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*Montclair State University*

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INQUIRY BASED DIALOGUE IN THE VISUAL ART CLASSROOM:  
EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education

by

EDWARD CHARLES RUGGIERI

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

2013

Dissertation Chair: Jaime Grinberg

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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

INQUIRY BASED DIALOGUE IN THE VISUAL ART CLASSROOM:

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

of

Edward Charles Ruggieri

Candidate for the Degree:


Doctor of Education


Dissertation Committee:

Department of Educational Foundations

  
Dr. Jaime Grinberg  
Dissertation Chair

Certified by:

  
Dr. Joan C. Ficke  
Dean of The Graduate School

  
Dr. Kathryn Herr

Date

4-11-2013

  
Dr. Chris Herrera

## ABSTRACT

### INQUIRY BASED DIALOGUE IN THE VISUAL ART CLASSROOM: EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

by Edward Charles Ruggieri

There are a number of problems in our current educational system, and as a society we realize that our educational system has to adapt in order to meet the needs of its people. In order to help the United States stay at the head of the class, language arts, mathematics have been stressed in schools, seen as the keys to a skilled, productive workforce. But with this emphasis, came an abundance of standardized testing and competition. Assessing students is vital to a quality education, but a problem arises when too much emphasis is placed on these two subjects that other areas of study, which hold their own value in society, are treated as less important or unimportant altogether. In the end, the whole child is not being educated and this is a problem. The philosophical aspect of visual art education can help balance out students' educational experience. The aesthetic theories of art developed by philosophers of art and artists alike, show that art progresses through philosophical reflection on the subject. Philosophy is a central component in how we view and create works of visual art, but currently visual art education in public schools seems to concentrate less on the philosophical aspect and more on art production. Understanding the winding road that visual art education has traveled throughout our nation's history, pedagogical and curricular trends can be mapped, highlighting what events have had major impacts on the visual art classroom and what could be beneficial to today's students. Looking at the pros and cons of a number of

pedagogies and curricular trends, I propose more philosophical dialogue, specifically ethical criticism, in the visual art classroom. Moreover, dialogue is proposed as best way to help students discuss philosophical topics. Finally, a hybrid model of visual art education, which allows students to engage in philosophical dialogue sparked by students' questions regarding a work of visual art is offered as a practical solution as to how to implement such an inclusion to the visual art classroom.

### **Acknowledgments**

**I would like to thank Dr. Jaime Grinberg, Dr. Kathryn Herr, and Dr. Chris Herrera for their guidance and support throughout this entire process. It is because of educators like you that made this entire experience so meaningful.**

## **Dedication**

**This dissertation is dedicated to my family, my Mom, Linda, my Dad, Lou, and my brothers Lou and Chaz. Your support is what has made this all possible. The love and encouragement you all have provided has meant more to me than I can truly express. Thank you for reading my work, for listening to me talk about it with you, and for offering me feedback, all of which has helped to improve my ideas.**

**I love you all so much!**



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## INTRODUCTION

The central thesis is two-folded; (a) a visual art classroom centering on inquiry based dialogue enables students to live better lives by helping them to make meaning out of their own experiences through the discussion of philosophical questions, which (b) emerge through their own curiosity as a result of engaging with works of art, as well as a process of individual and communal dialogue and reflection. Helping students grapple with and answer the philosophical questions that they find important helps them to more fully understand and appreciate their own lives. Education of the whole child is not being addressed in today's public educational system, and this dilemma can be countered by the inclusion of inquiry-based dialogue within the visual art classroom.

With each and every day, the world is changing, and so too do the challenges we face. As a society, we realize that our educational system has to adapt in order to meet the needs of its people. Politicians, policy makers, administrators have all opted to back a few subjects, mathematics and language arts, with science in a close third (Berliner, 2009), and push those subjects to the forefront of the educational initiative within the United States, as is evidenced by the implementation of NCLB and currently, RTTT<sup>1</sup> (No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top respectively). Based on federal programs that stem back several decades<sup>2</sup>, language arts and mathematics have been lauded as the keys to a skilled workforce, a productive workforce. In order to ensure that students are learning the appropriate material, standardized testing was developed, which measures

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>, accessed on January 25, 2012

<sup>2</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/reference.pdf>, accessed on

proficiency in these two areas. There is no problem with assessing whether students learned what it is hoped they did. What becomes a problem, which is evident in the last and current federal programs, is when there is so much emphasis placed on these two subjects that other areas of study, which hold their own value in society, are treated as less important or unimportant altogether (Hourigan, 2011; Levine, 2010). Moreover, with an emphasis on a number, a test score which is directly related to access to higher education for students and higher pay for teachers (as two examples), the competitive drive between individuals is ramped up (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998, referencing Foucault, 1979; Giroux, 2009). What develops from constant testing as well as hierarchical observation and normalizing judgment is “the meticulous control of the operations of the body” with “a relation of docility-utility” (Foucault, 1977, p. 137). However, this environment is problematic because the child has his own questions and if those questions are not acknowledged, it compels the child “to leave his mind behind, because there is no room for it in school” (Dewey, 2001, p. 50). This will be the goal of chapter one, to outline what is problematic with our current educational system, and what the visual arts offer in order to help balance out students’ educational experience. As is evidenced in the chapter, the educational system is slanted towards teaching for employment (Giroux, 2009), leaving very little to no time and space to discuss questions of value (Levine, 2010), helping students develop a sense of a good life beyond that of economic success (Lipman et al, 1980). My argument is that the visual art classroom can come to the aid in helping students learn how to live a good life.

In consequence, a discussion about the philosophical aspect of visual art education and how this component can help balance out students' educational experience and life in general follows. However, as there are numerous perspectives on how to teach the visual arts (Burton, 2001), there are many who do not believe philosophy is a necessary component of the visual arts. This point of view is addressed in chapter two by discussing the aesthetic theories that have been proposed and refined throughout the past two thousand years. The aesthetic theories of art developed by philosophers of art and artists alike (Collingwood, 1938; Danto, 1964), show that art progresses through reflection, often-philosophical reflection on the subject. Once it has been established that philosophy is a central component in how we view, create, and understand works of visual art, chapter three is dedicated to understanding the winding road that visual art education has traveled throughout our nation's history. Pedagogical and curricular trends are mapped, highlighting what events have had major impacts on the visual art classroom, and what could be beneficial to today's students. A main component of the argument is that a higher emphasis on philosophical dialogue is needed in the visual art classroom.

Chapter four centers on what should be components of a visual art classroom and understanding what role each one plays. While the overall educational system is unbalanced towards a few subjects in its curricula and towards its purposes such as education for employment (Giroux, 2009), the visual art classroom is also unbalanced in its approach to educating students in the visual arts because it neglects important

dimensions such as that of ethics in arts. Thus, within chapter four, an addition of ethical criticism is proposed in order to help give time and space to questions which students feel are important to the work of art they are discussing and to their lives. This is an important aspect of the visual arts (Carroll, 2000b; Gaut, 1998), which is often overlooked and neglected in the visual art classroom (Burton, 2001). Such an addition can at the same time enhance a student's experience with the visual arts and help to create a balance in their overall education and life which is geared mainly towards employment (Levine, 2010).

Chapter five of this dissertation centers on the concept of dialogue with all of its subtleties (Bohm, 1996; Burbules, 1993; Walton, 1998), and why its implementation is important to the visual art classroom and students' entire educational experience. The philosophical content advocated for is a necessary part of the visual art classroom (Carroll, 2000b), and it is believed that engaging in dialogue is the best way to help students discuss philosophical topics (Lipman, 2003; Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980). Dialogue allows students to take charge of their own questions and make meaning out of information presented and discussed both through an individual and a communal process (Kennedy, 1996). In this way, the teacher is not force-feeding information, making the experience all the more meaningful and lasting. Moreover, the power of dialogue is discussed, as well as the circular relationship between art production, ethical criticism dialogue, and reflection, and why the visual art classroom is the only place that this can be accomplished.

Throughout the first five chapters a specific type of visual art education is called for, one whose goal is to help students not only gain a more in-depth education in the visual arts, but more importantly, to balance out students' entire educational experience. The final chapter aims to come to a conclusion as to how students' may receive the type of visual art education proposed. Given the need for philosophical discussion in the visual art classroom to help balance it out as well as the entire educational system, it is understood that educators do not have a lot of time with students (Sabol, 2010). With the limited time that visual art students have, combined with the variety of content to be covered, it is necessary to provide a way in which students can engage in meaningful dialogue. A hybrid model of visual art education is introduced, which allows students to engage in philosophical dialogue sparked by students' questions regarding a work of visual art. Why the hybrid model would work well, as well as strategies for implementation are discussed.

In summary, the current educational system marginalizes the visual art classroom (Beveridge, 2010; Hourigan, 2011; Sabol, 2010) in favor of promoting math and language arts for the goal of job readiness. As a result of pushing standardized testing and job readiness, what is often left out of the classroom is the opportunity for students to learn how to live better, more fulfilling lives (Levine, 2010; Nussbaum, 2010). The beauty of the visual art classroom is that engaging with art fosters aesthetic experiences which communicate and help students to make meaning out of their own lives (Holzer, 2009). There is uniqueness to the visual art classroom that cannot be replicated in a math,



English, or science class. Students, through dialogue centered on ethical criticism will discuss questions that are of meaning to them, questions that they develop by engaging with works of art. Ultimately, the way students engage with works of visual art and each other in the visual art classroom is a form of play. As Bruner (1983) states, “play is an activity that is without frustrating consequences for the child even though it is a serious activity. It is, in consequence, a superb medium for exploration” (p. 76). The child who is in a state of play is not tied down to anything, to any one perspective, although they may hold firm to one belief; they exist in this state that is neither here nor there; the in-between, a state of possibility and exploration.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Are We Educating the Whole Child?**

#### **Moving Beyond Standardized Examinations**

Schools throughout the United States are impacted by an outlook toward teaching and learning where there is a belief that there are absolute truths which exist, irrespective of the learner. This trend is evidenced by national programs such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and current Race to the Top (RTTT) program, which stress standardized testing of often trivial questions as a means of assessing students (Monchinsky, 2008). While NCLB and RTTT are being used as examples, this chapter is geared toward all programs which explicitly foster competition and an education narrowed to a few subjects. More specifically, what influence do educational policies like NCLB and RTTT have on visual art education classrooms? And, what direction could be taken to help educate the whole child?

Because funding and resources in public school systems are often contingent upon students scoring well on standardized tests in Mathematics and Language Arts, teachers are often left teaching toward the test, stressing memorization and subsequent regurgitation on the part of the students. Arts education courses are in a precarious

position since the inception of programs like NCLB<sup>3</sup> and Race to the Top<sup>4</sup>, despite the arts being proclaimed to be on an even playing field as the traditional academic subjects.

Amidst financial sanctions for not reaching Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and subsequent budget cuts (Pederson, 2007; Sabol, 2010; Scheider, 2005; Vincent, 2005) stemming from a number of variables, the arts are often among the first programs cut from or downsized within public school curricula. Even if visual arts programs are not cut, students are often removed from arts programs for remediation in one of the tested subjects or extra math, science, or language art subject matter is imposed on the art teacher to incorporate into the visual art classes (Sabol, 2010). With the implementation of 2001's NCLB and the more recent RTTT, instruction in the arts, whose goal is to help individuals make meaning out of their own experiences (Holzer, 2009), develop visual literacy, imagination, technical production skills, and aesthetic awareness are increasingly diminished. While RTTT attempts to alter detrimental aspects of NCLB, "such as

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<sup>3</sup> Taking from <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbreference/reference.pdf>, accessed on January 25, 2012, the No Child Left Behind Act which became law in 2001, builds on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and "embodies four key principles-stronger accountability for results; greater flexibility for states, school districts and schools in the use of federal funds; more choices for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been demonstrated to work" (p. 9) in an attempt to bring students within the United States of America up to the perceived academic levels of foreign countries.

<sup>4</sup> Race to the Top is "a competitive grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, improving high school graduation rates, and ensuring student preparation for success in college and careers..." (Race to the Top Executive Summary, U.S. Department of Education, November 2009) – located at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf>, and accessed on January 25, 2012. Among other aspects, the Race to the Top program utilizes value-added modeling in order to evaluate teachers. That is to say that teachers are evaluated based on how current testing compares to the previous year. Even though President Obama stated in his 2012 State of the Union speech, that we should give schools more flexibility and stop teaching to the test, it is hard to do so when the test scores still play a prominent role in the funding of schools as well as teacher's financial stability.

punishing schools with low test scores, forcing important subjects that are not tested (such as the arts) out of curricula, and compelling teachers to teach to a test” (Hourigan, 2011, p. 60), the program’s focus still engenders similar affects (Hourigan, 2011). Because school districts receive money (and teachers in some districts receive merit pay) for performing better on math and language arts related standardized tests, teachers are still pressured to teach toward the test. Moreover, as tested subjects like math and language arts have an impact on funding received by districts from the federal government, subjects that are often referred to as special area or electives (such as art, music, theater, etc.) may receive less money for their programs to make sure that the tested subject areas have the materials and training needed to garner higher proficiency rates.

Race to the Top emphasizes improved teacher quality and student performance, and the federal government offers grant money for schools/districts which demonstrate improvements in these areas (as two examples). Reviewing RTTT’s definition of an effective educator, Hourigan (2011) states,

In the RTTT overview, The DOE defines highly effective teachers as those “whose students achieve high rates” and mandates that teachers be evaluated using “student growth” measurements and “multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles...In other words, teacher evaluations under RTTT will include both the standard observation evaluations and a connection to student performance (i.e., test scores). (p. 61)

The language used in RTTT claims that a teacher is more effective when students of that teacher score higher on standardized tests. Under RTTT there is also the option for districts to implement performance pay. Performance pay, according to the DOE, is a system whereby teachers are rewarded monetarily when their students rate higher (i.e. achieve more) on standardized tests (US DOE, 2009b). However, this practice reveals a lack of a broader understanding of the complexity of the educational process, which is to say that broader societal issues, such as poverty, play a pivotal role in student achievement (Haladyna, Nolen, and Haas, 1991; Hourigan, 2011; Kohn, 2000).

In a lecture presented by *Democracy Now: The War and Peace Report*, Noam Chomsky stated that, in general, today's students are being educated in a way that creates passive onlookers rather than active participants in their own education. While this idea is not new, Chomsky continues to build on a tradition of criticism, and from my perspective seems to be contending that schools, districts, and the government desire schools to educate innovative, creative and critical thinking individuals so that areas such as science and technology, as well as the economy, can advance, but within this exists a contradiction in that schools routinely and systematically restrict the creative and critical thinking process. Students are taught what to read, told when to read it, and how to interpret a given text. What eventually gets stamped with an OK, as *educated*, at the end of the production line is a population who, it seems, is normalized like a soldier in the military – in short, Foucault's docile bodies (1977).

Foucault's docile body is created through what he terms disciplines, "...methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility..." (Foucault, 1977, p. 137). Moreover, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and examination, are the three criteria on which disciplinary power relies. The docility and utility that Foucault speaks of resonates loudly in regard to today's educational system in that students are being educated to be productive workers, helping to fix our current state of economic unrest. This is evidenced in pushes, within the last decade in particular, toward studies in Mathematics and Language Arts (Berliner, 2009; Murray, 2006; Woodward, 2004), in order to help keep the United States economically competitive with the rest of the first-world nations. In striving to create future workers, which in and of itself is not a bad thing, what is created is, as Giroux (2009) says, a

narrow individualism in which all that matters is one's ability to compete and 'win' as defined by the ideologies, values, materials, social relations, and practices of commerce, it becomes difficult for young people to imagine a future in which the self becomes more than a self-promoting commodity and a symbol of commodification. (p. 17)

This commodification of our nation's youth partly comes as a result of the standardized testing mandated by programs like NCLB and RTTT, which is situated in a larger pattern of behavior within the United States formal educational system, stemming back to the

common schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century where there existed the idea that the more educated an individual is, the more productive he or she can be in and for society.

Referring back to Foucault, whose analysis echoes today, is the idea that the examination is a means of training, whereby information about an individual is gathered, and the examination “places individuals in a field of surveillance,” which “situates them in a network of writing: it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them” (Foucault, 1977, p. 189). The student, like that of the soldier or prison inmate, becomes part of a group whose aim is to conform to the desires of the state (normalizing judgment) – to become productive workers. And like the situation of the soldier or prison inmate, any sense of democracy in the classroom is removed. The creation of an attitude of consumerism and competition in public school students comes as a result of “a microphysics of power that disciplines the body, mind, and soul” (Anderson and Grinberg, 1998, p. 333 referencing Foucault, 1979).

Borrowing from Dewey (1899/2001), we could ask, is it not more important to help students cultivate the habit of reflection about an idea or bit of information, rather than engage in memorization and regurgitation? Students are literally caught in a web of standardized testing and competition and are viewed as little more than a product that can be used by corporate America. Giroux (2009) states,

In a society that measures its success and failure solely through the economic lens of the Gross National Product (GNP), it becomes difficult to define youth outside of market principles determined largely by criteria such as the rate of market

growth and the accumulation of capital. The value and worth of young people in this discourse is largely determined through the bottom-line cost-benefit categories of income, expenses, assets, and liabilities (p. 40).

However, in an effort to educate work ready, productive citizens in order to further the GNP, what are lost in a child's education are the tenets of a truly democratic society. There is a lack of an understanding of community, compassion for community members, a sense of justice, wisdom, ethics, acumen and civic participation.

This idea goes back to the Progressive Education Movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries where there was a clear tension between education for productivity and the development of the whole child. During the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a movement away from teacher-centered education to one which centered more on student-centered methods and practices. The Progressive Education Association had six principles outlined at its inception including the idea that

1. Children should have the freedom to develop naturally.
2. The child's interests should be the basic motive for all his or her work.
3. The teacher should function as a guide, not a task master.
4. Record-keeping should serve the goal and methods of the scientific study of children's development.
5. Schools should pay equal attention to all facets of children's development, including the physical.
6. The school and the home must be active partners in meeting the needs of children

(Irwin, 1991 p. 53).



Around 1932, progressive educators developed the Commission on the Relation of School and College which realized “that students were graduating with no sense of what it meant to be a citizen within a democratic social order. The Commission found no connection between daily community life and the fundamental human values intended to guide that life” (Irwin, 1991, p. 53). The Eight Year Study, developed by progressive educators,

...was based on values that teachers came to believe in. Programmatic choices grew out of these values. The essential value was democracy. This feature, more than any other, sets the Study apart from contemporary movements for school reform propelled largely by vague appeals for increased test scores, increased accountability, or increased productivity (Irwin, 1991 p. 59)

Progressive education, to Price and Grinberg (2009, p. 259 citing Cremin, 1961/1964), segmented into three categories; one based on “scientific answers with its centre in measurement, evaluation, and efficiency, while another...experiential with some psychoanalytic influences. The third section represented that of the radical critique.” There was a belief that “the classroom could become the model for a new collectivism, integrating self-expression with larger social goals” (Antler, 1987, p. 307).

John Dewey’s ideas on progressive education (1938/1953) centered on the belief that there should be a type of active learning within the classroom stemming not from the will of the teacher, but realized through the interests as well as the needs of the children within the classroom. To Gordon (1988), the idea of an education dedicated to educating

students as individuals understanding their role and responsibilities within a constantly changing society, with information that is relevant and meaningful to their everyday lives, stems from the work of individuals such as Rousseau and Froebel. As Price and Grinberg (2007) state, “Schools have been conceived as places where ideas can be experimented, implemented, challenged, rethought, and reformed...the teacher creates the environment and develops a curriculum that connects subject matter with children” (p. 256). Teaching in this way utilizes a teacher-as-facilitator stance and is more inquiry based in nature, but with a systematic, scientific approach.

In the United States, as children grow up in a society based on consumerism, individuals, quickly learn that in order to survive they must sell themselves, becoming marketable. Consumerism was always a part of the educational system, even in the art classroom during Walter Smith’s years, but it seems as though this consumerism is exacerbated today. In terms of schooling, the only way to make one marketable today is to perform well on standardized tests. The occurrence of making students marketable through performances on standardized tests, whether implicit or explicit in the curricula, weakens the sense of community, of shared responsibility, and “visions of the good society are cast aside” (Giroux, 2007, p.2) in favor of personal achievement and a drive to perform better than everyone else.

The claim may be made, however, that education for employment is needed and competition in schools is a natural part of that process. This functionalist perspective argues “that if we want to understand a certain social practice or institution” (Feinberg

and Soltis, 2009, p. 13), such as education for employment and the improvement of the economy, “we must consider the way in which it serves to further the survival of the social system as a whole” (Feinberg and Soltis, 2009, p. 13). In line with furthering the entire social system, Sadovnik (2007) states that “Functionalists view society as a kind of machine, in which to make society work” (p. 3). Sure, education for employment may help to “make society work,” but for how long, in what way, and to suit whose needs?

As the economy continues to recover after a downward spiral, and after two wars being fought, money for education is still being cut<sup>5</sup>. And when President Obama stated that “this is our generation’s Sputnik moment” in his 2011 State of the Union Address, he meant that there needs to be more of an investment towards technological advances, medicine, clean-energy solutions, etc.; math and science funding will certainly not be cut. As students and teachers are evaluated by students’ performance on standardized tests, needing to earn proficient and advanced proficient status in regard to math and language arts, other areas of study, such as the arts, will be impacted in order to continue to meet these benchmarks – especially in impoverished and lower class districts where resources are already limited.

According to Beveridge (2010), “As budgets are cut nationwide, the funding for non-tested subjects are affected first, because the majority of resources are directed at the

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<sup>5</sup> Prevalent in the New York Times are articles indicating the types and magnitude of recent budget cuts. For an article discussing New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie, see the following link, which states that Governor Christie “signed into law New Jersey’s smallest budget in five years, with major cuts to schools” that hovered (as of the October 4, 2011 article) in the neighborhood of 820 million dollars.  
[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/christopher\\_j\\_christie/index.html?scp=4&sq=Education%20budget%20cuts&st=cse](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/c/christopher_j_christie/index.html?scp=4&sq=Education%20budget%20cuts&st=cse)

areas that are tested for accountability” (p. 4). The goal is not to fight against an education that helps promote the national economy, as this has been an important component of arts education for the past two hundred years (Bolin, 1985, 1986; Efland, 1990; Miller, 1966). I am claiming that there needs to be an understanding, a push for subject matter, and an education which helps to promote citizenry with minds that are wide awake in regard to questions of value (Levine, 2010) – in addition to education for employment.

Matthew Lipman’s Philosophy for Children Model (e.g. Lipman 1976, 1981, 2003; Lipman & Sharp, 1984; 1985; Lipman, Sharp, & Oscanyan, 1980), specifically using the pedagogy known as the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) (e.g. Kennedy, 1991; 1994; 1996; 1997), engenders creative thinking by discussing philosophical issues relating to aesthetics and ethics, for instance, which requires students to offer examples, counterexamples, plausible solutions, draw inferences, etc., which is a highly marketable skill in the workforce aside from the larger goal of promoting democratic values and citizenry. More specifically, education for democratic values and citizenship refers to the idea that students are enlightened in regard to the everyday issues which affect them as individuals and as a community; that individuals learn how to deal with these issues and work together to fix perceived problems (Portelli and Solomon, 2001).

Moreover, each new generation has new dilemmas specific to their context and students need to learn to take responsibility for shaping, creating their world, preserving

rights and freedoms. Should our positivistic approach to teaching that is so prevalent in our current context give way to alternative approaches to teaching? As Barber (1998) states, our rights and our liberties in a democracy “do not come for free” (p. 195), and “unless we assume the responsibilities of citizens we will not be able to preserve them” (p. 195). Could the re-infusion of an education in the arts and humanities, centering on discussion and dialogue in regard to ethical and aesthetic questions help students learn to take on that responsibility – to live qualitatively better lives, to live the good life? I believe it can. Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980) describe a qualitatively better life as “an endless quest for meaning – for more comprehensive answers in life’s important issues...manifesting a consistency between what they say and what they do” (p. 84).

### **Is There a Place for Moral Education?**

This notion of helping students achieve consistency in thought, word, and action, and even helping to reflect on better and worse actions, leads us into the waters of character education, which has a long-standing tradition in American schools (McClellan, 1999). Despite an ebb and flow of interest throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, research has compounded over the past nearly four decades concerning effective practices in character education (Berkowitz and Bier, 2004).

Naturally, in order to teach for good character, we must first understand how we are defining the term. Berkowitz and Bier (2004) contend that we refer to “sociomoral competency” (p. 73) when we refer to character, which “relates to moral functioning” (p. 73). Referencing Berkowitz (1997), Berkowitz and Bier (2004) take into consideration

seven moral components when discussing one's character, including, "moral action, moral values, moral personality, moral emotions, moral reasoning, moral identity, and foundational characteristics" (2004, p. 73).

An individual's character starts to develop from the moment he or she is born and continues to develop based on life experiences, with particular influence stemming from the family unit, whatever the configuration may be (Berkowitz and Bier, 2004; Berkowitz and Grych, 1998; Damon, 1988; Lickona, 1983). However, moral education, does not begin and end with the family unit; it is but one (albeit highly influential) component in the complex structure that is the formation of one's character. The school is another component in the formation of a child's moral character. To Lickona (1992), "Moral education is not a new idea. It is, in fact, as old as education itself" (p. 5).

This type of education, however, is not without controversy (e.g. Fish, 2010; Kiss and Euben, 2010a, 2010b; Lickona, 1992, Moon, 2010; Murphy, 2010; Reuben, 2010). As Huff and Frey (2005) state, "Many faculty," and I would add parents, politicians, and administrators to the list, "will respond negatively to the proposal that ethics be integrated into a curriculum (any curriculum)" (p. 394). Some claim that an individual's ethical perspective is the result of his or her upbringing, developments which occur early on in the lives of children that are not subject to change. However, studies conducted in regard to individual's abilities to alter their moral stances and reasoning skills have shown that change is possible (Colby and Damon, 1992; Rest, 1994). As Huff and Frey continue, referencing Seligman (1994),

One reason people might adopt the “moral character is defined early” defense is that it is congruent with the popularized version of Freudian psychology that emphasizes early childhood development as crucial. Again, this popular conception has little empirical evidence to support it. Childhood patterns are notoriously poor predictors of adult patterns (Huff and Frey, 2005, p. 394).

In response, some might ask, if moral character is not set in stone early on in a child’s life and continues to develop over the years (Damon, 1988), and as Huff and Frey (2005) suggest, that adult behavior does not necessarily match the behaviors exhibited when an adult was a child, why should education include an ethical component to any curriculum? One answer to this would be that students are still living in the here and now; they are engaging with ethical situations every day that will undoubtedly impact their current and future lives. This is plainly evident in the relatively recent Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act,<sup>6</sup> which has been covered extensively by a number of media outlets including the New York Times.<sup>7</sup>

The bigger question in regard to the debate on moral education can be found in the arguments of Stanley Fish (2010), who posits that the role of the university in a student’s life is to educate him or her intellectually, not morally. We will see that his

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<sup>6</sup> Accessed on January 22, 2012, the following link ([http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/AL10/122\\_.PDF](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/AL10/122_.PDF)), explains the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act which cites a Department of Justice and Education study performed in 2009 which identifies that 32% of students between ages 12-18 have been the subject of bullying in the previous academic year; with 25% of schools in the study indicating “that bullying was a daily or weekly problem,” which in some cases in NJ and across the country has led to suicide.

<sup>7</sup> An online NYT article entitled, *Bullying Law Puts New Jersey Schools on Spot*, by Winnie Hu dated August 30, 2011 can be located at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/31/nyregion/bullying-law-puts-new-jersey-schools-on-spot.html?pagewanted=all>: accessed on January 22, 2012.

argument, once further elucidated, could just as easily be made for the exclusion of any type of moral/ethical education in K-12 public schools. For the purposes of this writing, the terms moral and ethical education are being used interchangeably. While Bernard Williams (1985) claims a difference between ethics and morals, Hinman's (2004) view is adopted here, whereby the study of ethics is a logically structured analysis of moral problems.

Fish (2010) advocates for what he calls "the distinctiveness of tasks" (p. 77), between academic and non-academic activities. This is to say that a specific activity has a specific nature about it, explicit content that makes it distinguishable from another, or else as Fish (2010) elaborates, the task "...ceases to be intelligible as an identifiable entity and is without boundaries or form" (p. 77). Kiss and Euben (2010b) take issue with Fish's (2010) notion that

If the academic task is finally indistinguishable from the tasks of politics or character formation or nation building – if what we do in the classroom and the research essay bleeds into the world which then bleeds back – there would seem to be no rationale for giving it a room of its own... (Fish, 2010, p. 77).

Fish continues by claiming that Kiss and Euben (2010b) confuse the types of questions that should be asked of students. Rather than asking how one should act, given a specific set of circumstances, the important and pertinent academic question would be (according to Fish), given a specific scenario, "where conflicting values vie for allegiance, what would Plato, Hobbes, Rousseau, and Kant tell you to do, and what reasons, drawn from



what traditions with what presuppositions, would each give for so telling you?” (Fish, 2010, p. 79). Fish claims that what is important is learning the academic theories posited by the major philosophical players of the past. Kiss and Euben interpret Fish by stating he contends that “democratic values and academic values are utterly distinct” (Kiss and Euben, 2010b, p. 65).

