

2009-01-01

In Defense of the Value of Visual Arts in Public Education: An Examination of Scholarly Arguments for Functionary Pedagogy and Intrinsic Fulfillment

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IN DEFENSE OF THE VALUE OF VISUAL ARTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION:
AN EXAMINATION OF SCHOLARLY ARGUMENTS FOR
FUNCTIONARY PEDAGOGY AND INTRINSIC FULFILLMENT

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Dedication

This work is done in tribute to Morgan and Malone Seymore for their patience and their devotion. Thank you and love to you my sweet babies.

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by

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THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Art

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

May 2009

Acknowledgements

Certain individuals who aided me in this work require mentioning. I owe a great deal of gratitude to friends and colleagues for helping me with structuring my ideas and proofreading multiple drafts. Their enduring personal and scholarly assistance went unmatched. My thesis advisor, Dave McIntyre, patiently guided me through all of my work. I want to express my thanks to the many other helpful professors, teachers, and college friends by showing off this completed work.

Abstract

A descriptive study sought to find answers to an ongoing dichotomous argument about Visual Arts education in public schools: should Visual Arts function in support of core academic courses or should Visual Arts be taught primarily for their intrinsic value? Multiple sources as well as personal experience teaching Art have influenced and contributed to resultant opinions in this study. Two main arguments clarified in detail and delineated in points of their disparate issues, function to defend Visual Arts in public schools. Conclusions maintain that Visual Arts educators can defend threats to any Arts program with knowledge of the arguments and support of the intrinsic values students experience through Visual Arts.

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Purpose of the Study

Can Visual Arts be supported for continued existence in United States public schools on the argument that they function to enhance and improve student achievement in core subjects or on the argument of their intrinsic value? This divided purpose of arts in public schools adds confusion to their purpose and can seem to propagate notions of the arts as almost a needless extravagance (Davis, 1996). Being a pragmatic nation for the last decade, schools in the United States focused on areas deemed practical in value, and the debate has stalemated regarding the “instrumental” versus the “intrinsic” values of arts education (Pogrebin, 2007).

Art educators have long advocated firmly establishing the arts as a subject of study in the public school curriculum. Advocates have made inroads toward standardizing the arts at the national and state levels in recent decades. The instrumental argument urges the use of arts to teach across the curriculum to improve “habits of mind” (Hetland, Winner, p.136 2007). For example, researcher Samuel Hope believes evidence exists that the Arts can contribute to higher achievement across the curriculum improving students’ brain skills. Brain based education is said to enhance cognition. The argument for intrinsic values of the arts sees them as more important in their own right and justifiable in terms of the unique kinds of learning that arise from arts study. Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland, researchers of “studio thinking”, believe art education can be championed for its own educational sake (Hetland, Winner, 2007). This study examines various answers to the dichotomous questions about the values of art education occurring in public schools.

Hypothesis

Educators who clearly understand the dichotomous values of the arts in public schools may account for the direction, focus and appropriateness of arts education occurring in their own schools, and, therefore, help defend a visual arts program needing their professional justification. Art educators play a role as advocates for the arts and the development of advancements in art curriculum in educational applications.

Overview of the Arguments

Two sharply opposed views of the value of visual arts in public education seem to be in constant discussion; should the arts be taught for their instrumental value to other subjects or should the arts be taught for intrinsic value? The essential points of this debate were expressed by Eisner and Catterall in *Art Education, The Journal of the National Art Education Association*, "Does Experience in the Arts Boost Academic Achievement?" Eisner's main argument was the arts should be taught for their intrinsic value because research had not proved a link between studying the arts and academic achievement in other subjects (Eisner, 1998, Catterall, 1998).

The two views discussed in this paper emphasize that art education can exist for its own intrinsic merits and it is the instrumental attributes of art that influenced *The No Child Left Behind Act* enacted by the federal government (American Arts Alliance, 2002). *The No Child Left Behind* legislation requires states to implement increased accountability plans, which may seem like a threat to instructional time dedicated to the arts, since the arts are not tested in 90% of the states (Fiske, 2000). In the current high-stakes education climate, priorities are often determined by what gets tested. Consequently, art education advocates like Porgrebin (2007) argue for teaching arts in inventive new ways to improve schools through "art integration", connecting the arts to other subjects. Porgrebin (2007) also argues that through sequential and discipline-based art instruction (which uses four different artistic disciplines tailored for different ages and incorporating other elements from core courses), students may miss the important human experiences of empathy and tolerance, a central and unique reason art arguably can exist for its own sake. Eisner (1998) argues that problems begin to emerge when the values for which the arts are prized in schools are primarily in educators' version of the basics (math, language, social studies and science) when those basics have little or nothing to do with the arts. The arts

are reflective, and some researchers and educators feel they should focus on the intrinsic qualities of learning through art education. Art is diverse in America's public school education, including the preservation and advocacy of art forms. Art's must try to a deepen value and commitment to make cultural literacy part of a child's education, as well as inspiring creativity, imagination, innovation and compassion.

Instrumental Views

Federal and state laws and policies have increased pressure on public education to hold schools accountable for student performance in curricular areas. The most famous accountability systems are the 1983 national report, *A Nation at Risk* and *Educate America Act* of 1994 and the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2000. In response to the requirements of these laws and to public and legislative demands, virtually every state enacted the adoption of standards for student learning (Corbett, 2001). Alternatively, this accountability agenda initiated dialogue about plans for student achievement in the Arts. Educators asserted that improved critical thinking redounds to measurable academic achievement. A study by James S. Catterall, a professor of education at the University of California, Los Angeles, found that students who had more involvement in the arts both in school and after school scored better on standardized tests, and that some researchers believe in the positive impact of arts on student learning across the curriculum (Catterall, 2002).

