

A CASE STUDY OF THE GEORGIA ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FALL
CONFERENCE: PRE-SERVICE AND EARLY CAREER ART TEACHER EXPERIENCES
AND SUPPORTS

by

MAEVE MUNSON

(Under the Direction of Christina Hanawalt)

ABSTRACT

Using a case study approach, I investigated the experience of and supports available for preservice and early career art teachers at the fall 2023 Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA) conference. I was interested in how the organization plays a part in supporting art teachers as they transition from preservice to early career teachers. I collected data through direct observation, interviews, and surveys. My participant group consisted of 17 GAEA members, ranging from board members to preservice conference volunteers. In addition to qualitative data, I researched the history of organizational supports for preservice teachers by studying archival GAEA materials. Through data analysis, I discovered four themes: benefits of attending the conference, disconnect between preservice teachers and GAEA, barriers to conference attendance, and intention versus impact of including preservice teachers in GAEA. These findings suggest that while there are benefits for teachers attending the conference, there are not many preservice teachers accessing the resources GAEA provides due to a lack of knowledge and connection to the organization. As a GAEA board member, I presented my findings and will

use the information found in this study to make impactful changes in how the organization interacts and recruits preservice teachers to be involved in GAEA and its Fall Conferences.

INDEX WORDS: Professional organizations, pre-service teachers, GAEA, teacher transition, art education, conference participation, qualitative case study

A CASE STUDY OF THE GEORGIA ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FALL
CONFERENCE: PRE-SERVICE AND EARLY CAREER ART TEACHER EXPERIENCES
AND SUPPORTS

by

MAEVE MUNSON
BA, University of Georgia, 2022

An Applied Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ART EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2024

© 2024

Maeve Munson

All Rights Reserved

A CASE STUDY OF THE GEORGIA ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FALL
CONFERENCE: PRE-SERVICE AND EARLY CAREER ART TEACHER EXPERIENCES
AND SUPPORTS

by

MAEVE MUNSON

Major Professor:	Dr. Christina Hanawalt
Committee:	Dr. Lynn Sanders-Bustle
	Dr. Sally Zepeda

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2024

DEDICATION

To my mom, my biggest supporter and inspiration. I've looked up to you my entire life, especially now that I'm following in your footsteps and becoming the new "Ms. Munson." Your strength, guidance, and passion as an educator have motivated me to pursue my goals. I am beyond grateful to have such a remarkable woman and mentor in my corner. Thank you for believing in me every step of the way. I can't wait to make you proud.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to GAEA and all my new art education friends and mentors. Your warmth and support made me feel welcome in what initially felt like such a new and daunting environment. I will forever be grateful for the care and inclusion you've shown me, and I look forward to continuing this journey with you for a lifetime. Additionally, many people have been so helpful to me and my project. I could not have finished this project without my interviewees, who took time out of their busy schedules to work with me. Nor could I have done this without my mentor, Dr. Hanawalt and my committee members Dr. Bustle and Dr. Zepeda. Thank you for answering so many of my questions and supporting me throughout my time getting my degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTERS	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Project	1
Purpose of the Project and Inquiry Questions.....	4
Overview of Report.....	5
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Early Career Teachers Challenges and Supports	7
Social Network Theory and Beginning Teachers	10
Professional Learning and Development	11
Professional Organizations and Associations	14
Implications for Inquiry	16
3 PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODS	18
About the Georgia Art Education Association	18
Data Collection	22
Data Analysis	30
4 FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS	32
Benefits of the Conference.....	32
Disconnects between Preservice Teachers and GAEA.....	36

	Barriers to the Conference	45
	Intention Versus Impact of Including Preservice Teachers	47
	Discussion	48
	Moving Forward	49
5	CONCLUSION.....	52
	Summary	53
	Implications.....	57
	REFERENCES	62
	APPENDICES	
	A. First-Year and Preservice Teacher Meet and Greet PowerPoint	67
	B. First-Year Teacher Focus Group Follow-Up Questions	71
	C. Survey for GAEA Board Members.....	72
	D. Instructional Coach Interview Questions.....	73
	E. Interview Template for Attendees	75
	F. Conference Organizer Interview Questions.....	77
	G. Volunteer Survey Questions	79

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Collage Magazine, Fall 1995.....	20
Figure 2: Collage Summer/Fall 1996.....	21
Figure 3: Research Questions and Corresponding Data	23
Figure 4: GAEA Professional Development Conference 2000, First Timer's Guide	39
Figure 5: GAEA Collage: Leaders in Art Walking the Talk, 2005	41
Figure 6: Preservice Representative's Board Report on Preservice Engagement	58

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

During the first year of my graduate program in Art Education, I was very focused on the present. My daily worries were small things like getting my assignments done or having nice clothes to wear to observe in school. I did not start looking forward to my career until my second year, which I recently completed. I attended the Georgia Art Education Association's annual conference in the fall, which opened my eyes to the larger world of art education. Georgia Art Education Association, or GAEA, is the state branch of NAEA, the National Art Education Association. They are non-profit organizations for education professionals in visual arts, design, and media arts (About Us, nd). When I registered for the conference, I did not exactly know what I had signed up for. It was my mom who encouraged me to go to the conference. She has been an art educator for almost 30 years and has found a home within GAEA. She lovingly calls her friends in the organization her "tribe" and was so excited to share this experience with me. She paid for my ticket and shared her hotel room. I was fortunate to have her by my side for my first conference. During the conference, I saw a network of art education professionals coming together to discuss their programs, issues, successes, and ideas for the future. There were workshops, lectures, and even parties for art teachers and professionals to get to know one another and learn together.

However, while I was at the conference, I felt a disconnect between me and most of the teachers because I was still a graduate student and not a practicing art teacher. I did not have

teacher horror stories, students to gossip about, or lessons to share with my peers. Most teachers were excited to take projects they learned in the sessions back to their students, but I did not have any students to take lessons back to. Many attendees knew each other well, whether from student teaching relationships, connections from previous conferences, or because they had worked together for years. I felt like I was looking through a glass at these fantastic teachers. When I attended that first conference, I did not come in contact with any other preservice teachers. This was not by choice but simply because I could not find any. I had nowhere to go when teachers broke into divisions like middle, secondary, supervision, administration, or elementary level. However, I saw the potential that this group and conference could have in terms of my future career, and I wanted to be able to share that with others.

At that point, I decided to further investigate the GAEA organization and community to see what kind of space preservice teachers have in the group. I developed a plan to research the organization to see whether and how they were reaching art educators who were either preservice teachers (students in teacher preparation programs) or early career teachers (in their first five years of teaching), knowing that early career teachers had recently been preservice teachers. I was curious how GAEA provided a community for these educators at annual conferences and what resources they provided. I especially wanted to understand the capacity of the conference to serve as a form of professional learning for preservice teachers during their preparation programs and then continuing into their early careers as practicing art teachers.

How the Project Took Shape

During my first conference, I volunteered to serve as the Preservice Representative on the GAEA executive board. In this role, I would represent the preservice members across the state. I was still determining where I fit into the organization but wanted to help and make an

impact. I realized that my first step to creating a lasting impact was to truly understand the organization and its effects on other preservice students, which included understanding the experiences of art teachers who had recently transitioned to their first years of teaching. It would have been naive of me to start trying to make changes without having a solid knowledge base about GAEA and its conference. Therefore, I knew I had to begin by developing a project that would allow me to collect this information. After completing the project, I imagined I could start to answer some of the questions that kept popping up: What am I supposed to be doing as the Preservice Representative for GAEA? How can I make things better? Where is my place as a preservice teacher in this organization? My desire to create impactful change is what inspired my applied project. I wanted to ensure that other beginning art teachers could have the same opportunity my mom gave me and could be involved with this fantastic organization. I also wanted to ensure that preservice teachers did not have to rely on an art-teacher-mom to receive the support and connections that GAEA afforded.

I decided to focus my project on GAEA's Fall Conference because it was a place where members joined in person to learn and be together. Because the conference only happens once a year, I chose to collect the majority of my data at the Fall 2023 conference in Columbus, Georgia. I designed a case study approach that would help me better understand the impact of the conference on preservice and early career teachers through interviews, personal observations, and conference materials. Additionally, I studied GAEA archives to see what insights they could provide about previous conference efforts relevant to preservice teachers. After collecting my data and understanding the central themes of preservice involvement at the GAEA Fall conference, my goal was to deliver a report to the GAEA Board in the hopes of instituting some

programs or changes that could improve how the organization interacted with preservice teachers during their preparation and throughout their transition to in-service teaching.

Purpose of the Project and Inquiry Questions

Based on conversations with other students in my teacher preparation program, I realized that many had not heard of GAEA nor understood what it could offer them. Many, including myself, assumed they could only participate once they graduated and became teachers. The GAEA website did not provide information to counteract this misconception. On their website, there was only one mention of students or pre-service teachers, which was in the title of the “Student Chapter Representative,” or referred to as “Pre-Service Representative,” the seat that I filled on the Board after it had been empty for years. Because of this gap in representatives in the position, I suspected that preservice teachers had fallen through the cracks in GAEA. My goal, then, was to bring the experiences and needs of preservice teachers to the forefront with the ultimate aim of forming a bridge between preservice teachers and GAEA to ensure they could benefit from this professional organization even before beginning their careers.

Throughout my project, I focused on answering the following questions through my case study of GAEA’s Fall Conference:

1. What current support does the GAEA conference provide for preservice and early career art teachers, and what did they provide in the past?
2. What are the experiences and needs of preservice and early career art teachers attending the Fall 2023 GAEA conference?

Through this case study of GAEA as a professional organization, I gained insight into an organization that can improve the lives of art teachers who are beginning their careers. As my project suggests, involvement in professional organizations like GAEA can potentially increase

teacher retention and alleviate teachers' feelings of isolation. This project helped me better understand the preservice experience at the GAEA conference in its current state. From that information, I plan to use my position on the Board to make impactful improvements to the experiences of beginning art teachers in Georgia.

Overview of Report

Through the remaining chapters in this report, I describe how I completed my project, share my findings, and explain the steps I will take moving forward as the Preservice Representative on the GAEA Board. In Chapter 2, I provide a literature review that offers context for my project, including information about first-year teachers' challenges in transitioning from preservice teachers to the workforce, social network theory and how it applies to teachers' working environments, and the role of professional development and professional organizations in teachers' experiences. Next, in Chapter 3, I explain how I collected my data before, during, and after GAEA's Fall 2023 Conference. In Chapter 4, I share my findings through the four key themes that emerged from the data: conference benefits, disconnects between preservice teachers and GAEA, barriers to the conference, and intention versus the impact of including preservice teachers in GAEA. Finally, in Chapter 5, I describe my next steps as GAEA's Preservice Representative, including presenting my findings to the Board.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anywhere from 50% to 66% of new teachers do not make it past their first five years of teaching and leave the profession (Hofsess & Hanawalt, 2020; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Marinell & Coca, 2013;). The first five years are usually the hardest for teachers, especially transitioning from a preservice educational program to their first job at a school. Additionally, art teachers are often isolated within their school building, typically being the only teachers in their subject in their school (Tollefson-Hall, 2015). They lack the community within their school that many core teachers (those who teach traditional academic subjects like Math and English) may take for granted. With these realities in mind, support for art teachers as they transition to the field is crucial to the success and longevity of their careers in education (Hofsess & Hanawalt, 2020). These supports may include “professional learning opportunities, teacher networks, curricular and pedagogical resources, and mentoring” (Hofsess & Hanawalt, 2020, p. 30). In my own experience, I noticed many promising forms of support available within the Georgia Art Education Association. Through my project, I aimed to understand more precisely what kind of support the organization offered for pre-service and early-career art teachers.

Education is in a constant flux that includes challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Thus, continuing research and discovery are needed to keep up with these shifts and better support the needs of the next generation of teachers (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). I investigated relevant peer-reviewed literature from educational disciplines to properly contextualize my work. I focused my search on three categories: preservice and early career art educators’ experiences,

professional development and communities, and professional organizations. Drawing from current literature, in this chapter, I establish the need for my project and its importance for art education.

Early Career Art Teacher Challenges and Supports

The first five years of teaching can be crucial and challenging for many teachers. Bautista et al. (2021) published a study about arts and music teachers in Arts Education Policy Review in which they explained: “Negative attitudes toward the teaching profession, high levels of anxiety, stress, and depression, the widespread phenomenon of teacher burnout, and the eventual leaving of the profession” (p. 43) are all severe possibilities for many first-year teachers. As stated, art educators are more susceptible to isolation than other teachers because they are typically alone in their school subject matter (Tollefson-Hall, 2015). In her article, visual art educator Tollefson-Hall (2015) wrote: “When I got my first teaching job in a rural Midwestern community, I was the only art teacher in the entire school district. The closest art teacher to me was 13 miles away” (p. 30). Isolation is a common experience for many beginning art teachers who have left the communities of peers and teachers they built in the university to spread far and wide for school jobs (Tollefson-Hall, 2015). On top of that, many arts teachers feel excluded in professional development and faculty meetings when their subjects are ignored or grouped into other subjects that are not applicable in content or structure (Battersby & Verdi, 2015).

While there are many struggles for first-year art teachers, the feeling of isolation within their school building and professional community is one of the most significant. According to Bautista et al. (2021), arts educators face three types of isolation in their schools: adaptive, physical, and emotional. In their article “Policy Strategies to Remedy Isolation of Specialist Arts and Music Teachers,” Bautista et al. discuss the different types of isolation and their impact on

arts teachers. The first type, adaptive isolation, arises when teachers need help to overcome their work requirements. Adaptive isolation is prevalent with new teachers, yet this may be exacerbated for teachers in the arts who often have more duties than other teachers, especially in younger grades. School administrators typically ask arts teachers to teach various subjects, students, and extracurricular activities (Bautista et al., 2021). The second, physical isolation, refers to "the distance or separation teachers feel from their peers in daily life" (Bautista et al., 2021, p. 43). Arts classrooms can feel separate from the rest of the school and physically separate or distant from other classrooms. This distance can create a barrier to connecting and finding mentors within their schools. The third and final type of isolation is emotional or psychological isolation. This type of isolation stems from a lack of "peer support, guidance, professional feedback, social recognition, and a sense of belonging to a larger teaching fraternity" (Bautista et al., 2021, p. 43). Many factors contribute to this feeling, including how arts teachers feel isolated and ignored in their larger school contexts. Hanawalt (2015) wrote "Reframing New Art Teacher Support: From Failure to Freedom" as a commentary on these feelings of isolation or inadequacy that can cause art teachers to leave within their first five years. In her article, she wrote: "Those invested in the preparation and development of beginning art teachers must examine the forces at play in new teachers' professional lives, as well as the problems with existing support structures" (p. 69). She calls for teachers or mentors to look beyond the classroom to ensure new teachers are supported in all aspects of their professional lives. Support for new teachers must be more than providing training and gaining knowledge; it is about being placed within a support system to ensure their success.