However, Kiss and Euben (2010b) are not set on this distinction it seems and bring up a story of Virginia Durr at the beginning of *Educating Citizens*, which

...portrays a young white woman from a genteel and racist Southern family whose experience at Wellesley challenged her assumptions and values and propelled her along a moral, intellectual, and political journey that would eventually make her a formidable champion of black voting rights and an opponent of the poll tax (Kiss and Euben, 2010b, p. 64)

In using this example, Kiss and Euben contend that a dedication to moral education does in fact have an impact on an individual’s life; therefore it should be a necessary component of the university. Fish (2010) retorts by explaining that given the example of Virginia Durr, one cannot “reason *forward*” (p. 80, italics original), meaning that you cannot say just because a student receives a certain type of moral education, he or she will necessarily become a moral and politically involved individual. While Kiss and Euben and Fish debate the merits of a moral education in the university, it is necessary to bring up Fish’s claim (which is cited by Kiss and Euben),

...moral and civic education is not our job” he does state “No doubt, the practices of responsible citizenship and moral behavior should be encouraged in our young adults – but it’s not the business of the university to do so, except when the morality in question is the morality that penalizes cheating, plagiarizing, and shoddy teaching” (Kiss and Euben, 2010b, p. 60).

Given this statement, why would have I dedicated a decent amount of space and time to elucidating Fish’s as well as Kiss and Euben’s points? The reason for the inclusion is that these debates, while geared toward the University setting, match the somewhat implicit conversation that exists in regard to our K-12 public schools. As the current trend in public education is a push for even more standardized testing and accountability, we see a disregard for developing the whole child. There needs to be a push back towards students learning to express themselves in regard to broader social issues.

Referring back to Lipman et al (1980), who discuss “manifesting a consistency between what they say and what they do” (p. 84), they were referring to students engaging in the Philosophy for Children program. But we should be looking at also applying this statement to the administration and policy makers. Hu (2011), in regard to the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, continues by saying that

...while many parents and educators welcome the efforts to curb bullying both on campus and online, some superintendents and school board members across New Jersey say the new law, which takes effect Sept. 1, reaches much too far, and complain that they have been given no additional resources to meet its mandates.

While legislators and others in power positions, who affect our public education system, may claim to want to educate for democratic citizenry, morally sound individuals with a strong sense of civic responsibility, there is first and foremost a push for work-ready skills and knowledge that are perceived as the most important, otherwise this lack of funding would not occur. Moreover, I think that part of the problem is that if there is a consistent education that centers on contestable issues; there may be a generation of individuals (or at least a few handfuls) that would challenge the status quo in any number of situations.

Although I may be accused of “reasoning backward” (Fish, 2010, p. 80) as were Kiss and Euben (2010), without any semblance of a consistent moral education, we are left with a society replete with individuals who are disturbingly inconsistent in what they say and how they act. Such is the case with the numerous cheating scandals that have come to light<sup>8</sup>.

It needs to be made clear that, as Fish (2010) states, there are a myriad of life experiences that come into play when discussing any one of these or other morally offensive events, and while we cannot scientifically claim that with moral education these individuals would not have behaved this way, it could be said that given a chance to reason morally in regard to any number of issues presented to them or that arise as a result of their own questioning, students could learn moral reasoning skills which could

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<sup>8</sup> For a CNN article about cheating scandals including Lance Armstrong’s admission to doping and SAT cheating, see <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/17/us/why-cheat/index.html>. Motivations for cheating and some ways in which it can be countered are discussed.

have the potential to prevent such behavior. Main opponents of moral education claim that, as Kiss and Euben (2010b) state, it might take “an unjustifiable form of indoctrination” (p. 64). This type of education leads into murky waters for certain; however, while the views of a teacher may come into play, it is imperative that they are not pushed on students. The goal is not for a teacher to make sure that student’s take a particular moral stance on a particular issue, as that would be a political statement (Fish, 2010), and highly dangerous, but rather that students learn to reason through particular situations through dialogue with their peers, offering their own beliefs/stances, the reason(s) for those perspectives, working together to see how they stand up to evaluation. In regard to ethical inquiry, Lipman et al (1980) state,

The variable factor that distinguishes older from younger persons is experience, and it would be shocking if we were to level accusations against young children for doing things that, due to a mere lack of information, they did not know were inadvisable or prohibited. To blame a toddler for playing with matches when the child as yet knows nothing of what matches can do and is unaware that playing with them is prohibited is just this sort of misplaced judicativeness (p. 153).

But as the authors continue,

On the other hand, we very often excuse children from the obligation to use their reason, on the grounds that they are too young. When we do this, however, we do them no favor. And, indeed, the situation is much worse, for what we are doing, when we fail to presume that the child is a rational being even when our

relationship with him is a moral one, is a censurable act of moral disrespect (1980, p. 153).

If we accept the notion that the school setting and the teachers within that setting can have an impact on the moral development of the children they teach, it seems reasonable to accept the idea that “a teacher has a responsibility for screening out those forms of behavior in pupils that are obviously self-destructive, and for screening in those forms that are self-constructive” (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 155). But every child is different, brings with him or her a unique set of experiences and knowledge, and referencing Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*, just as the body can be deficient or in excess in any given area, so too can ethical behavior as in the doctrine of means. It seems a fundamental human quality to want to make a difference, to make a lasting impression on the world. This, to Lipman (1980) and company is the role of the educator – “to ensure that each child feels that he or she has the capacity to make a difference and each day acts on that presupposition” (p. 155). Students’ actions have an impact on the lives of those that they encounter, and students can make a difference in the world when they learn that their actions do have consequences, good or bad. Being aware is the first step.

As was discussed earlier, we see evidence of an educational system that stresses consumerism, marketable, workforce products that will serve to support the economy. What occurs in public schools should be of public concern; it is within the power of the people to control what is being taught. As such, we are all responsible for the outcome and “A society that does not value a school environment conducive to moral growth...is a

society that should openly accept its share of blame for the amoral conduct of its children” (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 156).

The art classroom has the potential to act as a learning space where students can engage in ethical discussions, becoming that Progressive Education “model for a new collectivism”, where self-expression is integrated “with larger social goals” (Antler, 1987, p. 307). The larger social goal is helping to educate children with minds that are wide awake, learning how to discuss contestable issues and to raise and examine questions of value. This is accomplished through a recursive process of art making, art criticism, and dialogue. Adding an ethical criticism component to the visual art classroom, some may claim, would be an addition which does a disservice to the subject due to a belief that ethics plays no role in a visual art classroom. However, others, such as early progressive educators may advocate for the inclusion. The Progressive Education Association outlined several basic tenets including the idea that “The child’s interests should be the basic motive for all his or her work” and that “Schools should pay equal attention to all facets of children’s development” (Irwin, 1991, p. 53).

Within this first chapter, I have attempted to answer a few questions. Namely, what influence do educational policies like NCLB and RTTT have on visual art education, and what direction could be taken to help educate the whole child in American public schools? From my own experiences as an educator, in conjunction with the literature on the subject at hand, it is evident that programs like NCLB and RTTT view the public educational system as a vehicle to produce productive, work-ready citizens.

This is evidenced through pushes to teach and test mathematics and language arts, along with science to keep the United States globally competitive. As was stated, this is not necessarily bad in and of itself. The United States public education system needs to educate students in regard to certain skills and knowledge which will help them grow and get a job, making them able to support their own lives once their parents no longer provide for them. Knowing how to communicate with others through verbal and written word is the goal of language arts. Our society hinges on clear communication with one another. It is understandable that this subject is one which is stressed on a state/federal level. Likewise, mathematics plays a pivotal role in the lives of students and adults. As they grow, knowing how to manipulate numbers and understand number relationships is a vital skill. However, a problem arises when schools start making the learning environment one that is competition based and also place so much emphasis on these few subjects such that others are neglected.

Students get caught in a web of tests and numbers which are identified with them and follow them throughout the years. Constant competition can gradually change the goal of the educational system from both the perspective of the teacher and learner. From the student's perspective, the student can have their mind gradually altered to believe that it is the score that matters rather than the information/knowledge acquisition that the grade is supposed to reflect. The classroom becomes a game of sorts, with the mindset of "I need to do this to get an A" rather than I'm learning this because it will help me with or to understand x, y, or z. From the teacher's perspective, competition and merit pay

associated with test scores can inspire a change in mindset from helping children learn certain information for the good that it can do in their lives to helping students learn information so they just pass the test.

Placing so much emphasis on two (maybe three if you include science) subjects, has been shown to be detrimental to subjects like visual art. Money and time are two resources often taken away from students and teachers in the visual arts, in favor of language arts and mathematics. The result is often a student who is lacking a well-rounded education. The arts help students to further understand their lived lives, aside from the technical skills they learn. The visual arts, at its core, is about understanding what it means to be *you*, to be human, to understand experience and all that life offers. But this type of discussion can come with a discussion of morals and ethical situations, leading into a type of character education. In the latter portion of this chapter, I dedicated time to answering whether or not there is a place for moral education in American public schools. Ultimately, it is my viewpoint along with others such as Kiss and Euben that moral education would not only be a welcomed addition to any curriculum, but that it is a necessary component which is needed to balance out the competition driven, ego-centric education / climate that currently prevails.

The visual arts have a transformative aspect about them. Perceiving an image such as a painting or drawing engenders a different experience than does reading about that same object. There is a power to a visual creation that has the capacity to help us make meaning out of life in a way that is unlike any other. It is my belief that the study of



visual arts allows students to discuss questions that are important to them, questions that arise in their minds subsequent to viewing a work of art or making art. Part of learning aesthetics in the visual arts is the ability to make well thought out, reasoned judgments of works of art. Often, this includes an ethical component. Moving a bit further, discussing the ethical stance of a student can help him more fully understand who he is and why he believes certain things. Values and judgments can be called into question in a supportive, collaborative setting, only for the goal of exploring ideas, asking the question, “Why?” Some believe that this type of curriculum inclusion in the visual arts is unwarranted, that open discussion of philosophical topics only takes time away from art production and learning concrete skills and knowledge in the arts. As I will explain in coming chapters, there are many art educators who attempt to turn the arts into a more structured, subject like that of mathematics. That is to say, there are clear right and wrong answers to given problems and discussion of works of art, correct interpretations if you will. My understanding of the visual arts and love of it, as well as the love students have, comes from the fact that the subject allows for speculation on a regular basis. Through the circular process of art making and dialogue, students can play with thoughts and ideas they may have individually or as a group. Having set up the need for an education which helps students discuss questions of value in this chapter, the following chapter’s goal is to more fully understand what we mean by the term: *art*. I intend on explaining why philosophical content is and always has been an integral component of the visual arts.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **What is Art?**

#### **Aesthetic Theories: From Mimesis to Expression**

In the previous chapter, I ended by beginning to make a case for more philosophical discussion within public education visual arts classrooms. There are some visual art educators who would whole heartedly agree with this endeavor. But there are also others who would claim that the philosophical aspect of the visual arts plays a less central role and therefore is not a necessary component of visual art education. The purpose of this chapter is to make the case that philosophy has always been an integral component of the visual arts, dating back to at least ancient Greece. The philosophical aspect is that which has helped art to progress and change throughout the millennia. Conscious reflection, discussion, and questioning about artistic creations in light of new technologies, understandings, world events, and personal experiences are central to the subject as a whole. In this chapter, I will attempt to answer the question, what is art? In doing so, I will make clear that philosophy is a necessary component of the visual arts.

In the early 1970s, philosopher Matthew Lipman created the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) and developed a curriculum which addressed the need to discuss contestable issues, such as aesthetics, the philosophy of art, and ethics (Lipman, 1976, 1981), logically and rationally. The inclusion of Lipman's, Philosophy for Children model and its relationship to art education will be introduced

subsequent to the discussion of major aesthetic theories. Succeeding chapters will further a discussion of how a philosophy with children approach, centering on dialogue, may be used in the art classroom.

What is art? Any person reading this who is familiar with such a philosophical question will surely chuckle at the idea that an absolute answer could be given, and moreover, presented in one chapter no less! Rest assured my aim here is not to develop a new theory of art or to even discuss all of the perspectives that have been promulgated throughout the centuries. Rather, my intention is to present an overview of what can be meant when we refer to the term *art*. Before the subject can be taught effectively, a deep understanding of the term *art* is necessary. Moreover, my goal is to show that art educators should be aware of the varying viewpoints regarding a possible definition of art. Understanding that art is an open concept (unable to be confined by a single definition), as is evidenced by a number of aesthetic theories provided, helps individuals to understand that art is a subject which benefits and progresses through philosophical dialogue.

Over the course of many centuries and millennia, the production of visual works of art has had a special relation to human beings. Evidence of human cave paintings dates back to the Paleolithic Period. Depictions of a variety of animals and people including *Bison* (c. 15,000 B.C.), *Hall of Bulls* in Altamira, Spain (c. 15,000 B.C.), and *Bird-Headed Man with Bison and Rhinoceros* in Lascaux, France (c. 15,000 B.C.) are painted on limestone, existing now as memories of civilizations past. According to Stokstad

(2002), painters depicted the images of a variety of wildlife including mammoths, bison, bears, deer, horses, to name a few, along with depictions of male and female human figures, often painted with red, brown, and other earth tones.

Three-dimensional sculptures, referred to as sculpture in the round, as well as various relief sculptures were created as far back as the Paleolithic Period. Some famous examples of sculpture include *Lion-Human*, made out of carved mammoth ivory. The sculpture, standing roughly a foot in height, was found in Germany and has been dated between 30,000 and 26,000 B.C. As we see later on in ancient Greek works depicting images of centaurs and minotaurs, beings that are half man and half some other kind of animal (horse and bull in the aforementioned examples), *Lion-Human* looks like a human figure which either has the head of a large cat or wears a mask that is supposed to represent a large cat (Stokstad, 2002). Another noted ancient sculptural work (Stokstad, 2002) is a diminutive sculpture, standing almost four and a half inches tall, commonly referred to either as the *Woman from Willendorf* or the *Venus of Willendorf*. The figure has a large bust with a large stomach and chubby legs and the purpose of the work of art is only speculated. What were the reasons for creating these early works which we now label as art? Stokstad states,

Led by Salomon Reinach, who believed that art fulfills a social function and that aesthetics are culturally relative, they proposed that prehistoric cave paintings might be products of *totemistic rites* to strengthen clan bonds and of *increase ceremonies* to enhance the fertility of animals depended on for food. In 1903,

Reinach suggested that cave paintings were expressions of “sympathetic magic.”...which relies on two assumptions: first, things that look the same can have a physical influence on each other; and second, things once in contact continue to act upon each other even at great distances. (2002, p. 48, italics original).

What is suggested by Reinach and the idea of sympathetic magic is that early man may have commonly held the belief that if an animal is depicted in a vulnerable position, such as when it is asleep, then the hunter who gazes upon this work will find an animal in a similar vulnerable state when he is searching for food. Moreover, cave men could have engaged in pretend battles with the paintings in order to assure victory when they went out on actual hunts. But individuals such as Laming-Emperaire disagreed with Reinach’s sympathetic magic theory, stating that these early works of art, “might be mythical representations...they might be the concrete expression of a very ancient metaphysical system...they might be religious, depicting supernatural beings. They might be all these at one and the same time...” (Annette Laming-Emperaire, *La signification de l’art rupestre paleolithique*, 1962, pp. 236-7 as cited in Stokstad, 2002, p. 48). Unfortunately, we are not privy to earlier man’s thoughts and ideas in regards to visual images or what they would consider *art*. Nevertheless, it is clear that visual creations have and still do play a prominent role in our lives. Let us skip ahead several millennia and continue on our journey to understanding what art is or can be, beginning with Ancient Greece.

In Ancient Greece, Plato concluded in *The Republic*, circa fifth century B.C., that the creation and study of works of art do not contribute to any individual's cognitive development. To Plato, limited knowledge is gained by engaging with works of art due to the idea that works of art are *imitations of imitations*. Plato believed that when individuals perceived something in the world, that perception is already an interpretation of an Idea or Form. For example, when a person perceives a tree, he holds within himself a concept of what a tree is and applies that abstract notion to the physical manifestation of that Idea or Form. An artist, however, will see a tree, which is already an interpretation of the Form, and then depicts that tree in a work of art, which is an interpretation of an interpretation. Plato believed that when an individual viewed a work of art he only sees a portion of that object – the front view of the tree, for example, and thus the creation of art is an inferior subject matter. Moreover, Plato, who stressed rationality and logic, contended that works of art could corrupt the rational mind by playing with the viewer's senses, arousing specific feelings and emotional states which would override any rational reasoning ability. Acknowledging Plato's mimetic theory of art and its profound contribution to the ontological understanding of art work, it is important to critique his view that what counts as art is that which mirrors reality. As Danto (1964) counters, Plato's idea of what art is fails as a sufficient criterion due to the idea that many things can act as mirrors in life, yet not every one of those things may be classified as art. As an example, a pond or a mirror can reflect and imitate natural things in regard to lighting, shadow, color, etc., yet that imitation would not necessarily be classified as a work of art. As we will later see, improvisational works by Kandinsky or the famous drip paintings of

Jackson Pollock, which are now regarded as valuable art, defy Plato's claims that art is that which is mimetic. However, as Stewart (1997) states, "Imitation theories can also accommodate art that is not realistic. However, much depends on what counts as 'real.' If the world and our experience of it is seen as spiritual, then a work of art that shows this spirituality can be judged as significant, using imitationist assumptions" (p. 26).

What may be taken away from this brief discussion is that a work of art may be an intentionally created object that depicts reality realistically – that is to say the way in which a photograph now records a scene.

As Collingwood (1938/1958) states,

It was not until the seventeenth century that the problems and conceptions of aesthetic began to be disentangled from those of technic or the philosophy of craft. In the late eighteenth century the disentanglement had gone so far as to establish a distinction between the fine arts and the useful arts; where 'fine' arts meant, not delicate or highly skilled arts, but 'beautiful' arts...In the nineteenth century this phrase, abbreviated by leaving out the epithet and generalized by substituting the singular for the distributive plural, became 'art' (p. 6)

Collingwood distinguishes between art proper and art as craft, representation, magic and amusement, with magic and amusement being subsets of craft. Outlining the characteristics that make up a craft as opposed to art proper, Collingwood stresses six points. In order, Collingwood states that

Craft always involves a distinction between means and ends, each clearly conceived as something distinct from the other but related to it...It involves a distinction between planning and execution. The result to be obtained is preconceived or thought out before being arrived at....Means and end are related in one way in the process of planning; in the opposite way in the process of execution...There is a distinction between raw material and finished product or artifact...There is a distinction between form and matter...There is a hierarchical relation between various crafts, one supplying what another needs, one using what another provides. (pp. 15-16).

Moreover, art as amusement and art as magic, two other “kinds of art falsely so called” (Collingwood, 1938/1958, p. 105), are types of craft that are intended to stir up specific emotions which the creator of the physical object predetermines. As the names suggest, the emotion in art as amusement is supposed to be enjoyable while in art as magic, the emotion serves a ritualistic purpose such as was speculated earlier by Reinach (Stokstad, 2002) in the examples of cave paintings in Europe. Collingwood states that “The central and primary characteristic of craft is the distinction it involves between means and end. If art is to be conceived as craft, it must likewise be divisible into means and end” (1938/1958, pp. 107-108). But art proper, to Collingwood, is not divisible in the same way as craft is. Subsequent to making these distinctions, Collingwood states that art proper is a way of expressing specific emotion of the artist rather than arousing emotion in the viewer. In describing this process of expression, Collingwood states, “At first, he



[the artist] is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what this emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but whose nature he is ignorant” (1938/1958, p. 109).

The work of art then is a process of expressing, of feeling and subsequently realizing the emotions experienced. The artist brings the felt emotion into consciousness through this process of art making and as such “he feels it in a way from which this sense of oppression has vanished” (p. 110) – the individual is no longer at the will of the emotion, as it has been expressed and he has been relieved of its hold. It is in this conscious reflection of personal emotion and expression of that emotion that “differs sharply and obviously from any craft whose aim it is to arouse emotion” (p. 113). One who engages in a craft has a correct way of going about its creation and there is a correct answer to a specific endeavor, but Collingwood claims that in art proper, the artist “does not want a thing of a certain kind,” such as a bed, a table, or a cure as in a doctor and patient relationship, but “he wants a certain thing” (p. 114). There is a clarity of mind which is achieved through expression and this leads into Collingwood’s aesthetic emotion which is explained as “the specific feeling of having successfully expressed ourselves...it is not a specific kind of emotion pre-existing to the expression of it...It is an emotional colouring which attends the expression of any emotion whatever” (p. 117). Ultimately, the work of art is not the physical manifestation – the paint on canvas that is created, for example, but rather the work of art is an imaginary object. As Collingwood (1938/1958) contends,

It is something made by the artist, but not made by transforming a given raw material, nor by carrying out a preconceived plan, nor by way of realizing the means to a preconceived end...these things, in so far as they are works of art proper...are made deliberately and responsibly, by people who know what they are doing, even though they do not know in advance what is going to come of it...A work of art need not be what we should call a real thing. It may be what we call an imaginary thing. (pp. 125-129).

Critics of Collingwood's ontological view claim that his perspective on art could, like Plato's argument, incorporate things which ordinarily would not be included under the heading *art*. Humphries (1995) states that Collingwood's theory is too broad in that processes of psychoanalysis involves the patient exploring "his or her specific emotional reactions toward past and present life situations, and reveal them to the therapist – yet we would hardly label this therapeutic process as a work of art" (p. 46). Humphries (1995) continues by stating that "By making an expression of emotion a necessary condition for art, Collingwood excluded non-representative paintings for consideration as art works. Therefore, his theory is too narrow" (p. 47). But if the act of expression occurs as the result of bringing an emotion to resolution, then a non-representative work could be a work of art under Collingwood's theory, so Humphries may be mistaken, as the emphasis is not on the physical work. The focus instead is on having an emotional feeling.

Tolstoy, on the other hand, had another perspective on art that relates to the expressive abilities of an object. More specifically, Tolstoy contended that an artist

experiences a certain emotion within himself, creates a physical thing that accurately captures that same, specific, individual emotion, and then the viewer who interacts with the physical object must also experience that same emotion that the artist impregnated it with. If this is so, then the object can be considered a work of art. It is the act of communicating an emotion that creates the work of art, according to Tolstoy (1960). However there are problems with this theory as well. Should any object that communicates be considered a work of art? How can we be sure of an artist's intentions? How can we be sure of another viewer's reaction?

### **Aesthetic Theories: From Formalism to Native American Conceptions of Art**

Up until the time of Tolstoy's writing at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there have been many artistic styles. During the Renaissance, artists such as Masaccio, Brunelleschi, Piero della Francesca, and Raphael helped to bring art as imitation, arguably, to its height, with the further development and understanding of linear perspective. Linear perspective is a mathematical art making technique that aims "to construct illusionistic images in which all elements are shaped by imaginary lines called orthogonals that converge in one or more vanishing points on a horizon line. Linear perspective is the system that most people living in Western cultures think of as perspective" (Stokstad, 2002, p. 19). Along with the development in perspective, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci<sup>9</sup> and Michelangelo<sup>10</sup> further mastered concepts of shading, chiaroscuro – modeling

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<sup>9</sup>Leonardo da Vinci was an Italian Renaissance artist, working primarily in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries. His most famous works including the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper. See the painting

of a figure in tonal values to give the illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface. The birth of masterful art making techniques, such as linear perspective, aerial perspective, accurate modeling in light and shadow, etc., have a lasting effect on the art world and is evidenced in a myriad of styles that succeed the Renaissance, including but not limited to Baroque, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Realism, the list goes on. However, it was around the time of Edouard Manet and his painting, *Luncheon on the Grass* from 1863, that it is said that imitation begins to give way to other theories and drastic experimentations in art – questioning what art is and what it can do.

Manet's work was important for a number of reasons, one of which is his use of color. Manet flattens the figures, retreating from accurate physical modeling in light and shadow. Shortly thereafter, Impressionists such as Monet and Renoir used short brushstrokes known as broken color to “capture the ephemeral aspects of a changing moment” (Arnason, 2004, p. 30), moving yet further way from art as imitation. This is due, in part at least, to the invention of photography, which could more accurately record that which exists in nature. The Impressionists moved away from depicting nature and events exactly the way a photograph could.

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of the Mona Lisa for examples in shading and sfumato (a smokiness about the image). See the Last Supper for an example in one point perspective.

<sup>10</sup> Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni often referred to by his first name only, was a Renaissance artist living between 1475 and 1564. Major paintings of his include the paintings in the Sistine Chapel such as the Creation of Adam and the Last Judgment. Prominent sculptures by Michelangelo include David and Pieta.

Building on the brushwork of the Impressionists and experimenting more with unnatural, expressive colors, the Post-Impressionists such as Vincent van Gogh exemplify Collingwood's expressive theory. Van Gogh, in works such as *The Night Café* and *Starry Night*, depicts a physical object which is the manifestation of an individual who was coming to grips with his own emotions. The work of Post-Impressionist, Paul Cezanne, and his experimentation with transforming landscapes into more geometricized forms (such as simplifying trees into cones) laid the foundation for the work of Pablo Picasso.

Picasso built on Cezanne's geometrically structured landscape and still life paintings to develop Analytic Cubism alongside Georges Braque. Analytic cubism exhibits, "defiance of the Renaissance conceptions of space that had been under assault since Manet, in which art functions as a mirror of the three-dimensional world, and offers in its place a conceptual reconfiguration of that world" (Arnason, p. 170). As the Cubists and artists whose work is an outgrowth of Cubism worked, what developed were creations that centered less and less on identifiable objects. Such is the case in the work of Piet Mondrian.

Mondrian was mainly a landscape painter early on in his career, but was an artist who evolved. As Arnason states, "one can trace his progress from naturalism through Symbolism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism to abstraction" (p. 215). Such is evidenced in the changes exhibited in *Apple Tree* (1908) to *Color Planes in Oval* (1913-1914) to *Composition with Red, Blue, and Yellow* (1930).

Mondrian sought to achieve a plastic expression – a new reality. Arnason explains, “Thus, the new reality was the presence of the painting itself, as opposed to the painted imitation of nature or the romantic evocation of the artist’s emotions” (p. 215). We see here, exemplified in the work of Mondrian, movement toward a new theory of what a work of art is or can be. More specifically, Arnason tells us that Mondrian developed

...a set of organizational principles in his art. Chief among them were the balance of unequal opposites, achieved through the right angle, and the simplification of color to the primary hues plus black and white. It is important to recall that Mondrian did not arrive at his final position solely through theoretical speculation, but through a long and complex development in his painting. (Arnason, 2004, p. 215)

This idea of working through the process of creation, the evolution of the artist and his works, will become an important idea once we discuss art instruction in subsequent chapters. As artists such as Mondrian work and exhibit, a new theory of art is formulated. The Formalist aesthetic theory claims that “things such as subject matter, moods or feelings, social issues, and artists’ intentions are external to the artwork and do not have aesthetic significance. They are incidental at best and possibly harmful in that too much attention to them will work against having an aesthetic experience” (Stewart, 1997, p. 21). In regard to a visual work of art, Formalist elements are built on concepts

such as balance, line, shape, color, and composition. In *Art*, Clive Bell claims that every work of art has *significant form* – that

...lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir out aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving forms, I call “Significant Form”; and “Significant Form” is the one quality common to all works of visual art. (Bell, 1958, pp. 17-18.)

However, Bell never clearly outlines what particular arrangements give rise to significant form or how to identify it. He contends, rather, that it will become apparent when we gaze upon a work that has significant form in that we will experience aesthetic emotion. But what aesthetic emotion is, is also left open and unanswered, other than to say that aesthetic emotion is that which is felt when one gazes upon significant form. The way in which Bell describes significant form, above, could also include natural objects in the equation, which now incorporates non-manmade objects in the category of art. Under this theory, the content of the work plays a secondary role. Content in this case refers to the subject matter being depicted in the work of art. What Bell centers on is how elements are arranged, rather than what is portrayed. What becomes of paintings that hinge on their content and are traditionally lauded as great works of art because of the content? Should those works be demoted to a lesser art or reclassified as non-art?

So far it seems as though the term *art* is not able to be defined – it may be an open concept, taking from Wittgenstein (1958) and later, Morris Weitz (1968), who

appropriated Wittgenstein's theories to discuss the nature of art. As Dickie (1971) states, "An open concept is a concept for which there is no necessary condition in order for something to be an instance of that concept" (p. 95). When Weitz argues for the concept of art being open, he claims that works of art may resemble one another and at one specific moment in time, have a common characteristic which unites them all, but it is inevitable that a new thing – a new creation will come about which may resemble the previous creations but be deficient in that common characteristic.

Referring back to Bell and Formalism, a work in nature could potentially be classified as a work of art if it possesses significant form. Dickie (1971) discussing Weitz (1968) states,

To show how far Weitz pushes his thesis, it may be noted that he maintains that "being an artifact" is not a necessary condition for the generic sense of "art." His reason is that we sometimes utter such statements as "This piece of driftwood is a lovely piece of sculpture." He reasons that if we are willing to classify a piece of driftwood as sculpture, i.e., as a work of art, then artifactuality cannot be a necessary condition of art. (Dickie, 1971, p. 97).