Early educational researchers studied whether students' thinking while making art was followed by their improved thinking in other disciplines (Dewey, 1954). These studies showed that one way to enhance student learning in the core curriculum is to use art as the medium for analysis. The arts can be said to enhance the process of learning and the systems they nourish, because our integrated sensory, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities are, in fact, the driving

forces behind all other learning. That does not mean one can not learn without the arts. The arts, however, provide learners with opportunities to simultaneously develop and mature multiple brain systems, which is the support process that yields cumulative results (Jensen, 2001). More recently, researchers believe that visual arts improve reading and math scores. For example: arts affect achievement when comparing two groups of students, one “non-art” group and a second “art group”, the non-art group had a 55% improvement in math concepts vs. the “art group” which had 73% improvement in math concepts (Jensen, 2001). Former Secretary of Education Rod Paige referred to the *National Educational Longitude Study* from the University of California, Los Angeles, launched in 1988, in which a nationally-representative group of eighth-graders were surveyed, as well as their parents, teachers and school administrators (NCES, 1998). Researchers found that students who had arts included in their education, performed better on standardized tests, donated more community service hours, watched fewer hours of television, were less bored in school and were less likely to drop out of school (NCES, 1998). Rod Paige recently penned a letter supporting arts education citing both the benefits and the supporting research that concludes arts education contributes to our educational system. Paige believes the arts have a significant role in education, both for their intrinsic value and for the ways in which they can enhance general academic achievement and improve students’ social and emotional development (NCES, 1983).

Intrinsic Views

The arts have long been regarded as having no practical educational applications; consequently they have been marginalized in public education. Only language arts and literature, which are solidly integrated into the study of languages, have assumed a permanent place in the curriculum. However, Eisner, a professor of education at Stanford University, states “not everything has a practical utility, but maybe it’s experientially valuable.” He also states that learning through the arts promotes the idea that there is more than one solution to a problem and more than one answer to a question (1998). Congruently, professors and researchers of art education agree that recognizing that art making requires complex and reasoned thinking is a vital step in convincing the public that art education deserves a rightful and substantial role in the public school curriculum (Eisner, 1972; Efland, 2002).

In a time when government policy on education emphasizes test results and accountability, the arts do not easily lend themselves to such quantifiable measurements. There clearly are no substitutes to experiences in listening to jazz, or seeing *Death of a Salesman* performed, or reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or seeing the Vietnam War Memorial (Pogrebin, 2007). Unfortunately, such reasoning may not be sufficient to keep art education alive in public schools. Ellen Winner, a leading art education researcher, suspects that education policy makers should reason that if they want to improve math achievement, they will teach more math, not more arts (Rabkin, 2007). Therefore, do the core courses truly require ‘our’ assistance (fine arts’ and its teachers’) or is the issue that fine arts are truly superfluous in public education, and integrating arts into the core curriculum is an effort to keep them in public school?

Art's Value as Functioning to Enhance and Support Education

Art Education as Instrumental

Many arts education researchers encourage using a discipline-based approach in visual arts learning, and when combined with core curriculum, the purpose aims to enhance learning skills not only in the core subjects but in the students' overall education as well. DBAE is an implementation plan in which works of art are integrated into almost all thematic units presented by all teachers. Principals, art specialists and classroom teachers develop school wide implementation plans integrating and linking all subjects to art. All classrooms display and use reproductions of works of art. This is not a suggestion for substituting the learning of various art techniques, but a way visual art may find incorporation as a part of other subjects. A series of articles, *Structures in Art Education*, supports the fundamental identity of art as a discipline (Dobbs, 1984; Erickson, 1979) and art education as being structured around art production, art criticism, and art history (Burke, 1991). Some researchers advocate that art can be a structured discipline positively influential to the core subjects, if educators establish and maintain alternative methods of integrating the arts along with the schools' existing fundamental goals and priorities. The following paragraphs discuss the three common movements for structured contemporary art education: interdisciplinary art across the curriculum, discipline-based art education, and collaborative teaching.

Interdisciplinary Arts Program

Education policymakers and administrators are increasingly promoting "integrated arts" or "interdisciplinary arts" programs particularly in the elementary and middle school grade levels

that link arts learning and experiences with instruction in other school subjects and skill areas. Rationales for these programs range from the theoretical to the practical. Proponents of these programs often advocate a thematic or project-based design approach in which they engage students actively in processes that deepen their understandings and abilities more richly than study within a single discipline. Other proponents are more motivated by practical consideration, including the need to fulfill curriculum mandates to cover an array of subjects and skills in the limited school day. The concept of integrated and interdisciplinary learning – formulated collaborative educative units amongst teachers and creative curriculum designs – shows purposeful results through delivery of content that fosters higher-order thinking skills in students. Researchers assume that the programs will engage students in activities that deepen their knowledge and competence in each discipline, as well as across disciplines such as history and visual art, or music and reading (Catterall, 2002).

Educators in the 1960's, needing to clarify what subjects could be said to be disciplines, identified ways that inquiries in those disciplines and areas of study translated into educative structures of developmentally appropriate instruction sequences (Efland 1988, 1991). Educators began to experiment with the formulated collaborative unit; their efforts laid the groundwork for interdisciplinary learning as it exists today (Nuson, 1976). Heidi Jacobs, author of *Concept to Classroom: Interdisciplinary Learning in Your Classroom*, gives a clear explanation and definition, "Interdisciplinary: a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, topic, issue, problem or work." Interdisciplinary learning is one of the many ways to learn over the course of a curriculum. These methods may help students with a new awareness to meaningful connections that exist among the disciplines (Jacobs, 2004). Flowers (1990)

enhances Jacobs' theory and beliefs that, when considering linking art with other content areas in a school's curriculum, it is important to remember the relationship of art to other school subjects. Art provides a visual language and imagery used to express ideas about 'something': events, people, objects, emotions, or concepts. The visual arts teacher can help the students' behavioral and performance objectives in creating a bridge to the discipline of art by simultaneously creating a thoroughfare between students' emotional and social needs to the content of other core subjects (Jacobs, 2004). By interpreting events through visual arts, students can better sense the spirit of "the times" and operate in participation of them in personal, meaningful ways. Boyer feels as students see how the content of one course relates to that of others, they begin to make connections, and, in doing so, gain not only a more integrated view of the knowledge, but also a more authentic view of life (Boyer, 1995).