Hofsess and Hanawalt (2020), art educators working with preservice visual art teachers in universities, studied mentorship with beginning art teachers and shared their work in an article

called “Envisioning Future-Oriented Mentoring with Early Career Teachers Through Evocative Analysis.” They were intentional about the form of mentorship they provided for their first-year teachers to see its impact. Although mentoring is the most common practice within teacher induction programs, they also describe it as undertheorized (Hofsess & Hanawalt, 2020). In their study, they developed a mentoring group for first- through third-year teachers. They planned meetings where the group would create art and discuss their school experiences. Hofsess and Hanawalt (2020) found success in their program because they had cultivated a “group of art teachers who [were] committed to supporting and motivating each other in a shared professional pursuit grounded in inquiry” (p. 32). This work suggests that one goal for successful and intentional mentorship might include the development of a community of teachers sharing in professional inquiry. To create a thriving community, teachers must be able to “satisfy professional responsibilities in a supportive and safe environment” (Battersby, 2019, p. 16). That means increasing relational trust and positive interactions with peers. Good connections create more productive and successful teachers (Battersby, 2019). According to Bautista et al. (2021), peer support is crucial because it allows teachers to share their authentic concerns without the “need to put on one’s ‘best face’ or impress anyone” (p. 44). The purpose of the groups in Hanawalt and Hofsess’ (2020) study was to learn and improve together, creating positive communities within their profession.

Social Network Theory and Beginning Teachers

Social network theory is an umbrella term for many theories surrounding groups or teams and the webs of relationships that can impact their actions within their systems (Nimmon et al., 2019). Social network theory discusses social capital and “the sense that one’s connections can determine one’s access to resources” (Battersby, 2019, p. 329). Battersby (2019) explains

that social capital means gaining indirect access to resources through the social networking that one creates. In addition, “social capital theories focus on the potential inherent in social structures, and social network analysis seeks out specific mechanisms and patterns that explain outcomes” (Battersby, 2019, p. 330). When reading about this theory in connection with the needs of preservice and early career teachers, I wondered how social capital might be developed for teachers transitioning from preservice to in-service who may need resources and support.

Within educational psychology, Social Network Theory posits that “The process of identity formation is anchored in the sense of ‘being part of’—a web of relationships, group solidarity, and communal culture” (Flum & Kaplan, 2012, p. 240). Finding a community of peers in the work environment is essential to learning a sense of belonging and identity. According to Hanawalt (2015), “teacher identity is central to professional development” (p. 74). Teachers starting their careers may struggle with their identities and professional networks while keeping up with their daily duties. This means that creating intentional webs and networks that will continue to help and nourish novice teachers may be critical for them to form a solid professional identity. Teachers’ identities are “ongoing and dynamic,” constantly changed by their environment and the relationships they form (Hanawalt, 2015). New teachers typically develop their professional identities through their own experiences in school combined with their preservice training within their university context. The environment and connections teachers transition into during their first years are essential to forming their identity and teaching.

Professional Learning and Development

In 2009, President Obama implemented a program called Race to the Top, which encouraged school reforms to get grant money for school improvement. It also required states to develop teacher evaluation systems and professional development programs (Battersby & Verdi,

2015). One purpose of professional development was to “promote collaboration among teachers by creating a collaborative professional culture” (Battersby & Verdi, 2015, p. 23). However, intentions do not always translate into the reality of the school context. In schools, professional development and learning communities must be specific and relevant to their population.

Unfortunately, many professional development programs struggle to be effective (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). The difficulty with evaluation systems and professional development programs for art educators is that the same standards for core teachers are not typically applicable to them. Art teachers are often grouped with teachers of other subjects that do not follow any similar structure or system of evaluation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). According to Zepeda (2019), in *Professional Development: What Works*, professional development can only be successful when it includes the following characteristics: job-embedded, research-based, teacher-led, active, and relevant. Teachers are prepared to instruct children in education, but when creating professional development, educators might forget that adults learn differently than children. When teaching adults, the emphasis must be on self-direction, exploration and experiences, relevance to real life, and internal motivation (Zepeda, 2019). These elements imply that, for professional learning to be successful, it may look different from a typical classroom setting and structure. Learning as an adult requires active learning and open discussion on how information will apply to the teacher’s students or classroom (Zepeda, 2019). Zepeda emphasizes that informal learning is an essential professional development tool because it enables teachers to converse and learn from each other. Based on Zepeda’s (2019) studies of teacher professional development, she suggests that professional learning needs to be changed completely to fit the needs of teachers today. Many elements are missing in current state-mandated professional development programs, which should be teacher-driven and teacher-led to succeed. I plan to evaluate GAEA’s conference

learning to see if it has similar characteristics to successful professional development programming.

Professional Learning Communities

Linder et al. (2012) explored the idea of Professional Learning Communities in the Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, a journal for professional educators. They define Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs, as “site-based, ongoing, collaborative professional development” (Linder et al., 2012, p. 13). PLCs are a method for grouping professionals to learn and enhance their practice. They typically meet regularly for an extended period and focus on reflective inquiry and dialogue among their members (Linder et al., 2012). PLCs have a distinct structure that could benefit art educators who lack a community within their school. PLCs are described as designed intentionally with individual and collective understandings developed through social discourse and community to create collective knowledge (Popp & Goldman, 2016). PLCs are about building communities and cultures centered around teachers' subjects and interests, making them unique to their fields. Art educators often miss this individualized learning in their school communities and mandated professional development programs (Linder et al., 2012, p. 13). According to Bautista et al. (2021), teachers experiencing isolation may fall into echo chambers of people similar to themselves and miss the chance to be challenged and learn. Professional Learning Communities could help make first-year teachers' transition more manageable and give them a cushion when leaving the structure and support of their programs to teach on their own in their new classrooms. PLCs are often successful in community building because they enable teachers to create a unique framework specific to their fields and circumstances (Linder et al., 2012, p. 13). Learning in PLCs becomes active and particular to the group's needs, making the

experience especially powerful for young teachers who must learn to be advocates for themselves in their fields.

Battersby (2019) wrote about professional communities and their impact on music educators' professional development. Battersby discusses PLCs through the lens of Social Network Theory, suggesting that PLCs enable teachers to use their social capital to gain knowledge and a sense of place called “bonding capital” (Battersby, 2019, p. 329). Many art teachers may seriously lack this capital, which may come more easily to other teachers (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). The fact that arts teachers are isolated in their schools and lack crucial learning opportunities may hurt their ability to develop social capital (Bautista et al., 2021). Arts teachers must be more forceful and intentional in building communities and capital they can use professionally, which is essential because the interactions and relationships they create with peers can ultimately make them more successful in their careers (Battersby, 2019). There is a lack of research and evidence for the impact of PLCs on art education. Most data about professional learning communities is from math or science contexts (Popp & Goldman, 2016); however, as stated above, art is not comparable to other subjects and should have data and research that is genuinely applicable to the field.

Professional Organizations and Associations

As stated above, professional development can be crucial in developing teachers' careers, communities, and identities. Moreover, active engagement and involvement in professional organizations are essential (Rodríguez-Rad & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, 2023). Rodríguez-Rad and Sánchez del Río-Vázquez (2023) researched participatory behavior in professional associations to suggest improving their structures and management. They published their work in the article “The Relevance of Participation Behavior, Organizational Commitment, and

Attitudinal Loyalty to the Management of Professional Associations.” According to their study, a professional association is “an organization of competent professionals seeking common advancement” (Rodríguez-Rad & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, 2023, p. 1). Members’ fees provide services such as publications, websites, training programs, conferences, and professional benefits. These are tangible benefits to the community found in these organizations by giving members access to information and resources in their field. They found that by involving and instilling a sense of ownership in their members, they were more likely to invest and participate and thus improve the communal standing of the organization. So, by increasing and enhancing involvement and commitment, organizations will also improve the quality of their group (Rodríguez-Rad & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, 2023).

Brock (2021) researched traditions and methods of professional organizations and associations from the field of sociology. They found that professional associations began in the mid-twentieth century through the field of sociology (Brock, 2021). In terms of research specific to professional organizations, Brock (2021) explains that this kind of research began in the healthcare field but has encompassed a more comprehensive range of subjects in recent years. However, professional association research is still considered a small research tradition and typically focuses on accounting, health, and law (Brock, 2021). In Brock’s (2021) review of all published articles in the *Journal of Professions and Organizations*, there was no mention of articles about the arts and only a tiny mention of the subject of education. They mention that further research should reflect the current professional environment, which constantly evolves, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Brock, 2021).

Professional associations often host conferences, which Linder et al. (2012) describe as a “traditional paradigm of professional development” (p. 13). They write that, unlike the ongoing

and collaborative professional development offered by PLCs, conferences typically do not inspire a change of thinking in teachers' instruction (Linder et al., 2012). According to their research, conferences cannot guarantee change or inspiration, though there was little data or references to support these claims. A study by Battersby and Verdi (2015) titled "The Culture of Professional Learning Communities and Connections to Improve Teacher Efficacy and Support Student Learning" provides conflicting information. The authors state that the teachers in their study were interested in short-term workshops and willing to travel and pay fees to attend these programs (Battersby & Verdi, 2015). They continued to write that "weekend workshops and intensive summer workshops" typically accommodate widespread needs. However, they also explain that these workshops often do not focus on diverse groups of teachers or their specialized circumstances (Battersby & Verdi, 2015, p. 26). These studies seem to point to some ambiguity about the benefits of short-term professional development, such as weekend conferences (which also often include workshops), as a form of professional development.

Implications for Inquiry

The literature review clarifies that art teachers experience "intense feelings of professional isolation" (Bautista et al., 2021, p. 42). Teachers in the arts lack peers within their schools to collaborate with and are typically marginalized in professional development (Bautista et al., 2021). Arts teachers often feel invisible in their schools. These feelings of isolation are especially felt by beginning teachers, who may become distanced from their network of support of peers and professors when they leave their preparation programs to become teachers. Peer collaboration and relationship building are determinants of success in professional growth and the well-being of teachers (Bautista et al., 2021). However, it has become apparent that art teachers face several barriers to taking advantage of these opportunities. The arts are so distinct

from other subjects that arts teachers often have to turn outside of their schools to look for support within their subject (Battersby, 2019). Teachers in the arts would generally prioritize connecting with teachers within their fields over anyone in their same school or district who is not in the arts (Battersby, 2019), meaning they would rather have someone who understands their field over convenience or closeness. This sentiment may help emphasize how differently arts educators feel their lesson planning, evaluation processes, and professional development needs are to other subjects (Battersby, 2019). Further, the barriers arts teachers face to establishing content-specific networks of support may be a factor in what Battersby (2019) describes as evidence of troubling retention rates among arts teachers that should be further researched (Battersby, 2019).

Through my experiences at the GAEA conferences, I have seen that their programming, in my opinion, matches Zepeda's (2019) professional learning goals. Members organize GAEA's fall conferences and create, organize, and lead their sessions. The sessions are designed for art teachers to share resources from their experiences and classrooms and engage with their peers through conversations and artmaking throughout the weekend. I began researching the GAEA conference because I suspected it could be an excellent model for supporting preservice art teachers transitioning to their first years of teaching. Additionally, there appears to be a gap in research focused on the role of art education conferences as a form of professional learning for art teachers. As a preservice art educator getting ready to transition to my role as an in-service teacher, my study of preservice and early career art teacher experiences at the GAEA conference aimed to provide a unique point of view that could contribute to an understanding of art teacher professional learning toward community-building and increased social capital.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODS

About the Georgia Art Education Association

The Georgia Art Education Association is a state chapter of a national organization, the National Art Education Association. NAEA was founded in 1947 when four regional associations combined: Eastern Arts, Pacific Arts, Southeastern Arts, and Western Arts regional associations (Michael 1997). The mission statement for GAEA, found on their website, is:

We are a professional organization of art educators in Georgia affiliated with the National Art Education Association. The mission of the Georgia Art Education Association is to advocate for the highest quality visual arts education and provide for the advancement of knowledge through service, leadership and research. (GAEA, n.d.)

GAEA members pay yearly dues to be involved in the organization. For their membership, they can participate in various GAEA programs. The most significant and most relevant to my research is GAEA's annual Fall Conference. Other programs include Youth Art Month (YAM), the National Art Honors Society (NAHS) for high school students, the Capital Arts Show, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport Exhibit, and more (M. Jung, personal communication, January 24th, 2024). The state is divided into 9 Districts, and each district has a president who represents the teachers and is expected to plan district events. GAEA also publishes a magazine called Collage and posts content on social media. GAEA has a Board of 45 volunteers to run the organization and its programs. All positions are volunteer, and members typically run for their positions and are voted in by general members.

Their annual fall conference has been happening for many years. The first conference I attended was in the Fall of 2022. As mentioned, this conference was when I volunteered to hold a position on the board as their Pre-Service Representative. The conferences generally last a weekend, starting on Friday and ending on Sunday. It travels throughout the state to different venues, and in recent years, it has been hosted by the art education program at a university. The conference that I attended in Fall 2023 was at Columbus State University. Conference weekends mainly consist of workshops led by teachers in the organization. Teachers can submit approved and organized workshop proposals into a schedule. These workshops range from lesson plans, creating art, tips and tricks for job interviews, sharing research, and much more. When registering for the conference, members sign up for specific workshops and create their itinerary for the weekend. For the Fall 2023 conference, I submitted a proposal for a “Preservice and First Year Teacher Meet and Greet,” inviting members to connect and discuss my research plans. This event was where I found my focus group of first-year teachers. The conference also includes several large-group activities to which all members are invited, including a Youth Art Month breakfast, member art show, dinners, award ceremonies, silent auction, talks given by a guest speaker (selected every year), and more. Board Members are expected to attend an in-person board meeting the morning following the annual conference. At the board meeting following the Fall 2023 conference, I introduced my research project and asked members to volunteer to participate in interviews with me.

