Iowa Research Online
The University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

University of Iowa
Iowa Research Online

Theses and Dissertations

Summer 2010

"It's raining money": identity, class, and the unfolding curriculum at three schools through the lens of socioeconomic status

Amy Lynn Pfeiler-Wunder
University of Iowa

Copyright 2010 Amy Lynn Pfeiler-Wunder

This dissertation is available at Iowa Research Online: http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/723

Recommended Citation
Pfeiler-Wunder, Amy Lynn. ""It's raining money": identity, class, and the unfolding curriculum at three schools through the lens of socioeconomic status." PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) thesis, University of Iowa, 2010.
http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/723.

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd


Part of the Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons

“IT’S RAINING MONEY”: IDENTITY, CLASS, AND THE UNFOLDING CURRICULUM AT THREE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

by

Amy Lynn Pfeiler-Wunder

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Teaching and Learning (Art Education)
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Steve McGuire

Using a multilayered qualitative approach I draw from hermeneutical phenomenology informed by autoethnography through a case study to illuminate the culture and community of three elementary art rooms through the lens of socioeconomic status. Through my own story of having limited art education as a child from a rural working class background I simultaneously tell the story of students from three economically diverse schools in the same district. Focusing on their experiences within the space of the art room, I explore the ways children negotiate identity, notions of class, and interpret the shared district art curriculum.

A rich description of each school along with interviews and conversations with children elicit important dialogue in terms of how the curriculum, in both hidden and overt ways, promotes a particular art aesthetic. Through a digestion of image, story and interviews with administrators, teachers and students this project focuses on the importance of action research and revealing one's own identity as a teacher and researcher as one attempts to unfold the multifaceted space of the art room.

Front and center, this project calls for relevant and meaningful curriculum tied to the interests and lives of the children. My attempt is to tell the stories of the children I was privileged to work with for a semester. My research is intermingled with my experiences as a public school teacher for thirteen years, partnered with my own multifaceted identity as artist/child/working class/mother/student/teacher/middle class/learner…

Abstract Approved:

_____
Thesis Supervisor

_____
Title and Department

_____
Date

"IT'S RAINING MONEY": IDENTITY, CLASS, AND THE UNFOLDING CURRICULUM AT THREE SCHOOLS THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

by

Amy Lynn Pfeiler-Wunder

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Teaching and Learning (Art Education)
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2010

Thesis Supervisor: Professor Steve McGuire

Copyright by

AMY LYNN PFEILER-WUNDER

2010

All Rights Reserved

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

_____

PH.D. THESIS

_____

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Amy Lynn Pfeiler-Wunder

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in Teaching and Learning (Art Education) at the July 2010 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____
Steve McGuire, Thesis Supervisor

_____
Rachel Marie Crane Williams

_____
Bonnie Sunstein

_____
Christine McCarthy

_____
Gail Boldt

To my family, friends, colleagues, mentors, and students that I have been privileged to learn from...Don't forget to tell *your* story…

The willingness to do what needs to be done is rooted in attention to what is. The best care, whether by parent or a physician or a teacher, is founded in observation or even contemplation. I believe that if we can learn a deeper noticing of the world around us, this will be the basis of effective concern.

Mary Catherine Bateson, Peripheral Visions

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the students I have been privileged to work with-thank you for telling your story.

To my mentors for sharing this journey with me:

To Jane Gilmore who planted a seed to pursue my doctorate.

To Dr. Rachel Williams for sharing motherhood and academia with me.

To Dr. McCarthy for guiding me through the publication process-supporting my ideas, and traveling with me…across the world.

To Dr. Bonnie Sunstein, for reminding me to keep my voice.

To Dr. Gail Boldt for firing within in me a passion for theory.

In highest regard and thanks to Dr. Steve McGuire, for teaching me to tell my story with unwavering support.

To my partner Doug for eternal love and laughter.

To our spirited daughter for reminding me why I teach.

To my colleagues at Kutztown University-what an honor to work with an amazing group of teachers and scholars.

Thank you to the families, teachers, and administrators who supported this project.

ABSTRACT

Using a multilayered qualitative approach I draw from hermeneutical phenomenology informed by autoethnography through a case study to illuminate the culture and community of three elementary art rooms through the lens of socioeconomic status. Through my own story of having limited art education as a child from a rural working class background I simultaneously tell the story of students from three economically diverse schools in the same district. Focusing on their experiences within the space of the art room, I explore the ways children negotiate identity, notions of class, and interpret the shared district art curriculum.

A rich description of each school along with interviews and conversations with children elicit important dialogue in terms of how the curriculum, in both hidden and overt ways, promotes a particular art aesthetic. Through a digestion of image, story and interviews with administrators, teachers and students this project focuses on the importance of action research and revealing one's own identity as a teacher and researcher as one attempts to unfold the multifaceted space of the art room.

Front and center, this project calls for relevant and meaningful curriculum tied to the interests and lives of the children. My attempt is to tell the stories of the children I was privileged to work with for a semester. My research is intermingled with my experiences as a public school teacher for thirteen years, partnered with my own multifaceted identity as artist/child/working class/mother/student/teacher/middle class/learner…

.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: "IT'S RAINING MONEY": THE ARTMAKING OF A CHILD THAT LED TO A RESEARCH QUESTION

…we have become wary of single languages of truth and fixed categories. We are appreciative now of storytelling as a mode of knowing (Bruner, 1986, pp.11ff.), of the connection between narrative and the growth of identity, of the importance of shaping our own stories and, at the same time, opening ourselves to other stories in all their variety and their differences of articulateness.

Maxine Greene, Releasing the Imagination

"My momma has 10,000 dollars saved."

"Well, my *momma* has 20,000 dollars saved."

Many signs and symbols feverishly emerge from the work of children, and in the seemingly endless reams of paper children have traversed through in my art room, many questions have emerged both as teacher and scholar (Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010). Sometimes their papers are filled with a few simple marks, and without attention to these images, their meaning and significance could go unnoticed. Child psychologist, Robert Coles (2009), discusses how children are witnesses to their lived lives and how these observations bring great wisdom. It is my curiosity about how children negotiate meaning in terms of socioeconomics that brings me to my interest in the symbols related to money-and more specifically-wealth that children create in the art room. These questions developed from my own background as a child of working class parents who struggled financially and the revelations I discovered in my own teaching, art making and research. My exposure to art, specifically my first visit to the Art Institute of Chicago brought me to a place of "cultural grooming" where art acted as a conduit of social refinement. Later art would ignite a deeper understanding of how one constructs individual meaning through visual elements and stories. The story from my classroom was first shared in a publication on the power of the teacher researchers by M. Buffington & S. Wilson McCay (2010). This is how the artmaking of a child unfolded:

> Among the socioeconomically diverse student population of three hundred I worked with, the use of the dollar sign as a marker of identity stands out as a symbol of power and status (Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010). As first grade students studied a vase of flowers using observational skills, I was drawn to the dollar bill signs floating around the page of one particular student's work (see Figure 1). It was evident the flower image was secondary to the more important symbolic representation of money. I had to ask,

"Darion, why do you draw money?"

"I love money."

> The paraprofessional working with Darion piped in: He draws money every chance he has. Darion likes to draw money so he can pretend it rains money.
>
> "Yeah, I want it to rain money, so I have lots of it.""
> (Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010)

In a culture preoccupied by consumption, what is the significance of the money symbols in the work of children? In Darion's example, it might seem obvious the use of dollar signs or dollar bills mark the culture of the child. The symbols could also be related to the new math curriculum, which teaches students how to count change. If children listened even briefly to an adult conversation, they would most likely hear conversations related to rising food and fuel prices or the terms "recession" and "economic crisis". According to German sociologist Georg Simmel, our connections to objects and things in the world become distant through the mediation of money. Simmel (1997) describes money objectively through terms of monetary value. Simultaneously (and more importantly) money is enacted symbolically in terms of how *individuals* value money. He states:

> If one is unwilling to recognize the monetary value of symbolic money, even when its exchange value is universally accepted, then one makes the same mistake as do that type of economic idealism which is willing to accept as a 'good' only that which corresponds to a true need, but not that which satisfies superfluous or disapproved needs: a view which also fails to recognize that all granting of value is only a psychological fact and nothing else…(p. 237).

In the broader arena of culture, individuals mark themselves by their buying power and this reference isn't exempt in the classroom. In literacy studies, certain "literacies" act as dominant ideologies in terms of class, culture and race. These varying literacies operate in different ways for different people (Lindquist & Seitz, p. 69). As Pierre Bourdieu might explain: "…although the larger domain of social relations ultimately assigns market value to literacy practices so that some are "worth more" in the social and economic rewards they bring, these practices also take on their own value within local social settings" (Lindquist & Seitz, 2008, p. 151). By closely examining the experiences tied to socioeconomic status, coupled with semiotics, the signs and symbols pertaining to money are both fluid and powerful.

My journey to explore the signs and symbols relating to power and wealth began with the story of Darion and the economically diverse students I spent my days with in the elementary art classroom. As my field research unfolded, I quickly learned the culture and community of the three buildings I would spend a semester in were not teeming with the almighty dollar bill signs I found on masks or on self-portraits in my classroom. Nor were economics and money universal points of discussion. Instead, in subtle and not so subtle ways, the curriculum acted as a conduit of social capital based on middle class ideals of aesthetics (see Stankiewicz, 2002). Also, knowingly and not so knowingly children marked their socioeconomic status through conversation and the translation of lived life through visual image. I would spend my time carefully listening to stories from varying perspectives to examine how the school community and *culture of the school* might contribute to the proliferation of fine art aesthetic vs. and aesthetic couched in the "everyday" (Duncum, 1999). Duncum explains the "everyday" as those images that bombard us within popular culture and gives credits to the aesthetics which move beyond the walls of the museum to include the wealth of visual images within society. To accomplish this I attempted to create a story of each school place and art room culture. It was from here that I could tell the "story" of each child through dialogue

and image from a socioeconomic lens setting their story and work in the context of the unfolding curriculum.

Unfolding Terminology: Understanding Word Choice

When I use the word 'culture' in reference to the classroom, I am referring to the set of practices and procedures set side by side with the teaching philosophy of the art teacher. Within these practices, I deconstruct how their interpretations of the curriculum unfolded within a fluid art classroom where teachers also focused on multiple ways of seeing and understanding. In terms of the school culture, I examined the set of practices and procedures in place within the school community to get a flavor for how the school functioned on a daily basis and its over encompassing philosophy through the lens of socioeconomic status (SES). Meaning, I was keenly observant of the ways in which class might contribute to the rules, ideas and "governing" systems among generally held beliefs deemed important within each school.

My definition of socioeconomic status for the purpose of this study begins with using the free and reduced lunch numbers at each school as an entry point for understanding the demographics of each building through the lens of SES. The broader picture I will paint centers on a "middle class ideology" which predominantly operates within the school system and the ways in which the culture of the school maintains or "pushes" on this system (see Brantlinger, 2003) In terms of aesthetic affinity, Mary Ann Stankiewicz of Penn State, discusses how the use of art education has been used to affirm traditional social hierarchies, aligning young people with the emerging cultural values thus contributing to the construction of the North American middle class (2002, p. 1). Ellen Brantlinger from Indiana University draws on the work of Michael Apple (1992) who describes ideology as the "production of principles, ideas, and categories that support unequal class relations" (p. 5). In terms of art education, I was curious about how my students thought about art and what signs and symbols they employed in their

work based on various art experiences outside the classroom. Did the expectations by parents affect the art curriculum? Did the art teachers own cultural and economic background influence their curricular choices? I came to discover, through close observation on my students and my own life as a student and teacher, the ways by which "others" view the "child artist" and the merit given to particular aesthetic focuses within curriculum.

Unfolding Stories: The Background of the Study

Before entering a classroom as a full time art educator, I spent summers and evenings working at a homeless shelter. Located off the interstate, the two story tall complex had once been a hotel on the edge of a large urban area. The noise from the highway was prevalent and the view from the complex included long strips of pavement scattered with large billboards as the cars and trucks entered the city.

My classrooms consisted of two rooms in a large block of "apartments", which opened to a courtyard, a mostly empty span of dirt broken up by a few spindly trees and patches of grass. Against the pale brown complex and black strip of highway, the educational resource center seemed bright and cheery. It was also *always* filled with children; they would literally flock to the door waiting for myself and the other teacher to turn the key and click the door open.

The classroom seemed to be an anomaly outside the other rooms, which took on the role of temporary residency as individuals who struggled economically through job or home loss came to the shelter. Most "residents" intent was to use the shelter as a point of transition until they could reestablish employment and secure a permanent living situation. My role was to provide a summer enrichment program, focusing on school readiness, but also as a place to develop self-esteem and social relations. Along with another college student, we planned elaborate thematic units with accompanying field trips and art projects. I would learn this type of planning was futile. Early on, it became

very clear our extensive thematic units and field trips were no match for the solitude children enjoyed in simply painting or drawing.

Elliot was one such child. His dusty brown hair framed his slight smile and distant eyes covered with thick-lensed glasses. He was also desperate for recognition. Looking back he reminded me of a potted plant that someone forgets about in the corner, he thirsted for attention and thrived when he was showered with a bit of time and care from an adult. He was one child in the complex who was considered a "permanent resident". He also was a child many of the staff was most concerned about. He often came to the center smelling of urine. There were also numerous times when I would walk him back to his apartment to find no one home, a sink full of dirty dishes, very little light streaming into the room, and a general sense of dishevelment in the apartment. Elliot, unlike a thirsty plant that can only wilt its leaves in protest, would sometimes manifest his quest for attention through intense emotional explosions filled with colorful metaphors. I found that I could squelch this rage with a tub of water, a palette of watercolor paints and endless sheets of white paper. I had made an internal commitment when working at the shelter, that my role as art educator would be less concerned with the core subject matters but always about children having a venue where they expressed lived life through the actions of their hands in conjunction with their inner spirit.

After serving as a long term substitute in an at risk school, my first year teaching I taught art on a cart and was elated to be doing what I had worked hard to achieve. I served 800 students in a town of about 25,000 and worked at three socioeconomically diverse schools. Eisenhower, a traditional two-story brick and stone façade served mostly white-collar professional students. The town was one of the largest cities in the area and boasted of its medical facility. Many of the doctors' children attended this school. The classrooms had a traditional feel as well. Desks were often in rows with the teacher's desk prominently positioned. The halls were often quiet and the rooms had a studious feeling.

The majority of the population in the city included blue-collar working class citizens. The city was also home to a large meat packing industry. The at-risk school I worked at was located on the opposite side of town as Eisenhower, had a much different feel. The building had been created in the 1960's with an "open classroom" setting. Quite literally the school contained many "pods" such as the fifth/sixth grade pod which hosted four classrooms all open to a center common area.

Needless to say as first year teacher, I felt I was always on stage. My cart followed me to each pod, where I made the rounds to the classrooms. Students in the next room could always hear the lesson before I even made it to their "room" and the teachers often stayed in the room. This was their prep time and they had things to do. The school was a lively and energetic place. Although many children came from families who struggled to make ends meet, the atmosphere encompassed a nurturing attitude. This school was my "home" school because I spent the majority of my time there and had the largest storage space for the art supplies.

Just a few blocks away I worked in a predominantly blue-collar school and the children had very supportive parents who viewed schooling not only as a right but a privilege. Without fully realizing it, I had begun to set a stage for my later interests in the impact of socioeconomic status on the culture and community of the school. I also began exploring the ways in which the dominant socioeconomic status of the school spoke to the culture of the school community and type of art making aesthetics present within the curriculum. It was these spaces and places that revealed my own relationship to school and class. I found a desire to share my story in the backdrop of my students. In this way I hoped to reveal my own biases and viewpoints so my audience would have a larger picture of the research project. In order to accomplish this, I considered the research methods that would best serve the intent of the project.

Unfolding Methods of Research: Story as Illumination and the Use of Autoethnography

Long before the term "autoethnography" was in my repertoire as a research method, I came to understand through the subtle teachings of my professor and advisor the use of story to illuminate curiosities. I learned to strip away my preconceived notions of what it meant to do "authentic" academic work and discovered through authors like William Least-Heat Moon, Robert Coles, Annie Dillard, and later Martin Heiddegger and Georg Has Gadamer that experience did count (see Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010). I found my story of growing up working class and its influence on my teaching essential to my study. What I attempted to do was to listen to the call by James Rolling Haywood Jr. (2010) for, "… art educators [to] write and overwrite our stories of K-12, community, and university education practices, making the intractability of the positions we often occupy more public…"(p. 7). This made *my* classroom and the classrooms I spent the semester in invaluable to the study.

My research began by drawing on the culture and workings of three elementary art classrooms with specific attention to the signs, symbols and stories created by children. The lens of socioeconomic status has much to tell us about how students negotiate identity, power, and place within the landscape of the art room. It has been these themes present in my own childhood and schooling that have connected me deeply to the research project (see Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010).

Using a multilayered qualitative approach I draw from hermeneutical phenomenology informed by autoethnography through a case study to illuminate the culture and community of three elementary art rooms through the lens of socioeconomic status. My own story of growing up in a working class community with limited access to the cultural capitol of the "fine arts" coupled with little formal K-12 art education is an interpretative tool that hopefully allows the study to "evoke(s) in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible" (Ellis & Bochner as cited in

Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 751). The use of autoethnograpy allows emotion to enter my research and because the topic I discuss can be sensitive exposing my own vulnerability, reflecting on my experience with class and reading relevant texts helps fill out the hermeneutical arch required for a more complete interpretation. (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

My Unfolding Research Questions

I am interested in how socioeconomic status impacts a shared art curriculum within the district, both in hidden and overt ways, through a collection of conversations, images, and interview with K-6 art educators. My commitment to this project is to examine how art curriculums surrounding these stories are then interpreted and negotiated by particular school communities. Within these given sites, I also explore the myriad of ways in which we define the term "child artist" and how these "profiles" might be different from a socioeconomic standpoint. My observations and initial research point to three central questions:

- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children construct identity within different school cultures and similar curriculums?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children use story to negotiate and explore their understanding of class, status and power?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how curriculums function and unfold within a given school culture? (see Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010)

To set the stage in Chapter Two, I begin with contemporary and historical definitions of the "child artist", art pedagogical practice, and institutions' interpretations of classroom curriculum and culture in terms of the "child artist". In Chapter Three I lay out the multi-layered methods I used to conduct the study and how my own background and multiple roles of teacher, researcher, parent and student informed the work. From there in Chapter Four, I create a rich description of each school place and the culture of

the art rooms. Through a sharing of the teachers background and philosophy of teaching elementary art I attempt to invite the reader into each school environment. It is also in Chapter Four where I introduce the focal students of the project. Once the stage is set, I enter into story, dialogue and analysis of the three focal questions, in three separate chapters.

In Chapter Five I attempt to give a sense of the ways in which the three focal students were framed as child artists. In doing so, I highlight the complexities of children's identity and the ways in which their stories are integral to their art making and interpretation of curriculum. Chapter Six critically examines observations and stories from the classroom and the complex culture of school through the lens of SES. Finally, In Chapter Seven I unfold the ways in which the curriculum, school culture and teacher's philosophy were interpreted by the students through their art making. In the end, through critical reflection I reveal the projects impact on the field.

Figure 1: “It’s Raining Money” by Darion, Mixed Media.

CHAPTER TWO: "UNFOLDING" VERSIONS OF THE CHILD ARTIST

Who could ever tire of this heart-stopping transition, of this breakthrough shift between seeing and knowing you see, between being and knowing you be? It drives you to a life of concentration, it does, a life in which effort draws you down so deep that when you surface you twist up exhilarated with a yelp and a gasp.

Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

The Child Artist Within: Images of Self

My version of myself as "child artist" would best be described as occurring in a vacuum. Aesthetic experiences were, put frankly, non-existing. My parents lived on a farm. Their version of childhood encompassed the notion of child as "manual laborer". Chores occupied my days. Feeding cattle, bailing hay, picking up stones in the cornfields, and cooking for the additional help during spring planting and fall harvest. I recall arising early on Saturdays to help wash my sister's diapers in a ringer wash machine. My mother and I would pin them in rows on the wash line, where the sun would dry them crisp. Light reflecting on the white surfaces created dancing rays of color. To be fair though, this version did miss a *few* beats.

The landscape of green pastured fields amid contours of rich soil was certainly not void of aesthetic quality. Cold Iowa winters involved my mother setting up the quilting frame and completing tedious cross-stitches. Although I tried my hand at these crafts, it seemed I was very content creating imaginary stories, which turned into plays using the wash lines as a curtain. My imagination was manifested in the solitude of long walks along the creek mesmerized by nature's painted images; mushrooms lining the base of a tree in a perfect circle or glistening milk emerging from a milkweed. I scrounged for materials in grain bins and "baked" corn and mud sculptures for my father to eat. In school, art class was never really labeled "art"; we simply had a chance to color in baby Jesus on mimeographed sheets related to the coming holiday in the Catholic

Church. One particular nun informed me I would never be an artist when glue pooled around the straw I was gluing on baby Jesus' manger.

Without realizing it, my parents had created the conditions for what Annette Lareau (2003) describes as "natural growth". My parents believed in the importance of work, but also in the discoveries made through self-initiated play. My playground just happened to be a 380-acre farm in the hills and valleys of Eastern Iowa. The natural growth philosophy entails the belief a child will unfold left to his or her own devices. Lareau's term "accomplished natural growth" is not meant to undermine the work it takes to care for children. It describes the conditions of learning set forth in predominantly working class and poor families. Resources are more limited compared to children in middle class families. Parents draw restrictions around their children, but within these boundaries children are responsible for their own leisure time (p. 289).

In middle class to upper middle class families, Lareau employs the term "concerted cultivation" which involves a more structured approach to learning. Orchestrated by the adults, children are engaged in activities beyond the walls of the classroom, an often regimented schedule of sports activities, camps, and classes related to the arts (p. 31). The child and families learn to negotiate the systems of institutions (school, clinics) to secure advantages, like advocating for their child to be a part of a talented and gifted program. The type of language acquisition, which occurs in middle class families, facilitates a sense of privilege in the child. Parents actively foster and assess children's talent, opinions and skills (p. 31). The child learns to negotiate with adults, and feels an equal.

Reflecting on these notions of childhood through the lens of socioeconomic status, I am reminded of the multiple ways we view the child artist. What definition encompasses the term child artist? How do institutions best serve or not serve the art student? How do we define the "culture of the self" in relationship to the child as subject? What does a closer view of the ways we define the child artist teach us about

education locally and globally? To begin, we start with the various views of the child artist.

Child Artist: Artist/Art to Serve Society?

In the 1800's the notion of an art curriculum was not concerned with the individual child, but the ways in which the child could serve society (Bates, 2). During the age of the industrial revolution, technical drawing classes were offered, as means for individuals to gain essential skills to promote the growth of capitalistic society. Classes originated in the Massachusetts school system as companies rebuilding after the Civil War looked for ways to export manufactured goods as opposed to raw materials. To help with labor costs, the legislation prompted the Board of Education to make provisions for free drawing classes for all students. "As U.S. Commissioner of Education Henry Barnard emphasized, drawing was the alphabet of the industrial revolution" (Stankiewicz, 2001, p. 10).

Art teaching and even exposure to the fine arts, had been limited to upper-class men and women. The proliferation of objects produced through the industrial revolution gave new access to those in the middle class; "fine" art objects could be reproduced through the machine (Stankiewicz, 2001). The art museums became models of the European Aristocrats and in American society a means to educate the middle class. Serving society was also ubiquitous with understanding the "finer" things of life.

The Child Artist: The Connoisseur of Fine Art?

There was a distinct moment in second grade, which felt "other" when I recollect my "education" in the visual arts. I fondly remember being shown the *Girl with a Watering Can* by Auguste Renoir. The beautiful blond girl in a pristine high colored blue dress, trimmed with lace and gold buttons was mesmerizing. Her hair glittered in the light, highlighting her red bow and the reds of the flowers framing her golden curls. We were asked to copy it, and I remember how this felt authentic against the mimeographed

sheets related to Catholic Holidays. It fed into an insatiable desire for anything related to the arts.

At the same time, I wondered what his little girl meant to a farm girl who would tear off her school uniform when she jumped off the bus, changing into some old jeans and a t-shirt so she could help with chores or simply escape to the outdoors. Looking back, my teacher had designated this lesson as a means of "cultural grooming". The adult viewed the "natural child artist" as one who understood the "finer" things of life.

How then do we describe the Rousseaun (1762/2007) "natural" child artist? Is natural synonymous with ideal? Normal? Some may consider the laissez faire approach most "natural" as the child is left to his or her own devices to explore meaning. Others like Piaget (1954/1970) would view the child as going through a series of stages in a natural progression as a developing artist. Beside the "natural" artist, what other identities do we prescribe that inhibits or enhances the way we view the child artist?

The Child Artist: The Child as Object, The Child as Subject?

Paulo Freire (1994) describes the student as the object against the subject of the teacher. "Education becomes an act of depositing" in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor…this is the 'banking ' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits" (p. 53). In art education, the child is seen as an "empty vessel" needing to be filled up with the knowledge and skills necessary to create images in conjunction with the aesthetics of fine art. I was certainly guilty of this type of teaching in my formative years. We would study masters such as George Seurat and Van Gogh. Children would draw their own images but then copiously fill them with little dots of color. The parents were "AHHED" by the detail of the work and the "cultural grooming" which allowed their child to recognize the "important" names in art history.

These notions of "adult" versions of art making versus "child" versions are important to recognize (See Zurmuehlen, 1990, Kellogg,1970, Kellogg and O'Dell, 1967, Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1970) in reference to the various definitions of how we define the child and their art making.