Art applications to core subjects also may apply in the art classroom. In high school, students can use the visual arts of various historical periods to study American History. For example: students can sing and dance to the music of a particular period. Studying films about historical periods, dramatizing the literature, and debating and examining documents, are other ways the integration of the arts can be applied simultaneously to any subject. Employing the methods of recreation (a natural occurrence in the arts), interpretation, and evaluation; the arts hold their own in explaining and expanding core subjects. In reading, comprehension depends on students' sensing the emotional content of the story. An aspect of art integration can help identify the changing of moods through imagery to connect a sense of emotion (Kuau, 2000). This process is much more compelling than historical accounts alone. Art provides a self-generated and self-propelled approach to learning; it explores multiple facets of the world and human life, sometimes simultaneously, and it enhances the curriculum for students (Bunch, 2006). Boyer,

author of *The Basic School: A Community for Learning* says, “students see how the content of one course relates to that of others, they begin to make connections and in doing so gain not only a more integrated view of the knowledge, but also a more authentic view of life” (Boyer, 1998 p.992).

Enlisting all the senses in the learning process utilizes multiple knowledge gathering skills, in contrast to specific learning methods, and enables students to develop emotional self-awareness. Instructional lessons that teach relationships among subjects in school can help students understand the continuity of knowledge (Zimmerman, 1998). As schools cut time for the arts, they may be losing their ability to produce not just the artistic creators of the future, but innovative leaders who improve the world they inherit (Hetland, 2007). Students in art classes learn techniques specific to art and engage a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasized elsewhere in school, including visual-spatial abilities, reflection, self-criticism, and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes. Could this be the reason the educational system pushes the arts to integrate other core subjects into the art curriculum? Ellen Winner believes this one justification keeps the Arts in school; her research demonstrates how arts classes improve students’ intrinsic mental and emotionally influenced skills (Radkin, 2007). Artistic creativity can be an important component of curricular growth in education.

Other research shows integrating a cross-discipline approach to art could be developed with a team of teachers generating themes (Kevin, 2008). In *Critical Links* essays, Catterall (2002) Horowitz and Deasey (2002), and Scripp (2002) suggest that the cognitive capacities engaged in arts learning are interrelated, interactive, and similar to capacities engaged by other school subjects. Engaging in these processes suggests they could strengthen students’ overall intellectual development and the application of the processes within academic and social settings

(Effland, 1988). Two reports, the Carnegie Foundation's *Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals *Changing American Institutions* did a great deal to help interdisciplinary and integrated curricula enter the mainstream. These documents advocated a new interdisciplinary vision for American schools at both the middle and high school level. The research is conducted under the leadership of the Arts Education Partnership (Kevin, 2008).

The Arts Education Partnership mentions that arts are not considered mainstream subjects, but rather electives for those individuals who are deemed talented. People do not miss what they have never experienced, and most Americans never experienced formal art training in their younger years. Only in retirement do many Americans discover their potential in the arts (Beeching, 2008). Hopper states that the currently dominant subject-oriented approach to the curriculum leads to students skimming across the surface of a vast curriculum, leaving insufficient time to gain deep, significant understanding (Hopper, 2004). Applying these concepts educators could place the same restrictions on math and science because most children will not become mathematicians or scientists. We could dispense with physical education on the same grounds (Kevin, 2008).

The arts themselves are not the issue, but rather the general American mindset toward the arts. This curriculum agenda raises a number of questions concerning the content and skills that students learn and the intellectual processes involved. Opportunities that the arts provide for interactive design and continuous improvement may be especially important experiences for students. Integrated and interdisciplinary arts programs provide the opportunity for researchers to explore these suggestions and assist in improving program designs.

Discipline Based Art Education

Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) may be thought of as a four-part approach covering art curriculum in terms of four fields: aesthetics, criticism, history, and studio practice. An important scholar and researcher in both arts and education, Elliot Eisner has long taken an art critic's view of schooling in DBAE. Along with the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, Eisner has influenced the structure for art curriculum by promoting this approach to art education. He feels the arts too often have suffered from being without quantifiable goals, without structure and without a sense of continuity and development. He states that art needs more purpose and continuity (Eisner, 1998).

DBAE provides structure and is the construction link of conceptual bridges across subject matters (Brandt, 1993). An article on DBAE, *The Value of Dialogue: Teachers Who Encourage Art Dialogue in the Classroom*, discusses how DBAE is used in schools and the impact it has on a school's entire curriculum (Greer, 1993). A teachable set of multi-perspective criteria is used to insightfully understand works of art drawing from the four art fields and other disciplines. One example of this research is taken from Grand View Elementary in Los Angeles, California. The school had been without an art program but applied and received a grant from the Paul Getty Museum to provide DBAE as part of the curriculum for teachers in their school. Teachers were trained on instruction strategies and methods for ensuring continuous dialogue about student created artwork. The trained teachers were taught to facilitate art discussion and teach levels of critical thinking incorporating other disciplines. The DBAE curriculum is made up of activities from aesthetics, art criticism, art history and studio practice; activities that give information, concepts, and skills given by art educators (Eisner, 2004, Day, 2004). DBAE is based on the four broad art fields in partnership with the core curriculum to maximize learning opportunities.

Subsequently, since implementing the program, there has been unprecedented student achievement in the state assessment (Smith, 2005).

The implications of DBAE's complex subject matter, large knowledge base, and assortment of inquiry skills and traditions has its challenges: teacher training, curriculum development, instructional resources, research and evaluation. A school district must choose to adopt DBAE and consequently create a support system for the teachers (Korenik, 1993). There's been an on-going evolution of the principles embodied in discipline based art education in the field at large. Lanier (1982) for example, advocates art education without any studio practice, and Chapman (1984) places emphasis upon understanding the role of art in the popular culture (Smith, 1996). The general contribution made to the theory of DBAE by Eisner and the description of art criticism by Feldman moved the literature toward a discipline-based view (Eisner, 2004, Day, 2004).