However, I think it is important here to refer back to Collingwood in regard to Weitz's statement "This piece of driftwood is a lovely piece of sculpture." Collingwood, in defining how the term art is used, would claim that one is not actually classifying the driftwood as art, but rather in our English language, we mean to say that that piece of



driftwood is as lovely as a work of art of human creation – not that it is one.

Nevertheless, the main point in Weitz's (1968) claim can be summed up when he states, that firmly resting on a definition of art is an absurdity "since it forecloses on the very conditions of creativity in the arts" (p. 90).

While Collingwood may claim that the piece of driftwood about which Weitz writes is as lovely as a work of art, theorists such as Danto (1964) would contend that the driftwood could be a work of art but not in the context in which it was discovered, on the beach. Such is the case, in a more famous example, in the Pop Art of Andy Warhol and his *Brillo Boxes* displayed in 1964, in New York. Warhol silk-screened a replica of the Brillo font and logo on constructed wood boxes, made to resemble the actual product that could be purchased in the supermarket. In setting these replicas in a gallery space, The Stable Gallery to be exact, he turned something ordinary, something commercial, some every day object, into a work of art. As Danto (1964) states, "To see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry – an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of history of art: an artworld" (p. 580). Warhol was building on this tradition of the artworld, a history of art and its nature of evolving. But what does this idea, *artworld*, mean? Dickie (1971) presents a more clarified answer by stating that "A work of art in the classificatory sense is 1) an artifact 2) upon which some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain social institution (the artworld) has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation" (p. 101). What Dickie continues to expand on is this idea of conferred status – that conferring the status of art on an artifact is not the same as the state legally

marrying two individuals. Rather, Dickie claims the process of conferring the status of work of art on an artifact can be performed by a single person or group of people and is much less formal – like that of an individual in a town being recognized as a wise man. Two questions arise for Dickie (1971), “how does one know when the status has been conferred, and how is it conferred?” (p. 102). In regard to the initial question, Dickie (1971) offers that there is “no guarantee that one can always know whether something is a candidate for appreciation...The second question...is the more important of the two” (p. 102).

Dickie states that the act of conferring can take place, as was stated before, by a single individual or a group of people, but contends that it is one individual who normally confers the status upon the object; namely, the artist. The traditional go-to artist as example for this theory, which is also used by Dickie is Marcel Duchamp, a Dadaist in the early twentieth century. Dadaists created works in which the “central force” was “wildly imaginative humor,” and the production of those works was due to “chance or intuition uncontrolled by reason” (Arnason, 2004, p. 242). The Dadaists wanted to reexamine “the traditions, premises, rules, logical bases, even the concepts of order, coherence, and beauty that had guided the creation of the arts throughout history” (Arnason, 2004, p. 242). Duchamp’s most infamous work was *Fountain* (1917) which is a standard, commercial porcelain urinal which was turned on its side and signed R. Mutt, by Duchamp.

Dickie (1971) makes a distinction between presenting something for appreciation and “the notion of conferring the status of candidate for appreciation” (p. 103). The example used is that of a salesman versus Duchamp’s urinal. A salesman, regardless of what he is selling, can display his goods before a potential buyer – but such a display would not confer upon the goods the status of work of art due to the fact that the salesman did not do what Duchamp did. That is to say that the salesman did not exhibit his goods, cutlery for example, in an art-related institutional setting (Dickie, 1971, p. 103). The salesman did not intend of his cutlery set to be a work of art – but Duchamp engaged in an act of discovering something about the urinal and placed it in an appropriate context, an exhibition (which it was rejected from by the way). Before everyone starts running into men’s restrooms, unfastening urinals for exhibition in an attempt to make some quick cash – just because an object is deemed a work of art does not necessarily make it a good work of art or a valuable work. As Danto (1964) claimed earlier, an individual who holds him or herself as part of the art world, with knowledge of its history, can confer on an artifact the status: work of art. This definition of art also puts to rest the idea of other animals creating works of art.<sup>11</sup> To Dickie (1971), what would make a painting by an elephant a work of art “would be some agent’s conferring the status on behalf of the artworld” (p. 106). As apes or elephants do not have any such knowledge of the artworld, they cannot confer any status on the work. Even if another person conferred status upon the work, the work of art would be credited to the person

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<sup>11</sup>For a video depicting an elephant painting, see <http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=elephant+painting&mid=31313EBD22032D07EAA331313EBD22032D07EAA3&view=detail&FORM=VIRE3> – accessed on March 14, 2012.

who conferred the work rather than the animal who created the physical artifact (Dickie, 1971). It seems from this theory, however, that an artifact is indeed needed – a physical object rather than the work of art being the thought or idea of a thing. However, just because one person can confer such a status on any object, doing so may not be in his or her best interest without serious thought and reflection. In promoting a certain thing such as a cutlery set as a work of art, the individual who does so “always faces the possibility that no one will appreciate it and that the person who did the conferring will thereby lose face” (Dickie, 1971, p. 108). While this may not seem like any real consequence, if someone is attempting to make a name for him or herself in the art world – to make it a profession, reckless conferences could have a lasting effect on his or her success.

Stewart (1997) classifies the Institutional theory described above as well as Instrumentalist, and linguistic theories together in a larger group called Contextualist Theories of art. This grouping of aesthetic theories focuses on the “social, political, and historical contexts in which artworks are made and encountered” (1997, p. 23). An Instrumentalist theory purports that a work of art is an object that is functional, that it accomplishes something through its existence. Tolstoy, for example, asserted that feelings evolve through the creation and interaction with works of art. The purpose in creating and viewing works of art is by promoting those feelings that are more kind and needed so that the well-being of man is promoted (Tolstoy, 1960).

To Tolstoy, a thing is a work of art if it communicates. More specifically, Tolstoy believed that for something to be a work of art, the creator of an object must imbue that

work with the emotions experienced during its creation. However that expression is not enough, there must be communication of those emotions to the viewer who engages with that work. If the same emotion is not transmitted, there is no work of art, to Tolstoy. It is important here to note that all of the aforementioned theories are classificatory rather than evaluative. Once a work of art is identified, the degree to which it imitates reality, expresses an emotion, communicates, or how well a work changes “the way people think, believe, or behave...or *practically* functions” (Stewart, 1997, p. 23) can be discussed and works may be judged as good or bad, better or worse.

The theories described above help us to understand Western notions of identifying works of art. These theories have been discussed and refined throughout the years as artists work and as those artists and other critics discuss those works. Other cultures have different perspectives on art, however. As Bernstein and McMaster (2005) state, “The term ‘art’ is nonexistent in many, if not all, American Indian languages. The isolation of ideas into specific definitions as abstract as that of ‘art’ was never a practice among American Indians” (p. 37). While the term art may not have had a place in most American Indian cultures, we may be able to apply some of the theories here to understand the works. Many creations of American Indian people could be classified as Instrumental works in that they served a specific function – and better works of art more adequately serve that function. As Stewart (1997) states, “An Instrumentalist would argue, for instance, that a chair is good because it is comfortable or can hold an appropriate amount of weight” (p. 23). This statement, however, seems more of a way to

evaluate the works of art than to classify. It seems that anything that serves a function could be a work of art according to this view. This would surely upset many of the theorists listed previously, but as far as American Indians are concerned, perhaps that is why they did not need or have (for the most part) the abstract term *art* as Bernstein and McMaster (2005) state.

When we look at a variety of works by native people, such as moccasins, tobacco bags, shot pouches, clay pottery, and pipes, to name a few examples, we see a practical, functional object. The function could be more everyday such as to hold something or to clothe oneself, or it could have a more ceremonial, spiritual purpose. But even taking a more everyday example, such as a Mississauga Ojibwe bag, meant to be worn and used, it is much more than a bag, however. As Bernstein and McMaster (2005) explain the piece,

The Mississauga Ojibwe bag...has on it three images: Turtle, Thunderbird, and a human. All the forms come together to express an idea. The idea is more than a simple narrative about the power of Thunderbird, the story of origin in which Turtle is central, or the human beings' relationship to the cosmos. The bag must be viewed as a whole, the sum of the various parts. That whole tells the viewer something about the wearer's or holder's own personal and family position toward creation itself. The wavy lines that surround them, even the hair hanging from the bottom, are often associated with spiritual power; here they seem to

separate the forms from the human world. The flap's more abstract design completes the composition. (pp. 41-42).

Upon examination of Bernstein and McMaster's explanation of the Mississauga Ojibwe bag, we see that at the same time the piece is practical and functional (holding something), it also expresses, imitates wildlife through a depiction of animals, and has formal artistic qualities through line and color that serve a purpose. It is important to state that,

Most American Indian cultures and identities are based on the idea of land, a concept far greater and more complex than the word "land" implies to non-Native people. It encompasses not only the land beneath, but the sky above and beyond...Land and Native peoples are inexplicably bound, the creation of people and their arts intertwined with the making of the Earth. (Bernstein and McMaster, 2005, p. 37).

As native people relate to the world in an attempt to unify, it seems that their artwork reflects this notion – it is not a separate entity, a separate thing, but is part of their daily life. Children grew up learning to sew, weave, carve, as a part of their way of life; it functioned as a means of survival as well as a way to express personal traits and religious ideas. Art was a part of the everyday, engrained in their society, yet there was no term for it. This runs counter to traditions in the Western world. Around the same time that the native artifact described above was made, art education in Europe "for the most part

followed the age-old model that had developed in the context of the medieval guilds” (Chu, 2003, p. 33). The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, founded in the seventeenth century, served as a school where students/members could draw and study ancient Greek and Roman sculptures as well as live models. Others, such as the Carracci brothers of 16<sup>th</sup> century Italy set up their own Academy dedicated to draftsmanship and painting as well, but it was the French Academy that proved to have a lasting impact (Chu, 2003). As Chu explains the mission of the French academies,

First, they had to uphold artistic standards; second they had to secure due respect for the visual arts within the broader cultural realm. To uphold artistic standards, academies developed reward systems that encouraged artistic competition. In most countries, the highest reward was membership in the academy itself, an honor that was reserved for well-established artists...To secure for the visual arts a place of dignity in the cultural realm, academies organized periodic art exhibitions showing works by the membership and other artists approved by a member-appointed jury (Chu, 2003, p. 33).

We see in Europe a division between art and the rest of society – art is an elitist activity, the privilege of a select few individuals who have been schooled and trained, apprenticed in medieval guild terminology. This is the tradition that our forefathers take with them, at least in part, when traveling to what is now America, and setting up a new nation.



In chapter one, I explained how state and federal concentration on a few subjects such as language arts and mathematics has left other subjects in a precarious position. Specifically, the visual arts are negatively impacted, and as a consequence, students are impacted as well. In light of federal pushes which stress language arts and math education and assessment, students are often left with an incomplete education. The visual arts allow students to delve into their own lives, to further understand their own experiences, their values and beliefs, and their relationships to people in our society. Helping students to make meaning out of what they experience is a central goal. This is accomplished through art production and aesthetic discussion/study. As we will see in chapter three and four, the majority of visual art classroom time is allocated to creating works of art, leaving little time for aesthetic study and even less time for aesthetic (philosophical) discussion. What I started to make the case for is more philosophical discussion, specifically an addition of ethical criticism/inquiry, within the visual art classroom. Exactly what this entails will be discussed at length in chapter four. My assertion was that a philosophical component allows students time and space to discuss questions of value, to wonder, to speculate for example, and is needed in order to balance out the current public educational climate of standardized testing, rote memorization, and competition.

This chapter has been dedicated to understanding what we mean by the term *art*, or at least coming to a more comprehensive understanding of what one can mean when art is discussed. By delving into the various aesthetic theories that have developed over

the past two thousand years, it is evident that the term art has a deep philosophical history, and as such, philosophy is a necessary component in visual art education. What a person values as a work of art is based on a particular aesthetic (philosophical) stance, although the exact terms and aesthetic theories may be unknown to that individual. Moreover, how one goes about creating a work of art is also founded on a philosophical stance, an aesthetic theory. Visual art educators, from my perspective, need to be aware of these trends, these theories, this philosophical underpinning, because students in an art classroom can subscribe to any one of these theories.

At this point, I have explained that the visual arts can help to round out a student's education, making it more complete, more comprehensive. Moreover, I have purported that philosophy is a central component of the visual arts. There exists a problem now in how to go about reshaping the visual art classroom so that philosophical discussion and content may be included. The next chapter aims to track the course of visual art education within the United States so that the problem of why philosophy is not already included as a necessary component becomes clear.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **What Past Trends in Visual Art Education Have Had An Impact On The Way The Visual Arts Are Taught Today?**

"If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you are."

~ James Burke

#### **Leading Up to the Act Relating to Free Instruction in Drawing**

Knowing how a discipline, such as arts education, originated and progressed can lead to a deeper understanding of the current state of the field (Stankiewicz, 2001). Studying the history of arts education has several benefits, according to Erickson (1979). First, learning the history of one's discipline enables that person to become fully immersed, understanding how the subject matter has progressed through the years. An intimate rather than superficial relationship is created with the discipline, which is what is needed in order to help advance study in the subject matter. How, for example, can an art educator know how to address certain perceived problems unless he or she knows what has helped to create the current situation(s)?

Learning the history of art education enables individuals to understand and evaluate arguments within the field, helping to improve current practices. Dedicated historical study can then also help stimulate questions and concerns in regard to the future of the discipline – such as the aims and goals of arts education. However, each person writing about and studying the history of art education, or the history of anything for that

matter, draws their own conclusions replete with their own set of assumptions. In any historical study, it is important to remember that “each writer and historical document offers only a limited perspective on issues which are extremely complex, both in their occurrence and in their interpretation” (Bolin, Blandy, and Congdon, 2000, p. 2).

In this chapter, my goal is to present the history of American art education over the past two hundred years, highlighting movements, trends, and prominent figures that help to shape today’s art education classrooms. Contrary to what Eisner (1992) contends, the inclusion of a brief account of American art education is not “...a retreat from the problems which plague it at present” (p. 38), but rather serves to bring the visual art educator up to speed to uncover what pedagogies and curricula have waxed and waned through the years. It would be impossible to and furthermore is not the intent to provide an exhaustive account of art education practices within the United States. As we see in Logan (1955), Smith (1996), and Efland (1990), this would take several hundred pages to accomplish and probably still be incomplete. As Smith (1996) states,

Once we have blamed Puritanism, crass materialism, adverse economics, and so forth, we have far from exhausted the reasons for the strangely uneasy place of art education in American schools. We (art teachers and educators) must look to ourselves, just as much as to others, to find the reasons for the weak place of art in American schools and society” (p. 2).

Education in the arts in America existed before the inception of the common schools and formalized educational institutions, such as in the works of native cultures, including the wood carvings of the Northwest Coast Tribes, such as the Tlingit, and East Coast tribes like the Lenni Lenape. Native people's totem poles, talisman, and the like, which are now defined as art, had an everyday value for the individuals who created them. As Collingwood (1938) explains, the idea of art as magic, the creations of these works of art are infused with hope and emotion, used for various rituals that are an important part of the different native cultures, from rain-dances to dinner parties. So it is not to say that art education has never occurred in the Americas before formal schooling, but rather, what is charted here is the lineage of visual art education.

Early proponents of arts education included notable politicians and fore-fathers such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, as well as early American artists, such as Charles Wilson Peale, who had close contact with Jefferson and Washington, painting their portraits (Whitford, 1923). Founding father Benjamin Franklin wrote *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania* (1749) where he advocates for art education, specifically, education in drawing. Franklin states, "All should be taught to write a fair Hand, and swift, as that is useful to All. And with it may be learnt something of Drawing, by Imitation of Prints, and some of the first Principles of Perspective."<sup>12</sup> As Franklin believed some art education is necessary to every person, that it offered some aspect that is beneficial to society, so too did the heads of various universities.

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<sup>12</sup> (<http://www.archives.upenn.edu/primdocs/1749proposals.html>, accessed, September 8, 2011).

From the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, presidents of various colleges posited “a special connection between art and republican social order” (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, Bolin, 2004, p. 35). It was believed that the process of creating a work of art was indeed an intellectual activity, a highly creative endeavor and that art, taking from empiricist John Locke, was a very effective means of communication. It was believed by the heads of various universities that by creating and studying art, individuals would learn art criticism skills, the ability to discern a good work of art (painting, sculpture, architectural structure, drawing, etc.) from one that is inferior. Developing an ability to critique and ultimately judge a work of art supposedly advanced one’s intellect, as well as overall behavior (Efland, 1990, Miller, 1966). The goal, however, was not just in creating and learning about good, beautiful works of art, but in transferring these skills to individuals’ everyday lives, improving society through the use of critical thinking skills. Education was believed to be the primary vehicle for enhancing the individual, and since it was also thought that the study of art and the practice of art making (drawing in particular) could improve an individual’s intellect, the arts entered the arena of educational reform initiatives.

In particular, drawing skills were advocated above all else in that drawing skills served to advance study in other subject areas, such as geography, geometry, and writing/penmanship through the study of spatial relationships, proportion, perspective, and contours, for example. But, drawing was also the center of arts education due in part to limited resources. At the time, blackboards and chalk were scarce in classrooms, let

alone paints, brushes, or materials for sculpture. Referring back to Franklin, nearly a century earlier, drawing had a relationship with learning penmanship. Learning the subtle curves and sharp angles of the alphabet was thought to be a type of education in drawing. Practicing penmanship and writing the alphabet was a method discussed in Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's, *A B C der Anschauung* (1803). Pestalozzi's ultimate goal, however, was not practicing writing or in personal expression, but rather he took ideas espoused during the Enlightenment, believing that through intense study of objects, one could acquire more precise sensory perceptions which then would act as a basis for clearer, more rational thinking. The ability to have more accurate visual sensations and subsequently, clearer thoughts and ideas was believed to lead to a better life, which comes as a result of making wiser decisions (Efland, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001; Stevens, 1995). However, during this time period, romanticism took hold and became the first major art style in the United States with the Hudson River School painters, such as Thomas Cole, Albert Bierstadt, and Asher B. Durand. There quickly were differences in opinion in regard to art education. Smith (1996) states that "The Hudson River School artists, like Emerson, saw in untamed nature a spiritual message, and that message was not to be found in ill-lit classrooms, where assorted bits of information were crammed into students' heads" (p. 16). There was a difference between an educator's notion of art education and that of an artist's perspective. As a result, we have what is termed *school art* (Efland, 1976) – which is to say that visual art education in the schools has a weak relationship to the art world outside of the classroom (Smith, 1996).

As the years ticked by, the American middle-class grew, and the United States entered the early stages of the Industrial Revolution. It was Horace Mann, who between 1844 and 1845, first strived to put art education into practice within public schools. Mann looked to Schmid's model of drawing instruction to be implemented (Smith, 1996, referencing Saunders, 1961). Schmid's model of drawing instruction for which Mann advocated is a clear example of the type of instruction artists of the time, such as the Hudson River school artists, disagreed with. As Smith (1996) states, Schmid's strategy "...was chillingly logical, divorced from any of the warm, sensuous emotionalism of romantic art being produced at the same time" (p. 19). However, in light of this tension, Mann advocated for the German drawing model for the fact that he saw some promise of "...creating a new emotional climate," in the schools, "one that had some regard for the need for activity on the part of the students in the schools" (Smith, 1996, p. 20). Moreover, Mann tried to make the schooling system more sensitive to what growing children need in their lives (Smith, 1996) by the inclusion of such kinesthetic activities as drawing and physical education (Price and Grinberg, 2007? 2009). Mann is to be commended for fighting to incorporate drawing instruction in schools. However, having chosen Schmid's model of instruction, the art classroom was set-up as an anti-aesthetic one, most likely due to Mann's own lack of aesthetic education (Smith, 1996). A trend seems to be set for decades to come whereby philosophical, aesthetic discussion is trivialized within the visual art classroom.



By 1850, a number of public schools, primarily in the north, implemented some type of drawing instruction (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, Bolin, 2004). Growing support for the arts prompted Massachusetts legislation in 1859, which included art education in the curriculum, marking the discipline as a necessary part of an individual's education. The goal of the educational system at the time was to provide students with an education in regard to matters not learned at home (Bailyn, 1960), and as we will see, since there was little education at home which trained students for these specific industry-related jobs, art education was added to the curriculum. In 1869, there was a movement in Massachusetts to provide free drawing instruction for towns with a population larger than 5000 (Bolin, 1985; 1986). This resulted in the Act Relating to Free Instruction in Drawing, signed in 1870. The petitioners for this legislation had close ties to the textile industry, and it was believed that by making drawing instruction part of the educational system, it could propel the American economy in a forward direction (Bolin, 1985; 1986).

This time period, starting with Mann and moving forward, proves to be an important point in art education history, as the main focus of art pedagogy and curriculum throughout the Industrial Revolution and well into the twentieth century shifts from educating enlightened, critical thinking, active citizens, to productive workers with marketable skills. In regard to the industrial jobs that some students would then procure, Smith (1996) states that industrial work where individuals work on a small part of a whole (a cog in a machine) is in stark contrast to the way an artist works, seeing a project through from inception to completion. Within the factories, individuals were each

completing isolated components, parts of a whole. The work that these artists (maybe a better word is technicians) did was without any fulfilling, meaningful, aesthetic experience (Smith, 1996). As a result of this type of repetitive, mechanical, programmed type of work that was called art, it is no wonder why artists often condemned the practices of school propelled art education.

### **Changing Styles of Visual Art Education: From Walter Smith to Sputnik**

At this point in America, the arts had become a staple in the Massachusetts educational system, and there was a need for someone to oversee the development and implementation of arts curricula. A search for a drawing director in Boston resulted in Walter Smith taking reign as the state director. He subsequently founded the Massachusetts Normal Art School and devised a curriculum for all grades, through the end of high school. Drawing books, emphasizing a strong foundation in the arts, were created by Smith for use in the classroom. Interestingly, Smith did not advocate for arts specialists as teachers, but rather, general classroom teachers teaching the arts. One may make the argument that Smith wanted people unskilled in the arts to use his books and teach the subject matter because his emphasis on teaching towards industrial drawing would go unchallenged. Smith made a wealth of money through selling his drawing books to schools, used by educators unskilled in the arts. If art specialists were teaching the subject matter, they would most likely not have a need for Smith's drawing books, and Smith's wealth would have been compromised. A problem for Smith, however, was

in creating lessons that could be implemented by non-art specialists with positive results (Eisner, 1972; Smith, 1996, Chalmers, 2000, Stankiewicz, Amburgy, Bolin, 2004).

As Smith (1996) explains, “The student of Walter Smith era was required to master skills of representation, that is, to be schooled under the mimetic theory of art” (p. 38), so as to contribute to the growing economy.” However, as art education classrooms continued to use practices developed by Walter Smith, the art educators and art students wandered farther from artists working at the time (Smith, 1996).

Ultimately, Walter Smith was removed as state director and head of the Massachusetts Normal Art School due to somewhat unknown reasons, although speculation centers on disputes related to publishing profits and with competing drawing book authors and publishers. Why he was dismissed bears less importance, I think, than the pedagogical and curricular strategies implemented.

As printing technology improved during the industrial revolution, more drawing books and manuals could be created, which also meant that more and varied instruction could be offered to students. Arts education in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century centered mainly on industrial drawing and manual training; boys learned more drawing and architectural skills, while girls focused more on ornamental arts, sewing, weaving, and the like. Industrial drawing concentrated explicitly on rote learning through copy-methods and repetition of patterns and geometric shapes, instilling in the students quick sketching abilities with accurate proportions and angles which could be used in the textile industry, for example. Smith concentrated mainly on a copy-style method due to the time and

space restrictions. There were usually a large number of students in the classroom and time for art training/instruction was limited – a trend that continues today.

Manual training was said to be an education in hand-eye coordination where students practiced with wood and metal tools and materials. The skills learned could then be applied to any number of vocational areas of study. Manual training was generally geared toward poor immigrants and working-class individuals. Schools that often implemented manual training used the students as free labor (which is why they wanted to not specifically train for one vocation), to help keep the school up and running – to make the school self-sufficient. Manual training, according to Stankiewicz et al. (2004), was “shaped by assumptions about gender roles, along with assumptions about race and class” (p. 42).

Around the 1870’s there was a growing unrest amongst artists who grew tired of the capitalist push for profits and the poor design standards implemented in industrial factories. Individuals like William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti helped to push forward the Aesthetic Movement, which centered more on an art for art’s sake mentality over socio-political themes – there was a push away from didacticism. During the 1880’s we see artistic styles such as Impressionism, with works by Monet, Cassatt, and Renoir, which center on the play of light and shadow on various surfaces and the changing qualities of that light. Later yet, Post-Impressionism emerges, and the expressive works characterized by Vincent van Gogh and Gauguin, as well as the geometrically structured works by Cezanne, appear to be challenging the role of art and the artist. During the

nineteenth century, as evidenced in historical art styles such as Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, art was used more as an escape from the realities of the world; the hardships of society. This was a time of artistic rebirth, and education as well as art education was again moving in a new direction (Arnason, 2004).

The Progressive Education Movement developed around the end of the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth, having lasting impacts on American art education. Recognized by major figures such as John Dewey, Margaret Naumburg, and William Kilpatrick, the movement focused on studying new pedagogical strategies, such as child-centered learning, in the hopes of developing a more democratic society (Hayes, 2007). The Eight Year Study, which I mentioned in the first chapter, was an educational research endeavor which was sparked by progressive educators' drive "to eliminate the factory as a model for organizing the work of a classroom" (Irwin, 1991, p. 52). The progressives advocated for education which addressed, among other ideas, emotional and artistic aspects of human development, and Dewey believed that children grow intellectually if they are allowed the time and space to problem solve through actual, real-life experiences that are of interest – which often included making works of art.

Around the beginning of WWI, a couple decades after Psychology became its own distinct science, with the inception of Wilhem Wundt's research lab in Leipzig,

Germany, Sigmund Freud<sup>13</sup> was developing his childhood psychoanalytic theories and psychosexual stages. At this time, another Progressive educator, regarded as art therapy founder, Margaret Naumberg, fused the tenets of progressive education with psychological theory and practice. Naumberg promoted the idea that child-centered learning coupled with creative expression, through art education, should foster children's emotional development. Cubism was now in full force (starting in 1907, lasting until about 1919), changing the landscape of the art world indefinitely. Again, Cubism was developed by Picasso who took influence from Cezanne's use of geometricized shapes and still life paintings to develop Analytic Cubism, alongside Georges Braque. Put simply, in Analytic Cubism, Picasso looked at figures and objects from different angles and combined those different angles so that the space within the painting is disrupted. Outgrowths of Cubism, such as Surrealism, build on the psychological theories of the day, such as the subconscious posited by Freud and Carl Jung. There is an emphasis on the inner workings of the mind, the expression of personal experience as a type of therapeutic exercise and cathartic activity. The thought of expressing personal experience, which Naumberg brought to her art therapy school, Walden School, carries through to some of today's art education classrooms.

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<sup>13</sup> Sigmund Freud developed theories of the unconscious as well as psychoanalysis which was "a method of psychotherapy that explores unconscious conflicts and emotional problems" (Coon, 2001 p.12). The id, ego, and superego are the three layers that Freud thought propelled an individual's personality. The distinctions being that the id represents instinctual behavior; the ego which represents a process of thought and rationality to balance out the id; and the superego, which acts as conscience. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, one of Freud's major works for example, discusses the idea of expressing one's desires (otherwise unknown to the conscious mind) through the act of dreaming (Coon, 2001).

Developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and extending through to about the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was a movement in visual art education known as Picture Study (Smith, 1986, 1996). This movement was partly due to the improved quality in printing technique and processes (Stankiewicz, 1984). A central figure to the Picture Study movement, Oscar Neale, is said to have felt the arts were “neglected in teacher education and children’s education, and he determined to do something about it” (Smith, 1996, p. 81). This initiative was sparked by Neale’s sighting of a teacher who was haphazardly decorating her classroom with poor quality visual aids (Smith, 1996). Neale proclaims that picture study’s goal is to develop a sense of enjoyment within students by viewing and engaging with classic works of art. Moreover, as Smith (1996) states, “Neale quoted G. Stanley Hall’s discussion of Picture Study” when he writes:

Teachers do not realize how much more important, not only for children but for everyone who has not special artistic training, the subject matter of a picture is than its execution, style or technique. The good picture from an education standpoint of view is either like a sermon teaching a great moral truth or like a poem, idealizing some important aspect of life. It must palpitate with human interest. (Neale, 1927, n.p. in Smith, 1996, p. 82).

Picture study included such methods as educating students about the background of the painting, the narrative portrayed, the life of the artist, as well as having students answer questions pertaining to the painting, such as offering interpretations for the narrative

depicted. Children who were more mature in age and skill would practice their technical skill by copying the painting, drawing, etc., while at the same time, dissecting the images based on elements and principles of art. As Stankiewicz (1984) expands,

At the primary school, the objectives of picture study were identification of subject matter and moral lessons. In grammar school, the goals included knowledge of artistic composition, its elements and principles. Appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of art was the avowed goal of picture study (p. 86).