Often, the child artist can also be positioned in a dichotomy of being recognized for creating "cute" and innocent images while also propelled in the adult world of consumption. Is the child an object of capitalist society, not able to resist the market which promotes a particular type of subject? Do advertisements based on pop stars, like Hannah Montana, promote "mini" adults through dress and mannerisms? My eight-year old niece is infatuated with Hannah Montana. She loves to shop, and is always in style, often emulating the fashion of teenagers. Which position encapsulates the child? What pleasure might the child take in the media (Buckingham, 1996; Tobin, 2000)? As Patricia Tarr (2003) asks, "Are Children reproducers or producers of culture?"

Child Artist: Reproducers of Culture?

Waterbury Chair Professor, Henry A. Giroux (2003) discusses the ideas of "kids for sale" through the corporate culture invading the public schools. He provides examples of programs offered by companies to schools to provide "curriculum" overt with market agendas. According to Giroux, schools promulgate an identity in children of consumers rather than as multifaceted social actors (p. 172). For example*, The Channel One Program* provides $50,000 in free electronic equipment, based "on the condition the school agree to broadcast a ten-minute program of current events and news material along with two minutes of commercials"(p. 172). How does this change the role of education in the lives of children?

Members of the Frankfurt School, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (1987, English translation, 2000) questioned the role of mass culture in society. The consumer could take pleasure in the multiple venues provided culture industry, making

the banal exciting. At the same time, the consumer becomes entrenched in amusement, unaware they are promoting that which takes away identity. There is always something to see through movie and film, always something to consume. Reality is masked.

> In the ready-made faces of film heroes and private persons fabricated by magazine-cover stereotypes, a semblance of individuality….is fading, and the love for such hero-models is nourished by the secret satisfaction that the effort of individuation is at last being replaced by the admittedly more breathless one of imitation. (Horkheimer and Adorno, p. 126)

Buying power and pleasure of consumerism was to mark the individual outside the norm. Individual's marked personal tastes through the wide variety of clothes purchased or objects selected to adorn the home. Horkheimer and Adorno questioned if individuals were active participants in mass consumerism or simply caught up in notions of obtaining a source of cultural capitol through purchasing power. Bell hooks (2000) discusses how the "evils" of mass media construct a classless society, filled with images of "well to do, if not rich, or already on their way to becoming rich" individuals (p. 72). James Lull reminded me of Gramsci's theory of ideological hegemony. Quoting Nordenstreng, (1977, p. 276) he writes: "The mass media uniquely 'introduces elements into individual consciousness that would not otherwise appear there, but will be rejected by consciousness because they are so commonly shared in the cultural community" (p. 62).

Giroux's suggests children's identities are linked to capitalism in a negative way. On the contrary, the various discourses of childhood, specifically enacted through capitalism, can be viewed through various lenses. At birth, my own two year old received a "Counting with Cheerios" book. Cheerios, one of the first finger foods for toddlers, is marketed early by promoting the placement of the Cheerios in small circles to complete the patterns in the book. There is also great pleasure in consumerism.

Child Artist as Creator of Culture

In contemporary discussions of childhood, Paul Duncum (2002) reminds us the use of mass media is the very source for expanding and shifting the child from a singular innocent notion to a multifaceted identity. In "Children Never Were What They Were: Perspectives on Childhood" Duncum writes:

> Highly aesthetic images of the idealized children are commonplace; they can be found on cards, calendars and posters, but they stand in marked contrast to other constructions. The nightly news brings images of starving children form the Third World. Television advertising offers images of children as rabid consumers. Newspaper photographs show us brutal wounds inflicted on children's bodies…(Duncum, p. 98)

Despite these images, there exists a predominant cultural need to view the child as innocent (Rousseau, 1762/2007). Simply turn to the litany of songs, advertisements, and movies which illustrate children as our future. Whitney Houston's "I believe children are our future" might start playing in your head (it certainly did in mine). There is hope and salvation in the notion children will negate the adversities left by previous generations.

Childhood certainly doesn't embody the singular definition of innocence. Yet it is not essentially negative. A postmodern lens allows us to examine various truths (Duncum, 2002) and neatly packaged binaries of childhood such as consumer/social actor, empty vessel/producer of kid culture. In terms of consumerism, the child is not seen as naïve against the force of hegemonic consumerism.

> But relations of power obey no general form of binary opposition, no simple and universal division between rulers and the ruled, principles and punishment, oppressors and the oppressed. There is resistance in purely instrumental or even in supportive relationships. What these relations all have in common is the element of friction, of something, even when it is employed effectively by something else, nonetheless presenting a plane to be overcome, a recalcitrance to being exercised in a specific way, for a specific set of purposes. (Thompson, 2003, pp. 117-118)

For many children, the mass marketed toys not only provide "kid culture" (Tarr, 2002) but also are also pleasurable. Agency is marked by the ability to take up various

subject hoods, and these identities can act in various discourses to gain power, acceptance or to envision new possibilities.

Boys Play with Trucks, Girls Play with Dolls: The Child Artist Through the Lens of Gender

When my daughter Annabel was born, I swore I would not go crazy purchasing her toys. I would also be especially cognizant of emphasizing that there isn't a difference between boy versus girl toys. Pink was not a girl color, nor blue a boy color. Prior to the 1920's, pink was actually associated with boys, emphasizing a fiery and passionate demeanor. Blue was associated with the calmness and innocence of being a young girl. Unfortunately, this non-gender philosophy would prove somewhat futile in terms of my daughter's social world. During a recent visit to my grandmother's, Annabel was intently playing with a parking ramp and set of matchbox cars she had discovered in the basement. She was happily "parking cars" and watching them race down the ramp (she was also "caring" for a doll who sat idly in a swing) when my grandmother asked, "Don't you need to attend to your doll instead of playing with *boy* toys? Annabel responded, "Not right now, I'm busy!"

This moment made me almost as proud as her disregard for "gender rules" at a recent garage sale. Rummaging through a large box of twenty-five cent items she plopped a bright yellow hardhat on her head, and jostled through the box to pull out a woven handbag with a large felted orange flower emblazed on the surface. "Can I get these PLEASEE?" James Gee (2008) describes the use of an "identity kit", or a "tool kit full [of tools where] you can enact a specific identity and engage in a specific activities associated with that identity" (Lindquist and Seitz, p. 152). In children's play, (Paley, 2004) different characters are enacted and identity becomes a spontaneous musing of options.

Exploring a writer's workshop in an elementary school setting, Anne Haas Dyson (1997), examined the way children play with various identities through the characters they enact in their writing. As children draw from popular culture superheroes and villains, they negotiate between the official world of schooling and the unofficial world of their peer group. As she states,

> Tales about good guys and bad ones, rescuers and victims, boyfriends and girlfriends allow children to fashion worlds in which they make decisions about characters and plots, actors and actions. Thus, for children, as for adults, freedom is a verb, a becoming; it is experienced as an expanded sense of agency, of possibility for choice and action. (p. 166)

Play becomes an open field, not just for running or skipping, but also for imagining themselves in all sorts of roles. In the wide-open spaces, they are free from surveillance. The landscape beckons them to explore all the intricacies of self and others.

Post-structuralist Judith Butler (1990) saw identity, specifically tied to gender as a form of performance. "…*being* a woman or man….[does not occur] through phenomenology" instead ""being" of gender is an effect, an object of a genealogical investigation that maps out the political parameters of its construction in the mode of ontology" (p. 32). There is no self in the subject we only know ourselves through our performances in different roles. For children, they perform a certain identity in school, at home and with peers. This performance is an act of agency as they take pleasure, power or act in forms of resistance depending on desires and intentions.

How then do we frame the child artist? From a philosophical standpoint I am drawn to the idea of the human need for both structure and anomalies in life. In reconfiguring the stage development theories presented by Lowenfeld & Brittain (1947/1970), art educators Anna Kindler and Bernard Darras, (1997) suggest a more fluid interpretation of stage theories which resonate with the philosophical understanding that human action does not solely develop biologically, but is also created in the context of social experience (Lowenfeld & Brittain,1970; Kellogg, 1970).

As I examine the child artists in terms of institutions, culture of self and global and local discourses of education, I am drawn to many thinkers, most predominately, philosopher and post-structuralist thinker Michel Foucault, and the philosophy of John Dewey and Hans Georg Gadamer. Maxine Greene expands on these thinkers to provide another catalyst by which we examine an understanding of knowledge construction in the world, through acts of imagination. To learn more though, one must visit the art room.

Visions of the Child Artist in the Classroom: Stories from the Children & Views from Art Educators

After teaching for twelve years, I still found I was trying to figure out the best approach to allowing the child artist to develop. Following the arrival of a new bunch of kindergarteners in my room, I was even more baffled about what should constitute "best practice". As the students entered the room, the start of class was very *atypical* of previous kindergarten classes. Take Day One:

There was Timmy, sitting curled up in a ball rocking himself back and forth, back and forth repeating, "I am really angry right now, I am *really* angry right now!" Across from Tim on the rug sat Larry who had engaged (for almost ten minutes) in a descriptive account of his daily video game playing with his dad (which created a very interesting dialogue from many boys). Other children sat bewildered, some cried, and I wasn't sure where to begin. My catchy little phrase, "Are you ready, are you ready?" would normally echo back in a chorus of "yes we are, yes we are!" This was fully disregarded. There was literally a chanting of "When are we going to paint? When are we going to paint?" In their minds, the notion of art was synonymous with paint. As I did several introductory activities, explaining that art is more than just making art but also talking about art and looking at art, another child piped in, "Hey! When are we going to do ART?"

The institution of preschool had changed the ways in which kindergarten operated. For many children, entering the halls of a K-6 building was not their first

school experience. Children typically had "learned" the ways in which to conduct their bodies as "good students" (Foucault, 1977). They understood how to sit criss-cross applesauce, to listen intently and raise their hands to be heard. My school was economically diverse and many authors have suggested that the school system fits with a middle class ideology (Lareau, 2003, Hooks, 2000, Lee & Burkam, 2002). This brings significant pause for reflection, in terms of their "school readiness" and what type of child they are expected to be at age five and six?

On the first day, one of the activities involved drawing self-portraits or family composites. Over the years I had seen a wide array of mandala forms present in the children's first drawing. There was always a wide array of circles with a recognizable face along with several lines emerging from the circle to represent arms and legs. Others were filled with more "adult" recognizable forms, (Kellogg, 1970) with more attention to hands, hair, and clothing. The facial features also expanded from mere dots and lines, to curved lips; lemon shaped eyeballs and scribbled lines for hair. What was the significance of their shapes and forms in terms of how they were viewed as artists?

Natural Symbol Making: Remembering What Rhoda Kellogg has to Say

For Rhoda Kellogg (1970), the child is full of his or her own naturally made art symbols. Within this system are universal gestalts, which appear in their work. For example, the mandala, or circle shape, is one of the first "recognizable" images, which emerge from a child's scribbles. Other common gestalts in the pre-school years include radials, crosses, and rectangles. Kellogg views these as natural art symbols from the child's world. These images may be named by the child, but are not stories; they are simply designs (p. 37). Art involves haptic and visual components where the sensory experience of mark making provides the child with enjoyment and pleasure. According to Kellogg, it is the adult who melds the child artist into the language of naming, and the

child learns the work should be recognizable. "Such a strict representational approach all to often robs the adult of appreciating the wealth of structured, non-pictorial work which children teach themselves before the pictoralize" (Kellogg & O'Dell, 1967, p. 37). Kellogg, like Viktor Lowenfeld, reminded the adult world of the personal and meaningful in the child's world, outside the complete jurisdiction of what an adult deemed noteworthy or aesthetically pleasing.

The "Developing Child": Viktor Lowenfeld

Viktor Lowenfeld's emphasis on self-expression and developmental stages to understand the biological conditions of art making emerged after fleeing the human suffering witnessed in the Holocaust. His art reflected postwar times and was seen as a "humanizing activity that was broadly therapeutic" (Bates, p. 4). Art education was no longer associated with serving society, but as a means to serve the individual child.

He developed a series of stages to explain the social and emotional growth of children. In the Kindergarten class, I didn't solely rely on the developmental stages but I also couldn't ignore the fact his stage theories provided a marking point of where the children existed in the spectrum. Lowenfeld (1970) explained the egotistical nature of the child is more important than visual representation. This gave insight into the reasons a child would draw a person with less detail than what adults would consider crucial for representing the human form. A drawing of the head captures the sensory experiences of sight, sound, taste and smell. The child may skip features because they aren't relevant, or from his or her view he/she can't see an aspect of their anatomy (such as the neck).

There is also the idea the drawings develop from a pure biological base, as both Kellogg and Lowenfeld noted similarities in drawings from common age ranges. However, as both authors discuss, the children's work doesn't exist in a vacuum either. Kellogg highlights how adult affinity towards representation influences the child's work. Lowenfeld discusses the critical turning point in the pseudo naturalistic stage that remains

stagnate if an adult isn't present to instruct the child in technical aspects, such as perspective. Although stage theories may be an important tool in understanding the child artist, the implications and influences of culture are essential elements. As Christine Thompson (2005) explains, stage theories can be an inviting way, especially for new teachers, to make sense of the children in the classroom. She draws from Woodhead and Faulkner (as cited 2000, p. 11) who state: "Child Development" is a body of knowledge constructed by adults for other adults to use in order to make sense of, regulate and promote children's lives and learning" (p. 20). The tangible limits of stage theories were present during a critique of first grade self portraits hanging in the hallway for back to school night.

Unlike kindergarten, I had not just passed around paper and asked them to draw themselves. Beyond the physical features, students also considered important aspects of their identity, such as activities they enjoyed and how their personalities might be manifested in their facial expression. The children worked hard and copiously thought about proportion, the clothes they were wearing and the details of their face. They embellished the portraits to attract the attention of on lookers by designing hand made frames with jewels and gemstones.

A first grade teacher, stopping to look at the portraits, I imagine drawn in by the slightly kitsch frames and peering first grade faces colored with pencil and marker commented, "Wow, there are some really good ones!" Pointing to some images that were less recognizable she said, "Poor things, you can just tell which ones can't read." Notions of realism often contaminate adult notions of what "good" child's artwork should look like. This is one of the hindrances of relying on developmental stages to understand child's art. As Thompson also states when speaking of developmental stage theories with pre-service teachers: "Did my students understand that what is "typical" is not necessarily normal, desirable, or stable" (2005, p. 18).

Anna Kindler and Bernard Darras (1997) addressed this tendency towards realism through a "Map of Artistic Development" by which the use of stages often correlated with a dominant Western discourse of study in relation to pictorial images. Kindler and Darras turn to Vgotsky to examine the sociocultural foundations of art making. According to Vgotsky (as cited in Kindler and Darras, 1994)

> Within a general process of development, two qualitatively different lines of development, differing in origin, can be distinguished: the elementary processes, which are of biological origin, on the one hand, and the higher psychological functions, of sociocultural origin on the other. The history of the child behavior is born from the interweaving of these two lines. (p. 20)

As I stepped back into the realm of Kindergarten, the children were quickly drawing circles and adding eyes. Most announced within a few minutes after starting, they were done. A cacophony of sound resounded with the words, "When do we get to paint?" In the context of the lives of my students, development stages may have been an indicator of their understanding of the human body, but the context of their stories relevant to the time and place, would paint a much broader image of who they were as artists and individuals.

The Child Artist and Everyday Experience: Learning Play Evolves to Work Through Dewey

John Dewey (1934) explores the nature of the work of art which has relevance to the way in which children construct themselves as subjects through play. The clash of art deemed fine vs. the aesthetics of everyday (Duncum, 1999) found in the visual culture of contemporary society expands the ways in which text is read. Walter Benjamin (1936) discusses the movement of art from the ritual to art as political. Art moved from an aesthetic finesse to the realm of commodities through reproduction. Dewey explores the ways in which art in Athenian Greece embodied the life and community of everyday. Painting and sculpture were not separate from architecture; music commemorated important events in civic life (1934, p. 6). Art was deemed imitation and reproduction,

not because it was a reproduction of some image or work of sculpture, but because it inhabited the essence of daily life. As Dewey states: "For the doctrine did not signify that art was a literal copying of objects, but that it reflected the emotions and ideas that are associated with the chief institutions of social life" (p. 6). When art programs only offer works by masters as noteworthy images, they strip away possibilities for children to engage in the images of their culture and life, most often dominated by the proliferation of images from media.

This heightened aesthetic experience bound in the everyday was manifested through the play to work model discussed in Dewey's "How We Think" (1933). For my kindergartens that asked, "When do we get to make art?" their ability to construct self came from the play of materials where meaning is constructed. Dewey described the work of art as what the work does, how it exists in time and place and establishes meaning by the unique way in which the viewer comes into contact with the work (1934). The original aura of the work is still present, but how the viewer comes into contact with the work is pivotal. Dewey refers to Dr. Barnes: "…what is called the magic of the artist resides in his ability to transfer these values from one field of experience to another, to attach them to the objects of our common life, and by his imaginative insight make these objects poignant and momentous"(p. 123). To understand this relation, let's play with a story from the classroom.

A story of play to work

Brady exemplified the stereotypical "lone artist". A quiet sixth grader, he was one of those students I worried I would forget about. He wore dark rimmed black eyeglasses and peered intently during demonstrations and directions. During work time, I would usually only notice the top of his blonde brownish hair, dull even in the fluorescent lights. His head was always in his art.

I had known him for three years and he had never completed a project. When we made puppets he wrapped a rod in cloth and stuffed it. There was no head, no arms, just wrapped stuffing. He never really named it, but assured me he was making a "character puppet". However, remained a soft unidentifiable form of cloth. He always had a vision but it seemed the play with materials never revealed a finished piece. This was not important to him or me. I certainly encouraged his endeavors and prodded him to finish at least one thing each year. Yet he remained disciplined to experimentation and content with his studio practice.

In sixth grade, while making plaster masks Brady had a break through. As students worked, many forms emerged mostly referencing the face. Brady approached the content differently. Brady spent *days* molding a wide "lip" around the entire circumference of his mask. I assumed (incorrectly) he was mesmerized by the materials and simply enjoyed the work and play of smoothing the gauze. But I was wrong. Brady asked to come in at recess and spent considerable time mixing several shades of gray paint. I finally had a chance to ask him about his work. "It's a racetrack," he stated proudly with matter of fact. He showed me the matchbox cars to be featured racing around the "Indy"-like track, curved slightly and circular in shape. And there it was, conceptually sound, personally meaningful and executed with care. Brady's play had turned to work.

Dewey discusses that often times individuals view the play activity in and of itself, and through work the activity terminates. According to Dewey this creates an unnatural separation between the process and product (1933, p. 212). He states,

> The true distinction is not between an interest in activity for its own sake and interest in the external result of the activity, but between an interest in and activity just as it flows on from one moment, and an interest in an activity as tending to a culmination, to an outcome, and therefore possessing a thread of continuity binding together its successive stages. (1933, p. 212-213)

This was quite evident in the story of Brady's work. Through my observation, it is the process of creating where the child is able to form an object embedded with a life force. Maxine Greene (1978) a philosopher and educator offers this:

> No one's self is ready made; each of us has to create a self by choice of action, action in the world. Such action, if it is to be meaningful, must be informed by critical reflection, because the one who is submerged, who cannot see, is likely to be caught in *stasis*, unable to move. But the kinds of choices that are necessary can only be made when there are openings, when appropriate social conditions exist. (p. 18)

Regardless of the subject matter of the work, there is a transformation because the child gives the work significance. Like the first grade teacher who identified some portraits as "poor" little renditions, teachers often scrutinized Brady's difficulty in completing his academic work. He did not exhibit the qualities of the school "performer". Although academics beyond the art room are important, in light of many more state and federal mandates the school "as institution" has seemed more overtly concerned with test scores.

Yet school casts a shadow on all subsequent learning. Trying to understand learning by studying schooling is rather like trying to understand sexuality by studying bordellos. Certainly schooling is part of the spectrum of learning in human lives, but it is not the model of all learning, only one of the many byways. Learning and teaching are both fundamental for human adaptation, but not all human societies segregate them from the flow of life into institutional boxes.

Mary Catherin Bateson, Peripheral Visions

Unfolding Who Governs the Art Room: Institutions and the Child Artist

How have institutions altered the view of the child artist? As part of a school institution, the art room is not exempt from the surveillance of others. There is governance in the art room through expectations by administrators, parents, and the teachers own self-monitoring. Curricular initiatives have also played a key role in the construction of "normalizing" the art curriculum.

In *Discipline and Punishment*, Michel Foucault (1977) traces the genealogy of institutions in the creation of the docile body. That is, a body controlled not only by the gaze of those in power within the institutions, but also the self surveying one takes up as a way to fit into what is deemed "normative" society. Once punishment moved from the spectacle of torture the panopticon of the prison created a system of self-monitoring. The panopticon involved a central tower placed in the middle of the prison cells. Surrounded by windows and positioned high above the inmates, guards could watch the prisoners twenty-four hours a day. The idea of being watched conditioned the inmates to self-monitor, fearing retribution. This idea is translated in one's own ways of self-regulating. Foucault argues there are multiple discourses which operate in our own lives creating our own self-disciplining of the body. This self-regulation creates "normalizing" practices through institutes such as schools, church or within the health care system. These systems of practice operate through normativity where the individuals feel subjected to a series of "laws" which regulate how they operate as an individual. As a child attending Catholic school, I was subject to the practice of being the "good little Catholic" girl. I said my prayers, went to mass and obeyed the nuns.

However, power is not purely negative. Power finds its source where it can best be utilized as discourse and then reconstitutes it where it locates opportunity. Foucault refers to these as games of truth, meaning the subject is in constant dialogue with the discourses one finds they occupy. I also used the position of the "good little Catholic" girl to secure privileges in the class. My seemingly docile nature allowed me free reign to do extra projects of my own choosing. What various "normalizing" practices and discourses has art education inhabited?

A Marxist approach would examine art as a means to develop human capital. As the earlier mention of technical drawing classes for the promotion of industrial society (Stankiewicz, 2001, p. 46). In the Victorian Age, crafts gave both boys and girls a way to occupy their time wisely, and the study of "high art" created distinct boundaries between

classes. In the early nineteenth century, art was a means to beautify daily life and this often encompassed holiday projects (Stankiewicz, 2001, p. 68). An all too familiar tracing of the hand in brown crayon to make a turkey, cutting snowflakes to adorn frosty windows and making leprechaun accordion folded people to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. In the last twenty years, other curricular models have occupied discourse in art education in relation to society.

Institutions and the Call to Art As Discipline Based

In the 1980's, through the support of the Getty's Foundation, Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) received status as a curricular tool. The tenets of DBAE emerged in the 1960's with the launching of Sputnik and the space race. As math and science took precedent in the schools, the idea of self-expression in the arts was seen as soft against other disciplines (Bates, 4). Art education worked to position itself as more academically rigorous. The four main components of DBAE include: History, criticism, aesthetics and production. What it lacked was a real connection to the lives of the students. There were also concerns it was created so classroom teachers could teach from the curriculum, creating the perception art specialists weren't needed.

National Institutions and the National Arts Standards

The National Arts Education Association in anticipation of the Goals 2000 Act developed other institutional forms such as The National Art Education Standards. The act placed visual arts, music, dance and drama at the core of the American curriculum (Thompson, p. 87). The national standards outlined what goals educators should try to attain by various parts of the child's schooling, by the end of early childhood (4^{th} grade), the beginning of adolescence (8^{th} grade), and the end of high school (12^{th} grade) (p. 87). The implementation of the national standards caused a positive impact as school districts advocated the writing of art curriculum aligned with standards and benchmarks. This was also tied to the politics of education reform that created a slight fear tactic. If something

can't be assessed, then learning might not be taking place. Art education often feels tenuously positioned.

Does art align itself with the core subjects and use more standardized based education? Or, instead, does art education promote itself as core curriculum in and of itself? Art Professor Charles M. Dorn (2002) states: "Without adequate tests and realistic district assessment plans, it is quite probable the arts in most U.S. Schools will never be assessed, and with the current climate suggesting that what cannot be tested cannot be taught, the arts in the near future may face being left out of the curriculum" (p. 40).

Art education is asked to create standards similar to science and math, yet in an elementary setting art is often once a week instead of every day. There is a bit of revolving door atmosphere as students come in and out every fifty minutes. In addition, in relationship to the use of national art education standards, Dorn further states [standards]"may reflect a discipline based bias to curriculum development and assessment, which may now, indeed reflect what some may feel is a failed program and one that has acknowledged it was designed in practice as in-service for the education of curriculum generalists" (p. 41). Does the use of national standards and assessment tools create a deeper governance of what happens in the space of the art room?

Governmental Institutions: No Child Left Behind…No ART Left?

The No Child Left Behind Initiative further exacerbated the situation as art felt unstable because success in the arts was difficult to measure empirically. The NCLB Legislation is perceived as a completely new program created under the Bush Administration. Although strains of the legislation developed out of the standards and benchmarks Bush had implemented in Texas as governor, NCLB also developed from the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 under Lyndon B. Johnson (Frederick & Finn, 2007, p. 2). The purpose of the legislation was to prompt greater accountability by

schools to raise achievement levels especially in reading and math. With more emphasis on testing, arts education felt a larger need to align itself with its ability to enhance learning in other subject matters. As the school curriculum became more structured, children felt their voice slipping away. I noticed this during testing week at our school:

> A quiet stillness recently enveloped the elementary building I work in, as students put their noses to the test paper, filling in little bubbles while teachers nervously hoped the scores would bring the school to the level of achievement outlined by the No Child Left Behind Legislation. The art room was empty of many students that week, as without notice students had been pulled for test taking. It seems the art room is positioned as a place of "play" outside of "real" academic work of school. (Pfeiler-Wunder, 2007, p. 8)

The "Local Institutions": Art Displays and Museum Spaces

The pervasiveness of schooling as a means to educate the "masses" in established institutions makes it difficult to transcend the conception of art as on equal playing ground. Each year our school district sponsors a third grade trip to the local art museum and several art shows at local venues such as the bank and performing arts center. Typically, the attendance by families from lower SES backgrounds is low. This is due in part to transportation concerns, but I am also curious how comfortable the parents feel in these situations.