While collecting data, I accessed a personal collection of GAEA-published materials from a veteran teacher, Debbi West. The collection spans from 1985 to 2013. Looking through these items, I learned about GAEA’s programming throughout the years. The materials included board meeting agendas, conference booklets, copies of the Collage magazines, and GAEA

newsletters. Historically, GAEA has always had a Fall Conference, sometimes called a “Professional Development Conference.” The earliest mention of student chapters or acknowledgment of preservice involvement was in 1994, mainly just as a position on the board, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Collage Magazine, Fall 1995

**GAEA BOARD
1994-1996
Executive Board**

President:
Ted Oliver, 1507 Paces Ferry North,
Smyrna, GA 30080-8276,
404-438-7674/h, 404-319-3726/w

President-Elect:
Bunyan Morris, PO Box 1701, States-
boro, GA 30459-1701, 912-865-9118/h,
912-681-5141/w

Past President:
Deborah Lackey, 1780 Duke Rd, Atlanta,
GA 30341-4850, 404-457-7227/h,
404-552-6320/w

Secretary:
Rosanne Stutts, 2322 Creek View Dr.,
Augusta, GA 30907-3654,
706-823-4370/h, 706-868-8433/w

Treasurer:
Jackie Adkins, 1692 Grist Mill Dr, Mari-
etta, GA 30062-3863, 404-578-9214/h,
404-428-2631/w

Member-at-Large:
Dr Bruce Little, 910 Debbie St, Savan-
nah, GA 31410-3544, 912-897-4009/h,
912-681-5358/w

Division Chairpersons and Elects

**Administration/Supervision/ Division Di-
rector:**
Dr. Nancy Hooten, 550 E State St, Sa-
vannah, GA 31401-3544,
912-236-6565/h, 912-651-7052/w

**Administration/Supervision/ Division Di-
rector Elect:**
Jayme Ivey, 1817 Lullwater Rd., Albany,
GA 31707-3146, 912-883-8479/h,
912-431-1295/w

Elementary Division:
Dr. Nancy Hooten

Elementary Division Director Elect:
Cathy Handley, 205 East 54th St, Sa-
vannah, GA 31405-3419,
912-234-7918/h, 912-351-6356/w

Middle School Division Director:
Dr. Kathy Thompson, Rt 1, Box 1912,
Blue Ridge, GA 30513, 706-632-5752/h,
706-276-5030/w

Middle School Division Director Elect:
Jane Hollingsworth, 3727 Windy Hill Cr.,
Gainesville, GA 30504

Secondary Division Director:
Sonny Bartlett, 1617 West Popular St,
Griffin, GA 30223, 706-567-3868/h,
706-228-8641 x198/w

Secondary Division Director Elect:
Perri Morris, 329 Savannah Ave, States-
boro, GA 30458

Higher Education Division Director:
Dr. Lanny Milbrandt, 2427 Lochwood
Dr., Valdosta, GA 31601,
912-241-7697/h, 912-744-3197/w

Higher Education Division Director Elect:
Mary Jane Taylor, 3581 Meadow Lane,
Gainesville, GA 30506, 770-536-8784/h,
770-534-6420/w

Museum Division Director:
Kathy Jackson, 705 Ridgewood Ave.,
NW, Gainesville, GA 30501-3148,
770-532-9451/h

Museum Division Director Elect:
Ann Kelso, 1280 Peachtree St NE, At-
lanta, GA 30309-3549, 404-393-1164/h,
404-898-9507/w

Committee Chairpersons

1995 Fall Conference:
Joseph Emery, 2977 Rivercrest Dr,
Gainesville, GA 30507-8349,
770-534-3588/h, 770-536-4441/w

Advocacy:
Marianne O. Scott, 145 Austin Dr, Ath-
ens, GA 30606

Archivist:
Dr. Paul Edmonston, 100 Torrey Pine
Place, Athens, GA 30605,
706-546-9083/h, 706-546-9083/w

Awards:
Deborah Lackey

Business Representative:
Terrylyn Marshall, 716 Hiwassee Es-
tates, Hiwassee, GA 30546,
706-896-1060/h

Capital Art Show:
Kie Bedel, 1350 Palamino Pass, Bogart
GA 30622, 706-769-0282/h,
706-769-7941/w

Collage/Newsletter:
Regina Goodman, PO Box 907063,
Gainesville, GA 30501-0902,
770-531-1088

District Presidents Coordinator:
Melody Milbrandt, 2427 Lochwood Dr.,
Valdosta, GA 31601, 912-241-7697/h,
912-245-2290/w

Fine Arts Coordinator:
Ruth Gassett, GA Dept. of Ed., 1958
Twin Towers E, Atlanta, GA 30334,
404-656-7520/w

Historian:
Helen Fleming Stone, PO Box 232, Can-
ton, GA 30114, 404-479-3498/h,
404-479-4112/w

Journal:
Dr Stephen Lahr, 2503 Lakewood Dr.,
Valdosta, GA 31602-2149,
912-244-7024/h, 912-333-5835/w

Management Plan:
Paulette Zeller, 302 East 8th St, Rome,
GA 30161, 706-235-9455/h,
706-524-7261/w

Membership Chair:
Bunyan Morris

Minority Concerns:
Tony Loadholt, 7092 Thames Lane,
Riverdale, GA 30296, 404-996-0728/h

National Liaison:
Dan DeFoor, 2305 Brookstone Dr, Lithia
Springs, GA 30057-3040,
404-948-8009/h, 404-920-4500/w

Olympics Chairperson:
Rise Spearman, 404-998-9927/h,
404-381-9680

Olympics-in-the-Schools:
Dr. Kathy Thompson

Private Schools:
Jane Sibley, 577 Loridons Dr, Atlanta,
GA 30342, 404-252-1505/h,
404-262-1345/w

Retired Educators:
Dr. Roz Ragans, 198 Wendwood Dr.,
Statesboro, GA 30458-5467,
912-681-4547/h

School Boards:
Dr. Wayne Woodward, Georgia South-
western College, Americus, GA 31709,
912-273-3397/h, 912-931-2167/w

SE Elementary Division:
Deborah Lackey

Special Events Coordinator:
Mary Jane Taylor

Spring Conference:
Bunyan Morris/Bruce Little,

Student Chapters:
Dr. Mary Barr, 110 Frances Place, Carrol-
ton, GA 30117, 404-830-9374/h,
404-836-6797/w

Special Needs:
Betsy Garlinton, 90 LaRue, Atlanta, GA
30327, 404-641-8257/w

State Art Consultant:
Ruth Gassett

Summer Study:
Virginia Carnes, 4438 E Brookhaven
Dr, Atlanta, GA 30319, 404-237-4258/h,
404-355-8673/w

Youth A Month:
Jackie Ellett, 4 Myrtle St, Auburn, GA
30203-9713, 770-963-7941/h,
770-448-9363/w

REMINDER: 404 or 770-either may be
used until 30 Nov. After, basically,
Atlanta-404 and surrounding areas-770.
Please notify Regina if your number
does change.

Letters

Note. Scanned Image (January 22, 2024)

At certain points throughout GAEA's history (e.g. 1994-1997, 2004-2009) they have had both a student chapter sponsor (a university professor) and a preservice representative. In this structure, a student and professor worked together to serve as preservice representatives on the Board. Occasionally, reports from preservice representatives appeared in GAEA's newsletters or magazines, though the reports from 1994-1997, for example, were mainly provided by the sponsor, Dr. Mary Barr.

Figure 2

Collage Magazine, Summer/Fall 1996

Legislative Column

Each year the issue of funding elementary art, music, and physical education specialists are brought to the attention of Governor Zell Miller and our legislators and each year it is considered and because of finances it is not passed. I realize how frustrating this is, but I ask that we all do not give up on this cause. I urge all of you to write to your legislators and to Governor Zell Miller stating that you support funding certified art, music and physical education specialists in all elementary schools.

The address for the Governor is: Governor Zell Miller, State Capitol, Atlanta, GA 30334.
Jackie Miller, Legislative Liaison

Arts Education Not Getting Enough Credit

According to a recent Education Department survey, only 39% of public high schools require arts credits for graduation. Nearly two-thirds of the schools reported having neither a district arts coordinator nor an arts curriculum specialist.

These statistics do not match the 88.5% of public school administrators and arts program specialists polled who believe creative writing is an essential curriculum component and the 94% who rate music and art as very important.

The survey also revealed that only 29% of public high schools and 24% of elementary schools use the national standards for arts education released last year.

This information is in Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, available free from the National Library of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20038-5711. 800-424-1616.

From NAEAE News and based on data from article in Education Daily, Vol. 21, No. 142 "Arts Education Schools Implementations Disappoint," pg. 2.

Arts Requirements for High School Students and College Entrance Information for Georgia

Georgia does not have specific arts requirements for high school graduation. The arts are included as required electives. There are no college entrance requirements.

NAEAE Memorandum, Aug 10, 1996.
Data from NCEA, as of May 1996.

Student Chapters 1996

The number of Student Chapters has remained the same for this school year. Some students are members of NAEAE/GAEA but do not have a Chapter in their School. The benefits of having a Chapter are many. Not to mention that most college student government organizations grant money for activities such as attending a national conference.

Networking at state and national conferences is helpful for networking when in the job market.

A new group of art education majors will be identified in the Fall and college preservice professors will get them interested in their professional organizations. At the State University of West Georgia we usually have a chili lunch or supper for all the students with a guest speaker and followed up a month later with a workshop such as calligraphy, oriental brush painting... skills that are not always covered in the studio courses. A mini meeting telling about NAEA and passing out the application is included.

This year it will be twice as exciting since we will be welcoming Melody Mikrants to our art department and school. Mary J. Barr has retired from teaching full time to teaching one course a semester. Melody just completed her doctorate degree and we congratulate her and SUWG for their selection of her as Assistant Professor of Art Education, West Georgia!

We had nine art education majors graduate. Several have teaching positions for 1996-97 school year. Many new schools in West Georgia have art rooms and have hired art teachers. We hope to see many grads and art ed majors at the Fall GAEA conference at Macon, November 1-3.

Much to see and do: the Hammer Museum, the Indian Mound, the Antebellum Hay House and the GAEA member art show to be held at the Wesleyan College gallery which will be held to top the show at Bremen last year! See YOU at MACON!

Chapter Sponsors for 1995-96: Carol Edwards, Kennesaw; Tom Cato, Georgia Southern; Stephen Lake, Valdosta; Tommy Scanlon, North Georgia; and also the University of Georgia has a chapter. We need any changes or additions. If YOU are planning to sponsor a student chapter, please send the name and address of the student who will act as contact person. Please drop a note to: Barr, SUWG, Department of Art, Carrollton, GA 30118. Thank you!

The Ringier Five Painters in World Art exhibition at the High Museum will be on view till September 29, 1996. College student admission is \$6.00. The soundtrack tour by J. Carter Brown costs \$4.00 combining art and music and explores human emotions. It was excellent. The Viewing hours are Tuesday-Sunday 10 am to 7 pm. For tickets call 404-733-3000. It was incredible! Edward Munch's 'The Scream', Auguste Rodin's marble statue, 'The Kiss', Claude Monet's 'The Strand', are among more than 100 of the world's most exceptional and powerful art objects—paintings, sculptures and decorative art made in all parts of the world over a span of 8000 Years. One of my favorites was W.H. Johnson's 'Intergo'. Look into a High Museum membership. There are many fine Art Education programs and teacher workshops.

Mary Barr, Student Chapters Chair

10 REASONS TO JOIN GAEA

1. Art teaching gets lonely, there are so few of us at any school or county systems. I just enjoy talking to other teachers at state conventions and district meetings.
2. Speaking of state conventions. The workshops are where I get new ideas for my classroom. I always come back with several projects I can't wait to try.
3. My students have opportunities to receive recognition, such as the Capital Art Show, and the State and National Art Honor Society membership for art students. Honor Society members can attend their own state wide conference.
4. My school also receives recognition when students get GAEA sponsored publicity. The photos of students at the Capital Art Show look great in our local paper. When our school was awarded the National Art Education's School Art Program Standards Award, the certificate was framed by my principal and hung next to our School of Excellence plaque.
5. Articles in Art Education Magazine allow me to keep up with changes and new developments in my field. There are always four quality reproductions, which I laminate and use in class. That's 24 per year. It adds up over the years. Even better yet, each reproduction comes with lesson's written by a museum educator.
6. Between COLLAGE and Art Education, I am informed about resource materials, grants and educational opportunities. In the last COLLAGE, I found a notice of a set of interdisciplinary lessons from The Smithsonian for \$5.00. When I called I also discovered I could get a free set of lessons quarterly which are based on their collection.
7. Exhibits sponsored by GAEA have encouraged me to develop as an artist and allowed me to exhibit among my peers.
8. As part of a group I can influence state and national legislators on issues of state and national arts funding.
9. The National Art Education Association has three categories of grants for which members can apply. In the last 6 years I have received two grants totaling \$1,400. That's a pretty good for \$65 a year!
10. The most wonderful unexpected opportunities crop up as a result of my membership. Even new technology is not overlooked. This year my students and I participated in several (8 count) live videoconferences through Arts Alive. I was the first teacher in my school to use the county's new CREAM facility thanks to GAEA.

Kathleen Thompson

Make special note of these new District Presidents:
Roseanne Statts (CSRA), Natalie Kimball (Metro-Central) and Nancy Zeigler (Coastal Plains). We can look forward to their reports in the next edition of the COLLAGE!