The idea that pictures could be used to teach moral lessons, while at the same time discussing other art content knowledge, is an important part of what will be discussed later. We see evidence of it here, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in primary school settings. As Stankiewicz reminds us, referencing Gilson (1957) and Eitner (1975), the reproduction of an original work of art always changes the viewer's relationship with that work of art. This will also reveal itself as an important consideration in a later chapter of this dissertation devoted to online visual art education. In a letter correspondence from Neale in 1915, obtained by the granddaughter of Neale, Smith (1996) writes that "Neale sometimes substituted as a preacher which suggests the possibility that he could, perhaps did, adopt a rather evangelical style for his art discussions." This idea of a teacher, subconsciously or consciously importing his or her own religious background could have proved problematic then as it could now in light of the separation of church and state. Moreover, Picture Study did lean in the direction of an expression of personal experience,



with those experiences and memories being recalled because of the image being viewed. As Smith (1996) states, this type of expression seemed to be “excessively sentimental and not very informative about the work of art under consideration” (p. 86).

A number of criticisms listed above, such as poor quality reproductions, trivial discussions, detachment from the contemporary art community, and teaching particular moral perspectives, contributed to the Picture Study movement’s relatively short appearance in visual art education history. Another addition that may be made to this list is that those who taught Picture Study were limited in education themselves. Some schools allowed individuals who only had an eighth grade education or high school education to teach. Despite undergoing a certification program, individuals were often unqualified to teach Neale’s program (Smith, 1996). However, nearly a century later, there have been many changes that could help to bring Picture Study or a variation therein, back to art education classrooms. Some of these changes include more rigid teacher-education programs, vastly improved technology for reproducing works of art (and even the transportation capability to visit the actual works), educational beliefs and pedagogical strategies such as found in Lipman’s, Philosophy for Children and other dialogic inquiry-based pedagogies to help dig deeper into aesthetic discussions. In New Jersey, there are core standards<sup>14</sup> based on the creative process, history of the arts, performance within the visual arts, as well as aesthetic response and critique methodologies that visual art educators need to help students learn. Visual art teacher

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<sup>14</sup> For New Jersey visual art core curriculum content standards visit, <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/standards/1/>

education programs are geared toward helping future educators understand these objectives as well as methods that can be implemented to meet the goals set forth. Moreover, Picture Study could be revised due to endeavors such as Google's Art Project<sup>15</sup>, which has high resolution photographs of works of art from around the world, with more being added frequently. More informed discussion regarding the works of art can ensue due to a better visual experience with works that may be too far away to see in person. This is quite a change from the poor reproductions that Neale had to work with. As I will discuss in chapter five, social constructivism and the pedagogical strategy that is dialogue has progressed significantly, with authors such as Douglas Walton (1998) and Nicholas Burbules (1993) bringing to light important subtleties.

With the help of movements and practices such as Neale and Picture Study, as well as Naumberg's work at the Walden School, advocating a type of art therapy through creative expression, art educators started to shift practices, toward a wider range of art appreciation in the classroom; there was also further understanding and appreciation of children's art. More specifically, differences between children's and adult's art started to become apparent. Children's art making helped stimulate intellectual and emotional development. It was believed that engaging in art making and related activities is one essential component in education, which leads to an improved life for the individual (Rugg and Shumaker, 1928).

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.googleartproject.com/>

As World War I wound down, art educators realized that they could, as White (2004) says, “heal, revive, and integrate people’s emotional disconnection with the world” (p. 59) through art making and art appreciation programs like the Picture Study movement. Newer materials to the classroom, including pastels, crayons, and various paints, such as tempera and finger paints, afforded new opportunities for children and other individuals to express themselves through artwork, whereas the industrial studies in the nineteenth century primarily used hard pencils. While the United States was dealing with another World War and the Depression, philanthropic organizations, such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY), picked up the slack and supported scientific, as well as arts related ventures. However, during this time art education was written about in *The Place for Art in American Life* by the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Richard Bach, who stated that art education was merely a trend, a fad which would go away. While the country is in a state of unrest, art educators, much like in today’s NCLB and RTTT influenced climate, are left looking for inexpensive or donated materials (Sabol, 2010). Because the economy was in such a sad state of affairs, art educators’ emphasized jobs and practical aspects associated with the discipline, rather than Naumberg’s self-expression. Still, there were individuals, such as Victor D’Amico and Arthur Lismer, who valued and promoted personal, creative expression, building spaces for high school students to exhibit their own unique works of art in the Museum of Modern Art (Efland, 1990; D’Amico, 2001). Others, like Thomas Munro, advocated for relationships between arts educators and museums to develop aesthetic sensibilities, and

Henry Kent worked on creating interdisciplinary programs linking art works with other content areas.

Among the most notable studies before the inception of the NAEA was the Owatonna Art Project, headed by Melvin Haggerty and Edwin Ziegfield, which attempted to implement an art curriculum in Owatonna schools, with the hopes that the educators there would be able to continue the curriculum after the study ceased. According to Freedman (1989), this study illustrates “the complexities of foundation philanthropy in art education...the project missions were to enrich people’s lives and even confront industrial production, while at another level, they promoted industrial capitalism and made taste appear to be objective and scientific” (p. 15). Throughout the history of art education since around 1870, we see many attempts by individuals and organizations to bring the arts back to economic production and capitalistic ventures.

Arts education has at this point, a number of dedicated individuals with varied visions of arts education. This lack of a clear vision led to the idea that a national organization for the arts could help to unify the discipline and its educators. The national organization was fully realized in 1947, with Ziegfield becoming the first president of the NAEA. More research that would lead toward curriculum reforms and the evaluation of those reforms was needed. We see with the Owatonna project a push towards more scientific studies in art education.

Skipping ahead several years, the Soviet Union’s satellite, Sputnik, was launched in 1957, which lit the space-race fuse, inciting politicians to push for more math and

science education within American schools, due to fear and safety concerns. As Smith (1996) explains the aftermath of the Sputnik launch, “Americans were told that the schools had failed to provide good enough scientists to compete with our enemies” (p. 206). Creativity was advocated, but only insofar as it helped to advance scientific endeavors. While arts education suffered over the next several years, 1964’s Seminar on Elementary and Secondary School Education in the Visual Arts developed recommendations for improving arts educator quality (content knowledge as well as broader knowledge) and quantity (one art teacher for every 500 pupils), instructional spaces (art rooms) and materials for use in the classroom, as well as publications in and for the arts. Also, there were discussions in regard to improving the scope of art education, and a clearly outlined education program from preschool to high school and even up until graduate study (Conant, 1965).

### **A Push for Aesthetic Education and the Benefits of Philosophical Practice**

It was in the late 1950s and early 1960s that Jerome Bruner (1960) developed his theory that education in regard to the different academic subjects should center on the problems that professionals are facing in that field of study. In this regard, “The adult practitioner, in a field was to be the model for the student” (Smith, 1996, p. 208). Later on, in the mid-1960s, art educator Manuel Barkan “became enthused by this idea” (Smith, 1996, p. 208) and “designed a model of art education that combined the teaching of art history and art criticism with art making activities” (J. Paul Getty Trust, 1985, p. 39). Barkan believed that art education curriculum should be structured like that of math

and science, and that rather than a discipline merely centered on self-expression, art education and the art classroom is a social environment where children learn and develop through their interactions with others. Barkan's view ran counter to what acclaimed art education teacher Viktor Lowenfeld posited some decades prior.

Lowenfeld, a German immigrant studied fine art at the University of Vienna before immigrating to the United States in the late 1930's due to the rise of the Nazi regime. While in the United States, Lowenfeld taught at the Hampton Institute and subsequently Pennsylvania State University (Smith, 1996). During his career as an art educator, he published a number of books including, *The Nature of Creative Activity* (1939), *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947), and *Your Child and His Art* (1954) – with *Creative and Mental Growth* having the most lasting impression on visual art education. Lowenfeld (1947) outlined six stages of artistic growth including scribble, preschematic, schematic, dawning realism, pseudorealism, and period of decision/crisis. Growing up around expressionist work of Viennese artists and similar German expressionist artists, Lowenfeld incorporated this idea of expressionism into his art education practices – around the same time that Margaret Naumberg was working. There was an air of creative expression in the art education classroom that had not been seen or practiced before. His ideas are still taught and utilized in today's classrooms and art educator preparation programs, including my own. However, Barkan posited that children develop their individual personalities and traits through working with the group, not through isolated art making activities (Barkan, 1955). Half a decade later, Barkan wrote *Through*

*Art To Creativity* (1960), where he espouses the special relationship between art teacher and pupil; that the teacher is in the distinct position to help the child grow, artistically, cognitively, and imaginatively, contrary to the developmental stages of Lowenfeld (1947). The ability to help students along their creative journey, of which Barkan writes, seems to be a type of scaffolding and social learning theory as posited by Lev Vygotsky (1978).

The discipline based instruction writing of Barkan has been built on by Day (1969, 1976) and Greer (1987), and Clark, Day, and Greer (1987), who further develop the idea of discipline based instruction, ultimately coining the term Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) in 1984. The Getty Center for Education in the Arts funded a study which centered on the implementation of DBAE – a curriculum movement that centers on four main areas; art history, art criticism, art making, and aesthetics (Alexander, 1992; Getty Center for Education in the Arts 1987; 1988; 1998). About two decades earlier, Barkan (1965) noted that the study of aesthetics was noticeably absent from any art curriculum, and advocated for its inclusion. It was not until the work of Clark, Day, and Greer, as well as others, in cooperation with the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, that aesthetic study was included in any curriculum model.

Fisher (1978) and Madenfort (1981) believed that by incorporating the study of aesthetics in the curriculum, it would help individuals to live a more meaningful life. I think the idea posited was that aesthetic education awakened individuals up to experiences often taken for granted, by slowing down and understanding what one was

experiencing. But this type of deep understanding often included the discussion of what can be somewhat difficult philosophical topics. Arts educators such as DiBlasio (1985) and Lanier (1984, 1985) contended that aesthetic instruction was never incorporated into the standard art curriculum because there was an assumption that the “philosophical procedures of aesthetics are beyond the grasp of students” (DiBlasio, 1985, p. 199). But when taught properly, that is to say, using a pedagogy that is age and content appropriate, students can understand difficult philosophical concepts. About a decade later, Hagaman (1990) claimed that “changes in curricula will not be enough if there are not effective changes in pedagogy as well” (p. 155). So, aesthetics can be included in the visual art classroom, but what must also accompany that addition is a well thought out pedagogical practice that helps students in the process of learning the content introduced.

As was mentioned in chapter two, philosopher Matthew Lipman created the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC)<sup>16</sup> in the early 1970s, and developed a curriculum which addressed the need to discuss contestable issues, such as aesthetics and ethics (Lipman, 1976, 1981), logically and rationally. The goal of the IAPC was and is to bring philosophy and philosophical discussion into primary and secondary classrooms, fostering reasoning, critical thinking, and self-reflection through the use of a pedagogy known as the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI). Ultimately, the goals of the program aims at helping students create a “qualitatively better life” (Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan, 1980, p. 84).

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<sup>16</sup>Although the Philosophy for Children program will be discussed in this and coming chapters, if you wish to learn more about the IAPC you may visit: <http://cehs.montclair.edu/academic/iapc/>



Lipman (1980, 2003) employs a model known as the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI) to help facilitate philosophical discussions, which could be utilized in the arts classroom to further controversial and/or contestable discussions – such as those dwelling in the realm of aesthetic inquiry. What is art? What is the nature of art? What is beautiful? How does one determine beauty or ugliness? etc.

David Kennedy (1996) describes CPI as a “unique epistemological event” where knowledge is constructed through and by the group – “the collective” (p. 4). It is separate from one individual’s ideas and speculations. As Kennedy (1996) says, “a single idea by itself is not knowable at all...In any insight an entire nexus or web of ideas is involved” (p. 4). We are all part of this world and each one of us offers a unique perspective. The practice of CPI allows its participants to experience the world together through the sharing of ideas in a supportive environment and evaluating of individual thoughts based on logic and reason. Through the practice of CPI and the process of stating, restating, reformulating ideas, positing alternatives, and carefully listening, individuals learn to coexist and work together toward a mutual end, so long as this is appropriately modeled by a skilled facilitator (Kennedy, 1991, 1996, 2004). To make any sense of the world in which we live, we need to communicate – and not superficially, but through meaningful dialogue and conversation. This contrasts with Neale’s Picture Study movement, whose discussions were often labeled as anecdotal (Smith, 1996).

According to Kennedy (1996), “The community [of inquiry] depends for its forward movement on the loss of self” (p. 11). In this loss of self, an individual (both

student and teacher alike) undergoes a transformation whereby he/she comes into relation with others – and presumably then, not just those in the CPI, but an understanding that the world is full of other *people* who have stories that need to be heard and understood. The practice of CPI aims to rupture the egocentric, competition driven education. Its aim is to promote the understanding of alternative perspectives and cooperation in order to reach the good, the beautiful. This practice engenders trust and respect among its participants and questions long unquestioned habits, beliefs, choices, offering “students an opportunity for self-reflection and for living what Socrates called ‘the examined life’” (Levine, 2010).

Seeing the benefit of Lipman’s dialogically based pedagogy, Hagaman (1990) advocated for its implementation in the arts classroom, as it was thought that CPI could help students to study aesthetics. In a Philosophy for Children manner, formal aesthetic theories were not presented to students to study and memorize, as it was understood that this would turn students off from studying the subject matter. Rather, specific situations were presented to students in an issue-centered approach, which would spark students’ interest and compel them to learn more about the theories that relate to the specific issue at hand (Lankford, 1990, 1992).

Throughout the late 1980s and 90s, there have been very few studies performed or journal articles written about arts education and the pedagogy known as CPI to teach visual arts content (aesthetics, art history, art criticism, art making) (Read, 1987; Lardner, 1988; Hagaman, 1995; de Haan, 1995; Humpries, 1997; Slade and del Gigante, 1997;

Sharp, 1997). There is, I feel, a need to explore the relationship between CPI and the visual art classroom further.

During the 1980s, it seemed like arts education as a whole was improving in terms of academic standing as a result of DBAE in that it offered a more comprehensive curricular model which addressed most of the discussions in which arts professionals were engaged. In the 1980's, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, was a study which concerned itself with "four important aspects of the educational process: content, expectations, time, and teaching."<sup>17</sup> Moreover, findings regarding content and teaching state that "Secondary school curricula have been homogenized, diluted, and diffused to the point that they no longer have a central purpose...we have a cafeteria style curriculum..."<sup>3</sup> where "Too many teachers are being drawn from the bottom quarter of graduating high school and college students." Discipline-Based Art Education arose in the era of *A Nation at Risk*, where there was a call for improved teaching and curriculum design to address the deficiencies outlined. *A Nation at Risk. Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools* (1984), the first main artifact related to DBAE, did not help ingratiate itself to art educators of the time when the Getty Center claimed that art education programs were substantively lacking. Some claimed that DBAE helped to raise the standing of visual art education in public schools, such as when Hamblen (1988) writes,

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<sup>17</sup> Visit <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/index.html> to review other findings and recommendations in regard to content, expectations, time, and teaching published under *A Nation at Risk*. Accessed on January 31, 2012.

In a DBAE curriculum, the emphasis is on learning art content, not on students' artistic development or the conveying of original qualities in their art products. Hence, similarities among students' products are not viewed with alarm, but rather as a sign of success (Rush, 1987), much as a mathematics assignment would be considered successful when most students calculated correct (and similar) answers (p. 23).

In addition to outlining specific definable goals in the art classroom, DBAE is also said to broaden "the conceptual base of art instruction" (Hamblen, 1988, p. 24) with the addition of an art historical, criticism, and aesthetic component.

However, as Malewski (2009) states, "Opponents of DBAE argued that it was too restrictive in content, too prescriptive in theory, too academic in practice, and too Eurocentric in nature" (p. 246). The Discipline-Based Art Education movement adopted a less student-centered, more objective notion of teaching visual art, which sparked some heated debates between those who were in favor of DBAE and those who preferred a classroom based on Lowenfeld's teaching methods (which were more student-centered and expressive in nature). It seems that there is an either/or mentality here when in actuality a combination of the two could prove to be a better path for visual art educators to take and for students to be exposed to. An academic approach to visual art education is important at times. Learning the elements and principles of design, their definitions, and how they can be employed in works of art is one area where an academic approach can prove beneficial. Likewise, practicing skills in painting or drawing helps students to be

more expressive later since they have the requisite skills to create the image in their mind. But practicing specific skills and learning vocabulary, for example, should not be the only goal. Expression of one's ideas, thoughts, and feelings are an inherent part of the visual arts. As is evidenced in works of art throughout the centuries, expression and emotion of a thought or idea is an integral component of some works of art. But if students are just let to create whatever they want, whenever, they may not necessarily grow in skill. At some point, students may hit a wall and not be able to create a work of art they want to because of a lack of technical skill. When you combine specific skill training and the ability to express yourself while learning those skills, I think the student benefits more and has a more meaningful educational experience.

Art education in the late 80s and 1990s centered on art educators tweaking DBAE to fit their educational beliefs (Malewski, 2009), which is also the case today as well. Some people push(ed) for more studio practice and the drilling of skills in painting, drawing, and ceramics, others concentrate(d) more on expression of the self, in an art therapy type manner of Naumberg or expressionist views of Lowenfeld. While others yet, preferred teaching from a multiculturalist perspective which was prevalent in the 1990s (Smith, 1996). There were/are about as many ways to teach art as there were/are arts educators.

Over the past two millennia, the visual arts and visual arts education have taken a variety of forms – we see a small example of this within our own country's formal educational system. The goals of visual arts education and the pedagogies utilized to

reach those goals have changed as well. Each era has contributed something to the practice of visual art education and it is important to look at what practices have waxed and waned in combination with our current context. DBAE is still the predominant art curriculum model. In regard to this model, lead evaluator at the Getty Center, Brent Wilson (2006) states that DBAE “will have to respond to changing societal, artistic, and educational conditions and to the interests of new individuals who decide to join the continuing task of forming and reforming DBAE” (p. 227). Art education needs to make a shift once again, in light of our current context.

Dedicating some space to the history of visual art education in the United States has unveiled a myriad of pedagogical and curricular shifts. In the time of Walter Smith, visual art education took an approach that centered on drilling specific skills to be used in factories during the Industrial Revolution. The art classroom was one void of any discussion of works of art and any philosophical content. But at the time, such discussion was not deemed necessary. The classroom fit the needs of the society. However, as the Progressive Education Movement developed and wars were being fought, art education slowly started to shift to include teaching strategies and curriculum additions. During this time, we see an emphasis on children expressing themselves through art rather than the mere drilling of skills for future factory work. Developing around this same period was the Picture Study Movement. The goal was to try to teach morals and lessons to students through discussion of the content of various works.

As the years passed, other dedicated individuals in the field of visual art education such as Barkan helped to see value in artistic discussion, as Neale did in his Picture Study Movement. But Barkan emphasized aesthetic discussion, more philosophical in nature, more open ended as compared to Picture Study. As discussed in chapter two, what art is, has been contested throughout the centuries, millennia even. The goal of the previous chapter was to show that art has a deep philosophical history, and as such, philosophy should at least be a component of visual art education in today's classrooms. I think that Barkan understood this, which is why he pushed for aesthetic study in the visual art classroom. It did not seem that Smith had a clear understanding of the role that philosophy played in the visual art classroom, and as a result, students were left merely practicing technical skills for future factory work. And, as was discussed earlier, those workers were employed in a work environment that was in stark contrast to the way artists like the Hudson River School painters worked and felt about art. Ultimately, aesthetics was included in the curriculum model DBAE, developed by the Getty Center, along with art production, art history, and art criticism. Realized from this whole discussion is that art educators often had an either/or mentality, leaning completely one way or the other in regard to a curriculum or pedagogical style, which at least to today's standards not in the best interest of the students. For example, teaching technical art skills for the sole purpose of factory work leaves students with an incomplete education. Having students only express themselves in works without technical skills being developed likewise leaves their visual art education incomplete. Having fully appreciated where the discipline has traveled, in chapter four I outline what ought to be components

of visual arts education. Learning from the trends of the past, my view which is forthcoming is a combination of multiple perspectives.



## CHAPTER 4

### **What Ought to Be Components of Visual Art Education?**

In the last chapter, my goal was to bring to light major curricular and pedagogical shifts that took place within the visual art education classroom in American schools, along with a brief explanation of the contexts in which these changes occurred. Moreover, my intent was to understand where and why visual art education is where it is today in public schools. Each epoch in visual art education history from the manual training during Walter Smith's time, to the focus on emotion and expression of Margaret Naumberg, to the discussion based Picture Study movement and Barkan's ideas on aesthetic education poses benefits for today's students. So often there appeared to be an either/or mentality, which is also the case in today's art classroom. The goal in this chapter is to identify what I believe ought to be components of visual art education in today's public schools, with my main contribution being an addition of aesthetic/ethical criticism using dialogue as a pedagogical strategy. It is my belief that an ethical criticism component and the incorporation of dialogue in the visual art classroom have the potential to help students receive a more well-rounded education, helping them to live a better life. However, I am not claiming that ethical criticism is the only aspect of the visual arts that should be taught. I am looking toward creating a visual art classroom which is an amalgam of art history, art making, aesthetics, art criticism, with an incorporation of ethical criticism, and dialogue. Moreover, I believe the entire visual art classroom should center on a circular process of individual and communal dialogue and

art making activities, which helps students to understand their own context in this world, how to express themselves, and how to work through questions of value through consistent self-reflection and discussion.

### **Four Necessary Components**

Dewey, in *Art as Experience* (1934), states that the work of art itself is vital in that it engages the viewer in an experience, a dialectical process. The object, the artist, and the viewer exist in a tripartite relationship where each encounters the other, with “works of art” being “the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to share in the arts of living” (1934, p. 336). If we look at the twentieth century as a whole, there was the overwhelming perception of the arts as a softer subject matter due to art education centering on the often unchallenged expression of personal emotions and opinions, which stands in contrast to traditional academia. But how does visual art education become a valued member of the educational system? Discipline Based Art Education, which developed in the latter part of the twentieth century, sought to address this very question. DBAE is a curriculum model that focuses on making the arts more academic in nature, where students engage in four art disciplines, including art history, art making, art criticism, and aesthetics (taken to be the philosophy of art). Any model of visual art education needs to meet the requirements and goals set forth by these four disciplines.

Each discipline, art history, art making, art criticism, and aesthetics is to be given attention (under a DBAE program), as they all contribute to, and are necessary for, a

sound knowledge base in the subject of visual art. Each of the four disciplines named above allows students to make meaning out of works of art from four distinct perspectives, so chosen because they are the disciplines with which art professionals are engaged. Combining these four key elements of art education, Dobbs (1998) states that

(a) art helps students access their own civilization and those of others; (b) art teaches students to communicate in different ways; (c) art promotes inquiry processes in students, such as observation, description, analysis, and judgment; (d) art helps students learn to solve problems and to make choices; and (e) art teaches students appreciation and offers them insights about the extraordinary power of the human imagination (p. 60).

However, looking at what Dobbs states more critically, it would be fair to state that each of these points could very well be met by another subject of study. Social studies and history helps students to learn about their own and other cultures. Courses in English and writing also facilitate students' communication through the study of prose and poetry, for example. Studying science, such as physics and biology, promotes inquiry processes such as observation, description, and analysis through the scientific method. Depending on the project or assignment, any course could involve a component where students need to solve problems and make choices. And, likewise, an English course studying a myriad works of fiction could offer insights into the human imagination. So far this does not bode well for visual arts education, despite Dobbs impassioned discussion about arts education advocacy. Let us return to the four categories under DBAE for the moment.

## Art History

Any visual art classroom should, from a DBAE perspective, and according to certain state standards,<sup>18</sup> include an art historical component. The discipline of art history is a more recent development as compared to actual art making. Among the first, and often credited as being the first art history book (Stokstad, 2002), is Giorgio Vasari's mid-sixteenth century text, *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters and Sculptors*. Modern day art historians engage in a myriad of arts related endeavors. To Stokstad (2002), art history has two main areas of study "the study of an individual work of art outside time and place (formal analysis and even art appreciation) and the study of art in its historical context..." (p. 37). By engaging in an art historical inquiry, carefully studying works of art, we may learn what specific individuals and larger cultures thought, felt, and how they lived. More specifically, art historians use biographical information available in order to produce knowledge about the artist, their life, as well as "social history to understand the economic and political forces shaping artists, their patrons, and their public; and the history of ideas to gain an understanding of the intellectual currents influencing artists' work" (Stockstad, 2002, p. 37). In order for students to understand why a particular art style developed, why the works in that style look the way they do, it is necessary to look to the social history of that time period to give insight. Doing so often helps to generate new understanding in regard to an artists' or several artists' works, such as Warhol's Pop Art works, or Pollock's Abstract Expressionist works

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<sup>18</sup> For New Jersey's visual art standards, descriptions, and cumulative progress indicators in regards to art history see: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/standards/1/1-2.htm>

Many visual art lessons that art educators use for instruction incorporate art history as an anticipatory set or introductory activity that leads into an art making activity.<sup>19</sup> I speak mainly from experience working with and talking with a number of visual art educators in New Jersey, as there is limited research on how art teachers teach in their classroom. However, as Burton (2000) realized in his study of visual art educators in a K-12 setting, that in response to the question, “How frequently do you teach lessons/units related to Art History/Cultures during the course of a typical course...” (p. 16), 46 percent of art educators who responded claimed that they “‘frequently’ teach art history or culturally-oriented lessons” (p. 16), with 29 percent of the visual arts educators who responded claiming that they “teach art history ‘very frequently’” (p. 16). It is important to clarify, as Burton (2000) states, “The question asks, how frequently the teacher teaches lessons/units *related* to art history/cultures” which suggests that an art historical element may be incorporated, but “not necessarily lessons/units devoted exclusively to art history” (p. 16).

Dobbs (1998, pp. 42-43) identifies eight types of inquiry that art historians are engaged in including Attribution, Authentication, Iconography, Provenance, Function, Style, Psychology, and Connoisseurship. Attribution refers to the basic factual information about the work of art including the artist or artists responsible for the work’s creation, the date or approximate date of creation, the place of origin, and information as

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<sup>19</sup> A popular website that offers lessons plans for visual art educators may be found at: [http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/art\\_period.html](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/art_period.html). This link leads you to a web page that is geared toward middle school students, with lesson plans based on different art historical styles such as Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism and even centering on the work of specific artists such as Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, or Pablo Picasso to name a few examples.

to why the work was created. Authentication refers to the documentation that allows the work to be attributed to a certain artist or group of artists. Iconography refers to the interpretation and the meaning of the content of a work of art. When we discuss the lineage of ownership, Provenance is the inquiry in which art historians are engaged. Inquiry into the function of the work questions why the work was created. Style refers to the visual elements, the characteristics of a work of art that relate it to other works but differentiate it from others. The psychology refers to “What personal factors (family, personality, friendships, and so on) help relate the artist to his or her time and the work to a particular social or cultural milieu?” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 43). And finally, Connoisseurship refers to “What does intensive study of the work reveal or help resolve with regard to problems of authorship, ownership, or physical condition?” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 43).

Having students engage with works of art, carefully studying paintings, for example, helps them to become more visually attentive. As an example, I have provided groups of students with twenty different works of art from five different art styles in art history. Before discussing specific artists, acclaimed works of art, or characteristics of the styles, I provided students with the reproductions ranging from Impressionism to Surrealism, and challenged them to categorize the works according to styles, and write down what characteristics they used to divide the works of art. In collaboration with one another, students were able to successfully work through the problem of identifying five distinct styles. Then, given a set of information about how a specific artist worked, students were asked to see if they could attribute a work to a certain artist based on the

knowledge of his or her life. For example, when told that Paul Gauguin was half French and half Tahitian, and that he eventually moved to Tahiti, studying the native people and culture, students were able to accurately match his biographical information to a work of art. When given the chance to look at works of art whether singularly or in a group, students can pick out themes, similarities, differences, all which help to develop their visual awareness. However, this takes time. Students must be given the opportunity to develop visual skills. This example was one way in which students can learn art history and practice being more visually attentive at the same time, rather than having the teacher just lecture on about a particular art style or artist.

Having students attempt to date a work of art by clothing styles or other visual content helps them to become more attuned to social differences, customs, etc. While art historians do use cutting edge scientific technology to study works of art<sup>20, 21, 22</sup>, this may not be possible in the classroom. As an alternative, I have digitally altered works of art, such as adding a cell phone to the waist of the father figure in David's, *The Oath of the Horatii*. By printing one real work and ten or so fakes, providing students only with a magnifying glass, they must take time to examine each element of the painting – practicing some of the skills that art historians do as well. By carefully looking, unrealized features may be discovered; such is the case of art historian Chiara Frugoni

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/aug/04/artnews.art> tells of an x-ray revealing a hidden van Gogh painting.