In my own teaching, I recall selecting a child for a local elementary art show sponsored by one of the area banks. The exhibition makes a conscious effort to promote "art for everyone" by including schools within the local district but also children from the Christian academies, alternative schools, and children who are home schooled. The project was to be created at home, removing any inhabitations the child might feel in the school setting. I had selected a paper weaving from a little girl named Ana. She was quite thrilled to be chosen and the principal asked me to sit in on her conference so I could encourage attendance by the family. Because our school has a diverse student population both ethnically and economically many conferences included an interpreter for our Spanish-speaking parents. The mother was thrilled by her daughter's work being

accepted but never attended the show. I might surmise the language barrier may have made it a bit intimidating, but I was also curious if the semiformal atmosphere of the bank with ribbons, punch and finger sandwiches created an environment reminiscent of the social hierarchy both in structure and form of the art museum?

Popewitz and Brennan (1997) locate the possibility of new freedoms when one examines the histories of how subjectivities are formed as the "potential space for alternative acts and alternative intentions that are not articulated through the available commonsense" (p. 25). What happens when I use art room as a space for children to tell their own stories or to operate within a curriculum that is fluid and flexible? What happens when I pay less attention to standards and benchmarks set by individuals "outside" the art room and move to the direct impacts of their daily lives/issues/concerns/desires/fears? How does this translate to students' understanding of art making or schooling?

Stereotypically, the artist is viewed as irrational, one who resists the roles of normativity. The interplay between the irrational/rational binary is the exact intersection where resistance takes form, necessary for the power dynamic to operate. Foucault describes this well in his one of his interviews when he writes, "In order to exercise a relation of power, there must be on both sides at least a certain form of liberty. Even though the relation of power may be completely unbalanced or when one can truly say that he has 'all the power' over the other, a power can only be exercised.... if there is a possibility of resistance" (Rasmussen, 1994, p. 12). In subtle ways, the art room can take up positions of resistance allowing a place of freedom.

Sometimes there is an advantage that art is seen as unimportant in the scope of the school environment. You worry less about how you are being governed, and worry more that the students in your class, simply get to be themselves. Anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake argues for "art for life's sake". At a keynote speech at the National Art Education Association she stated: "…art is a normal and necessary behavior of human

beings that like talking, exercising, playing, working, socializing, learning, loving and nurturing should be encouraged and developed in everyone" (Bates, p. 8). How then does art education return to the human capacity of art making?

Front and Center: Visual Culture as a Means to a Children's Voices

Philosopher Maxine Greene (1995) believe the arts were the exact realm by which students would sever ties with "linear learning", and instead open themselves to new modes of thinking. She states, "Postmodern thinking does not conceive the human subject as either predetermined or finally defined. It thinks of persons in process, in pursuit of themselves" (p. 41). Foucault also reminds us power can be highly productive. The current framework of emphasizing the use of visual culture as a focal point of art education curriculum is meant by many to become the great equalizer. Separating high and low art into an overarching umbrella of the visual creates a diverse pool of imagery to draw from. Art works move from categorical or subgroups of artists such as "Woman Artists", "African American Artists", or "Outsider Artists" to making connections between groups. Visual culture included the images individuals are bombarded with on a daily basis through media, the Internet, and the oil painting, "anything to be looked at or to enhance natural vision" (Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 3)

Proponents of Visual Culture Education such as Kerry Freedman (2003) outlined the components of a post-modern curriculum. This type of curriculum acts as a representation and montage, it develops from "creative production" based on the life and community of the artists (p. 110). Within this context, children are not merely learning skills and knowledge to produce art works; the lives and interests of the students are embedded in the "working curriculum". A broader definition of visual culture involves the material culture of the world and allows for the inclusion of "multiliteracies, multimodalities and meaning (Duncum, 2004). Through material culture, Duncum

(1999) broadens the scope of aesthetic discourse to include places such as "theme parks, shopping malls, city streetscapes, and tourist attractions…" and it is "applauded by others (as cited in Johnson, 1997; Lemeke, 1998) for offering both immense pleasure and rich resources for the construction of identity" (p. 295). Professor Emeritus Arthur Efland (2005) from Ohio State University states: "The visual arts were set apart from the cultural influences that gave rise to them, and this was a grave error. Visual cultural studies in large part attempts to remedy this tendency" (p. 37).

At the same local bank art show, popular culture images are not accepted. Each year excited children bring their works of art, often renditions of "Brat dolls", "Winnie the Pooh" or "Pokemon" characters. The show is a big deal. Besides receiving a ribbon, pieces are also selected to be a part of calendar put out by the bank. The picture has personal meaning simply through their selection of the image. Through reproduction they feel a great sense of pleasure in mimicking an image which has an obvious wide audience. The establishment of curricular components that draw from visual culture brings the child's aesthetic choices front and center. Moving from the place of institutions in the governance of child artist we also locate possibilities to establish a culture of self.

> Not only does the world impinge cruelly upon the subject, and not only does the subject's inner world constitute the be-all of understanding and misunderstanding: the subject lives both dilemmas in ways that cannot be predicted, authorized by another, or even deliberately planned and separated.
>
> Deborah Britzman, Lost Subjects, Contested Objects

.Unfolding "Cultures of Self" and the Child Artist

"Cultures of Self": A Historical Primer

In order to understand how we might decode the term "culture of self" my musings have returned me to the construction of the "child artist" in terms of subjectivity. I want to step back historically to examine the work of such thinkers as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegal, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. From here the "politics of identity and

difference" described by contemporary scholar Stuart Hall allow an access point to examine subjectivity as "reinvented [and] rediscovered"…."We go to our own pasts through history, through memory, through desire, not as a literal fact" (1997).

German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1899/1956) moved from a Kantian notion of *apriori* knowledge to a notion the subject was "already made" to the subject's role in the manifestation of the perfect State. Hegel viewed history as unfolding teleological in order to obtain the highest realm of humanity. As he states:

> The Human Spirit has come to stand on its own basis. In the self-consciousness to which man has thus advanced, there is no revolt against the Divine, but a manifestation of that better subjectivity, which recognizes the Divine in its own being; which is imbued with the Good and the True… (1956, pp. 407-408)

In the Grundrisse edited by R. Tucker, (1978/1972) Karl Marx disrupted this notion of a teleological unfolding of history. Marx's work dislodged the "German Ideology" promoted by Hegel to the concept of history as a continuous series of "revolutions" where one class of individuals works to reinscribe power. The material conditions and social conditions had a tremendous impact on how the subject was able to act. As Marx reiterates later in his work:

> The human being is in the most literal sense a (political animal, translation) not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society. Production by an isolated individual outside of society-a rare exception…as is the development of language without individuals living *together* and talking to each other. (Tucker, (Ed.), p. 223)

Groups had the potential to dislodge the ideology of the ruling class allowing history to be remade or redirected. Marx states, "Only in community [with others has each] individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible" (Tucker, (Ed.), p. 197). Marx's model becomes problematic if the individual, who works in order to obtain material goods, must continue to labor in order to purchase the goods, which he or she makes. This creates a form of alienation, for the individual subject feels tied to the superstructure

of particular ideologies. Ideologies are over compassing beliefs that create a sort of operating system in society such as religion and politics. For Marx, the subject was contained in one truth, that of capitalism. But the subject is still limited. Both Hegel and Marx define subjectivity through "outward" actions. It would be Sigmund Freud who would postulate it was expression and understanding of the inner self that led to subjectivity.

Freud (1961) moved the subject from being constructed in the collective or community to the rational and irrational aspects associated with the conscious and the unconscious. Trying to trace a primordial "starting gate" to the development of civilization, Freud traces subjectivity from the individual, to the family and, finally, to the community. These are the components which drive the formation of mankind. This occurs through a mutual dance of satisfying both hunger and love, the need to gratify the individual/ego and the need objects/libido (1961, pp. 76-77). These are not separate entities working in isolation, but revolve around and act upon the other (p. 78). Freud believes the unconscious always affects the conscious, but the unconscious can never be known empirically. The aim of civilization and human beings is to find a path to happiness. Pleasure was associated with subject -hood.

Happiness can occur through what Freud terms sublimation. Emerling (2005) explains Freud's work by describing how sublimation occurs when individuals try to take repressed material (the unconscious) and promote it into something (p. 7). This something can be art, music, writing etc. Freud describes it in this way, "Sublimation of instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic, or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life" (1961. p. 51). Through art, the subject has possibilities of examining the intent of the artist, not to uncover the "truth" or real meaning of the piece but to experience the piece in relation to self. We use these things as constructions

towards happiness such as powerful distractions, substitutive subtractions, and intoxicating substances (pp. 23-24).

Each of these philosophers propels the concept of subjectivity into strands that continue to permeate discussions today. They also influenced modernist thinkers like Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel who examined changing cultural norms to explain the subject. Simmel, (1997) described as the philosopher of culture, illustrates culture through the transformation of raw materials to works of art. He states:

> The material products of culture-furniture and cultivated plants, works of art and machinery, tools and books-in which natural material is developed into forms by which could never have been realized by their own energies, are products of our own desires and emotions, the result of ideas that utilize the available possibilities of objects. It is exactly the same with regard to the culture that shapes people's relationships to one another and to themselves: language, morals, religion and law. (p. 37).

He does postulate that the engagement with the material objects of culture allows for a "process developing out of us and returning back to us that moves external nature or our own nature" (p. 37). Culture encompasses traditions, norms, and shared experience by a group of individuals. The culture of the art room is a moving, fluid entity, which pushes and pulls on the expectations and group norms through experience to meld new ways of understanding others and self. Initial readings of Simmel, seemed to suggest that the transformation of raw goods into a material object created meaning for the individual. This is certainly present in the culture of the art room.

Exemplar: The Child, the Artist, and Transformation of Materials

There was flurry of fur, raffia, and yarn as the sixth grade created personal masks. Excited by the progress of their work, students mostly wanted time to work and tell the stories of their characters. There were no management concerns and the culture of the art room was one of mutual learning and dialogue. The students were encouraged to bring materials from home and students brought pennies, sunglasses and bandanas to embellish

their masks. From white plaster mask forms, seemingly banal faces transformed and emerged into Hippie Biker, Voodoo Man and Lion Woman.

Through the mask making students permutated raw goods to a mask which seemed laden with subjectivity. Through transformation they enacted alternative identities and performances of self or acts of "other". The object acted as an entity to be enjoyed aesthetically. Here Simmel would suggest the "art interprets the meaning of the phenomenon itself" and "the artistic process is completed as soon as it has succeeded in presenting the object in its unique significance…the work of art is an objective value in itself completely independent of its success in our subjective experience" (37-38). It seems the subject is positioned in an awkward state. Although Simmel disregarded the need for some scientific formula for uncovering the meaning, the art object was viewed as the transformative subject, not the other way around. He viewed the object as saturating the viewer with meaning, as opposed to the individual creating meaning.

As modernist and writer during the time of the industrial revolution, Simmel like Walter Benjamin (1978, 1989, 1996) was concerned with human alienation through mass production. Simmel felt individuals within the new culture of technology, felt an "intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli" (Leach, (Ed.). 1997, p. 65). The "spirit" of art objects moved from a Kantian sense of being imbued with pure aesthetics transcending time and place. Instead, objects lost their aura through mass production. The original intent and meaning was no longer present.

According to a scholar of Benjamin's work, Kia Lindroos (1998), the biggest shift in the art world was not that the work was being reproduced, but *how* it was being reproduced (p. 123). The hand was replaced by the eye, changing the perception of the artwork through the advent of photography (ibid). The "usefulness" of the painting is altered. Through photography, the image can be captured in "time" and viewed as a slice of history. The advantages of the reproduced image include:

It is more independent than the original and can take on various "life" forms. The photograph can be retouched, enlarged, etc (p. 127).

Through the manipulation of the work, individuals may see it in different ways.

It can be brought to places and situations the original cannot (p. 127)

Lindroos continues,

…as the distance transfers between the original and reproduced *work*,… the perceiving subject is seen as changing in a way which alters the quantitative approach towards *qualitative* understanding of time. (p. 127)

From the thinking of Hegel, there is a large leap in how the individual constructs truth, not from a universal unfolding of history, but a construction of meaning through material culture. Benjamin did believe through reproduction the original lost its true intent or aura through mass production. The reproduced work also allowed for new context and new identities from the viewer's relation with the work. Craig Owen (cited in Emerling) in the "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism" (1980) argues that Benjamin alluded to postmodern ideals because "our experiences of art (transform) from a visual to a textual encounter because it attempts to problematize historical reference and foreground the instability of meaning" (Emerling, p. 97). Benjamin's work is considered quite esoteric but he also suggests subjectivity through his many short essays on children. He writes: "For the fact is that the imagination never engages with form, which is the concern of the law, but can only contemplate the living world from a human point of view creatively in color" (1996, p. 51). This very human point draws me to contemporary Culture Studies Theorist, Stuart Hall (1996; 1997, 2000).

Hall observed the ways in which we use "other" to position ourselves. In seeing "other" as subject we constitute a human community. We acknowledge a need to access some "true self…hiding the husks of all the false selves we present to the rest of the world" (2000, p. 42-43). He continues,

> It (identity discourse) gives us a sense of depth, out there, and in here. It is spatially organized. Much of our discourse of the inside and the outside, of the self and the other, of the individual and society, of the subject and object, are grounded in that particular logic of identity. And it helps us, I would say, to sleep at night. (2000, p. 42-43)

Wrestling with the notion of how the subject constructs a "culture of self", *I* have not been able to sleep at night. Hall identifies the "old versions" of identity construction in terms of the philosophical and the psychological. The old philosophical path to identity was based on the Cartesian model of the dualism between mind and body. "Identity is the ground of action"(Hall, 2000, p. 42). Psychological is "a notion of the continuous, self-sufficient, developmental unfolding, inner dialectic of self-hood (Hall, 2000, p 42.) According to him, these versions seem to postulate we are on our way to identity and we will know it when we get there.

Identity is part and parcel obtained through representation. Stuart Hall traverses identity through a global discourse of the "nation-state" by which individuals feel part of a collective. This was severed as the world became globalized. Empirical Britain could not stop the migration set in motion by colonization which transformed the identity of the nation-state. Growing up with British influence in Jamaica, he describes everything as English. As Jamaicans "settled" into Britain, he recalls being asked when he was moving back to his "homeland". When Jamaicans stayed, identity politics emerged as individuals tried to find some sort of identity against racist society, to reconcile the fact they were blocked out of identification within the group (2000, p. 52). "Black" became the focus of "other" in Britain society at the same time other ethnic groups such as Asian immigrants were silenced. According to Hall, subjectivity needs to be understood in terms of how we construct ourselves against others and those who we silence.

Culture of Self Through Other: The Formation of the Subject through the Art Room

For children in the art room, there is a constant push and pull between Who I am? and Who Should I be? as they negotiate meaning both from an individual standpoint and within the context of "other". Maxine Greene (1978) explains:

> As individuals experience the work through and by the means of their lived worlds, the realities they discover may well provide new vantage points on the intersubjective world, the world they share with others; the enrichment of the 'I' may become an overcoming of silence and a guest, for what is not yet. (p. 181)

"For what is not yet", is negotiated within changing school demographics as families migrate from large urban areas. Predominantly a middle class neighborhood, housing subsidies in the local neighborhood had created an economically diverse school. In an astonished voice, one little girl from inner city Chicago remarked to our principal, "Everyone cares about you here!" For some children, the transition was hard, as the culture of caring felt "other" compared to the culture of survival many had left.

Enter sixth grade, an age of independence and an age of shifting attitudes. Teaching them sometimes entailed a love/hate relationship. This particular group came with a "history" and the label "difficult". Since working with them in fourth grade I had worked out multiple tensions between students to foster a sense of community. This was best illustrated by puppet making in fifth grade. I honestly thought some of my already "too cool" fifth graders would correlate puppet making to a game of doll dress up. I was wrong. The lesson transformed the art room.

Zach, who came bearing a large dose of disrespect for fellow classmates either flipped on the charms with teachers or stood in "lockdown" mode, staring off into space with an "I wish I didn't have to be here" look in his eyes. On this day he told me this was the best project he had done in art *ever*! His friends (along with himself) had been counting down the days until art class. He had even taken cloth home and sewed; yes

sewed clothes for his puppet. I was hooked. Hooked on the enthusiasm he had shared. The culture of the art room had transformed and I was elated.

Fast forward to sixth grade. I couldn't wait to work with this group again. They loved art and had transformed themselves from mere doers to makers of meaning (Zurmuehlen, 1990). We had several new students who came from other schools in the district. The culture of the art room changed. Constantly fights broke out between Zach and two boys from the other school. My art room was small and there was barely enough room to keep peace between them. I was confident though, overly, unfortunately, I had helped foster a community of artists and everyone would learn to get along. It all circulated around power. Zach, Tayvon, and Andre all jockeyed to be leaders in the class, and no one wanted to share the role.

After a fight almost broke out in the art room I asked Andre if I could talk to him. He was so angry. I explained he could come talk to me any time and attended to the rest of the class. He approached me later and finally shared with me information concerning what had been occurring. When one of Tayvon's friends tapped me on the head as he walked by and said, "you two okay?" Tayvon had come from a nearby elementary with Andre and spent most of his day in the special education classroom. Andre nodded, "yeah, we okay". Andre accepted me as "cool" and as someone to talk to, but he and Tayvon struggled with their place in the art room. As they both told me, "We were cool in our other school, now we're not." The relationships between the students did improve, but Andre left a lasting impression on me related to issues of class, race and power.

Zach had been at Lucas since Kindergarten. He was white. Andre was black. Zach was middle class. Andre came from a working class family. Zach also had been part of Lucas when the student population was quite different. He also had a 'history' in this place he called school. Hall believed that through the recognition of how we were positioned, individuals could organize through difference, eliciting change by creating new positions in relation to the local and the global. The local was the art room and

although the boys never become friends, the group dynamics melded to one of a community again. The tenuous relationship of Zach and Andre illustrated the complex issues children face in group dynamics. I had come from working in a homogenous school district both economically and racially. I believe, at Lucas, children understood the self as dynamic and fluid, by participating in a diverse human community.

Culture of Self Through a Care of the Self

In his earlier work through systems of power, Foucault illustrates the ways in which the body "naturally" self regulated through systems of power. Foucault's later work opens up a reading of the text in a more hermeneutic sense. I use this word with caution in terms of Foucault's work. Hermeneutics creates a space for individuals to take meaning from their own interpretation of lived experience and Foucault's use of this word may be seen as problematic, as the practice of self was about obtaining knowledge of the discourses within which one operate (Gros & Davidson, p. 524). As Fredric Gros (2005) explains, Foucault was hesitant of this phenomenological approach because it didn't account for signifying systems (linguistics, sociology, or psychoanalysis) (p. 524) Foucault still saw the subject as much more passive, but this transforms in his works prior to his death in 1984.

The writings in reference to the care of the self, originally titled the "Culture of the Self" became part of his third volume in the History of Sexuality in 1984 (Gros, p. 507). The impetus of the 1982 course as described by Gros highlights a significant transformation on how Foucault positioned the subject. He dislodges truth revealed through an individual's tie to Christian doctrine or acting in an ethical and moral fashion to adhere to a supreme being or avoiding the evils of the Devil. Foucault did not see philosophy as enough to access truth, but spirituality (which comes through a care of the self) as "the pursuit, practice, and experience through which the subject carries out the necessary transformations on himself in order to have access to the truth" (From his

dossiers, as cited in Gros p. xxiii). His return to the Hellenistic and Roman Epochs were in order to achieve the care of the self; you tamed your body through gymnastics and your soul's courage was "awakened through music" (Gros, 534). He continues by explaining, to achieve the depths of knowledge for oneself, the body and soul exchange their weaknesses and vices (Gros, p. 534).

I believe that in this work, Foucault begins to stress the importance of dissecting one's own lived life to understand the conception of self. This self-reflective action does not mean isolating oneself from "other". Justen Infintio (2003), Ball State University, explains the care of the self has two purposes, to bring about and maintain greater freedom for the individual and to give due concern and respect to others by attending their needs. This overcomes the myth of locating our true selves, because we are in constant formation. As he states, "A close reading of Foucault supports the view that individual liberty *results from* concern for others; freedom is the outcome of acting ethically towards others and ourselves" (p. 162). In his dossiers, the Hermeneutic of the Subject "scans the subtle episodes of existence with a detailed reading (Gros, 2005, p. 536). In the myriads of ways we can position the child artist, which ones do I knowingly and not so knowingly use to describe my students? How does the governance (surveillance by parents, administrations, other teachers) silence the interests and voices of my students? How does my identity through a working class background change or affect the way I view my students?

Recently, I had one of those honest moments when a new babysitter came to watch Annabel. She was also in my Art Learning class and was planning on using Annabel for her case study. Annabel loves babysitters and took to Erica right away. Erica babysat six children over the previous summer and was quite qualified. She presented herself as responsible and her work in class proved she was a responsible student.

Annabel had had a couple of other babysitters from the art department. Without stereotyping, they were "struggling" artists and teachers of sorts and I enjoyed their companionship and my mentor relationship with them. I remembered those days (which never seem too far away) when I was a recent graduate, still struggling financially. My babysitting jobs gave me an extra financial buffer. I also happened to baby sit for other teachers who were both my mentors and friends. I felt I had come full circle, and was able to return the favor by providing income for other pre-service teachers.

Erica drove up in an expensive vehicle. She was carrying a great leather handbag. She lived in a really upscale apartment in downtown Iowa City. She grew up in a suburb of Chicago. I did not want to position her as the stereotypical Chicago suburban student who grew up in an upper middle class neighborhood, seeing money much differently than I had…but I know in that moment I did. I noticed myself feeling less "powerful" in the situation or that she was "checking out" how we lived. Her mother had been a teacher and her father a lawyer. With my other babysitters, we had mutual conversations about art, the quirkiness of our old house and the financial burdens of undergraduate loans and low teaching salaries. Erica represented the student who I felt I could not mentor. She had privileges I could not fully describe.

As Annabel happily engaged in an art extravaganza and wound up by a new visitor, my daughter saw Erica simply as a playmate. I had "staged" Erica as a certain "character" and I needed to remove the makeup and allow myself to let her reveal who she was, instead of my preconceived notions creating the scene. Foucault's "Care of the Self" "is therefore a shot through the presence of the other: the other as guide to one's life the other as the correspondent to whom one writes and before whom one takes stock on oneself…" (Gros, 536). Erica reminded me to question my assumptions, not apologize for who I was; mentoring meant being open to other and therefore open to revelations about oneself.

Coming Full Circle: The Culture of Self through Interpretation

I have traversed through historical conditions related to the formation of the subject as well as various theoretical and philosophical means by which we explain how we construct a sense of identity from our encounters with the lived world. If I were asked to nail down the "correct" version, I would do my students and myself a disservice. It is through various lenses I suggest the culture of self is constructed. The lenses are our understanding of self against other, care for the self in community, and the play and work of melding experience. We are what we make (Zurmuehlen, 1990).

Art educator Marilyn Zurmuehlen was influenced by the work of Kenneth Beittel who grounded his work in the interpretive strategies of art making in phenomenology. The term phenomenology derives from the Greek term phainomenon and logs, phenomenon and logos. From the work of Martin Heidegger, (1953/1996) phenomenon means "the self-showing in itself…a distinctive way something can be encountered" (p. 27) in terms of the presence "without an explicit knowledge of the guidelines functioning in it" (p. 23). The important aspect in terms set form by Heidegger is the concept of Da-sein which literally means being, there and here, and involves acts of interpretation. A student of Heidegger, Hans Georg Gadamer (1977/1986) revealed that interpretative strategies allowed individuals to move beyond the intermediate meaning of a work of art or to claim a total recovery of the meaning of the work (34). Meaning occurred through an ontological musing of the individual's experience.

Marilyn Zurmuehlen describes three philosophical aspects embedded in the work of creating. First, there is the idea of praxis, "I am what I make" where the artist feels like the originator (1990, p. 18). Second, idiosyncratic meaning entails the work of art is "subjective, uniquely bound to a particular person and situation" (1990, p. 25). And finally, through intentional symbolization, the artist manifests his or her lived experience through symbol. These are not mutually exclusive, but function as sites of meaning

through concrete forms of art making. Even at three, Annabel shared her world symbolically.

Through haptic and visual affinity, Annabel's scribbles at age two had transformed into "objects" of meaning through naming. In an effort to encourage vegetable and fruit eating, mealtime became an artistic endeavor. As her mother, I created funny faces from orange slices and bananas. She would quickly gobble them up and had taken it upon herself to make her own. Dining out was a spectacle as food was played with, all in the name of art. Later, this play manifested itself into drawn circles, where she carefully placed two dots for eyes and a dash for a mouth. At the end of each preschool day, a stack of papers filled her cubby. She would tell me she had drawn me again, and there I would be, numerous repeated circles filled with eyes and a smile. When we pulled into the garage she would hop out and run to the chalkboard saying enthusiastically, "Want me to draw you?"