District Presidents

1 West Metro District, Jan Craft 770-481-1885	9 West GA District, Amy Goldberg 770-434-8516/6, 770-432-2128/w	16 West Flt District, vacant	Region Chairs and Districts:
2 East Metro District, Saraell O. Williams 706-567-3868/3, 706-228-8841/w	10 Central GA District, Sorey Bartlett 912-484-2058/5, 912-808-6096/w	17 Heart of GA District, Tomey Brachman 912-481-8848/8, 912-764-2752/w	Region 1: Davies 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 Vacant
3 Metro Central District, Natalie Kimball 404-222-0436/6, 404-853-4046/w	11 Middle GA District, Emery Maine 912-423-1984	18 Flint District, Georgia Dancy 912-481-8848/8, 912-764-2752/w	Region 2: Davies 9, 10, 11,12,13,14,18 Georgia Dancy
4 Perimeter East District, Saraell O. Williams 706-291-0217/8, 706-236-1849	12 Ocean District, Dar Brown 912-452-7066/5, 912-453-4570/w	19 Coastal District, vacant	Region 3: Davies 15,16,17,19,20,21,22,25 Florie Allen
5 Northwest GA District, Verona Maddox 706-808-8433/3, 706-823-4370/w	13 CSRA District, Roseanne Statts 706-808-8433/3, 706-823-4370/w	20 Coastal Is. District, Cathy Stanley 912-234-7918/8, 912-451-7201/w	
6 North GA District, Joan McDonough 7 Pioneer District, Dolores Diaz 706-514-0844/4, 770-967-9826/w	14 Chattahoochee District, Sarah Tharscott 706-512-1872/8, 706-569-2543/w	21 Southwest GA District, Nancy Zeigler 912-242-0778/8, 912-559-5153/w	
8 Northeast GA District, Dr. Marilyn Wolf-Bagatz 706-743-3873/3, 706-548-7208/w	15 East Flt District, Jim Mitchell 912-273-7580/3, 912-276-3430/w	22 Coastal Plains District, Nancy Zeigler 912-242-0778/8, 912-559-5153/w	
		23 Okefenokee District, Joanette Dulak 912-384-5590/3, 912-384-1342/w	

Note. Scanned Image (January 22, 2024).

Data Collection

I collected my data in various ways and at multiple times. I worked before, during, and after the conference to gather materials and perspectives for my project. I collected my data

through surveys, in-person interviews, or questions emailed back and forth, which I will explain further in this chapter. I intentionally located relevant people in many positions during the conference and scheduled times to interview them afterward. The conference was incredibly short and busy, filled with many activities and sessions, and I did not want to take away time from teachers' experiences. Therefore, I interviewed most participants directly after the conference to ensure they still had the conference fresh in their memories. I also took time to reflect and observe while at the conference, using my own experiences as a second-time conference-goer with a preservice teacher perspective as evidence. Throughout my process, I kept my research questions in mind when selecting participants to speak to. Figure 3 shows a chart of my research questions and the participants (pseudonyms used for all participants other than me) I found to help provide information for each. I had 17 participants (including me) in my project. In the next section, I describe each group of participants in further detail.

Figure 3

Research Questions and Corresponding Data

What current support does the GAEA conference provide for preservice and early career art teachers, and what support did they provide in the past?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two conference organizers [interview] Monica Gale Beth Smith • Five board members [survey] Blair Anderson Michelle Jung • GAEA Conference Archives • GAEA 2023 Conference Materials
What are the experiences and needs of preservice and early career art teachers who attend GAEA conferences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One instructional coach & long-time conference go-er [interview] June Lee • Three preservice student volunteers [survey] Carly McMillis Tricia Spencer Susan Knight • Three first-year teachers who were first-time conference go-ers [focus group at the conference]

	Francis Carter Gloria Perry Zora Higby <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two pre-service attendees (including me) [interview] Flora Daniels Maeve Munson • One early career attendee [interview] Stacy Ember
--	---

Participants

Preservice Art Teachers

When looking for preservice art teacher participants, I unfortunately did not have access to the names of preservice attendees at the conference. Throughout the weekend, I tried to find and introduce myself to any preservice participants I could find. I was unable to find very many. The lack of preservice attendance was still relevant to my project, proving my target group's significant lack of participation. I used my observations as a preservice teacher myself. Also, I spoke with one other preservice educator who attended the conference to contribute to the preservice perspective portion of my project. Additionally, I reached out to a small group of Columbus State University's preservice teacher volunteers at the conference and was able to send them a survey after the meeting. Ultimately, I still found a range of people who could speak about preservice involvement while I was at the GAEA Fall 2023 conference.

Early Career Art Teachers

For the project, I aimed to include perspectives from early career art teachers in their 1st through 5th years of teaching to understand their perspectives on transitioning from preservice to practicing teachers in the organization. I found one early career teacher attending the conference through my connections at my university and the rest of the early career participants during the preservice and early career teacher "meet and greet" I organized and held

on the conference's second day. Three first-year teachers attended the session; it was their first time attending the conference that year. I recorded our conversation and later transcribed it.

GAEA Leadership (Veteran Teachers)

To gain a perspective on the leadership of GAEA and their intentions for supporting and including preservice teachers, I asked the three Fall 2023 conference organizers if I could interview them on the phone or by emailing them. While all three agreed to participate, only two could follow through with the interview process. Additionally, I sent a survey to all 47 GAEA board members at the end of the conference during our board meeting and received five responses. Lastly, I also interviewed a member of GAEA who was an instructional coach in art education for a large suburban Atlanta school system because she focused on transitioning and supporting first-year teachers in her district. She could offer a unique perspective for my project.

Data Collection Methods

Pre-Conference

Before the conference, I focused on developing my interview questions and surveys to utilize once I met my participants. I created all my materials before the conference to ensure I could focus on finding participants and observing. For example, I organized the “First Year and Pre-Service Teacher Meet and Greet” I would be leading at the conference, which included creating a PowerPoint (Appendix A) and interview questions (Appendix B) for the focus group I was hoping to have at that session. Additionally, I created a survey for GAEA Board Members to fill out at the end of the conference (Appendix C).

Before the conference, I spoke to one of my participants, the Instructional Coach. I found the Instructional Coach through my connections on GAEA’s Board because of her focus on supporting first-year teachers. Her work seemed incredibly tied to the motivations for my

project, so I created specific interview questions for her, which can be found in Appendix D. I talked with her over the phone, recorded our conversation, and took notes as we spoke. I could write down essential moments of our conversation and later go through the recording to transcribe our conversation by hand. Throughout our discussions, I focused on gaining a perspective from a qualified professional who worked with many early career teachers. We spoke about common fears and shortcomings of teachers in their first couple of years of teaching. Most of the information I learned from her matched the literature I had found. I also met this Instructional Coach in person at the conference and attended her session on preparing for job interviews.

During the Conference

Focus Group. Most of my interviews were over the phone or online through email, except for my focus group. I held a meet-and-greet conference session for preservice and early career teachers. Three early career teachers came to my event. As a group, we reviewed the slides I had prepared about GAEA and the benefits the organization could have on their careers. I ended my short presentation so that we could have time to talk together and answer the questions I had prepared (Appendix B). I enjoyed hearing their perspectives and giving them a chance to meet each other. I saw them occasionally throughout the rest of the conference as well. They were also first-time conference attendees and provided information about how welcomed or informed they felt when they entered the conference for the first time. I recorded our conversation through VoiceMemos on my iPad during our Meet and Greet and transcribed it by hand afterward.

Preservice Attendees. My original goal was to find pre-service attendees organically while at the conference. The conference organizers had a specific tag for “Preservice” you could

add to your nametag, so I felt confident that I could find them in the crowds. I quickly realized that there were not many preservice teachers at the conference. Other than myself, I found one other preservice teacher attending the conference. I met her through another GAEA Board member and spent much time at the conference with her. We went to workshops and ate dinner one night at the conference. It was great to have someone to spend time with when surrounded by so many new people. I asked her at the conference if I could send her some questions about her experience afterward.

I did not find many early career teachers at the conference. I was lucky that three early career teachers came to my meet-and-greet event. On top of that, two of my classmates from the University of Georgia were also attending the event. One was a fifth-year elementary school teacher with whom I spent much time walking around at the conference. We did not know many people; this was her first GAEA conference. On the first night, she joined me, my mom, and some of my mom's teacher friends for dinner. I asked her during the conference if I could send her some interview questions in the following weeks. All of these interviews took place through email. I sent them the questions, and they typed their responses. Many people found that option easier to fit into their busy schedules than a phone call. Their sets of questions were very similar to each other, just tailored to their specific experiences, as shown in Appendix E.

Student Volunteers. I noticed at my first conference that most of the people my age were volunteers at the GAEA conference event. At this conference, I saw the volunteers from Columbus State University guiding teachers to different meeting rooms, setting up classrooms, and much more. I had hoped some would attend my preservice and first-year teacher meet-and-greet, but they never came. After the meet-and-greet session, I went into the hallway to give away the extra food I'd brought and met a couple of the volunteers. They were happy to take my

food, and I could talk to them briefly. Some mentioned my event and how they wanted to go but were unsure if they could. I asked if any of them would be willing to answer some questions about the conference, and I got their contact information. When I followed up with them after the conference, they said they would be willing to send a message in their class GroupMe if I wanted to send them a survey. So, I created a survey with questions very similar to the meet-and-greet questions, with some adjustments because of their role as volunteers rather than attendees at the conference, as found in Appendix G. I got three responses from that survey.

Post-Conference

GAEA Archival Materials. When I was at the conference, I noticed a small exhibit in which someone had laid out old GAEA pamphlets and conference booklets on a table in the main hallway of the conference. I asked around and learned that they all came from a Board Member who had been involved in the leadership of GAEA for many years. She brought the materials to create a small exhibit for retired GAEA members she represented on the board during the conference. After seeing all her materials, I asked to borrow them for my project, and she was kind enough to let me do it. I took a large storage box of materials home to review and analyze for my project later.

Board Members. After the conference, Board Members stayed for an in-person board meeting. During the meeting, I had a chance to update the board on my work. I spoke about my project and how much I had learned throughout the weekend. I shared a QR code in our meeting notes with a survey I had created for the board members. I valued their opinion as the leadership team for the organization because they shaped the focus and actions of the organization. My questions for the board focused on what they perceived as the needs of preservice teachers and

how they hoped to support them through the organization. These questions can be found in Appendix C. I received five responses and abundant verbal support from the Board Members.

Conference Organizers. After speaking with the board members, I realized another influential group could provide me with more insight about the conference: the organizers. I emailed all three of them, asking questions about their experience creating and leading the conference. I also asked them for any records or materials they could give me about my project, such as attendance records, costs and revenue for the conference, workshop proposals, etc. I heard back from two of the conference organizers and communicated with both of them. I asked them the same questions, as shown in Appendix F. I spoke with one organizer on the phone and recorded our conversation through VoiceMemos on my iPad. I later transcribed our recorded conversation by hand. With the other organizer, I emailed the questions and received a written response. The organizers were limited in the records and materials they could still access and share. They sent me the conference vendor receipts, but unfortunately, these did not offer meaningful information for my study.

Limitations

Unfortunately, my participants were limited because I could not find more preservice students at the conference. Their lack of participation was a reason I branched out to gain perspectives from other groups of teachers as well, such as board members, instructional coaches, and conference organizers. Additionally, the group of veteran teachers I talked with was very unique. The teachers I had readily available to me and the members who volunteered their time for the board found a lasting community in this organization and were involved in many aspects of the group. Many veteran teachers across Georgia may not feel the same way. Because

my participant pool was small, my data cannot be used to make large generalizations. My project can only offer a glimpse into this specific conference and the current state of GAEA's climate.

The reality is that I was attempting to gather information from a very busy group of people, and teachers do not always have time for interviews and surveys. Most of the participants I could find were through connections I had already made in GAEA or through my university. Two of my project participants were peers in my Art Education program. I am worried that I missed a diverse range of perspectives and some preservice teachers at the conference. Further, the realities of education being a predominantly White field (Schaeffer, 2021) made finding a diverse group of participants to interview difficult. All of my research participants were women, and most were White. Although they are the majority in the field, my research still needs more perspectives and identities. I also found it challenging to get conference materials. The only information I could access was vendor receipts from the conference, so I lacked more details about the participants. While analyzing my data, I also realized I was missing another critical perspective – university professors' perspective on art teacher preparation programs. Their connection to preservice students as mentors influences preservice teachers' involvement in the GAEA organization and conferences.

Data Analysis

After the conference, I worked to transcribe the recorded conversations I had collected by hand. I tried to use a program that transcribed the recordings for me, but I quickly realized that I could create something more accurate on my own. Once I had transcribed all of the interviews, I printed them out and organized them by type of participant: preservice, early career, leadership, and others. I used a color-coded system of highlighters to find similarities and differences within the work. Once I had a few different themes with quotes from various people,

I created a new document titled “Evidence,” where I typed up the quotes I had found into emerging themes: benefits of the conference, disconnects between preservice teachers and GAEA, barriers to the conference; and intention versus the impact of including preservice teachers in GAEA.

In addition to transcribing and analyzing the interviews, I eventually began going through the enormous storage box of old printed materials the GAEA Board Member had let me borrow. I organized all materials by type: Collage publications, conference booklets, board member reports, GAEA newsletters, and more. I removed any irrelevant material from my analysis, such as materials from other states’ conferences. I looked through the materials and placed sticky notes on any document where “Preservice” was mentioned or omitted. Then, I spent an afternoon scanning and uploading the sticky-noted sections to my computer. Afterward, I organized the scans of preservice mentions by year to get a clear picture of the evolution of preservice in GAEA. I was able to make note of similarities and differences over the years to understand the previous role of preservice teachers in GAEA before I joined the organization.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As described in Chapter 3, through data analysis, I discovered four themes that emerged regarding the supports for and experiences of preservice and early career art teachers at the GAEA conference: the benefits of the conference, disconnect between Preservice teachers and GAEA, barriers to conference attendance, and intention versus impact of including preservice teachers in GAEA. In this chapter, I discuss the four themes in detail, integrating evidence from the data into the discussions. Overall, I found that the GAEA Fall Conference held a variety of benefits for teachers' social and professional lives that had the potential to impact their K-12 students and themselves. However, many barriers to attending this event significantly affected preservice teachers in art education programs. Finally, while most of the GAEA board member participants who were veteran in-service teachers emphasized the importance of preservice teachers as the future of the field and how valuable they were for bringing contemporary perspectives, I did not observe significant efforts to include them in the professional sphere of art education through GAEA.

Benefits of the Conference

The professional development offered at the fall conference was active, self-motivated, teacher-led, relevant to the classroom, and informal. Based on my experience and conversations with attendees and planners, the conference offered a successful form of professional development for art educators. Teachers noted that many beneficial elements of the conference were specific to being in the environment. A conference organizer wrote, "You can't replicate

that. You can't get that in a book. You can't get that on Zoom or a resource you may purchase for your teachers. You got to be there" (G. Perry, personal communication, November 3, 2023). Six people in this study who had been attending for a long time noted similar sentiments that echoed the significance of the in-person aspects of the conference. Eight teachers described how beneficial it was to have time to make friends with their colleagues. Additionally, one teacher said at the conference, "You get to be an artist, we forget that we're artists" (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). She highlights how the conference offered opportunities for art teachers to make art and learn together, which they may not always have time to do in their busy school schedules.

