him how to make dots in the eyes... I think. He told me he got stung by a bee once.”

“Did he tell you what that might have felt like?”

“Yeah, he said it hurt when the stinger went in, and then itched. I put a stinger on my bee too! But my bee won’t sting anyone” (Personal communication, September 19, 2003).

Through the aesthetic experience of art, Timmy, who had never been stung by a bee, now had a new viewpoint of what might happen if he were ever to have the experience. Once again, this intrapersonal aesthetic thought was interpersonalized into a sociocultural experience.

#### Copying as a Form of Sociocultural Learning and Care

Lawrence and Timmy decided together how they would create their image, and then they each drew the image on two separate sheets of paper. I noticed that Timmy was copying directly from Lawrence’s paper. At least that is what I thought until I saw the delicate differences. Because the concept of joining two familiar things to make something unfamiliar was rather difficult to understand, Timmy felt safer following Lawrence’s lead in making qualitative judgments with the artwork. This was an example of Wink and Putney’s (2001) concepts of safety and regression. Timmy first needed to feel secure in the relationship before he could go

on, or he might regress. By allowing Timmy to copy his work, Lawrence created a comfort zone, just in case Timmy didn't understand or felt lost by the difficult concept. Creating a zone of comfort also exhibited care. Timmy chose the same colors as his buddy and began the painting by creating the same composition.

Timmy followed Lawrence's lead even though they had talked as equals about what they were going to draw. Lawrence had better technical skills for drawing, and so they both depended on his ability to depict just the right image they wanted. I often see people in museums practicing their skills by copying artworks. I have engaged in this practice myself. However, for most of the twentieth century (since the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud) the focus on children's art has been on expression of feelings, not on developing thinking skills. Arguably the most influential art educator of the century, Viktor Lowenfeld (1947/87), specifically prohibited students from copying as he claimed that it impeded authentic self-expression. Timmy and Lawrence knew intuitively that there was much to teach and learn from copying, including care and helping a less-experienced peer find a comfort zone. Their images ended up being remarkably similar, but with many subtle and important differences. Their final rendition was an image of a bee turned sideways. On the body of the bee was a TV. The bee was flying through the air for people who were on the ground in cities or in the country to enjoy watching TV. This art lesson also represented a caring attitude toward others beside themselves. They thought it would be nice to let people who were walking around on the ground watch TV.

When I asked Lawrence if Timmy was learning by copying his bee he replied, "No, we are not really copying. We talked about this first, and then we started to draw. Each time I drew something I asked him if that was what he had in his mind. Timmy told me 'no' a couple of times and then showed me what was in his mind" (Transcription from audiotape, September 15,

2004). This accounted for the final differences I saw in the two art works. Timmy had lots of legs, not just the six usual for insects. Knobs for the TV were in lots of different places. Probably the most independent thought was evident in the backdrop for the bees. Lawrence had the bee flying over buildings and Timmy flew his bee over a single house and acreage. The two students differed on the style of antenna and stripes. Lawrence created eyes with an iris while Timmy just made black dots for his bee's eyes. Having more experience with bees, Lawrence created fuzz around the body of his bee while Timmy's bee was smooth. The basic idea was discussed, and then artistic license and individuality took over.

Although there was much discussion about how the bee as a TV would look, I could not dismiss the fact that Timmy looked at Lawrence's artwork to create the same forms on his own sheet of paper. There was no question that Timmy deferred some of his original ideas in order to follow Lawrence's lead. At first glance, many art teachers might find this distressing if not downright against the rules in the art classroom. What I found to be true in my art classroom was that children of like ages who find out that others are copying them seemed to get angry at the intrusion into their ideas and abilities. But children who allowed a younger child to copy them felt that it was teaching moment, and they also felt bolstered about their own artwork by knowing that someone else thought that it was special enough to be copied. They also felt that they were also consciously giving their consent for the younger buddy to copy them. They did not seem bothered by the notion in the least. Lawrence felt that Timmy would learn stylistic techniques while also advancing his thinking about things such as detail, color combinations, and composition. In essence, the lesson was an example of the benefits of the zone of proximal development. Lawrence taught Timmy more than he could learn on his own by allowing him to copy his work and contribute some of his own thoughts. Although Timmy's final picture did not



look exactly like Lawrence's, the replication was remarkably evident. Timmy contributed his thoughts to the group idea yet made his own subtle changes. I would attribute these subtle changes to the reasoned perception that Lawrence and Timmy were helping each other to achieve through their discussion, artwork, copying, and quiet moments steeped in their own intrapersonal aesthetic thoughts.

#### Active Listening as a form of Sociocultural Experience and Care

For the lesson to be successful, it required a lot of time talking about what they imagined in their minds, and how they could show what they imagined through the images that they made. On the days that the students did not meet with his or her buddy, the third graders spent time discussing active listening. Active listening involved paying close attention to a speaker. The students practiced active listening by looking the speaker in the eyes while he/she was talking, nodding their head, or repeating words so the speaker received a signal that he/she was being listened to. They did this as a way of helping someone to see that what he/she said was important and that the speaker was cared for. We practiced this technique while the kindergarten buddies were not with us so that we could learn to be better listeners and friends. This was also a form of aesthetics through sociocultural experience. By learning to attend to the subtle nuances and fine-grained distinctions of what a friend was saying, they were listening with acutely-tuned senses. This intrapersonal listening became aesthetic development. By showing our friend that we are listening by nodding our head or repeating words, we were creating a caring situation and interpersonally, or socioculturally, connecting to our friends.

Lawrence felt the need to spend a lot of time with his buddy doing some of the active listening that they had been practicing while the kindergarteners were not in class. I noticed Lawrence using these skills by looking at his buddy while he was talking. He nodded his head to

show his buddy that he was listening and repeated some of the things that Timmy said to reinforce that fact. These skills did not come easily, yet Lawrence was a model student. Lawrence just wanted to be friends with his buddy and felt like listening, praising, and paying close attention was the best way to do this.

### **Storytelling and Working together**

They worked with the synectic lesson for two class periods. I then began another project by reading *Andrew Henry's Meadow* (Burn, 1963). I remembered reading this story over and over to my brother when he was little. I had long imagined designing a lesson around the story. The objectives for this lesson were: 1) to conceptualize alternate realities, 2) to participate in collaborative learning, 3) to demonstrate individuality through personal choice, and 4) to create a clubhouse and village that the whole class would take part in making.

The story was about little boy who loved to build things. He built a helicopter in his mother's kitchen and an eagle's cage in the living room.

Figure 5.6 - *Andrew Henry's Eagle Cage*  
Copyright 1963



His endeavors were not appreciated by anyone in the family even though his work was very good. His family kept telling him that he would have to build somewhere else. So, Andrew Henry packed up his tools and left to find a place to build his own house.



Figure 5.7 - *Arriving at the meadow*  
Copyright 1963

He finally settled in a meadow and built a fine house. Soon other underappreciated children with seemingly obnoxious hobbies showed up in Andrew Henry's meadow. Andrew Henry ended up building houses for all the other children. Eventually, there was a whole village in the meadow.

On a two-page spread, the author had drawn the most imaginative houses for each child's hobby. There was a tree house for the little girl who loved birds. There was a bridge over a river complete with paddle wheel for the little boy who loved boats. There was also a teepee, a castle with moat, and a circus tent.

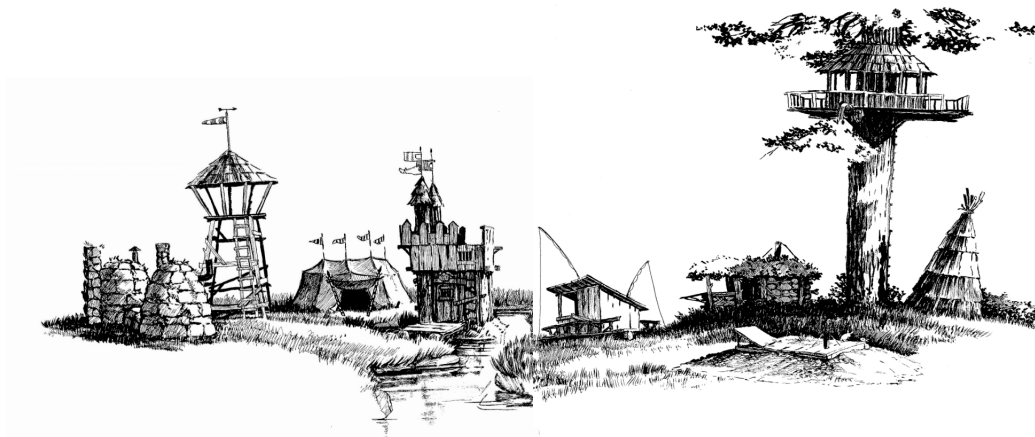


Figure 5.8 - *Andrew Henry's Meadow*  
Copyright 1963

I scanned the images from this book into a computer presentation and told the story so that the images were projected onto a wall. The children were all lying on their backs looking up at the movie-like images while they listened to my telling the story. When I got to the two-page spread depicting the entire meadow, most the children sat up and said, “Wow!” or “Cool!” and “I sure would like to live there!” I ended right there so that we would have time to talk about the story and begin creating a village of our own. Before they moved to the tables, they talked a little about the story. They talked about what a story was. I told them that stories can be based on truth or they can be based in fantasy. The children understood this. Some of the children engaged in a discussion about how all those children could be gone from their homes, and no one missed them. A few children talked about how a young boy could really build all those houses. Some one else spoke up and said that it would take days and days to build those houses, and someone would surely have found those children by then. They had fun talking about what might not be so truthful about the book, but when they engaged in a discussion about the delights of living in a

village like Andrew Henry's, the students were happy to become part of the story and imagine what their homes might look like if they could live in that meadow.

To further this discussion from book reading to art discussion and then to meaning and art making, I checked the ABC standards and the QCC, for third grade. The closest standard that allowed me to connect what my students were learning was a fifth grade requirement. It stated: "create works of art that imitate nature (Realism), that are concerned with design and composition (Structuralism/Formalism), and that express feelings or emotions (Emotionalism/Expressionism)." In order to discuss aesthetic issues, I had to scan the standards all the way to high school, and even those standards were not broad enough to include my third-grade and kindergarten discussions.

The children moved to the tables where I had a small piece of green poster board for each buddy pair, glue, and several oddly-cut pieces of chipboard (heavy cardboard) on the tables. Together the buddies were to create a clubhouse on the green poster board. They would be able to decorate and embellish the houses later, but today the children would need to settle on the design, get the walls and roof up, and let it set to dry.

Lawrence and Timmy managed to do this task very effectively having established a well-ordered method to their art making in the previous lessons. Lawrence would put glue on the edges, and Timmy would hold the parts together until they stuck sufficiently enough to begin another piece. The chipboard pieces were much too hard for the children to cut themselves. Cutting the board would require strength and the expertise of using a Xacto blade, they were much too young and inexperienced to do that. I cut the pieces into random shapes, and it was up to the children to qualitatively choose appropriate shapes and sizes to suit their ideas.

I watched the children choose a shape, turn it round and round and then discard it or use it. Many times, pieces were put in place for a fitting only to find another that fit better. It was a pleasure watching the children complete this project. It required considerable concentration, and so the class was very quiet. Some children were able to create several floors for their clubhouses. When a preconceived idea did not work out, most of the buddies didn't seem to get flustered. They were able to easily adjust their ideas and create something new. When Timmy's wall fell over against another wall, he felt this added to the design by making a triangular shaped room. The triangular room became a very interesting feature of the structure. Eisner (2002) calls such thinking *flexible purposing*, and attributes the idea to John Dewey. Timmy has adapted his original idea to the reality of construction. He was showing flexibility of thinking and a willingness to reconsider his original purpose in light of the constraints of the materials with which he was working. Furthermore, Timmy was allowing the materials to suggest solutions he had not originally imagined. He had not thought of a triangular room. However, when presented with this possibility, he was open to considering it and proceeded to incorporate it into a larger design.

When the houses were completely dry I covered a 4x8 sheet of plywood with green paper and set the houses all over the board in the fashion of a small village. I clipped branches and shrubs and provided construction paper in all shapes and sizes so that the children could embellish their houses when they returned. The children were very excited about creating this project.

It was the second day of the project when the students began thinking about the houses as their own clubhouses, forts, and playhouses. To provide a context for their buildings, the children set to work creating streams, bridges, pathways, and swimming pools for their village



Figure 5.9 - *Lawrence gluing chipboard*

created out of construction paper. They drew doors and windows and decorated the tops of their houses with signs and flags. The village was nearing completion, and I had never seen such an excited bunch of children.

After school, while Lawrence and Timmy were in the car-rider line, I talked to them about making their clubhouse. They made it very clear to me that they considered the village to be the best art project they had done. They also made it clear to me that they had not finished their artwork. Apparently, while they were sitting in the car-rider line, they had talked about their clubhouse and decided on many things that could be added to enhance the design. They let me know in no uncertain terms that working four times on the village was not enough.



*Figure 5.10 - The village nearing completion*

### **Aesthetic Experience, Sociocultural Learning and Care**

Nearly all my photographs of Lawrence and Timmy depict a buddy pair who cared about one another. Lawrence either has a hand on Timmy's shoulders or is facing him, talking to him and, most importantly, looking at him. I read in my journal that Lawrence and Timmy wanted to do everything together. It reads, "Lawrence asked me today if he and Timmy could pass out the art supplies together. They had it all worked out. Timmy would pass out glue and markers; Lawrence would pass out scissors and scraps of paper. I, of course, replied 'Sure!' They smiled at one another and walked to the resource table to get the supplies" (Journal entry, September 26,



2003). They smiled at one another all the time. They hugged or high-fived each other in class and even outside of class. They kept each other on task by talking about their artwork. When they were on the blue carpet for the beginning of a lesson they sat quietly and listened to me. They sat together and asked questions.

Care in this relationship had bi-directional benefits for Lawrence and Timmy. When we care for one another, we involve ourselves in a deeper commitment than just being connected as an acquaintance. It requires an emotional connection. According to Noddings (1992), without care, learning cannot take place. Without care, we would have a difficult time perceiving, imagining, or feeling. We would struggle to be part of a social group. These are all necessary elements to learning. Additionally, aesthetic experience would be weakened. Our senses would be too closed off to note the nuances in the world around us. The potential for further aesthetic development and learning within a social structure would be lost.

We learn to care for others through observation and modeling (Phillips, 2003). It is a learned quality, not something that is innate (Noddings, 1992). Learning to care is relational and requires continuous development in the presence of others. To care entails understanding each other's beliefs, as well as the importance of improving and preserving our community, families, and environments. It ultimately requires asking ethical questions of how we relate to each other sharing in interpersonal discussions through dialog.

Often, I overheard Lawrence practicing his new listening skills with Timmy. Lawrence would turn Timmy's head so that he could look him in the eye. While Timmy was talking, I would catch Lawrence out of the corner of my eye nodding and sometimes repeating things back to his buddy. Although few children thought about using their newfound listening skills while their buddies were actually in the room, Lawrence seemed to remember to do this on occasion.

One of the most important things I learned was that even outside of class, the older and younger buddies began to care about one another. I realized this when the students began to tell me about buddy sightings around school. They actually sought each other out in the lunchroom and in the hallways. Twice I witnessed the students waving at each other down the long hallways. On one occasion, I saw several students in the hallway leave their classroom line to go over and hug their buddies, even as the classroom teacher was fussing at them.



Figure 5.11 –*Taking time to care. Lawrence and Timmy early in the study.*  
*Lawrence (Left) and Timmy (Right)*

Although the students always greeted each other with a hug when they entered the classroom, I was not prepared for the care and affection that they exhibited while they were outside of class. I was delighted at the naturalness of their demonstrative demeanor, for this was something that I never planned. The sheer delight that the children exhibited in seeing their

buddies enchanted me. It somehow seemed unfair that this miraculous time would have to come to an end. But something happened after the first nine weeks were over, and the children began going to music instead of coming to art. The children continued seeking each other out in the car-rider line. The younger buddies sat with the older buddies, even though they no longer had shared class time together. The older buddies still chatted with their like-age friends while they were waiting to be picked up, but for the younger buddies it was a time to just sit and ‘be’ with an older buddy who cared about them. I saw Lawrence sitting with his buddy the last time I went out to talk to the children, and I watched Lawrence point to the orange cone and say, “Hey Timmy! They just called your number to go to the orange cone.” Timmy jumped up and waved to his friend and said, “See you tomorrow, Lawrence!”

“Later!” Lawrence replied.

How do we help children care about what they do? I am not sure that we can *make* children care about their friends, their schoolwork, their teachers, their school, and their community. Having a need to be cared for, or cared about, is an innate human need. Children learn at a very young age that when they return the care that their parents bestow on them, a cycle is completed (Noddings, 1992). Infants learn quickly that smiling at their mother when she coos feels good and keeps the relationship cemented. But what about children who somehow get off the track in the cycle of care through a failure of some sort of sociocultural aspect? It then becomes the role of the teacher to create an environment that is conducive for children to begin to learn how to care. The multiage classroom proved to be a place in which care could flourish.

In the case of Lawrence and Timmy, Lawrence came into the classroom with many prior caring skills. Obviously, he learned these at home as his younger brother was equally well adjusted. Lawrence's sense of care was evident as he often asked about his little brother and how

he was doing in art. Although much care is learned at home, we would do a disservice to children if we never modeled or talked about it in school.

Once I witnessed Lawrence walk across the lunchroom to give his brother a pat on the back. When I met his parents at a PTA meeting, I immediately saw the care and concern that they had for their children. Many of their questions about their children had to do with how they fared with other children and with me. Although they were certainly interested in their children's academic performance, they seemed more interested in their citizenship in the classroom. School is one place to practice and display care, but it could be so much more effectively modeled in homes neighborhoods and communities. Of course, if school is the only place that a child feels cared for and learns to return care, then we, as caring professionals ourselves, owe it to them to model a caring behavior so that they can develop the full spectrum of their intelligence through aesthetic and sociocultural experience. The ABC standards and the QCC do not call attention to this dimension of learning nor do they have a scope and sequence for aesthetic development and sociocultural experience.

## CHAPTER VI

### **Symbolic Thinking: Challenging the ABC Standards**

#### **John and Damon**

##### **Introduction**

“Ms. Heid, when I think about what I want to draw as a symbol for my pet bunny, I think about his soft white fur. But then I also think about his pink eyes and his wiggly nose. He is so cute!” Patty worked with the small sketch and drew some whiskers and long ears.

“Umm. You think some fur and a wiggly nose would do the trick?” I queried.

“I’m not sure how to draw that,” Patty said as she gazed at her artwork.

“Well, could you just simply draw a carrot?” her younger buddy Jane suggested.

“Yeah, I guess so. I just wanted to draw something cute so people would know how soft and cuddly he is,” Patty said.

“You know what?” I said. “You can draw your whole bunny, since you are having a hard time making a decision. The picture of your bunny is a symbol because it is not your actual bunny.” Patty waited a moment and then made up her mind.

“I think I will make a nose and some whiskers. I don’t think that I need to draw the whole thing. “

“Yeah, like Frida Kahlo did in her pictures,” Jane, the kindergartener, sat up and said.

“ That’s right. She put a lot of symbols in her pictures,” Patty said to her buddy. “Let’s go look at that picture again in the front of the room.”

“Okay!”