"Okay" she would answer for me and begin the face. In a short span of a few days she had begun to add a body of sorts. On one occasion, she erased me. Narrating the scene…"Oh no mommy your're gone. Don't worry I can make you again. Don't get sad."

Symbolicly speaking to be hers, I only needed to be named. Part of her drawing is related to development, but she certainly embodies her lived life through the visual. Her recent drawings of me became another way of remembering and holding tight to that which she held dear. Prior to the drawings, she would enact our homecoming after a long day of preschool through play. She would sit in the bathtub as I did dishes while her rubber duckies took on the role of mother and daughter.

Rubber Ducky 1: "Sweetheart, I have to do to work now!"

Rubber Ducky 2: "No, mommy I want to play with you!"

Rubber Ducky 1: "Don't get sad, you get to be with your friends and then we will play!"

Rubber Ducky 2: "Okay, I love you! Bye!"

The work of her drawings side by side with her ducks enacting our relation is an example of what Anna Kindler (1999) describes as drawing repertoires. Like the work of Zurmeuhlen, Kindler reveals the ways in which individuals symbolically represent themselves through their art. Kindler demonstrates the way her child, an avid hockey fan, reveals his interest through several multi-modal forms of drawing. He "becomes" the hockey player by demonstrating the hockey moves from his favorite players. He draws play-by-play action maps from the games. Through copying, he even replicates his favorite "All-Star" hockey player poster.

As her third birthday approached, Annabel asked for a ducky party. As we were perusing the aisles of a party store, we found shelves filled with rubber duckies. The duckies wore little plastic painted on costumes to represent a gamut of party themes such as cowboy ducks, baby ducks, bride and groom ducks. This became a wonderful playground and Annabel was mesmerized. Although her ducks literally meant the world to her, she suggested she get ducks to give to her friends as well. Kindler remarks that her son cannot describe his love of hockey in words. For Annabel, even before she can make tangible letters on the page, the pictorial process of sharing her life symbolically through action and image tells much about how children construct meaning (Kindler, 1999). In order to allow students to have an experience entwined with meaning, it is also important to engage in dialogue relating to how local and global discourses of education are enacted in the art room. Interweaving my story with the story of my students tells us much.

Unfolding Local and Global Discourses and the Child Artist

Education as the "Great Equalizer"

In my own childhood, money dominated the backdrop of any conversation. I grew up in a small homogenous community of farmers. Caring for the land was an honor

for my father, but the beautiful landscape could not compensate for low hog and corn prices. When it came to finances, my mother saw our status bound to material possessions. On the other hand, my dad always said, "you can't take it with you (money) so you might as well enjoy it". So we ate fresh fruits and vegetables from the garden, and mostly generic food. We used shampoo to the last ounce, making sure to rinse the bottle for any residual soapsuds. We kept the heat low, wearing extra layers around the house. We took timed showers. We had a house full of stuff.

My mom loved to wallpaper and redecorate, coordinating fabric swatches with home interior "wall systems". Collections of small porcelain statuettes often found at the local drug store or Hallmark store lined the shelves. Mom's favorite were the *Country Cousins* and *Precious Moments*, along with other various knick knacks. According to Marxism, we seek the obtainment of commodities as a means to initiate cultural status, but in order to obtain these goods one is inescapably tied to the market of production. Working to earn a wage, which is diffused through the exchange of goods, brings a particular cultural standing. However, the attainment of goods and the accumulation of wealth are not mutually exclusive. As Marx states,

"The worker's propertylessness, and the ownership of living labour by objectified labour, or the appropriation of alien labour by capital-both merely expressions of the same relation from opposite poles-… "(1978, p. 293).

We worked to obtain middle class status through the objects we displayed. My family worked hard. Often my dad worked two jobs. Ironically, my mom worked during the Christmas season selling clocks at one of the kiosks. Why she did this was not necessarily to put food on the table, but to provide her children with a middle class Christmas with presents under the tree and all the trimmings. My parents also reminded me I would attend college (and I should marry someone rich as well). Education was seen as the "great equalizer"and doing well in school would mean I had the possibility to live a life with more economic freedom.

Former professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University, Ellen Brantlinger (2003), explored the ways in which a middle class ideology operates within the school. The dominant discourse of school success is upheld for the middle class because middle class mothers vocalize the importance of progressive education reform while upholding traditional curriculum practices. In this way, the curriculum gives advantages to the type of learning and family structure which occurs in middle class homes. Well before the students enter the K-12 school system, Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam (2002) argue, the myriad of social differences which account for achievement differences in school. The quantitative study was supported by the Economic Policy Institute and involved using data from the U.S. Department of Education. They conducted a study beginning in 1998 involving a nationally representative longitudinal study of young children-The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K). One of the major findings was the large impact SES had on children's success in school:

> Socioeconomic status is quite strongly related to cognitive skills. Of the many categories of factors considered-including race/ethnicity, family educational expectations, access to quality child care, home reading, computer use, and television habits-SES accounts for more of the unique variation in cognitive scores than any other factor by far. Entering race/ethnic differences are substantially explained by these other factors; SES differences are reduced but remain sizeable. (Lee & Burkham, p. 2)

A few potential flaws of the study are worth mentioning. The study gives most of the attention to discrepancies in school preparation mostly through White versus Black and White versus Hispanic binaries. In addition, it never elaborates on the reasons Asians scored quite higher on math and reading scores than white children. Although it looks at family activities, the study does not address the different cultures of the home or parenting practices.

An ethnographic study of the social life of the family has much to tell about the way class operates to serve the child in school. Lareau (2003) explores the verbal

language commonalities and differences of various socioeconomic groups. As mentioned earlier, she uses the term "concerted cultivation" emphasizing strong participation in extra curricular activities and negotiation with authority figures as the right of middle class families. These expectations were well equipped for the workings of the school institution and power was employed through normativity. What she means by this, is the "workings" of the school often fit well with the structured routine middle class families had learned, thus their success in school was very closely related to their economic status and what roles it facilitated in broader institutions.

Often in working class and poor families, there was stock in the natural unfolding of children's interest and development. This meant children negotiated their world more through social dialogue with peers vs. adults. Adults were the final word in a given situation and the child did not question the adult's authority. Lareau (2003) draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) who examines how social structures delineate one's agency within a group. "This socialization provides children, and later adults, with a sense of what is comfortable and natural (he terms this *habitus*). These background experiences also shape the amount and forms of resources (capital) individuals inherit and draw upon as they confront various institutional arrangements (fields) in the social world" (as cited in Lareau, p. 275). What then might the use of money symbols tell about the lived life of children in relation to socioeconomic status and identity? In order to discover answers to my questions, I engaged in laying out my research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: UNFOLDING METHODS OF RESEARCH

For some people, what is ambiguous and not immediately applicable is discarded, while for others, much that is unclear is vaguely retained, taken in with peripheral vision for possible later clarification.

Mary Catherine Bateson, Peripheral Visions

Method of the Study

I have to admit my first encounters with academic writing seemed dry and truth seemed to be driven by "hard facts" and quantitative work. It was through my first readings in art seminars classes that led me (a bit blindly at first) to the world of qualitative research. Explaining how qualitative research allows for the audience to take the information presented and place it in the context of their own lives and interpret meaning for themselves mirrors the postmodern art world, where multiple competing discourses create ongoing streams of dialogue. This parallels the ideas presented by John Dewey (1934) in reference to the process of making which creates the "work of art", meaning the product of art is never static but in "circulation" by constantly contributing to human experience by the myriad of ways it is translated in time and place. Dewey (1934) states:

> What is called the magic of the artist resides in his ability to transfer these values from one field of experience to another, to attach them to the objects of our common life, and by his (her) imaginative insight make these objects poignant and momentous. (p. 123)

It is this framework that leads me to a multi-layered approach to my research. I implemented a mixed method qualitative approach in my study, involving an overlapping of hermeneutical phenomenology as autoethonograpy. Through hermeneutical phenomenology I pay close attention to the lived experiences through the stories of the children coupled with conversations with the teachers with keen attention to the themes of my research questions:

- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children construct identity within different school cultures and similar curriculums?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children use story to negotiate and explore their understanding of class, status and power?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how curriculums function and unfold within a given school culture? (see Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010)

In John W. Creswell's (2007) book *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design,* he describes Van Manen's description of hermeneutical phenomenology:

> In the process, they reflect on essential themes, what constitutes the nature of this lived experiences. They write a description of the phenomenon, maintaining a strong relation to the topic of inquiry and balancing the parts of the writing to the whole. (p. 58)

The interpretation of lived experience draws from John Dewey's discussion of reflective thought and aesthetics as part of the on going dialogue involved in the art products' "work". My own story and revelations of circulating around experiences tied to my families' socioeconomic status are vital as well. Drawing from autoethnography, I will scrutinize my own identity in relation to the stories unfolding from the participants. In telling my own narrative, I allow myself to be critical of myself as a researcher, dissecting seemingly natural biases I may bring into my study.

Autoethnography has evolved from several terminologies related to qualitative research methods including Van Manen's (1990) hermeneutical phenomenology or interpretation of lived experience. Carolyn Ellis and Arthur P. Bochner (as cited in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln, 2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Eds.) extensively outlines these references and I include a few here to broaden the understanding of my use of autoethnography such as personal ethnography (Crawford, 1996), critical autobiography (Church, 1995), self-ethnography (Van Manen, 1995), and ethnographic memoir (Tedlock, 1991). Ellis and Bochner share that autoethnograpy "has become the term of choice in describing studies and procedures that connect the personal

to the cultural…" (p. 740). I employ this term because I hope the stories from the students and myself illuminate the ways in which SES impacts on their social world both in terms of their school culture and positioning of self.

It has been my experience in the classroom embedded with the lived lives of my students that has turned my focus to this type of ethnographic approach. Ethnography involves an examination of the context, time and place of the group being observed with a particular focus on the culture of the group. Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater (2007) define culture as an "invisible web of behaviors, patterns, rules, and rituals of a group of people who have contact with one another and share common languages" (p. 3). My work will not be isolated only to the signs and symbols children employ in their work, but expand to include the larger background and culture of the school. Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater draw on the work of anthropologist James Peacock, who uses the metaphor of the camera to describe this type of ethnographic fieldwork: "…he describes its "harsh light" and "soft focus" to show how ethnographers try to capture the background and foreground of a group" (p. 3). The foreground and center stage of my work will begin in the individual classrooms of three elementary art classrooms within the same school district. The leading roles will be played by the focus students who tell their stories through image and conversation, intermingled with my own experience and reflective journaling along the way.

Qualitative research involves an "interplay between theory and methods, researcher and researched" (Leavy, 2006, p. 5). My reflective practices will confirm, meld and transform the approaches I implement. The study of Michel Foucault's theories will examine the dominant ideology and power constructs situated in the school institution, the art room, and widely held beliefs about class. But I will also look at the powerful ways children construct meaning through hermeneutics. I find it useful to implement several theory/method because the topic of the study is complex and no single theory/method can illuminate all the ways in which one reads class, understands culture

or defines the child artist. In observing and reflecting as a researcher, I couldn't help but also tie in my experiences from the classroom in which I simultaneously was "teacher". In this way, my project also took a form of action research, where the stories of my classroom were also embedded within the research project (see Chriseri-Strater and Sunstein, 2006). As I examine the work produced by students, the accompanying narratives and the curricular practices of the teacher, I will consider class as both powerful and restrictive.

Participants

The schools include School One, School Two, and School Three in a school district which shares its rich education heritage with a large Midwestern university known in the country for its strong education program. The numbers presented here represent the number of students receiving free and reduced lunch and are based on data from the fall of 2007 when I first selected the schools.

- School One: 22.40%
- School Two 5.30% of
- School Three 76.99%

The other aspect of my fieldwork entails a more in depth discussion of what the numbers really mean in relation to the demographics of the school body. For example, some schools in the district serve a large number of graduate students who often receive subsidies for themselves and their families because they are students at the university in town. In addition, housing availability and costs have much to do with the make up of the individual neighborhoods as well as the particular ways in which the district zones the schools. Beyond the center stage of the individual classrooms, these types of questions will paint a broader image of the backdrop or "backstage" workings of the individual school's culture and its relation to the workings of the art room.

Beyond the culture of the schools, the participants in the study include the children in the classroom, their art teacher and the administrator from each school. I began by observing the classroom as a whole and did not ask specific questions of students until I received permission slips from families. The students were either in 3rd or 4th grade and all initial observations occurred in the art room setting. After spending about three weeks at the school, children were given a permission slip for the study. At School One fourteen forms were returned out of twenty-six. This included four males and eleven females. At School Two eighteen out of twenty four permission slips were returned and many students were eager for me to interview them. This included seven boys and eleven females. At School One slips went home with the teacher and were returned quickly. At School Two, slips filtered in and several students "left them in their back pack" and asked for another form. At School Three the permission slips were offered several time and on the first attempt only one was returned. The second and only other form I received was "helped along" through a para educator who had a strong relationship with the student and his family. This included a permission slip from one boy and one girl.

My intention at the onset of the study was to interview as many students as possible along with scheduling formal interviews with the principals and art teachers. After getting a sense of the culture of each particular art room, I quickly discovered the stories of individual children were quite numerous, but I also naturally gravitated towards particular students because of their interests, conversations or images. At each school, I focused on one girl and one boy and planned to write mini ethnographic case studies on each school using the children's art and accompanying narrative as a focal point. After documenting their conversations, I narrowed it down again to one student at each school as the focus on the study became aligned with the research questions/themes which I outlined in the first chapter. In some cases this was also facilitated by the ease by which the students talked with me.

At School One Ella was very comfortable talking with adults and was quite interested in art. School One was also the quietest classroom and so little narration occurred during their studio time. This is also the School I visited slightly less frequently due to a conflict with my own teaching schedule. Initially when I set up the time to observe at School One, I had no teaching conflicts. Once the semester began, I had to make adjustments due to a last minute schedule change. To compensate for both the time and the less talkative class, I came at other times. Initially, I met with several students in their homeroom. I asked them to draw a picture for me and also recorded their answers in my research journal. This was where Ella and then Joseph attracted my attention. Ella stood out because her drawings included lots of narration. She also seemed very confident in what she communicated visually. From the classroom teacher, I knew Joseph struggled a bit academically but when he drew, his images had a cohesive theme. I don't think I could help but be drawn to the symbols in Joseph's work. His family farmed and his image making often involved dirt, corn and tractors. Joseph was a bit shy and I also knew he took the bus home. Ella's mom worked in the school, so it was easier for us to establish a time to visit afterschool.

At School Two, Anson was quite the chatterbox. Emily was very comfortable talking with adults as well. I felt I had to condense the wide range of stories and imagery that had emerged from each student. I also had to balance this with the descriptions of the school, art curriculum, and art teacher and principal interviews. Anson's ability to elaborate on any topic made it pleasurable to listen to his stories.

Finally, at School Three, because I only received two permission slips, I was fortunate enough to have both a girl and a boy turn in a slip. Jasmine would talk with me, but again was a bit shy and my focus became more attuned to Tayshawn. During my first visit I sat with him in the hall because he was having "trouble" in the classroom. Early on, this solidified a relationship and he enjoyed working one on one with me. These were not necessarily due to the fact he was dismissed to sit in the hall, but as the end of the

school year approached and the lessons and schedule of the art room became more flexible we had time to work one on one. This was unique to his situation. Ella's one on one time was fostered after school. Here, I felt she was more open with me and I had a sense of her "kid" culture. Anson provided strong narrative in the classroom setting and because of this, I did not set up individual meetings with him.

What became a very crucial aspect of working with my participants were my "formal" interviews, which were quite different than I had originally intended. Considering the school administrators schedule constraints, I set up formal interview appointments. I intended to do the same with the art teachers but discovered most information about the culture and community of the school during our half hour to hour weekly chats after my observation. Based on the events of the class and discussions with the children, the teacher (knowing the class and school well) could illuminate and expand my perspectives and field notes by explaining it through their lens of teacher. My lens was important as well. I couldn't help but bring my experience of teaching into my research. I also couldn't ignore the topic that was very dear to me. My own experiences of class would "color" the research, and I tried to be very cognizant of these roles as I reflected on my research.

UnfoldingTensions and Openings: Researcher as Reflection of Self

The landscape of the art room and school communities that I built upon also weaves in my own story of growing up on a vast 380-acre farm that involved Sunday walks and moments of quiet solitude and ample reflection. When I first began teaching, I found myself immersed in a school culture much different from how I had been schooled. Coming from a rural farming community, the students in my class seemed homogenous. We were mostly German Catholic farm families with middle to low incomes. Many of our parents carried on the farming occupation from a long lineage of ancestors. This way

of life was embedded in our German roots. My desire to go to college was fueled by two goals. One to leave the provincial life of small town Iowa and to be immersed in widening horizons through my studies. I also sought a career with a stable income.

I had been the observer of the difficulties embedded in financial strife as my parents were always capable of providing food on the table but extras seemed far and few between. The tension that existed because of financial woes seemed prevalent and constant and caused many difficult discussions to arise even as I embarked on the college track. I desired to teach, but my parents tried to convince me the profitability of this occupation would be minimal. I was encouraged to marry someone of wealth. Instilled with a service background and despite my parent's advice for choosing an unprofitable career, a teaching income seemed significant compared to the measly amount of money by which my parents raised three children. It is through memories that I return to that place. It was a place which involved hard labor, long school days and little formal art training. It was also a place of profound beauty, a landscape lush with green pastures in the spring and summer, a place I wandered in solitude even as a young child. It would be later as I traversed those large fields of memory that I came to realize the aesthetic nature of my upbringing. When I returned after college, I found my story of being raised on a farm deeply embedded into my teaching and my belief's about art education. When William Least-Heat Moon (1991) traveled across Kansas his marriage to the land was solidified through the memories entangled in the relationship.

> Whatever else prairie is-grass, sky wind-it is most of all a paradigm to infinity, a clearing full of many things except boundaries, and its power comes from its apparent limitlessness; there is no such thing as a small prairie any more than there is a little ocean, and the consequence of both is this challenge: try to take yourself seriously out here…(Least-Heat Moon, p. 82)

The landscape of my teaching, involves a partnership between memory, story, and the unfolding events of the classroom. Unless I weave my own story into it, the stories of the children will not be complete. I also know my role is multifaceted, and this role

brings tremendous ethical responsibilities and a keen awareness of the tensions that are present in my work.

One of the first tensions involves my role as educator and researcher in the very district I teach. I specifically applied to work in the Small Midwestern Town School District seven years after teaching in a small rural community for several reasons. The district was made up of a diverse student population, had strong community support for the arts, and a reputable and experienced art staff. Overall, the district had a very positive reputation. Previously, I was often the only art elementary teacher and felt some sense of isolation. During my tenure of four years in the district, I have appreciated the viewpoints and insights of art teachers at staff meetings and have been honored to work with experienced teachers. I have also been energized by the new teachers being trained and entering the field from the University.

I am also keenly cognizant of the fact that my role as graduate student, teaching assistant and elementary art educator (and parenting as well) involves a myriad of expectations, questions, and sometime unexpected remarks from others. I can honestly say I am asked almost weekly how I balance all my roles. Until recently, I had not often stopped to reflect about these comments from others. It seems others feel I must be sacrificing something, and yet I felt it was because I was both in the elementary classroom and preparing pre-service teachers that I offered a lived example of theory in action. I feel my work in all three areas helps me to be a better teacher. But it also comes with a great act of balancing. My biggest concern outside the attention to my family is that I am able to mentor and guide all the students I work with. It is these diverse roles that make me extremely present to the fact that teaching is not a job but a way of life. Grounded by a service to others, I also recognize that my life in the last four years has been filled with rapid transformations. These shifts occur in my identity as teacher, researcher, and learner.

In talking with another graduate student who plays the role of teacher, student and teaching assistant, he directed me to the work of Ann DiPardo, (1993) a former professor of English Education at the large Midwestern University. I needed her work to remind me of the tensions one feels when one is transformed from classroom teacher to graduate student. When my principal read my notes and lesson plan for my recent evaluation he commented on my choice of words. "This sounds like a dissertation to me… Don't you think graduate school is sometimes just learning the language?" I had been a part of many classes in the language and literacy department as an early graduate student and felt like an outsider because I didn't have the language they used to discuss theory. I was mesmerized by the fluidity of their thoughts and the ways in which they could argue a point through dense theory. I wanted to obtain this language. It seemed "real" and noteworthy, especially if one was aspiring for a PhD. At the same time, I felt in pulling from theory I would also disengage myself from the teachers I worked with in the public schools because they would see my ideas as elitist or severed from the everyday life of the classroom.

In several interviews conducted by Dipardo this tension was present in the lives of M.A. students as they began their studies either along side teaching or by taking a leave of absence to complete their degree. As one teacher comments:

> I would hear myself really trying to check, because I didn't want to come across as being "in the know". And trying to figure out, how to negotiate, telling them something that I thought sounded really interesting and valuable, without using words that would send a message that "you're an outsider." Because I felt that lot, that I was an outsider. (p. 204)

I later found at art staff meetings "all eyes on me" as questions about art education arose and people turned to me as some sort of expert. Many of the teachers in the room have taught twice as long as I, and I was honest in emphasizing that experience does count. When my colleagues at the elementary would ask how soon they could call me Doctor Wunder, I would respond that I always preferred to go by Amy. I wanted to

stay connected to both the community of teachers at the elementary, but also craved the challenge and rigor of academic courses. I had stereotypes of what it meant to be a doctoral student, and I learned that I had to define my role from multiple vantage points.

These tensions lead me to the importance of writing in a way that is theoretically sound, but also an engaging text that teachers in the field will actually read. Valerie-Lee Chapman's (2005) *Making a Good Victoria Sponge Cake: Schooling, Empire, Class, Gender, and Sexuality* explores the notion of power embedded in the relationship between professor and student using the work of Michael Foucault. She feels the very notion of the academic tongue challenges the intimate mentor relationship individuals establish in the very feminist "language" of teaching which involves the caring of other. Through an overarching and seemingly simple question she asks: "How do we communicate our work to our students and our friends who don't speak the same academic tongues as we do?" or as she bluntly states: "What's the point of research and theory, if only six other people in the world get it?" (p. 261)

Her work is an autoethnography that explores her story of class and sexuality and what it means to her as she constructs meaning and intention through her work at the university level. She further states:

> The Body's Tale is about how power and bodies come together in schools and in colleges, and how teacher and learners and planners can't help but be changed by what they do there, and what is done to them. Because power flows both in and out of bodies, teachers and learners and planners' bodies can affect schools, and colleges, and what is done in them. (p. 280)

It is her work with autoethnography that inspired my own weaving of class issues from childhood and my own interest in how class operates in the school. From here I was looked at the means by which children negotiate a sense of identity through their selection of signs and symbols and their acceptance or rejection of curricular components.

Chapman shares very personal stories to engage the reader in their own dialogue of how they position themselves in reference to class. In turn, there is recognition of a limited view by the fact we are active participants in the reconstruction of the class ideals we represent. Our bodies are marked with class and gender through our social and cultural worlds and thus our agency. According to Chapman, they are not mutually exclusive. Using a Foucauldian perspective, she works to dislodge the power structures anchored in class and has individuals ask the question "What is it that is impossible to think?" I consider the question, how could education be anything but middle class? How in American Public Schools are the bodies classed? How might I teach middle class ideals without even realizing it? Beyond the recognition of the tensions and contradictions in my work, I must be fully present to the images, sounds and stories that surround me. This creates a body of work which can be read from multiple vantage points.

The Procedures of Study

I visited three schools over the course of the spring semester starting in January and ending in June. For purposes of consistency, I selected third/fourth grade multi-age classrooms as my target group. My time in the classroom entailed observing their regularly scheduled art class for 50 minutes followed by a half an hour to an hour follow-up with the teacher. As the students became more comfortable with me, I intended to take the role of volunteer in the classroom. After several visits, I sent home a letter of consent for parents to read which detailed the study. If children and their parents agreed to the study, I planned to interview the children to gain further insight into their work. Some of my emerging questions included:

- Can you tell me a little bit about your artwork?
- Is there a story behind your artwork?
- Do you do art at home? What art supplies do you have?

I wanted this to be a very "natural" process, and I did not want to distract from the normal ebb and flow of the art room. When I use the term "interviewing", my attention was focused on engaging in dialogue with students. Other questions naturally occurred during our talks, purely based on the topic of conversation. I also interviewed the art teachers and principals so as to discover expectations, desires and content related to the curriculum. Interviews with the teacher and principal were tape-recorded or relied on by careful note taking when the participant wished not to be recorded. Photography of student artwork in progress and when finished was paired with their stories and conversations. I took photos of the classrooms, posters throughout the school which perhaps reflected the culture of the school. I noted any stories relating to "class" as well as looked for common signs and symbols students may have used denoting socioeconomic status.

Through the combination of field notes, transcribed interviews, photographs and observation, I allowed for the process of "triangulation" (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein, 2006) to create a study, more "persuasive, "thick" with detail texture and information" (p. 116). I am quite cognizant of the fact that qualitative research involves constant reframing and an act of reflection. I reassessed the questions I asked the students, teachers, and administration. As I collected data and wrote field notes, I began coding data to look for emerging themes and ideas, specifically identity, class and curricular elements. Through reflective practice, I worked to be keenly aware of the fluid and living data of the research.