In spite of any lack of knowledge concerning the importance of arts in our public education, core subjects will benefit if education establishes alternative methods to integrate the arts with the schools' fundamental goals and priorities (Eisner, 1988). This theory is important because no art educator would doubt that there is art in all subjects and that art is related to all subjects. Even classroom teachers in elementary schools may not understand that art is evident in all subjects; it is evidenced in the high degree of use of visual information as a tool to teach core subjects (Masami, 2001). An example of participants who received extensive training in the theory and implementation of discipline based art education for school districts, where teams comprised of art specialists, art supervisors, classroom teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members, as well as for museum educators occurred in the community of Dallas, Texas. Called the Dallas Initiative, the Dallas Independent Schools, Denton Independent

Schools, Fort Worth Independent Schools, Plano Independent Schools and Pilot Point Independent Schools were involved in extensive DBAE collaboration with Dallas museums and the outlying school districts.

Collaborative Teaching

Structured collaborations between schools and cultural organizations to provide arts education to students have grown and matured in recent decades. The Getty Museum Education subdivision describes the evolution from occasional visits by students to museums or concerts and performances by artists at schools, to carefully planned and coordinated art programs which attend to the instructional expectations of the curricula. Student learning seems to be enhanced according to studies of educational outreach programs maintaining creative partnerships between schools and museums.

There has been an explosion of network-based technologies in museums that enable traditional and non-traditional learners alike to learn collaboratively. These environments enhance traditional learning curricula by giving students the opportunity to interact with other students and other environments (Jermann, 2001, Soller, 2001, Muehlenbrock, 2001). Learning is generated in the museum by making it a supportive place to learn and impart skills and perspectives to help children recognize historical connections, heritage and culture (The Getty Institute, 2008). The Arts Education Partnership has published analyses and guidance on the processes for structuring and managing partnerships (Dreeszen, 1999). Seidel and others at Harvard's Project Zero have analyzed through case studies the factors contributing to sustainability and the differences in arts education partnerships from other partnership types (Seidel, 2001).

Museum programs are designed to provide a “hands on” environment to enhance basic learning skills. Utilizing the museum’s facilities, these learning opportunities also provide a real-world perspective in history, math and science, not to mention art (USS Saratoga Museum Foundation, 2001). It is not uncommon for children to make trips to museums as most educators and parents see the museum as an extension of public education. The National Gallery of Art and The Getty Museum maintain various programs that unite art to virtually every public school discipline (The Getty Institute, 2008, The National Gallery of Art, 2008). Not surprisingly, these and other museums deliberately, and consequently, educate students about Americans and other cultures throughout history. Australian museum expert Mushi says, “This tapestry of cultures weaves shared knowledge and beliefs systems that does not necessarily strip meaning from any particular culture but finds an educational opportunity for interchange of affective and possibly authentic multi-arts practice” (Mushi, 2004, p.181).

Museums also have become a high priority with the Federal Department of Education. In June 2001, The White House announced the first round of awards for community learning. Former Education Secretary Richard Riley made numerous pronouncements about the “mutual interests” and “natural partnerships” between museums and schools (Nuperud, 1995). Evidence exists that two institutions support one another. During the 1995-96 school years, the Georgia Museum reached more than 2600 students, nearly 1000 teachers, and 360 others including administrators and interested business, civic and community members that participated in the museum activities (Khatena & Khatena, 2007). Another museum that contributes to the success in arts is The Getty Museum. California museums are the creation of community support groups in ongoing advocacy for arts education. Their role is to work with community and schools in expanding their arts education programs.

Museums are a window to other cultures and aid in understanding other peoples' values. Community museums help this art process by offering art exhibitions that inform the public of the process and historical influences. They develop more coherence by introducing students to essential knowledge, to connections across the disciplines and to the application of knowledge to life beyond the campus. Since partnerships are a growing and substantial facet of the institutional configurations seeking to provide arts education programs to students, they merit study from multiple perspectives. Applying this or other social science frameworks could be very productive in arts education research (Horowitz, 2002).

Art Value as Implicitly Fulfilling in its Experience

Intrinsic Values of Art

Should we justify arts learning in terms of other disciplines? Art education can be taught for its own sake: design, art production, paper and canvas work, photography, drawing, illustration and painting. They also demonstrate theater work: costume design, make-up, lighting props, and scenery. Many arts are using technology as a visual medium which includes film-making, video stories, visualizing, print-making, shooting, editing and computer-based graphics design (Jensen, 2001). Research has shown that art does impart intrinsic values to students. Chalmers said if art is to be valued, it is important to understand what art is. Art is a “powerful, pervasive force that helps to shape our attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors” (1987). Jessica Davis, a psychologist at Harvard University, states, “If coming to know one’s humanity through art is not as important as a multiple choice test, it’s time for us to review our values” (1996).

It is my assessment that art education is basic to an individual’s perception and understanding of the world in which we live. Creative learning enables students to interpret these perceptions in visual and image rich forms. Art education teaches students to respect and appreciate their own interpretations and those of others. Eisner and Dewey are clear that the study of art encourages visual awareness and is fundamental to intellectual growth and creative self-expression. Thus, arts have intrinsic value; they are worth learning for their own sake, providing benefits not available through any other means (Eisner, 1998).

Fine arts standards, arts assessment, and legislation recognizing the arts as a core academic subject provide a foundation for promoting the intrinsic value of the arts as an educational subject in school curricula (Fiske, 2000). The intrinsic values in art education demonstrate and prove their maintained integrity in public school. Four main points support this:

art can enhance self - expression, increase perception, cultivate cognition, and promote aesthetics.

Self-Expression

One of the most valuable contributions that art can make to the human experience is self-expression. The role of language in acquiring and expressing knowledge of self and the world is well established; expression not only is in oral and written forms but also in acts of thinking and reflecting. Creative activity helps students with ideas, feelings, and gaining freedom and flexibility in their own works. Students should have opportunities to respond, perform and create. Scholars agree that art has value and should be championed for its own sake. Theoreticians and artists feel that increasing one's competence in the forms of expression leads to deepening and discipline of one's thought and understanding. Composing imaginative works engages and embodies rich emotional content, intensifying and stimulating the learning experience (Eisner, 2002). John Dewey states that the arts allow for the self-expression and release of our own representations of the world. He believes that man is concrete proof of consciously having the union of sense, need and impulse to live creatively (Dewey, 1954).