I walked away from the two buddies. Clearly they had their own ideas in mind without interference from me. (Journal entry, September 4, 2003)

### **Getting to Know John and Damon**

Teachers often remembered that it was a shame that they first children whose names they learned had the worst behavior. I do not believe that is quite accurate. I believe that we first get to know the children who are the most assertive. In other words, the children who make their presence known, whether by improper behavior or a need to be boisterous, demand that we know—right now!—who they are!

I met John on the first day of school and learned his name immediately. Although most of the children were a little intimidated by the new experience and new teacher, John waltzed into class full of vim and vigor and announced his name to me. He then promptly told me that he loved art. I wouldn’t say that John was the worst kid in the class, but he was certainly the loudest and the most exuberant.

I paired John with a shy little boy named Damon who was a little intimidated by his older and much louder buddy. I worried that the two would not get along. I thought that perhaps John would be too rambunctious for Damon. I was bothered by the notion that Damon might feel intimidated by his older buddy. I was afraid of regression in the zone of proximal development. John might overwhelm Damon. After the first day with the buddies, my worries seemed to be unfounded. Not only did the two become fast friends, but John helped his young charge come out

of his shell by including him in everything. Maybe this sociocultural learning was going to work after all.

During the first art-making lesson on our second day with the kindergarteners, John ushered his buddy to his spot at the table and set him right to work. He sharpened his pencil for him and sat close by. He gave directions and encouraged Damon in everything he was doing. John forewent his own artwork in order to give undivided attention to Damon and Damon's self-portrait. John became a full collaborator in Damon's artwork. In contrast, Lawrence and Timmy made separate work much of the time.

I was immediately struck by how seriously John took his newfound role. I admired the way he handled his buddy, and I was encouraged by how John's classmates reshaped their thoughts about him. More than one of John's classmates turned to look at him while he was instructing his buddy and appeared rather awestruck by his ability to talk quietly and focus on someone else. While John was with his buddy, the others in the class found that they could not distract him into clowning around or being loud. It was as if he realized he had a job to do and that was to oversee his buddy's art education for the next few weeks.



Figure 6.1 *John and Damon working on self-portraits*  
*Damon (left) and John (right)*

## The Self-Portrait Lesson

Our first project with the buddies was to create a self-portrait. There were two objectives to this lesson. The first objective was for the buddies to learn more about each other by engaging in symbolic representation. Another objective was to help students see who they were, not just a fantasy of who they thought they were. The lesson was about color and learning to pay close attention to the world with precise color matching.

The day before we were to meet with the younger buddies (August 14, 2003), I gave the third grade students a brief instruction on creating the proportions of the human face. I hoped that the third graders would master this lesson and then take the initiative to instruct the kindergarteners when we began the self-portrait lesson with the buddies. In other words, the third graders received instruction from me in facial proportions and drew their own self-portraits in pencil prior to the arrival of the kindergarteners. Once we started the self-portrait with the kindergarteners, most of the third graders went on to finish their portraits alongside their buddies, but not John. John wanted to spend the time helping Damon make art.

When the buddies arrived we all sat on the magic blue carpet to look at renditions of different artists' portraits. We looked at Rembrandt, Kahlo, Van Gogh and Dine. The last painting we looked at was Rene Magritte's portrait of his wife, *Georgette* (1937). This portrait displays a woman's reflection in an oval mirror with finger waves in her light brown hair.





Figure 6.2 - *Georgette*, by René Magritte (1937)

She is smiling directly at the viewer, as if she knows them very well. I often asked children if they thought she might have a story to tell us. I also asked them if they thought she might like them. The mirror with the woman's reflection was placed in a blue sky as if it were floating with white puffy clouds. Symbol images floated in a ring around the mirror.

After discussing self-portraits and why artists choose to make them, we also discussed the concept of symbol making and why artists use them. As we began the art-making part of the lesson, I asked the older buddies to explain the proportions of the face to their younger buddies and help them draw their portraits. I was amazed to find that they remembered much of what I taught them. Almost all the third-grade children taught their younger buddies to divide the face in half vertically and horizontally with a light pencil mark. Half the class remembered where to put the nose, mouth, and ears. The kindergarteners did a remarkable job and exceeded my expectations of drawing their portraits by using the proportion ratios taught by their older

buddies. The older students were exceptionally good at telling their buddies to look in the mirror and draw the clothes they had on. I put out back-to-back twelve inch mirror wall tiles I had purchased at the local home-improvement store. The mirror tiles were taped with duct tape at the top to create a kind of hinge so the mirrors could sit up on the table like a tent. This allowed the students on each side to see themselves. The students could then frequently check their mirrors to see themselves and carefully draw what they saw in the mirror.

Children often wanted to draw what they thought they knew about themselves. I helped the students remix skin colors or suggested that students have dark brown eyes rather than blue. Frequently, children wanted to symbolize how they wished they looked. Girls drew themselves in symbolic Brittany Spears<sup>1</sup> outfits (skimpy and tight), and boys liked to depict themselves as a hero or star athlete. This alternate fantasy appearance seemed to be more evident in girls than boys. Caucasian girls chose pink shades to represent their skin color and frequently drew their eyes blue, even if they did not have blue eyes. African American girls knew that their skin was darker than pink, but they still wanted to draw their skin much lighter than it was. I felt it was very important that girls and boys were made to feel comfortable about their own skin, hair, and eye colors. Therefore, we talked about how we were all different from each other.

On the second day of the portrait lesson, we began the day with the embedded color-naming painting lesson that I described in Chapter Five with Lawrence and Timmy. Teaching children to aesthetically develop a sense of color mixing was the goal of this lesson. After the color-naming lesson, the children moved to the tables where I had earlier set more paint. I asked everyone to put his or her arms in the middle of the table (mine included). With all those arms in the middle of the table, it was plainly evident that there was not one skin tone that was exactly

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<sup>1</sup> Brittany Spears is a popular singer amongst young preadolescent girls.

the same. We were all as unique as fingerprints. The children always marveled at the sheer beauty of all those colors of tans and browns. While the children left their arms on the table, I demonstrated what colors were used to mix skin color. I picked out one child and then added a little of this and a little of that to get just the right tone. I put a little paint right on his/her arm so that he/she might see if the color blended well.

Jean queried, “Ms Heid, do you use all the colors to make everyone’s skin color?”

Joey piped up and said, “Yeah, she does, but she just uses a little more of one color for each different skin color.”

“That is exactly right.” I said. “Each different skin color uses more or less green and more or less red and maybe more or less of something else, but all the colors are used in making all skin colors. And millions of colors can be made.”

“Millions, really?”

“Yep, millions.”

“Ms. Heid? It looks like you are mixing up all kinds of make-up that people put on their face, like you see at the grocery store,” said Jill.

“Yes, it does!” I turned and smiled at Jill. “In fact, if you go to work for a company that makes make-up, you would have to be a color-mixing expert!” (journal entry, August 27, 2003)

The children spent the rest of the period mixing skin colors and painting their portrait faces. The children began to understand that they needed to add a tad more yellow or a smidgen more green. Before the end of the period, the children were becoming very capable at sensing what colors needed to be added to get just the right tone. This aesthetic experience helped them come to terms with aesthetic understanding by attending to the qualities of colors. I found students dabbing their arms with paint so they could test their newly mixed color to see if they

got it right. Finding a color to represent oneself was not easy. The kindergarteners had some difficulty, but the third graders helped them begin with a base color and add a little of this or a little of that. Soon, even the kindergarteners were becoming proficient in mixing a relatively close match of skin color to paint the faces of their portraits. Creating tints shades and intermediate colors was a skill not taught until third grade according to the ABC standards. This class demonstrated that even kindergarteners could use aesthetic sensitivity in mixing tints, shades, and intermediate colors. The third graders also worked with tints, shades, and intermediate colors for the first time, too. They caught on much more quickly and were able to work with these concepts much more vigorously than the younger students. After we had cleaned up and lined up at the door to leave art, I noticed that most of the children had not washed off their skin color paint dots. I decided to let them wear them back to class to signify their mark of achievement. What a great after school conversation they must have had with their parents!

John helped Damon to begin with white and add red, yellow, and green. After a couple of attempts, they had a color that was a close approximation to Damon's skin tone. Damon spoke up and said, "I just think that needs a little more green, John." (journal entry, August 27, 2003) Damon was right. It did need a little more green. It also needed a little more red to make the beige a little darker, but the important aspect of Damon's assertion was that he was metacognitively taking control of his own learning. Not only was Damon taking control of his learning, he was also looking at fine-grained distinctions in the extreme subtleties of the color tan. Damon also became the more experienced peer, even if it was only briefly.

### Creating Ourselves Through Symbols

After the basic portrait was drawn and painted, the next step in the portrait lesson was to create five symbols that represented five things that were very important to the student. The

symbols were supposed to float around the portrait in the sky like Magritte did in his portrait of *Georgette* (1937). We first talked about the symbols that Magritte chose to put in his painting. Magritte painted six floating symbols around the head of his wife: a branch; a glove; a candle stick; a key; a wadded piece of paper with the word “vague” on it; and a little light brown dove. I let the children speculate what the pictures might be about. I asked them, “What are these things floating around Georgette’s head?” Some children elaborated inventive and extended stories about the bird or the glove. Patty thought that the glove was a gardening glove because the lady in the picture liked to garden. There was a clue for this idea as there was also a piece of shrubbery. Patty’s buddy, Jane, spoke up to support her older buddy by asserting that birds liked gardens too. Another child added that some people liked to light candles in a garden to keep bugs away. After several minutes of this kind of discussion, I felt the students were grasping the idea that the items around Georgette stood for a story or perhaps something else. When the children became comfortable with this idea I asked them, “What is a symbol, anyway?”

John raised his hand and said, “It’s a picture of something that stands for something else.”

“Very good, John,” I smiled. I drew some arches on the newsprint stand. “So if I draw this, what do you think it stands for?”

“McDonald’s,” shouted several children.

“And if I draw this?” I drew a swoosh on the newsprint.

“Nike!” shouted two boys.

“And if I drew this?” I drew a bald eagle.

“The United States! America!” shouted nearly all the children.

“Good, then. How about if I write Ms. Heid on this newsprint?” I pointed to the words “Ms Heid.” Is that me, or is this some letters that represent me?” This question puzzled the students a little. After a few students thought about it, they all agreed that words represent things too and that they are indeed symbols.

“So,” I said, “A symbol is a picture that represents something else. Can anyone else think of another symbol?”

“The American flag!” said Susie.

“Good! What else?”

“How about this?” Richie stood up and took my marker and drew a heart.

“Ooh...that’s a symbol for love!” said Sebastian.

“I think you guys have got it. Let’s go back to our seats and talk about what kind of things are important to you and talk about what kind of symbols you would use to put around your portrait.” (transcribed from videotape, September 4, 2003) I hoped this project would encourage the buddies to get to know one another by encouraging discussion about the symbols they chose to put on their pictures. I asked the older buddies to talk about themselves, explain why they created the symbols, and what the symbols represented. Symbolic representation does not appear in the ABC standards in art until fifth grade.

I found this project to be very successful. The students drew symbols that represented the things that were most important to them around the head of their self-portrait. The children got to know a little about their buddies but also a little about themselves. I heard third grader Kelly talking to her buddy about her portrait:

“I want to be a rock star when I grow up so I put a picture of my microphone. My mom says I have a soft heart for animals so I put a heart and a picture of a dog that I wanted to take home a couple of days ago.”

“What is that?” asked Kelly’s kindergarten buddy, pointing to another image.

“Oh, that’s some crayons and art stuff because I reeeeeally, reeeeeally like art!”

“Me too!” said her buddy. (Journal entry, September 4, 2003)



Figure 6.3 - *Kelly, 2003. The finished self-portrait of Kelly and the symbols she chose to put around her head. Symbols also appear on the front of her dress.*

The students moved to the tables and began working. John immediately helped Damon by checking to see that he knew all about symbols. This was a difficult task for the kindergarteners. Perhaps it would be an impossible lesson to undertake if there was only one teacher in the room. John drew a bone that represented his dog. He drew a computer that

represented his mother who worked in technology, and he drew a controller to represent the Xbox that was so near and dear to his heart.

An essential part of adding symbols to each portrait was allowing time to talk about the symbols. The buddies learned about each other's pets, siblings, moms and dads, and the games that they liked to play. In the case of John and Damon, they discovered that they both had an Xbox, and they had some of the very same games. This realization seemed to cement their relationship.

There were three factors in establishing an atmosphere of safety with the buddy relationship: dialogue, inclusion, and attentiveness. Having a dialog where each child could talk freely about something that was personally important opened the door for the ability to care. All three factors happened between John and Damon. Right away, I observed this sincere inclusion from John to Damon. John was sensitive to Damon's needs, and he included and incorporated his buddy's ideas in their discussions. John was extremely attentive and protective of his little buddy. In fact, he often called him *little buddy*. He conversed with him about everything. When Damon trusted John with the conversation, it appeared that he felt a certain amount of safety in the relationship.

This became the first step in enabling care between the two students to flourish. When Damon felt safe and nurtured in the relationship, he was able to return the care to John by responding to him openly. This reciprocal relationship completed the cycle of caring (Noddings, 1992).

One interaction between John and Damon exemplified the factors of dialogue and attentiveness. When John began talking to Damon about symbols, he told him that the pictures had to be about something in his life that was important.



“You have to think in your head about some things that you like. You have to think about stuff like your mom and dad or your dog. See? I drew this bone for my dog.”

“Uh-huh”, said Damon.

“Then you have to think about a picture for your mom or dad,” said John.

“Can I draw a picture of my mom?”

“No, you have to make a symbol,”

“What’s a symbol?”

“It’s a picture that goes in place of the thing you like. Something that makes you think of that thing. Like, you said you have a bird named Cracker so instead of drawing a whole bird, you could just draw a feather or something to make you think of the real thing. Get it?”

“Yeah. So what should I draw for my mom?”

“Well, what does she like to cook?”

“Spaghetti.”

“So draw some spaghetti.”

“Okay.” (transcribed from videotape, September 4, 2003)

The boys went back and forth like this for a few minutes until Damon was comfortable with the idea of using symbols around his self-portrait. He may not remember the term “symbol” until he is a third grader himself, but he probably won’t forget what it means to use an image from his mind to represent something else. When Damon was able to articulate his good feelings for his dad as a baseball, I knew that he could make the intrapersonal and aesthetic transfer from a cherished feeling to a mental image and then to a symbol that represented the emotion. This was a huge step for kindergarteners. Damon achieved this step through the extended dialogue he had with his more capable peer and the attentiveness that John had shown working through his

problem. After John helped Damon, in a zone of proximal development, to brainstorm a spaghetti symbol of Damon's mother, Damon, in turn, was capable of creating his own symbol for his father. Creating a symbol allowed Damon to articulate or interpersonalize his feelings through a form representation. Damon first drew a baseball. He made a visual selection of a symbol. Then Damon talked to his buddy about what the baseball represented. Talking transformed his visual intrapersonal thinking into verbal intrapersonal thinking

This five-year-old child (and in fact all the children in the class) was capable of demonstrating visual, intrapersonal symbolic thinking and then connecting it to verbal interpersonal thinking. I am not sure how many teachers would tackle this venture in understanding symbolism with five year olds. The ABC standards do not require introducing symbols in art making until fifth grade. The beauty of having a multiage setting was that there were eleven teachers for eleven students. The zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1934/1978) was in effect for every pair of buddies. The more capable peer had the time and perseverance to stay with the learner until the concept was understood.

Damon and John seemed to be role models for the zone of proximal development. This was largely due to John's strong conviction in taking his job so seriously and being such a good teacher for Damon. The two were virtually inseparable. They sat close together and talked quietly about the work they needed to accomplish. They always chose to work on one art project rather than two separate projects. John did not worry so much about making his own art. For John, it was far more important to see that his buddy was making the artwork with him.

One of the arguments against multiage learning within a mentoring or buddy situation is that the older children spend all their time teaching the younger children and do not accelerate their own learning at a proper pace. According to Kasten (1995) this assumption was not true.

Kasten found that younger children indeed quickened the pace of their learning by being exposed to more advanced thinking, but the older children were given the chance to engage more deeply and to work more robustly with difficult concepts such as the idea of symbolic processing. In this way, learning was accelerated for everyone. Although John was not making his own artwork because he was acting as a teacher, he was synthesizing instruction on a much deeper level. This was evident in the seriousness with which he assumed his role of mentor as opposed to his willingness to be the class clown in the single-age classroom.

In the ABC standards, symbolic processing in visual art is considered to be a relatively high-end learning outcome that is only introduced into the visual arts standards relatively late in the course of a child's education (fifth grade). Through a climate of care, created through the multiage classroom, an opportunity for third graders to teach this idea became possible, thus accelerating their own opportunity for learning. By teaching in a multiage, caring classroom with multiple more capable peers, kindergartners gain exposure to the concepts. They did not necessarily master them, but they began to play and work with the concepts, thus giving creditability to the idea that they would be able to work purposively with visual symbolic processing long before the fifth grade.

### **Symbolic Playscapes**

In Chapter Five, I described the lesson centered on *Andrew Henry's Meadow*. The story described a boy who loves to build things and ends up running away from home and creating a village for all his friends with hobbies that annoy their parents. The goal of the lesson was to inspire the students to create their own clubhouses and village out of chipboard, paper, and other found objects. The objectives for the lesson were: 1) to conceptualize alternate realities; 2) to

participate in collaborative learning; and 3) to demonstrate individuality through personal choice. Although Lawrence and Timmy's participation in the lesson generated high levels of care through aesthetic story telling, John and Damon's understanding gave way to a different experience altogether. John and Damon's experience was rooted in the symbolism and storytelling that the students were hearing and learning.

After listening to the story, the students discussed the different types of houses that Andrew Henry built for his friends. Students made note of the tree house for someone who loved birds. They also noted the paddle-wheel house for the child who loved boats. And they talked about the castle and moat for the child who liked anachronistic play. These houses symbolically represented the hobbies and dreams of each child who moved into the meadow. When the discussion was over the students moved to the tables to begin making their clubhouses.

While the students were working on the clubhouses, John listened to his buddy's desire to build a gabled roof house (see Figure 7.4). The initial triangular piece was easy for the pair to construct, but when John suggested that they put another piece on the top of the roof, the task resulted in having to hold the chipboard for a long time. John and Damon took turns holding the piece so that they could continue working on other parts of the artwork. The piece finally stuck fast, and the two began planning other things to do to add to the artwork.

The children enjoyed constructing their clubhouses together. They worked hard to figure out ways to put floors on the clubhouses and invent things that were unique and particular to their own work. When one buddy pair could not make an upper level work because it kept falling in, they decided that they liked the tepee effect and they made a qualitative decision that the "happy accident" really worked well for them. As mentioned earlier, Eisner (2002) calls this flexible purposing. It is the ability to shift direction by redefining one's objective if a better idea



Figure 6.4 - *John and Damon working on their clubhouse*  
*John (right) and Damon (left)*

emerges in the process. This also makes use of Siegesmund's (2001) cycle of visual inquiry. In a cycle of visual inquiry, the lesson goes from perception to conception to expression and then to reflection. When students double-back and change their aim after reflecting, flexible purposing is evident. The clubhouse provided two places to sleep and a middle garden to play (see the picture below).