Unfolding the Importance of the Research in the Field

My crossover to language and literacy studies has allowed me to see important connections between the field of literacy studies and art education. During one of the seminars in Language and Literacy, students were naming off the important scholars in their field. I had to ask myself, did I have this knowledge base? Did I know the lineage

of the great art educators, their work and the trajectory of their theories? I found myself teasing out art names in the "biz" categorizing their big ideas. I also began contemplating and contextualizing a field I am less familiar with, rhetoric. There were moments of concreteness…similarities, connections and realizations the text of our stories, written or visual, aspire to accomplish some form of truth for us. In both disciplines, the difficulty lies in convincing others in an age of standards and benchmarks there is much to be discovered through semiotics. Postmodernism opens up "gaps" as Foucault would describe them. These gaps are places where new ideas may emerge truths become relative and many perspectives occupy meaning. Julie Lindquist and David Seitz (2008) outline "questions about literacy, "what it is, what it does, and what its "effects" are…" such as:

- What does "literacy" mean and for whom?
- How do perspectives on literacy change when viewed from different (cultural, social, institutional) locations?
- When (in response to what social and historical forces) do definitions and uses of literacy seem to change?
- Who is affected by which definitions of literacy?
- What questions do we pose in the field of art education?

These fluid ideas of what occupies literacy for children is the same fluidity art education offers, especially if we use a postmodern lens. The challenge is severing the "truths" educators feel pinned down to because of tradition, administrations, or parental expectations. There is also the notions of "teaching" passed down to individuals in the long apprenticeship of teaching we all occupy after (x) amount of years in school (Lortie, 1975). It seems prevalent in education to categorize the reader, the writer, or young artist into stages or assessment models with rubric headings of "emergent", "fluent", or "developing". As Anna Kindler (1999) notes, "children's pictorial production extends well beyond what we have learned to value and cherish. It includes pieces of paper, some with only a few marks or that have been discarded by even the most thorough child art

collectors as “errors” or incompletes...” (p. 333). How do we abandon fixed categories in curriculum? How do these fixed categories provide opportunities for students to draw from the “unofficial” world of kid culture (Dyson, 1997, Tarr, 2003)?

I could cite many examples of how this plays out in art, but I will start with postmodern terminology. Moving beyond the standard elements of art (ex. line, color, texture) and principles of design (unity, balance, repetition) art educator, Olivia Gude (2004) offers terms such as juxtaposition, layering, gazing, and interaction of text and image. The use of “contemporary” terms extends the modernist language offered by the principles of design and elements of art. The work of Betye Saar illustrates these concepts when everyday objects are juxtaposed and layered to create a new way of “reading” signs and symbols of dominant cultural meanings.

The new spins on how art is “constructed” exemplify the ways in which students draw from visual culture recontextualizing various texts to form personal meaning. Gude does not advocate abandoning fine art, but offers another means of students constructing knowledge from the “aesthetics of everyday” (See Duncum, 1999). It was these ideas related to curriculum content that made me curious about how this study might inform curricular practice.

As I have listened to conversation and read theory in terms of writing workshops for students, the same discourses related to curriculum have emerged. How do we allow the child/student to lead while providing the technical aspects of writing when necessary? Donald Murray could speak for art education when he writes:

> The student uses his own language...Actually, most of our students have learned a great deal of language before they come to us, and they are quite willing to exploit language if they are allowed to embark on a serious search for their own truth. (Murray, 2003, p. 5)

Visual art is defined as the first language My observations in the classroom, however, indicated to me that writing trumps drawing as the “real” work of the classroom. Exposure to varied literature selected as to the reader’s interests, constitutes

strong writing, yet in an age of mechanical testing, this "freedom" seems to be largely off limits. I remember entering into a second grade classroom where the teacher remarked "We have to use this thing…there is not just one, but two…" referring to the neatly bound textbooks offering reading assignments with prompts for the teacher. If tensions bring new truths and new ways of "looking" the artist in me always returns to the thoughts provided by Le Guin via Maxine Greene "Only the imagination can get us out of the bind of the eternal present, inventing or hypothesizing or pretending or discovering a way that reason can follow an infinity of options…" (1995, p. 187).

This research is vital to the field. It allows for a deep conversation about the ways our backgrounds and the way we facilitate the curriculum interprets and constructs individual identities for children in the art room. In the outlining the various definitions of the child artist, especially through the work of Lareau, I wondered how my observations of the children's art making through the lens of SES would compare to the ways in which she saw families structure activities through concerted cultivation or natural growth. This drew me to the ideas by Lindquist and Seitz (2008). The questions proposed by Lindquist and Seitz are the same crucial conversations we need to have in art education.

- What does *"art aesthetics"* mean and for whom?
- How do perspectives on *art education* change when viewed from different (cultural, social, institutional) locations?
- When (in response to what social and historical forces) do definitions and uses of *art education* seem to change?
- Who is affected by particular/chosen definitions of *art education*?

My interest in examining the culture of the school and climate of the art room in terms of students interpretive strategies fits with what Brent Wilson states in terms of teacher impact: "teachers' conceptions of their students; their understanding of student' artistic development; their understanding of the "cultures" of childhood…" are all

important areas where continued research is needed (as cited in La Pierre & Zimmerman, 1992, p. 15). I want my research to provide an exemplar that would highlight the culture of the art room so practicing and pre-service teachers can be reminded on how important it is to engage in dialogue and reflection onf the various signs and semiotics that exist within the art room. In examining the complex culture of the art room, one also looks at the individuals which create the culture and the influences both from the "inside" and "outside" the classroom sphere. Qualitative research allows for a braided montage of personal story, observation and listening. We need to listen closely to the subtle ways students mark identity, power and place within the particular school settings and the landscape of each art room. We have much to learn.

CHAPTER FOUR: SETTING THE STAGE OF THE STUDY: UNFOLDING THE LANDSCAPE OF THREE ART ROOMS

We must somehow take a wider view, look at the whole landscape, really see it, and describe what's going on here. Then we can at least wail the right question into the swaddling band of darkness, or, if it comes to that choir the proper praise.
Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.

Integral to the story of each school and the students, is the sense of place each school occupies through its community of families, teachers, and staff. The building and neighborhood itself occupies various histories and stories that contribute to the culture of each place. This is also significant because many schools are "neighborhood" schools. This had relevance due to discussions on closing schools or rezoning schools as I wrote up my research. In turn, this had impact on how these schools were viewed from the public's perception.

To more fully understand the stories of the children it is essential to provide a rich description of where they spend the majority of their day. This place called school entails education, socialization, and friendship. In some cases it also involves disengagement, tension, and questioning. As William Least-Heat Moon (1991) reminds us while immersed in the prairie grasses of Kansas:

> I was coming to see that facts carry a traveler only so far: at last he must penetrate the land by a different means, for to know a place in any real and lasting way is sooner or later to dream it. That's how we come to belong to it in the deepest sense. (p. 105)

The portrait I paint of each school should be objectively fashioned, but my qualitative and ethnographic lens reminds me this is not possible. The community I write about was my home for nine years and even though two of the schools were almost in my backyard, I only knew them by their façade. I entered one to vote and the other to use the restroom during a bathroom "emergency" while playing outside on the playground with my daughter. The stories of these places are interwoven into my experience as teacher,

neighbor, community member and parent. These are my versions and visions. The way I see and maybe sometimes even dreamed about a place I spent so many days in as a child. The place of memories, both joyous and maybe haunting, the place we call "school".

School One

Walking towards the entryway of School One, the area is teeming with history. There is the historical home of a famous artist, to several other structures which housed local grocery stores, galleries, and a craft guild now turned bakery. Not a block from the school is a house believed to part on an encampment from the Civil War era. As one teacher described it, the neighborhood is made up of people who use their hands. Many writers, academics, visual artists and musicians reside in the surrounding homes.

Framing the school are old oak and maple trees, cascading shadows on the facade. Gardens surround the school, planted by the school parent association. In the garden a huge sign carved in stone, announces the name of the school. The school is four stories, red brick and framed by an arched stone entry. It feels comfortable, like a good pair of sneakers, ready to be replaced but so full of stories they can't be discarded. I grew up in an old house built in the 1920's and now live in a house about four blocks from the school built in the 30's. I am used to the worn molding along a set of staircases and the various tones of carpet, which mark the well-worn path of those who enter the space.

The gardens intermingle from school to yard, as the plants in the neighborhood seem to have history as well. There is an annual garden walk where the lineage of plants can be discovered by listening to stories by long time neighborhood residents. It is not uncommon to see garden parties or children selling lemonade. There is even a natural prairie trail, which runs along a creek maintained by the neighborhood association. People who reside in the area would be considered "green", front lawns have been replaced with native plants and prairie grasses. Rain barrels are attached to spouts, to ease the use of city water. Vegetable plants and flowers meld together in the soil, using

the space for aesthetic and practical purposes. Some homes feature a folk art garden, where remnants of antiques and collectibles meld with soil.

There is an eclectic feel as large homes are scattered with more modest homes dappled with others split into apartments for renters, mostly college students. The homes range in price from the historical homes in the $250,000 to $500,000 mark to more modest homes in the low $100,000's. Only about twenty two percent of the children receive free and reduced lunch. It is also important to note many children are bused to school from a fairly new suburban neighborhood on the edge of town. As the art teacher comments, the group is fairly diverse in terms of socioeconomic status, but in her opinion it is a non-issue at the school. For example, she tells the story of a child describing this great place he eats each week with his family and other families where they also play games. The child next to him excitedly shares he is going to see if his family can go there too. The teacher shared with me, the one boy was having dinner at the Salvation Army, and the other boy lived in the upper middle suburban neighborhood on the edge of town.

As I enter the school, I climb stairs to reach the office and I am always welcomed by a bulletin board filled with art. Splotches of watercolor are outlined in neon string where kindergartners created abstract images or highlighted what could only be seen by what Fahey (1996) describes as "magic eyes". Birds, dragons, bunnies, and fish make their way to the viewer's attention (see Figure 1). I wander through the library where framed art from students are hanging, return to a set of stairs and then find myself in the art room. Posted on the door are these quotes:

> *Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create.*
>
> *Albert Einstein*
>
> *There is no doubt that creativity is the most important human resource of all. Without creativity there would be no progress and we would be forever repeating the same patterns.*
>
> *Edward de Bono*

Opening the door the room is quiet. The stillness represents a large portion of my visits. Students are engaged and busy, yet very little conversation exists. The teacher reminds me not all her classes are like this, but this class just happens to be unusually quiet. The room is in the basement and the views from the windows provide a worm's eye view to the outside world. Tennis shoes, Mary Janes, Crocks, among others are seen set off by pant cuffs, tights or socks during recess. After school stroller and bike wheels are present as families linger on the playground. Glass brick walls make up one of the walls, often the place of bouncing basketballs and frustrated artists who are annoyed by the rhythmic "TAP, TAP" on the window panes. Painted in turquoise, a staircase leads to one set of windows and the FIRE EXIT sign. The tables are situated in a U shape, with a cream carpet and old wicker rocking chair creating an inviting space for students to meet. Stripes of color adorn the circumference of the room in purple and blue against a yellow background. The room is dotted with antique statues and has a cluttered but organized and well used feel.

Towards the end of one of our visits, I asked the teacher to share her philosophy. She said, "You gotta to be kidding…"

I wasn't sure if she was thinking I should know by being in her room, or if it was obvious what every art teacher's philosophy is…. I found out in a later conversation, she felt a little pressure; a student teacher has time to formally write a philosophy. In this case, I was putting her slightly on the spot!

I rephrased the question, asking her to tell me what were the most important things she wanted her students to take from the art room.

She said:

- Excited to Come
- Creative Thinkers
- Try New Things
- Think Outside the Box

These ideas developed from her background and educational experiences in undergraduate and graduate school, her extensive experience in the field and her strong belief in being an active artist in her own medium.

Background of Teacher

Like Georgia O'Keefe who fondly remembers sitting on a brightly colored quilt on her farm in Wisconsin drawn to the world of color and design, Ms. S new she wanted to be an artist since she was five. It would be many years later before she was called to teaching. Her mother grew up during the Great Depression and had a high school education. Her greatest accomplishment was to send her children to college. Growing up on the Southside of Chicago, Ms. S aspired to attend the Art Institute of Chicago. Her mother selected a small midwestern college because she wanted her daughter to be safe. Like her sister, college was essential, not the choice of school. Her brother however, was able to select the school he attended.

Ms. S received a BFA in printmaking and a K-12 teaching license. Her first job began in a small Midwestern town, where after a year, she opted out of teaching to become a medical graphic designer for large university hospital. After staying home with children, she returned to teaching. She said this proved that you could take time off from teaching to raise a family. Her current teaching position has spanned at least twenty-five years. She is an active artist, the vice president the state pastel society and works mainly in oils with a focus on abstract expressionism. Her philosophy of teaching melds with her experience as artist and the eclectic backdrop of the neighborhood in which she resides. Her husband, a collector of antiques, adorns their lawn with intricate wrought iron fencing, art deco benches, and folk art adornments. As she commented, "we couldn't live in another neighborhood with all our stuff".

Not a block from the school, and in the same alley adjacent to their house, various cement balls are lined up like anxious children ready to roll out onto the playground

when the three o'clock bell rings. The "neighborhood ball man" as described by Ms. S looks like something from Mars. In fact, the gentleman creating them is starting his own business. "What other neighborhood could this happen in?"

As I first spent time in the art room, the demographics of the students seemed diverse. When I began meeting with the children one on one, multiple children seemed anxious for me to interview them. During the interview, many wanted to draw with me as well. This is how I got to know the children before selecting a focus child. My focus child for the study became a bright and creative artist who was always quite expressive with materials.

Child Profile: Meet Ella

Sketching a character with similar qualities of the BRATZ dolls, Ella's' art portfolio was whimsical and playful (See Figure 2). The character holding a clipboard and pencil took center stage as fairies dances on the page and landed gently on the large curved block lettering which created her name. The portfolio was meant to hold her collection of work from the year. These included, a Matisse inspired cut paper design (see Figure 3), an abstract painting (see Figure 4), and a personal collage (see Figure 5) inspired by a local guest artist.

A bright turquoise headband, with white polka dots, holds her long sandy brown hair back as she works, even when it is time to clean up she is trying to add life to her character by filling in the face and arms with color. On a hot and muggy day while the voices of children are heard outside the open windows, Ella's t-shirt proclaims, "I love earth" screen-printed with an "I", a large heart, and planet earth. The short brown cotton capris show off her *All Star* black high tops. Ella's dress describes her character well, a spirited and self-proclaimed visual artist and writer. She is slightly reserved but extremely comfortable around adults. An only child, her mother teaches at the school in a

second grade classroom and her father is an engineer. She lives in one of the older "quaint" houses in the surrounding neighborhood.

As a fourth grader, she loves to spend time with friends, especially having sleepovers and roller-skating on Saturday, because it is free at the local recreation center. She likes to run and participate in a girl's track activity and has a couple activities each week, but towards the end of the semester she has time to visit with me afterschool while she hangs out in her mom's room until she is done working at 3:45.

As I walk into her mom's classroom to chat with Ella she is at the computer. Holding a twelve-inch English cucumber in her hand, the saran wrap is pulled back and she is munching away. I offer her a brownie, she obliges and then later returns to the cucumber. As she snacks and we chat, I discover her alter identity takes the form of a cat, chosen for her love of cats and their attributes of speed and climbing ability. Her cat character is freckled (like her), with whiskers, fangs and "my skin is white". She likes that you change into other clothes and transform your hairdos.

Poptropicas, as I will come to discover, creates a virtual world where children can create characters and face challenges to facilitate the continued life of the island. The "challenges" seem to take on an ethical appeal and relate to contemporary issues of modern society, while also facilitating a power identity in a lighthearted atmosphere. For example, at *Shark Tooth Island* you must give the sharks a potion to put them to sleep to save the bay. At *Spy Island* you must stop people from taking others' hair, lest they be forced into a life of baldness! Her favorite island, *Time Tangled Island*, allows you to fix the wrongs of the past. For example, the future had become stifled with garbage and people were living in sky houses. As she commented, "I help the future became a better place for everyone to live in".

As Ella describes these places and tasks I pose on the spot questions about the game. For example, "Whom do you think the game is for?" She feels the game is for boys and girls and geared towards 3-6th grades. The game came to her from a friend and

from my perspective it didn't appear to totally encompass her free time. However, during my intense questioning to satisfy my curiosity about the game, her mom rolled her eyes at the mention of "Poptropicas". Her ability to transform will be revealing later when I learn of her alter ego world through writing. This was accomplished by a piece of writing where she takes on the characteristics of "shape shifters". Ella would teach me much, but so did the teachers and students in other school spaces.

School Two

The drive to School Two takes about fifteen minutes and I enjoy the quiet solitude of the national public radio station in the fading speakers of my ten-year-old car. With most of my days filled with the inquisitive elementary students repeatedly saying, "Mrs. Wunder, Mrs. Wunder…" and my own three year old eagerly pronouncing "Mom, I have something to tell you…" I soak up the peacefulness, which can be found driving alone.

The school is located in the town adjacent to where I live; the towns literally are merged as one, with most of the new construction both in housing and in retail consolidated to this area. After leaving the interstate, I wind myself past a few hotels and then down a sloped street past a new golf course. The rolling hillsides and undeveloped areas are a reminder of forgotten corn and soybean hills. There is a sense you are away from the city as the hills surround the school, like small individual rising loaves of bread. Houses in the range of $500,000 to into the millions of dollars spot the landscape with manicured lawns, and pre-fabricated children's play structures often dapple the backyards. Here, only 5.3% of the students receive free and reduced lunch. In many of the homes, garages are another focal point, met by long cement driveways and occasional basketball hoops. I leave the school around almost 3:30 everyday, and often only see one or two children playing on the "court."

The street to the school is nestled around the golf course and a wooded area. I cross a quaint bridge with tall black lights reminiscent of the styles of the 30's and 40's.

Around a slight bend, sits a one-story school. Sprawled against the flat landscape, it is anomaly among the bends and curves of the housing development. The school itself was built in the 1998 and is well kept. In the spring daffodils bloom profusely and large spirea bushes spring up in perfectly manicured rows against the streamline school. The one story building is made of brown brick with a two large atriums forming sloped roofs on the building. In the library, the atrium brings a soft light to the space. The library is quite cozy, even featuring a live bird "house".

As you enter the school, a large glass case is filled with art. Vibrant creatures and heads stare at you from within the glass. Their whimsical nature makes you wonder if they might just bust out of their "cage" (see Figure 6). Third grade Oaxacan inspired creatures are constructed with small wooden boxes, beads, bits of woods and old golf tees. Also in the case or humorous faces, often with large googley eyes. The sixth graders, using a subtraction method, twisted and formed a block of clay into a person or character of choice. A "School Three Wall of Fame" is plastered with newspaper articles featuring the accomplishments of current students and school alumni. The halls are adorned with oil pastel flowers inspired by the work of Georgia O'Keefe, Mola paper cutting which are to describe a life experience and jungle paintings by second graders. Next to the art room door, a sign reads, "Art is not a frill; it is an essential language that makes it possible to communicate feelings and ideas words cannot express" (Ernest Boyer). On the door matted and laminated in green construction paper the school mission statement reads:

> *The ----- school is committed to serving the whole child. We acknowledge that each student's physical, social, and emotional well being is integral to learning. The individual needs of all unique learners are accepted, fostered and challenged, promoting life long learning in a safe and nurturing environment.*

Entering the room, the children notice me, but tend to the teacher's direction. The room is well lit and large. Hanging from the ceiling are two large butterfly kites and a puppet. The classroom is dotted with "artifacts" and trinkets from various parts of the

world. There is a large carpet where children can gather, but most often they come around a group of two tables for directions. Bulletin boards in the room highlight particular lessons students are working on and art is hanging throughout the space. For the first few months of my visits the large bulletin board in the room features a winter day scene made through a first grade/second grade collaboration project.

The art room functions around a philosophy of independence, and "inspirational phrases" are little treasures found throughout the classroom: "I'll give you independence if you give back responsibility" or "Don't just make it okay-make it great, make it art!" In her words, she believes the role of the art teacher is to set up situations where art can occur and then get out of their way. This develops from guiding them early on to be independent and training them to think for themselves. It also means setting up the room so they can do things themselves. One project, weaving, was more technically based but the majority of the projects focus on problem solving opportunities. As Ms. G describes, the mola project involved designing something based on a personal event. She strongly feels art should always be about their personal interests, embedded with story. This philosophy developed out of experiences receiving a master at the local Midwestern University and a personal tenacity for embedding meaning in her own work.

Background of the Teacher

Her own story of teaching began after attending the large university in town for both her undergraduate and then her MFA in drawing. She painted in oils for many years and wore the multifaceted hat of motherhood; raising her daughter singly while creating bodies of work for exhibition. She came to teaching later at the age of thirty-two and lived in the town she graduated while commuting to a smaller district nearby so she could work at a middle school. This only lasted a year. Her job was cut and she worried she would not get job in the town where a year prior she had declined a position, because she

sought a job focused on working with middle school students. In the end, she ended up working in that district, the community in which she still resides.

As an artist, she works with a variety of media and finds her voice through collographed monoprints and acrylic paintings. One print, hangs in the school library, a darkly inked background set off by tiny bursts of color and splashed with bits of gold, made after 9/11. In addition, for the past twenty-one years, she has contributed to art community projects by designing the poster for the public library to promote the reading program. She has worked in several schools within the district and has made School Three her home for eight years. As an artist she works in mixed media and is always filling sketchbooks with collages about her grandchildren, occasionally her cats and life philosophies. Her desire to work with a variety of mediums carries over to the wide range of materials students are exposed to. In addition, the storytelling quality of her art is present in the art of her elementary students.

Child Profile: Meet Anson

Ms. G's philosophy of setting up a problem and letting children be, works well for aspiring architect Anson. A bubbly fourth grader, with a thick somewhat bowl style haircut, he constantly delighted me with his insights, descriptions, and interests. His artwork reflects his descriptive language and jovial demeanor. His work is colorful, detailed and a narrative more often than not accompanies his work (See Figure 7, 8, & 9).

His dress seems "clean cut" reminding me of my nephew, mostly straight leg jeans or shorts (preferably the kind basketball players wear) jerseys or t-shirts from the chain stores in town. Tennis shoes complete the ensemble. When I ask him if he cares about clothes he responds, "No, I just reach in my closet, close my eyes and pick something and that is what I wear unless my mom tells me differently, like today". I tell him he looks nice, he is wearing a jersey with the local university mascot emblazed on

the front with matching shorts. I ask him if he knows the team player the number six represents, and he says it is just a number.

His mom manages the household and an older teenage brother, while his dad is the president of an engineering company. However, Anson informs me his dad would prefer a job that is more fun and wants to work at a marina. Anson informs me this would me a future "starter off job" for him, when he is fourteen. Beyond his future aspirations, he presently loves macaroni and cheese, apple pie and Harry Potter. Mario and Sonic are his video games of choice and football and soccer mark spots as favorite sports.

He has traveled throughout the United States, and enjoys weekends and the summers at his Lake House to "see people he sees every year". Anson, is comfortable talking with adults, and often mentions the close friendships of the adult circle his family participates in. As children were discussing moves they had made in their life, his comment centered on the fact they just moved to a bigger house up the street, because they were surrounded by what his family had described as "life long friends".

Beyond friendships, sports and his love of school, Anson has two goals in life:

To be an Olympic gold medalist and to go to Australia. The testimony of the "School Hall of Fame" is a reminder that anything is possible, and as I keenly observe another "treasure" in the art room, a small note card announces: "There is a moment in childhood when a door opens and lets in the future" (Graham Greene).

School Three

The sunlight flickers on my windshield as pass the row of simple ranch houses ranging around $80,000-100,000, mostly home to retirees or rentals. The grass is beginning to green up, which gives the neighborhood a refreshed look after the piles of muddy snow have finally disappeared. The neighborhood is adjacent to the historical area of the city, and look reminiscent of the simple suburban homes of the fifties and sixties. You can sense the progression of development, as just down the street from the school is

an older shopping mall. At one point in the city's history this would of represented urban sprawl. After almost being vacated, the mall and surrounding area has been recently renovated in the last five years, refurbishing the mall and adding a couple strip malls and restaurants to the area. Crossing a busy highway, superstores line the highway, mixed with low-income rentals and a neighborhood of houses built in the seventies.

Children from this neighborhood attend the school, but the vast majority of children who arrive at its front doors are from across the busy highway. The school is a one-story building that sprawls out along a grassy lawn with a semi-circle drive. Built in the 1970's the entrance is supported by small metal poles, it feels somewhat non-descript, but the sounds of children on the playground and large parking lot, easily speak "school yard" to the observer. There are lots of trees and a very large playground are features new equipment. The art teacher highlights this because of the initial difficulty in fundraising for the new play structure. In the end it was the city that helped secure the funding for the project.

As you enter the building the focus is around the name of the school, a famous writer who wrote a well-known novel in 1884. His image is largely painted on the cinder block walls and there are several other art pieces related to this great known author. As I enter the building and sign in, the secretary and I chitchat about the warm day and the robins I spotted in my yard the previous day. Everyone is ready for spring. As the lady at the grocery store remarked, we need a little life…with the economic crisis. "Life" is always present in a school building, and today I notice the hallways are filled with new art projects. Adjacent to the office are collaged animals done by 5th and 6th graders reminiscent of the picture books of Eric Carle and Steve Jenkins. Down the main hall, oil pastel expressive works with shape; line and color are highlighted with bits of ribboned glitter glue (See Figure 10). Close to the art room, caterpillars crawl, making their way across paper filled with background of various sorts, grass, flowers and butterflies created by the kindergartners.