<sup>21</sup> X-ray study reveals a hidden Goya painting, and can be read at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15018174>

<sup>22</sup> More recently, and controversially, Leonardo da Vinci's, *The Battle of Anghiari*, is thought to have been discovered behind a Vasari painting, in the Palazzo Vecchio. The story is found at [http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/2012/03/13/Lost-da-Vinci-painting-may-have-been-found/UPI-73041331677750/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2012/03/13/Lost-da-Vinci-painting-may-have-been-found/UPI-73041331677750/)

who discovered the face of a demon or the devil in a 15<sup>th</sup> century by Mantegna.<sup>23</sup> Once discovered, the art history community may then look into its meaning and significance.

Art history has a place in the visual art classroom as the discipline attempts to comprehend how “art functioned in its original context. In a practical sense, art history is the art of writing about, providing explanations for and interpretations of, the art of the past, based upon evidence gathered from a wide variety of sources. Information that art historians search for, compile, analyze, organize, and utilize...” (Dobbs, p. 44) may be divided into four categories including factual information, formal analysis, technical analysis and contextual relations. Just as art history is an important aspect of visual art education, so too is art criticism.

### **Art Criticism**

Art criticism affords students the opportunity to describe, interpret, analyze, and ultimately judge a work of art “for the purpose of increasing understanding and appreciation of art and its role in society, as well as for many other purposes” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 32). Students who engage in art criticism aim to become more critical of their own work and others. When describing a work of art, students identify information such as the title of the work, the artist’s name, the date the work was created, the medium, and the size. Likewise, students describe basic features of the work, such as the color palette that was used, textures, and specific objects within the work. According to Barrett (1992),

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<sup>23</sup> The story relating to the discovery of the demon feature in Mantegna’s painting may be located at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15624767>



“Descriptions are important because they inform viewers about what can be noticed and what might not have been noticed. Descriptions are the basis of interpretations...” (p. 116).

When analyzing a work students are asked to further explain the usage of objects/things described previously. Analysis of a work of art looks more at the discussion of elements and principles of art and design within a work of art. For example, how has the artist achieved rhythm, unity, a sense of space, texture, balance, etc. in a work of art and what is the impact on the overall work.

Description and analysis should provide the viewer with enough information in order to make an educated interpretation of the work of art. Like looking at clouds in the sky, individuals can come up with any number of realistic or unrealistic interpretations for a work of art. However, according to Barrett (1992), “Good interpretations are objective in the sense that they refer to the object, the artwork, and have evidence in their support which other people can observe and with which they can agree” (p. 116).

This is not to say, however, that there may only be one correct interpretation of a work of art. Depending on an individual’s background, life experiences, and the particular lens through which a work of art is viewed, the work of art can be interpreted and subsequently appreciated in multiple ways, all of which may be reasonable. Educationally speaking, the act of interpreting a work is lauded as the more significant portion of art criticism (Barrett, 1992; Feldman, 1973; Feinstein, 1989).

Lastly, there is the judgment of a work of art. The goal here is for individuals to make a reasoned judgment of a work of art. “Judgments, like interpretations, are arguments put forth...They attempt to persuade others to see an artwork the way they see it, and to value it similarly” (Barrett, 1992, p. 117). Does the work of art have any value? Is it a good work of art? These are just a few examples of questions in regard to judgment. In the process of art criticism, description, whether occurring verbally with another individual, group of individuals, or mentally, generally occurs first as it seems illogical for a person to analyze, interpret, or judge before we perceive something visually and acknowledge what we see. But after describing, perceiving visual information within a work of art, individuals may quickly interpret a scene if it is a narrative and judge the work. Educating students in how to slow down, visually dissect a work of art, and discuss it, explaining why they like it or do not, has the ability to help students more fully appreciate the work and make meaning out of the work and subsequent discussion.

### **Art Making**

Beautiful works, some of which we now label *art*, have been made throughout history in virtually all cultures and for a wide variety of reasons, some of which may never be realized. Cave art from the Paleolithic periods adorn the limestone walls of Spain and France, for example. These works, depicting horses, boars, bears, and bison (to name a few), were created using various earth toned, natural pigments, and primitive tools, emphasizing the most characteristic features of the animals, people, or any other

represented object. Some of the cave paintings that still remain appear to even tell stories through the visual representations, such as hunters on the prowl for wild game. Was it meant to be a historical account, a mythical representation, an aid in a ritual exercise, and/or sheer expression? We cannot be certain.

In ancient Egypt, there are an incredible amount of unearthed works, many of which decorated the tombs of kings past. The entrance way to the Temple of Rameses II shows the wonder of ancient sculpture in its physical grandeur, used “in a very big way to speak of his actions. Legislation, and power” (Stokstad, 2002, p. 119). Wall paintings such as *Queen Nefertari Making an Offering to Isis* show important aspects of the Egyptian culture, their belief in specific deities and the offerings they made, such as perfume jar offerings (Stokstad, 2002, p. 123).

The ancient Greeks, with their delicately hand-painted vases, such as those by Kleitias, depict incredible narratives that document lives and stories that often revolve around their belief in various gods. The ancient Greeks “grounded their art in close observation of nature. Only after meticulous study of the particular did they begin to generalize, searching within each form for its universal ideal” (Stokstad, 2002, p. 177) seeking to convey the essence of the object under study. And in a somewhat similar manner, early Chinese song paintings attempted “to paint the eternal essence” of a scene “not to reproduce the appearance of a particular” (Stokstad, 2002, p. 420) landscape viewed.

The sfumato and three-dimensional modeling in light and shadow of Leonardo da Vinci, the musculature in Michelangelo's paintings and delicate touch in his and Bernini's marble sculptures, the incredibly defined contours of the neoclassical Jacques-Louis David, the sublime images created by Romanticist Caspar-David Friedrich, the softness of Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir's brushstrokes, the swirling, unnatural yet expressive colors of Vincent van Gogh, all have a reason for their being and an important place in our society. Some served political purposes such as David's, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, others, like Friedrich's, *Monk by the Seashore*, call the viewer to contemplate his own place in the world. Regardless of their purpose, the subject that is the visual arts relies upon the creation of works. Without the production of physical works, there would be no term *art*, no need for theories pertaining to the concept, no history of the subject, and no aesthetic discussion of those works. Acknowledging this, the production of works of art holds a higher status in the visual art classroom, for it is on the production of works of art that the other disciplines discussed rely upon.

Students who engage in the production of visual works of art engage in a "process of responding to observations, ideas, feelings, and other experiences by creating works of art through the skillful, thoughtful, and imaginative application of tools and techniques to various media" (Dobbs, 1998, p. 27). Personally, I subscribe to this Discipline-Based Art Education definition of art production. However, it is necessary to state that there are visual art educators who assign students projects that are little more than tracing exercises, or kitschy projects that outline step-by-step what actions a student should

perform in order to achieve a certain result (not unlike the ornamental training of early American art instruction), not requiring students to imagine, to brainstorm, to make the art making activity uniquely personal.

There are many administrators, students, parents, and academics (to name a few) who exist outside of the realm of the visual arts or visual art education and view art production, which takes up the majority of the visual art classroom (Burton, 2000), as little more than a leisure activity or as Haack (1981) states, a subject in which students should “participate for sheer enjoyment” (p. 302). But art making is more than a leisure activity, like practicing addition or subtraction in lower grades, plugging numbers into the quadratic equation, or using a graduated-cylinder in science, there are correct ways of performing certain tasks. This is the case in art making activities, where certain skills are being taught; that is to say that certain time honored traditional ways of painting, drawing, sculpting, printmaking, etc., are presented. As an individual sits at eye level and reads the meniscus on a graduated cylinder, the art student should be careful when creating a piece of ceramic, ensuring no air bubbles are created, otherwise it can explode when fired in a kiln. The difference in art making from equation solving in math, is that that art, being an open concept, a la Wittgenstein and Weitz, more readily allows for experimentation with materials, with tools, with ideas.

Students come to the art classroom with a wide variety of personal experiences and ways of perceiving the world in which they live. Producing a work of art is a process of thinking about what one would like to create, given a certain set of parameters in the

visual art classroom (teachers and students are often restricted by materials, time, space, etc.), and bringing that thought to fruition, memorialized in a tangible product. Engaged in the process of art making, students rarely work in isolation, asking for and receiving feedback and criticism from the teacher as well as other classmates. Continuously there is individual and communal reflection in regard to students' works. As Vincent van Gogh would write to his brother, Theo, about works in progress and those finished, so too do students have the urge to discuss their vision.

From personal experience as an art student, artist, and art educator, there is, in Greek terminology, a shift from a state of *chronos* to *kairos* when individuals are in the process of creation. The state of *chronos* is like that of sitting in a classroom watching the clock tick by while a monotone teacher lectures you in regard to any number of facts. *Kairos*, on the other hand, is the feeling of being in the zone – being so consumed by the activity in which you are engaged that you lose sense of time.

Students who are engaged in art making activities can learn to use a myriad of media and tools, as well as become acquainting with a number of styles of art making and traditional symbols incorporated into works of art. In addition, students who produce works of art learn to generate an original thought, refine that idea, and capture it and/or an emotion in a work of art. Moreover, students

“...learn about visual problem solving, in which art-making occurs through a sensed artistic resolution of the tension between opportunities presented and restraints encountered...understand the motivations and attitudes of artists by

reading about their lives and appreciating their roles and contributions to society and appreciate the various contributions to an artist's work from artistic training and experience (Dobbs, 1998, pp. 31-32).

What students learn in class, however, can depend on a variety of factors including the background knowledge of their teacher – one of the, if not the most, crucial aspects. That is to say, visual art educators often have a specialty in their undergraduate or graduate career, such as drawing or painting, and may tend to include more assignments relating to their knowledge base. A teacher who has little knowledge of Adobe's Creative Suite may not assign projects where students are engaging with these programs, and would rather stick to more traditional forms of art making. Moreover, a district's financial situation plays a role in determining what type of funding is to be allocated to the visual arts (Sikes, 2009).

Whether a district is an A district (such as Irvington, New Jersey) or a J district (such as Mendham Township, New Jersey) on the District Factor Grouping system (DFG) makes a difference. In addition, even if a school is identified as having a higher socio-economic status that does not necessarily mean that the district as a whole is in support of the arts. Personally, I have worked in two J districts and in one, I had the privilege of having a nearly \$10,000 art budget, whereas in the other I had to resort, as arts educators do, to scrounging for recycled materials (newspapers, magazines, milk containers, etc.) or donated materials due to the fact that the art department was consistently underfunded and undervalued. The tradition of the visual art classroom is

reminiscent of the French Academies and apprenticeship of the past, where students are learning from a more educated individual, one supervising their activities, providing guidance and feedback. Any visual art education will require a student and a knowledgeable teacher who can help the student through the artistic process, from an artwork's inception to completion.

Despite these other considerations, art production still exists as a key feature of the visual art classroom, which sets it apart from other areas of study. Adding to why the arts are of value Dobbs (1998) states that, visual arts education “is a source of knowledge, beliefs, and values about ourselves and about our world” (p. 9) which is a vital component of any students' education. Moreover, art is necessary for the fact that a dedicated, knowledgeable teacher of the visual arts can help students develop visual literacy, honing skills of perception, observation, and understanding of visual symbol systems. In addition, the development of individual imagination through visual media as well as the development of technical skills to aid in memorializing imaginative thoughts and images is a calling card for art instruction. Furthermore, the arts help students understand the philosophical area of study known as aesthetics.

In a later work, Dobbs (2004, p. 702) says, “shaping form to possess aesthetic character, and understanding types of aesthetic experience,” such as experiencing another's original work of art and essence as a person “...is not a goal of any other subject in the school curriculum.” Having delved into what the art production aspect of the visual art classroom may entail, let us turn to the subject of Aesthetics.



## Aesthetics

Aesthetics, to Stewart (1997), “Is the branch of philosophy that deals with issues of beauty or the beautiful...the creation of and response to art, the role of art in society, and the standards for judging art’s significance and for interpreting meaning” (p. 2).

However, the study of aesthetics extends beyond works of man-made art and also extends to our relationship with and contemplation of the natural world. In aesthetics, there are four main theories that determine an artwork’s value to the viewer including Formalist, Expressionist, Contextualist (including the subsets Instrumentalist, Institutional, and Linguistic theories), and Imitation Theories (Stewart, 1997). These different theories were discussed earlier on (see chapter two).

Aesthetic education has the potential to awaken us to our experiences (Greene, 1978). Taking an example from modern cinema to illustrate the point; recall the scene in *Forrest Gump* (1994), where Forrest is stationed in war-torn Vietnam. As Gump marches forth with his brothers-in-arms, led by Lt. Dan, Forrest finds himself waist high in water, keenly aware of the subtle differences in the rain despite being in a combat situation.

Forrest states, in a matter of fact manner,

One day it started raining, and it didn't quit for four months. We been through every kind of rain there is. Little bitty stingin' rain... and big ol' fat rain. Rain that

flew in sideways. And sometimes rain even seemed to come straight up from underneath.<sup>24</sup>

Listening to the various sounds rain creates as it interacts with its surroundings and seeing the differences in the way rain acts may seem trivial, but if you recall the whole of *Forrest Gump*'s life, the story he tells, this awareness permeates his being, making each of his experiences richer and more meaningful. This awareness is why his description of his life is so fascinating and the strangers he meets on the bus stop bench listen intently. Aesthetic education in the art classroom can educate students in this kind of "rich and lively awareness" (Wolf, 1983, p. 18; Winner, 1982). However, resistance by proponents of DBAE was met in regard to the inclusion of aesthetics in the art curriculum. It was thought that students would not be able to handle the concepts involved in aesthetic discussion, and/or students would spend more time reading and writing about art (learning art history, aesthetics, art criticism) than making it. This is clearly not the case, as is evidenced in Burton's (2000) *Survey of Secondary Art Education Instruction in the U.S. Schools*, which realized the fact that studio production takes up the majority of visual art class time and in the work of Eisner (2002), for example, who discussed the time constraints associated with the art classroom. More specifically, Eisner (2002) explains that the limited time in the art classroom lends itself more to small-scale, technically based art making activities. The fear of DBAE opponents, however, was that the visual art classroom would become too academic, too

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109830/quotes>, accessed September 12, 2011

intellectualized for its own good. The fear, it seems, is that the art classroom can quickly become a place where there is too much talking about art theory and the history of art that creativity is stifled and actual art creation is lessened significantly.

In response to the first objection, that students cannot handle the concepts involved in a philosophical discussion, a number of studies (Lipman, M., Sharp, A. & Oscanyan, F., 1980; Long, 2005; Nowell, 1992; Tricky & Topping, 2004, Santi, 2007) indicate that students do have the mental capabilities to deal with often abstract and difficult philosophical subject matter. However, Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980) state that the long standing power of philosophical vocabulary over the past 2500 years can be overwhelming for any child. “They certainly suffice to intimidate any child...For this very reason, philosophy for children requires the bypassing of that vocabulary” (p. 43). Acknowledging this, philosophical thinking with younger students in regards to aesthetic issues, ethics, or otherwise should use “ordinary language with which students are comfortable” (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 43). Keeping the language at a developmentally appropriate level and jargon to the minimum, students will be more inclined to practice the skills of thinking and reasoning well – eventually embodying those skills and dispositions, rather than worrying about specific philosopher’s names or theories. That information can come at a later point, once students have sufficiently practiced the process of identifying philosophical issues and reasoning through them well.

In regard to the second contested point, that too much time will be spent reading and writing about art rather than creating art, I offer the following statement. The mere

addition of aesthetics or art criticism in any form does not overpower the studio aspect of the art classroom. Rather it is the individual teacher who needs to keep watch over how long students engage with each component. Currently, however, it is the study of aesthetics that is getting short shrift by teachers in art classrooms due in part to a lack of training in art teacher education programs (Burton, 2000). But again, why is aesthetic education necessary at all?

Aesthetic education allows us to further understand our own realities initially formed through our sensory perceptions. Beardsley (1958) has outlined seven distinct benefits of aesthetic experience and education, including the idea that aesthetic experience,

...relieves tensions and quiets destructive impulses...resolves lesser conflicts within the self, and helps to create an integration, or harmony...refines perception and discrimination...develops the imagination, and along with it the ability to put oneself in the place of others...is an aid to mental health, but perhaps more as a preventive measure than as a cure...aesthetic experience fosters mutual sympathy and understanding...and offers an ideal for human life (p. 573).

As characterized by the most comprehensive art education curriculum model, Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), developed by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, aesthetic study raises and examines

...questions about the nature, meaning, and the value of art, which lead to insights as to what distinguishes art from other kinds of phenomena, the issues that such differences give rise to, and the development of criteria for judging and evaluating works of art. (Dobbs, 2004, p. 701)

In discussing works of art and the concept of beauty however, questions and discussions often need to swim deeper into the waters of philosophy than most art educators are trained to do (Galbraith, 1995; Burton, 2000). Dobbs (1998) states in an earlier work that

Aesthetics is specifically about teaching children to think philosophically and about examining questions and possible answers that occur naturally in the course of making, enjoying, and discussing art (1998, p. )

As Dobbs states, the study of aesthetics aims to help students think and reflect on philosophical ideas. Stewart (1997) stresses the need for the art educator to recognize philosophical questions, differentiating questions that can be answered by fact or through interpretation from questions of value, concept or metaphysics, which are the philosophical questions. To Stewart (1997), “Questions of concept” are questions such as “When we ask ‘What is art?...’What is sculpture?’” (p. 31) Stewart adds that engaging with works of art may also prompt “questions of moral value (‘Is copying someone else’s artwork wrong?’) or aesthetic value (“Is that artwork good?”). To answer all questions of value we must make a judgment” (p. 30). Then there are also metaphysical questions which go above the physical to raise common, central, and contestable issues (Gregory, 2008) such as, What is happiness? What is the good life? These fundamental questions

play and essential role in the art classroom, and are those with which students should also engage. And as of now, the extremely limited research on visual art education practices realizes that the philosophical aspect of visual art education is drastically underrepresented.

It was in 1966 that Manuel Barkan posited that visual art educators should encourage students to ask questions of value – questions that affect them and the world in which they live, understanding that they are a part of a whole. Lankford (1990, 1992) contends that visual art educators need to have a knowledge base in philosophy to be effective in helping students learn. As Stewart (1997) states, works of art “are based on such things as standards, rules, principles, or criteria, which are often grounded in broader philosophical beliefs or theories; thus, a question of value leading to a judgment may well prompt philosophical discussion about beliefs or theories assumed in making the judgment” (pp. 30-31). However, despite the acknowledgement of philosophical importance, teachers in the art classroom often focus solely on techniques and skills and the philosophical aspect of visual art education is virtually left out of the equation (Bresler, 1998; Eisner, 2002; Stokrocki, 2004; Lappe, 2004; Hughes, 1998; Burton, 2001).

When we experience works of art, we reflect on our experience of experiencing the work of art and subsequently judge the work. In regard to experiencing works of art, Dewey states that

Esthetic experience is a manifestation, a record and celebration of the life of a civilization, a means of promoting its development, and is also the ultimate judgment upon the quality of a civilization. For while it is produced and is enjoyed by individuals, those individuals are what they are in the content of their experience because of the cultures in which they participate (1934, p. 339).

When we make an aesthetic judgment, determining whether or not we like a work of art, think it is good or bad, beautiful or not, there is value in digging deeper into these judgments – we uncover the life of our civilization, our own lives, and the quality of it. Being asked to explain your feelings about or criticisms of a work of art brings to light beliefs that often go unexamined. Verbalizing or writing an opinion in regard to a work of art makes the individual own his or her statement and can lead to the wide-awakeness of which Greene (1978) writes. This wide-awakeness, or realization of one's own context and placement within the world does not necessarily lead to action, however. Opening up our beliefs, which we often feel are truths (Bohm, 1996), to philosophical discussion with a community of inquirers (classmates, for example) helps in the process of creating a self-reflective individual, one who is open to evaluating his or her often rigidly held beliefs and assumptions in regard to any number of topics.

### **Toward Aesthetic-Ethical Discussion**

What the scope of aesthetic study should be and how it is to be taught does vary (Hamblen, 1985, 1988; Hamblen and Galanes 1991, Kaelin, 1989, 1990; Lankford, 1990, 1992; Levi and Smith, 1991) but the contention now is that aesthetic judgment – that is to

say, how students judge a work of art (such as a narrative work of visual art) is, at times, based on their personal stance toward ethical situations evidenced in some works of art or ethical stances towards works of art.

There are a number of individuals who strictly follow Kant's aesthetic notion of disinterestedness. Kant's disinterestedness is summed up well by stating there is a "commitment to aesthetic formalism (the view that all that matters for aesthetic appreciation is the abstract formal pattern manifested by the object, that is, the way in which its elements are interrelated in space and/or time)". There are many who follow a strictly formalist aesthetic outlook such as in Gerda van de Windt's dissertation, *Art and Aesthetic Education: A Painter's Philosophy* (2008), where the author states the following:

Noticing the details and complexity of expressive aesthetic qualities is what matters, not the issues of what monetary or moral value a work of art may have. Ulterior concerns should have no influence on viewers, as they surrender themselves to attending to the object's beauty, unity of form and the art work's expressive intensity. Aesthetic enjoyment and understanding involves letting go and attending to the meaning of the art work's formal structure. (2008, p. 54)

However, Gaut (1998) posits that works of art can be "aesthetically meritorious (or defective) insofar as it manifests ethically admirable (or reprehensible) attitudes" (p. 182). Furthermore, "the ethicist does not hold that manifesting ethically commendable attitudes is a necessary condition for a work to be aesthetically good: there can be good,



even great, works of art that are ethically flawed...Nor does the ethicist thesis hold that manifesting ethically good attitudes is a sufficient condition for a work to be aesthetically good” (pp. 182-3). The idea is that judgments are often made in regard to works of art due to the content of the work – such is often the case in narrative works where the viewer is being drawn into a particular situation. Carroll adds to the conversation when he asserts that individuals

...assessments of artworks remain steadfastly linked to ethical considerations, as can be readily confirmed by listening to what ordinary folk talk about after seeing a film or a play or TV show, or when they trade opinions about the latest novels.

There has been, in other words, a gap between theory and practice with respect to the ethical criticism of the arts throughout the twentieth century – a gap intensified by philosophy’s silence about the relation between ethics and art (2000, p. 350).

The visual artist, like a writer, often prompts the viewer (or reader) to put their own ethical system to work by imagining what it is like to be in a particular situation at a particular time – a specific contextual experience. By allowing students time and space to engage works of art through ethical discussion makes the artwork more relevant to their own lives, as students will develop philosophical questions that are of interest to them, regarding specific scenarios. Whereas Fish (2010) may claim that students should only discuss how prominent intellectual figures like Socrates, Aristotle, or Kant, may respond to a particular situation, a philosophy for children model (Lipman et al, 1980, Lipman,

2003) dictates that students should first discuss how they would act based on their own thought process, reasoning through the opinions and hypotheses for example and perhaps then, with facilitative help, learn the difference between various positions. As Sherman (1999) states, “what guidance can an adolescent girl gain from thinking what Socrates would do in such a case?” (p. 36). To clarify the addition of this quote, adolescents may be able to learn a great deal by thinking about how someone like Socrates would act in a given situation, however, merely analyzing a work of art from an intellectual perspective of the past leaves out the student-centered component. Allowing a student to explore an ethical topic based on his or her own experience first, may allow for the development of virtue as the individual student may learn what virtues are deficient or excessive, such as courage or fear – in accordance with Aristotle’s doctrine of means. As Sherman (1999) cites Aristotle’s, *Nicomachean Ethics*, “To be wise is to know how to exercise...virtues as circumstances require” (p. 36).

Gaut (1998) also explains, however, that “ethicism does not entail the casual thesis that good art ethically improves people” (p. 184), a sentiment echoed later on in the work of Landy (2008) when he states that “Literature cannot edify, but it can clarify” (p. 80). Having students engage works of visual art, encouraging them to express their particular ethical views, and discussing those views in a community of inquiry through dialogue, has the potential to create a self-reflective individual, aiding in ethical development. The main goal is that of helping students learn an alternative way of discussing works of visual art, one that students readily employ, according to Carroll,

with an emphasis on raising questions of value that have significance in the students' lives, as Barkan (1966) advocated for. This helps promote active learning in the classroom, education which does not stem from the teacher disseminating information, but this active learning occurs as a result of children inquiring into issues that they deem important to their current lives. There is an element of self-expression, but there is that larger social objective of educating students in learning how to suspend conclusion, to reflect, to reason, to examine, to work together toward solving an important question.

By engaging in a philosophy for children type model (only using visual elements as a stimulus rather than the traditional novel/text based method) of dialogue students are not only offering their own moral stances and discussing those stances. Students also attempt to understand and evaluate the reasoning behind ethical beliefs, searching for plausible alternatives to stances that are questionable (Lipman, et al, 1980). Through the dialogue process students actually practice "consoling, caring, advising, honoring, sharing" (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 173), caring for other people's feelings. There is widespread belief that, as is evidenced in the forming of various state visual arts curriculum standards, aesthetic education is a necessary component of visual arts education. Moreover, as Dobbs (1998, 2004) and Stewart (1997) contend, and is evidenced in a number of works ranging from Kant and Hume to present day, philosophical discussion is an inherent part of aesthetic discussion.

Socrates shows us that questioning is a necessary component of philosophy, and as Lipman et al (1980) state, "questioning is an aspect of dialogue" (p. 173). Therefore, if

we accept that aesthetic education is a necessary component of visual art education, we at the same time claim that philosophy and dialogue are necessary components. By engaging in a dialogue, practicing those critical, creative, and caring attributes that Lipman et al describe (logical reasoning, imaginative reasoning, perspective taking, respect for others thoughts and ideas and the like) and requiring their practice, we are already engaging in moral education. It cannot be separated from philosophical discussion. Discussing the ethical nature of works just adds another road to travel.

Given a set of circumstances, whether in a literary work or in a visual work of art, students are usually quick to take a stance. Subsequent to a student taking a particular position or view point on a specific issue, it seems that a logical progression would then be to afford the individual the opportunity to discuss the issue with peers who have different life experiences and perhaps those with more life experience (such as a teacher) in order to offer the potential for self-reflection and ethical growth, since self-reflection is a product of dialogue (Lipman et al, 1980). Such is the case in the writings of Noel Carroll (2000) where he states that:

For the advocate of the cultivation approach, education may also involve other things, including the honing of ethically relevant skills and powers (such as the capacity for finer perceptual discrimination, the imagination, the emotions, and the overall ability to conduct moral reflection) as well as the exercise and refinement of moral understanding (that is, the improvement and sometimes the expansion of our understanding of the moral precepts and concepts we already

possess). As the label for this approach indicates, the educative value of art resides in its potential to cultivate our moral talents. (p. 367)

Engaging in ethical criticism as a result of looking at works of art has the potential to help students garner a more well-rounded education which aids students in living a “qualitatively better life” (Lipman et al., 1980, p. 84) - the good life, which is one of the most important, if not the most important aspects of practicing philosophy and gaining an education. It is not about learning skills in order to make more money, or to make the United States more competitive, but rather, engaging in ethical criticism helps students practice being good human beings. This is accomplished by allowing students time to develop and discuss questions in regard to how life could and should be lived.

In longstanding philosophical tradition, such as in Plato’s dialogues and Aristotle’s treatises, including his *Nicomachean Ethics*, the good life is equal to the moral life. To Socrates, knowledge is virtue, and the good life for Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle is living the philosophical life, a life of questioning, contemplation, self-reflection, and a search for knowledge. From Pierre Hadot’s perspective, philosophy’s goal was that of continual self-transformation, reworking the mind and subsequent actions to achieve a moral life.

In addition, Hadot (2004) states, “philosophy was a mode of existing-in-the-world, which had to be practiced at each instant, and the goal of which was to transform the whole of the individual’s life” (p. 265). To be living the good life, one cannot cherry pick attributes one wishes to change or enhance rather, there must be a concerted effort to

look within and reflect honestly on all aspects of one's life. Reflecting on one's lifestyle is a cognitive process that takes continual practice, and is best accomplished when there are critical friends with whom one can discuss important matters. What is brought about here is the idea that an individual's choice of lifestyle is never made in solitude, and for an individual to grow, to change, to realize his moral insufficiencies, he must engage in dialogue with one or more people and then reflect on the discussion that has taken place.

This idea of the good life, the virtuous, moral life runs counter to some of today's conceptions of the good life which are based largely on the accumulation of material wealth and physical goods, where morality is largely a matter of personal preference. However, Plato asserts, in *The Republic*, that ethics are not relative, and that the four main virtues are temperance, wisdom, courage and justice. Aristotle contends that the good life is based on civic involvement and contemplation. I think that allowing students to discuss works of art and philosophical topics generated by engaging with works of art allows students to contemplate their own lives, which can lead to (but may not necessarily lead to) civic involvement and a promotion of an interestedness in helping society as a whole.

Nussbaum (2010) believes that the arts and humanities help individuals become critical of the government, of economic practices, of ways of life, of tradition and as a result, this helps lead to the good life. It is this questioning spirit that leads one to examine and reexamine his own place in the world and the reason for his existence. The arts by its nature push the envelope, moving beyond tradition, as is clearly evident in the

progression art has taken (discussed in chapter two). Sometimes this is not for the better, but this is where that critical, questioning spirit comes in. This is why a circular process of art making and dialogue is so important. Internal dialogue should be open to critique in a communal forum so that ideas may be analyzed and subject to reason. Aristotle stated that life in and as part of a community is better than living a life in solitude. Being a part of a larger whole, having relationships with people is what helps lead to a good life. The visual art classroom can help individuals live the good life, but there must be more of an effort to have the self-expressing individual understand the questioning nature inherent to the arts and learn how to question and critique, especially ethical matters.