On October 3, I conducted the third day with the village lesson. I began by reading Daniel Pinkwater's *The Big Orange Splot* (1993) to the children. Besides making an obvious connection to literacy and language acquisition, incorporating reading into the art classroom served multiple creative goals. First, this story presented an outstanding example of the importance of individuality. Awareness of the power of making individual choices was critical

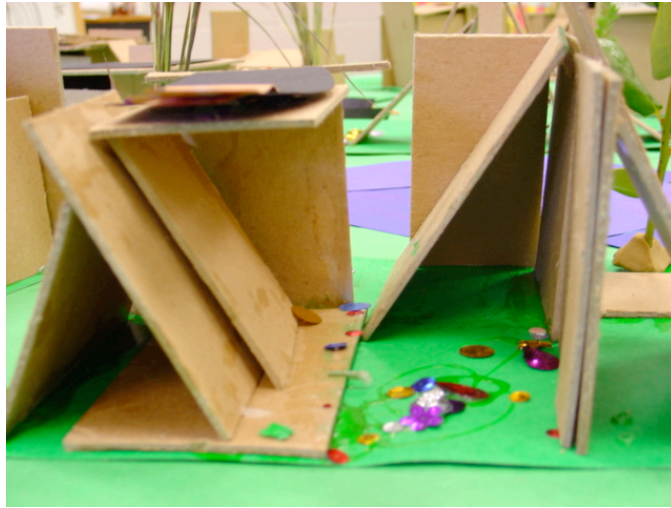


Figure 6.5 – *Clubhouse with collapsed floor. The sleeping spaces are on the right and left. The garden area is in the middle.*

for fostering creativity. Second, books such as this are parables that teach children morals and ethics. They exemplify imaginative metaphorical thinking and provide clear, understandable models to children of how to think about recreating themselves (Eisner, 2002). The discussion surrounding these stories provided children with methods for applying these narrative lessons to their own lives.

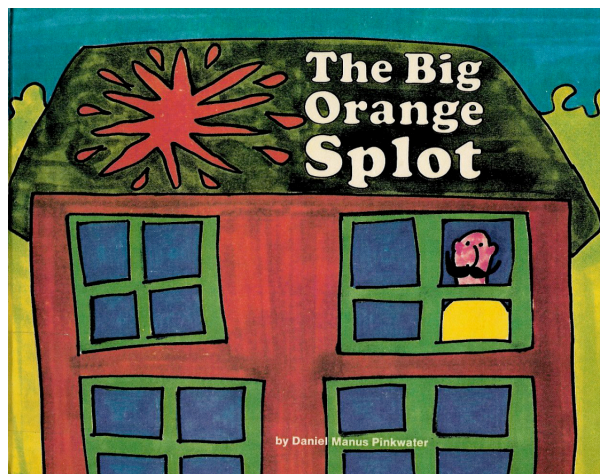


Figure 6.6 - *The Big Orange Splot* by Daniel Pinkwater (1993) Copyright 1993

*The Big Orange Splot* is a story about individuality and conformity. The accidental hero, Mr. Plumbean, who through reflection and communication, convinces his neighbors that their community would a better place if their homes visually express their individuality.

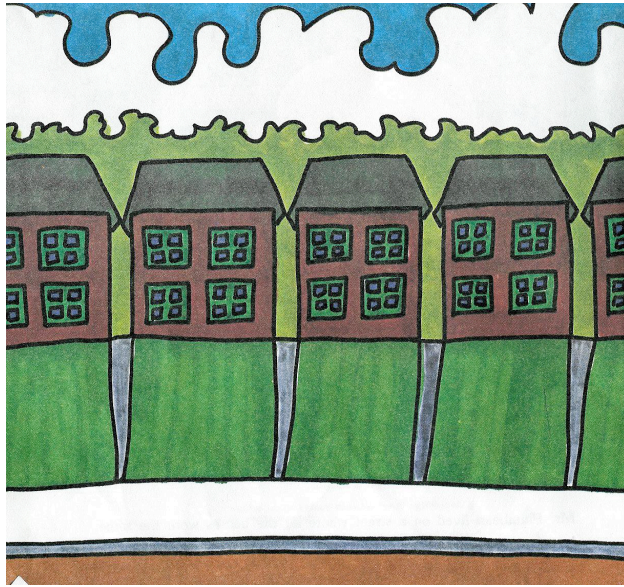


Figure 6.7 - *Mr. Plumbean lived  
on a very neat street*  
Copyright 1993

The pictures at the end of the book depict a wide variety of colorful and individual houses. At last all the neighbors realize how they can make their houses reflect a part of who they were as different people.



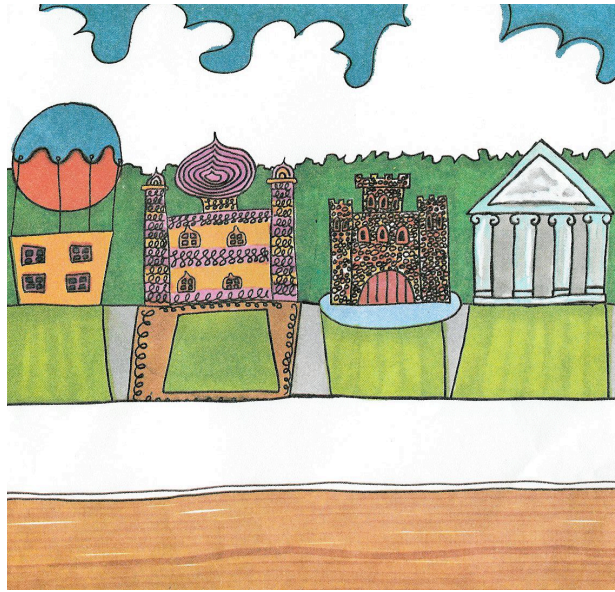


Figure 6.8 - *Creative neighbors at last!*  
Copyright 1993

This book fascinated the children. They were eager to turn their neighborhood into a beautiful display of creative and interesting houses. For the next class period when the buddies were together, it was necessary to divide the class in half so that only twelve people would be working on the 4x8 village at a time. I allowed the girls to work on the village for the first half of the class, and the boys worked in the second half. While one group worked on the village, the other group completed another art project at their tables.

To get the girls started, I put out glue, markers, construction paper, and shrubberies with which the children could decorate their houses. I hardly heard a noise from the girls while they worked diligently. I saw windows and doors being constructed, pathways that went from house to house, and even a swimming pool complete with a diving board in one yard. Streams and bridges began to take shape. Shrubberies and trees dotted the landscape, and the children began decorating their houses just the way they wanted. Small details such as doorknobs on doors and



cross-panes on windows began to emerge. The creators of the clubhouses made small qualitative judgments about their village. Buddies put their heads together to work on the smallest of details.

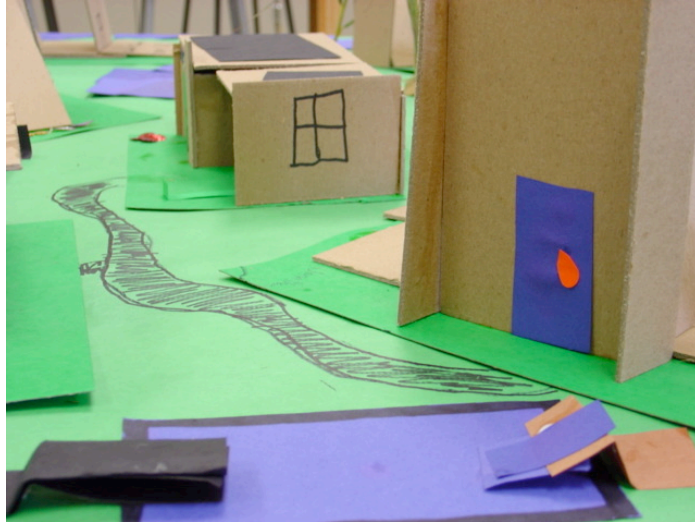


Figure 6.9 - *Swimming pool detail*

I sat with the boys while they worked on their separate project. After twenty minutes I asked the boys and girls to switch activities. The girls joined me in the art project, and the boys set to work on the village. After just two minutes, I heard a shout from one of the boys and another boy ran to me in distress shouting, “They can’t do that! They can’t own the town!” I was really confused. I furrowed my brow and asked, “What’s going on, Jackie?”

“Ms Heid, the girls think they can own the whole town!” he anxiously replied.

“What do you mean?” I asked,

“Well, they put up a sign that says ‘Girl Town’. How can they do that?”

“I am sure that they were not trying to take over the town,” I tried to sooth him.

“Yes, they are! They said so!” he shouted.

“No, we aren’t,” said Krystal “That sign is for our club house!”

Another girl piped in, “I put the sign in front of our clubhouse so you all would not come in. I wanted you to know that it was for girls only!”



Figure 6.10 - *Girl Town Clubhouse complete with sign, interior sofa, entrance and awning. You can just make out the bits of orange and red construction paper where the fires had been.*

I could see the ire rising in both groups of children. Jackie was still incensed and stomped off. I turned my back on the boys, thinking I had helped the situation. The girls and I put our heads together and continued working on our task at hand. At clean-up time Krystal went over to the village to take a look at what the boys had done. She screamed, “Ms Heid, Ms Heid! They are burning it down!!!” My teacher instinct kicked in. I whipped around to see all the big boys running around the village as if they were dancing and chanting in some sort of primeval ritual. They were shouting, “Yeah! We got ‘em!! See if they can call it ‘girl town’ now!” The girls ran over to the village and cried, “It’s on fire, it’s on fire!”

I looked at the village and saw that the boys had created construction paper fires and glued them all over the town. The bigger boys had the kindergarten boys on the floor with scissors, yellow, orange, and red construction paper cutting out fire shapes while the bigger boys

glued the paper on the village. I had to bite my tongue to keep from laughing. The whole class was falling apart at the seams! Instead of laughing at the shenanigans of the boys prank, I had to be serious lest the girls become more distressed.

I calmly asked the boys to take the flames off the village and restore the artwork to its original glory. They didn't complain. Somehow, I think they knew I would react this way, and they set about cleaning up the mess. The kindergarten boys just hung in the background, not really understanding what was going on. This was a small moment of regression in the zone of proximal development. They just couldn't comprehend the notion of the battle of the sexes. Kindergarteners have not had the experience with girls as enemies. Their feelings for girls have not developed out of androgynous feeling yet. They had been initiated by their older buddies into the feeling of what it is like to be "boys against the girls."

### **Representing Ourselves Symbolically**

*All the world is a stage and the men and women merely players.*

- William Shakespeare

I was stunned at the events that took place surrounding the burning of the village. As I reflected on this episode, I was amazed to think that these children were so highly inventive and creative. Yet, my reaction to the boys "addition" was to reprimand and call it inappropriate. It would be difficult to imagine that in the reality of a classroom, my reaction, at that moment, would be very different. The children engaged in highly creative symbolic imagination and play. They all reduced themselves symbolically to tiny little people who could walk around the village and make things happen. In essence, they were creating and elaborating their own story in a virtual setting, implementing themselves as the players. The feud between the girls and boys took

place in the village. It was not a feud that was fought in the classroom with real classroom issues. It would have been easy enough for the boys to simply destroy what the girls had done. Instead they took the imaginative leap of creating a symbolic narrative within the constraints of an imaginary village. Although they were working in a make-believe symbol system, they were also working out real life issues. This was a teachable moment, if I had had the wherewithal to grasp it. The children actually fought in their imaginations and *all* the children engaged in the imaginative interaction. I was also very surprised to see that the events were so real to the children. Real feelings were hurt, not imaginative ones. Real anguish was felt, not imagined. Even though they knew this village was an imaginative creation, they all engaged wholeheartedly in blending the lines between reality and what was represented as real. Afterwards, I was sorry that I asked the boys so quickly to remove the flames before I could document the event with my camera. However, just as firemen rush to put out a blaze before it gets out of control, I too had to put out the fire in the village. The emotions were too real. This was no time to sit down and have a critique.

The incident also illuminated a problem of sociocultural learning and working in zones of proximal development. Learning is not always positive. Negative and anti-social attitudes can be taught just as easily as positive ones. By allowing the children to work to the exclusion of the other sex, I set up a problem that opened Pandora's box. I created a culture (like a Petri dish) that accentuated gender differences and antagonism: the girls turned cliquish, and the boys resorted to violence. The more capable boys used their buddies as pawns for a means to an end. Here the zone of proximal development was clearly regressive. Even though the kindergarteners did not understand what they were doing, it was fun to help out the older boys. The more capable peer established a model of behavior that had to be undone. The flames had to come down

immediately so the kindergarteners would see this was inappropriate. The model of mis-education could not be permitted to stand.

The burning of the village creates new perspectives about classroom management in the multiage as well as the like-age classroom. Unknowingly, I set up an exclusionary experience to take place. The girls worked independently from the boys. This immediately gave the girls a go-ahead in creating an exclusive sign and an elite mindset. If I had teams of boys and girls working together, I doubt that the fire-starting would have ever happened. In other words, if I had just asked half the class to work on the village instead of dividing the class into boy and girls only, the boys may not have felt excluded and might not have resorted to symbolic violence to express their frustration and anger. If the pair of girls responsible for making the “girl town” sign had made it with the boys working alongside them, the argument may not have ensued.

This incident also points to a possible weakness in my design of this research project. I assumed that all buddy pairs should be the same sex. What if the buddies had been a mixed boy-and-girl relationship? Perhaps this kind of multiage pairing erases boundaries so much that mixing boys and girls in a buddy pair would not make a difference. I originally chose not to mix the sexes in the buddy pair because I felt it would take too long (longer than nine weeks) for each student to get to know his or her buddy well enough to develop a working and communicating relationship. These questions certainly open up more inquiry for later research.

Ironically, the story of Mr. Plumbean that I read to introduce the lesson foreshadowed the events of the fire-starters. The way the girls took articulated individuality in their work on the village was, in a sense, like Mr. Plumbean and his very individual house. The boys were like the angry neighbors who sought to change or destroy the girls’ good work because they felt excluded

from their creativity and individuality. However, there was a much happier ending to Mr. Plumbean dilemma.

I was so stunned by this event that I never adequately helped the children reach a resolution. If I were to do this again, I would certainly want to do a better job finding a solution. Instead of dismissing the boys and their obvious pain, it would have been wise to reread the story about Mr. Plumbean and talk about how he found a resolution to his problems. Using a comparative story may have helped the children transition from virtual reality back to real life.

Who was the instigator of this whole event? It was my little teacher John. When I had time to sit with him in the car-rider line I asked him about how he got involved in setting the fires. He told me he got all the kindergarten boys sitting on the floor and making fires and got the older boys to think about where the fires should go. They put flames on most of the houses and some were just set on the ground. He told the kindergarten boys that they could use yellow, red, and orange construction paper because they were the warm colors (what a wonderful teaching moment). Blue, purple, and green were the cool colors, and they would not work. Then he told the kindergarteners to create the flames. John did not show them how to cut out the flames. He said he just told them to make it “look like fire.” The flames were irregular and disjointed, however everyone knew exactly what they were. They certainly got their point across by making meaning through symbolic use of warm colors and sharp points on the flames. They had to imagine how to make a three-dimensional flame into a two-dimensional object that would be recognizable to the rest of the class. The accuracy of the symbol was imperative in order to get the effect they sought from the girls.

I asked John if he had fun. He said “Yeah! It was fun seeing the girls run around because they really thought the village was on fire!”

“What do you think the little boys learned?” I said.

“Well, they learned how to cut out fire,” he smiled.

“Yeah, but do you think they learned anything else?” I continued.

“I think they learned that they could think about things in their mind and then they could make those things. I like helping my buddy think of things to make,” he said.

“You are an awfully good teacher,” I encouraged.

“Yeah, I like my buddy. He is a cool little kid.”

“That’s what I think about you, John.”

### **Symbolic Thinking and Cognitive Learning**

The aesthetic experiences of the multiage classroom provided opportunities for accelerated learning in symbolic thinking and cognitive learning. As my students were symbolically representing themselves when they went from actual life to virtual play, they were making fine-grained qualitative choices and carefully choosing a form of representation to embody themselves. They were critically thinking about the creative houses they were making and how they could make themselves into tiny little people in order to engage in virtual play. Through aesthetic and emotional choices involving representing themselves, the students created an elemental shared sociocultural experience. Experiences such as this allowed learning to scaffold through discussion to forms of representation and back to discussion. This movement between the interpersonal, the intrapersonal, and back to the interpersonal allowed cognition to increase. Although sociocultural context of learning was not a requirement for such cognitive development to take place, it may hasten and deepen it.

Regrettably, even though there is mounting evidence of the power of sociocultural learning to accelerate cognitive development of each student, the ABC art standards in grades K-12 do not embrace sociocultural experiences.

### **New Curricular Opportunities Through Sociocultural Learning**

Accelerating learning so that symbolic thinking is introduced in kindergarten and mastered by third grade is a critical opportunity for learning both inside and outside the art classroom. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that learning is more efficient when we group shared characteristics rather than memorizing isolated facts. Associating items within categories involves thinking about similarities and commonalities. It requires building and extending on prior knowledge, not the mere acquisition of disembodied concepts. By transforming the qualities of experience into symbols, speech, text, and other similar connections, students make direct associations to their previously-formed schemata. Making direct connections requires finding similarities between the content and what has previously been learned. Learners who can connect their intrapersonal aesthetic thinking to other known symbols are creating learning connections. By relating similarities between empirical pieces of experience, students learn to formulate new conceptions. Eisner (2002) suggests that transformation of associations into new symbolic representations requires an imaginative leap. “Ideas that cannot be embodied through a medium are destined to remain in the cortex, a locale that is inaccessible to other and evanescent for oneself” (p. 99).

Waiting until the fifth grade (as the ABC Standards dictate) to engage reflectively students in such acts of transformation is unacceptable. Langer (1951) suggests that there is a basic human need to symbolize, invent meanings, and to apply meanings to our own world.



Langer suggests two ways to look at symbolism: discursive and presentational. Langer's two modes of symbolism anticipate Gardner's (1983) interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Although both forms express meaning, discursive symbolism refers to words and mathematics and presentational symbolism refers to representation through the visual arts, such as drama, dance, images, and music. Langer further suggests that it is only through presentational symbolism that emotions and the sensuous properties of human experience play a part in the symbolic representation. It is the presentational symbol that demonstrates the intrapersonal intelligence of aesthetic experience. During the symbolic play in the village, feelings and emotions were important to the aesthetic development, sociocultural development, and how the children chose to represent themselves.

Piaget (1954) further suggests that children begin making complicated symbolic constructions as early as the second year of life. Development of symbols is connected to children's psychological and social development. As they develop and grow, children use symbols to imaginatively extend activities that are representational and figurative. Piaget (1954) suggests that very young children in the sensimotor development stage engage in three symbol making activities: 1) symbolic play; 2) language; and 3) drawing and painting. These activities make symbolic dreams, imagination and mental images possible. The more symbol activities are refined, the more a child can collaborate with others. White and Siegel suggest, "Parents and children experience intellectual communion, richer communication, and richer possibilities of cooperation." (p. 256)

The lessons I created in my art classroom allowed children to engage in Piagetian activities such as symbolic play, language, and drawing and painting. The students engaged in symbolic play both in the village and in the synectic lesson. They engaged in language and

discussion with multiple-aged peers during all of the lessons with their buddies. And they use symbolic representation while they drew, painted, and sculpted throughout the lessons I introduced. If children begin making use of symbolic representation at age two, I wonder why art standards do not ask students to begin talking about it until age ten.