The most significant way the conference ensured that professional learning was arts-focused and relevant was by letting teachers in the organization develop and lead the sessions. Teacher-led content ensured that learning opportunities were developed with art teachers in mind and applied to their classrooms specifically, versus programs developed by districts that rarely offer content specific (or relevant) to art teachers. As a member of GAEA, anyone can submit a proposal and present at the fall conference. One of the preservice teachers described presenting for the first time at the fall conference. She listed presenting as one of the main reasons she attended the conference and one of the things she hoped to do again. Because any GAEA member can present at the conference, even preservice teachers have an opportunity to speak and share their ideas.

Beyond presenting, teachers also had an active role in choosing which sessions to attend. They could sign up to participate in their chosen sessions and find events and activities that interested them from the conference booklet they received when checking in. Attendees could tailor their experience to their needs based on their schools and communities. Two of the

new teachers noted how relevant what they learned was to their classrooms and students, noting that they would be taking lessons back to their schools to try on their own. For example, one early-career teacher noted an online tool she heard about in her session:

I'm bringing back all of the resources through GADOE Inspire [...] My district had briefly mentioned Inspire to us, but it seems so much more practical and useful after some real training. (S. Ember, personal communication. December 1, 2023)

This teacher built upon her learning from her district and learned how this resource could be applicable and helpful in her classroom through hands-on exploration at the conference.

Battersby and Verdi (2015) wrote that conferences are too general and do not meet specific needs. Still, my experience and the data I collected suggest that GAEA has found a way to meet most of their teacher's needs and keep their learning relevant to the field and their classrooms.

Several veteran teachers, such as board members and the Instructional Coach, noted the conference's small and intimate feeling. The informal sessions and events led to many discussions and connections made inside and outside the presentations. The focus of this conference was not just learning but connecting people in art education. One veteran teacher said, "You have nights where you go out and have libations with your friends and have convos about kids that you teach, about how hard the job is and how wonderful" (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). The informal setting enabled teachers to connect with teachers across the state and meet a wide range of people. Another veteran teacher explained, "I have made lifelong friends that I support and who support me right back. All of that support spills into my classroom and benefits my students and community" (B. Anderson, personal communication, October 31, 2023). Being in arts education can sometimes feel isolating, being the only art educator in your school. At the conference, attendees can connect with people in

their fields and careers. A long-time conference-goer described how much she valued this opportunity, “just realizing the scope of the conference as far as how many art educators come together because GAEA really puts us all together and otherwise we’re marginalized and isolated on our campuses” (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). The Instructional Coach, another long-time conference-goer, said:

I’ve gone every year since then [her first conference], and I think this connects to my value of community because it feels like I call it my art teacher retreat. It’s like a getaway where I get to connect with like-minded educators, and I get to rejuvenate and refresh my practice. (J. Lee, personal communication, October 16, 2023)

The connections made at the conference prompted teachers to want to return year after year to keep learning and meeting their colleagues.

Likewise, preservice and early career teachers noticed the significance of the personal connections made at the conference. One preservice teacher noted, “Overall, my experience was great. I believe it is important for future and current art educators to join this group where so many different art educators come together.” (F. Daniels, personal communication, December 5, 2023). The conference offered an opportunity to learn lessons or art techniques and gain new perspectives from colleagues, including veteran teachers. Most of the early career teachers who attended my focus group session had coincidentally eaten breakfast at the same table the morning before we met to talk. Two of them explained they had intentionally chosen to sit at that table to speak to a veteran teacher they had met during the workshops. One said that something they found especially helpful was “the conversations with people who’ve been teaching like way longer, like that lady we were sitting with for breakfast. I sat with her yesterday during a workshop.” Then, the other teacher replied, “Yes, that’s why I navigated to her this morning

because she's so awesome." (Z. Higby, & F. Carter, personal communication, November 3, 2023). At the conference, one of the best resources for preservice and early-career teachers was meeting experienced teachers and connecting with them.

Establishing connections with a community of peers and building a professional network is sometimes an overlooked aspect of professional development. Preservice teachers mentioned being able to talk with many mentors, potential bosses, and coworkers. One of the student volunteers, a preservice teacher, said that a veteran teacher "was very appreciative of the help we did and told me that I could put her down as a reference any time" (S. Knight, personal communication, November 6, 2023). One preservice teacher even wrote, "Without GAEA, I would not be the next art teacher at BMS" (F. Daniels, personal communication, December 5, 2023). Through this conference, preservice teachers had the potential to gain knowledge, hands-on experience, and social capital within their field. They had opportunities to make social and professional connections before leaving their university programs. The three preservice teachers who volunteered at the conference listed numerous benefits they gained from the experience, including networking and resources, coming together and sharing ideas, interactions with vendors and presenters, gaining lesson plan ideas and advice, seeing the connections everyone had, and recognizing how everyone had a place, noting joy when teachers met new people, receiving advice for getting a job, connecting with other teachers, and meeting potential bosses and colleagues.

Disconnects between Preservice Teachers and GAEA

The most shocking and notable finding from the surveys completed by the preservice student volunteers at the conference was that they helped, saw the guest speaker, and met so many amazing people but had no fundamental understanding of what GAEA was. Many of them

thought that, as preservice teachers, they were not supposed to be there. They explained: “I honestly didn’t think that they would do anything for preservice teachers. I thought it was just for current and past teachers” (C. McMillis, personal communication, November 6, 2023) or “I figured the conference was designed for established teachers” (T. Spencer, personal communication, November 6, 2023). One preservice teacher said, “I would love to go [to the next conference] if it was my choice, but I’m not sure how to become a member or anything” (C. McMillis, personal communication, November 6, 2023). Using student volunteers appeared to be a creative way to get preservice teachers involved at the conference, eliminating the barrier of tickets or registration fees; however, I was uncertain whether they were there to be included in the conference and introduced to GAEA or merely to serve as tour guides and helpers. The students described feeling disconnected from the conference and the organization, not even GAEA members, or not knowing how to become a member.

Challenges of Being a First-Time Conference Attendee

A group of first-year teachers attended the conference for the first time. During my meet-and-greet session for early career and preservice teachers at the conference, I spoke with them in a focus group. One of their testimonies described their sentiments regarding an apparent lack of support at the conference:

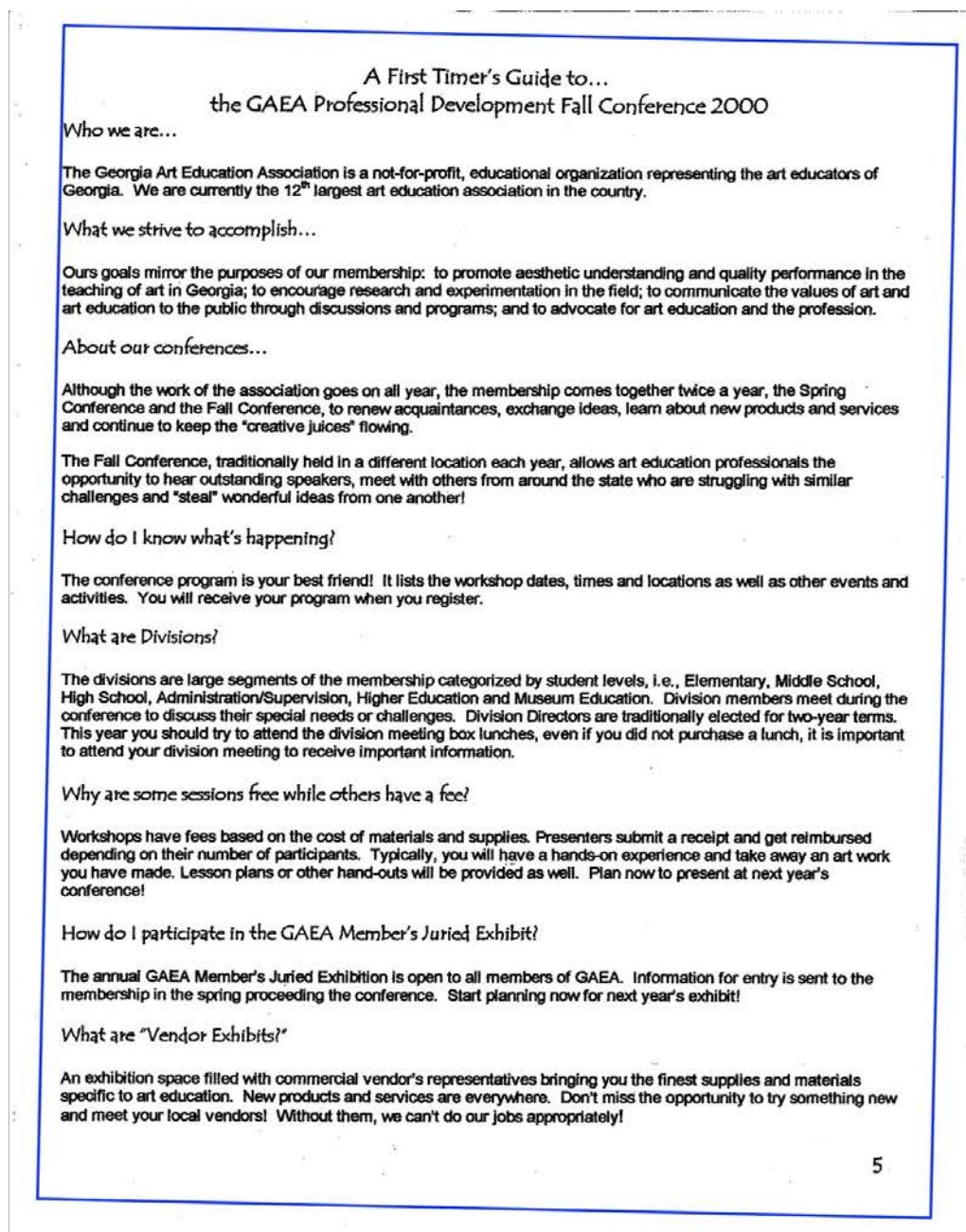
Yesterday, I was about to cry when I got here because I was so frustrated. I don’t even know what to do. And everybody was just like, it’s fine, it’s fine, you’re fine, you’re fine. And I’m like, no, I’m not fine. I don’t even know what I’m doing. And I was really frustrated. (Z. Higby, personal communication, November 3, 2023)

This teachers' experience suggests a disconnect between the groups of teachers who have been going to the conference every year since their early careers and new teachers who are just trying to get involved.

One place that could include helpful information for new attendees would be the conference program. For example, the printed conference program could have included more explanation of the conference structure and processes. The program included the sessions and descriptions, a map of the college, and a basic schedule for the night. However, in a conference program from 2000, there was a section called "A First Timers' Guide to... The GAEA Fall Conference 2000" (Figure 4), which included details about the conference, its mission, what exactly teachers were paying for when they attended, and much more. I also found that the "First-timers Guide to the Conference" was printed in the 2008 program; however, this information was not included for 2023. While new members join the conference every year, the program did not address them and, therefore, did not ensure all conference attendees had at least a basic knowledge of the conference format.

Figure 4

GAEA Professional Development Conference, 2000, First Timer's Guide



Note. Scanned Image (January 22, 2024).

I recall not knowing what to expect when I attended my first conference in 2022. Even figuring out what clothes to pack caused incredible uncertainty because I was unsure what to wear. I remember thinking: "Should I pack casual clothes? Professional? Fancy?" Thankfully, I

could ask my mom, and she said, “Oh, pack whatever. It’ll be fine. People wear anything.”

While this may seem small, it demonstrates how much easier the conference experience can be for veteran teachers who know what to expect every year. Though the conference sessions may change yearly, the weekend structure has not changed for years. However, without guidance for new conference-goers, the conference can feel exclusionary.

For teachers attending the conference for the first time, going to the conference can be a leap of faith. They may need to figure out what to expect or if their time away from their students was worth it. Preservice teachers especially may feel the financial burden of their registration fees without a school district to fund their professional development (S. Ember, personal communication, December 1, 2023). Some teachers may play it safe and only attend if they know what they are getting into. On top of that, the preservice teachers I spoke to did not know they were eligible to participate in a conference like this. Unfortunately, preservice teachers cannot benefit from all the conference has to offer if they do not know it exists or whether they can attend. Preservice teachers will only receive vital resources if their engagement in the conference and organization is prioritized.

Uncertainty about Preservice Representation

Based on my experiences serving as the Preservice Representative on the GAEA board and my analysis of archival documents, preservice representation on the board has been limited and ever-changing. When I joined the board in 2022, the president was excited to fill the position because it had been vacant for several years. When I asked about my role and responsibilities, I was told I had the freedom to try anything because there was nothing to refer to from previous representatives. Many art teachers involved with the board told me what they hoped to see from the position or what they remembered seeing in the past, but I had very little to work from

regarding official structures or roles. Curious, I decided to investigate the GAEA archives to see what I could find out about the history of the preservice position. I noticed that “preservice” was mentioned in various places. In particular, I was surprised to see that from 2004 to 2009, there was a Student Chapter representative (a preservice university student) and a Student Chapter Sponsor (a college professor) on the board (Fig. 5). This meant that a college professor and preservice student had worked together to represent student chapters on the board, which seemed like a promising idea.

Figure 5

GAEA Collage Magazine: Leaders in Art Walking the Talk, 2005

following counties: Effingham, Chatham, Bryan, MacIntosh, Liberty, Long, Appling, Tattnall, Toombs, Montgomery, Jeff Davis, Telfair, Wheeler, Wayne, Treutlen, Laurens, Bleckley, Pulaski, Dodge, and Wilcox. Please submit news items or questions to either Alisa or Judy at the above email addresses.

DISTRICT 8 CO-PRESIDENTS
 Betsy Bridger
 bbridger@dougherty.k12.ga.us
 Shawn Bland
 shawnphd@hotmail.com

DISTRICT 9 CO-PRESIDENTS
 Tamara Daughtry
 christam@darientel.net
 Nancy Zeigler
 zeigler@surfsouth.com

Marsha Parm, Whitfield County. Way to go girls!
 All National Board Certified Teachers and those working on certification need to keep your ears tuned to what our legislature is doing on changing the laws concerning our increases. A proposal has been made by the Governor and his staff to make the raises only for teachers who teach in at-risk schools. I'm not sure what this definition is but we need to let our congressmen and women know of our opinions. Let our voices be heard and question them about their support of NB certification and support of the arts in our schools. Leadership is the key. Don't wait on someone else to do it or it may never happen.