Dewey (1959) stated that moral guidance is "the business of the educator" (p. 11). The educator should help students to engage in a process of dialogue, both internally and with others in order to develop a taste for moral conduct. Supposedly, the school system exists so that society as a whole can improve, that there can be "the development of a larger life" (Dewey, 1897/1972, p. 57), "through subject selection, methods of learning and doing, the ideal of inquiry through an art curriculum that represents varied societal experiences extends a way to foster moral and intellectual training."

But as Dewey helps to make my point that dialogue in the art classroom in regard to ethical issues is warranted, we see in the research by Burton (2000) and Sabol (2010) that visual art education practices are severely lacking in this area, due to a variety of factors. Some of these factors include a teacher's preference to teach technical art making skills, a lack of training in inquiry-based pedagogy stemming from teacher education

programs, and the idea that the types of mandates which programs like NCLB, ordered in conjunction with other administrative decisions, has impinged on art educator's instructional time and resources. And, in an effort to substantiate the art curriculum, teachers continue to have students create tangible products. This idea that students should be primarily creating external works of art, rather than engaging in ethical criticism (of their own or master works of art) runs counter to my ideas and those expressed by Shusterman, in his aesthetic model "that life should be practiced as an art" (p. 25).

According to Gregory (1998), "The formalistic view that novels are about language, not about life, fails to explain why people get so caught up liking and disliking different fictional characters or why they deeply desire specific resolutions to certain fictional plots and situations." Similar statements could be made in regard to visual works of art. The Formalist aesthetic theory claims that the social context of a work, intentions of the artist(s), and the feelings of the artist(s) and/or viewer(s) are aesthetically unimportant. In regard to a visual work of art, Formalist elements are built on concepts such as balance, line, shape, color, and composition, elements and principles of art that have been established throughout centuries of art making (Stewart, 1997).

In contrast to Formalist theory, Expressionist theory expounds on the idea that artworks have the ability to evoke a reaction in the viewer by way of feelings and emotions. Within the Expressionist theory, individuals may "attribute the expressive character of an artwork to the formal elements – such as color, line, texture, and use of space – which, with subject matter, help create the feelings expressed or evoked by the



artwork...the formal elements are significant but only insofar as they are involved in expressing or evoking feelings” (Stewart, 1997, p. 22).

Imitation theory centers on the notion that an artwork is judged best based on how closely the work mirrors reality, an idea which dates as far back as Plato’s time, maybe even earlier (Stewart, 1997). A work of art that more closely displays subject matter as close as our own eyes would perceive them, such as Photo-Realist paintings by Ralph Goings, would be judged as better than abstract works by Vasily Kandinsky or Mondrian for example.

Contextualist Theories, according to Stewart, may be divided into three subcategories, including Instrumentalist, Institutional, and Linguistic theories, which focus on the “social, political, and historical contexts in which artworks are made and encountered” (1997, p. 23). Freedman (2000) adds to the conversation, making the point that the context of a work of art is vital to a proper education in the arts. Freedman (2000) states that, “Contexts of production are part of works of art; they provide the conceptual connections that make art worth studying. And yet some art educators still argue that understanding contexts of production is peripheral to understanding art” (p. 318).

Visual art educators concentrate on teaching Formalist terms such as line, shape, color, texture, balance, and the like when discussing a master work of art and altogether miss an important opportunity to discuss other aspects of the work of art, which may prove more important to the overall appreciation of the work of art, aside from affording

the students' opportunity to grow in ethically meaningful ways. Jonathon Kazol (1967)<sup>25</sup> understood the value of digging deeper into works of art and sought to help his students delve deeper as well, but was ultimately released from his teaching position for teaching a Langston Hughes poem to students during the civil rights era. The administration seemed to believe that aesthetic discussion was dangerous. When discussing any work of art, the context in which it was created is extremely important, and often raises philosophical questions which should be discussed. Take for example, Goya's, *Third of May, 1808*, which memorializes the resistance of Spaniards against Napoleonic forces.

In regard to Goya's work (figure 1), Chu (2003) states that

[W]e see a group of captured rebels, led under cover of night to an execution ground where a French firing squad shoots them one by one...The soldiers, seen from the back, resemble automatons with their identical uniforms and poses. The rebels, lit by the lamp, show their humanity, mortality, and courage in the face of death. The man about to be executed shows a dramatic range of emotions...it portrays human slaughter in all its sordidness (p. 151).

At the heart of the work are ethical concerns. For example, we wonder why these unarmed individuals should be condemned to death, why a band of people on the sidelines do not come to the aid of the individual's being executed. Why do these soldiers blindly follow orders to execute? We question their actions.

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<sup>25</sup> Kazol's (1967) book, *Death at an Early Age*, recounts his first year as a teacher in Boston public schools where he was dismissed for teaching a Langston Hughes poem.

As another example, students of mine have viewed Goya's somewhat grotesque, *Saturn Devouring One of his Sons* (figure 2). Upon hearing the title of the painting, not knowing anything about the mythology behind the work, students wanted to discuss why a parent would kill his or her own child. What ensued was a lively discussion with some students taking the position of the child, while some took the position of the fearful Saturn. Students eventually turned to their own lives and wondered what obligations a parent has to a child, and a child to a parent. Shouldn't a parent always care for their children? Doesn't a child have an obligation to care for their parents at some point? These types of filial relationships were explored.

As a third example, Gericault's, *Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man*, (figure 3), begs of ethical discussion, although it could be discussed from any one of the aesthetic theories described earlier.

In this work, the viewer focuses on a relatively older man, dressed in a number of layers of tattered clothing as is evidenced in the ragged edges of the gentleman's outer coat. The old man rests on the corner of an intersection, with some passersby, beneath a window of a bakery. Inside the bakery, two townspeople are visible yet caught up in their own conversation despite the old man and a dog situated immediately outside. Chu (2003) states that Gericault's work "differ[s] greatly from Gericault's large-scale Salon paintings. Meant for a middle-class public" (p. 207). Gericault's twelve lithographic print series showcases figures in their own daily lives, centering on poor, meager individuals

who live in an urban setting. The works themselves are imbued with such moving imagery that the works call for an emotional response from the viewer (Chu, 2003).

Anyone could look at Gericault's work and appreciate it for his use of line, perspective, shading, balance, and the like, but the point is that discussing either of Goya's two works, Gericault's lithograph, or any of the countless other works of art created, merely from a Formalist perspective leaves out important philosophical questions, subsequent discussion, and reflection which can help to add meaning to the work, enriching students themselves as works of art.

Readers may claim that what is proposed here, as a fundamental aspect of the visual art classroom, is actually an irrelevant aspect. I would answer by stating that students clearly judge certain works of art, like narratives, based on the subject matter (as Carroll corroborated earlier); they don't like Goya's, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*, for example, because it is viewed as wrong to kill your own child. Why a student or students believe that this behavior is wrong speaks directly to the aesthetic value of the work, as was described earlier by Gaut (1998). Uncovering and discussing why one does or does not like a work, such as one's feelings towards execution, abortion, environmental issues, etc. do at times, come into play. But in a similar manner as expressed earlier by Gaut (1998) and Stewart (1997), students may also judge Goya's, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*, to be a good work of art because of its expressive nature or because of how it imitates reality through the use of shading to create human-looking forms, all-the-while disagreeing with the ethical stance taken by the characters

within the painting. These fundamental issues of human life seen within these three masterful works of art are those we deal with in our everyday lives. Gregory (1998) expands on this by stating,

Why is it that we cannot escape questions of morality and ethics? Because human actions are imagined and chosen rather than prescribed or programmed...Because there is a dimension of choice to almost all forms of human conduct, conduct is always subject to moral and ethical evaluation. In ethical criticism, the important issue is what we make of ourselves by the choices we make and the actions we perform. None of us chooses our actions or makes our choices in a social and moral vacuum. We seek help from friends, from models, from ideas, from value systems, and from different fields of discourse.<sup>26</sup>

A visual art education in this regard helps students to understand that there are alternate possibilities to life, that action on our parts is not pre-programmed. As Freedman argues, “The visual arts help to make life worth living. They enable us to create, force us to think, provide us with new possibilities and allow us to revisit old ideas...At a time when democracy is being challenged by even our own policy-makers

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<sup>26</sup> The quote by Gregory (1998) was retrieved from the article, *Ethical Criticism: What It Is and Why It Matter?* on EBSCO. The full web address is provided in the references page. No page numbers are provided in the article on the website.

the protection of art and art education in social institutions is increasingly important” (2000, p. ). Referring to a Deweyan (1934) perspective, each individual has the capacity to be a work of art. Dewey states (cited by Shusterman, 1997) that,

What strikes me is the fact that in our society, art has become something which is related only to objects and not to individuals, or to life. That art is something which is specialized or which is done by experts who are artists. But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or house be an art object, but not our life? (p. 26).

Foucault, several decades later, states “...that the self is not given to us...we have to create ourselves as a work of art” (Foucault quoted in Shusterman, 1997, p. 26). If we take the idea that we, as humans, are living works of art, it seems logical to suggest that there are better and worse works of art – better lived lives. It is in this regard that the inclusion of philosophical discussions in regards to ethics within the art classroom is warranted. Helping students to realize what their ethical stance is in a given situation and how that view differs from others could have the potential of helping them progress to a higher stage of moral development. These discussions are not a tangent to the visual art classroom, but in regard to the study of aesthetics, a necessary component.

Within this chapter, I have discussed the role and importance of art history, art criticism, art making, and aesthetics within the visual art classroom. Each discipline offers a way in which students can interact with works of art, with thoughts, with ideas.

But more than discussing or working with external objects, students have the ability to become the work of art, to understand and potentially reshape their own lives like a lump of clay. This is accomplished in a collaborative, supportive environment, where students discuss their judgments of works of art. As discussed, children's judgments (like adults) are often based on how they feel about a particular scenario presented or experienced that has an ethical component. Some students may unknowingly hold a particular viewpoint and opening that position up to a group for exploration against someone else who may have a different view has the potential for students to see their own life in a new light. Moreover, it has the potential for students to reshape how they make ethical decisions in the future. But what students do in the future is not the ultimate goal of such discussions. Rather, the intent is on students practicing exploring their beliefs, working together, appreciating one another, playing with thoughts and ideas through dialogue, all the while learning about how to engage with works of art.

But when I speak of engaging in a dialogue in regard to ethical matters or any philosophical matter, what does dialogue actually entail, and how can a community of inquirers go about engaging in a dialogue so that there is meaningful progress? Let me, for the time being, claim that we accept the notion that our current public educational system in the United States centers more on standardized test taking and drilling specific content knowledge in math, science, and language arts, rather than on helping to develop the whole child. Second, let me also assume that a visual arts education which incorporates more aesthetic discussion, specifically an ethical criticism component taught

using a dialogic inquiry based pedagogy, has the potential to help students to develop a more meaningful life through self-reflection regarding their own actions. I also assume here that the teacher is not imparting his or her own ethical stance so that students take up that particular viewpoint, but is acting as a facilitator who guides student-centered discussions regarding ethical questions that arise from the student's own concerns or interests. This leads us to the question, what is dialogue? What are the components of a dialogue that need to be taken into consideration by the teacher?



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **What is Dialogue?**

As of now, I have hopefully made it clear that I believe public schools have an inherent problem. That problem is that there is too much competition, too much emphasis on attaining future employment, too much standardized testing and rote memorization in an age where information is available at the click of a button. Part of that problem is also that there is not enough education centering on helping children develop as people, helping them to understand their own contexts and answering the questions they have about life and all its complexity. In addition, it is my belief that the visual arts are inherently geared toward helping individuals understand and make meaning out of their lives; the visual arts can help students develop as people, addressing part of the problem mentioned above.

However, the visual art classroom has had a long and ever changing history within American public schools. Today, the discipline is divided by those who believe visual art education is solely about expression, solely about production and technique, or a number of different combinations. My view of visual art education is one that balances out art production with more art history, art criticism, and aesthetic discussion. As discussed in the previous chapter, I put forth the idea that ethical criticism is a necessary inclusion in the visual art classroom. Discussing the narrative that is portrayed or a student's judgment of a work of art through a lens of ethics has the ability to help develop the student as a work of art. I purport that the best way to accomplish this is through the

use of dialogue. After explaining what ethical criticism is and what good it and aesthetic education in general can do for students, as well as some specific examples regarding ethical criticism, the subtle nuances of dialogue will be explored. Subsequent to this, I will clarify why it is that I believe dialogue is beneficial for students' learning in the visual art classroom, as well as why dialogue is not used more often.

### **Types of Dialogue**

As the term art is an open concept that progresses as a result of making and discussing works of art, dialogue is a necessary component of the visual art classroom. I will introduce the concepts of dialogue and the goals as espoused by Dewey, Burbules, Walton, Bohm, and Buber, and explain how each can either be beneficial or detrimental from a Philosophy for Children/CPI lens. Ultimately, I will combine several theories including writings from other philosophers and authors, such as Dewey and Parker in what I believe will be most effective practice for dialogue in the secondary visual art classroom. Dewey (1916) states that

...education offers a vantage point from which to penetrate to the human, as distinct from the technical, significance of philosophic discussions...If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education. Unless a philosophy is to remain symbolic – or verbal-or a sentimental indulgence for a few, or else mere arbitrary dogma, its auditing of past experience and its program of values must take effect

in conduct....Education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested (pp. 383-384).

Within *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, John Dewey tries to come to an understanding of what Inquiry, an important aspect of dialogue, actually is – how it can be defined. Dewey states that “Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole” (1938, pp. 104-105). The definition provided by Dewey seems to suggest that inquiry is the search or operation by which an individual takes a problematic state (the indeterminate situation), which is characterized by disequilibrium, and equalizes that state of tension. What is suggested is that a being encounters a problem within a particular environment. In the art classroom, this problem or state of disequilibrium may be sparked by trying to reconcile an alternative ethical stance taken up in a work of visual art, such as Goya’s previously mentioned work, *Saturn Devouring One of His Sons*. The goal for the student then is to rectify the problem and return to an equalized state.

However, as Dewey (1938) states, a being cannot return to the exact previous state because change has taken place. Moreover, when one problem is solved equilibrium is reached for a time, but a new problem may arise due to reflection on the previous solution or due to another outside agent that causes an individual to reevaluate the previous solution, such as viewing a different painting which offers an alternate outlook on a specific situation. This problem/solution/problem and tension between equilibrium

and disequilibrium creates an evolutionary pattern, which may occur in the community of philosophical inquiry (CPI). Students encounter a problem, e.g. what is fair, and arrive at a solution, or perhaps a better word is consensus, which suits the needs for that point in time. However, although a solution or agreement has been reached in a given session, a new problem may (and probably will) arise from that previous solution.

The community of philosophical inquiry which centers on dialogue in regard to common, central, and contestable topics (Gregory, M.R, 2008) can be considered a pedagogical strategy, a tool that with practice can help to create a better life for those involved. The community of inquiry may best be described as a collective experience, where knowledge is constructed through and by the group (a visual art class for example). It is separate from one individual's ideas and speculations. We are all part of this world and each one of us offers a unique perspective. We experience the world together, in society, in relation to one another; truth and knowledge are communally constructed. No one person has the answer and no one will ever have one definitive answer to questions of value. According to Richard Paul (1992), these "Multilogical issues require a dialogical, or dialectical comparison of two or more relevant perspectives, and provide the opportunity for exploration of claims and grounds, assumptions, reasons, evidence and criteria across more than one context" (p. 19). To make any sense of the world in which we live, we need to communicate, and not superficially, but meaningfully through dialogue. Paul (1992) continues by proclaiming that even though children encounter multilogical questions in their life, "children rarely

are given a real opportunity in school to reflect upon questions in mutually supportive dialogical settings” (p. 20). Once we, as educators, understand that we must engage in dialogue with one another, the goal then is to understand the different ways we do engage with one another. Only then can there be progress, not just in thought, but perhaps in action as well.

The notion of dialogue is furthered by David Bohm’s, *On Dialogue* (1996). Often, individuals are inclined to believe that their opinions are ‘truths’, even though these opinions may only be the individual’s own assumptions and reflect his or her own background/experience. However these thoughts or ideas are formed (through experiences with family members, teachers, reading, etc.), people tend to identify with these thoughts and defend them as if any act against the idea is an attack on the individual. What happens in the community of inquiry (ideally, as this also depends on the group - it takes time to develop the skills and dispositions associated), is that individuals come to believe that their opinion in regard to multilogical issues is not law. Dialogue, to Burbules (1993),

...is an activity directed toward discovery and new understanding, which stands to improve the knowledge, insight, or sensitivity of its participants...Dialogue represents a continuous, developmental communicative interchange through which we stand to gain a fuller apprehension of the world, ourselves, and one another (p. 8).

In order to have a dialogue, members within the group must understand that there is no winner or loser, as Bohm describes. It is not a debate where people give opinions and argue to try and defend a particular position, but rather a venue where people can talk openly and try to come to some new meaning or new understanding on a given topic, some sort of truth. These dialogues are designed to try and get at the unknown or unfamiliar territory. People throw out ideas which are then evaluated by the group, evaluated based on logic and reason and how each idea relates to the previous statements. Members of the community need to curb their egos if the group is to make any meaningful progress. An individual undergoes a transformation whereby he/she comes into relation with others, understanding that there are other viewpoints. A given session may seem to an outsider as disorganized and/or frenzied – organic in nature, progressing in a non-linear fashion, but there is actually a real order to a true dialogue. This “disorganization” can and usually does provide some new insights and new understandings. There will be people who (at times) get upset, who are disturbed, or who are uneasy. All of the positive and negative emotions and feelings are part of the process of the community of inquiry and dialogue. These varied emotions would seem to indicate that the path the group took a particular conversation was different than what was expected. If someone was annoyed or disturbed at points in a conversation, it probably means that something that was said went against the person’s opinion or assumptions. The dialogue serves to open all participants up to new possibilities and new meanings and new understandings (Bohm, 1996).

Walton adds to the conversation in regard to dialogue as inquiry by claiming that “The goal of inquiry is to prove that a particular proposition is true or false, or that there is insufficient evidence to prove that this proposition is either true or false” (1998, p. 70). Burbules’ states that inquiry is an inclusive-convergent type of dialogue which “aims toward the answering of a specific question, the resolution of a specific problem, or the reconciliation of a specific dispute” (1993, p. 116) Moreover, the main characteristic of inquiry, to Walton (1998), is the idea of cumulativeness. The inquiring group, such as a visual arts class discussing a parent’s obligation to their child(ren) which arose as a result of viewing a Goya work, carefully works through propositions one at a time, with each subsequent point building on that previous proposition’s truth or falsity. For example, if one student references Goya’s, *Saturn* and states, “There is no acceptable reason for a parent to kill his or her child,” other students may offer examples to counter that statement’s truth claim, such as being in self-defense. It is important to note, however, that participants may retract statements/propositions during the inquiry, but the goal of inquiry is “to minimize or, if possible, eliminate retractions. What this means is that, in the context of an inquiry, retraction of commitment is regarded as a very serious step” (Walton, 1998, p. 70). Any retraction should be considered a serious step because participants aim to create “workable solutions to problems that are of importance” (Lockwood, 1999, p. 55).

Dewey’s, Kennedy’s, and Bohm’s, Walton’s, and Burbules’ views outline the major goal of dialogic inquiry as utilized in the practice of CPI, but it is important to

delve deeper. Walton posits several subsets of dialogue in *The New Dialectic* (1998), including Persuasion Dialogue, Negotiation Dialogue, Information-Seeking Dialogue, Deliberation, and Eristic Dialogue, in addition to Inquiry, which was already discussed. Likewise, Nicolas Burbules offers four distinctions, dialogue as conversation, dialogue as inquiry, dialogue as debate and dialogue as instruction. Each of these types of dialogue has a function, but what that function is in the context of CPI is necessary to discuss.

Walton's Persuasion Dialogue (PD) (1998) is similar in regard to one of Burbules' (1993) four distinctions, dialogue as debate. In Walton's view, PD is a dialogical exchange whereby two parties come together with the goal of presenting and representing a particular vantage point on a given argument. Ultimately each party wants to, as the name suggests, persuade the other person to cross the argumentative bridge to the other person's point of view through argumentation, logical reasoning, and rhetoric. According to Walton (1998), "What is distinctive about persuasion dialogue is that a participant's arguments are supposed to have as premises propositions that the other party is committed to... Persuasion dialogue is also closely tied to, and begins with, presumptions for a commonly held opinion" (p. 38-39), such as abortion or the death penalty. Each party attempts to persuade the other through either positive arguments for his own view or negative arguments against the other person's position. During what Walton describes as a more conversational dialogue, propositions can be inserted and retracted by participants in order to make specific points with the goal of persuading the other.



Burbules (1993) dialogue as debate holds similarities to Walton's, PD. In regard to debate, Burbules (1993) opens, "A critical-divergent dialogue has a sharply questioning, skeptical spirit, but does not have any necessary aim toward agreement or the reconciliation of differences" (p. 119). When thinking about CPI, what could be the benefit of debate or persuasive dialogue where each party has a specific agenda? Burbules (1993), states that debate can be both beneficial and detrimental to "communication and pedagogical growth" (p. 119). Debate can prove beneficial in that third parties who are not yet locked into a particular view point or stance can see a range of arguments, including the pros and cons of each side. It is this third party that then has the ability to offer a new perspective based on the previous two opposing points of view. This third perspective may be able to act as a rupture to the other two parties' thinking, dislocating their preoccupation with specific ideologies and dogmas.

However, dialogue as debate can have adverse effects, as Burbules states. These undesirable outcomes include the desire to win, rather than communally construct an answer that works for all or most. We could see this occurring when discussing Gericault's, *Pity the Sorrows of a Poor Old Man*, where one or two students stand steadfast in their belief that no one should help the elderly man because of a speculation that he put himself in that situation, whereas another faction may contend that we should always help those in need. The power dynamics of the debate may also skew the relationships between participants. As individuals become emotionally attached to their arguments, and act more passionately or authoritatively, this may stifle another's

perspective through fear or uncertainty. Facilitation becomes a key component in this instance. The facilitator must be keenly aware of the participants; who is speaking, how often, to whom, what non-verbal gestures are being made during the inquiry, etc., in order to keep as much of a balance as possible (Kennedy, 1994).

Subsequent to PD, Walton introduces Negotiation Dialogue (ND), an argumentative strategy that is inherently different from that of Persuasion Dialogue. In Walton's earlier PD and Burbules' dialogue as debate, arriving at truth was a main concern. However, each party in the dialogue holds his or her own view of what is correct, what is true. In ND, however, "the truth and falsity of propositions are secondary" (Walton, 1998, p. 100). Truth and falsity becomes secondary to the main goal of arriving at a favorable outcome in regard to an item or items of value. These items could be a physical good, such as a car, or an intangible good, such as thought. Either way an "I'll grant you this, if you grant me that" attitude and procedure is adopted, with individual satisfaction as the goal. In this view, each person or party attempts to arrive at what they desire by giving up that which they do not value. For example, a prospective car buyer can tell the car dealer, "I'll take the car you have on the lot, even though it's not the color I like as long as you throw in the mp3 player for no charge." This type of dialogue does not neatly correspond to any of Burbules' four categories of dialogue, but Walter Parker (2003) adds to the distinction stating that negotiation is a discussion where individuals may have varying interests and how a dialogue progresses is based on a tally of how many concessions were given to each person with a particular interest. Again, like

debate, negotiation is characterized by two initially opposing groups, only in negotiation the groups are trying to come to some mutual understanding and agreement on a solution that is beneficial for both parties.

In regard to CPI in the classroom, negotiation dialogue plays a very limited role, due to the want to arrive at some type of truth. Suppose students are asked (after the teacher has modeled the behavior enough) to come up with an ethical question in regard to a specific painting, and a couple of different questions arise. Negotiation may ensue between student and student or student and teacher where individuals agree to discuss one topic or question before another. This could be accomplished by listing the questions together and understanding the benefits of answering or addressing one question before another. From there, the dialogue can continue. For the sake of time, the teacher could make the decision, but there is importance in allowing students to reason through and practice the process of selecting a question by themselves, with guidance from the teacher. It is important, however, to remember the results of these types of negotiations so that one student or one topic does not dominate the classroom. For example, it could be detrimental to a student's educational experience, their self-esteem and future participation in the group, if he or she is consistently on the negative side of the negotiation, such as telling the student that their question will be raised next and is subsequently avoided (whether purposefully or by accident).

Another subset of the broader topic of dialogue is Information-Seeking Dialogue (ISD) which is a type of dialogue that centers on the appearance that one individual is a

“repository of information that the proponent cannot get access to other than by questioning the respondent” (Walton, 1998, p. 126). In this type of dialogue, an individual or group of individuals seeks out information from another in order to arrive at some truth or to solve a problem of some kind, to reach a state of equilibrium. Common examples could include a doctor’s appointment, where the doctor questions the patient in regard to symptoms so that the doctor can adequately treat the individual; in another situation, an employer could question an applicant in regard to credentials to see if the interviewee is an appropriate addition to the work force. In a CPI dialogue, this strategy may be used if one individual in the group has particular knowledge in a specific area and the group needs that information to help move the dialogue further. For example, in the art classroom, individuals could be discussing a painting depicting the Transfiguration of Christ. In discussion of the work, one individual may be a practicing Christian and have knowledge of the symbolism and iconography which could be pertinent to discussing the work. Once a question is posed and the knowledgeable student answers, students may question what explanation or information was given, ask more questions, etc., until the group has acquired the necessary information to continue. Walton (1998) states that, “An information-seeking dialogue is concluded when the original question posed in the dialogue has been answered, or when the sequence of questions and replies indicates that the information possess by the respondent is insufficient to answer the question” (p. 130). This brings up an important facilitative move in that these different dialogical strategies can and do change. Knowing the aforementioned as well as the sub-sets of dialogue still to be introduced, helps to make a CPI session more focused.

Deliberation is another sub-category posited by Walton, claiming that individuals using this strategy seek to resolve practical problems. Offering different solutions, the group works through the proposed suggestions to come to some agreement on a course of action. Dialogue as deliberation is also viewed as decision making, and in this regard, the individual may actually act as a group participant in an endeavor to solve a problem or may keep the decision making process entirely internal, working in his or her own mind trying to solve the problem. In the latter, the individual who seeks to resolve an issue by him or herself posits a solution and then plays devil's advocate in order to adequately assess the proposed solution (Walton, 1998, p. 152). Again, there is a state of disequilibrium that is seeking to be remedied through purposeful thought. In regard to the classroom, it is important to understand the agency of each of the participants. Are all individuals included in the deliberation, do some individuals have the ability to override the thoughts of others? (Wooldridge and Jennings, 1995, p. 116 in Walton, p. 153). What are the goals of each agent involved in the decision making process? Are they conflicting or common goals? Deliberation dialogue "arises from a problem that requires thinking through a sequence of practical reasoning to arrive at the best or most practical solution. The problem can be an ethical one, or a technical problem requiring expert skills or knowledge, or a scientific problem, or any kind of practical problem we encounter in our normal activities" (Walton, 1998, p. 153).

In addition to dialogue as debate, Burbules (1993) introduces the concept of a critical-convergent style known as dialogue as instruction. This style of dialogue is

viewed by Burbules (1993) as a Socratic style of dialogue that is “a highly directive form of teaching, but one that operates through indirect processes of instruction that require the student to work actively to make conceptual connections in response to teacher questions” (p. 120). This type of dialogue, I think is best represented by Plato’s, *Meno* where a Socratic dialogue unfolds between Socrates and Meno’s slave. Socrates seems to be leading the slave toward a particular end, with the illusion of the slave being an equal participant in the dialogue. Lockwood (1999), states that “Burbules is quick to point out that this directing type of dialogue is not wholly what he is after as dialogue” (p. 53). This should not be the goal of CPI/dialogue in the classroom, due to the fact that it is viewed from my perspective, as an insincere dialogue, one where the teacher has a specific end in mind, rather than letting knowledge and meaning emerge from the group. Should this type of dialogue occur in the art classroom, the teacher would basically be leading students to adhere to a particular ethical stance, which could be dangerous. As Kohlberg (1981) states, not all individuals reach the higher levels of moral development. Moreover, leading students down a particular path, like Socrates does with the slave, even if we could objectively say it is the correct decision, does not help students learn the process of thinking through, reasoning, and being self-reflective due in large part to issues relating to authority and the teacher-student relationship.

In order to have any meaningful dialogue, it seems necessary to include in the process, Burbules’ inclusive-divergent concept of dialogue as conversation. This type of dialogue aims at connecting individuals on a deep level, seeking to create “a generally

cooperative, tolerant spirit, and a direction toward mutual understanding” (Burbules, 1993, p. 113). Allowing two or more individuals to engage informally about a variety of matters, ranging from the trivial to significant experiences, through anecdotes that are not judged, criticized, or forced in a particular direction, engenders camaraderie.