As children begin to master the various symbols in culture they move from intrapersonal aesthetic experience to interpersonal sociocultural aesthetic understanding. As soon as children can communicate their knowledge through any number of symbolic forms, they choose to represent their thoughts and feelings publicly. It is at this point in development that they can enter into sociocultural development with others. The village lesson models this point when making students' intrapersonal thoughts into symbolic forms such as the clubhouses. The boys used signs and flames to state symbolically and publicly their feelings about their own turf in the village.

Sociocultural experience accelerated learning in the art classroom. The students were able to grasp this new (and by the ABC Standards, advanced) information quite easily when care was present between the buddies. Younger and older children felt safe to care about their buddies, their thoughts, their own learning, and the task at hand. Aesthetic development and sociocultural experience in a multiage setting promoted a climate of care. Care enabled the children to engage in symbolic processing and thereby created new opportunities for accelerated standards learning.

Sociocultural learning may create opportunities for mis-education. This danger challenges teachers to be alert to several important issues that may create mis-education.

- Safety and regression issues.
- Maturity issues.
- Curriculum that is not designed for a broad base of learning.

- Care that is not talked about or modeled.
- Curriculum that does not acknowledge older and younger learners in the same classroom.
- Concepts, which are too simple or way too difficult.

Authentic symbolic representation is an outgrowth of aesthetic experience mediated by critical thinking. Artistically talented students can do this intuitively, but to make this form of cognition accessible to all students requires an expanded curriculum. The teacher needs to understand the cognitive process behind symbolic representation and create curriculum that moves students through stages, step-by step. Students must go through a cycle of visual inquiry of perception, conception, expression, and reflection. If students can understand how they are creating these images, then they display metacognition (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 1999), the ability to regulate and analyze one's own learning mastery. When John explained to Damon the process for creating a symbol, John was demonstrating metacognition. He was analyzing the process of learning. He was demonstrating that he knew how to think, which was a higher level of cognitive performance than simply making a symbol.

### **Aesthetic Development Supporting the Development of Care**

The sociocultural engagement with others that leads to positive aesthetic development requires care. This is also a reciprocal cycle: aesthetic development supports deepening and more authentic experiences of caring.

When my students engaged in aesthetic experiences, they expressed themselves through symbolic processing. By using a symbolic process, students created an outward expression of

their inward thoughts and feelings. A classroom that was constructed with attention to creating a safe and caring environment was a prerequisite for students to engage in aesthetic experience and explore aesthetic development. However, caring was more than the context within which this work was done. There were two ways in which care was developed. First, the students cared enough about their own thoughts and feelings to express themselves symbolically. Second, this outward expression was fostered through the sociocultural experience of the multiage classroom. The aesthetic problems that the students engaged engendered caring relationships between the buddy pairs.

### **Characteristics of Multiage Student Collaborations**

Successful multiage collaboration established an atmosphere of safety with the buddy relationship. There was dialogue between that pairs that included opportunities to talk, opportunities to listen, and opportunities to show the other and younger learner that he/she was willing to listen or talk. By allowing a two-sided conversation, the students felt included in the dialogue, the art making, and the entire classroom. When Damon told John that he didn't know what kind of a symbol he should create for his mom, John listened, acknowledged his comments, and then asked for clarification. This showed Damon that he cared about what he had to say. Damon felt included in the conversation and the classroom. By attending to Damon's comments John came to a deeper understanding about Damon's thoughts. This was an important moment for Damon. John cared about Damon's thoughts, and he felt a sense of inclusion from the attentiveness.

Another characteristic of multiage student collaborations was the importance of introducing an art lesson by reading a book of children's literature. These readings enhanced the

art lesson by providing examples of the educational objectives that were embedded in the lesson. They helped the student to see how the lesson was more than just making something. The narrative gave children the ability to put themselves in the characters' place and began to care. When the story was a parable or moral lesson, it became an example of symbolic representation through care. Children learned to care by empathizing with the individuals in the story. Not only could children apply the lesson to their own lives, but they could also imaginatively transfer themselves into the characters within the virtual space of the story and beyond. If the lesson successfully built on that imaginative transfer, then learning was accelerated.

### **Challenging Standards**

The ABC standards for each grade level spell out the essential subjects students are expected to know and accomplish in that particular grade and/or subject. The ABC standards offers solid bases on which teachers are supposed to build a rich curricular experience for their students. Teachers are encouraged to use the curriculum guides, textbooks, technology, lesson plans, and other materials to teach the ABC standards and to make sure every student is learning to his or her potential. If they so desire, teachers may follow ready-made lesson plans and benchmarks, which are made available by the county. Although teachers are told that they can tailor the classroom experience to meet a child's individual needs, they readily resort to using the canned material and textbooks because of ease, pressure from the county, and, generally, not having the extra time to prepare for a class. Along those same lines, the ABC standards offer a sequential curriculum. For example, second graders study Japan as a unit in social studies. Third grade teachers know this and do not repeat the sequence. More than once, I was questioned about

teaching Japanese tea ceremonies to kindergarteners, as if the study of Japan should be withheld until the second grade.

The Academic Knowledge and Skills (ABC) were developed in response to my county's mission statement:

*The mission of this county's schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards. (My Counties Website, 2003)*

The ABC standards are what teachers are supposed to teach and students are supposed to learn. According to my county's alignment of the ABC standards with standardized assessments such as ITBS, SAT I, and ACT, they ensure that my county's students are well prepared for these measurements of achievement. The ABC standards are also aligned with the state-mandated QCC standards, assuring that students are prepared for state tests such as the Georgia High School Graduation Test (HSGT) and the Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT).

Many believe that the curriculum was designed for teaching to the test. Plainly and simply, it was. Although the administrators at North Georgia Elementary School were aware of this, they still wanted to appear that they were also teaching children to think rather than to learn by rote memorization. With so much pressure at the beginning of the year for children to begin *test talk* and learning the answers to the tests, there was little time for teaching critical thinking, aesthetic experience, sociocultural experience, or getting past the basic grade level core knowledge...even if brighter children were ready to do so. Administrators were so worried about test scores that most schools in my county were putting aside the first 30 to 45 minutes of school

to do *test time*. This meant the whole school was working on test questions on which students did poorly the year before. They were doing math, working on reading, or memorizing facts. Special area teachers such as art, music, and PE, did not have classes during test time. They were assigned a small group of children, and they were expected to teach preassigned questions in which the student body as a whole was deemed insufficient in according to the previous year's test results.

Because the tests did not ask direct questions about art, the art teachers in my county did not have to follow a stringent pre-assigned curriculum. No one was at my door checking my lesson plans or demanding I teach a prescribed curriculum. I was free to design my own curriculum as long as I covered the ABC standards at least once during the course of the school year. My principal came to do an observation only once, and the assistant principal came twice to observe my work. These observations were a requirement of the state. All three times, I received high marks and praise for what I was teaching and the manner in which I was teaching my lessons.

The knowledge in the ABCs is worth knowing. It should be covered. However, if students are capable of so much more than the bare-bones standards that are assigned to each grade level, then standards become an ossified bureaucratic tool that hinder achieving the goal they are created to attain: robust student learning in art. Instead of seeing standards as defining the maximum scope and sequence of curriculum, they should be seen as a skeletal development outline not constrained by grade level. We should celebrate if kindergarteners attain fifth-grade standards; not be concerned that the students' cognitive skills are "developmentally inappropriate." If kindergartens could demonstrate aesthetic understanding of the Japanese tea ceremony, they would be primed for a richer engagement of the second grade Japanese social

studies curriculum. Learning is not made richer by holding students back. Accelerated learning is possible by guiding students in an intensive aesthetic development through sociocultural learning and care in a multiage classroom. Putting a cap on what children are allowed to learn is self-defeating and boring. Allowing children numerous, varied, and substantial learning opportunities in art (or any other subject) will increase a child's willingness to develop and learn as well as his or her desire to engage in new experiences (Caldwell, 2003).

My county's inflated desire to step up the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum by adopting what they considered to be higher standards than what the state advocated did not necessarily create a difference in children's ability to think critically. Cognition is derived from our biogenetic brains, our sociocultural experiences, and aesthetic development through care. Increasing the interaction between these three factors in cognition broadens and deepens knowledge. If we continue to teach children answers to the test questions, that will be exactly what students are going to learn...and nothing else.

I have aggressively challenged children through utilizing Vygotsky's zone of proximal development in a multiage setting. I have also challenged the ABC standards by teaching students through an aesthetic development model. Although I believe the standards offer some important concepts, the two models clearly have different objectives. One model offers rote memorization, one offers thinking, feeling, expressing, talking, and caring. The huge and demanding five-inch notebook of standards, for all of its obsessive good intentions, is actually holding these children back if it is followed as prescribed. These children desire, demand, and deserve so much more.



## CHAPTER VII:

### **Multiage Learning: When Care Between Students is Absent**

#### **Jackie and Tony**

##### **Journal Entry**

Today is the first day that I set up my camera on my tripod to take videos of the children. I set the camera in a corner of the room, plugged it in, checked the videotape once again, and deemed myself ready. I turned on the camera so I could later look at how the children entered the art room, and so that I could use the tape to write down the dialogue. I wanted to see their expressions. Were they glad to be here? Were they excited?

I brought the third graders in first and seated them on the magic blue carpet in order to talk to them a moment before the kindergarteners arrived. I felt I only needed to inform the third graders about the camera. They, in turn, could later inform their buddies on the social protocol of videotaping.

“Just forget about the camera being here.” I said. “I need to get some pictures of you for the study so that I can look at how I teach and how you learn. You may say anything you would normally say in class, but please do not do anything rude or act silly just for the camera. Okay?”

“Okay!” the children all shot back.

“I really appreciate your helping me. This is an important study.”

I went to Ms. Smith's classroom door, picked up half of her kindergarteners, and left half of my third graders to join her. It only took a few seconds to do the switch. Afterwards, we all settled back down on the blue carpet to begin the lesson.

When I got home that night I inserted my firewire plug into the video camera, opened up iMovie and began downloading my first images of the children in the classroom. I saw happy children entering the classroom and sitting down on the magic blue carpet. They were obviously anxious to get started. I heard several children ask what we were going to do that day. I heard my voice saying, "You'll see!" When they were all seated, I explained that I wanted to videotape this class and watch them make their art. I told them that I wanted them to ignore the camera. Then I crossed the room to get the other part of the class from Ms. Smith. During the few minutes while I was making the switch, Jackie stood up, walked up to the video camera, and started making obscene gestures and rude faces. He topped off his behavior by shooting a bird with his pinky finger. I knew right away what he intended. I stared incredulous at the computer monitor while I both listened to my voice talking to other children and watched Jackie "act out" for the camera. I could hear myself calling and cooing to the children who were leaving, welcoming the younger buddies into the classroom, and then visually watching Jackie making obscene gestures for the camera. The duality of the two concepts struck me. Where most of the third graders were still wholly innocent, Jackie had gained some street knowledge (Journal Entry, August 18, 2003).



Figure 7.1- Jackie “acting out” for the video camera. Shooting a bird for me on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of art.

### **Getting to Know Jackie and Tony**

Third grade is the best age to teach, said many teachers and administrators at my school. One teacher at North Georgia Elementary told me, “Generally, they have caught on to the rigors of school, they are beginning to get interested in subjects, they really want to learn, and still have that special innocence about them that they lose once they get to fourth or fifth grade.” (personal communication, September 18, 2003) I happened to agree with her. I too found third grade to be a charming age.

In Jackie’s case, it was not experience that he lacked. It was the right experiences about which I found myself worrying. Jackie was street smart; there was no doubt. What he lacked was maturity and a positive self-concept. He wanted attention. His need for attention was so strong that he would gladly sit in time-out *or* receive praise from me as long as his classmates looked at

him, laughed at him, or scowled at him. Good or bad, he would take attention in any way he could get it.

When I could get Jackie in a one-on-one lesson between teacher and student, he usually performed very well for me. I enjoyed many conversations with him. Although he often talked baby-talk in an attempt to get his way or some sort of additional attention, I did not allow his tactic to succeed. I worried over Jackie more than any other child that year. I tried rewarding his good behavior and ignoring his bad behavior. I tried punishing his bad behavior. He relished the idea that all the eyes in the class were looking at him whether he was praised or reprimanded.

Jackie was very immature for his age. He did not care that his classmates made fun of him for speaking baby talk. I often wondered about this five-year old mind packaged in an eight-year-old's body. What did his parents do to encourage this kind of behavior? Was he coddled? Was everything done for him? Did he have any responsibilities at home? Would it be possible for me to make a difference in this child's life when I saw him only three times out of seven days for only 45 minutes?

I paired Jackie with a kindergartener named Tony. Jackie and Tony had a difficult time getting along. Because their minds were so much at the same maturity level, they fought and competed, or they played like five year olds rather than settling into a working relationship of older and younger learner. Jackie was not a good role model for Tony. Most of their artwork was done separately. Although many third graders liked the idea of little kids copying their work, Jackie constantly complained that Tony was copying him. There was very little interaction between the two, even when I gave them tasks to encourage them to do so. It seemed to me as though pairing Jackie with a fellow third grade classmate might have resulted in a more appropriate "older buddy" for Jackie.

Many times, I noticed that assigned work would be left on the table in front of Jackie and Tony while they wasted the art period goofing off or engaging in rambunctious play. Jackie would tattle-tell on his buddy as much as his buddy would tattle-tell on him. Although other buddy pairs were quickly resolving their own issues and getting their work done, I constantly intervened between Jackie and Tony to keep them on task. I was painfully frustrated about what to do with these two children. I knew their behavior was certainly not going to be an example to support my thesis. I wondered if this relationship was salvageable. I wrote in my journal about Jackie. I wrote poems and created artwork about this child, trying to come to a better understanding about his behavior and how I might help him to become more of a leader.

### **Journal Entry: Jackie's Blue Face**

Many children would have dissolved into tears if what had happened to Jackie had happened to them. I kept markers that smell like fruits and candies in my room with which children might draw. I heard one of the children say, "Jackie, you have blue marker on your nose." The children love to smell the markers and try to guess what the marker smells like. Obviously, Jackie let the marker get too close to his nose. The blue marker made a huge streak across his nostrils. Although most children would be rather embarrassed about being seen with blue marker on their face, Jackie was actually very excited about it. Shortly after this exchange, Jackie proceeded to use the same marker to mark all over his nose, hair, and face. Then he started marking up his arms. That's when I caught him and asked him what he was doing. Had I been his age, I might have been mortified by such a question from the teacher. But Jackie was actually bragging about it. He stood up so the whole class could see him and laugh. I left him alone, hoping to let him stew in his own predicament. Towards the end of the period, he asked

me if he could wash his face. I told him no, if he was bold enough to do that in front of his entire class, then he would not be embarrassed to walk out into the halls. I stuck to my plan until the end of the period when he got quiet and seemed a little worried about people seeing him. I relented. I suppose that I began to worry a little about what other teachers might think about an ogre of an art teacher who refused to allow a child to wash off blue marker from his body. We washed it off the best we could, but not all of it would come off. He told me he was not going to do that trick again. I imagined he would not, but I was certain he would do something similar to gain his classmates' attention. (Journal entry, September 8, 2003)

### **Jackie's Reputation at North Georgia Elementary**

Jackie had a reputation at North Georgia Elementary School. During preplanning, Ms. Smith and I were looking over the third grade and kindergarten class that we were going to divide between us. Having taught at North Georgia for the last three years, Ms. Smith was familiar with many of the third-grade names, including Jackie. Only after the study was over, while I was discussing some of Jackie's issues with Ms. Smith, did I recall what she told me on the day we were dividing the third -grade class. In essence, she said that she had had Jackie in her art class for the last three years, and she would appreciate it if I would take him in my class this time. She implied that she and Jackie did not hit it off very well; she had had trouble with him every year she has taught at North Georgia Elementary School.

As the nine weeks wore on, Jackie seemed to stagnate in his multiage art class while others were clearly enjoying and benefiting from their experience. I decided that I would talk to Jackie's second grade teacher. I found her in the office and approached her. "What was Jackie like last year?" I said.

She sighed deeply and proceeded. “Jackie was promoted because he could do the work; he just had difficulty staying on task and he also had maturity issues.”

“Did you notice any problems with attention?”

“Yeah, he lived for it.”

“What do you know about his home life?” I inquired.

“All I know is that his mom and dad go round and round. They get into a fuss, they yell, he leaves, comes back, and then the grandparents are called and Jackie ends up staying with them for a while. It happened about three times last year. I don’t think they ever pay much attention to the child. They seemed to be mostly concerned about themselves. Thank goodness he is an only child.”

“Did his parents ever come in for conferences?” I said.

“I called them in because of problems I was having. They never came together, and sometimes I had to call and call to get them to come in for a face-to-face visit. He is crying for attention, or at least for someone to notice his unique abilities.”

“What are some of his unique abilities?” I queried.

“He can be awfully kind to other kids when you can get him to focus on them and not himself. I heard from another parent that lives in the same neighborhood that Jackie’s parents allow him to run amuck without supervision.” (transcribed from audio tape, October 2, 2003)  
Later she told me that one Friday night, way past midnight, she saw Jackie out playing with kids much older than he. She was very concerned that he had snuck out of the house to run all over the neighborhood and get into trouble.

These revelations were disturbing. I decided to talk to the school counselor to discuss the situation and perhaps get her viewpoint on how to handle students who never seemed to get

enough attention. At my initial meeting with the counselor, I learned that Jackie had a scheduled visit with her each week. She let me know that she could not talk about Jackie in any way. That was the end of that discussion.

I approached Jackie's generalist classroom teacher whom I greatly respected, Ms Edwards. She seemed to be a concerned and caring teacher. She echoed my observances of him. I asked her for some tips on how she managed Jackie. She stated that she was out of ideas. Nothing seemed to work for her either. The teacher told me that she had gone so far as calling in parents and grandparents for a conference. She had written notes home. She said that she finally resorted to separating Jackie from the rest of the class. When I went to his classroom to watch how he interacted with other students in a non-art setting, I noticed that his desk was against a wall, separated from the rest of the desks. This was hard for me to observe. I felt that something about that circumstance was just not right. I decided that he would not be separated from the social structure in my classroom, even though that had worked for Ms. Edwards. I decided that in order to learn an appropriate social behavior he must take part in it, observe it, and model it with positive feedback. Separating Jackie from social experiences seemed to defeat the purpose of trying to get him to fit in. And so I tolerated Jackie's behavior and hoped that he would grow up before my eyes.

Even though there were plenty of frustrations with Jackie, toward the end of the nine weeks, I felt that there was some growth in his ability to adjust socially to my multiage classroom. I will describe these small steps in the synectic lesson below. These tiny increments were enough to give me hope that if this study had continued through the whole school year, I might have made some important discoveries about the influence of multiage learning on the



immature more capable peer. Learning to care is at the root of this discovery. This predicament revealed questions for further study.

### **The Animal Mix up Lesson: Some Multiage Issues**

One of the first short exercises that I asked the children to do prior to beginning the *If...* (Perry, 1995) synectic lesson was to make a drawing with their buddies. I first shared my collection of mix-and-match books with the students. Mix-and-match books are put together with a spiral binding so that parts of each page can be flipped over to expose pages underneath to create new images. I have a book that creates new silly sandwiches, new bugs, different aliens, or new dinosaurs. I showed the children *Alien Alphabet* (Chaplin, 1994). Mixing and matching pictures, words, and names in this book can create almost 700 different aliens (See Figure 7.2).