Committee Reports



MINORITY CONCERNS
 Kathleen T. Jackson
 kthorn20632@fairburn.com

My name is Kathleen T. Jackson, formally Thomason. I'm a Pennsylvania native and have resided in Georgia for the past 17 years. I currently teach PreK-5 art classes at Campbell Elementary School in Fairburn where I presently live. I attended Georgia State University from 1998-1995 and after seven years was conferred with a BFA in Art Education. Recently, I earned a master's degree in Technology and Education through the Intensive Masters Degree Program at Columbia University's Teachers College Online Program. Community involvement is important to me, as well as being an advocate for issues relative to educators as a whole. Outside of the current position I hold with GAEA as Minority Concerns Committee Chair, I also serve as the President of the Fulton County Association of Educators, an affiliate of GAE/NAE.

As chair of GAEA Minority Concerns Committee it is my goal to activate minority involvement during the state conferences. During the fall conference, this committee sponsored a

tour of famous African-American historic sites in Savannah. Our goal is to be present and active with these kinds of activities. Watch for us to have similar activities at future conferences!

Editor's Note: I asked Kathleen to give us some background information about herself in that she is new to the GAEA board. Please make an effort to connect her with any news, concerns and ideas. I am also encouraging her to submit to Collage on a regular basis. And here I must make a confession. Kathleen faithfully sent this report in last fall and I inadvertently left it out of the Collage Fall issue. I publicly apologize to her and to our GAEA membership.

NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS (NBPTS) LIAISON
 Jane Baars
 art_baars@yahoo.com

This has been another successful year for NBCT teachers in Georgia. The state now has the 4th largest group of NBCT teachers in the U.S. Georgia added eight new art teachers out of the 400+ statewide for the year 2003-2004. The eight included four in Early and Middle Grades and four in Adolescence through Young Adults. The four elementary/middle were: Emily Barba, Floyd County; Lisa Casey, Cobb County; Carol Mohor, Clayton County; and Deborah Wilson, Fulton County. The four AYA were: Kathleen Diggs, DeKalb County; Elizabeth Eppes, DeKalb County; Donna Holder, Effingham County; and

STUDENT CHAPTER SPONSOR
 Chris Dockery
 ckdockery@atlTel.net

STUDENT CHAPTER STUDENT REPS
 Robbie Quinn
 rdquinn@uga.edu
 Stephanie Baugh
 stephbaugh@mindspring.com

The GAEA Student Chapter announces the National Convention Scholarship for the 2006 NAEA Convention in Chicago. It is our goal to encourage student chapter members to attend the NAEA Convention by partially funding one student's Convention costs. Application packets will be mailed to all NAEA/GAEA Student Chapter Sponsors by September 15, 2005. Please contact the Student Chapter Team at the Chris' email to ensure that your chapter is included in our contact list. Thank you! The GAEA Student Chapter Team: Chris Dockery, Stephanie Baugh, and Robbie Quinn



Robbie



Stephanie

Note Scanned Image (January 22, 2024).

In addition to the Student Chapter position being either non-existent or in flux, I noticed that GAEA lists this role under “Committee Chairs and Liaisons” on their website rather than under Division Directors. The membership of GAEA and the corresponding Directors on the board is divided into six divisions: Elementary, Middle Level, Secondary, Museum, Higher Education, and Supervision/Administration. Even though NAEA (the national organization with which GAEA is affiliated) includes a Preservice Division and a Preservice Division Director, GAEA does not. NAEA created the Preservice Division on the national level in 2013. After calls from student chapter interest groups to become “a full-fledged seat at the table,” the new division was voted on and added to the national constitution (National Art Education Association, 2023). Being a division enables Preservice teachers to have a more significant voice, create more leadership positions, and be placed on the same level as other division groups.

The fact that there is no Preservice Division in GAEA becomes relevant at the annual conferences because, for example, there is a lunch event called “Division Lunches,” where teachers meet with others in their division to talk about issues or events specific to them. However, because there is no Preservice Division, preservice teachers have not been included in these lunches. For the past two years, I have not known where to go when it came time for Division Lunches. I felt physically excluded from this event, and I can only imagine that other preservice teachers felt the same way.

Challenges with Fitting In

As stated earlier, veteran teachers have typically attended conferences since the beginning of their careers. Many hold various positions on the board and continue working on GAEA projects throughout the year. Veteran teachers often come to the conference with old

friends from their college preparation programs, teachers they have met, and teachers in the districts where they teach. Most of the preservice teachers I saw at the conference had come independently. The connections between various groups of teachers were beautiful to see, with many calling their art teacher friends ‘tribe’ or ‘family’ (M. Jung, personal communication, January 24, 2024). These established connections made some new teachers feel out of place. For example, the early career teacher I interviewed shared: “At times, I felt a little unqualified to be there or an outsider to my field.” (S. Ember, personal communication, December 1, 2023). As a preservice teacher myself, I often felt like I was looking in from the outside rather than being in the conference. I felt similar to the other participant, who explained that sometimes it felt “like I hadn’t been vetted to join the group yet, only to be there as a passive observer” (S. Ember, personal communication, December 1, 2023).

Impact of Support from University Professors

All preservice students have a bridge into their professional world through their college professors. Many professors are members of the national organization NAEA and the state affiliates, such as GAEA. Professors can connect their students to other professionals, colleagues, and opportunities in the real world, including the state conference. My experiences with two participants showed that a professor's support or involvement in the fall conference could impact their experience. For example, a fellow preservice educator who became a participant in the study came to the conference with her two professors. They went to sessions with her, introduced her to many people (including me), invited her to the higher education division lunch with them, and ensured she felt supported the entire weekend. They were a safe space to return to as she ventured into sessions and met new people. It was comforting to see their care and pride in her.

On the other hand, the fifth-year teacher who participated in my study was in a graduate program and felt less supported by her professors. Similarly, as a preservice teacher in a graduate program, I did not see my professors often at the Fall 2023 conference. I attended my first conference in 2022 alone without anyone from my school or program. I was able to rely on my mom and her art teacher friends for guidance, but not everyone is lucky to have this kind of support at these events. The fifth-year teacher wrote,

I only saw my professors twice. Once at the awards presentation and once at a coffee shop getting breakfast. Both times were by chance. I apparently got left off the email saying our presentation was canceled, which probably says all that needs to be said about the interactions that were had. (S. Ember, personal communication, December 1, 2023)

While both the fifth-year teacher and I are graduate students whose age and maturity differentiate us from traditional undergraduate preservice teachers, we recognized that we desired support from our university professors after the conference.

Teachers in higher education likely understand that they impact their students through every lesson and class but may not realize how impactful they can be in other professional spheres. Professors introduce the world of art education to their students, and this can include professional organizations and conferences. In one of my first classes, I was required to purchase a membership to NAEA, GAEA's national organization. However, the topic of the conference and the state organization were not discussed. Because professors are essentially preservice teacher mentors built into teacher preparation programs, they can guide beginning teachers into their careers. Given the professional benefits of state conferences like GAEA, as illuminated in

my project, professors might consider introducing preservice students to this vital resource and supporting them in their attendance.

Barriers to Conference Attendance

Despite the benefits of attending the GAEA conference, some teachers may face barriers to attending. Throughout the interviews, the financial burden of the conference was the most significant barrier frequently expressed by participants. Not only do teachers have to pay \$85 yearly to be members of GAEA, but they also have to pay around \$250 to attend the fall conference. There is a discounted membership rate for preservice teachers (\$55) and first-year professionals (\$80), and the conference rate for preservice students is greatly reduced to \$75. The financial burden of the conference is likely a significant reason why many teachers do not attend. GAEA is aware of these issues and is interested in cutting costs to make their programming inclusive to everyone, but that may only be partially feasible. From my experience on the Board, the money made from the conferences funds many aspects of GAEA's year-round budget.

In addition to the cost of the conference, lodging and transportation costs are also burdensome. The conferences happen all across the state of Georgia. One of the conference organizers said she brought the conference to Columbus because "selfishly" she wanted to serve the teachers in her county and easily get them to the conference (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). Because the conference is over the weekend, teachers must account for the added cost of hotels. Overall, there are many layers of logistics involved in attending the conference. These complications can be incredibly daunting for new conference-goers.

Beyond costs, teachers face the challenge of leaving their classrooms. Early career teachers, in particular, may not feel confident or able to take time away from their classrooms to

attend the conference, even if this may mean they will miss out on connections they may need to get through their first years of teaching. As the fifth-year teacher in my study shared, “I either couldn’t afford it, didn’t have funding from my school system, or didn’t feel prepared or able to take the time away from my school during the early years” (S. Ember, personal communication, December 1, 2023). Unlike preservice students, who may need to pay on their own or raise money through student chapters to attend the conference, some in-service teachers can get funding through their school system to participate in the conference. However, one veteran teacher explained that because school administrators often see the arts as auxiliary or less important since they are not based on standardized test scores, funds for attending conferences are usually given to teachers of other subjects. This problem is exacerbated because not all districts have art coordinators or specialists to advocate for them (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). After speaking with teachers attending the conference for a long time, it seemed that there were systematic problems with schools undervaluing the arts and art teachers, which caused people to miss out on the conference.

With the current barriers existing for art educators state-wide, only a particular type of teacher will be able to go to the conference—those who have the resources and administrative support to fund the experience. Not only are conferences missing a more varied perspective in the cohort that attends conferences each year, but teachers who cannot attend are missing crucial resources that could benefit them and their students. This disparity in who can attend the conference and who cannot affect art teachers across the board, including preservice and early career teachers.

Intention Versus Impact of Including Preservice Teachers in GAEEA

After conducting the interviews with preservice members attending the conference this fall, it was clear that they did not feel like they belonged there. Only a few limited sessions or activities were created for them. They still found many benefits in attending but did not feel it was a space for them. One of the conference organizers said it best: “If teachers, preservice teachers, knew that they had a family waiting for them, they could continue to grow that family during conferences. That was another big misconception” (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). Showing that there seems to be a gap between what GAEA wants to offer preservice teachers and what preservice teachers experience.

When speaking to board members and veteran teachers, they spoke highly of preservice teachers and how much they are needed at the conference. One Board Member wrote, “You [preservice students] have great professors, and you’ve learned new skill sets and new content because everything’s evolving and changing so quickly that you have things to offer seasoned teachers” (B. Smith, personal communication, November 17, 2023). Three of the Board members spoke about fresh perspectives and contemporary learnings that are important for preservice teachers to share with classroom teachers. All but one survey member talked about the future of art education, saying, “It is definitely important for our association to pour into these new teachers because they’re the next generation of art educators. If we don’t pour into you now, we’ll lose you. There are so few new teachers anyway; there’s a teacher shortage, and higher ed programs are shrinking” (J. Lee, personal communication, October 16, 2023).

According to board members, there is an apparent want and need for preservice and early career teachers to be involved with the organization. They welcomed me on the board, and I was also nominated and given the “Preservice Educator of the Year” award at the fall awards ceremony. However, I was shocked to know that this was even an award, and I could not find

mention of this award in any of the historical materials from GAEA. Some small steps are being taken, but there must be many more before preservice teachers are active in the organization.

Another crucial observation I made about the Board is that every member is a volunteer. These are teachers with full-time jobs and students who spend their limited free time working for GAEA. Additionally, all Board Members have specific roles and populations they serve. They have time in their busy schedules to worry about their own position and the needs of the group of teachers they serve. Understandably, certain positions like the preservice representative (that has been empty for years)—if not raised to a certain level of visibility within the organization—could fall through the cracks over the years.

Discussion

Going to the conference as an observer and genuinely understanding its impact changed how I interacted with the event. My research pushed me out of my comfort zone and forced me to make real connections with so many people. This experience deepened my understanding of the GAEA community and empowered me to advocate for myself and my position on the board. It was a journey of personal growth, and I hope my experience can inspire others to take a more active role in their professional communities. I was welcomed into this group and saw firsthand how helpful an experience like their fall conference can be, and I want to ensure other people can benefit from this kind of experience. I aim to make the conference and its benefits more accessible, especially to pre-professionals and all art teachers across the state.

There are many disconnects between preservice teachers and GAEA. Many students may need to understand that they are welcome into their professional community, which includes the option to attend the fall conferences. If they do go to the conference, they may feel overwhelmed or forgotten because it is created with current teachers in mind. There is a

knowledge gap for preservice teachers that university professors can fill and make students aware of all the resources GAEA offers. There is a clear desire in the leadership of GAEA to include preservice members. However, preservice teachers remain primarily uninvolved. The absence of a preservice representative on the board for many years resulted in preservice teachers falling into the background of these very busy educators' minds. Without someone on the board whose focus was solely on preservice teachers, this population has gone unnoticed for numerous years. My position and this research will aid members in focusing on this group of professionals and encourage them to become active members of the organization.

Moving Forward

I received my Preservice Art Educator of the Year award at the fall conference, where I collected data for this project. One friend told me at the ceremony, "Make sure there's someone to take your place." I was shocked when she said this to me. How was I supposed to find someone to fill this role? Since then, I have wondered how my work will continue after transitioning from preservice to early career teacher. How will I ensure I was not just a blip in the preservice involvement in GAEA's history? I do not want preservice teachers to continue to fall through the cracks in GAEA. The lack of preservice involvement in GAEA makes enacting change within the group complex. One of the limitations of this project was the lack of voices and opinions I could find at the conference. An issue with ensuring the longevity of a preservice representative is getting more preservice teachers involved, especially those that represent a more comprehensive range of perspectives about sociocultural factors such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, and geographic and socioeconomic contexts. Improvements can be implemented once there is a base of students with whom to interact.

Another hurdle to ensuring preservice involvement in GAEA is that they are an ever-changing group: students are in teacher preparation programs for only a few years before moving on in their careers. However, one constant in this field is the professors in teacher preparation programs. Through my research, I realized how impactful professors can be regarding preservice teachers' experiences with the GAEA conference. One of the actions needed in the future is to nurture a relationship between teacher preparation programs and preservice involvement in GAEA. Disseminating information and resources to students is difficult without their mentors' support. I would like to utilize professors' roles as the bridge for preservice teachers to the professional world of art education. Recruitment of preservice teachers to GAEA can only be successful with the support and help of professors.