Visual art forms are clearly intended by the artist to shape and convey intellectual and emotional content and to evoke intellectual and emotional response. The process of producing a work of art engages the artist in an iterative exploration of ideas and emotions as the work proceeds (Goldhawk, 1998). Expression in art is the process or product of deliberately and creatively arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions, especially beauty. Research done by the National Art Education Association published in 2007 *Art Making and Education* states the importance of the qualities of creativity, self-expression and

communication. The article emphasizes that there are several experiences in which art cultivates self-expression and developing skills, as well as contributes to learning about direct experience of the senses (NAEA, 1997). When students start to learn about art, they are able to learn how to weigh meaning and make evaluations (creative visualizing), to build the bridge between verbal and nonverbal, between the strictly logical and the emotional, to gain an understanding of the whole. The article remarks about a world full of images, ideas, and information that students can learn to analyze and make judgment. They can learn how to communicate their own ideas in sophisticated and better ways (Dorn, 1994).

Another significant attribute of art and self expression is the process of creating; it allows one to reflect, sort through repressed feelings, contemplate and express emotion, and can lead to immense personal growth. Lowenfield states that art can be a process that helps people deal with all sorts of situations and feelings (1982). Visual arts for example require students to physically engage with materials to make artistic decisions and problem solve in order to demonstrate creativity. Williams writes in *The Art-Making and Related Experiences*, that the art-making process also helps one develop goals which are crucial for future growth. Creativity and imagination become the process of divergent thinking (2000).

Students from abusive backgrounds admittedly use art for self-expression in order to release tension, and this suggests a healing benefit to them and similar implications for other groups. There are community-based art organizations across the nation providing self-expression through art and other healing benefits to various populations (Loftus, 1994). For example: the Healing Arts Project in San Antonio, Texas, and the Survivors Art Foundation of Westhampton, New York, offer similar services for trauma-survivors, providing children who have been abused with opportunities for artistic expression to help with their healing (Williams, 2000). Self-

expression through art can influence a student's life in a tremendous way. Each of the art forms engages in its own way specific physical, cognitive, and affective process modes of thought in action. Exploring dramatizing, choreographing, or poetry writing might add to the understanding of the cognitive processes engaged in learning and could yield insights important to the quest for effective educational practices. Opportunities to experience the iterative processes of 'art making' - continually refining ideas based on formative assessment by oneself and others - may be especially valuable for enhancing students' abilities to learn throughout life (Greene, 1995).

Perception

Perceiving and understanding relationships among the elements and principles of design as they appear in the natural and man-made environment influences mental images and is an important discipline in interpreting, creating, evaluating as well as making educational applications in art. Visual arts heighten one's awareness of the original artifact or environment. William Blake writes that what can be perceived defines what is possible, and what is possible defines what can be perceived. The mode of perceiving is precisely what makes reality real to the limited forms of life to which it is appropriate (Blake, 1790). For Blake it is precisely in art that humanity creates itself as God,"In his creative activity" (Blake, 1790, p.262).

Art education performs a valuable function in helping people become more receptive to change through developed perception, self-expression, and understanding of their emotions. As perception becomes more apparent, internal self-discipline and positive choices can more easily follow. Eisner believes that art education is primarily concerned with the development of visual awareness. The more students refine and increase their expertise in this area, they tend to focus more on the world around them and concentrate on one form at a time. For example: decorating a

room manifests itself in the selection of individual items. It is interesting to note that the ability to see and understand relationships among phenomena is generally what we mean by having developed a sense of maturity or perspective (Eisner, 1988, p. 70). Arnheim and Eisner agree the significance of the ability to see and construct meaning from visual experience cannot be overestimated in the production of visual art. The perceptual meaning acquired through refined sensibilities goes well beyond attention to the formal structure of visual arts; it spills over into our everyday life (Eisner, 1994).

In art education, students receive training to look beyond seeing what is framed by expectation, because expectation often confuses and gets in the way of perceiving the world accurately. Students learn to visually observe, a task far more complex than one might think. Seeing is framed by expectation. As an example: when asked to draw a human face, most people will set the eyes near the top of the head, but this is not how a face is accurately proportioned; as students learn, our eyes divide the head nearly at the center line. Observational drawing requires breaking away from stereotypes and seeing accurately and directly. Perception provides a constantly changing and expanding vehicle for interpreting visual learning.

Our behavior is determined by any number of important factors such as cultural orientation and physical and mental structure. Through the process of perceiving we learn to believe what we see and have belief in our perception. We gain knowledge by observation. Eisner, in his book *Educating Artistic Vision*, states that the sense of vital living that the perception and creation of Art provides is one of the themes essential for our schools both in art and in education. Arts should be enjoyed because of what they add to human life (Eisner, 1972).

Visual Arts and Cognition

The arts have long been identified as highly demanding cognitive activities (Eisner, 2002; Perkins, 1994). Visual arts education aids with enhancing cognition because it involves similar processing, visual input and visualizing, sensory sorting, movement and emotional responses. The mental process of recognizing and knowing includes aspects such awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment. Elliot Eisner's work on cognition and curriculum has become a significant reference point in debates involving teaching; the visual arts are essential and can be justified as part of education at all levels because one of the essential benefits is cognition.

Research in *Critical Links* identifies a range of cognitive capacities engaged in and nurtured by learning in the arts, including focused perception, elaboration, problem solving, and elements of creative thinking including fluency, originality and abstract thinking (Deasy, 2002). Making art is a highly cognitive process that involves and contributes to improving problem-solving, critical thinking and creative thinking. Cognition involves processing, visual input and visualizing, sensory sorting, movement and emotional responses; all are effects of cognition and visual arts seem to be strongest when used as a tool for academic learning (Jensen, 2001). The research done by Barbara Grandy, shows that the students using visual tools generated sixty percent more ideas in the same period than those students without explicit visual instructions and tools. These studies show art brings special ways of perceiving the world and mentally organizing and retrieving information utilizing critical thinking and problem solving skills. Art education can increase interest in academic learning and in cognitive and basic skill development (Jensen, 2001).