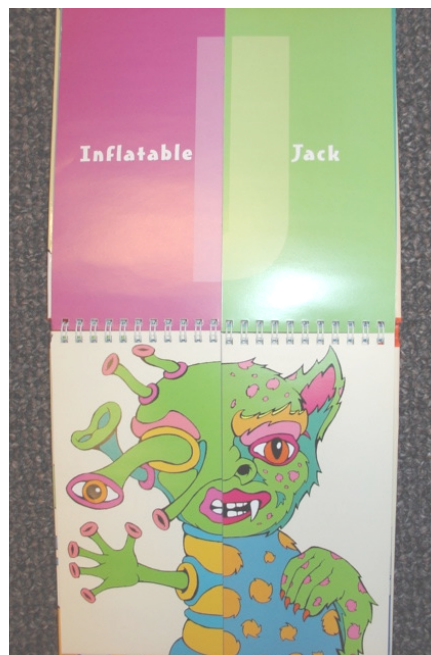


Fig. 7.2 - This is inflatable Jack from the mix-and-match book *Alien Alphabet* (Chaplin, 1994). This proved to be a good example to show children how to mix up animals.  
Copyright 1994

I asked the children to think of an animal and then create a new animal by joining their buddies' animal with their own. I wanted them to think of the unique details that identified each animal. For example, if the animal they thought of was an elephant, then I wanted them to think of the specific details that distinguish an elephant. I wanted them to use the big ears and trunk of the elephant and to imaginatively put those details on their buddy's animal. In this way they would create a whole new animal. This lesson was a preparation exercise for the synectic lesson I would do later with the *If...* book.

There was a great deal of excitement about the drawing possibilities. However, Jackie and Tony had difficulties accomplishing this task. Jackie took over the drawing and did not share the paper or his thoughts with his buddy. It was difficult to watch when all the other children were working together sharing their thoughts and ideas.

I had to ask Jackie several times to share his artwork and to talk to his buddy to get some ideas. At one point, I suggested that he draw one line, let his buddy draw the next line, and to continue back and forth in this way.



Figure 7.3 - Tony (left) and Jackie (right). Tony puts his head on the table, clearly dejected, while Jackie takes over the assignment.



Figure 7.4 - Jackie's fictional animal, done alone. Tony only made the marks to the right

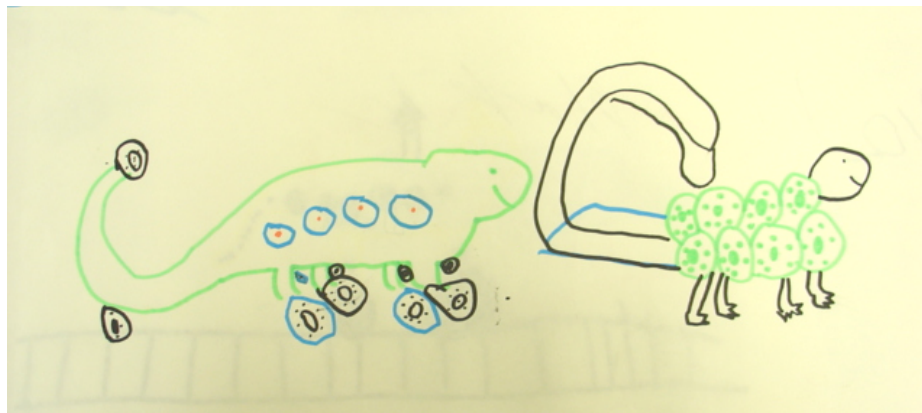


Figure 7.5 - A shared experience between a kindergartener and a third grader. They are separate but on the same page. Notice the shared and related images, motifs and concepts that one learned from the other another.



*Figure 7.6 - Jackie is writing his name all over the supposedly shared picture while Tony looks on.*

### **The Missing Element: Care**

Jackie and Tony sat together, but that was the only thing they did together that day. I was discouraged and heartbroken for Tony, but I was also discouraged because the buddy pair was not working out very well. Looking back on the last couple days and then looking forward, I wondered how we were going to manage the next few weeks. I worried that Tony's art education would not be advanced by being paired with Jackie for the next nine weeks. This was half his art education for the year.

I realized that what was missing in this relationship, besides a higher maturity level in Jackie, was care. I don't think that Jackie knew how to care enough about his newfound friend to

make any movement forward in his education. Although Tony was working at grade level in his academic and maturity performance, Jackie was way below grade level in maturity and barely grade level on academic performance. I took the two children aside and talked to them both about what they needed to do to help each other make art. I talked to Tony about being a good friend, and I pointed out how the other buddies in the class were working together. They looked at all their friends. Heads were together drawing or talking, and everyone seemed to get along. Observing these role models really helped matters. I think the boys realized what they were supposed to do, whether or not they had a desire to work together. When I asked Jackie whether he would like to be able to work with Tony like his other friends in the classroom worked with their buddies he replied, "I don't care."

"Then I want you to choose to care!" I said adamantly. He looked at me with his big brown eyes. "When you choose to care about things your world will change for you. But you have to be truthful about it. You have to really feel that you care; and then you have to show your friends and the world that you do. Choose to care, Jackie. It will be the best choice you ever made." (personal communication, September 8, 2003)

Learning to care did not come easily for Jackie. I could not tell whether it was a measure of what his home life was like or his inexperience with the idea. If his second-grade teacher's observation of his home life was any indication of the lack of role modeling how to care, I can easily see how Jackie had very little knowledge of what it felt like to be cared for, let alone care for anyone else. His immature ability to care about people, himself, the curriculum, or me was profound. If this had been a longitudinal study, perhaps I could have found identified some other issues. The few short weeks I worked with Jackie and Tony were not nearly enough to make up

for eight years of not knowing what care felt like or having any knowledge of how to return it, but I feel that it was a step in the right direction.

As the nine weeks wore on, the two children became more comfortable with each other and things did improve slightly. Tony and Jackie were beginning to show some examples of caring for one another. For example, I heard Jackie including Tony when the two were discussing the village. Another time, I saw the two children laughing together when they were busy making the “If people were buildings... .” It would still take a long time to catch up to his classmates, but these two episodes offered some hope that Jackie was catching on to this idea of caring.

As Jackie improved, I noticed that much of it was because Tony began to assert his feelings and make himself known in Jackie’s presence. Although I appreciated Tony’s asserting himself, it meant that I now had two students who were acting out a lot.

### **The Synectic Lesson: Acting Out**

*If...* (Perry, 1995), was a favorite among the children. The children would squeal and groan at all the icky ideas that the book presented. The children begged me to read the book over and over. The loudest beggars were Jackie and Tony. They wanted the story read, but they mostly wanted to *act out* by standing up at each page that was read and shout “yuuuuuuuuuuck!” They then fell over on the floor and laughed until I read the next page, and they stood up to say “yuuuuuuck!” all over again. Their little show was immature, silly, and terribly frustrating to me. I tried to ignore the behavior, but the whole class would laugh uncontrollably at their act of falling over at each page. This encouraged the two to embellish their performance even more. After about five pages of this behavior, I told the two boys that

they could not get up again, but by now the whole class was reacting to the pages with “yuuuuuuuuck!” I allowed the comments to continue as long as they settled down to hear the next page. It was to the class’s advantage to get quiet—they really wanted to know what new ideas the next page would bring.

I began taking notice of Tony. He was not encouraged to perform by Jackie, but it was obvious that he looked up to his buddy. He wanted to act just like him. He wanted his buddy to like him. He wanted to be noticed by him. Consequently, he resorted to any kind of behavior to get his attention. Jackie mostly just brushed him off, paying little mind to him. I sensed that he did not like this kindergartener stealing his thunder. I wondered if this was history repeating itself. Was this how Jackie’s mom and dad treated him? Was this how I treated him? Once, during one of these falling over episodes, I noticed that Jackie kept looking at Tony while Tony was mimicking him. I wondered what was going through his head. He gave him several dismissive looks and once seemed a little taken back by his little buddy’s behavior. Later in the car-rider line, I learned from Jackie that he felt like his buddy was hyper, out of control, and needed to calm down. He told me that he didn’t like it when his buddy acted out. When I reminded him that that was just how he (Jackie) looked to me when he acted out, he seemed pensive, maybe a little embarrassed. Maybe.

I will remain convinced that it was while I was reading *If...* to the class and the two buddies were acting out so badly that Jackie looked at his buddy and realized, for the first time in my class, that what he saw his buddy doing is what he must have looked like to the rest of the class. While this may not have been a pivotal moment in Jackie’s life, it was somewhat of a break-through in helping Jackie understand that he was the older buddy, the more capable peer. I think this moment was when he realized that he was supposed to act older, to be a teacher of

sorts, and adopt a more leader-like role. Afterwards, there were still moments of immaturity. But there were also moments of maturity,.

Jackie and Tony decided to paint a page for the synectic lesson that said, “If people were buildings... .” On this occasion, I was very pleased with their ability to work together to accomplish this task. Generally, they still worked separately; however, they both created pages to the book that depicted three buildings with a head, arms, and legs. The buildings looked as if they were running around and laughing. When I asked the boys why the buildings were running and laughing, they replied that they were running from the people who lived inside.

“Why would they run from the people who lived inside?” I said

“Well, if they stop, then little people will try and go up inside them,” said Tony.

“Can you imagine all those people running around inside you?” added Jackie. “It would be awfully ticklish. That’s why they want to run from them.” Clearly, they had worked out the story behind their idea together.

“What do they do when they get tired?” I ventured.

“I guess they have to rest sometime. Maybe they can lock their doors!” said Jackie giggling and looking at his buddy.

“Yeah, maybe they can hide too,” said Tony, laughing again.

“Well,” I said, “do you think the building might really like the people who live inside them and they are just trying to play a game? I mean, after all, the building keeps the people warm in the winter and cool in the summer. They must really like the people and care for them a little bit.”



“Yeah, I suppose they do like the people. The people keep the buildings clean. Wash their windows and stuff. So, I guess the buildings like the people. They just don’t want to get tickled by people running up and down their stairs.” Jackie offered.

Tony offered a rare comment. “The buildings run so they won’t get tickled.” (Journal entry, September 17, 2003)

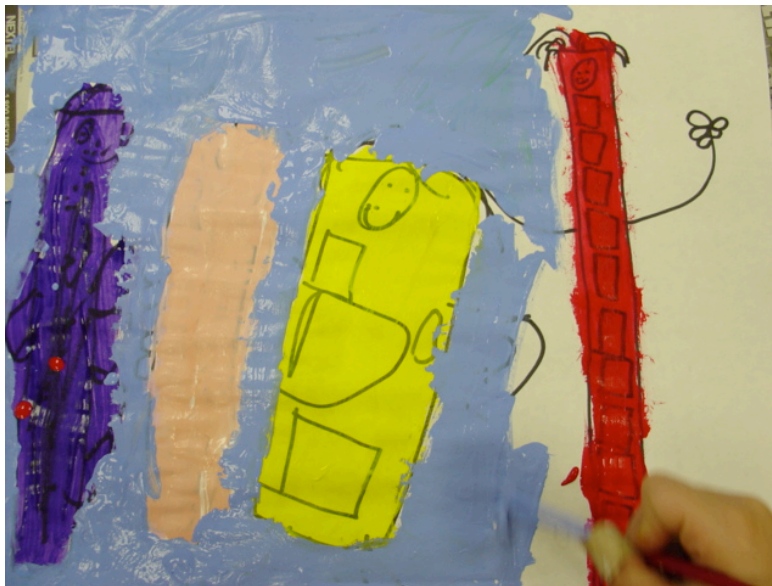


Figure 7.7 - Jackie’s rendition of *“If people were buildings...”*

Their shared artwork in the synectic lesson resulted in a common interest between two very young minds. It may have been a chance moment, as I never witnessed it again. During their shared time together, there was really little social interaction. They were two boys, different in age but similar in maturity, working side-by-side but not with each other. Indeed, it was an experience described by Piaget (1973) where during the fifth year of life, the children’s play still tended to be individual. The two boys, though one was clearly older than five, were acting in expectation of what Piaget had noted. Social play and behavior are slowly learned and garnered

as the child matures, gains more experience with people, and is able to role model what he/she sees and learns. Social interacting must be modeled. If there is no modeling, then the child will fail to know what is socially acceptable behavior (1973). A multiage classroom that provided a more capable peer could challenge Piaget's model of individual learning. But Jackie could not fulfill his appropriate role. Consequently, Piaget's theory was a more accurate description of what could be expected from both Jackie and Tony.

I hoped that Jackie would grow out of his immaturity and need for attention. I hoped that something would “click” for Jackie. I hoped that he would realize that if he could bolster himself, step-up in his role as the more capable peer, in turn he could address his insecurity. If he could exude his own confidence, if he recognized that he was a teacher, then he might not be so dependent on others telling him whether or not he was doing well or poorly.

I wrote a poem about Jackie. This poem describes Jackie when I was most frustrated by him. Like my own students who were making art to come to a better understanding of care, writing this poem gave me the ability to understand and empathize with Jackie in many important ways.

### **Jackie**

“Put some Velcro on your bottom and sit still” She says

What does she expect me to do?

Sitting still is just about the hardest thing

Listening is just about as bad

I just want to *move* and *shout* so that people will notice me

I can't help it; I like it when everyone looks at me

I like being noticed in any way I can

It is like my life accounts for something

*Why is it always so easy for the others to be good?*

I flicked a girl about 10 times in a row, until she couldn't take it again

She raised her hand and in a squeaky, pitiful voice said "Jackie will not stop flicking me"

I knew she would tell the teacher

I flicked her until she told on me

I wanted the teacher to stop the class and notice what I was doing

I flicked her again

And got in trouble again

*It's like I am addicted to this kind of attention*

I want that sticker so badly

If you scratch the sticker a little, it smells like pumpkin pie

She promised me if I go a whole day without disruption I would get one

It is so hard to do; I feel the need to be noticed right now

You know, if she would just give me the sticker now I would be good all day

I would just sit and smell that sticker and behave

"Jackie, you are making inappropriate noises again, you just lost your sticker today"

I give up. But now I can be twice as naughty

*How do your friends notice you when you get a stinking sticker anyway?*

I used a blue marker to put a mustache on my face today.

It feels so good when everyone turns to look at me.

It makes me feel like I am the most important one

I like the way I make them laugh at the stupid things I do

I like the way they say my name and yell, "Jackie. Stop it!"

I like how everyone turns to look

I like their looks of disgust while they stare at me

I like how their eyes caress my hungry body

I feel a warm sensation

*I wonder why I can't get my mom to look at me?*

Sometimes I act like a little baby

I use a baby voice with my friends and teachers

This makes everyone look at me strangely

I figure it this way: Everyone loves babies!

They are picked up and held, cooed to and loved on

My teachers don't like my baby voice but my grandparents do.

If I talk like a baby all sweet and cheerful, they pat me on the head and give me some candy

But today the candy doesn't satisfy the hunger and raw craving I have

So I will act out again to try something new

*My Dad is always at work. He never has time to play with me.*

I take out my teacher's note from my backpack and hide it from my mother

I don't want her to yell anymore

She and my dad do enough of that

They are always mad

I will just watch TV until they are asleep

Tonight I will sneak out and find the big boys in the neighborhood

They like me

I make them laugh

They notice me, when I do stupid things

My friend says he has a surprise to try tonight

*Maybe it will make me feel good.*

*Maybe my parents will notice me*

*Maybe it will take away the pain*

-K. Heid, 2003

### **Helping Tony with Identity**

As the project progressed, I began to realize that Tony needed some help with identity. The last project that we did together was the village. Jackie and Tony began working together in small bits and pieces. Jackie largely worked alone, but he soon realized that he had a buddy who would not be denied. It became evident that Tony wanted a piece of the action while they were

making art. Tony learned to assert himself, and took charge of the glue while Jackie attached the boards, instead of putting his head down in dejection. The two children were forced into making an artwork together as I gave only one green board for each buddy pair to work on (Figure 7.8). They helped each other hold pieces and talked (albeit in small bits and pieces) about what they would do to improve their artwork.



Figure 7.8 - Jackie (left) and Tony (right). Working on the village project, a shared artwork.

Had Tony not had the audacity to take control of his own learning, he could well have been a child who was left behind in a sociocultural classroom. This is dangerous stuff in the multiage classroom. A child can easily get lost in the shuffle while the will of the older learner affect the relationship. If a teacher did not recognize that Tony was not being attended to by his buddy, the time spent in the multiage classroom would have been ridiculously wasteful. Tony

would probably have been better off learning in a like-age classroom rather than working with a partner like Jackie.

### **Helping Jackie Create Himself**

I made a final visit to the car-rider line. I sat down with several of the children who were in my class during this past nine weeks. Jackie came running up to me and for the first time put his arms around me and hugged me openly. His hug felt genuine, not staged, or attention-seeking. He sat down and asked me when he would be coming back to art.

“You will come back when we start school again in January,” I said.

“I really like art,” Jackie said honestly, but in baby-talk.

“I really like you too, Jackie,” I said honestly, “Especially when you talk like a big boy.”

“Will our buddies come back?” he asked.

“Would you like them to come back?” I inquired.

“Yeah, I want to make some more stuff with my buddy,” he said casually.

“What kind of stuff?” I said.

“Any kind of stuff, it is just fun talking to little kids about making art,” Jackie said as he looked around the corner to see if his car was there yet.

“Do you think he learned anything from you?” I asked.

“I dunno. Maybe. I think he liked me. He liked to do everything I did,” he said distractedly while he fidgeted with his zipper on his sweatshirt.

“I think he looked up to you, Jackie,” I ventured.

“Yeah,” and he was off looking for someone else to talk to.

That was the longest real conversation I had with Jackie during the nine weeks of this study. Later in the spring, I saw Jackie walking down the hall with his class. He was walking

quietly and attentively. I pulled his teacher aside and asked about him. She said he was doing much better. Homework was coming back to school finished, his grades had improved, and he actually got to move his desk back to the center of the room. She also told me that she had decided to loop her class. *Looping* is a term that is used when a teacher moves up with her class. Instead of greeting a new class of third graders, she would move on to teach fourth grade with her current class. I was overjoyed for Jackie. Her consistency and constancy in Jackie's life was just what he needed.

Later that week, I entered the cafeteria to find Jackie sitting alone and up against a wall while his classmates sat at the lunch table. When I stopped to ask him how he was doing and why he was sitting alone, he did not respond. I looked at his plate. He had taken all his food and milk and made a huge mixed up mess in the middle. Remnants of peas and applesauce mixed with bits of chicken and honey mustard lay in a swirl. "If I had been your teacher, I would have made you take a bite of that to teach you a lesson!" I said. "But because I am your art teacher, I would like for you to tell me the name of your new dish that you have created!" He stared at me trying to decide whether or not I was serious. "Well, would you name it Jackie's Surprise or Mixed Up Mush?"

He looked at the mess again and said, "I guess I would call it Jackie's Embarrassment."

I laughed, "I see. It is rather embarrassing isn't it? I guess you won't be making this silly recipe anymore."

"Nope."

"That's good, Jackie. You've learned a lot this year." (Journal entry, October 18, 2003) I left to get my own lunch. Although Jackie made many good advances in his maturity, there were still plenty of slip-ups. However, the self-awareness that Jackie was showing towards the end of



the year was a good sign. There is always hope, but unless someone is willing and able to attend to helping Jackie learn to care, there is little likelihood that he will gain these abilities without role modeling and proper guidance from younger and older peers. Perhaps an older buddy would be good for Jackie. He needed someone to model a few things about proper social behavior at this critical time in his life.