Nel Noddings, in *Challenge to Care in Schools*, contends that these types of social encounters “connects us to each other and helps maintain caring relations. It also provides us with the knowledge of each other that forms a foundation for the response in caring” (1992, p. 23). It is in this regard that I believe dialogue as conversation is dialogue which acts as the foundation of the community of inquiry, building trust and appreciation for each other so that individuals can move on to engage in what Walton, Burbules, Kennedy, and Bohm introduced earlier, describe as Dialogue as Inquiry. Burbules’ Conversational Dialogue makes dialogues such as Walton’s Negotiation Dialogue or Deliberation Dialogue, more productive and efficient by the fact that an understanding of the other individual as a person occurs first.

Moreover, as Parker (2003) states, dialogue

...should not be confused with situations in which people who have already formed their opinions gather to advocate and defend them, nor with alternating monologues (whether autobiographical or expository) where there is sequential talking but no listening, let alone perspective taking and empathy. (p. 81)

What is being advocated here is what Martin Buber in *The Knowledge of Man* (1965), describes as a genuine dialogue. This, to Buber, is an experience where individuals come together to gain wisdom to make meaning relevant to all participants' lives. Parker (2003) adds that this type of experience "creates an in-between space – potentially a solidarity across differences; a 'we' – among people who are not necessarily friends or relations..." (p. 81). There is a transition from seeing the other as an object, the Buberian I-It relation (1970), not worthy of time or consideration; an object to conquer and master (as in a debate) to an I-Thou state, whereby individuals are respected, treated as equals with value. A more concrete example of the I-It/I-Thou relation would be when one is walking in New York City, or any other city for that matter, sees and without any regard walks by a homeless person asking for change, treating the homeless person as nothing more than a stationary object, an ornament on the street. This would be an I-It relation with the other person. This cold, indifferent relationship would change to an I-Thou, if when asked for change, you stop to converse with the person, even for a short time. You could ask his or her name, hear his or her story, whatever it may be, you acknowledge that person as another person, who is in actuality very similar to you, despite having a different set of life circumstances. Such could be the case in a classroom where one student, say the class clown, takes the time to listen to a timid classmate's response of his or hers in regard to a painting.

Buber claims that both person to object (I-It) and person to person (I-Thou) categories are necessary for human life, with the melancholy realization that most of our



lives will be spent in the I-It phase. When implementing these types of ethically centered inquiry-based dialogues, the visual art classroom can be a time of I-Thou for students, which perhaps above all else in our current educational context, provides the space for such practice, since the art classroom naturally incorporates questions of value (Levine, 2010). Students are deeply interested in other students' works, and ultimately other perspectives on the world, as they are currently formulating their own perspectives on a wide variety of ethical situations. The objective of helping students learn how to engage in dialogue with one another is to learn to experience a loss of the sense of self and a realization of the idea that we are one; we are united, despite any differences that may exist. In a dialogue devoted to inquiry, we are at once ourselves as well as the others around us. In experiencing and thinking with one another, we change, we are no longer merely ourselves, but a combination of the others with whom we interact in a quest for truth (Kennedy, 2004).

Within this section I have introduced and discussed a number of sub-categories that fall under the umbrella that is Dialogue. The different types of dialogue listed above each have their time and place within our lives, and in our classrooms. Moreover, there can be, as Walton (1998) states, dialectical shifts within a given conversation that are often times very fluid and organic, with "no explicit announcement of the closing or beginning of a dialogue" (p. 244). For example, suppose a teacher has been working with students using CPI on a regular basis. Students have already practiced coming up with philosophical questions. What exact questions students wish to discuss depends on the

visual information provided in a work of art and the connections that students make with those works. But let us just pretend that students have in fact come up with a list of questions after working individually and then in pairs. The master list of questions generated by the students is then written on the blackboard, large pad, whiteboard, smartboard, etc. After being asked to group like questions together, the teacher may ask the group which question is a good question to start discussing. At this point, students may start to deliberate, offering ideas and reasons for each question, quickly escalating into a debate over which question is better and for what reason. Two (or more) individuals may be vehement in regard to their support of their own or another's question. What starts out as a debate may quickly move into a negotiation by one of the debaters or a third party in order to resolve the issue without detriment to the discussion that is to come. If a student does not make the facilitative move to negotiation, the teacher as facilitator should step in to do so. At this point, students may start to offer ideas and examples and the actual inquiry commences. As students are working back and forth, speculating, positing ideas, offering counter examples, etc., students are bound to offer anecdotes of personal experience. At this point, the inquiry can shift into tangential conversation, deviating from the goal of answering a specific question to conversation unimportant to the topic at hand. Persuasive dialogue, debate or another type of dialogue may naturally be used by a participant who wishes to segue back toward the inquiry. After this short hiatus, the inquiry may continue on its winding path, until an impasse in the discussion is reached. Where do we go from here, where have we gone so far in this

discussion, what do we need to discuss next? The inquiry then switches again to another type of dialogue.

Knowing the various types of dialogue, what their goals are, and when to use them is of utmost importance to any facilitator. Conversation, such as a funny anecdote amidst an inquiry, can help to build community; but likewise, too many attempts to start a conversation or inclusion of irrelevant stories by a particular person can serve to isolate that person from the group and derail the inquiry. Students quickly pick up on the fact that one person in particular always offers lengthy examples, yet they do not relate to the inquiry at hand, and this can become irritating. As such, there might be a different type of dialogue used, such as PD or ND in order to remedy that situation. The aim should always be the overall functioning of the group, working as a whole.

### **Dialogue as a Pedagogical Strategy**

Richard Morehouse states that

The community of inquiry is well suited to assist the student who is on the verge of understanding, in other words a student at a zone of proximal development.

The advantage of a discussion with a community of inquiry is what one student knows about one part of the discussion, for example a concept or a strategy, can help another student who will in turn be helped by another student in a circle of ‘assisted instruction’. The teacher can also aid this process by modeling and

providing cognitive structures in particular (Morehouse, 1993, p. 9 cited in Splitter and Sharp, 1995, p. 38).

The zone of proximal development (ZPD) was developed by Lev Vygotsky (1934/1978) and is defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p. 86). As children grow and engage in a variety of activities, physical, cognitive, etc., there are always undertakings that are slightly out of reach, which is to say that the child needs some help in order to accomplish a given task, as his or her abilities only take them so far in a given situation at a specific time period. Dialogue and other social activities which have been arranged in a systematic fashion play a vital role in developing the mental processes of individuals such as students (Vygotsky, 1978).

Applying the ZPD to the standard visual art classroom, suppose a student in a middle school classroom is having trouble making a piece of coil pottery. The student has had experience with clay before, making pinch pots, for example, but cannot quite grasp the skills needed to achieve a proper coil. A pinch pot is a type of ancient pottery method whereby an individual takes a certain amount of clay and using the thumb and middle finger or index finger (or a combination of both) to slowly pinch a pot into a specific shape, a bowl, a cup, a dish, or any other desired form. This is a pottery method that is generally at a beginner level. Coil pottery, is slightly more difficult for children. In this

process, one needs to take a lump of clay and slowly roll it out into a long strand. Think back to when you played with Silly Putty or Play Doh and rolled pieces into ribbons of hair or hotdogs, this is a type of coil making. In the art classroom, some students have problems discerning the amount of pressure to use, the speed at which to roll, the amount of moisture to keep the clay from cracking or becoming too saturated. The child, having one of these problems, is within a ZPD. The conscientious teacher or table-mate, seeing the child or classmate struggling, can offer an example of how to remedy the problem. Use less pressure and demonstrate, add a little more or less water and demonstrate, etc. With this added guidance, the child can overcome his or her current state, graduating on to encounter more difficult scenarios.

As Mayes (2006) contends, the zone of proximal development is best served through the example of scaffolding listed above where the teacher has "...the main responsibility for providing the guidance, but the wider learning group," can and often does play a pivotal role (p. 16). According to Vygotsky, children learn when problems are solved in a collaborative fashion. As Ravencroft and McAlister (2006) state,

Vygotsky considered language and dialogue to be the most interesting and powerful semiotic mediators and the primary tools for thinking. He claims that our higher mental functions, such as verbal thought, reasoning, selective attention and reflection, originate in the social...communication and social contact are essential (p. 77)

If we accept this social-constructivist notion that dialogue plays a pivotal role in the educational experience, that peer mentoring/tutoring/guidance can help students to mature cognitively, as well as the idea that art criticism/aesthetics are an integral component of a contemporary visual art education classroom, two questions immediately come to mind. Why is dialogue not more readily used as a pedagogical strategy to discuss aesthetic judgment, ethical criticism? Second, how can dialogue in regard to ethical criticism make an appearance in the visual art classroom?

Regarding the first question, there are a variety of plausible reasons why dialogue plays a limited role in the visual art classroom. Burton's, 1999 Survey of Secondary Art Education Instruction in U.S. Schools indicates that "One-to-one conversation, demonstration, and exploration of media and techniques clearly predominate, in the 80% and 90% range" (2000, p. 69), which could be due to art teacher preparation programs which educate future art educators primarily in studio courses. While many teacher programs include a philosophical component, as Vygotsky (1978) explained, it may be hard to make the leap from general philosophy to practical application in the visual art classroom. If no specific coursework is offered or required in art criticism or aesthetics, aside from a limited introduction in a methods class, a future educator may never realize the importance. Thankfully, this was not the case for me.

Moreover, art educators may concentrate more on studio lessons and projects due to the time constraints involved (Eisner, 2002; Madeja, 1980). Some middle schools in New Jersey, for example, allow students to take a visual art class for a marking period, it

is the rarity that students are offered a longer period of study. In addition, Sabol (2010) realized that,

In open-ended item responses, respondents reported that during art classes they...were required to include remedial content focused on language arts and math which required additional work to prepare new lessons plans and instruction and instructional materials for that content. Inclusion of remedial work also caused cuts in art curriculum content (p. 87).

Additions imposed on the visual art classroom such as those described by Sabol relates to the Elementary, Middle, High School setting, and eat into time that could be spent helping students engage with works of art in addition to the studio time where students create works of art. In reference to NCLB, The Center on Education Policy describes findings that school participants in the study indicated increased instructional time for Mathematics and English language arts by 141 and 89 minutes per week respectively, art and music instruction decreased by 57 minutes per week.

There also exists a problem for the visual art educator, in that one may feel the need to constantly prove him or herself in an era of accountability, due to the fact that if budget cuts are needed, the arts are usually the first to be cut (e.g. Beveridge, 2010). It seems that an art educator's pedagogical successes are best evidenced to those outside of the art-education world (such as administrators and parents) in the form of physical, tangible products including paintings, drawings, ceramics, and the like; such as those holiday / school art projects (Smith, 1996, p. 3), that decorate refrigerators and walls of

homes. As such, visual art educators may feel the need to constantly have students produce, as if they were workers in factories, so that artwork and therefore, the teacher's efforts can be shown. The reasoning seems to be, the more artwork students produce and is showcased, the better the art teacher.

Administrators often laud the accomplishments of their school to parents by showing off their art programs by way of an art show, by having a concert, chorus recital, dramatic play or musical, for example. Siphoning time away from studio production, on an already limited schedule to engage in what could be lengthy dialogues (despite students' interest in the discussions), allows fewer works to be made. In my own experiences, I knew that my administrators (save for two rare exceptions in two elementary schools I taught) had the point of view that less physical artwork meant that I was not working as hard or did not take my job seriously. Little attention was paid to the cognitive growth that students made in terms of interacting with and discussing their own master works of art.

More explicitly, there is a circular relationship between art, philosophy, and dialogue. As I explained in chapter two, the subject of art has been discussed for millennia, and its basis is philosophical in nature. It is in and of itself, a common, central, and contestable term. Likewise, the content of works of art has sparked critical conversation and dialogue for centuries. In the Philosophy for Children program (e.g. Gregory (2008); Lipman, 1976, 1981; Lipman et al, 1980) there is an emphasis on a stimulus for dialogue. The stimuli prescribed are generally texts that were designed by



Matthew Lipman. However, it is my belief that there is a widely untapped resource in visual works of art, which may act as stimuli for philosophical discussions in visual art classrooms, as was discussed in chapter four at some length.

Engaging with works of art, using the steps of art criticism, students may come to speak and interact intelligently with works of art. Rather than picking out a particular sentence or passage in *Suki* or *Lisa* (two of Lipman's philosophical texts), students may take specific visual information within a work of art to discuss and act as a jumping off point for philosophical discussion. Lipman created his own philosophical texts to use in the classroom so that he could more readily control the types of questions that students would raise.

If works of visual art are used in place of Lipman's texts within the visual art classroom, would the art teacher lose control of the classroom due to not knowing where the students may want to take a dialogue? I would say, maybe. Anyone using works of art in the classroom should have a sense of the subject matter and a reasonable idea of the types of questions that could be raised. But part of philosophical dialogue in this manner is that it is inherently risky. The part that is so appealing to students, to teachers, to people in general is that it is not a completely preprogrammed, preplanned endeavor. It is an in-the-moment, honest discussion based on an immediate or almost immediate response to a visual creation. The beauty of it all is that the ensuing dialogue does not leave the work behind, as the discussion actually helps to enhance the meaning making of the painting and the power that art has to affect people's lives. Using visual works of art

rather than text offers a different insight into a topic. You are not reading and then interpreting, you are seeing then interpreting. It is, in my view, a drastically different experience. Again, in my view, a thought or idea is better received, more powerful when seen through my own eyes as an image (no matter if it is depicted in a painting, sculpture, drawing, etc.) rather than words.

Works of art depicting scenarios with people for example, such as war, poverty, abuse, friendship, love, and the like, become less abstract in a way, especially in the case of photography. Adding the idea of works of art impacting the viewer, Feagin (1995) says, "...a painting or sculpture as an object relates physically to our whole body, not just to our eyes" (p. 21), and it is in this sentiment, as anyone who has stood before an immense painting or sculpture in a museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art will understand. A work of art has the ability to envelope you, to take you in, to reach you in a way words, as powerful as they can be, cannot do.

However, engaging in philosophical discussion within the visual art classroom also acts as a stimulus for subsequent works of art and as a way to revitalize or reshape current works of art. Discussion of a common, central, and contestable theme can inspire students to envision alternatives to what is, what was said, what can be. These works of art can be completed in a variety of media, and artistic discussions, like how the media chosen to depict a complex thought or idea affects that thought or idea, can ensue. Students will all react differently to a philosophical topic due to their own background knowledge and experiences. This means that no two works will be the same although

some may be similar. To me, it strikes right at the core of what art should do. That is to say, it challenges students to come up with an original, at least self-important, idea and figure out the most efficient and effective way of communicating or depicting that idea in a visual form. A knowledgeable teacher and classmates can help each student through the brainstorming process.

As I mentioned, this art creating, philosophical discussion process is circular. New works generate new discussions, which inspire new works to be created. As Feagin (1995) states,

Paintings and sculptures...are generally touted as giving us visual insights, through changing the way we see things, or as giving us insights into character or personality...Paintings and sculptures can reveal attitudes and social structures prevalent at the time when they were produced; we can reflect on cultural differences and similarities and come to a better understanding of ourselves and how we are embedded within the styles, institutions, and attitudes of our own culture” (p. 17)

What I am stating here could be construed as being important but not necessary to the visual art classroom. One could ask, couldn't another subject area incorporate dialogue into the classroom and just as easily discuss philosophical, more specifically, ethical topics? I would answer, yes, an English classroom for example, could center on reading a poem, short story, or novel, discussing some philosophical aspect of that work or sparked by that work and then engaging in an assignment where students explore their questions

through their own literary creation. However, this should not be confused with doing the same thing that the visual art classroom accomplishes. Someone trained to skillfully create and intelligently respond to and interact with works of visual art will offer expertise to students as they grapple with difficult issues that arise through engaging with visual works of art. What the art teacher brings to the classroom, or I should say, should bring to the classroom is an understanding of the importance of play. Play for children, outdoors or indoors is always inherently risky, as is this type of dialogue. But it is serious play, and as Bruner (1983) states, “play is an activity that is without frustrating consequences for the child even though it is a serious activity. It is, in consequence, a superb medium for exploration. Play provides a courage all its own” (p. 76). The type of play advocated here, centering on dialogue and the exploration of philosophical ideas, such as ethics, is not a random activity. The playing with ideas comes as a result of the child struggling to understand the world around him. Bruner states that “There is no question that the games of childhood reflect some of the ideals that exist in the adult society and that play is a kind of socialization in preparation for taking your place in that adult society” (p. 77). The ideal of children playing with philosophical questions in the visual art classroom is a world where people rationally discussion questions and appreciate where another person is coming from, while trying to arrive at an answer. Why would we not want children to play with these ideas, what service does it do to inhibit their discussion of questions they find important?

What I am advocating for is not just the inclusion of dialogue in the visual art classroom, but rather, a circular process of dialogue, reflection, and visual art production. It is not always in that order. Sometimes a dialogue can occur, followed by reflection, followed by more dialogue, followed by art production. Sometimes art production can spark reflection and then a subsequent dialogue, etc. The dialogue could be purely internal or with a group of co-inquirers. But what is needed is a skilled visual art educator who understands the relationship between all three and helps to facilitate the classroom, helping to move each student through his or her thoughts. In the last chapter, I discussed the conception of *the* good life, and what this circular process of dialogue, reflection, and art creation does is help to develop a sense of how to live *a* good life. In the visual art classroom, students come to realize in a unique way that each person brings with them their own life experiences, stories, and within their own contexts. Hadot (2004) states, “philosophy was a mode of existing-in-the-world, which had to be practiced at each instant, and the goal of which was to transform the whole of the individual’s life” (p. 265). The circular process I discuss is philosophically based, and at each instant in the visual art classroom, like in no other, students are engaging all of their senses by putting them to work and using them to reflect, to inquire, to refine, to question. The switch by introducing the philosophical dialogue and themes/questions that students develop, is that there is a classroom shift in how the student engages with himself and the artwork. Rather than just asking himself, does the work of art look the way I want it to look? The student questions how do I feel about a particular topic, what is my stance on this or that issue, why do I believe that, what do other people believe, how does my view stand to reason

against theirs, and how does this work of art fit who I am as a person or reflect my viewpoint, as well as what does it say about me? It is in the visual art classroom that the student is at the same time inside and outside of his work. Imbued in it but somehow also hovering above it, reflecting on it. The tripartite relationship between dialogue, reflection, and art creation helps to develop the person as the work of art, when students are taught to look at the visual arts from the perspective I have put forth.

The problem comes when a teacher needs to assess students in this process. Figure four in the appendix may help to ease some in regard to how to assess a dialogue; however there are some problems. In assessing students' dialogue centering on ethical criticism, or any philosophical dialogue for that matter, it seems like there is an end that is presupposed. If this is the case you can definitely have criteria to measure the students against. As a teacher I could say each student is supposed to talk at least three times per class, responding to another point or example, but that seems to be an imposition that would hurt the flow of the dialogue and the ultimate goal which is to help students resolve questions they are interested in. However, the goal of the philosophical dialogue, as I see it, is not to have any particular end result in mind, but to allow the organic nature of the visual arts to take over. This should not be confused with being unprepared and winging the class, so to speak. Getting back to the issue at hand, if you do not have an end in mind, how then do you assess the students? This is a dilemma I cannot answer at this time, but thought it important enough to pose it.

Over the course of this chapter, I have thoroughly explained the subtleties of dialogue and the importance of each subcategory from a CPI perspective. Moreover, I have discussed dialogue as a pedagogical strategy, and the benefits associated, when implemented in the visual art classroom. In chapter four, I outlined what curricular addition should be made the visual art classroom. Again, I posit that ethical criticism within the visual art classroom allows students the ability to develop a deeper understanding of who they are as people, as individuals who have free will and whose actions do play a role in shaping our society. After expounding on my ideas of what this may look like in the visual art classroom in the previous chapter, this chapter was intended to further understand how such a curricular addition should be incorporated.

After reading through my thoughts on dialogue as a pedagogical strategy in the visual art classroom, some individuals may not think that dialogue in the art classroom has any value whatsoever, while others may feel uncertain in their abilities to facilitate a dialogue. Some may not believe that students truly have anything to add to the conversation, and that they should not attempt to make a contribution. There may be the belief that students are empty vessels waiting to be filled by the teacher, who is the possessor of all the important knowledge about a given subject. There could be any number of plausible reasons as to why people do not include dialogue in their classroom. Nevertheless, for those who wish to include a dialogic component to their classroom, as described in the previous chapter, a new question must be answered. Given the time

constraints of the visual art classroom, how can a visual art educator incorporate dialogue involving ethical criticism in the classroom?



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **How Can Technology Enhance the Visual Art Classroom?**

As has been discussed throughout the preceding five chapters, many art educators do not have the necessary skills and content knowledge in order to effectively teach and discuss aesthetic issues. Erickson (2004) states that in a

3-year curriculum-development project initiated at New York's Museum of Modern Art...The researchers found that 'many teachers were...at the same stages as their students and a stage or more away from museum staff and experts'...and that teachers with poor comprehension of information transmitted that information to their students in a distorted way (pp. 479-480).

Gathered from this is, while no real revelation is the idea that in order for what I am proposing in this dissertation to work, visual art educators may need to continue their education in the visual arts in order to appropriately teach the recommendations and additions prescribed here. In the succeeding pages, no matter what technology is used, it makes little difference and will do little good if the educator him or herself does not possess the appropriate content or pedagogical knowledge. Having said that, and assuming we accept the claim made that ethical criticism through dialogue can help to offer balance to the current educational system, the next step is to explore and ultimately offer a practical answer as to how this curricular and pedagogical addition can actually be

incorporated into the visual art classroom. It is this practical answer which is the center of this final chapter.

### **Online Education and the Visual Arts Classroom**

According to Versluis (2004), “the most radical changes in the history of higher education have come about through technology” (p.38). Commuter schools were created through the advancements in automotive technology, including the making of inexpensive cars and fuel (Versluis, 2004). In more recent years, teachers in face-to-face classrooms have engaged in web-based instruction/education, where the internet is used in some capacity, including posting a calendar of events for the classroom, homework assignments, projects due dates and descriptions, and video clips, to name a few examples. A visual art teacher, for example, may choose to post a link to a YouTube video of a painting demonstration so that students can view the clip at home, before they come into class to experience a new lesson. Technology has helped students and teachers at all levels of schooling to move beyond the walls of the traditional classroom to virtual education or online education, which is available to the vast majority of individuals in the United States due to faster and cheaper internet connections and the development of online programs that may be adapted to suite a variety of educational endeavors (Versluis, 2004; Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Lan, Cooper, Ahern, Shaw, and Liu, 2006).

Online education is a form of distance learning that allows students to enroll in classes, generally at the undergraduate and graduate levels (although K-12 online models, such as <http://www.k12.com/>, do exist) and engage with other students through online

discussion boards, email, and live chat to name a few examples. Most universities still offer face-to-face classrooms, but hybrid courses, (a combination of face-to-face and online environments), and completely online courses are becoming more abundant. Rutgers University recently developed and began a Master in Accountancy in Governmental Accounting that is completely online.<sup>27</sup> Online education has taken hold since the turn of the millennium and has burgeoned ever since, with the majority of public two and four year colleges and universities offering online coursework (Tallent-Runnels et al 2006). Tallent-Runnels et al (2006, p. 94; citing Pethokoukis, 2002) state that “Enrollment in online classes in the United States is increasing by 33% per year,” and citing Katz-Stone (2000) state that “the market was estimated at 2.3 million students in 2002”. Other solely online for-profit universities such as The University of Phoenix, are seeing an estimated growth in enrollment per year of about 70 percent, ushering in an extraordinary amount of revenue of around one billion dollars per year (Versluis, 2004).

A wide variety of courses and subjects are presented in completely online formats including areas such as Finance, Business, Philosophy, Mathematics, Science, Education, and History, to name a few. However, in my searches through several university online course catalogs, very few visual arts related courses have been offered online. Those arts related courses that are offered completely online are primarily text based courses, such as art history. Hybrid courses in the arts are limited to photography based art forms which

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<sup>27</sup> For more information on this program and to see what Rutgers outlines as the advantages of distance learning, visit <http://www.rutgers.edu/about-rutgers/distance-learning-adds>

naturally use the computer as part of the process (such as through photo-editing programs like Adobe Photoshop).

If the physical visual art classroom concentrates less on studio time, perhaps requiring the majority of art making to occur at home rather than in class, the potential works of art could be started as homework and then brought in and critiqued. There are a plethora of instructional videos available online, that are of professional quality (technically and instructionally speaking).<sup>28</sup>

However, if students create works of art at home to only be critiqued in class, then a crucial component is eliminated, the instructional abilities of the visual art teacher during the art making process. This could potentially lead to wasting more time in class trying to ascertain what students had problems with, where, and why. Demonstrating techniques in class, watching students engage in an art making endeavor, and helping those students in real time is an essential component of the visual art classroom. Moreover, if students are to advance in their educative experience, they will require the assistance of someone more knowledgeable in regard to a specific task (Vygotsky, 1978). Granted, students may be able to find an alternative video to trouble shoot a specific problem, but this could quickly turn a student off if a video is not found quickly. Or, even if a video is available and provided by the teacher, what assurance is there that it actually

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<sup>28</sup> An example of a good online instructional video related to the coil method may be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cPuXbqYNIY>. There are a number of videos in this instructor's video series related to ceramics, which are broken down into smaller segments, making the subject matter more manageable for those who are looking to learn ceramic techniques. The way the technical instruction is broken down is a positive aspect, and if students have the art making materials, they could complete the task at home. Likewise, this could take place for a painting or drawing lesson as well.

helps the student through the specific problem experienced? Burton (2000) and Sabol (2010) claim that visual arts teachers' expertise primarily comes in the form of studio production knowledge. And even if the art making aspect were eliminated from the day-to-day activities, there would not necessarily be more time for discussing master works of art. Instead, the time that would have been allocated to creating a work would most likely be dedicated to troubleshooting problems and critiquing the in-progress works of art. Moreover, if the art production aspect were eliminated, it could devalue the art classroom even further in the eyes of parents, other faculty members, and the administration. This path seems as though it leads to a dead end.

### **The Feasibility of a Hybrid Model of Visual Art Education**

So assuming that visual art education remains in the curriculum, what other options are there? As was stated, research indicates that visual art teachers in K-12 education primarily use their in-class time for studio-based projects, with little time for art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Acknowledging this, a hybrid model of visual art education could add an extra dimension to the visual art educational experience, one I contend is vital to education. Many schools already have some online component for teachers (such as personal websites that are to be updated on a regular basis), students, and parents to access in addition to teachers regularly using online media in the classroom. In the coming pages, I will explore the complex nature of online education and attempt to outline a plan for an online dialogic setting discussing aesthetic questions

raised by students (primarily at the secondary/middle school level) in regards to visual works of art.

Understanding social constructivism and the work of Vygotsky (1978), learning takes place within a social context, with the act of reflecting on one's own thinking being an essential component for learning (Dewey, 1916). As the trend for online education grows, and this hybrid model of visual art education is explored, there is a need to further understand interactivity and interaction in an online setting (Sims and Hedberg, 2006). According to Mayes (2006) interactivity often refers

...to the implication that there are two agents involved in some action, and there is an influence of both on the outcome. However, we also frequently refer to the idea that learners interact with learning materials, so we cannot restrict the concept by defining an agent as necessarily an active participant: one of the agents may be passive information which cannot itself do anything except make itself accessible... (p. 9).

In an online context, it is necessary to recognize that interactivity comes in a variety of forms, including the idea that students interact with other students, students interact with their teacher, students interact with the content (both presented by the teacher and discovered through self-motivation) as well as with the interface of the of the online learning space (such as Blackboard, WebCT, and Moodle) (Moore, 1989; Hillman, Willis, and Gunawardena, 1994; Mishra and Juwah, 2006; Sims and Hedberg, 2006).

Whether discussing a face-to-face (FTF) classroom or online classroom setting where there is more than one individual, trust will be the thread which unites all participants (Palloff and Pratt, 2001, 2003, 2005; Spillane, Gomez, and Mesler, 2009). Trust acts as a vehicle for innovation in that risk is supported, and trust improves problem solving because people are less likely to believe there are ulterior motives when working with one another, thus helping to concentrate on the task at hand. As Lipman et al stated some years earlier in reference to philosophical discussion, “Unless an environment is created that is conducive to mutual trust and respect for each individual in the classroom, no educational program, neither philosophy for children nor any other, is going to make much of a difference in helping children to become moral individuals” (1980, p. 156). But developing trust in an online format is not necessarily the same as in a FTF classroom.