A correlation exists with visual arts and fine arts programs that foster commitment, social skills, communication, self-discipline and a work ethic; all help with the thinking process and

generating of ideas in learning. The key for schools is to develop a setting to create a varied and stimulating environment in which students become ‘immersed’. Educators also need to encourage students to try making meaning; to conceptualize the situation. Eisner (1994) says this is done by constructing images derived from the material the senses provide, and refining the senses, a primary means for expanding one’s consciousness (Eisner, 1994) . Art education cultivates natural interest and fosters curiosity in academic learning, as well as cognitive and basic skill development (Eisner, 2002). Recognizing this, recent research in arts education explores the cognitive development of students engaged in arts learning, and attempts to develop the cognitive processes engaged and developed in creating, performing and responding to works of art. Research might continue to examine both how students develop these skills and their inclination and depositions to use them as they practice grappling with ideas, material, and meanings in the arts (Fiske, 2000).

Aesthetics

Aesthetics, the study of beauty, is fundamentally important in public education because it provides students knowledge to identify art; it serves as a guide to developing their skills in creating art, and presents opportunities for genuine aesthetic experience. Throughout history, people have sought to surround themselves with beauty and study beauty. In the early Greek civilization, students were taught to create and evaluate paintings, music and poetry (Efland, 2002). Today, people are still seeking aesthetic enrichment. Aesthetic education should provide an individual with inner strengths and personal interaction with a work of art; the arts can affect humanity’s inner life.

A primary function and benefit of fine arts education is enhancement of experiential qualities that make ordinary life and human existence appealing. Such education not only helps aesthetic awareness for later experiences (after public school), it also reveals meaning and supplies vision at the time it is learned. Throughout Dewey's early writings on education, he emphasized the importance of aesthetic education. His views emphasize the connection between aesthetics and art (Dewey, 2000). Dewey's theory states one of the basic purposes of aesthetics is to help students understand art more clearly in order for them to experience art in a more meaningful way.

Research shows that philosophical aesthetics must be an integral part of art education. Philosophical aesthetics is the study of sensory or sensory-emotional values, sometimes called judgment of sentiment and taste, and it's a critical reflection of art, culture and nature (Radkin, 2007). There are two major reasons why the study of philosophical aesthetics is important in art education. First, ideas from the art discipline and appropriate methods of dealing with those ideas can connect parts of an art curriculum. Also, it is often difficult to make meaningful connections between various aspects of production, fine arts, crafts, art history, and art criticism, and at the same time integrate content and methods.

Another significant quality of art education is the process of students learning to listen and carefully consider the views of others, recognize that things are not always as simple as they seem and that attention to seemingly minor issues can clarify assumptions and influence rigidly held beliefs. Dobbs writes that art is a distinctive form of human experience and the study of it in schools ought to focus on what other subjects' fields do not. For example, shaping form to possess aesthetic character, and understanding types of aesthetic experience may not be the main concern for most subjects in the school curriculum. Art should introduce and sustain forms of

experience which can enhance the lives of students who encounter and experience it. Researchers continue to reinforce Dobbs' (1984) theory that art is a distinctive form of the human experience and that art should help shape form to possess aesthetic character as well as understanding types of aesthetic experience. Dobbs recognizes the need for educational materials about aesthetics; investigating existing methods and materials that might serve as models for art education.

Philosophers associated with the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (Lipman 1974; Lipman & Sharp, 1978; Lipman, Sharp and Oscanyan 1980; Reed, 1989) have helped develop curriculum and materials about general philosophy such as metaphysics, logic, ethics, and aesthetics for children all ages (Dobbs, 1984). There also are extensive teacher's manuals that accompany each text, filled with discussion ideas, exercise and activities. The main objective of this approach is to develop critical thinking skills and philosophical inquiry through class dialogue based upon the texts. Lipman and his associates believe that thinking about aesthetics in the classroom is best achieved through dialogue. Discussion draws upon a student's wonder and develops critical thinking skills within the context. The art teacher's goal should be to develop a community of inquiry, a class climate where each child feels comfortable to express an opinion or observation, with an end goal of "student-student" rather than "teacher-student" discussion (Lipman, 1974). There are three components to encourage a community of inquiry. First, students are encouraged to examine criteria and explain what they think. The second is self-correction, they are encouraged to listen to other comments and be willing to reconsider opinions. Lastly, attention to context, understanding the influence of context upon one's judgment and opinion is crucial. Other approaches to teaching aesthetics include writing responses, keeping art journals, and completing teacher made worksheets (Lipman, 1974, Sharp, 1980).

Studying artworks requires students to develop accurate and appropriate descriptive vocabulary to discuss works; in this process, they experience different forms of understanding and enjoyment. A certain satisfaction may be assumed in owning one's ideas and students may be disposed to wonder about, question, and give focused attention to their art-related lives (Flowers, 1990). In the end, they may become more reflective and better skilled in thinking about their lives in general. The lessons learned through engagement with art are educationally relevant in the broadest possible sense (Eisner, 1988). Smith reinforces this idea by stating aesthetic education may imply arts education programs develop aesthetic literacy in matters of creating and appreciating art, the fostering of a distinctive sensibility irrespective of the subject (1966). The works are no longer foreign and intangible, but become a personal schema and some become inspiration. It also fosters consciousness and the ability to construct meaning from experiences (Eisner, 1988).