As you arrive at the classroom door a poster hangs on the door; a close up of two hands grasped together, one white, one black with the caption “Friendship knows no color.” Pulling open the door, a “Chinese motif” engulfs you with red Chinese lanterns hanging from the ceiling, and many banners in Chinese calligraphy dot the landscape of the art room. Ms. C always begins the year with a theme and each grade level works on a project related to a particular culture or time period. She views it as a community building project as children have opportunities to view work by other grade levels under the same focal point. For example the 5/6th graders "googled" to see their name in Chinese and then painted them in calligraphy. Younger students made Chinese lanterns, while the 3/4th grader designed and painted kites. Rules are important at this school and expected behaviors are discussed each time they come to class. The room as well as signs in the hallways outlines expected behaviors. For example, hallway expectations involve the following guidelines:

- **Responsible**
- Body to self
- Follow adult directions
- Safe Walking Feet
- Clean up after yourself
- **Respectful**
- Use manners
- Voice level 0 to 1
- **Caring**
- Help others in need
- Care for property

Although I did not discuss the classroom or school wide discipline system used by the other schools, I find it necessary in adding to the picture of the school culture at School Three. I knew as a teacher in the district an often-negative reputation was held by

the community about the school. I felt it important to share how the school used a behavior system to support a positive learning community. The school uses a system titled, PBS, or positive behavior system in which the child is given a ticket for "exhibiting expected behaviors". Then each week the tickets are poured into a fish tank on display at the entryway to the school to earn a special school wide reward. The accumulation of tickets is celebrated at certain points throughout the school year. From my discussions with the principal and art teacher, classroom management was a concern, but not purely in the negative sense.

I found Ms. C to be extremely positive when teaching. Despite her positive outlook and great rapport with the students, Ms C often openly acknowledged she felt "run over by a bus" at the end of the day because of the students emotional needs and differing responses to school "rules". I rarely sensed this when she was in front of the students teaching. Students walking by the art room often stop to say hi. One boy, Thomason, drew a self-portrait of her because of how much he loves her class and when he found out he had to move, asked if he could take it with him. She is extremely positive and quite humorous with the kids…and honest when she needs to be. A cross-stitch in her room reads: "The most wasted day of all is that day which you have not laughed". She tells me her fifth and sixth graders often comment on how funny she is, and during class when a kid decided to stick his head really far out the window, she tells him he better get it back in the room, or the lawn care service people may "trim" his head instead of the bushes. Chuckles are heard from several students.

Despite the positive setting the faculty and staff instill within the school environment, the community and students are often aware of the stigma surrounding the population and socioeconomic status of the students. I have heard many children and individuals in the community describe the school as the "ghetto school" and (75%) of the students receive free and reduced lunch. This assistance is not equated with parent "employment" as students at the local university. The principal describes this as a

temporary need for assistance; instead, the families who attend her school often need permanent financial support. Many families come from DIP program, (domestic intervention program) transitional housing or the homeless shelter. The principal also shared that even when families come to visit, and see active, happy learning communities, they often still ask to be transferred. Because it is a "gap school", meaning it did not meet certain benchmarks in alignment with NCLB requirements, families are allowed to open enroll at other schools within the district. This exacerbates the continued negative lens by which the community views the school and also further segregates it, as families with more resources are able to open enroll. The principal had three transfers to sign on the day I interviewed her early in the semester. Quite evident in our discussion was a keen desire she wanted the community and parents to shift from a focus on behaviors, to a focus on engaged learning.

In reference to the art room she hoped children didn't see art as just 50 minutes once a week, but instead saw that art is everywhere and the experience of going to class opens the door to all the arts. She continued by expressing art as an equal playing field for all children; the experience of language prior to school can have a large impact on their readiness for school (ex. Number of words exposed to before entering Kindergarten) but art is on an equal playing ground and felt that their home life should not affect talents and abilities in art.

When I asked her how parents viewed the art room, she shared this: Parents on the other hand didn't often mention the art room or their child's art, but many parents had commented on what a wonderful room Ms. C creates. She compared this to a school across town in a more affluent neighborhood near the University where many doctors and professors resided. Here she observed parents had a bigger voice in the workings of the art room. Parents would be vocal about not just wanting their child to use markers or pencils, but to have a wide variety of art experiences. In some regards at School Three the parents have so many other concerns (I added such as transportation costs, worrying

about food) and Ms. B nodded and agreed, that sometimes the happenings of the art room was their least concern.

One of these concerns was visibly and easily recognized, housing. As the year progressed, the enrollment in the class dropped. Students move in and out of the school on a regular basis. One family had moved seven times for housing needs. The end of the month/first of the month brings the most challenges to families. If unable to pay rent they often find themselves moving, sometimes in the middle of the night. The teacher shares that one mother sent four of her children on a bus around 1:00 in the morning on a four hour long bus drive to an aunt in a large urban city. It is these multiple "strains" that focus Ms. C's attention on a positive and welcoming space within the art room.

Background of the Teacher

In her classroom, the desks are situated in a square and in the center of the room a rug in browns and golds gives the room a warm feel. The teacher begins each lesson by sitting in an oversized but short red plastic chair with a table of materials in the backdrop. Ms. C wants her children to know they are artists, and to feel empowered by using their imagination to be creative. The art room is a place to have fun, but shouldn't be equated with recess, "As long as they are trying to be successful-what they are doing is great, especially if they don't get it [art] in other places."

Ms. C's own interest in art began with a philosophy and anthropology degree from St. Mary's in Notre Dame. At one point, she thought about going into law, but instead chose to do a M.A. at the local state university in Design and Metalwork while also acquiring the teaching certificate and then M.F.A. She commuted to a district for about five years before starting an after school program and subbing before becoming full time in the district. This she says has been a wise and fun choice.

She shows an investment in students by her commitment to working full time as an art teacher while also directing the after school program at a nearby school in the

district. She is known in the district for creating engaging "work spaces" for children. Each year her art rooms take on various themes celebrating the arts from various times, places and cultures. From an Egyptian "oasis" to a celebration of the culture and life of Asia these are just a few themes which have occupied her room.

Child Profile: Meet Tayshawn

I would quickly say from day one Tayshawn saw me as interested adult. And I would say I say Tayshawn as a remarkable child. A nine-year-old third grader, I would find him sporting his black and red tennis shoes, blue jeans, and often a fairly brightly colored shirt filled with designs. His hair was pulled back and twisted into almost shoulder length braids, held with an alternating pattern of white and blue beads. He loves adult attention, and towards the end of our time together, he began calling me "Wonder Woman". He also loves to play video games, often adult rated selections, which he informs me his Chicago father says is okay. He has an older brother who is fourteen and another who is twelve and one little sister who is two years old. He lives with his mom and the father of the two year old, in a large apartment complex about four miles from school. His mom manages and cares for the family and the step dad's job was somewhat unclear. "Sometimes he has to appear at court" and little detail followed. I knew from an associate, he did have a job.

During one of my first days at the school, Tayshawn was dismissed to the hallway for not doing his work. They were working on self-portraits and he didn't seem to quite enamored with the pencil and crayon drawing. I offered to check in with him and sat down by him in the hall.

"Would you like to draw for me?"

He began drawing, telling me how he thought the super bowl was rigged. I was hooked. Instead of drawing a self-portrait, he began by making a large robust looking character, the arms made of sequential bumps, muscles to my discerning eye (see Figure

11). It wasn't until towards the end of the semester as we were reviewing his work from the year I returned to that image. It took me a second to jog my memory because we couldn't find his self-portrait. Then it dawned on me, this was the football player he had done when he told me the super bowl was rigged. He informed me the player was Devion Hester, who moved from the Bears to the New York Giants (or so he thought). A necklace hung from his neck, with a small S written on it. I had not noticed it during our first visit, and I had dismissed the symbol (see Figure 12) I asked him what the S was, and he informed me it was a dollar sign. I asked him why, "I like money" and probing further he shared he like to buy things, like transformers. With a different view, I noticed other detail I had missed. In the corner or each bottom corner a small rectangle was drawn with two circles in each. These were stereos for listening to music. Through close observation of his portfolio, I noticed a repeated serial of characters related to X-men, (see Figure 12) football, and the popular TRANSFORMER toys. He tells me it is fun to transform, and there are several sketches on this theme included in his portfolio (see Figure 13).

How he might perceive of his identity, as child and artist might seem influenced by conflicting discourses. The teacher and associate at school describe him as a "good boy" and as they say they "drill it into him" that he doesn't need to head down the path his older brother seems to have chosen. During one of my last visits, the older brother had been picked up on the police radar for throwing rocks at an old woman's car. Tayshawn was a really great kid, and he sought attention through his artwork but also by the making choices that were not always positive. These seemed mostly related to "securing" some sort of attention. Mostly he refused to work or made inappropriate comments while making art.

Like most children, he has dreams and aspirations. He enjoys attention by adults. He also finds school to be a fun and safe place. Tayshawn tells me he wants to be a cop

when he grows up, so he can chase people down and use tazer guns. He tells me he could be a cop during the day and then play basketball in the evenings.

Although his apartment is several miles away and along a busy highway, his mom comes with his baby sister in the stroller each day to pick him up after school, walking along an area with little pedestrian sidewalks. According to Tayshawn, his mom moved them to this city because there were a lot of gangs in the large urban city he grew up in through Kindergarten. “They go and shoot around” its not safe to be there. When I ask him how he feels at this school he informs me he feels safe in his new home and likes school, the “whole school” especially PE.

As we continue to draw in the hallway a shark emerges on his page, one of his recent favorite subjects. I think he discovered how to really look at an image through shape. Beyond his mom's involvement, a para educator at the school has also taken him under her wing. She often picks him up so he doesn’t have to make the long trek to school. She takes him to races and other events on the weekends, and occasionally rewards him with McDonalds. He looks forward to seeing his Dad over the summer and spending time in the bigger city. He is often labeled a “good kid” and I wonder how his home life will meld into his outlook and personality towards life and how circumstances beyond his control (housing, older brother, etc.) will influence him.

Over the course of a semester as I visited each room I took on the roles of researcher, teacher and friend. Researcher would dominate my role, and for someone who has taught for almost thirteen years, it was refreshing to really sit and listen to the conversation and unfolding stories of the students in the class. It is the story of three children intertwined with their peers that illuminate the versions of child artist and what it means in relationship to the curriculum and culture of the art room. It is also evidence of the role socioeconomic status plays in how students understand self, other and their world.

Equally important was the conversations with my colleagues, often after a long day of teaching. Although we saw each other monthly at meetings, it was quite pleasurable and informative to discuss their students, art room, and insightful knowledge and varying viewpoints as experienced teachers. I also became extremely cognizant of the ways in which each of us as teacher passes a hidden curriculum through our word, actions and classroom environment. As Bateson reminds us,

> Not only do we know what we know, we don't know what we teach. All societies pass on complex patterns; conventions of human relations; language roughly comparable in their basic complexity, whether or not they have ever been written down; details of the environment; skills for survival; abstract notions of causality and fate, right and wrong. (p. 42)

The culture of the school would be a keystone to the discussions related to identity, power and place within the space of the art room. After "seeing" an creating an image of each place, I turned my attention to each focus child. I tried to paint a picture of who they were, what interested them and how they interpreted the curriculum. I also became keenly interested in what type of artmaking/creative endeavor they engaged in outside the space of the school.

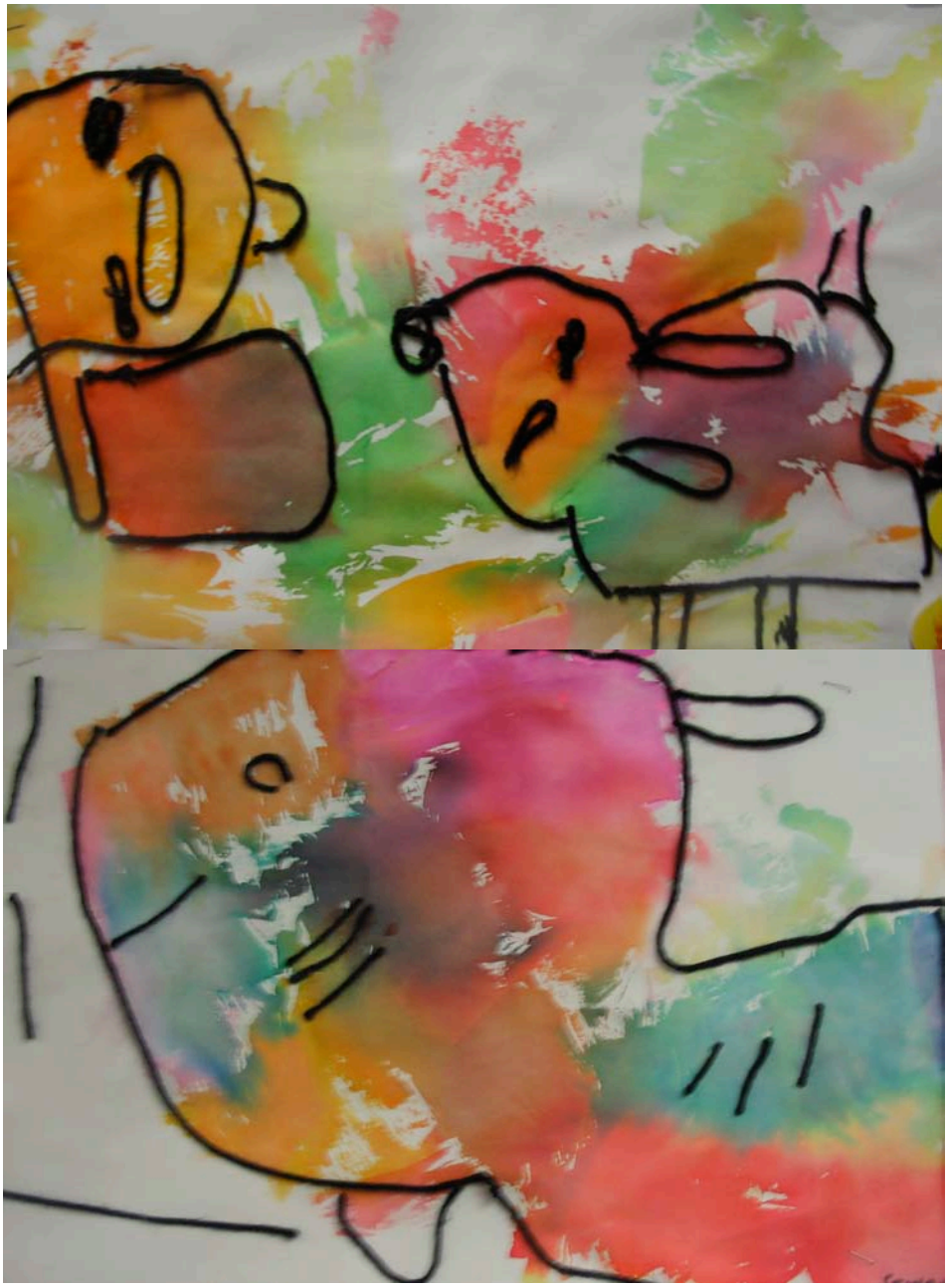

Figure 1. Kindergarten images which welcome visitors in the office of School One. Tissue paper was laid down and wetted, once dried students used string to highlight an image they saw in the colored abstract shapes.

Figure 2. This is the character that stood next to Ella's name on her portfolio. Due to confidentiality I am only showing this image from the portfolio cover.

Figure 3. This is a classroom project using a paper to create paper cut out collages inspired by the work of Henri Matisse. Students used foam board to create raised areas when making the final composition.

Figure 4. This is an abstract painting assignment which involved mixing different tints and shades. Many students commented this was one of their favorite projects. Ella added her "signature" by painting her hand and stamping the almost completed work.

Figure 5. Ella's self-portrait created in class. The fairy in the corner is similar to the one which was also drawn on her art portfolio.

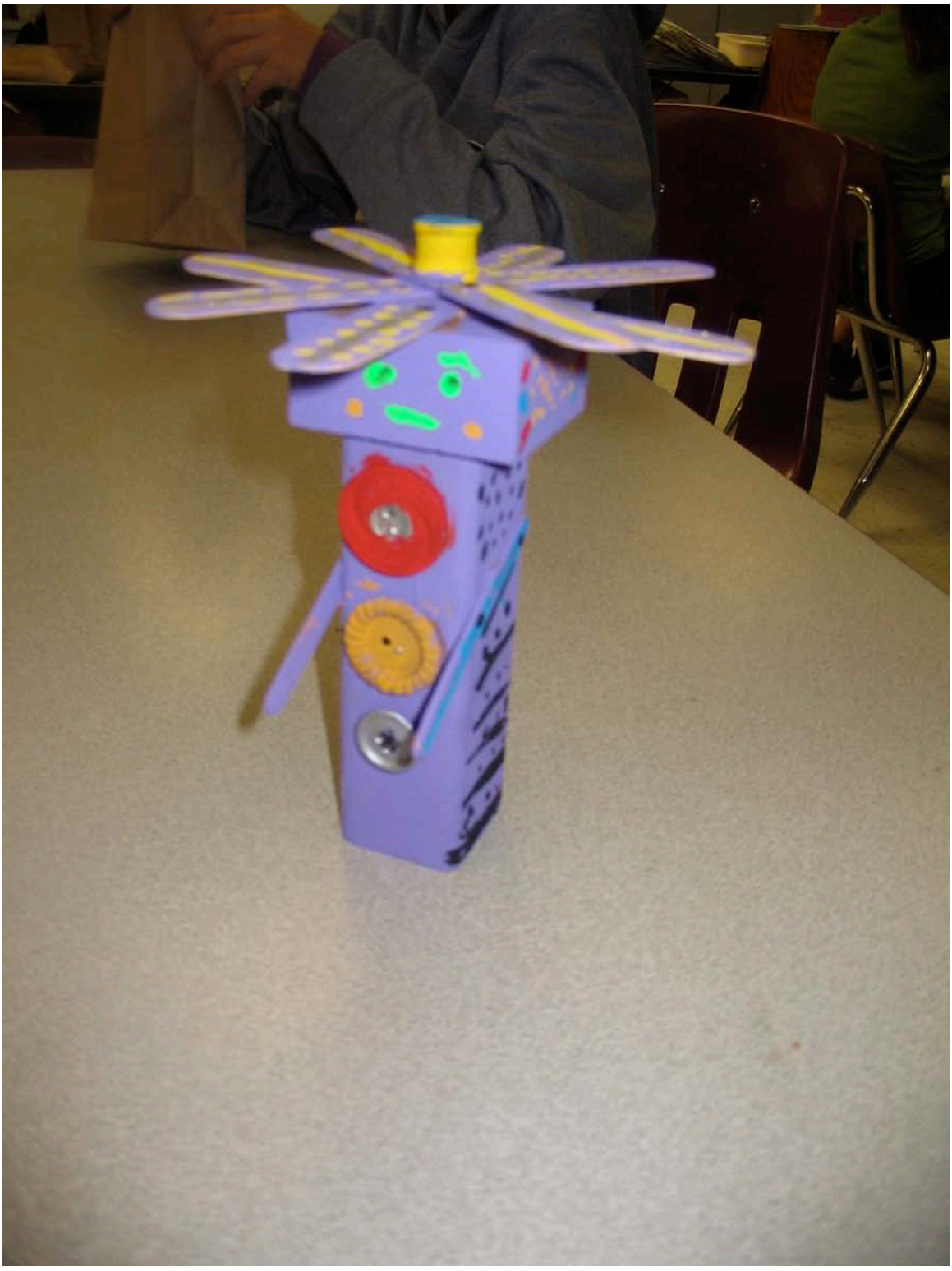

Figure 6. Example of an Oaxacan creature made from spools, small boxes, beads and sticks. A large number of these filled the glass cabinet as you entered the school.

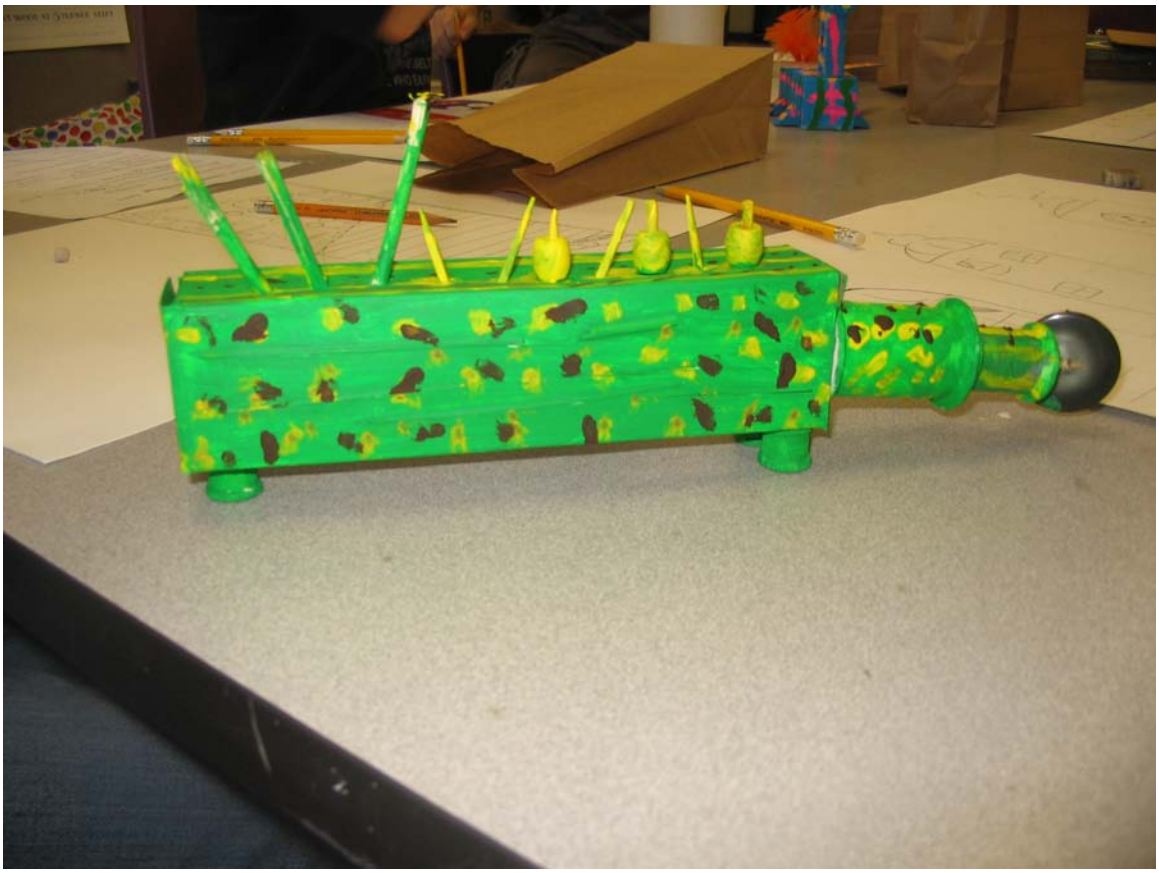

Figure 7. An example of Anson's Oaxacan creature.

Figure 8. An example of Anson's Mola Paper Cut Project.

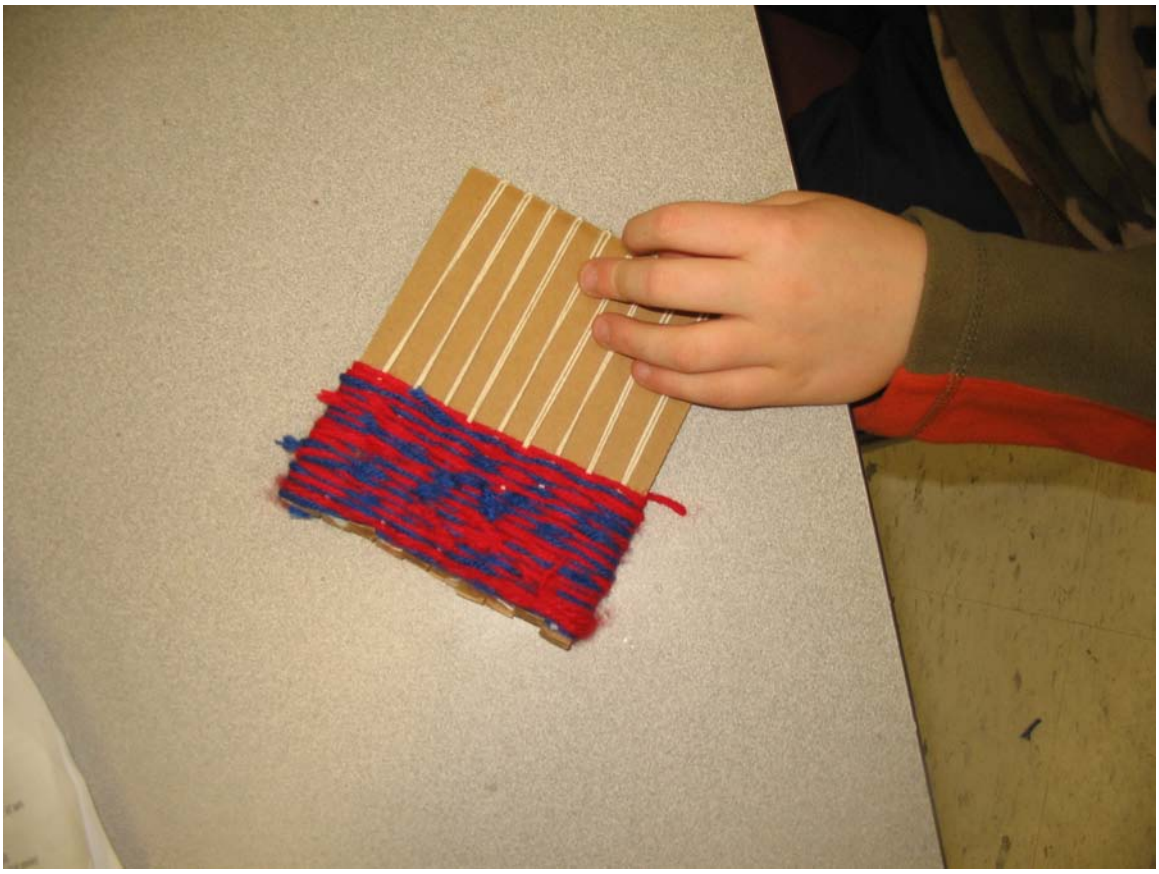

Figure 9. An example of the weaving project in progress by Anson.