After more involvement from preservice teachers, changes could also be made within the GAEA Board. One step toward getting more recognition for preservice teachers in the organization could be accomplished by following NAEA's lead and creating a preservice division in our state chapter. Moving the board position from "special groups" into divisions would signify that preservice teachers are as important as the elementary, middle, or high school divisions. Additionally, it would be beneficial to have a preservice teacher on the conference committee to ensure the active inclusion of preservice teachers at the fall conferences. As a board member, I aimed to share my findings from this project and my resulting recommendations with GAEA through a board report (Appendix H) at our April 2024 meeting. I aim to pass this information on to the next preservice representative to ensure they will continue to fight for the needs of preservice teachers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this research project, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of GAEA and its fall conference to unearth insights that could potentially reshape the organization's future. At my first conference in fall 2022, I was given a great opportunity to fill a spot on their board that had been vacant for many years. I jumped at the chance to be their Preservice Representative so that I could work to represent and advocate for future teachers like me. I needed somewhere to start because I was incredibly lost when I began working with GAEA. I saw this project as a way to understand this organization and, more importantly, my place. By implementing this project, I gained perspective on how the organization addresses the needs of preservice and early career art teachers. This group of teachers has a unique set of needs and circumstances that can differ from most GAEA members. Because of this, actions can be taken to include them more actively in the organization.

More specifically, I wanted to understand how the organization's leadership viewed and supported preservice and early career teachers. I also looked to the past to see when the Preservice Representative position was created and how the role functioned within the board. I felt these were necessary steps in my role as Preservice Representative if I wanted to make meaningful change. Now that I am at the end of this project, I have a better understanding of the support GAEA currently provides for preservice and early career art teachers, and, based on the data I collected, I have a better sense of the support these teachers need. I now feel confident that

I can take specific actions to help more preservice and early career art teachers benefit from GAEA and its fall conference, and I have already begun doing so.

Summary

Throughout my research, I attempted to collect data through various sources. I spoke to relevant teachers before and after the conference, studied archives, and utilized my connections on the board to speak to leadership. I gained a broad perspective by talking with teachers in many positions in the organization. In the end, the population I lacked the most information from was preservice teachers. The sad reality was that only some attended the conference or were active in the organization. This fact alone was incredibly eye-opening and disappointing; I had hoped to find a larger group of preservice members to connect with during my work. I was grateful, however, for my other participants, such as my focus group of first-year teachers and GAEA Board Members, who were able to help me gain more insight.

Conferences as Professional Development

After speaking with the teachers who participated in my project at the conference, I can confidently say that the conference was a successful form of professional development for art teachers. The conference is made for and by art educators, making all the information relevant to the teachers. This is especially important for arts teachers, who may often feel excluded in traditional professional development and faculty meetings when their subjects are ignored or grouped into other subjects that are not applicable in content or structure (Battersby & Verdi 2015). The yearly conference aims to connect art educators through learning and teaching as a community. While many researchers claim that “one and done” conferences may not significantly impact teachers, this conference most certainly did affect the teachers I spoke with. Linder et al. (2012) wrote that professional conferences do not inspire a change of thinking in

teachers' instruction, while PLCs offer more impact through ongoing and collaborative professional development. I found the opposite true in my research. The GAEA conference offers art teachers opportunities to create communities and cultures, provides a unique framework specific to their fields, and empowers them to put their learning into their own hands. I spoke to teachers who travel year after year to attend this conference, with one stating, "You can't replicate that [the conference]. You can't get that in a book. You can't get that on Zoom or a resource you may purchase for your teachers. You got to be there" (G. Perry, personal communication, November 3, 2023).

Active engagement and involvement in these organizations are essential to developing teachers' careers, identities, and communities (Rodríguez-Rad & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, 2023). At the conference, teachers can connect with various teachers across the state to challenge their points of view and gain new perspectives. Their involvement implies that teachers who choose to invest time in this event and community will, in turn, improve the quality of their careers. With these benefits in mind, the conference could be an excellent tool for art teachers transitioning from preservice preparation programs to their first years of teaching by connecting them with the support of fellow teachers statewide. Hanawalt (2015), in *Reframing New Art Teacher Support: From Failure to Freedom*, calls for teachers or mentors to look beyond the classroom to ensure transitioning teachers are supported in all aspects of their professional lives, and the GAEA conference provides an opportunity for this kind of support. For many teachers, the conference is a place to see friends yearly and share in continued learning. One veteran teacher I spoke with has attended the conference every year since she was a first-year teacher. She explained that she joined GAEA in either her junior or senior year of her undergraduate program, attended her first conference then, and has "gone every year since then," calling the

conference her “art teacher retreat” (J. Lee, personal communication, October 16, 2023). The conference’s goal is more than providing training and gaining knowledge; it is about placing art teachers within a support system and helping ensure their success.

Supporting Early Career Art Teachers

Although few preservice or early career teachers attended the conference, they could benefit in numerous ways. Many transition issues for first-year teachers may be alleviated through the conference. For example, many preservice art educators experience isolation when they begin teaching. Preservice students leave the support of their professors and peers at their universities to join the workforce and may need help to settle into their roles in the early years of their careers. Art educators are more susceptible to isolation than core teachers because they are typically alone in their school subject matter (Tollefson-Hall, 2015). Not only are they normally the only art teacher in their school, but much of the professional development offered by school districts may need to be revised to their specialized field. However, art teachers in Georgia can find connections and peer support by joining GAEA and taking advantage of their fall conference. They can learn together and specify their sessions to their own specific needs. Teachers gain essential tools to cultivate a sense of belonging in their profession, like “peer support, guidance, professional feedback, social recognition, and a sense of belonging to a larger teaching fraternity” (Bautista, Stanley, & Candusso, 2021, p. 43).

After extensive interviews and observations, I am convinced that GAEA’s fall conference can help preservice and early career teachers gain social capital. I witnessed how conference attendees gained connections that gave them a sense of community, a professional network, and mentoring support. The connections teachers make at the conference give them access to a broader network of professional resources as they return to their schools. I have

gained many professional opportunities from my involvement in GAEA, including interviewing for the Governor's Honors Program for Visual Arts in Georgia, serving as a judge in the National Art Honor Society's national juried show, visiting classrooms across Atlanta, and much more.

Challenges to Overcome

Despite the potential benefits of involvement in GAEA and its fall conference, I also found a disconnect between preservice and early career teachers and GAEA. My project indicates that preservice teachers may not be aware of GAEA and the benefits they could gain from participating in the organization. There are multitudes of resources just waiting for them if they only knew. As most of my research participants mentioned, the nature of in-person conferences entails barriers such as cost, transportation, and lodging that stop many teachers from attending. Further, if preservice teachers attend the conference, they may find few preservice teachers to connect with. Both preservice and early career teachers may also be intimidated by the groups of life-long friends and veteran teachers they find there. These beginning teachers may not know what to expect and may not understand that every conference is meant to be a place where they are welcomed and can feel that they belong. Another obstacle that can significantly impact preservice and early career teachers is that the conference typically occurs from Thursday to Saturday. This means that working teachers must leave their classrooms, and pre-service students must miss class to attend the conference. These circumstances, unfortunately, mean that only certain groups of teachers will be willing and able to participate in the conference, thus excluding teachers who may need the community support that the conference provides. I would like to work to eliminate, or at least alleviate, these barriers and create a more inclusive conference.

Implications

I presented my research report (Figure 6) to the GAEA Board during our Zoom meeting on April 27, 2024. I explained my discussion points while members looked at the report I created. I summarized my research to show the board where my suggestions came from and then introduced some ideas to improve preservice engagement as an organization. I began working on some of these ideas immediately, while some were presented as long-term goals.

Figure 6

Preservice Representative's Board Report on Preservice Engagement with GAEA

Pre-Service Engagement and Involvement in GAEA

Summary of Research

Maeve Munson – Preservice Representative

METHODOLOGY	<p>Qualitative research, a case study of GAEA's Fall Conference in November 2024</p> <p>17 participants (including myself)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 conference organizers [interview] • 5 board members [survey] • 1 instructional coach [interview] • 3 pre-service student volunteers [survey] • 4 first-year teachers & first-time conference go-ers [focus group at conference] • 2 pre-service attendees [interview] <p>GAEA Conference Archive Materials (1985–2013)</p> <p>Published GAEA materials collected by Debbi West</p> <p>Board reports, conference booklets, Collage newsletters, etc...</p> <p>Board Resources</p> <p>Board Reports</p> <p>Conference Materials (vendor records)</p> <p>GAEA Membership Records</p>
FINDINGS	<p>4 themes found in my research</p> <p>1.Potential for preservice to benefit from GAEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits gained through in-person learning at the conference that cannot be recreated anywhere else • Professional and social connections with teachers state-wide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentor teachers & job contacts • Gaining a diverse group of ideas and opinions • Relevant and art-focused learning as a form of professional development created for teachers by teachers • The small, intimate, informal structure allowed intentional learning and connections. <p>2.Preservice lack of connection or knowledge of GAEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None of the student volunteers had prior knowledge of GAEA, how to be a member, or that this conference was also meant for them. • A Focus group of first-year teachers expressed their frustrations with being unprepared for the conferences' structure, specifically signing up for sessions. • Preservice unsure where to go for Division Lunches

FINDINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Some first-time conference goers felt that the tight-knit community of GAEA feels at times difficult to join and feel included ◦ The impact of professors' involvement with their students at the GAEA conference can significantly impact their students' experiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support or familiar faces can make students feel more comfortable at the conference. ▪ Lack thereof may deter students from attending or being successful at the conference. ▪ Professors are the connection between GAEA's information and their students who are new to the profession. <p>3. Barriers for all members to attend the conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cost of conference, hotel, and transportation are huge barriers for many teachers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability to take time off from work (one early career teacher explained that her first couple of years in class were the first couple of years she didn't feel comfortable leaving her students to attend the conference). ▪ Many teachers can get their conferences paid for by their districts or schools for professional development, but pre-service students don't have that option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also, not all districts have a fine arts coordinator or anyone to advocate for them and get them help to go to the conference. <p>4. Intention vs Impact on Preservice teachers in Georgia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Based on my survey and talking with many Board Members, there is a clear desire and want for more preservice teachers to be involved in the organization. They are seen as a fresh perspective and the future of our organization. ◦ However, there also seems to be a lack of action or focus on this population. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GAEA Board is a volunteer position and everyone has their own focus. There hasn't been a preservice representative for many years ▪ There hasn't been anyone who has been focused and responsible for this population for a long time – we've "fallen through the cracks"
POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS	<p>First priority is to grow the number of preservice teacher members and their involvement in GAEA by introducing them to the organization and explaining the benefits of their involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing professors as a resource to connect directly to their students • Include preservice-specific information on the website so it is easily accessible to interested members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Make preservice site and link to main one? ◦ Have a tab specifically for preservice teachers?

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Listserv & Newsletters (Utilizing GAEA Members)

- Volunteer opportunities/experiences
- GAEA & NAEA Conference information
- Benefits of GAEA membership
- Member spotlights

Eliminating barriers for students to attend GAEA conference

- Adding a preservice member to the conference planning committee to ensure their perspectives and needs are present at the conference
- **Open up volunteer positions state-wide**
- **Letting students attend the conference free for a day to shadow professionals**
- **Group discount for chapters or groups of students**
- Facilitating student chapter fundraisers
- **Scholarships to attend the conference**

Once we increase the numbers and involvement of preservice students, then we can create programming specifically for them:

- At the conference
 - Meet and greet at conference
 - Guides to the conference, tips and tricks
 - Sessions for preservice students, interviews, etc.
 - Connecting to administration
 - Connecting to retired teacher mentors
- Year-Round
 - Connecting student volunteers to GAEA programming/teacher needs
 - Connecting students to network of schools and teachers to observe
 - Special events for student leaders
 - Workshops
 - Presentations
 - Social gatherings

Preservice included as a division and not a special interest group

- NAEA changed Preservice to a special interest group in 2013
- Increases help, credibility, and visibility
 - More than one preservice representative
 - Professor & Student Reps (Archives)

Note. Original work presented on April 27.

After my report, I received much support from the board, and many have offered to help me with some of my goals. The GAEA president was very receptive to my Board Report and took the time to read through all of my suggestions. She left comments throughout my report with recommendations and more ideas. She was particularly excited about my ideas for the conference and suggested I work with the organizers to implement some of them. She also wanted me to include information about the newsletter I wanted to create on GAEA's website. Her reaction makes me feel hopeful for real change in the future. She agreed with many of my ideas and gave me people to contact to make them happen.

When I joined the board, improving preservice involvement on my own felt daunting. I was unsure how I could bring more preservice teachers into GAEA. However, with the support of board members and, hopefully, college professors, I can bridge the missing gap for this group of members. Through the president's guidance, I am working with the current conference organizers to adjust programming to make it more inclusive to preservice members. Our representative for retired teachers is planning a workshop with me at the upcoming conference to connect retired and new teachers to serve as mentors. I will also add preservice-specific information on the GAEA website and provide a way for teachers to connect virtually with the organization and each other. At the next board meeting, we will discuss changing Preservice from a Special Interest Group to a Division. I am optimistic that these small steps can begin to make a big difference and shape a more inclusive and supportive future for GAEA. Empowering new art educators and connecting them to a support system is essential to developing strong and successful teachers and ensuring they remain in the field. Strong and successful teachers are critical to the field of art education, and actions should be taken to ensure preservice teachers are

successful at the beginning of their careers. Through GAEA, actions can be taken to provide this support and ensure the organization's and the field's future. I look forward to being a part of these important actions.