### **Learning to Care**

For Jackie, life in a multiage classroom was difficult. Jackie did not have any brothers or sisters. Therefore, his experience with children of different ages was most likely limited (unless it was running around with older gangs in the middle of the night). I thought that Jackie would have benefited from a long-term multiage classroom. Possibly Jackie would have been able to learn socially appropriate behavior modeled by older children.

Social opportunities affect motivation to learn. As we saw in my classroom, older children can help younger children feel comfortable in taking an interest in a challenging task. They can help simplify a problem and enable understanding of difficult concepts. An older child can sustain the pursuit of a goal and thus model similar expectations for younger children. Older children can analyze critical differences in a younger child's studio production and suggest, what might be, an ideal solution. An older child generally has a longer attention span and can influence a younger child to spend extended periods of time on task. The older child also demonstrates a tendency to take more risks in pursuit of the task. As we saw with the kindergarteners when they were cutting out the fires, it is especially significant and stimulating that children sense they are contributing something important to others in the classroom.

By grouping children in like-age classes, we assume that children within approximately one chronological year of each other will have similar needs and abilities. This faulty association

tends to envision an education for children as a business or as an assembly-line production. The result is a classroom with little or no opportunity for children to learn in sociocultural environments.

However, the assumption that a third grader would be a more capable peer was also faulty. Jackie's learning environment needed to be adapted. Perhaps what was needed in my classroom was a wider age discrepancy. Grouping children differently, such as kindergarten, first, and second grades, might also have alleviated this issue. Having a buddy group of three, with two third graders and one kindergartener, could have done the trick by providing an additional third grader who was at a developmentally appropriate level of maturation. Perhaps adding a fourth grader to the group could have made a difference in Jackie's behavior, his ability to learn to care, and learning to return care in the sociocultural classroom.

## CHAPTER VIII

### **Conclusion: Research Questions Revisited**

Human beings are meaning-making creatures. My multiage students came to my art classroom with expectations of creating artworks that held meaning. We did not just create pretty pictures for the sake of occupying the student's time for forty-five minutes while their teachers took a break from their students. We engaged in meaningful experiences through the intrapersonal expression of new forms of representation and interpersonal linguistic communication. We engaged visual and verbal narrative. We talked with one another, solved problems through language and within visual media, and learned to care about one another. We all want to create meaning in our lives. Although some meanings that we create are expressed through literal language such as spoken words between learners, other meanings are garnered through forms and symbolic representations that can be represented and shared with each other (Eisner, 2003). My multiage elementary visual arts classroom provided a range of such forms.

On pages 60, 62, 64, and 96 of this dissertation I used several authors' findings to support my work. These authors addressed a list of factors that seem to be essential to elevating cognition and accelerating learning. Caldwell (2003) sees the Reggio Emilia as a sociocultural approach to learning as a necessary component for schools. It is a concrete example of applied progressive and constructivist teaching philosophy. Out of these approaches, my classroom utilized:

- The child was a constructor of his/her own learning.
- The child was a co-learner with varying ages of children.
- The child was a communicator through symbolic representation.
- The teacher was a nurturer and guide.
- The teacher as a teacher-researcher.

Eisner (2002) suggested six ways of understanding why aesthetic experiences help us to elevate cognition. Of these, my lessons included:

- The art made the children think. Thinking is cognitive.
- The children attended to the art and the relationships with others deeply.
- The children were granted permission and then openly engaged in imaginative play.
- My classroom was free from judgment and rules governing how the children constructed their art.
- The students were encouraged to explore their intrapersonal and then discuss them without fear or judgment.

Efland (2003) offered three reasons why approaching art within a sociocultural context is important. My classroom offered all three:

- The children studied art in a social context, not in isolation. Everything was done with a buddy.
- Symbol making and language played a huge part of how the students created, talked about and made their art.
- Much of the lesson was focused on learning to attend to relationships and sociocultural readiness rather than the domains of knowledge.

Honebein, Savory and Duffy suggest what such a constructivist classroom should look like. The following attributes applied to my multiage classroom:

- My students were provided with aesthetic experiences.
- Many times children had experiences with multiple experiences.
- Learning was authentic.
- Learning was student centered.
- Children utilized collaborative learning.
- Students used metacognitive and reflexive activities.
- I challenged the students to think about multiple perspectives.
- Students were encouraged to test alternate views with their buddy and negotiate outcomes.

The findings of Caldwell (2003), Eisner (2002), Efland (2003), and Honebein (1996), Savory, and Duffy (1996) identify some general themes in my own work. More specifically, I found that children should be authors of their own learning based on experiences in the presence of peers of varying ages who have learned to care about each other. The more exposure to different kinds of art experiences children have, the more likely children will be to attend to the special nuances of art, relationships, and curriculum. I found that the child, in conjunction with a buddy of an older or younger age, was a co-learner and co-constructor of his or her own learning. Even young children can learn to attend to relationships with others while they are learning to attend to art. It appears that these while learning to attend to relationships and art, children can accelerate what standards require. To this end, much of the lessons that were taught in my classroom focused on learning to attend to sociocultural readiness rather than the domains of art knowledge.

The students were always eager to study art in a social context, not in isolation. Students were encouraged to test alternate views with their buddy and negotiate outcomes of learning. These negotiations and alternate views required that children think intrapersonally and communicate interpersonally. Thinking in any form is cognitive.

The students were encouraged to explore their intrapersonal aesthetic realms and then discuss their thoughts interpersonally without fear or judgment. Symbol making and language played a huge part of how the students created and talked about their art. The child in essence became a communicator through becoming symbol makers and through symbolic representation. The creation of symbolic symbols of representation granted the child permission to openly engage in imaginative play.

The intent of this chapter is to revisit the five research questions I asked in the first chapter. I will suggest answers and explore the implications that are presented in my data.

**1. If care is defined (Noddings, 1995) as the students' reciprocal capacity to attend to each other, how might an art teacher introduce care as an educational objective into her elementary art classroom?**

Care was introduced as an educational objective in my art classroom by creating a multiage environment. Third grade students were asked to pair with a kindergartener. Care became an educational objective through three factors: instructional time, curriculum design, and role modeling. Instructional time was spent learning practical ways to care for one another. The most prominent of these strategies was active listening. On the days the third graders did not meet with their buddies we spent time learning how to listen, respond, and talk back to our

buddies. In several cases, most notably with Lawrence and Timmy, active listening was used. Although it takes time to become proficient with active listening, a few children were exhibiting early signs of aptitude. This finding suggests that classes that continue to learn to care over longer periods than the nine weeks in which I collected data may see benefits in sociocultural learning objectives.

Curriculum was specifically designed around students creating art together. A reciprocal capacity to attend to each other was necessary to successfully complete the tasks that were designed. In these lessons, students had to listen to each other and work collaboratively to complete a shared goal. Introducing conditions that allow care to flourish was the first step in creating caring viewpoints in the art classroom.

Care was also introduced through my role modeling. I exhibited a caring attitude by showing the children how much I took time to listen, greeting them by name, looking into their eyes while they spoke, kneeling beside them while they worked, acknowledging their presence outside the art classroom, and devoting the time to developing a curriculum that not only facilitated learning but also caring. I also showed the children what it meant to care about art materials and what we were making. Older and younger peers modeled my behavior and also role modeled for each other. Older children modeled care of materials, care of the art we created, and returning care to our buddies.

Learning to care in the multiage classroom means becoming alive to another person's thoughts, ideas, and discussions. This was evidenced most fully through the work of Lawrence and Timmy, but was evident in all the buddies. Pats on the back, hugs in the halls, seeing each other off campus, and sitting with each other in the car-rider line was evidence that the buddies continued the care during class and even after class was over. Through lessons such as the paint-

mixing lesson, Lawrence and Timmy attended to aesthetic qualities of their shared art making and inadvertently learned to find special qualities in each other. Much like learning to attend to the qualities of art, they learned to attend to the qualities that formed their relationship with each other. They learned to appreciate each other, but more importantly they learned to have feelings of an aesthetic nature for each other. They learned to listen to each other, look each other in the eye, repeat what they were hearing, and encourage each other's ideas. These small gestures were evidence that they cared for their buddy. These techniques and qualities were returned to complete the reciprocal cycle of care.

**2. If aesthetic experience is defined (Dewey, 1934) as how we critically attend to fine-grained distinctions in our world, then in what ways does the inclusion of such practices in the multiage art classroom support the development of care?**

Learning to attend to fine-grained distinctions about our world helps children to begin to focus on fine-grained distinctions about relationships. This was evidenced in the care Lawrence and Timmy exhibited in their relationship. For example, Lawrence and Timmy spent a lot of time talking, listening, creating, and attending to the books I presented and to the art they were making. During this intensive aesthetic focus on art, they also rigorously attended to their own relationship by listening, talking, caring, and returning care with each other. Although the two of them did not make the very best art in the class (from a disinterested formalist point of view), they spent time listening and attending to each other. They cared about their relationship as if it was a piece of cherished art. They talked to each other often. By seeking approval and advice from each other, care was reciprocated.



What about John and Damon? John's concern was that Damon learn to attend to qualitative relationships in his work generated a profoundly caring relationship. Jackie and Tony also demonstrate that when attention is not focused on attending to the task at hand or to each other, caring also suffers.

When in the presence of caring, learning to attend to each other becomes an aesthetic experience. The children in this study taught me that attending to the special nuances, fine-grained qualities of art and art making are often no different than attending to the extraordinary distinctions and detailed traits of a buddy. In this way, the relationship of aesthetic attention to caring is bidirectional. Each supports the other.

**3. When we provide aesthetic experiences (Dewey, 1934) in the multiage elementary art classroom, what evidence is there that students have opportunities for accelerated learning as measured by state-mandated standards?**

The data in this study suggests that students have opportunities for accelerated learning, as demonstrated in the story about Lawrence and Timmy and the color-mixing lesson. Further evidence suggests that John and Damon's engagement with symbolic processing is also accelerated learning. Through Lawrence, a more capable peer, Timmy, a less capable peer, learned color-mixing skills that were normally reserved for third graders according to ABC standards.

John and Damon worked through issues of symbolic processing together. This is normally a concept that is not taught to children until fifth grade according to the ABC standards.

However, John was in third grade and Damon was a kindergartener. John and Damon's work with symbolic processing was evidence that children need not be restrained by curriculum or by present standards. Both children were working at a more advanced level than their grade-specific ABC standards.

In the case of Lawrence and Timmy, the less capable peer was certainly learning at a more advanced level than what the kindergarten standards deemed appropriate. Lawrence, on the other hand, was working with grade level standards much more robustly than working to learn the concepts on his own. Sociocultural learning was present in both the scenarios involving Timmy and Lawrence, as well as John and Damon.

The essential attribute of sociocultural learning is that, by its very structure, children are encouraged to reflect intrapersonally and converse interpersonally. On an interpersonal level, children join in conversation on joint projects and assignments. They clarify the problem, offer solutions, examine alternatives, and then revisit the problem again. Learning becomes process-oriented as well as product-driven. In other words, correct answers remain important but the student processes gain a value equal to the end result.

In order for children to have conversation in the sociocultural learning described above, they necessarily engage in a type of self-talk and reflection as they grapple with the issues assigned to the problem. In this sense, sociocultural learning encourages intrapersonal reflection. In effect, what came to pass through sociocultural learning in a multiage art classroom was a process by which students had public and private conversation, which is aesthetic development through sociocultural experience. Perhaps our standards do not focus on aesthetic development because orchestrating a sociocultural environment is complex and untidy. But without sociocultural learning, aesthetic development appears to be an unrealistic goal for the elementary

classroom. This is a lesson from Jackie and Tony. In other words, sociocultural learning accelerates our expectations for learning by encouraging the aesthetic development processes that come through public and private conversation.

When teaching aesthetic education in the elementary classroom, the focus should be on aesthetic development. Aesthetic experience—direct and nonlinguistic—becomes aesthetic understanding through the use of language. The process of moving from aesthetic experience to aesthetic understanding is aesthetic development. Children who learn in sociocultural situations facilitate and accelerate the transformation of aesthetic experience to aesthetic understanding. Together, these things represent aesthetic development. Currently the ABC standards discuss aesthetic education as a cultural appreciation or a philosophy. For example, one standard for third-grade aesthetics asks students to “examine the individual reasons for preferences in works of art.” (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-22)

**4. What kinds of curricular opportunities for aesthetic experience, designed to promote caring and content acquisition among multiage learners, are currently provided in an art classroom?**

Curricular opportunities involving aesthetic experience should include lessons engaging emotions. Such lessons should provide direct links to sensory awareness. In my art classroom, nearly every lesson drew on aesthetic experiences. Having an aesthetic experience was dependent on the students learning to depend on their own feelings and senses.

With the color-mixing lesson, I asked the students to describe new intermediate colors. The students had to draw on previous sensory experiences to determine what to call the new

colors. Emotions were drawn upon to associate feelings with the color. Senses were solicited to find a metaphor that fit the name of the color.

The self-portrait lesson required students to decide on five symbols that were important to them. Making selective decisions were largely based on feelings about those five symbols. Deciding on a symbol to represent the important item also involved drawing on feelings.

The animal mix-up lesson utilized the students' senses in finding the qualities that described the animals they chose. Much like the animal mix-up lesson, the synectic lesson asked students to choose qualities from their feelings and senses about the familiar items in order to make something unfamiliar.

The village lesson asked students to sense qualities in the materials the students were using. However, more importantly, the students combined thoughts and feelings. They had opportunities to practice this as they responded to stories that were read to them and through their virtual play. Emotions and feelings were an integral part of this entire classroom.

Placing emphasis on understanding emotions, feelings, and senses in the art classroom is educationally significant. Children learn to use their feelings and senses to understand aesthetic development. Children are not like computers. They cannot be programmed with data so that they regurgitate answers when the teacher wishes without involving their thoughts and feelings. Learning to attend means learning to use feelings. Communicating with older and younger peers about the aesthetic discoveries suggests learning will be accelerated.

##### **5. What are the characteristics of multi-age student collaborations in an elementary art classroom?**

A multiage classroom allows for students to experience, model, and be motivated by more-experienced peers in the elementary art classroom. Tasks that involve older and younger learners in the art classroom seem to stimulate learning by engaging the students in aesthetic development through sociocultural experiences. Development in language based skills such as reading, writing, and talking further engages higher order skills such as symbolic processing and metaphor making. These forms of higher order thinking increase when students are allowed to practice them in sociocultural settings.

Before teachers and administrators embrace a multiage teaching method for their art classrooms, there are a few features that need to be considered. Attention should focus on:

- Pairing students with common interests.
- Maturity and immaturity issues of older and younger learners.
- Curriculum should focus on teaching for understanding not for rote memorization.
- Making sure that students engage in a curriculum specifically designed for multiage learning.
- Creating curriculum with broad learning thresholds to include students who underachieve as well as those who over-accelerate their learning.
- Creating a curriculum that engages children in aesthetic experience and aesthetic understanding (aesthetic development) through sociocultural learning.
- Understanding that multiage learning doesn't just happen; it must be constantly monitored to inform the teacher as to whether or not children are working and learning well together.
- Taking time to attend to the relationship between students, not just what is being studied.

- Taking time out of the curriculum to focus on how to care for each other, the curriculum, the art making, and the teacher.
- Arranging a schedule that meets the needs of the school, students, and schedules of children.
- Positive support from teachers, administrators, and school systems.

Teachers of like-age classrooms may overlook these features because their classrooms are designed for expediency in teaching and learning. Developing a multiage classroom takes time to get to know one another and relearn old vestiges of the way we were taught and the way we have learned. Students of like-age classrooms traditionally learn things alone and do not study the important aesthetic features of relationships. Teachers of like-age classrooms may not take the time to study the rudiments of learning to care, aesthetic development, and the importance of sociocultural learning. Evidence suggests that in order for students to accelerate learning care, aesthetic development, and sociocultural experience needs to be part of the educational objectives and curriculum.

This leads me to one final question: Are these opportunities significant enough that all art instruction should be reconfigured to multiage classrooms? My answer would be yes, if possible. However, if logistics do not allow the curriculum or classrooms to be reconfigured, then multiage learning should be included as an educational objective as a short-term goal. At the very least children from other classrooms can be imported to make multiage classrooms. Children can work in partnerships, and group work can be written into the curriculum. This study revealed that through aesthetic experience, children come to aesthetic understanding. By

discussing thoughts with older or younger buddies, children are learning socioculturally. This sequence is aesthetic development.

Given that children live in multiage neighborhoods, families, and future workplaces, we are creating a synthetic learning environment when we put children into like-age classes. This study suggests that children learning aesthetic development through sociocultural experiences accelerate their understanding.

### **Recommendations For School Systems**

In addition to what classroom teachers can do to implement multiage learning in their classrooms there are a few school-wide or system-wide recommendations that can also be achieved.

- Standards could include a strand on the social nature of learning. Benchmarks could include learning to care about art, materials, the curriculum, and the teacher. Other benchmarks could include learning to attend to the world around us, and learning to empathize with others.
- Teachers could engage in an in-service training to learn the importance of the social nature of learning. Training sessions could be assigned continuing education credits towards certification or certification renewal. In-service training may also allow teachers to design new curriculum that may include sociocultural learning in their daily lesson plans.
- The extension from the classroom to after-school programs may encourage students to practice what they have learned in school with different children.

After-school teachers can also be trained in teaching children to care as well as working with multiage learners.

- Colleges and universities could include courses and programs for preservice teachers so that they can learn the importance of teaching and learning in multiage classrooms and implement an environment of care into their classrooms. This may become a grassroots change in present-day standards.

Understanding that multiage classroom does not happen naturally is the start of implementing a multiage art classroom. It is crucial that children have a desire to care. Care cannot happen in a classroom without a sincere desire from the classroom teacher to nurture it, culture it, and make it a part of his or her instruction, everyday. When children are confronted with learning to attend to each other, to their teacher, to the curriculum, and the art materials they will fare well in the realms of social and psychological development. They will also be accelerating their learning beyond what the standards require.



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## Appendix A

### Georgia Quality Core Curriculum 1998 Visual Arts Standards

#### Kindergarten

1. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates art with different subjects and themes and from personal experiences.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)
2. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks - drawings, painting, pottery, sculptures, prints, fiber arts, and mixed media - emphasizing one or more art elements (e.g., color, line, shape, form, texture, and pattern).
3. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses a variety of art materials and techniques to model, construct, and compose original artworks.
4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.
5. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from another discipline and its topics as sources of ideas for own artworks.
6. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Names and identifies colors, such as red, yellow, blue, green, orange, violet, black, brown, white, and gray (pigment colors).
7. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Points out and describes lines, as thick, thin, straight, and broken.
8. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes and names shapes, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, and organic (free-form).
9. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes form as not flat.

10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Explores and names texture, such as smooth and rough.
11. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes colors, lines, shapes, textures, and patterns in artworks and in nature.
12. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes and compares subjects and themes of artworks.
13. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Uses art terms with emphasis on the elements of art to talk about own artworks and art reproductions.
14. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Expresses preference for one of two or three art reproductions.
15. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Offers ideas about what art is and who are artists?
16. **Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Views and talks about Western and non-Western artworks of significant artists that have recognizable subjects and themes.
17. **Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Points out clues in selected artworks that determine time and place.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

1. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Mixes primary colors to create secondary colors.
2. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks (e.g., drawings, paintings, pottery, sculptures, prints, fiber arts, and mixed media art ) emphasizing one or more art elements (e.g., color, line, shape, form, texture) and the principle of repetition (pattern).
3. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses a variety of art materials and techniques to model, construct, and compose original artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses imagination and immediate environment, including family, home, and surroundings, as sources for ideas.

5. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.
6. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies and compares the concepts of pattern from other disciplines, such as pattern in music, dance, mathematics, and poetry.
7. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes and differentiates between primary and secondary colors.
8. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies lines as outlines or edges of shapes and forms.
9. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Differentiates between geometric shapes and organic shapes.
10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies shapes as flat and forms as not flat.
11. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes positive and negative space.
12. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Differentiates textures by sight and by touch.
13. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes how artists overlap shapes to create a sense of depth.
14. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies and describes patterns as repetition of colors, lines, shapes, or textures.
15. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Distinguishes between natural objects and objects made by people.
16. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Uses art terms (elements of art) to describe differences in two artworks of similar subjects.
17. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes feelings in response to looking at artworks.
18. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Talks about how art is different from other things.

- 19. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines and judges artworks based on clues within the artworks.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Examines common subjects and themes in selected artworks from different cultures, such as the world of play, foods, costumes, celebrations, communities, and nature
- 21. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Recognizes ways that artists are involved in communities (e.g., architects, painters, photographers, window designers, educators, and docents).
- 22. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Recognizes and associates selected artists with their individual works.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

- 1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Mixes white with colors to create tints and black with colors to create shades (values).
- 2. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses a variety of art materials and techniques to model, construct, and compose original artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
- 3. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks (drawings, paintings, pottery, sculptures, prints, fiber arts, and mixed media arts) emphasizing one or more of the arts elements, e.g., warm and cool colors, line, shape, form, texture, value, and the principles of movement, rhythm, repetition (pattern), and spatial techniques (overlapping, size placement of shapes).
- 4. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks based on close observation of familiar objects (representational artworks).
- 5. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of materials and tools.
- 6. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Discusses how culture and environment provide inspiration for creating artworks.
- 7. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from another discipline and its topics as sources of ideas for own artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)

- 8. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes red, yellow, and orange as warm colors and green, blue, and violet as cool colors.
- 9. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes tints and shades in artworks.
- 10. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Differentiates horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines.
- 11. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Explains how space surrounds two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms.
- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Demonstrates how artists use spatial techniques such as overlapping, size, and placement of shapes.
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies symmetrical (formal) and radial balance in artworks and in nature.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses how artists create movement and rhythm in selected artworks.
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines two artworks of the same subject identifying similarities and differences.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses expressive qualities of artworks and gives personal interpretation of each.
- 17. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses and compares own definition of art with that of others.
- 18. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses why people make art.
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Makes statements about the functions (purposes) of particular artworks and the culture that produced them.

**20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context

**Standard:** Explains the use of symbols and cultural icons in selected artworks, such as flags, jewelry, uniforms, products, and company logos.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

**1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Creates sculptures by construction (additive method) and by modeling (subtractive method).

**2. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Produces art in each of the following art areas: drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, and crafts

**3. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Creates artwork using implied texture in two-dimensional shapes and actual texture in three-dimensional forms.

**4. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Creates artworks using direct observation, intermediate colors, lines (descriptive, directional, expressive), space (foreground, middleground, background), value (tints and shades), balance (symmetrical, asymmetrical), and emphasis.

**5. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Produces artworks in the areas of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, crafts, fiber arts, and mixed media.

**6. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.

**7. Topic:** Connections

**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from other disciplines and their topics as sources of ideas for own artworks.

**8. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Describes intermediate colors as red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, and red-violet.

**9. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Recognizes value as the lightness and darkness of a color.

**10. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Compares and explains descriptive, directional, and expressive lines in artworks.

- 11. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Explains how texture (implied and actual) is used in two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms.
- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Points out division of space in artworks as foreground, middle ground, and background.
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes and compares symmetrical and asymmetrical balance in artworks.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes how size, colors, lines, shapes, and textures are organized in artwork to create a focus or center of interest (emphasis).
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Distinguishes between original artwork and reproductions.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses the purposes and functions of art in today's world.
- 17. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines other individuals' reasons for preferences in artworks.
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Associates artworks of a particular style with the culture from which the work was produced.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Explains selected works of art as characteristic of the historical period in which each was produced.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Places selected art reproductions in chronological order based on information (clues) within the artworks.
- 21. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Gives examples of how technology has influenced the creation of art.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks using the following properties of colors (e.g., hue, intensity, and value).
2. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks using the following color theories (e.g., complementary and neutral).
3. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artwork portraying an object, subject, or theme from different points of view (e.g., close-up, below, and above).
4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks using direct observation, lines (descriptive, directional, and expressive), shapes and space (positive and negative), spatial concepts (overlapping, placement, size, color, and detail), balance (symmetrical and asymmetrical), and contrast.
5. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Emphasizes specific elements of art and principles of design and selects materials and techniques appropriate to creating an artwork based on own idea and self-direction.
6. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Produces artworks in a variety of subject matter and in the areas of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, fiber arts, and mixed media. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
7. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses available technology such as computer, camera, and video recorders, to create artwork.
8. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of materials and tools.
9. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Researches and applies regional history sources as ideas for original works of art.
10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies and discusses the properties of color (e.g., hue, intensity, and value).

- 11. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies and discusses color schemes (e.g., complementary and neutrals).
- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Explains how artists use a variety of lines and color values within an artwork to achieve three-dimensional effects (dimensional line and shading techniques).
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Explains how space and shapes can be positive and negative in a composition.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Compares spatial concepts that show depth in artworks (e.g., overlapping, placement (scale), color intensity, and detail [atmospheric perspective]).
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses an artist's purpose for using line, shape, and color to capture movement in artworks, such as gesture drawings, action painting, and mobiles.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Develops criteria for sorting artworks into categories of landscapes, cityscapes, still lifes, seascapes, and portraits.
- 17. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes how an artist creates a point of view in an artwork (e.g., close-up, below, and above).
- 18. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Develops and applies criteria for judging personal decisions about artworks.
- 19. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines selected artworks based on questions related to art theories: Does the intent of the artwork seem to be to imitate? (Realism).  
Is the artwork primarily concerned with design or composition? (Structuralism/Formalism).  
Is the work trying to express a feeling or emotion? (Expressionism/Emotionalism).
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Matches a description of a culture with an artwork representative of the same culture.
- 21. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Generates accurate statements about the functions (purposes) of particular artworks and the culture that produced them.

**22. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context

**Standard:** Explains how art reflects the relationship between artists and their culture (e.g., geographic, political, religious, and economic).

## **5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

**1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Produces artworks and graphic designs that use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message.

**2. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Plans, organizes, and creates artworks using: form, color expressing emotion, linear perspective, proportion, contrast.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)

**3. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Creates artworks in the areas of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, fiber arts, mixed media, and digital images.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)

**4. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Creates a separate work of art that imitates nature (Realism), is concerned with design and composition (Structuralism/Formalism), expresses a feeling or emotion (Emotionalism/Expressionism).

**5. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing

**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.

**6. Topic:** Connections

**Standard:** Researches historical events and uses these as sources of ideas for artworks.

**7. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Recognizes color relationships (e.g., complementary, analogous, and monochromatic).

**8. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Define characteristics of form as open or closed.

**9. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding

**Standard:** Examines how artists use linear perspective (one- and two-point) to achieve depth in artworks.

- 10. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Analyzes proportion in artworks as the relationship of one part to another or in the whole.
- 11. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Illustrates how elements of art and principles of design are used in combination to create contrast in artwork.
- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies specific media and techniques used to produce selected artworks.
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Critiques artworks in sequence of: description, analysis of design or a composition, interpretation of meaning, and judgment based on evidence/clues observed in artworks.
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Develops, judges, and communicates personal decisions about artwork.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Supports a personal position on the "big" questions about art (e.g., Why do people create art? Why are certain objects considered art and others are not considered art? How do we justify judgments about what is art? Must art be beautiful? Does art have to be functional? If it is in an art museum, does that make it art?).
- 17. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Interprets artworks from selected periods of art based on historical facts, theories, and other information compiled by historians.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Describes the similarities and differences between two works of art of the same style but produced by two different artists, such as Picasso and Braque.
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Explains how particular technological advances change the way an artist works, such as the invention of steel and the architect; the computer and digital artist, architect, and graphic designer; the camera and the photographer.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

1. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Plans and creates artworks using elements of art and principles of design for compositions expressing an intended meaning.
2. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Plans and creates additive and subtractive sculptures in a variety of media.
3. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses art materials and tools.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)
4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Produces an interpretation of the same architectural structure in both atmospheric and linear perspective.
5. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates a series of artworks that expresses a feeling or emotion (Expressionism/ Emotionalism).
6. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools
7. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from another discipline and its topics as sources of ideas for own artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
8. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Analyzes how artists have applied color relationships (value, intensity, tints and shades, cool and warm colors) to create descriptive and expressive effects in artworks.
9. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines the characteristics of form, such as open, closed, functional, decorative, organic, and geometric.
10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes how the illusion of mass is created by color, line, or texture in two-dimensional artworks.
11. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Analyzes how artists and architects have applied linear and atmospheric (aerial) perspective to communicate the illusion of space.

- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes the interrelationships between the elements of art and the principles of design in artworks and in the environment.
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Compares and contrasts how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
written by a professional art critic using periodicals, books, Internet, and other telecommunications sources.
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Judges an artwork based on how successfully it expresses aspects of the society in which it was produced.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Judges an artwork based on whether its organization creates a vivid and intense impression.
- 17. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Develops and applies appropriate criteria for making aesthetic judgments of artworks and product designs.
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Uses timelines, graphs, and visuals to trace important historical developments of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa using indigenous artworks.
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Analyzes and compares historical accounts of an artist and/or artwork from two or more sources.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Compares and contrasts styles of selected artworks from Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.
- 21. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Describes the materials, tools, and techniques employed by artists in producing particular artworks and explains the advancements that preceded their use.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- 1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Plans and creates artworks using the principles of design to organize the elements of art for creating a composition.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)

2. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates artworks to depict a mood, emphasize the effects of light as reflected off surfaces and within the atmosphere, or demonstrate proportion.
3. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses art materials and techniques.  
(See Introduction: Matrix.)
4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Produces interpretations of the same landscape in both atmospheric (aerial) and linear perspective.
5. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates a series of artworks that is concerned with design and composition (Structuralism/ Formalism).
6. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.
7. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from another discipline and its topics as sources of ideas for own artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
8. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes the properties of color (hue, value, and intensity) and the color schemes of monochromatic, analogous, and complementary.
9. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Judges an artwork based on how successfully it expresses aspects of the society in which it was produced.
10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Examines selected artworks based on questions related to art theories such as:  
Does the intent of the artwork seem to be to imitate? (Realism).  
Is the artwork primarily concerned with design or composition?  
(Structuralism/Formalism).  
Is the work trying to express a feeling or emotion? (Expressionism/Emotionalism).
11. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Compares and contrasts the features and characteristics of linear perspective and atmospheric (aerial) perspective in selected artworks.
12. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Identifies the interrelationships between elements of art and the principles of design in artworks and the environment.

- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Discusses how media used to create artworks (e.g., sculpture, drawing, painting, pottery, fiber arts, photography, video, and computer production) affects artistic expression.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols or ideas, to communicate a message.
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes the expressive quality (feeling/mood) of artworks.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Distinguishes between the art historian and the art critic citing their specific roles and functions within societies, past and present.
- 17. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Locates, reads, and summarizes major points from historical accounts of artists and/or artworks indigenous to a specific culture.
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Traces the development of selected art professions from past to present societies, such as painting, architecture, photography, printmaking, and graphic designing.
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Uses timelines, graphs, and visuals to trace important historical developments of the Americas, Europe, and Oceania using indigenous artworks.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Compares and contrasts styles of selected artworks from North, South, and Central Americas, and Europe.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

- 1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Selects subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message in an original artwork.
- 2. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Designs and produces artworks such as graphics, jewelry, pottery, weaving, and public art for a specific function.
- 3. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses various art materials and techniques.



4. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Renders a subject in realistic detail using either linear or atmospheric perspective.
5. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Creates a series of artworks that imitate nature (Realism).
6. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Plans and creates a series of different illustrations on a single theme using the elements of art and principles of design.
7. **Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates proper care and safe use of art materials and tools.
8. **Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from another discipline and its topics as sources of ideas for own artworks. (See Introduction: Matrix.)
9. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Evaluates artists' use of color relationships (value, intensity, tints and shades, cool and warm colors) to create an intended descriptive and expressive effect in artworks.
10. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Interprets how artists and architects have applied linear and atmospheric (aerial) perspective to communicate the illusion of space.
11. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Analyzes the interrelationships between the elements of art and principles of design in artworks and in the environment.
12. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Differentiates between various media and techniques used to produce two-and three-dimensional artworks.
13. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Reads an art review or critique to analyze and evaluate the viewpoint (main idea) of the art critic citing statements within the source.
14. **Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Expands and develops a personal position on aesthetics: What is aesthetics? Why do people create art? Why are certain objects considered art and others are not considered art? How do we justify judgments about what is art? Must art be beautiful? Does art have to be functional? If it is in an art museum, is it art?

- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Judges a utilitarian object on the basis of how well it functions or fits a context.
- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Evaluates, using appropriate criteria, two or more artworks that are different in appearance, but are often judged to be essentially of the same aesthetic worth.
- 17. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Examines how political, geographic, and social developments of colonial America are reflected in artworks created during this time period.
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Uses timelines, graphs, and visuals to trace important historical developments of colonial America using indigenous artworks (including those of Native American cultures and local and regional art and artists).
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Explains why artworks from technologically developed societies differ from those of primitive societies.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Writes an historical account of an artist and/or artwork based on several sources (e.g., periodicals, books, Internet, and other telecommunication technology).

## Grade 9-12 Painting

- 1. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Develops ideas, plans, and produces original paintings from these content areas: observation experiences, imagination, and emotions.
- 2. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Develops ideas, plans, and produces paintings that emphasize selected elements of art and principles of design.
- 3. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates use of color theory (hue, intensity, value, and color schemes) to create expressive qualities in paintings and to portray subjects in different lighting conditions.
- 4. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Experiments with tools, media (including computer paint programs), and methods of paint application to create a variety of painting effects.
- 5. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Uses spatial concepts to create the illusion of depth in paintings.

- 6. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Recognizes that painters use a problem-solving process (e.g., conceiving an idea, elaborating and refining it, giving form to the idea with paint media, evaluating the result, and then beginning the process again) to create and applies that process in own artwork.
- 7. Topic:** Artistic Skills and Knowledge: Creating, Performing, Producing  
**Standard:** Demonstrates and applies knowledge of computer technology in painting, such as paint programs, importing and altering own paintings, and use of own digital art in mixed media paintings.
- 8. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Relates color theory to science and discusses difference between pigment and light color theories.
- 9. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Applies concepts and ideas from other disciplines as sources of ideas for own artworks.
- 10. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Evaluates through expository or creative writing the role of paintings as a visual record of humankind's cultural, political, scientific, and religious history.
- 11. Topic:** Connections  
**Standard:** Recognizes the application of higher-order thinking skills (e.g., tolerance of ambiguity, nuanced judgment, complex thinking, and finding structure in apparent disorder) in the creation and production of paintings and discusses their transfer to practical and workforce situations.
- 12. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Describes how the elements of art and the principles of design function to create selected expressive and/or visual qualities.
- 13. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Recognizes and describes the content of objective, abstract, and nonobjective paintings.
- 14. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Critically analyzes paintings using the processes of description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment based on evidence observed in the work.
- 15. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Evaluates, based on predetermined criteria, own performance and progress on skills and written and visual products.

- 16. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Compares and contrasts paintings that are similar and those that are different in style.
- 17. Topic:** Critical Analysis and Aesthetic Understanding  
**Standard:** Makes informed aesthetic responses by relating his/her own paintings to work by major artists.
- 18. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Recognizes and discusses selected major paintings, artists, and styles from diverse historical periods of world cultures.
- 19. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Determines the influences of historical, social, and religious factors on the development of paintings.
- 20. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Compares the roles of a painter in contemporary society with the historical roles of the painter in world societies.
- 21. Topic:** Historical and Cultural Context  
**Standard:** Researches and analyzes diverse paintings through Internet museums, exhibits, reviews and critiques, periodicals, texts, local museums, and galleries.

## **Appendix B**

### **ABC Standards**

#### **Kindergarten**

##### **Creation and Performance**

- explore the qualities of line (thick and thin) and use a variety of lines in works of art (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-1)
- describe and use geometric shapes in works of art (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-2)
- employ color to indicate mood in works of art (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-3)
- repeat lines, shapes and colors to create a pattern (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-4)
- recognize differences of line, shape and color (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-5)
- point out space between and around shapes (KVA\_A1999-6)
- demonstrate proper use and care of art materials (QCC, CE) (KVA\_A1999-8)
- explore a variety of two and three dimensional art mediums (QCC) (KVA\_A1999-9)

##### **Perception and Analysis**

- identify geometric shapes (QCC) (KVA\_B1999-10)
- distinguish between natural and human-made forms (KVA\_B1999-11)
- recognize visual and tactile textures (QCC) (KVA\_B1999-12)
- distinguish between warm and cool colors (QCC) (KVA\_B1999-13)
- recognize factors in works of art that infer time and location (QCC) (KVA\_B1999-14)
- express preferences among art reproductions (QCC) (KVA\_B1999-15)

##### **Cultural and Historical Content**

- view selected works of art by master artists which have recognizable subjects (family, animals, plants, buildings) (QCC) (KVA\_C1999-16)
- identify artists as the makers of art (QCC) (KVA\_C1999-17)

#### **1st Grade**

##### **Creation and Performance**

- use a variety of art materials and techniques to model, construct, and compose original works of art (QCC, CE) (1VA\_A1999-1)

- name a variety of lines (straight, curved, diagonal, horizontal, vertical) and use them in works of art (1VA\_A1999-2)
- identify line as the outline or edge of shapes (QCC) (1VA\_A1999-4)
- use 2-D shapes, both geometric and organic to demonstrate unity, variation and contrast (QCC) (1VA\_A1999-5)
- repeat visual and tactile textures with color, line and shape to create a pattern (QCC) (1VA\_A1999-6)
- identify primary and secondary colors (QCC) (1VA\_A1999-7)
- mix secondary colors from primary colors (QCC) (1VA\_A1999-8)
- use warm and cool colors in a composition (1VA\_A1999-9)
- create works of art with attention to the elements of art (QCC, CE) (1VA\_A1999-10)
- use imagination and immediate environment, including family, home and surroundings, as sources for ideas (1VA\_A1999-11)
- demonstrate proper care and safe use of art tools and materials (CE) (1VA\_A1999-12)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- identify line qualities (thick, thin, straight, curved, angled) (1VA\_B1999-13)
- recognize 2-D shapes (geometric and organic) (1VA\_B1999-14)
- identify shapes as 2-D (flat) and forms as 3-D (not flat) (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-15)
- recognize positive and negative space (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-16)
- recognize how artists overlap shapes to create a sense of depth (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-17)
- distinguish between natural objects and objects made by people (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-18)
- use the terms for elements of art to describe differences in two works of art with similar subjects (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-19)
- explore the concept of center of interest (emphasis) using size and color (1VA\_B1999-20)
- describe the mood depicted in a given work of art (1VA\_B1999-21)
- state reasons for preference between one work of art and another (QCC) (1VA\_B1999-22)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- identify different kinds of artists (painter, architect, sculptor) (1VA\_C1999-23)
- recognize ways that people are involved in art in their community (architects, painters, photographers, window designers, educators, docents) (QCC, CE) (1VA\_C1999-24)
- explore subject in works of art by master artists (QCC) (1VA\_C1999-25)
- compare the concepts of pattern from other disciplines, such as a pattern in music (QCC) (1VA\_C1999-27)