Palloff and Pratt (2005) state that, teachers who are generally regarded as more outgoing, personable faculty (in the university setting) are offered the positions to teach online courses. The problem with this, they claim, is that it is hard to convey a specific personality through text in a digital world. What often happens is that the teacher in question appears flat or sarcastic, which leaves students feeling uncomfortable or uneasy about expressing themselves. Face to face interaction allows humans (although it can be misinterpreted) to figure out the exact meaning of a statement based on gesture (Kennedy, 1994) and intonation. Within a hybrid model, teachers need to take caution when conversing with students, as their in-class FTF persona may not easily translate in

an online format. In the previous chapter, I discussed how conversation is a type of dialogue that can lead to further, more meaningful communication. Just as you engage in small-talk upon meeting a friend of a friend in a social situation before discussing more personal matters, so too should this happen in an online setting. The key is to imagine that you are starting a new class, as if no one has met before. Students may have anxiety over their thoughts and words being in print, as there is a sense of permanency (e.g. Palloff and Pratt, 2005), due to fear of the technology such as the new interface with which students will have to become accustomed, or any other number of reasons. In an attempt to build an online community based on trust, online teachers may provide a session/space for individuals to connect on a more personal level. Palloff and Pratt (2005) discuss the idea of a program called The Sandbox, which is an online chat room designed as a space for more social interaction, but this will depend on the interface available for use. According to Gregory (2007),

Part of what makes dialogue so meaningful and efficacious for inquiry is that it is an intersection of the different inquiries and journeys of the participants; the kind of dialogue described...is only possible if individual participants see themselves as partners in one collaborative inquiry, if they commit to a shared agenda of questions and to shared methods of pursuing those questions (p. 61)

Once students (and the teacher) feel acclimated to their new digital environment, actual coursework may begin. It seems more logical to take an extra day or two allowing



students to become comfortable than the duration of the online component with students who are insecure or afraid of communicating with one another.

Mishra and Juwah claim that “email is the most used technology on the web” (2006, p. 161), but teaching and learning online allows for synchronous and asynchronous discourse. Asynchronous communication may be defined as discourse where students log into a particular platform, such as Blackboard, and are able to engage with classmates and coursework while other participants/classmates are not logged in simultaneously (although they may be). An example would be a discussion thread where individuals can post a topic him or herself while others post threads responding to the previous post or starting their own topic. Each individual participant need not be logged in, in order to participate. Synchronous communication, on the other hand, may be defined as a type of discourse that allows all participants/students to engage with one another in real-time, such as video-chatting or instant messaging (e.g. Hirumi, 2006; Mayes, 2006; Mishra and Juwah, 2006).

Comparing the two, Davidson-Shivers, Tanner, and Muilenburg (2000) found that synchronous discussions allowed for more authentic conversation, direct contact with participants with immediate responses that were found to be less focused and succinct than the asynchronous communication which allows more time for thought and reflection; such is the case in talking on the phone versus say, using email. It would seem as though asynchronous communication, such as discussion boards, may be the most viable option for developing a hybrid component of visual art education due the fact that

if this is to be performed at home as an ongoing homework assignment, students cannot be expected to meet at the same time in an online classroom after school. Or, for example, if computers are available in the art room, students may go to the online discussion board and post an idea or respond to an idea already in progress concerning a specific work of art. In this way, the aesthetic dialogue continues, but it does not necessarily mean taking time away from production for time sensitive projects.

Before engaging in any type of online threaded discussion, chat session or otherwise, the teacher should make clear the goals of the session such as “critical discussion and reasoning, exploratory dialogue, creative thinking...the roles of the participants...the intentions/moves that may be performed...the locution openers that actually express the surface-level realizations of the intentions...and the rules of interaction...” (Ravenscroft and McAlister, 2006, p. 79). In any given discussion session, regardless of how long, the roles of the individual participants need to be clear. Which students are, as Ravenscroft and McAlister state, “the discussants” (2006, p. 79) and who is the facilitator? According to Gregory (2007), “The role of the facilitator is...to model and to call for good dialogue moves (cognitive and social), and...to help the participants keep track of how the dialogue progresses...” (p. 61) In an online setting, as in a FTF setting, it would prove beneficial for the teacher to model the appropriate facilitation behaviors first, before allowing students the opportunity to facilitate a discussion (if at all, depending on the duration of the overall art class). It should be noted though that the teacher should still continue to moderate and “intervene with moves such as identifying

assumptions overlooked by the group” (Gregory, 2007, p. 61), including the student-facilitator. Ravenscroft and McAlister, although they do not cite any Philosophy for Children literature, seem to be aligned to a degree with the P4C model, in terms of their definitions of intentions/moves, locution openers, and rules of interaction. Ravenscroft and McAlister state that intentions/moves can “inform, question, challenge,” while locution openers come in the forms of statements such as “‘My evidence...’, ‘Is it the case that...’, ‘I disagree because...’” (2006, p. 79). These examples are aligned with Lipman et al (1980) and more recently, the Philosophy for Children Practitioner Handbook (Gregory, 2008). As Lipman et al state, “Although one doesn’t teach philosophical topics to children, it is possible to elicit from them the wondering and questioning characteristic of philosophical behavior at any age” (1980, p. 103). In this regard there should be a general conversation regarding the work of art first and when a philosophical point arises, a dialogue may ensue. The teacher should take time online or in a FTF class session to offer examples and ways of looking at works of art and types of philosophical questions that may be asked, which provides a type of scaffolding, allowing students to make the leap to asking more philosophical questions that arise from the visual information within the painting.

By following the points mentioned and those that I will discuss in a moment, we can see that secondary visual art classroom students will have the opportunity to systematically discuss philosophical and more specifically, ethical matters, which arise out of their engagements with works of art. Lipman et al (1980) outlined a number of

locutions that aid in any inquiry, each having a particular use. When trying to elicit opinions or opening statements from participants the facilitator could ask, “What do you think about the question / how do you feel about...?”

According to Lipman et al (1980), specific questions are designated for clarifying and restating statements so that students may be able to express their views more appropriately. Questions in this category include something along the lines of, “You seem to be saying that the work is not good because...x, y, or z” or “Is it possible that based on the visual cues in the work, that...” Often, it is necessary to move beyond clarification “to explore not merely what they say, but the meanings of what they say...” (1980, p. 115). This is accomplished through questions such as “Is (blank) what you are saying?” Each individual participant’s interpretation of and answer to a question may fluctuate according to the experiences in his or her life. In order to draw out interpretations of the participant(s), the facilitator or other discussant may ask or state, “Your statements seem to suggest that...”

It is natural in the course of a conversation to ask a person with whom you are conversing to define or explain a term being used that is unfamiliar to you. It is a necessary step in order to alleviate any confusion or misunderstanding that could otherwise take place. As an educator, I can recall several instances where I had to ask a student to explain what X word means because it was a new type of slang that I did not understand. Such is the case in philosophical dialogue as well. As Lipman et al (1980) state, “There are times when the terms employed in a discussion get to be more confusing

than illuminating. On such occasions, it may be well to pause for a definition – or else to abandon the troublesome terms altogether” (p. 118). However, it is important to keep track of the flow of the conversation as asking to define a potentially loaded term such as love or friendship while students are working collaboratively in a positive direction can disrupt that flow causing damage to dialogue as a whole.

In engaging with works of art and rendering a judgment, the goal here is to dig deeper into students’ assumptions, unearthing beliefs that they may not know they held. In a philosophical dialogue it is necessary to uncover assumptions at times, and this can be accomplished through specific questions. In particular, this could prove beneficial when students are judging a work of art. For example, a student could say, “I don’t think it’s a good work. I don’t like Corot’s, *Hagar in the Wilderness*, because the woman and child at the bottom look like they were abandoned,” to which the teacher could prod by asking, “Aren’t you assuming that being abandoned is always a bad thing?” The dialogue could potentially revolve around the notion of abandonment, including topics of adoption or parental obligations/family obligations. Certain children may have a related experience, although it could be painful to talk about, it could also prove to be a healthy outlet. It is this notion of questioning that returns back to idea of the good life, constantly evaluating and reflecting on our own particular situations and circumstances to make meaning.

There is no way to clearly outline what will be discussed, but a teacher should carefully choose a work, view the work, devise his or her own philosophical questions (or

those the teacher thinks the students will bring about) and have exercises ready to help students engage with those specific questions. The teacher plays a critical role in monitoring discussions and should pay careful attention to student participants. If one student does not respond or has not responded to a thread, such as in this scenario, the teacher should reach out to that child personally to see what the problem is. It could be that the child does not want to discuss the matter due to a personal experience or is struggling with the interface, for example.

In addition, the teacher-facilitator and student participants may request reasons for particular beliefs using questions such as “What is your reason for saying that...? What makes you think that...?...Why do you say that...? Why do you believe your view is correct? What can you say in defense of your view?” (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 121). As the authors claim, “When one offers a reason in support of an opinion, it is generally because the reason is less controversial and more acceptable than the opinion it is meant to support” (1980, p. 121). The reason serves as a premise which works toward the conclusion that was previously stated. Fundamentally different from asking a student for reasons for a belief is the act of asking a student “How do you know?” (1980, pp. 122-123).

For example, suppose a dialogue regarding abandonment ensues, and a student states that abandoning a child is always bad. When asked for a reason, the child may state that it is bad because children who are abandoned are not happy. Although we asked for and were provided with a reason, the next question, “How do you know that children who

are abandoned aren't happy?" opens the conversation up more. "Because my friend, Tommy was abandoned and he doesn't like his new parents, he's not happy, he looks like the family in the painting." We see that the student only knows what he thinks he knows based on one personal experience. A similar experience occurred when Aristotle counted the number of legs on a fly (five, one was missing) and proclaimed all flies have an inaccurate number based on his personal experience. In response, the facilitator could ask, are there not any other possibilities? Can there be children who were abandoned but are happy? In the latter example, has anyone seen flies with more than four legs? These questions help to elicit and examine alternative points of view and experiences. This can be accomplished further by using questions such as "How else could this matter be viewed?...Is your view the only one people might take on this topic?...Is it possible that other explanations than yours are possible? Couldn't it also be that...? What if someone were to suggest that...?" (Lipman et al, 1980, p. 124).

Any of these questions can be asked at any time; however, as was stated by Lipman, it is necessary to consider the impact that the statement will have at a given time. Will it disrupt a train of thought? Will that disruption prove beneficial to the group or will it be cause irreparable damage to the current dialogue?

Lastly, as far as rules of interaction, students should all feel welcome to participate and should participate in the dialogue, whether by offering an example, relevant anecdote, statement, restatement, inference, challenging an assumption, identifying a fallacy, etc. Moreover, students should be respectful when engaging in a

dialogue. That is to say there is no abusive language, snide remarks, or the like. Students should also take turns, and either through self-facilitation on the part of the students, or by the teacher, make sure that no one person or group of people is dominating the dialogue.

Ravenscroft and McAlister (2006) describe this kind of inquiry based dialogue as a dialogue game and explain how (although they do not reference P4C) a model of inquiry such as Lipman's, P4C can occur online. Some may take issue with the game connotation, as there is meant to be neither a winner nor a loser in the context of an inquiry-based dialogue. But the idea is that discussants should aim to work together toward an end, which in this case would be discussing ethical matters arising from viewing and interacting with works of art. That is not to say that individuals will not have different viewpoints, unable to reach a consensus. But the difference is different than setting the dialogue up as a debate from its inception. Additionally, as Gregory stresses, the facilitator should not try to force a consensus among the group as "Dissent and even factions can be productive, so long as mutual respect is maintained" (2007, p. 63).

Specifically, Ravenscroft and McAlister (2006) introduce InterLoc which is an interface used to help students recognize and practice using specific moves as described earlier by Lipman et al (1980). Ravenscroft is the project director for Dialogue Games and InterLoc, and the program is described as a dialogue game which aims to "...foster



reasoned discourse and lead to greater meaning making within the contemporary learning landscape”<sup>29</sup>

The program is able to be adapted to a specific context, such as a visual art education class discussing works of art. There are folders where specific files can be uploaded or downloaded as well as links to other websites posted. The facilitator/teacher can set up specific groupings of students who will discuss a specific question or topic together. One of the major benefits of this program is that it incorporates locution openers, which aids students in the process of understanding what moves are being made, by whom and when. Easily identified categories such as Inform, Question, Challenge, Reason, Agree, and Maintain are listed on a student’s dialogue box, requiring him or her to make a conscious move in the dialogue (Ravenscroft and McAlister, 2006). The interface is plain but easily manageable so as not to promote anxiety within the participants. However, one need not acquire such a program, as other online interfaces, such as Blackboard, could work just as well. The teacher could model the behaviors, and just as easily provide a list of possible locutionary opening statements that students are required to use (at least at first, to practice behaviors that aid in promoting a more efficient dialogue). Moreover, it is essential for the teacher to understand how the program works such as how to post, how to start a new thread, how to define groups of students, and be able to troubleshoot problems when they arise.

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<sup>29</sup> [www.interloc.org.uk/about.htm](http://www.interloc.org.uk/about.htm), accessed on October 23, 2012

How the groups of students are set up plays an integral role in student-student interaction. As Juwah (2006) states, “Socialisation of the group is critical in helping to ensure good group dynamics as participants get acquainted with individual, social and cultural differences...The group’s performance can be limited by the number of participants” (p. 174). When there are too many people in the group, there may be too much confusion, too many posts being made resulting in students being unable to keep up with the discussion, spending most of their time reading and re-reading what was already posted by others. On the other hand, if there are too few students, there may be very few interactions.

Mishra and Juwah (2006) state that any teacher using an online discussion board should, just as in the FTF classroom, make students aware of what the expectations are in regard to participation and grading procedures. Grading participation could prove to be a challenging task – there are always exceptions based on students’ individual abilities – IEP’s, etc. However, the authors outline a rubric that could be used for assessing online dialogues (see figure 4).

Another way to grade students could be to use a journal system, where students reflect on their own practices and the growth they see in themselves citing specific examples from online transcripts. Discussion threads, such as in Blackboard, stay posted until removed by an administrator (online terminology for someone granted the authority to remove/add information, rather than a principal or vice-principal). If individuals in an online visual art class are discussing questions of an ethical nature, it will prove

beneficial for the teacher to save transcripts just in case a parent or administrator (such as a principal) has a question about a dialogue.

It is recommended that the class size remain at a reasonable level, however, as this is not in any teacher's control, what can be controlled is the groupings of students to foster meaningful discussion, as was discussed earlier. In addition, Mishra and Juwah (2006) mention similar points earlier on, such as using "open-ended questions to promote divergent thoughts" (p. 163) as well as understanding the value in each of the different types of dialogue such as those I discussed in the previous chapter, that can take place. Moreover, it is important to guide the discussion through facilitation and suggestions, helping to summarize the dialogue every so often, paying attention to participation (those who may be talking too much and too little), and moderating accordingly. The authors suggest that a response to a student from a teacher should be provided within 24 hours.

As Gregory (2007) contends, a dialogue can span the course of several class sessions; it should not be a rushed event. Using a discussion board allows for more reflection and thought-out posts, as compared to synchronous chat sessions, where everything is in real time (Juwah, 2006). Acknowledging this, I would suggest that a given dialogue span the course of a week in the online classroom. Day one could be spent looking and responding to the work of art, possibly generating questions in regard to the work. A homework assignment of maybe fifteen to twenty minutes or more may be assigned, but could last longer depending on the students' interest in the work.

The second day could be spent categorizing the questions, classifying questions as philosophical, and differentiating those from questions of fact or that can be answered by empirical evidence, etc., and identifying a question that the group wants to discuss.

Day three could be dedicated to offering hypotheses, opinions, and reasons for particular answers. Ideally this part would be performed in smaller groups with students that the teacher has grouped together because of the various cognitive and social skills that each student brings to the table, so to speak. Groups may need to be changed once the online dynamic is witnessed firsthand by the teacher.

Day four could continue on with the dialogue, after summarizing what has been said thus far, allowing time for students to reflect on the previous day's session. There are any number of ways to manage the online session, including taking one day in the FTF class to view the work of art and discuss it together, generating questions and then posting those questions online, and having students take the rest of the week to discuss the questions in small groups. Teaching is an art form and a science, so it cannot be stressed enough that if this is going to be implemented, the teacher should take what is being stated as a generic guideline that must be adapted to fit the particular needs of the students involved.

The reason this hybrid model is advocated for secondary schools (primarily middle school) is due to the fact that the art teacher generally remains with all the students throughout the course of their enrollment in the school (typically sixth to eighth grade in New Jersey). As Lipman et al (1980) claim, "The process of preparation is a

time-consuming one, one that requires continuity from year to year, and reinforcement each year of what had been learned the year before. It requires, moreover, an able teacher committed to dialogue and open inquiry” (p. 189). Having a knowledgeable teacher who engages with every student year after year will help to keep that consistency with each subsequent year. The teacher has the ability to know where students are with regard to their reasoning abilities, emotional situation, and what type of character the child is of, as well as how sensitive a student generally is to his or her peers.

This idea of continuity between student, teacher, and parents is a more recent educational innovation known as looping. Looping is a way of organizing students so that students remain with the same teacher for two, sometimes three years, in an effort to build on the rapport already established in the classroom, eliminating or significantly reducing the anxiety of adapting to a new grade with new teachers (Crosby, 1998; Elliot, 1998). Franz, Thompson, Fuller, Hare, Miller, and Walker (2010) studied the effects of looping on students in a middle school mathematics classroom. According to their study, “Looping students achieved statistically significantly greater growth on the MCT than their non-looping counterparts between sixth and eighth grades.” These findings suggest that “looping may academically reengage students during the middle school years” (2010, p. 298). However, if a teacher has a negative impact on a student, this could prove to have a negative impact on the child’s education the following year. As many middle school visual art educators, like music teachers, gym teachers and other special area teachers, do encounter students for two or sometimes all three years (or more depending

on the district) of the student's middle school career, introducing a space for aesthetic dialogue could have the potential to liberate students.

Technological advances such as the ability to hold a class session online has definitely had an impact on the way classes can be and are taught. This has implications for teacher education programs. While I do not think that teacher education programs can keep students up to date with every facet of the latest technologies, it is important to at least brief them on what is available and how some programs and tools may be used and why. Ultimately what should be taught is the ability to be innovative in the subject area and to foster the idea of life-long learning and reflection.

### **Concluding remarks**

Our current educational system can be changed in order to afford students the opportunity to receive a more well-rounded education, to liberate them from the current culture of public schools, one of competition and standardized testing. By allowing students to engage in dialogue regarding aesthetic questions with a community of inquirers, there is a move away from competition with one another toward communal understanding, a fostering of global consciousness. Students will be learning to look at and evaluate works of art from an important, but neglected vantage point, an interestedness of the viewer in regard to philosophical, often ethical, issues evidenced within and that emerges from works of visual art. Students get the time and space to discuss ethical situations for example and reason through them, taking into account their own and other life experiences and perspectives. In this way, students may also be

liberated from their own constraints. As the Eagles song, *Already Gone*, goes, “So often times it happens that we live our lives in chains, and we never even know we have key”. Students may awaken from a slumber they did not know they were in and make changes within their own lives, for the better. As a result of making some small change within you, it can impact society. This is the importance of aesthetic education and the inclusion of ethical criticism. I believe that it would be best if the dialogues could take place in the classroom as a group, but the online model may prove to be just as good or better once implemented.

Greene (1978, 1988, 2004) posits that much of what has come into being in our society is because it was imagined, and acknowledging this means that the world can be re-imagined, reorganized, reconfigured. If it (it could mean anything, universal healthcare, gender relations, race relations, etc.) can be imagined, it can become a reality. For Greene, however, there must be some type of force that moves one to action, to question “Why?” Scientifically, this is Newton’s first law of motion in that an object remains in a particular motion (in Greene’s instance, an unquestioning lifestyle) unless an outside force acts on it (life experience that begs the question “Why?”). Greene states that “The ‘why’ may take the form of anxiety, the strange and wordless anxiety that occurs when individuals feel they are not acting on their freedom, not realizing possibility...not elevating their lives. Or the ‘why’ may accompany a sudden perception of the insufficiencies in ordinary life, of inequities and injustices in the world, of oppression and brutality and control” (Greene, 1978, p. 43). Works of visual art can act as stimuli for

students to ask the question “Why?” in regard to certain societal and individual actions. For too many students and children in general, there is a feeling of powerlessness which is almost inescapable. Greene (1978) states,

...that such feelings can to a large degree be overcome through conscious endeavor on the part of the individuals to keep themselves awake, to think about their condition in the world, to inquire into the forces that appear to dominate them, to interpret the experiences they are having day by day. Only as they learn to make sense of what is happening, can they feel themselves to be autonomous. Only then can they develop the sense of agency required for living a moral life (p. 44).

Greene (1988) promotes aesthetic education as a means to reach this state of wide-awakeness, a state of being where individuals come to realize or remember what it means to live with other human beings, to have a dialogue which promotes a life of decency. The trouble as described by Bruner (1983), is that children already have this understanding of how to live with other children, yet presumably lose it somewhere along the line, perhaps through our current educational system’s emphasis on competition.

Wallace Stevens’ poem, *Man with the Blue Guitar* (based on a Picasso painting of the same name), tells of a man with a blue guitar who refuses to “play things as they are” and insists instead that we must “throw away the lights, the definitions,/ And say of what you see in the dark...” By ridding ourselves of these old definitions of art education, by verbalizing what we see in the dark (a new way of helping students engage with works of



art and each other); the unexamined aspects of life (our own thoughts and beliefs in regard to philosophical issues; ethical issues), and as a result of using our imagination, the roads to new possibilities can be paved and subsequently traveled in "...a form of collaborative, playful, communal 'worldmaking'..." (Kennedy, 2004, p. 211). Whether working with text or a work of visual art, as in what I envision; students can engage in a form of play where they try on various masks, offer different perspectives, examples, counterexamples, posit ideas, and reorganize statements, to try and arrive at some newly constructed meaning.

In Greene's writings, she calls for the reading of revered works of literature such as Moby Dick, Dostoyevsky's, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's, *The Great Gatsby*, to name a few, but I think that artworks should be used as a vehicle for an aesthetic education and the implementation of the pedagogy that is the community of philosophical inquiry. While Greene uses works of literature that often take time for students to read and comprehend, famous works of visual art such as Velazquez's, *Las Meninas*, Edward Hopper's, *Nighthawks*, David's, *The Oath of the Horatii*, Caspar David Friedrich's, *Monk by the Seashore*, *The Life Stages* or any contemporary painting dealing with war, poverty, media, technology, etc., could be used in that they are visually rich paintings which allow the viewer to open up a broad range of philosophical topics of discussion, specifically ethics. Unlike Greene and the works of literature she discusses, the visual works of art that I offer can be shown in one period and discussed almost immediately because that is one of the beauties of visual art; it is instantaneous.

In each of these instances, whether the vehicle for dialogue is a work of literature, a philosophical text, or a famous painting, what seems to happen is that these revered works are no longer the sole property of the academic elite because of the fact that a teacher in the K-12 setting brought them to the children's classroom (Agamben, 2007; p. 74). Put more simply, we could say that students in the art classroom have the chance to discuss famous works and serious ethical questions in a playful setting and forum. Again, this does not mean that the works are diminished in any capacity, but rather, they are brought back to the realm of common use, in the classroom with students who can play with the works of art in a dialogue.

By playing with these often sacred works of art, students have an epiphany of the ordinary – a realization of everyday life which, in the realm of the child, can present some new experience or idea. As previously mentioned, the child who is in a state of play is not tied down to anything, to any one perspective, although they may hold firm to one belief; they exist in this state that is neither here nor there; the in-between. Is it not better to allow students the chance to practice engaging with and reasoning through philosophical questions, specifically ethical questions/situations at an earlier age than to wait and let them only think about such matters when the actual moment arises? The communal dialogue emerging from works of visual art, like a painting, is no less serious than the standardized test in the eyes of the child, but differs significantly in that the painting and the dialogue are never finished; they are always being reconstructed, reconfigured, reanalyzed and improved. Through an aesthetic education, an arts

education, students can question, can wonder, can imagine and re-imagine the world in which they live to create some type of new reality. This state of imagining and of play is the most important part of a child's education in that they are not necessarily forced to go one way or the other, but rather, think, seriously about issues of interest.

Using the framework provided within these past several chapters, students, with the guidance of a knowledgeable and dedicated teacher are, as Wilson states, "provided opportunities to write and rewrite the texts of these artworks into the texts of their own lives" (1997, p. 94). As students discuss works of art and the ethical/moral situations they perceive in those works, they are not being taught philosophical theories or memorizing vocabulary, philosophers, or dates, but rather are forming an attitude of questioning, of pondering, of reflecting on real life, practical concerns.

Referring back to The Progressive Education Association (PEA), children who are playing the way I have discussed are able to develop naturally. No questions are being forced on students to answer, but instead, students are shown how they can look at and interact with works of art with a philosophical eye and mind and are encouraged to raise any questions they have when they arise. As the dialogue is sparked by a students' question ensues and the cycle continues into an artistic creation based on that discussion, the child's interests are also the motive for his work. Likewise, as I have stated, which is in line with the PEA, the teacher is not standing at the front of the classroom commanding that certain brush strokes be made or opinions be taken. Rather the teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding students through their questions and art making activities.

According to the PEA, record keeping is important in that it helps to scientifically measure children's development. In regard to this serious play, as the teacher interacts with his students you can make observations about students' behaviors, attitudes, reasoning abilities, and other habits that develop as you may with your own children, only here you would take notes of where each student is developmentally to see if there is any progress. The goal after all is in developing: the way students interact with works of art as well as the habit of reflection and suspended conclusion to name a few examples discussed.

As the PEA advocates, schools should "pay equal attention to all facets of children's development" and "the school and the home must be active partners in meeting the needs of children" (Irwin, 1991 p. 53). Currently, the school system is not paying equal attention to every part of students' educational upbringing. This is evidenced by budget cuts in the arts and a push for more standardized testing in two main areas. Job readiness and other economic factors are at the heart of the school system today. Philosophical dialogue and the ability to discuss questions of value is what are desperately needed in today's schools. The arts and humanities, according to Levine (2010)

can nourish deliberative democracy. They are the disciplines which most directly address contested questions of values, the same questions that animate public debates and divide citizens and their elected representatives...the humanities

address these questions with a degree of detachment, reflection, open-mindedness, and collegiality – hallmarks of civility (p.15).

By addressing philosophical issues, students are required to think for themselves, having to first formulate an opinion and then offer reasons for that opinion. Engaging in such discussions encourages students to work together in a process; a cycle of tension and equilibrium through dialogue, reflection, and art making, where a question is played with on a group and individual level. Helping to create painters, sculptors, philosophers, and individuals who are constantly questioning and reflecting, the arts are needed in order to educate for democratic citizenship (Nussbaum, 2010).

What are truly needed are individuals who take the risk to unmask the reality of a lack of democratic education and understand the need for the study of art and philosophy to offer a balance to our current educational context. Individuals need to be educated in a way that provides time and space to learn about the current happenings in their society and equips those individuals with the tools to identify, discuss, and ultimately solve (or come as close as possible to solving) those issues which need to be addressed in their own lives not just in the future, but here and now. These tools are what will lead students to live a good life, not more emphasis on equations and grammar by filling in bubbles on a test. I will sum up by saying that the child has his own questions and if those questions are not acknowledged, it compels the child “to leave his mind behind, because there is no room for it in school” (Dewey, 2001, p. 50).

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## Appendix



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Table 9.2 Rubric for assessing online discussions and interactions

		Description
Level 1	No interactions	Students download material from the Web, read notes and send assignment to tutor. Does not initiate any interactions with peers. Level of synthesis, analysis and integration of theory to practice is very limited and superficial. Submitted work lacks critical reflection on own learning and/or practice. Attainment of the intended learning outcomes is very patchy.
Level 2	Low level interactions	Limited use of communications facilities (e.g. mailing list, e-mail), initiates few interactions and dialogues with peers and tutors, and does so only when required and with significant guidance; argument presented is ineffective and lacks synthesis and coherence; very limited evidence of integration of theory to practice. Other people's posts are sometimes acknowledged. Reflection on own learning and/or practice is very limited, discursive and lacks critical analysis; achieves one or two of the intended learning outcomes. Number of posts is sufficient and met the given deadline.
Level 3	Moderate level interactions	Makes good use of diverse range of two-way communication tools; with guidance initiates and facilitates some interactions and dialogues with peers and tutor/facilitator; limited evidence of synthesis in argument presented; some gaps in the linking theory to practice; integrates ideas from own learning and others' posts (with due acknowledgement); critically reflects on own learning and/or practice and achieves some of the intended learning outcomes. Number of posts is sufficient and met the given deadline.
Level 4	High level interactions	Makes very good use of a diverse range of two-way communication tools and multiple media; facilitates and initiates many interactions and dialogues with peers and tutor/facilitator with minimum or no guidance; good evidence of synthesis and coherence in argument presented; good linking of theory to practice; good integration of ideas from own learning and others' posts (with due acknowledgement); critically reflects on own learning and/or practice; achieves most of the intended learning outcomes. Number of posts is sufficient and met the given deadline.
Level 5	Outstanding level interactions	Makes effective and efficient use of a diverse range of two way communication tools and multiple media; facilitates and initiates several interactions and dialogues with peers and tutor/facilitator autonomously; exemplary range and depth of attainment of all intended learning outcomes underscored by plentiful evidence of linking theory to practice; very good synthesis and coherence in argument presented; excellent integration of ideas from own learning and others' posts (with due acknowledgement); critically reflects on own learning and/or practice. Number of posts is sufficient and met the given deadline.

Source: Juwah, C. (2003) Rubric for assessing interactions.

Figure 4