Art as a Priceless Contributor

Art as Fulfillment

The arts provide a self-generated and self-propelled approach to learning; they explore multiple facets of the world and human life and enhance the curriculum for students. Therefore, fine arts are a priceless contributor to students in public schools (Schiller, 2004). In an arts learning experience, individual students taught the same artistic skills will create different works of art, not just because of their varying levels of skill mastery, but also because of the unique sets of experiences and ideas they bring to bear in the artistic process (Stevenson, 2004). The student creates something new, something even the teacher cannot create. The student is thus purposefully engaged and at the center of the learning experience, and the teacher a facilitator (Wootton, 2004).

Students in art classes learn techniques specific to art and engage a remarkable array of mental habits not emphasized elsewhere in school including visual-spatial abilities, reflection, self-criticism, and the willingness to experiment and learn from mistakes. This could be the reason the educational system pushes the arts to integrate other core subjects into the art curriculum. Parents, administrators and politicians have the belief that arts classes improve children's skills. There is optimism concerning art in schools, as schools and institutions are starting to realize that marginalizing the arts is not in the best interest of education as a whole. Many children need a creative outlet or they have difficulty performing successfully in the other subjects (Kevin, 2008). Federal and state laws and policies assert the need for schools to provide arts education to all students and declare that students will progress in meeting content and achievement standards in the arts. Consequently every state has adopted standards for the Visual and Performing Arts (Benard, 2004).

Art involves application of ideals; it also is a process for investigating and sharing worlds, giving students ownership of learning to summon their personal judgment and decision-making. As an advocate for the arts and a teacher of arts for fourteen years, I feel this is an accurate assessment of what happens inside arts classes. Oreck (2004) found that teachers in general, regardless of their own personal knowledge of or experiences in the arts, believe that arts experiences are valuable for students. The primary motivation for non-arts teachers to integrate the arts into their classrooms, he found, was the desire to increase their own teaching enjoyment (Oreck, 2004). Burton and others also have found that teacher-student relationships are improved in arts-rich schools (2000).

To reiterate, the importance of having art in education is not the end goal of the student becoming an "artist" but rather openness to the understanding of art. Researcher Hetland, *Art for Arts*

Sake, says as schools cut time for the arts, they may be losing their ability to produce not just the artistic creators of the future, but also innovative leaders who improve the world they inherit (2007).

The Impact of Federal and State Policies on the Arts

Standard-based education and its related accountability systems have been the dominant policy agenda at the federal and state level over the past two decades. The goals for the United States is for every state to meet the requirements of the government mandated laws and the public and legislative demands energized by *A Nation at Risk* and to adopt standards for student learning (NCEE,1983). *A Nation at Risk* is known as the most famous accountability system the federal and state level policy over the past two decades. Federal and state laws and policies assert the need for schools to provide arts education to all students and declare that students will progress in meeting content and achievement standards in the arts (NRCC, 2003).

There is widespread debate about the effectiveness of the standards and accountability movement, as well as the measures used to gauge success. Also debated is the accountability movements that impacts students' access to arts education (NRCC, 2003). Given the scope and dominance of the standards and accountably movement, it is essential that rigorous and regular efforts be made to analyze its impact on national, state, and local levels. Methods and models other than standardized testing also are needed to monitor the implementation of arts standards (NCEE, 1983). Additional processes are needed for determining actual student engagement time with arts instruction, compared to reports that the arts are 'offered' in schools. Work needs to continue in developing appropriate methods for assessing and reporting arts learning. In my

research preparing this report, I find that arts education research has quietly matured as a field and that studies identify a set of similar developmental outcomes of arts learning experiences.

Conclusion

If fine arts programs require some defense to threats of a gradually perceived or overtly abrupt removal from public schools, then educators must understand the dichotomous (instrumental vs. intrinsic) values of art in public schools as clarified in research findings and so presented here in this thesis. In my observations, recognizing that art making has connections to other subjects can be complex and important. Instrumental teaching ideas have a wide range of benefits and have potential that can be used in a productive way to enhance any core subject. However, the teachers and schools must collaborate and be willing to take the time out of their own curriculum to teach an interdisciplinary topic and properly fund new curriculums. Efland (1991) says that for such collaboration to be successful, positive beliefs and attitudes must pre-exist among those involved.

Art in itself - its intrinsic value – should not be ignored and is vital in convincing the public that art education deserves a rightful and substantial role in the public school curriculum requirements. The Daily Digest of Arts, Culture and Ideas contains an article against the instrumental value of the arts and how arts organizations in this country have learned to survive by making their case for public funding. The author of the article, Glenn Lowry, considers they are missing the point; they should be concentrating on the intrinsic value of arts, not just the instrumental. The article further states that anyone involved in the arts believes characteristically in their fundamental intrinsic value and he would

argue that any other value that can be attributed to them is secondary, and ultimately not all that interesting (Lowry, 2005).

The goals of art education should be to aid each pupil to the full extent of their abilities to perceive and understand the relationships among the elements and principles of design as they appear in the natural and man-made environment, as they influence mental images, and as they appear in works of art. It is often that arts education programs are subject to budget cuts during times of economic downturn or when policy changes require schools to focus on core curriculum only. The arts are necessary in public school in order to introduce students to aesthetic appreciation, improving everyday life and teaching other modes of thinking we value. Concluding in my research I found that arts education research has matured as a field and that its studies identify a set of similar developmental outcomes of arts learning experiences. The authors studied in my research claim that the current overemphasis on instrumental benefits not only undervalues the arts but also fails to provide a sound basis for decisions in support of the arts.

Students today are experiencing life in a rapidly changing world and need vital modes of seeing, imaging, inventing, and thinking. Students will need tools and abilities to envision solutions to unknown future problems. Lowry, believes and would argue that the intrinsic value is where the needed tools and abilities lie. The arts are not only fundamental to success in our demanding, highly technical, fast-moving world, but they are what make us most human, most complete as people. At a time when higher standards are being thrust on all of us, arts are more valuable in a students education. Even if one could get higher scores without the arts, do we really want to live in a world where the best we have to offer are higher test score graduates, or a person who is not nurtured to be creative and express himself? I would not choose a world

without art. Educators who clearly understand the values of the arts in public schools may have some strong claims about the arts and, therefore, help defend their visual arts programs in their schools. There still will be skeptics who are uncomfortable with a stronger arts role in school. Art educators play a role as advocates for the arts and can make as good a case or better for arts than one can make for any other discipline.