Figure 10. An example of abstract cray pas designs ribboned with glitter glue that hung on display in School Three.

Figure 11. Image of the “muscle guy” and football player by Tayshawn. Note the necklace with a dollar sign in the center.

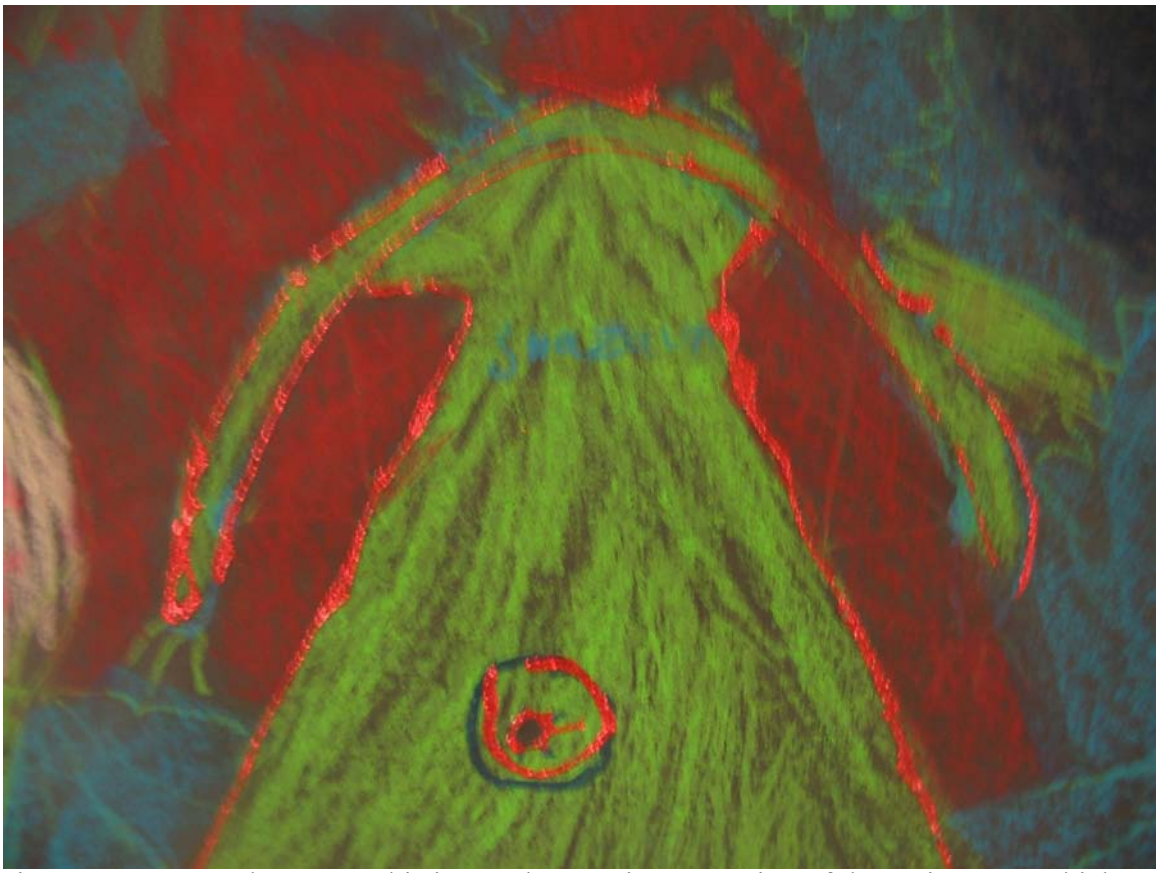

Figure 12. X-men character. This is Tayshawn's interpretation of the assignment which required using specific lines and shapes to make an abstract image.

Figure 13. This is another image of a "muscle guy" or football player by Tayshawn. This drawing was done together when he was removed from the art room and was expected to draw a self-portrait.

CHAPTER FIVE: UNFOLDING IDENTITY: A DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILD ARTIST IN THE LANDSCAPE OF "PLACE"

The term experience may thus be interpreted with reference either to the empirical or the experimental attitude of mind. Experience is not a rigid and closed thing; it is vital, and hence growing. When dominated by the past, by custom and routine, it is often opposed to the reasonable, the thoughtful. But experience also includes the reflection that sets us free from the limiting influence of sense, appetite, and tradition…Indeed, the business of education might be defined as an emancipation and enlargement of experience.

John Dewey, How We Think

As I observed the classrooms, searching for emerging dollar signs and symbols related to power and wealth, I found these images to be a rare sight. The art curriculum was the predominant means by which the art projects unfolded within the three schools. Each teacher accessed different projects, but the methodology of instruction contained many similarities. Children were given a project designed by the teacher, but with consideration that the child was the author of his or her product. The lessons often included time to brainstorm or guide sheets to help foster the development of ideas. Books often accompanied lessons, whether through story to inspire the creative act, to set context, or to share examples of works of art related to themes present in the lessons. If experience is to be the catalyst towards knowledge, I was curious if children truly had opportunities for individual interpretations through the context of a formatted lesson.

If we look at the multiple ways one might define the child artist, there is often a binary between the child as constructed by the adult world's notion of "what one shall be?" versus the conception of a "child's world" encompassing an idea around "who shall I decide to be?" In education, the child may attempt to inhabit a notion of "normal" by conducting oneself in a manner which follows adult expectations (see Foucault, 1977/1985). The child also may feel pleasure in the act of receiving approval and praise for their rule adherence. Professor of language and literacy studies at Penn State, Gail

Boldt (personal notes, 2005) poses these questions in relation to identity: Who can represent us? And who should make those decisions?

How are various definitions of the child artist enacted within the teacher and school district facilitated curriculum? By observing the construction of alter identities and views of place from the children, I was able to examine how children marked identity through the use of symbol and story. In the backdrop of their stories, are my own stories and how I was defined as an artist and what this meant for how I viewed the children as artists. Political discussions in the community and within the school district also potentially had an impact on how one sees place and marks identity in a community. I tried to be a sharer of their stories, allowing the children to show me the way.

"Outside" Spaces: Children's Identities through Play

Outside the Art Room Culture

Transforming One's World: Tayshawn turns Hulk

In the moments Tayshawn would draw for me I saw great-imagined possibilities, albeit "unofficial" subject matter that found its way into the "official" art curriculum in some cases (See Anne Hass Dyson, 1997) Tayshawn seemed quite capable of following the guidelines of the official curriculum, while simultaneously revealing his child driven ideas in art making. He would also use storytelling to wrestle with the complexities of friendships and perception of adult and child roles. During my first observation at the school, the students were creating abstract images with the following requirements:

- Draw six lines (straight, curved, etc.), which touch the sides of the page
- Draw three circles and color them
- Draw 2 squares
- Draw 1 triangle
- Draw three other shapes

From the center of Tayshawn's page, a bold character colored in green and red with zigzagged lightening bolts emerged. His work was an anomaly among the rest. In many of the other children's work, patterned lines and repeated shapes filled the surfaces, grabbing my attention because of the bold colors against the black background. I was intrigued by what appeared to be a figure in Tayshawn's work and inquired about his inspiration. Through his description, I discovered an Xmen character was slightly hidden among the circles, lines and triangles. At first glance it had not revealed itself in the composition. This was due to the clever use of using manipulating the parameters of the assignment to make something of personal meaning. I would come to find this fit with his repertoire of working with the theme of super heroes. His characters emerged both in story and visual form.

On other occasions I would observe him drawing a person holding a truck to save a dog because (according to him), the truck was going to fall. When someone came to save the dog he shared with me the dog would bark to say thank you. He later referred to the person holding the truck as an angel. When given an opportunity to create valentines in an open studio format, he took it upon himself to create "a pet". As many students crafted traditional cards for their parents, he attached a string to a piece of paper and was "walking" it around explaining he was "caring for it." I found these moments refreshing against completed projects that would hang with mats in the hallway. As an art teacher, I also displayed artwork in the hallways. It fulfilled certain curricular expectations, and there was something satisfying about "showing off" student's accomplishments. Students also enjoyed viewing their work, often playing "I Spy" to locate their piece among the large number of works on display. It was also an advocacy tool, highlighting the curriculum for the public. But just as engaging and potentially more insightful were these slices of the child's world when curriculum was reinterpreted by *their* standards.

How do we ensure that these moments are possible in the curriculum? Or is it because there is an official curriculum, that students have opportunities to push the

expected boundaries in order to be more self-expressive? I saw the importance of these "slices of the child's world" because I was fortunate enough to be let into his world. I also happened to be present when these moments occurred. This was partially due to the fact I was able to observe him in spaces outside the art room. This was evident in his story titled, "Spy Agents". Through several pages of handwritten text, Tayshawn marks his identity through an engaging storyline and set of characters. I have tried to highlight important aspects of the story through shorthand sentences using his spelling and any highlighted text, as well as direct quotes. At the time I was invited to enter his world through his storytelling, the story was at four chapters.

Title: The Spy Agent (non-fifion) [sic] The spy agent is from Florida where the "people came by". "Then they were from Chicago" this includes many of his friends. In the first chapter the spy agent is following them into an old house. They arrive at a bad house. Mason goes into this house and the rest of the group encourages Mason to get out of the house. In Chapter Two, they find Mason but he is eating cake, and the group responds, "…you…you….you ate all the cake". Suddenly Tayshawn sees a shadow. As they are running a ladder falls on Tayshawn. For some reason, one of the other boys throws a brick at Mason. Then Mason hits a cop. Mason runs to get lost. Tayshawn has a blackout at this point and tells everyone Mason is going to the graveyard to become a ghost. As Chapter Three begins they are in the hospital and everyone things[sic] Tayshawn is dead. The doctor shares, "asmost had bran canke.[sic] The doctor makes him stay one more day and then go to the graveyard to find Mason. As they are going to the grave they run into the cop. The cop tells Tayshawn and his friends which way Mason has gone. They ask if the cop needs help and the cops says yes. The cop asks to come along and they (Tayshawn and the group of friends) says yes. In chapter four after Mason comes out of the grave and has someone gotten a hold of the cop the passage reads:

"Then Mason came out and said what do you what with me. We said give us That cop back. Mason said no anto*[sic]* you give my me *[sic]* 1,000 dollers*[sic]* back. Than

Tayshawn said We done*[sic]* own you. And wont. Than Mason said if you don't get away from me I will get you and Put you in The grave. But than Tayshawn said do it than. So than Mason got up with the cop and almost grab Tayshawn but the cop shot Mason. But the bullet went right threw him. Than Mason said you can't not kill me. Then Dasheen said Let's go Tayshawn before he turn Hulk". Chapter five reads: Hulk vs. Ghost Tayshawn turns Hulk and I wonder if they still are "battling"…

These moments of expressing himself beyond the confines of a "lesson" were evidence of what Anne Haas Dyson (1997) describes as the "unofficial" curriculum. This occurs when students bring into the curriculum their "kid culture" as a form of agency against adult norms of what is deemed relevant. There were no story prompts to illicit Tayshawn's ideas or even a story format from the classroom setting. Instead, he specifically shared with me the story was not for school, but "just for fun." Dyson looks at the ways children use text as representation, to mediate social situations and gender roles. She writes, "At their roots, the conflicts generated by superhero stories were about these relations; they were about inclusion, exclusion, and the right to play in a story…" (Dyson, p. 81).

I wondered in the work of Tayshawn, most notable the drawings he did one on one with me, if these were openings for true self-expression against the expected work of the curriculum? How might this cause pause for reflection on our expectations of student work? I was reminded of Marilyn Zurmuehlen 's (1974) conversation about who is making the majority of the decisions, the child or the teacher? The symbolic act of creating is rich with the story of the child, and their need to voice lived experience. As Hans Gadamer (1967/1977) remarks: "What is shown, is so to speak, elicited from the flux of manifold reality. Only what is shown is intended and nothing else. It is no longer just this or that we can see, but it is now shown and designated as something" (Gadamer, 1967/1977, p. 129)

As Tayshawn became characters in his story he played with things that many of us face as adults. He worked through relationships by who he could trust (not to eat cake) and who he could eat cake with (so to speak). He confronted violence through falling ladders, and thrown bricks and fear of disease through the onset of brain cancer. Through the cop character, he negotiated the role of power. He gave the cop a positive and secure place in his story. A reminder for me of how we all long to be safe and feel protected. The use of story to negotiate identity was not exclusive to Tayshawn's world. Several blocks away, other identities were emerging. Although still in a school setting, the hours after school proved to be a venue for character shifting. It was here, Ella invited me into shifting identities through story and art.

Identity Through Self-Expression: Ella as Shape Shifter

Creating characters or "making people," Ella was able to traverse Superpower Island beating villains and putting them in jail. In other island spaces, she rewrote history and fixed the wrongs of the past. This could all be accomplished in a day's work, by creating various identities through the on-line game Poptropicas. This ability to create alternative identities also led to interesting characters that appeared in story form.

Ella was kind enough to bring me a copy of some of her writing after she shared her storyline after our first afterschool meeting. The main character is named Abbigalle Bines who confronts the multiple layers imbedded in identity through shape shifting. What follows are few excerpts and short hand notes from her storyline. Once again I have left spelling as is and included emphasized words by the author. The story sequence unfolds like this:

After she introduces her name, she informs the audience she attends Woodstock Elementary and that her school is really weird. "…because if you go to that school, you eather[sic] have to have a crazy name, a weird wordrobe[sic], or Extremely weird parents. Thas [sic] me. At least I think they are. YOU see, My Dad is a trapiees[sic] artist

and my Mom, Well I don't know what she is. All I know is she works with Elphents.[sic] Any way, in our school , WE HAVE to have to Have a funky wordrobe.[sic] Once you wear something funky, That's[sic] what you wear everyday. I wear A red cape, Red ruby shoes, and a red over alls. Everyone thinks I'm weird because I have Red eyes…."

Following this passage she continues to tell a bit more about herself and how she solves a dilemma of an empty house. She wakes up one morning to discover her parents are gone and have left a note and breakfast for her. They are attending a meeting with Mr. Flabergast. She is quite stunned her parents have made her breakfast, because they can't even make toast! So this prompts her to call her best friend-Blue-Bell Waters. "They were best friends because Abbigalle had red everything, exsept[sic] skin. And Blue-Belle has blue everything, exsept[sic] skin. She has blue hair, blue eyes, blue frekles,[sic] and wears blue cloaths.[sic] She was also born as a wolf like Abbigalle was born as a cat. They both shape-shift into animals and they both know eachohters secreats.[sic]" The story continues with them attending school and then meeting at their secret spot...

Again, I felt honored to be let into her world; Let into the world of Poptropicas and her world, where red and blue girls could emerge and share their story. The only hint of this in the art room would have been the creation of one such character on her portfolio. Here she was encouraged to make a portfolio for holding her projects from the year that was significant to her. Although Ella was always articulate about the meaning behind her work in the art room, it occurred through the dialogue of her responding to my questions. This often took the form of, "Tell me about your work." For me, her storytelling reveals much. Elizabeth Delacruz and Sandy Bales (2010) refer to Campbell, (1949), "Stories, embedded as they are in myths, imagery, and rituals, embody the cultural histories and aspiration of social groups and solidify communitarian values (p. 33). I wondered then, what was Ellas trying to say through her characters?

From my experience as an art teacher, it seems the art room philosophy is often described as a place where self-expression occurs. I began questioning the reality of this

through Tayshawn's and Ella's stories. Joseph Tobin (1995) examines the ways in which opportunities and definitions of self-expression were enacted in American and Japanese preschools. In American schools, teachers often encourage the use of "free-expression" in places like sharing time or during art classes. At the same time, there are often perimeters placed on how these spaces are social constructed. We ask children to "share their feelings" but often with a long litany of restrictions.

I was guilty of this when I took stock of my own art room, specifically how I asked young children to discuss their work. During what I deemed, "guest artist" I would have students gather on the carpet with their art to share their work. When they shared, they sat in the teacher's chair and displayed their work at the easel. If they desired they could wear a hat to create a "character profile." They would begin by describing their work and then taking two "comments" from the audience. I had informed the students this should involve "warm fuzzys" or positive comments. Students could not just respond with "I like it" but had to explain why they were drawn to the piece. I found my use of conditioning the discussion in the realm of warm fuzzy's, I dismissed potential criticisms by the students. In the Japanese pre-schools children had opportunities to share what they really felt, and was not nearly directed by the teacher (Tobin, 2005).

Tobin writes, "…sharing time in American early childhood settings is similarly conventional and performative" (p. 242). Tobin doesn't think there is something necessarily wrong with this more authoritative role played by teachers (Tobin, 2005). The problem lies in labeling it as self-expression when it is clearly not (ibid, 2005). He discusses how the term self-expression is "central to contemporary American middle-class cultural beliefs and practices that it can be difficult for us to see them as anything other than natural and desirable" (p. 233). Tobin creates "strangeness" with the idea of self-expression because we often deem it as a free and open, but he illustrates there is a self-surveillance tactic as described by Foucault (1977/1995).

In Ella's art room, students had an expectation of what to create. This occurred through the directions laid out for a project, the teacher's exemplar and the time constraints put on the project. When Ella worked after school, her mom showed her "distaste" for the Poptropica's program through several facial gestures (read as semi-disapproval) when I asked her thoughts. But she would often be busy with meetings so the after school space became Ella's space. It was here, she seemed to have more openings to express her ideas, outside adult expectations.

Interpretations and Social Constructs of the Children's Identity in "outside places"

In Tayshawn's case, his use of rescue imagery and images outside particular curriculum expectations, did find places inside the classroom. For example, his self-portraits became a football player, a symbolic gesture on his disapproval of the outcome at the Superbowl. With Ella, she seemed to keep these particular identities outside the art classroom, although they did still exist in the school environment by nature of her mother working at the school. This brought up Dyson's (1997) notion that white middle class children, in the writer's workshop she observed, kept media outside the official curriculum of the school. She discusses how for other children, identity was marked through the use of superhero stories in the *official* curriculum of the classroom. Her study examined stories which emerged during the writer's workshop and author's chair. Here she observed how "media-based stories linked to their identities, not only as boys and girls, but also as members of different sociocultural reference groups (p. 115). In terms of class, she also noticed from Seiter (1993) that "some children distanced themselves form peers' superhero stories in ways that suggested a dominant criticism of middle-class adults about children's television" (p. 115).

This fits with a discussion by Charles Garoian (2002), that children are often "forgotten" in the classroom. He discusses how children perform the expectations of the

teacher, "devoid of children's memories and cultural histories". (p. 122). By allowing children to enact these various ways of being it "encourage(s) critical reflection as they compare and contrast the memories and cultural histories with the academic knowledge they learn in school" (Garioan, p. 123). As Tayshawn wrestled with power, violence, friendships and security, Ella had many of the same components in her story. From my interpretation, she made reference to whiteness and to being "other". In these instances, she used dress to enact power through the vibrant red coloring of her clothes and the finesse of a cat or her friend's power and agility through the wolf creature. These "performances" relate to Garioan's reference of performance artists like Suzanne Lacy and Tim Miller who "expose(d), examine(d), and challenge(d) the dominant culture's stereotyping of identity…(p. 123). Although students didn't set out to act as artists making a statement through their performance, we must recognize that the act of storytelling reveals much about student's ideas and identities as they wrestle with a sense of place in the social and cultural worlds in which they exist.

In terms of the art curriculum, there are certainly expectations laid out through the document, which "holds" the curriculum intermingled with expectations from the district, families, and the teacher. Within the art room, there is also a discourse of creativity at play. How then does a child negotiate a project within particular expectations (adult) against their own life aspirations, desires, and tensions in their lives?

Version of Self Through Place

City as Tour Destination

The room is noisy and active as I enter. After passing out art that had been on display, Ms. G (School Two) prepares for a demo by taking her chair which is centered around two tables. Meanwhile, children continue with noisy chatter and many of their completed Oaxacan "creatures" they received earlier in the class begin to "chime" in adding sound effects. The children seem interested in having their animals take an

animated form. After few students gather to listen, Ms. G patiently reminds them she will wait and compliments the students who came around the table for directions. The rest of the class "catches on" and soon everyone is gathered and ready to listen.

Today they will continue with a city scene drawing they started several weeks ago. She explains they should attempt to "Get lost in your (their) drawing(s)…" by creating a little world/city that is *all* theirs. She continues talking and encouraging them to be "less social" because they only have two and half work sessions left in the year and "This is to be one of your masterpieces this year!"

Holding a framed city scene, which belongs to a student's older brother, she comments on the use of detail. She then asks the students to notice where the artist has used permanent markers vs. paint and why the selection of the materials is important. One of the students enjoys pointing out where the artist has used paint versus marker. Other students share the watercolor is great for filling in large expanses of area on their project. When she proceeds with directions, they are reminded to outline first, and then to begin painting when they are ready. A few colors are unavailable, popular blue and a few other colors have dwindled as the supplies begin to show another year of art making has passed.

As the city scenes arrive at the desks of anxious artists, I slowly begin to wander around taking note of their various details and selection of buildings (see Figure 15). The cities are based on the largest city they have visited but can be imaginary in their planning as well. Many shops emerge from the "city planners" and "architects" in the room. Pet shops among others and malls create the urban skyline. Several children feature the HuHot, a restaurant many children remark as a "favorite". Children also reference the skyline of Chicago, specifically the buildings of Michigan Avenue such as the Ritz Carlton, American Girl Store, and the Water Tower Shopping area. One child includes a building titled "Works A Lot"!

As the children draw, I sit next to Anson, with Emily at a nearby table. She quietly chats with friends, while adding intricate detail to her "sky top" restaurant. Recreating the ambience from her visit, she sketches in decorative table clothes, a variety of potted plants, and ornate ceiling lighting. Anson talks almost incessantly, to his friends but also intermittedly to answer my questions. I ask him if he is traveling anywhere this summer and he responds,

"I go everywhere"! He explains it mostly involves traveling to his lake house in a nearby Midwestern State. He spends most of the summer there (he adds) so he is able to see the same people every year. As he continues chatting about a wide gamut of stories and topics from Christmas presents, toy desires, and clothing the city scenes become little worlds as the children add intricate detail. I spot many highways transforming into traffic jams as additional cars are added. One busy highway even includes a limo. The cities are picturesque, little smog or garbage is drawn, instead flowing fountains and trees add a serene feel often intermingled with clock towers and parks. The cities take on the individual interests of the authors. There are cities which focus on the municipal pool, caring for pets, or the production of army equipment. One boy names his city after himself, and includes a toilet factory. Against the majority of picturesque cities and "ideal places to live" there is still room for third grade humor.

This project began with a brainstorming activity several weeks prior. To draw from their personal experience, Ms. G had asked the students, "How many of you have been to Paris?" Three students raise their hands. "Anyone to New York?" Anson responds I have! He also lists Denver, Honolulu, and LA as other cities he as visited. "Any one to Chicago?" All the students raise their hand.

During the first day of the lesson, students gathered in a group. On the table were books about various large cities as well as large reprints of city scenes by well-known artists. The students were handed a worksheet and encouraged to work together to brainstorm ideas. Questions included: What is the largest city you have visited? Name

three other large cities you have been to. What types of buildings do you see in the city? What type of vehicles do you see in the city? Towards the end of the worksheet, it asks why the reasons for visiting big cities. Anson writes in shopping. I asked if he visited the museums while in Chicago and he said "No, we usually only have time to visit family and my mom goes shopping."

In describing the version of "city" by children at School Two, I predominantly found students viewed a large city as a "tour" destination. Cities were also a consumer stopping place. Dining out, purchasing American Girl Dolls and general shopping were activities equated with going into the "city". Anson shared his drawn city used to be owned by one man who built this huge building all for himself, and then he realized it was lonely so he started asking other people to move to his city. He explains, that now everyone shares it and the man is much happier (see Figure 16). This is a consistent story told each week when I asked him about his work. On one occasion, Anson told me " I especially like this project because I want to be an architect when I grow up!"

Although this lesson develops from the teacher's curriculum, the project was also open-ended enough to allow ample choice making by the students. In fact, the lesson encouraged the children to "create their own little world" and to make it a "masterpiece."

The use of "masterpiece" is important to note here. From a teacher's perspective, its intention seems to be an encouragement for the child to realize they are capable of making "great" work. At the same time, the term is also "loaded" with connotations. The use of masterpiece aligns with a traditional white male approach to art history. This in turns brings up the discussion points around what is chosen or avoided when artworks are selected for a gallery space. The word also delineates adult standards of art making, and might allude to the fact that "great" work is framed and displayed. As teachers, it is important to recognize the use of the hidden, null or evaded curriculum that operates within the school culture. The Hidden Curriculum according to Chapman, (1997) "…is that which we teach without meaning to do so" (as cited in Rosenberg, 2007). I find it

extremely important to reflect upon those things which we promote or avoid in curriculum when thinking about creating a rich learning environment for all students. In addition, the use of "masterpiece" gives pause for consideration on the type of aesthetics being promoted in a particular school culture.