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

### **Creation, Performance and Production**

- produce various types of lines (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-1)
- create sculpture (form) (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-2)

- produce tactile (real) textures (2VA\_A1999-3)
- produce visual (implied) textures in 2-D works of art (2VA\_A1999-4)
- define and use neutral colors (2VA\_A1999-5)
- produce pattern through repetition of the elements of art (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-7)
- use contrasting colors in compositions (create paintings and drawings using light and dark, warm and cool colors) (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-8)
- use a variety of visual and tactile textures in compositions (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-9)
- produce rhythm and movement in artwork (2VA\_A1999-10)
- mix white and black with colors to lighten and darken (tints and shades) (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-11)
- practice and demonstrate safe and proper use of art materials (QCC, CE) (2VA\_A1999-12)
- create works of art using symmetrical balance (QCC, CE) (2VA\_A1999-13)
- create a center of interest using color (emphasis) (CE) (2VA\_A1999-14)
- recognize lines as contour (outline of forms) (2VA\_A1999-15)
- explore methods of creating depth (CE) (2VA\_A1999-16)
- identify and discuss similarities, differences, themes and moods in works of art (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-18)
- discuss and compare own definition of art with that of others (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-19)
- discuss why people make art (QCC) (2VA\_A1999-20)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- recognize lines as contour (outline of forms) (2VA\_B1999-21)
- explore shapes that overlap to create depth (2VA\_B1999-22)
- use overlapping, size and position in order to introduce illusion of depth (QCC) (2VA\_B1999-23)
- use primary and secondary colors in composition (2VA\_B1999-24)
- distinguish among shapes and forms and the space between them (QCC) (2VA\_B1999-25)
- identify similarities, differences, themes, and moods in works of art (QCC) (2VA\_B1999-26)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- explore how artists, through history, get ideas for works of art from real life (QCC, CE) (2VA\_C1999-27)
- explore how artists, through history, get ideas for works of art from imagination (QCC) (2VA\_C1999-28)
- examine works of art from other countries (CE) (2VA\_C1999-29)
- distinguish between different kinds of artwork from many cultures (paintings, drawings, sculpture, crafts, architecture and printmaking) (QCC, CE) (2VA\_C1999-30)

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

### **Creation and Performance**

- use different media and tools to produce a variety of works of art (drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking and crafts) (QCC, CE) (3VA\_A1999-1)
- create sculpture by joining (additive method) and modeling (subtractive method) (QCC, CE) (3VA\_A1999-2)
- use textural details in artworks (QCC) (3VA\_A1999-3)
- define and produce tertiary (intermediate) colors (3VA\_A1999-4)
- create the illusion of space in a two-dimensional artwork (QCC, CE) (3VA\_A1999-5)
- use repetition in the production of nonobjective design (3VA\_A1999-6)
- produce rhythm and movement through repetition of colors, lines and shapes (QCC) (3VA\_A1999-9)
- use value changes (tone of light and dark) to produce tints and shades (3VA\_A1999-10)
- use direct observation to produce an artwork (3VA\_A1999-11)
- create works of art which communicate a message (CE) (3VA\_A1999-12)
- create works of art using balance (formal and informal) and emphasis (center of interest) (QCC, CE) (3VA\_A1999-13)
- demonstrate proper care and safe use of art materials and tools (QCC, CE) (3VA\_A1999-14)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- examine use of line in master artworks (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-15)
- distinguish between 2-D shapes and 3-D forms (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-16)
- describe and recognize tertiary (intermediate) colors, complementary colors, and value (tints and shades) in artworks (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-17)
- identify natural and human-made examples of radial, symmetrical and asymmetrical balance (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-18)
- develop the concept of center of interest (emphasis) using size, color and placement (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-19)
- identify function of works of art when present (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-20)
- distinguish between an original work of art and a reproduction (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-21)
- examine the individual reasons for preferences in works of art (QCC) (3VA\_B1999-22)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- place selected art reproductions in chronological order based on characteristics of the artwork (QCC) (3VA\_C1999-23)
- identify master artists using selected works of art (3VA\_C1999-24)
- identify the culture that produced a particular work of art (QCC, CE) (3VA\_C1999-25)



## **4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Creation, Production and Performance**

- create works of art using directional and expressive lines to create center of interest in a composition (QCC, CE) (4VA\_A1999-1)
- use gesture drawing to express movement and action (QCC) (4VA\_A1999-2)
- use line to define shapes and forms (contours) (4VA\_A1999-3)
- create the illusion of space using overlapping, placement, size, color, and detail (QCC, CE) (4VA\_A1999-4)
- demonstrate formal balance (symmetry) and informal balance (asymmetry) in works of art (QCC) (4VA\_A1999-5)
- produce works of art using these properties of color: hue, intensity, and value (QCC) (4VA\_A1999-6)
- create works of art using these color schemes: complementary and neutral (QCC) (4VA\_A1999-7)
- use a variety of media and tools to produce texture (QCC) (4VA\_A1999-8)
- create unity in a composition by using the elements of art (QCC, CE) (4VA\_A1999-9)
- use these specific principles of design in the creation of works of art: variation, repetition, contrast, rhythm and movement (CE) (4VA\_A1999-10)
- demonstrate proper care and safe use of materials and tools (QCC, CE) (4VA\_A1999-11)
- use a variety of technology such as computers, cameras, and/or video recorders to create artwork (QCC) (4VA\_A2002-1)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- recognize that color and shading techniques can show depth in artwork (4VA\_B1999-14)
- recognize how an artist creates a point of view in a work of art (close-up, below and above) (QCC) (4VA\_B1999-15)
- develop criteria for determining personal decisions about artwork (QCC) (4VA\_B1999-16)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- explain how art reflects the relationship between artists and their culture (geographic, political, religious and economic) (QCC) (4VA\_C1999-17)
- analyze how visual clues identify the culture represented in an artwork (QCC) (4VA\_C1999-18)
- name artists who are well known for using a variety of art forms (such as sculpture, painting and drawing) to express ideas (4VA\_C1999-19)

## **5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Creation and Performance**

- create values (shading) with lines (5VA\_A1999-1)

- create sculpture that is closed and solid, open and hollow or a combination of both (5VA\_A1999-2)
- produce compositions in selected color schemes (5VA\_A1999-3)
- create unity in a work of art by selected means (5VA\_A1999-4)
- create a functional and nonfunctional work of art (CE) (5VA\_A1999-5)
- use various media and techniques to create contrast (QCC) (5VA\_A1999-6)
- use advanced techniques to create the illusion of space in an artwork (5VA\_A1999-7)
- demonstrate knowledge of size relations (proportion) in two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks (5VA\_A1999-8)
- produce designs that use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas to communicate a message (QCC, CE) (5VA\_A1999-9)
- create artworks in the areas of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, fiber arts, mixed media, and digital images (QCC, CE) (5VA\_A1999-10)
- create works of art that imitate nature (Realism), that are concerned with design and composition (Structuralism/Formalism), and that express feelings or emotions (Emotionalism/Expressionism) (QCC, CE) (5VA\_A1999-11)
- demonstrate developing skill in contour drawing (5VA\_A1999-12)
- demonstrate proper care and safe use of art materials and tools (QCC) (5VA\_A1999-13)

## **Perception and Analysis**

- define characteristics of form as open or closed (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-16)
- recognize how light and shadow reveal textures (5VA\_B1999-17)
- examine unity in the works of master artists (5VA\_B1999-18)
- select elements or combinations of elements to express variation in 2-D or 3-D compositions (5VA\_B1999-19)
- select appropriate means of showing balance (formal, informal, or radial) for art production in 2-D or 3-D compositions (5VA\_B1999-20)
- recognize color relationships (complementary, analogous, and monochromatic) (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-21)
- examine how artists use linear perspective, one- and two-point, to achieve depth (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-22)
- analyze proportion in artworks as the relationship of one part to another or to the whole (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-23)
- identify specific media and techniques used to produce selected works of art (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-24)
- recognize how artists use selected subject matter, including symbols and ideas, to communicate a message (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-25)
- critique works of art in sequence of description, analysis of design or composition, interpretation of meaning, judgment based on evidence or clues observed in artworks (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-26)
- develop, judge and communicate personal decisions about artwork (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-27)
- support a personal position on the "big" questions about art (QCC) (5VA\_B1999-28)

## **Cultural and Historical Context**

- interpret, describe, analyze, and judge works of art (student and/or master) based on specified criteria (QCC) (5VA\_C1999-29)
- explore various art careers, such as architect, graphic designer, painter, photographer, and video artist (QCC, CE) (5VA\_C1999-30)
- recognize that artwork from different cultures may have the same subject or theme (CE) (5VA\_C1999-31)
- describe the similarities and differences between two works of art of the same style that are produced by two different artists, such as Picasso and Braque (QCC) (5VA\_C1999-32)

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Creation and Performance**

- create artwork from visual memories and imagination (QCC, CE) (6VA\_A1999-1)
- produce artwork to emphasize the art elements (QCC) (6VA\_A1999-2)
- demonstrate understanding of the use of art elements and principles for creating art (6VA\_A1999-3)
- demonstrate proper care and safety with art tools and materials (QCC, CE) (6VA\_A1999-4)
- explore the creation of art using computer technology (CE) (6VA\_A1999-5)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- identify the elements of design in artworks and the environment (6VA\_B1999-6)
- explore the process of critical analysis of art (description, analysis, judgment) (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-7)
- identify media in works of art (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-8)
- identify the function of art when present (e.g., stained glass, architecture, pottery) (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-9)
- explore the properties of color (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-10)
- describe how elements and principles are used to affect the mood or expressive content of art works (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-11)
- explore relationships between visual arts and other disciplines (QCC) (6VA\_B1999-12)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- explore various art techniques and styles of different cultures (QCC, CE) (6VA\_C1999-13)
- explore the creation of art through historical events and contemporary developments (QCC) (6VA\_C1999-14)

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Creation and Performance**

- create artworks from visual memories and imagination (QCC, CE) (7VA\_A1999-1)
- produce art using principles and elements of art in various types of media and techniques (QCC) (7VA\_A1999-2)
- demonstrate proper care and safe use of tools and materials (QCC, CE) (7VA\_A1999-3)
- explore the creation of art using computer technology (CE) (7VA\_A1999-4)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- identify the elements and principals of design in 2-D and 3-D artworks (QCC) (7VA\_B1999-5)
- explore the relationship among elements and principles of design in artworks (QCC) (7VA\_B1999-6)
- use artistic vocabulary in describing artworks (7VA\_B1999-7)
- explore the process of critical analysis of art (description, analysis and judgment) (QCC) (7VA\_B1999-8)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- explore the unique styles of different cultures and time periods (QCC, CE) (7VA\_C1999-9)
- explore artists of various historical periods (QCC) (7VA\_C1999-10)
- explore the conceptual relationships among visual art, music, drama and dance in various stylistic periods (QCC) (7VA\_C1999-11)

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Creation and Performance**

- create artworks from visual memories and imagination (QCC, CE) (8VA\_A1999-1)
- represent ideas in a variety of 2-D and 3-D media (8VA\_A1999-2)
- produce artworks using a variety of materials and techniques, utilizing art elements and principles of design (QCC) (8VA\_A1999-3)
- demonstrate proper care and use of art tools and materials (QCC, CE) (8VA\_A1999-4)
- explore the creation of art using computer technology (CE) (8VA\_A1999-5)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- identify and describe the elements and principles of design in works of art and in the environment (QCC) (8VA\_B1999-6)
- explore the various art forms and techniques an artist might select to produce 2-D and 3-D artworks (QCC) (8VA\_B1999-7)

- engage in critical analysis (description, analysis, and judgment) of artworks (QCC) (8VA\_B1999-8)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- identify the career opportunities for artists (CE) (8VA\_C1999-9)
- explore artists and philosophies of art from historical and contemporary periods (QCC) (8VA\_C1999-10)
- explore the conceptual relationships among visual art, music, drama and dance in various stylistic periods (QCC) (8VA\_C1999-11)

## **9-12 Drawing and Painting**

### **Creation and Performance**

- use a variety of drawing and painting media, techniques and equipment to solve visual art problems (QCC) (VADP\_A1999-1)
- apply knowledge of the principles and elements of design in creating drawings and paintings (QCC) (VADP\_A1999-2)
- display work habits and craftsmanship appropriate to the media and equipment being used (QCC, CE) (VADP\_A1999-3)
- make independent decisions and evaluative judgments while working within the criteria of specific drawing and/or painting problems (QCC, CE) (VADP\_A1999-4)
- demonstrate an ability to use a variety of drawing and painting tools and skills to organize and convey ideas, feelings and moods (QCC) (VADP\_A1999-5)

### **Perception and Analysis**

- recognize and identify a variety of drawing and painting media (QCC) (VADP\_B1999-6)
- use the specialized vocabulary of drawing and painting in critical analysis and evaluation of one's own work and the work of others (QCC) (VADP\_B1999-7)
- discuss aesthetic issues related to drawing and painting (QCC) (VADP\_B1999-9)
- explore the relationship between the visual arts and other disciplines (QCC) (VADP\_B1999-10)

### **Cultural and Historical Context**

- demonstrate an awareness of contemporary and historical developments related to drawing and painting (QCC) (VADP\_C1999-11)
- describe and analyze characteristics of the drawings and paintings of various artists, periods and styles (QCC) (VADP\_C1999-12)
- explore career opportunities related to drawing and painting (QCC, CE) (VADP\_C1999-13)

## APPENDIX C

### **Lesson Plan I**

#### ***“Who Am I?”***

#### **Grades 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Rene Magritte – *Georgette* 1937**

Time required – 3 lessons of 45 minutes

### ***Big Idea - Symbolism***

#### **Discussion**

It is a tradition for artists to paint a picture of themselves. Oftentimes artists use themselves as models in order to spare the expense of paying a model. Many artists have continued to use themselves as models for practice, but more importantly artists paint themselves as a record of their painting styles, their meanings and to record themselves as an artist. Many artists paint themselves as they change over the years.

#### **Goal**

To encourage students to think about themselves as artists in symbolic terms.

#### **Objectives**

- To associate themselves as artists and symbol creators.
- To create meaning form important objects and events in their lives.
- To identify and explain proportion of the human face.
- To participate in collaborative art making.
- To demonstrate color mixing techniques

#### **Materials**

- Sketch books
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Slide or Poster of *Georgette, 1937* by Renè Magritte.
- Poster board, one for each student
- Tempera paint
- Brushes

- Newsprint to cover tables
- Sharpie marker

## **Procedure**

- Students will come in, sit on the carpet in a group
- We will discuss what a self-portrait is, how it is used and why artists paint them.
- I will engage the students in a critique of Magritte's *Georgette, 1937*
- I will encourage the students to think about things that are important in their lives. Later they will make journal entries about these things.
- I will engage the children in a discussion about what are symbols.
- Student will move to tables that are preset with art materials.
- I will discuss facial proportion and have children follow my demonstration, step by step in their sketchbooks.
- Once students are familiar with proportion they will begin their final art works.
- Students will create a cloud background on the poster board with an inset portrait of themselves. Student will learn how to make the clouds go off the page. They will paint these portraits.
- I will then ask the students to choose at least four symbols for their artwork.
- I will ask each student about their symbols to ensure their understanding of what a symbol is.

## **Extensions**

Rembrandt, Khalo, Jim Dine

## **Vocabulary**

Rene Magritte

Self-portrait

Proportion

Iris

Sclera

Pupil

Nostrils

## **Lesson Plan II**

### ***“Animal Mix-up”***

**Grades 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>**

***Exemplar - Benjamin, A. (1995). 1000 silly sandwiches.***

Time required – 1 lesson of 45 minutes

### ***Big Idea – Symbolism.***

#### **Goal**

To encourage students to think about the qualities of animal characteristics by mixing up unique traits of two animals.

#### **Objectives**

- To create an animal that has never been seen before
- To participate in collaborative learning
- To utilize another person’s ideas in creating an artwork

#### **Materials**

- Sketch books
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Mix and Match books
- Paper for each student pair
- Markers

#### **Procedure**

- Students will come in, sit on the carpet in a group
- We will discuss the characteristics of different animals. For example, elephants have trunks and big ears, and snakes have slithery tongues.
- I will engage the students in several mix and match books to show the students how turning the pages can change the pictures of the alien, sandwich, or dinosaur.
- I will ask each person in the buddy pair to think of an animal to draw.
- The students will discuss what they are going to create for a few minutes.



- The students will move to the tables and begin their collaborative artwork with provided paper and markers

## **Vocabulary**

Characteristics

Making the familiar strange

Mix and Match books

**Lesson Plan III**  
**“Synectic Lesson”**  
**Grades 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>**  
***Exemplar - If... by Sarah Perry***

Time required – 3 lessons of 45 minutes

***Big Idea - Symbolism***

**Goal**

To encourage students to think about themselves as story tellers through the use of symbolism and elaboration.

**Objectives**

- To juxtapose incongruent images or sensory impressions in order to create new things.
- To solve authentic problems.
- To justify selections between two or more possible choices.
- To describe, analyze, and interpret Sarah Perry’s book, *If...*(1999).

**Materials**

- *If...* by Sarah Perry
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Sharpies
- Tempera paint
- Large paper
- Aprons
- Newsprint
- Brushes

**Procedure**

- Students will come in, sit on the carpet in a group
- I will read the story book *If...* by Sarah Perry.
- The last page of the book will be an invitation to extend the book further. It states, *If this is the end then dream up some more.*

- I reveal a giant grid on the board and ask the students to think of 10 things down one side that are animals and ten things across the top that are inanimate things.
- Buddy pairs will choose an animal and in animate object that they will use to create another page for our extended If.. book.
- Students will take time to collaborate and discuss what they will create together.
- Students will draw then paint their pages to the book.

## **Lesson Plan IV**

### ***“Andrew Henry’s Village”***

#### **Grades 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### ***Exemplar - Andrew Henry’s Meadow* by Doris Burn**

Time required – 3 lessons of 45 minutes

### ***Big Idea - Symbolism***

#### **Goal**

To encourage students to think about themselves as artists and creators of alternate realities.

#### **Objectives**

- To conceptualize alternate realities.
- To participate in collaborative learning.
- To demonstrate individuality through personal choice.

#### **Materials**

- Glue
- Chipboard pieces
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Markers
- Construction paper
- Small branches and shrubs
- Green poster board
- 8’x 4 foot covered plywood sheet

#### **Procedure**

- Students will come in, sit on the carpet in a group
- I will show Andrew Henry’s Meadow in a Power point presentation. I will stop the story at the meadow where all the small houses are seen en masse.
- We will discuss as a group the interesting qualities of the houses.
- The students will move to the tables to discuss with their buddy how they will construct a house to be included in a meadow of their own.
- The students will glue chipboard pieces together to create their clubhouses.

- The students will create roads, streams, trees and other embellishments on the sheet of plywood to create their own village.