Appendix I

Lesson Plan with Instrumental Values

The following lesson is an example of one of the instrumental views discussed in this paper. The Getty Center of Education For the Arts was established in the U.S. to do research and development in the implementation of discipline-based art education. A major goal of the Institute is developing within students the desire to be life-long audience participants and supporters of the visual arts. The goal involves making students aware of art in museums, as well as building confidence in approaching their entire visual world. By initiating an art program in kindergarten and sequentially developing it throughout the entire educational experience, the Institute proposes to connect art to all major areas of the school curriculum so that each student will have the foundational disciplines that contribute to the creation and understanding of art.

Title: “The Circus, Joan Miro”

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Identify symbols and colors that suggest a circus in Miro’s “The Circus”
2. Analyze the painting’s technical qualities.
3. Discuss emotions and feelings generated by the work.
4. Create a multi-media rubbing/painting inspired by favorite performing events.

Materials and Preparation:

Larger, flat pieces of burlap or other heavily-textured cloth,

Masking tape

White drawing paper

Old crayons with paper removed

Drawing pencils

Black yarn

Tempera paint or watercolors

Brushes

White glue

Resources:

Joan Miro, by Walter Erben.

Joan Miro: A Retrospective Exhibition, by Carolyn Lancher.

Books on circuses, carnivals, ballets, theme parks, sporting events, etc.

History on the Spanish Civil War (to inform students about the time period of the artist's life and works.)

Vocabulary:

Symbol, celotex, collage, curvilinear, surrealism, texture, conservation, rubbing or frottage, biomorphic or organic shapes.

Procedure / production

Have students recall a favorite show performance or sporting event for their inspiration. On sketching paper allow students to practice drawing curvilinear organic or geometric shapes that symbolize the topic they have chosen.

Tape burlap or other materials used for a texture rubbing on a table top so that it is secure and will not wrinkle when rubbed. Place the white drawing paper over cloth, where students

would like the rubbings to appear. Select the materials, such as crayons, oil pastels or ebony drawing pencils, press in firmly, and rub across the paper's surface in any direction. After rubbing in the desired direction, paper can be repositioned to allow for a variety of texture patterns or colors.

Evaluation / Outcomes

Did the students:

1. Find symbols and colors suggesting a circus?
2. Respond to the mood created by the circus?
3. Produce a work of art that uses symbols, materials and colors to represent an event?

Interdisciplinary Connections:

Language Arts: Write a how-to paper about the process of creating the multimedia rubbing/paintings.

Mathematics: Estimate how many inches are in each biomorphic shape in "The Circus".

Science: Celotex, used here for the background, is not a stable material. Introduce and investigate the painting conservation.

Social Studies: Create a time line of the Spanish Civil War, including artists, musicians, authors and world history.

(DBAE, 1995)

Appendix II

Lesson Plan with Intrinsic Values

The following lesson is an example of arts as an intrinsic value. To experience beauty of an entirely different kind, an experience that for many is sublime. The arts cultivate the direct experience of the senses: they trust the unmediated flash of insight as a legitimate source of knowledge. Their goal is to connect person and experience directly, to build the bridge between verbal and nonverbal, between the strictly logical and the emotional, the better to gain an understanding of the whole. The intrinsic value of art also bridges to things we can scarcely describe, but respond to deeply.

Title: Painting/Collage/Low Relief

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Select an objective of interest using symbolism, and create multiple original drawings to incorporate into their assemblage. Students will research narrative/symbolic works and mixed media works.
2. Plan a color scheme and cover painting skills.
3. Have awareness of non-objective art.
4. Have the principles of design and elements reinforced.
5. Alter their work of art by creating a low relief assemblage.

Materials:

Illustration board

Acrylic paint, flat and round brushes

Scraps of mat board and color matt board or poster board

Paper cutter or x-acto knives

Crystal clear

Rulers

White glue

Scraps of any kinds students desire for assemblage

Resources:

Gunther Gerzso and various Mexican Artists.

Gunther Gerzso (autobiography) Mexican Abstract painter, born 1912 – 2000.

Latin American masters.

Procedures:

1. Student will select an objective of interest using symbolism, and create multiple original drawings to incorporate into their mixed media assemblage. Students will research narrative/symbolic works and mixed media works.
2. Use illustration board and acrylic to paint a nonobjective painting. Use analogous, complementary, or split complementary color schemes. Choose the colors to be used and incorporate it with the objective of interest. Use lightest colors first going the darker values last. Students may layer their ideas adding a variety of design and media to their

pleasing. Vary the size of the brush strokes and overlap colors to produce more complicated areas.

3. Let the painting dry and spray with crystal clear to give it a shine and protect it. Put it under some weight after moistening the back to let it dry flat. Using a paper cutter or x-acto knives, cut the painting into uneven widths with the center of interest being smaller than some of the others. Next take each row and cut again into the same number of squares and rectangles for each row. Arranging all the cut pieces, use colored mat board that goes with the painting or contrast color. Overlap each shape and arrange the entire pieces on the mat board to the student's desire.

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Curriculum Vitae

Monica Seymore was born January 7, 1970, in El Paso, Texas. The only daughter of Ronald and Yolanda Lyons and mother of Morgan and Malone Seymore, she graduated from Jesus Chapel High School, El Paso, Texas, in the spring of 1988 and enrolled at The University of North Texas. While studying interior design, she was blessed with a sweet baby girl. Her study interest changed; ultimately she chose to study Art education at the University of Texas at El Paso. In 1993, she began a career in Dallas, Texas, teaching elementary Art and writing curriculum with the University of North Texas, in 1996 relocating to El Paso, Texas. In El Paso, she was a middle school Art teacher for four years then began teaching high school Art. Having fourteen fulfilling years teaching in the Art classroom, she became a graduate student at the University of Texas at El Paso to enhance and gain a greater knowledge in Art education.

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