REFERENCES

- About Us. (n.d.). *National Art Education Association*. Retrieved April 15, 2023, from <https://www.arteducators.org/about>
- Andrews, B. (2016). Towards the future: Teachers 'vision of professional development in the arts. *International Journal of Music Education*, 34(4), 391–402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761415590361>
- Battersby, S. L. (2019). Reimagining music teacher collaboration: The culture of professional learning communities as professional development within schools and districts. *General Music Today*, 33(1), 15–23. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371318797126>
- Battersby, S., & Verdi, B. (2015). The culture of professional learning communities and connections to improve teacher efficacy and support student learning. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 116(1), 22–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2015.970096>
- Bautista, A., Stanley, A., & Candusso, F. (2021). Policy strategies to remedy isolation of specialist arts and music teachers. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 122(1), 42–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2020.1746713>
- Bloomberg, L. D., & Volpe, M. (2018). *Completing your qualitative dissertation: A road map from beginning to end* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Brock, D. M. (2021). Research on professional organizations: A review of theoretical traditions, themes, methods, and locations. *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 58(4), 569–586. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12364>
- Flum, H., & Kaplan, A. (2012). Identity formation in educational settings: A contextualized view of theory and research in practice. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 37(3), 240–245. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2012.05.005>

- Fuhse, J. (2015). Theorizing social networks: The relational sociology of and around Harrison White. *International Review of Sociology*, 25(1), 15–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2014.997968>
- Georgia Art Education Association. (n.d.). *GAEA*. Retrieved from <http://www.gaeaartforall.org/>
- Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house.” *US Department of Education*, 3(2), 12. <https://doi.org/10.5929/2014.4.2.9>
- Hanawalt, C. (2015). Reframing new art teacher support: From failure to freedom. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 35, 1–11.
- Hofsess, B., & Hanawalt, C. (2020). Envisioning future-oriented mentoring with early career teachers through evocative analysis. *Art Education*, 73(4), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2020.1746162>
- Hudson, P., & Hudson, S. (2007). Examining preservice teachers' preparedness for teaching art. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 8(5). Retrieved from <http://ijea.asu.edu/v8n5/>
- Hyett, N., Kenny, A., & Dickson-Swift, V. (2014). Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 9(1), 23606. <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.23606>
- Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2004). Do teacher induction and mentoring matter? *NASSP Bulletin*, 88(638), 28–40.
- Kelman, H. C. (1958). Compliance, identification, and internalization: Three processes of attitude change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2(1), 51–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200275800200104>

- Linder, A., Post, G., & Calabrese, K. (2012). Professional learning communities: Practices for successful implementation. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 78(3), 13–19.
- Marinell, W. H., & Coca, V. M. (2013). Who stays and who leaves? Findings from a three-part study of teacher turnover in NYC middle schools. *Research Alliance for New York City Schools*. Retrieved from <http://media.ranycs.org/2013/003>
- Meyer, C. B. (2001). A case in case study methodology. *Field Methods*, 13(4), 329–352. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X0101300402>
- Michael, J. (1997). *Our history: Celebrating 50 years 1947–1997*. National Art Education Association.
- National Art Education Association. (2023, August 10). Preservice division. *National Art Education Association*. Retrieved from <https://www.arteducators.org/community/articles/78-preservice-division>
- Nimmon, L., Artino, A. R. Jr., & Varpio, L. (2019). Social network theory in interprofessional education: Revealing hidden power. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 11(3), 247–250. <https://doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-19-00253.1>
- Popp, J., & Goldman, S. (2016). Knowledge building in teacher professional learning communities: Focus on meeting matters. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 59, 347–359. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.06.007>
- Rodríguez-Rad, C., & Sánchez del Río-Vázquez, M.-E. (2023). The relevance of participation behavior, organizational commitment, and attitudinal loyalty to the management of professional associations. *Journal of Business Research*, 154, 113324. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113324>
- Schaeffer, K. (2021, December 10). America's public school teachers are far less racially and

ethnically diverse than their students. *Pew Research Center*. Retrieved from
<https://www.pewresearch.org/>

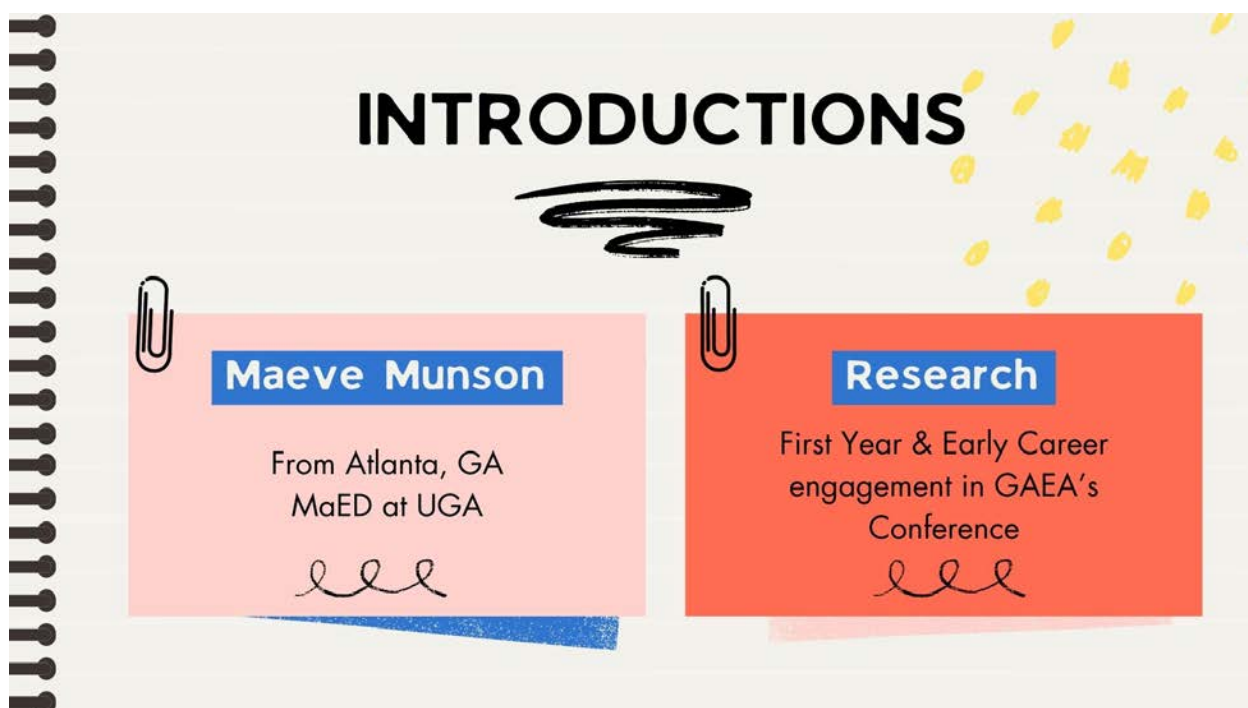
Tollefson-Hall, K. (2015). Building a teaching community through peer mentoring. *Art Education*, 68(4), 30–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2015.11519328>

Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 134–152. Retrieved from
<http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss2/12>.

Zepeda, S. J. (2019). *Professional development: What works* (3rd. Ed.). Routledge.

Appendix A

First-Year and Preservice Teacher Meet and Greet PowerPoint





Introductions

- 1. Name**
Pronouns (if you would like to share!)
 - 2. Degree/School**
Where are you studying? Or teaching?
 - 3. Hot Take/Fun Fact**
- 

GAEA!



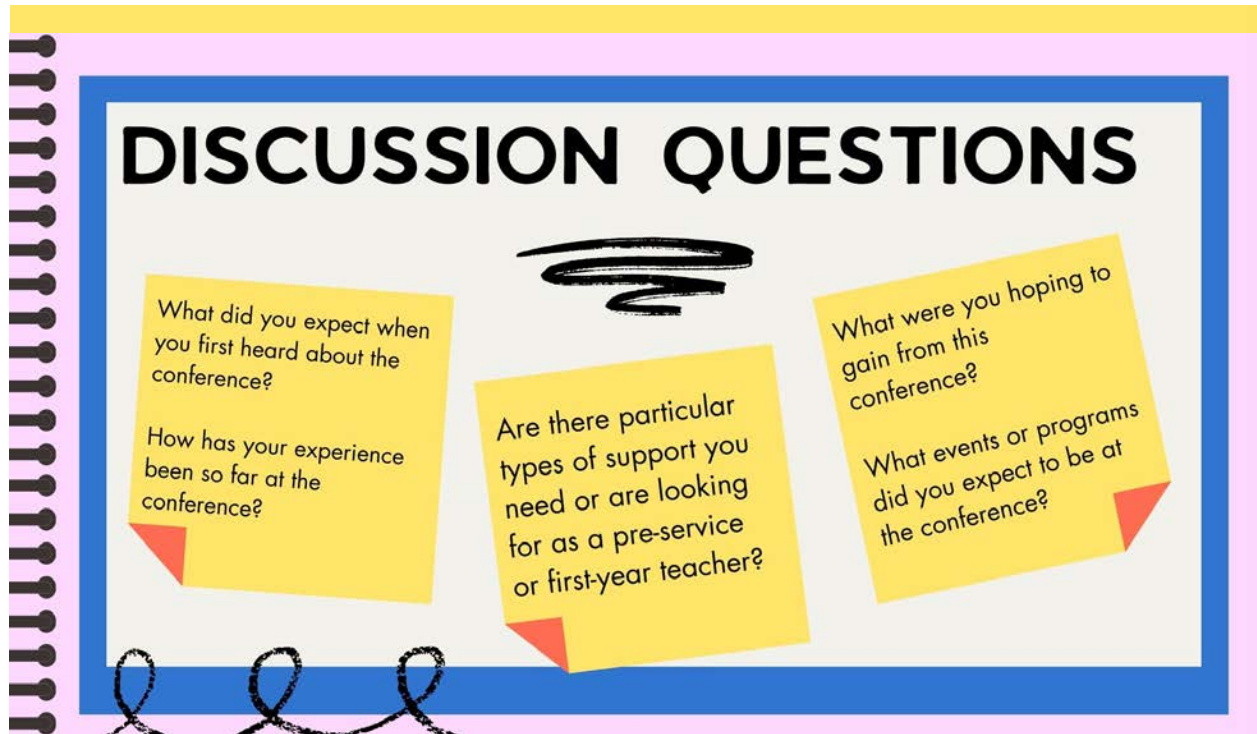
How did you hear about GAEA & The conference? Why did you join?



What's great about the conference?



How can GAEA help you?





Appendix B

First-Year Teacher Focus Group Follow-Up Questions

1. Why did you join GAEA?
2. How has your experience overall at the conference? What was the most memorable part?
3. What sessions and events have you attended that have been particularly meaningful?
What made them meaningful?
4. What was your favorite and least favorite part about the conference?
5. Who did you talk to or meet at the conference? Do you plan to continue those connections throughout the year?
6. Are there particular types of support you need or are looking for as a pre-service or first-year teacher?
7. What did you gain from this conference?
8. How and what will you bring what you've learned from the conference back to your classroom?
9. Are you planning on going back to the conference next year?

Appendix C

Survey for GAEA Board Members

1. Role on the board:
2. Years serving on the board:
3. When did you join GAEA? At what stage in your career (pre-service, early, middle, late..)
4. Why did you join GAEA?
5. What has pre-service involvement in the conferences looked like in the past? What about now?
6. Why do you think preservice involvement has changed over the years?
7. How many early career and preservice teachers do you recall seeing at the conference this past year?
8. Do you recruit early-stage/pre-service teachers to the conference? If so, how?
9. Have you planned anything for people in this pre-service/early career at the conference this year?
10. What is most helpful for early career or preservice teachers to do at this conference?
11. What do you wish was planned at the conferences for preservice and early career teachers?
12. How would you like to see early career and pre-service teachers involved in the conference?
13. Why do you think it's important to cater to this group of teachers? Do you think it is important for them to attend the conference? Why?

Appendix D

Instructional Coach Interview Questions

Instructional Coach

Student Chapter NAEA

1. When did you join a student chapter for NAEA? How did you get involved?
2. What did that look like as a student? How did it impact your daily life?
3. How did GAEA's involvement impact your career?

Instructional Coach

1. What is a Fine Arts Coach? What does your work day look like?
 1. How did you become a fine arts coach?
2. Why did you become interested in supporting first-year teachers? What are your goals when speaking and working with them?

GAEA/CONFERENCE

10. When did you join GAEA? What stage of your career were you in?
 1. When did you start becoming involved with GAEA and their fall conference?
 2. Why did you join GAEA?
 3. What's your session at the conference? How do you see early career teachers interacting with it?
11. How would you like to see early career and pre-service teachers involved in the conference?
12. Have you seen pre-service at the conference? In what capacity?
13. Why do you think it's important to cater to this group of teachers at GAEA? Do you think it's important for them to attend the conference? Why?

Appendix E

Interview Template for Attendees

Name:

College/School, program, year:

1. When did you start becoming involved with GAEA? How?
 1. When did you first hear about their fall conference? When did you attend the first time?
 2. How was your first experience at GAEA? What stands out to you now?
2. What did you expect from the conference? How was it when you came here?
3. Did you make friends at the conference? Did you already know people coming in?
4. How did you interact with your professors at the conference? What role did they serve while you were there?
5. Why did you attend the fall conference this year?
6. How was it presented at the conference? How was the process of signing up, prep, and presenting?
7. How has your experience this year at the conference been? What stood out to you?
8. What sessions and events have you attended that have been particularly meaningful?
What made them meaningful?
9. What did you gain from this conference?
10. What did you expect they would do at the conference for you as a pre-service teacher?
11. Were there any barriers you saw or felt attending or being at the conference this year?
12. Do you plan to come back to the conference next year?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience at the conference?

Appendix F

Conference Organizer Interview Questions

Name -

Position in GAEA -

School/Grade Level -

1. When did you join GAEA? And why?
 1. Are you on the board? In what position? For how long?
 2. How have you benefitted from being in GAEA?
 3. When was your first GAEA conference? What do you remember about it?
2. How were you chosen to organize this year's conference?
 1. Do you have to be on the board to lead the conference?
 2. Why did you want to do it?
3. How did the process look for organizing the conference?
 1. What kind of structures were already in place?
4. How did you make it your own this year?
 1. Team?
 2. How do you choose the location of the conferences?
 3. What's typical or traditional at every GAEA conference?
 4. Advertise:
5. How do you support pre-service teachers at the conference in your role?
6. What barriers do you see to registering and attending the GAEA conference?
7. What benefits are there to coming to the conference?

experiential and community (what was said earlier)

Appendix G

Volunteer Survey Questions

1. When did you start becoming involved with GAEA? How?
2. Was this your first conference? What did you think? What stood out to you?
3. What did you expect from the conference? How was it when you volunteered?
4. Did you sign up to volunteer for the conference? Were there any incentives for helping out?
 1. How did you expect to help out at the conference versus what you actually did?
 2. Why did you volunteer at the fall conference this year?
5. How were your interactions with the teachers attending the conference? Did you make any connections?
6. What sessions and events were you able to attend?
7. Were any particularly meaningful?
8. What sessions were suggested for you to go to and by whom?
9. Based on your experience, do you think preservice teachers would benefit from the conference? Why?
10. What did you expect they would do at the conference for pre-service/early career teachers?
11. Are there particular types of support you need or are looking for as a pre-service teacher?
12. Were there any barriers you saw or felt attending or being at the conference this year?
13. Do you plan on attending the conference next year? Why or why not?
14. Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experience at the conference?