This is not to discredit the wonderful things that did happen in the lesson. Through the brainstorming activities children draw from their own experience of city life and are inspired by examples both from students and the work of professional artists. This fits well with the philosophy of the teacher, who believes in giving students a problem situation and then "letting them go" to make their own artistic decisions.

In this lesson there is evidence of a constructivist approach. Melody Milbrandt, Janet Felts, Brooke Richards and Neda Abghari (2004) describe the constructivist approach as "understanding students are in control of their own learning" (p. 20). Dewey (1933) would discuss the importance of drawing from lived experience. In this lesson, students were not asked to replicate a city scene, but instead to create their "own little world". She facilitated this by having students gather around on the first day of the lesson to view the large reprints of city scenes or to show multiple examples of how students had approached the lesson.

Mildbrandt, Felts, et. al (as cited in Hamblen, 1984) describe the importance of teachers guiding students in higher level thinking with opportunities for decision making as well as creative thinking. This was facilitated through the use of brainstorming, but also allowing a space with open dialogue so a narrative could accompany the work. In terms of constructing identity, it becomes fundamental that one has opportunity to tell one's story. Otherwise, the lesson becomes an exercise in fulfilling the desires of the teacher and not the student. How would this act of drawing a city be different at another school? As this lesson unfolded, I couldn't help but think of Tayshawn who was from Chicago. How might a drawing about the city change if it occurred outside the art room?

City as Home

An appointment ran over, so I arrive after art class is over at School Three. I had been excited to see what Tayshawn might draw, and disappointed by the constant constraints on my busy schedule. It proves to be an advantage as the events of the morning unfold. As I walk into the art room, the teacher suggests I see if he can work with me over lunch. As we enter the classroom, art is almost over and Tayshawn is not in the class. She suggests I check in with the classroom teacher. Later, as I walk into her room, students are working on a science experiment drawing seedling plants in their journal. The teacher observes from the back of the room. When I ask about Tayshawn, I am informed he is in the office. During art it seems he had difficulty maintaining an "inside" voice and had taken to making loud bird like calls. The teacher says I can take all the time I would like with him. I have the feeling based on her facial expression she is "done with him" for the time being. I travel back to the office where only moments ago I had signed in, and don't seem to spot Tayshawn. I decide to wait in the chair. I end up waiting for a while.

The secretary is looking through student files for a mother's work number. There is a gentleman in the office asking to contact a woman and if there would be a way to obtain the phone number. The secretary, looking concerned but cautious, informs him she cannot disclose this information. There is a look of defeat in the man's eyes. "I have her kid in the car." The secretary shares that she could try contacting the mother if he writes down what to say. There is a pause and the man starts scratching a note on a post-it-note. When the secretary has a moment, I find out Tayshawn is with Petal, the behavior interventionist.

I travel back past the art room to find Petal's room. The room is large, and Tayhawn sits alone at a long table quietly writing what appears to be a story. Petal sits at her desk and I ask her if it is okay to work with Tayshawn. She says no problem he will be here for awhile. She gets back to her work, it appears she is packing her office and a

few boxes are scattered in the room. Not much is in the room and I assume she is packing up her belongings as the end of the year approaches.

As I take my place next to Tayshawn I am quite curious about his work. This is the day he is hard at working writing Spy Agents and had agreed to bring the rest of the story the next time we meet. Since he doesn't have the full story, we decide to draw together. It has become our "staple" way to pass time since often we are in the hall outside the art room. I also find his artwork insightful. I ask him if he would mind drawing a picture since I missed seeing him in art.

"Anything I want?"

"As long as it is appropriate!" I respond.

Beginning with a blue marker he creates an outline of a shark, and adds a mouth full of teeth. He then meticulously begins adding rows of dots, still using blue through the shark's long torso.

"It's a shark, he is ready for food-he is so hungry" Tayshawn narrates as he draws and informs me it doesn't matter what it eats for food, fish or people. He adds "food" by drawing baby sharks on the bottom.

"He is just really hungry" he shares again.

I ask him to sign it. He starts with blue again and I ask if he wants to use other colors, he says no. He likes blue because it reminds him of the sky. The image with the dots transfers from the art lesson on Aboriginal Dot Paintings the students had been working on over the course of the last few weeks. He signs it.

From my observations of children creating imaginary cities from School Two, and Anson's versions of city as more of a tourist destination I was curious how Tayshawn would draw that same place. Since the teachers don't have a "plan" for what he is to work on, I ask him to draw a picture of Chicago.

Starting with a two long lines, he adds a pointed roof, a stereotypical house structure, but this one elongated. "It's a really tall tall building you know with lights

around it". I ask if he means skyscraper and he nods and responds, yes. He adds a street with two small cars and then a long rectangle becomes a sidewalk where two stick people take in the sights of the city. He explains it is his dad's house. The important idiosyncratic meaning (Zurmuehlen, 1990) is embedded in the creation of his dad's house, which he visits in the summer.

"Is it (Dad's house) next to the skyscraper?" I inquire.

"No-just pretending, its far far away"

He then begins to describe his father's house. This is what I record in my journal: *It has bushes and a gate (the bushes are like Christmas trees) and Uncle Charlie lives upstairs with a cat and we have a basement. Even if the cat goes to the basement, it always ends back up by the window*.

"You can pet the cat, it doesn't scratch you unless you pull its tail!"

Furniture begins to be carefully arranged by adding a sofa, and then he switches from the blue that had begun our session to pink. He shares this is a pretty pink rug that his grandma gave his dad, he visits this grandma in the ground when he puts flowers on her grave. "That's Chicago"(see Figure 17).

What is the significance of the children's versions of Chicago? The versions of city are claimed by each artist based on their experience are examples of idiosyncratic meaning and intentional symbolization as described by Zurmuehlen (1990). For many of the students at School Two, the large urban city is not home, but a place to visit for shopping or to possibly visit museums. For many children at School Three and other children in the district, their experience of this large urban area *is* home, and many still spend weekends and holidays there.

The Place of Community and School Culture as a Marker of Identity

Backdrop Stories: Perceptions of Youth from the Community

IIn the backdrop of their visual experiences lies the story of a community whose demographics have transformed over the course of several years. This has had a direct impact on the school system, and in turn, how the community shapes these particular school cultures has an impact on how students are viewed within each school. In talking with district administrators, many families have moved from this large urban area, to seek a better life both in terms of housing and education. The small Midwestern town that they travel to happens to be one of the more diverse communities in the Midwestern state. The community is also known for a strong social service support system. As mentioned earlier, one student told the principal at my school, "Everyone is so nice here".

The population change within many of the schools has not always been a smooth transition. Many of the families who have relocated are poor or working class, and often minorities. The change in the SES of the students has had a direct impact on the school cultures at many schools. Through listening to teacher conversations in the lounge, change has not always been easy. Many teachers, who had taught for an extended time period, were not open at first to the many ways they restructured and reorganized their classroom. On the other hand, a more varied student population has also been extremely productive. I hear teachers who describe how they have changed the ways in which they teach to meet the more diverse needs of the learners and how this has benefited all students. This has also aided them as teachers, learning new methodologies to differentiate instruction.

Many schools have also established Family Resource Centers in order to provide a liaison between families new to the school and also assisting families in need of basic

necessities. This might include distributing donated jackets in the wintertime or providing help with transportation to ensure children are at school on time. The main goal is to help families feel an intricate part of the school community.

At the school where I taught, the establishment of the DEEDS program or Dads Engaged in Engineering Dreams was created to have men have a deeper presence in the activities within the school community. Activities often seem to have a larger percentage of female teachers and mothers present. The director of the Family Resource program at my school discussed how research has shown "that men, whether they are fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers or uncles, can have a positive influence on a school and students' achievement" (Daniels, 2009, p. 4A). There is also a strong partnership program between the higher education state institution and the local school district. Through grant funding they were able to offer graduate courses focused on better understanding the multifaceted student population in terms of race, culture, gender and SES. While the school district has shown initiative in examining the needs of students and community, mixed emotions in relation to the changing demographics of the community still exist.

In several editorials and newspaper articles, these tensions were expressed in very direct language. Some people feel all the problems are blamed on "those people", "meaning black residents and people from Chicago or other metropolitan areas". During the writing of my dissertation, several meetings had been called with individuals worried about the stereotypes surrounding particular housing areas in the city. When fights allegedly involving adolescents broke out particular neighborhoods, some deemed these "riots" while others felt the situation had been misconstrued. One editorial had expressed the group of young adolescents who had supposedly "acted up" where actually energized after an evening church activity. As she stated in her editorial, "Were they unruly, as the police asserted? I don't know many groups of young people who, on leaving an event that is energizing and fun, aren't unruly. Obviously, being unruly and black, however, is a different matter" This is just one example of the tensions present in the community,

which had a direct impact on the school culture, and in turn how students were often "labeled" or stereotyped within particular school places.

Identity Through Stereotypes

In *bad boys*, Arnett Feguson (2001) discusses a prevalent discourse within the public school institutions around dominant stereotypes of black youth as troublemakers. According to those who heard about the riot at School Three, it involved many black and African American individuals. The neighborhood does consist of low-income housing and many residents receive section eight housing vouchers. Within the community, this often circulates a stereotype this neighborhood is more violent or unsafe.

I write this excerpt with caution, as these stories certainly sparked the ongoing tension I had heard individual express in the community in relationship to changing demographics. In addition, the location of the alleged fight was near Tayshawn's school and I was interested if this had affects on him.

In addition, I do not believe the supposed "riots" fully encompass the ways by which the community is shaped and viewed. As referenced in the polarized opinion pages and articles there are two versions of the story. At the same time, Ferguson's works not only brings front and center a dominant "viewing" of black minority students in the schooling system, but also highlights the important culturally difference in which communities define themselves as a group and marks themselves individually. Ferguson discusses this dilemma for black and African boys:

> Schoolboys must work to strike a balance between the expectations and demands of adults and peers in and out of school. They experience psychic strain as they weave back and forth across symbolic boundary lines. The ability to "act white", to perform the citational acts of that identity, is an act of survival, and a passport to admission to the circle of children who can be schooled. This difference may be rewarded in school by adults but can be a problem in the construction of self among one's peers and with family and community outside the school. (p. 212)

Would these social constructions cause conscious and unconscious performative behavior by Tayshawn as he negotiated perceived perspectives of "Who he should be?" or "How he should act?" How would his elementary days filled with notes and comments of "good boy" set itself against the older brother as the troublemaker or the wish of the Para educators and teachers to shield him from this part of his family culture? I believe as counter to predominant stereotypes or labels, identity was also marked through resistance.

Identity Through the Resistance of School Curriculum

Ferguson discusses how the use of "troublemaking" by any adolescent regardless of race or culture "function(s) to spice up the workday and make time go faster" by disrupting the routine (p.169). Children were rarely labeled troublemakers during my time at the three schools. (I can only think of Tayshawn's brother). Kids regardless of race, culture or SES *were* experimenting with pushing boundaries and more likely using outbursts as means of attention seeking against the expectations of adults. From observation, I saw more outbursts at School Three and this could be related to their background and the need for a tough outer shell, a form of self-protection against the multitude of things out of their control. Especially having to fight for basic human needs, such as food and shelter.

Outbursts occurred almost on a weekly basis at School Three. Students used loud verbal language to express their frustrations or occasional physical gestures to demonstrate their anger, not necessarily in regards to things which occurred at school, but also a manifestation of their frustrations with things out of their control. The art teacher shared with me that they had reasons to be angry. They were often from disjointed families, struggled at times to have basic needs fulfilled, and had less resources and opportunities at their disposal. The outbursts that happened at School Three often involved a school interventionist, a visit by the principal or removal from the classroom.

Children at other schools also had ways of pushing boundaries. But these might be read in completely different terms. At School Two, one girl was quietly reprimanded for throwing a ball of yarn instead of carrying it to the box before selecting another color. At School One, the group often lost points for "goofing around" during clean up. These seem minor infractions, but at School One and Two, these were seen as "typical" behavior. These were also seen as the ways in which students resisted the rules set forth by adults. At School Three, boundaries were pushed differently, more verbally and physically. At the same time, these varying ways of responding to adults or making one's mark in the social sphere of school were affected by the culture of home and school. Not to mention pervasive stereotypes related to being black, poor or both. Ferguson comments,

> …for African American children the conditions of school are not simply tedious; they are also replete with symbolical forms of violence. Troublemakers are conscious of the fact that school adults have labeled them as problems, social and educational misfits; what they bring from home and neighborhood-family structure and history, forms of verbal and nonverbal expression, neighborhood lore and experiences-has little or even deficit value (p. 169).

This form of self-performance was documented by Ferguson in terms of high school. The school principal at School Three had shared the stereotype of School Three as a "troublemaking" school. Many in the community felt little learning occurred and there was less discipline in place. As she shared, even if a family would walk through and not see a single incident in which a child struggled in terms of behavior, she would often still sign a transfer request at the end of the visit.

Even among these stereotypes teachers and administrators worked to combat, this was becoming a challenge for the district. The state board of education had made requests in reference to "socioeconomic and racial isolated enrollment pattern(s)". As stated in the report, "socioeconomic and racial integration should be one of the primary criteria

utilized when making decisions related to the placement of new buildings, the closing of schools, and the drawing of boundaries" (www.iowa-city.k12.ia.us/district/SFIP/FAQ.pdf). The difference I saw within the elementary setting for students like Tayshawn was the contradictions in how he was "labeled". He did find himself often in the hallway, the office or meeting with the behavior interventionist-here he may of felt like a "trouble maker" but I think he also relished the negative attention. While I was in the school, it meant we often had time to draw together. He was also often told he was a "good boy". As described by the art teacher, she worked hard to provide experiences that were positive and successful for the students. But these "labels" took on different meanings and forms of power/resistance according to the context of time and place. Maxine Greene discusses what happens when labels are pinned on children:

> The stigma of "disabled" or "low I.Q." or "lower socioeconomic class" too frequently forces young persons to become the recipients of "treatment" or "training", sometimes from the most benevolent motives on the part of those hoping to "help". Far too seldom are such young people looked upon as being capable of imagining, of choosing, of acting from their own vantage points on perceived possibility. Instead, they are subjected to outside pressures, manipulations, and predictions. The supporting structures that exist are not used to sustain a sense of agency among those they shelter; instead they legitimate treatment, remediation, control-anything but difference and release (Greene, 1995, p. 41).

I am left with their stories in my head, interpreted through my own experiences with class, school, and art making. I am reminded how labels and stereotypes can continually haunt a person. I am also reminded how these same labels and stereotypes can save us. One of my graduate students reminded me of this as we discussed the current status of art education and how to be advocates for the field. He shared he felt art in some shape or form had saved us all (referring to the other artists/teachers in the room). The voices from the children, reminded me that education is best served when we too tell our stories. Aware of our backgrounds and biases, we can then critically examine our

expectations of students. I think as teachers we will come to find that our beliefs about school and teaching can't help but be influenced by our own experiences related to class.

Changing Landscapes: Personal Reflection Identity Through Place

As I searched for homes as we prepared to move from Iowa to Pennsylvania, I felt the possibility for a switch of identity when I began to imagine the type of house or neighborhood we would choose to live in. What would the house say about us? What would the neighborhood mean for my daughter's understanding of class? What would her experience of schooling entail based on the type of neighborhood or community we chose to live in? What would become her "normal" so that she might not even be aware of the privilege by which encompassed her life?

I was teased in school because I didn't always have the "right" shoes or the right clothes. (I was also studious, a bit of a teacher's pet) I had always been comfortable around adults but tended to be self-conscious with my peers. At the same time, the discourse of "having" and " not having" was common fuel for dinner conversations at home. I remember my parents discussing the neighbor's newest farming equipment and what it cost, my mother's desire for nicer clothes and furniture. Looking back, I also think we lived a fairly comfortable life. We had the wealth of food from the farm, a large old farmhouse to spend time in and I learned the simple pleasures of reading outdoors, playing board games, or taking long walks in the countryside. As much as the discourse of not being well off (but better then some) as my mom would say, we also had much to be thankful for.

When it came to looking for a new home, I honestly wrestled with this when we came upon a neighborhood I had always imagined living in. Beautiful colonial homes with mature tree lined streets, a nearby art museum, planetarium and upscale shops. I was also drawn to homes in more eclectic neighborhoods with more economic diversity. I

questioned my choices against the backdrop of my research and began to see how much "place" was embedded with identity.

Part and parcel to qualitative research is the ability to highlight seemingly "natural" biases. Post-colonialism reminds us to step outside a "white" view of the world, to examine ways in which a particular landscape, whether institution or even particular cultural "norms" to view it from the lens of "other". I wondered then as I traversed the setting of three diverse art classrooms situated in very different neighborhoods how the story would be told if I was actually working in the school, or lived in a different neighborhood. More importantly, how the view might be different if it was told from the perspective of individuals who are considered in the minority?

I think about all the ways in which, I "color" the research because I grew up in a working class family. As my professor read over my beginning chapters, he paused where I had written my parents expected me to marry someone of wealth. (ex. doctor or lawyer). In their minds, economic security was a path to happiness. Not to be trite, but I needed a job that fulfilled my creative and social side. I have never really chosen a job for the salary (although money does take care of particular necessities and wants) but because the "work" of the job was wealthy by different standards.

My versions of what it meant to be "wealthy" were not as much couched in a notion of material goods, but all the ways in which my life was wealthy in terms of family, friends and work. But this is powerful construction as well. I can label this "wealthy" because I still have a very comfortable lifestyle. Both my husband and I can work in careers of our choosing because we also have decent salaries. The act of teaching also has a service component, which can be taken up as a form of self-sacrifice. This goes back to my Catholic days of being taught to be greedy equated oneself with sinfulness. This was a reminder of the teacher that instructed us to only ask for one item from Santa, when they in fact were considered quite well off. What a contradiction to use

God as tool to frighten "want" while also promoting a signifier of commodity, the man in the red suit.

I suspect we all have versions of what it means to be wealthy. My professor shared the story of two doctors he knew that were making around $250,000 dollars a year and were considering a move where the wife would head up a department in the hospital for a salary around $350,000. The husband considered taking a break from his surgical practice to stay home and oversee their ten-year-old daughter. The daughter was flabbergasted by the prospect of only one parent working. "Won't we be poor if you are both not working?" She wondered. This might be considered a simple exchange, but a story that illustrates notions of wealth and status.

Personal Reflection on Identity and Class

In writing the story of each school, it seemed I couldn't help but be drawn to the School Three where the most students receive free and reduced lunch. I am pulled to this place and to those students, because it is a reminder of the work I did as an undergraduate in the homeless shelters. It is also a reminder of the things we need to fix in education. I think also in many ways, it related to the economic struggles of my parents that seemed always present in conversation and lines across their face. I knew growing up we qualified for food stamps but my parents did not accept them as form of pride and I believe social status.

My parents also seemed concerned about being hypocrites and were frustrated with those who accepted food stamps and used them to buy "name brand" food versus the generic we purchased. I did receive a free and reduced school lunch ticket and I remember this being pointed out by students at the upper middle class private school I attended because the card was "coded" by being printed on a different colored piece of cardboard. It wasn't until I was an adult that my father shared we received heating

assistance in the winter. How then do we bring to the forefront issues surrounding class especially in terms of education, without letting the focus be on difference?

Julie Kaomea (2000) talks about this in terms of visibility politics when she writes about the use of curricular textbooks in Hawaii which have similar qualities to the types of images and portrayals of the Hawaiian people used in tourist industry and what these images say about post-colonial Hawaii (2000). She uses Peggy Phelan's critique of visibility politics because it "...summons surveillance and law…(Kaomea, p. 340, Phelan, p. 6) and "while there is a deeply ethical appeal in the desire for a more inclusive representational landscape and certainly underrepresented communities can be empowered by enhanced visibility, the terms of this visibility often enervate punitive power of these identities (Kaomea, p. 340, Phelan, p. 7).

There are discussions in the district about the importance of increasing the number of minorities who teach in the district. The reasoning is as the student population becomes more diverse, the school district needs to look at it staff as well. I find this attention to "visibility" interesting to reflect upon in term of representation in teaching and the particular signs by which we read "teacher." This has of course historical roots as well. The tradition of teaching in American schools unfolded out the church as a means of moral upbringing and the Puritans saw salvation through literacy. Schooling was the work of God (See Lortie, 1975). The social position of the teacher was certainly a particularity when I went to school at a private Catholic college. A teacher was considered a moral representative and good standing citizen who led by example, both publicly and privately. Even in the student teaching seminar class at the large Midwestern University, the expectations for behavior from undergraduate student to "teacher" are explained each semester..."you do not accept date offers by high school students, be seen at the bar, or host a party." Teaching also tends to be a predominantly female career and also a higher percentage of teachers are white (Labaree, 2004). These factors among many flavor what might become "synonymous" with the word teacher and

how this contributes to notions of "Other" and what it means to be on the periphery in education.

Conclusions

Although at the onset of the research project I had intended to look at how identity was marked through the signs and symbols related to power and wealth, the stories that did emerge in the classroom setting about place became very revealing in looking at different school cultures within a school district. This was further illuminated by the backdrop of stereotypes and labels, which were prevalent in the community in reference to particular neighborhoods and school. I also saw how through resistance of the curriculum and story children enacted forms of agency in playful ways, yet very intuitive fashions. This was revealed through the life of shape shifters and superheroes. As I looked at the factors which have influenced the field of teaching by revealing my own background and ideas related to wealth, I began to examine how these ideas were then embedded in the larger school culture, specifically through the lens of SES.

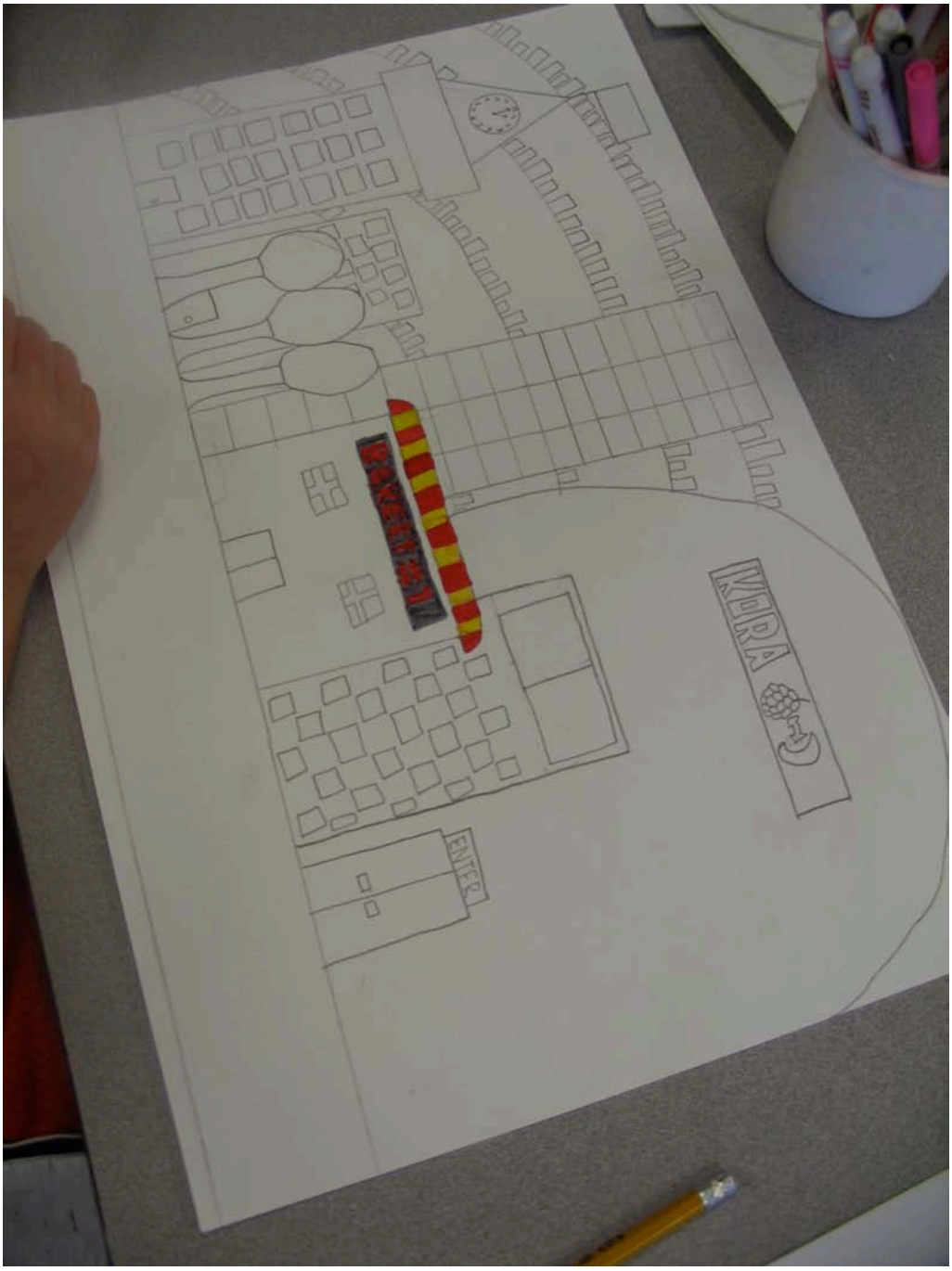

Figure 14. City Scene Example

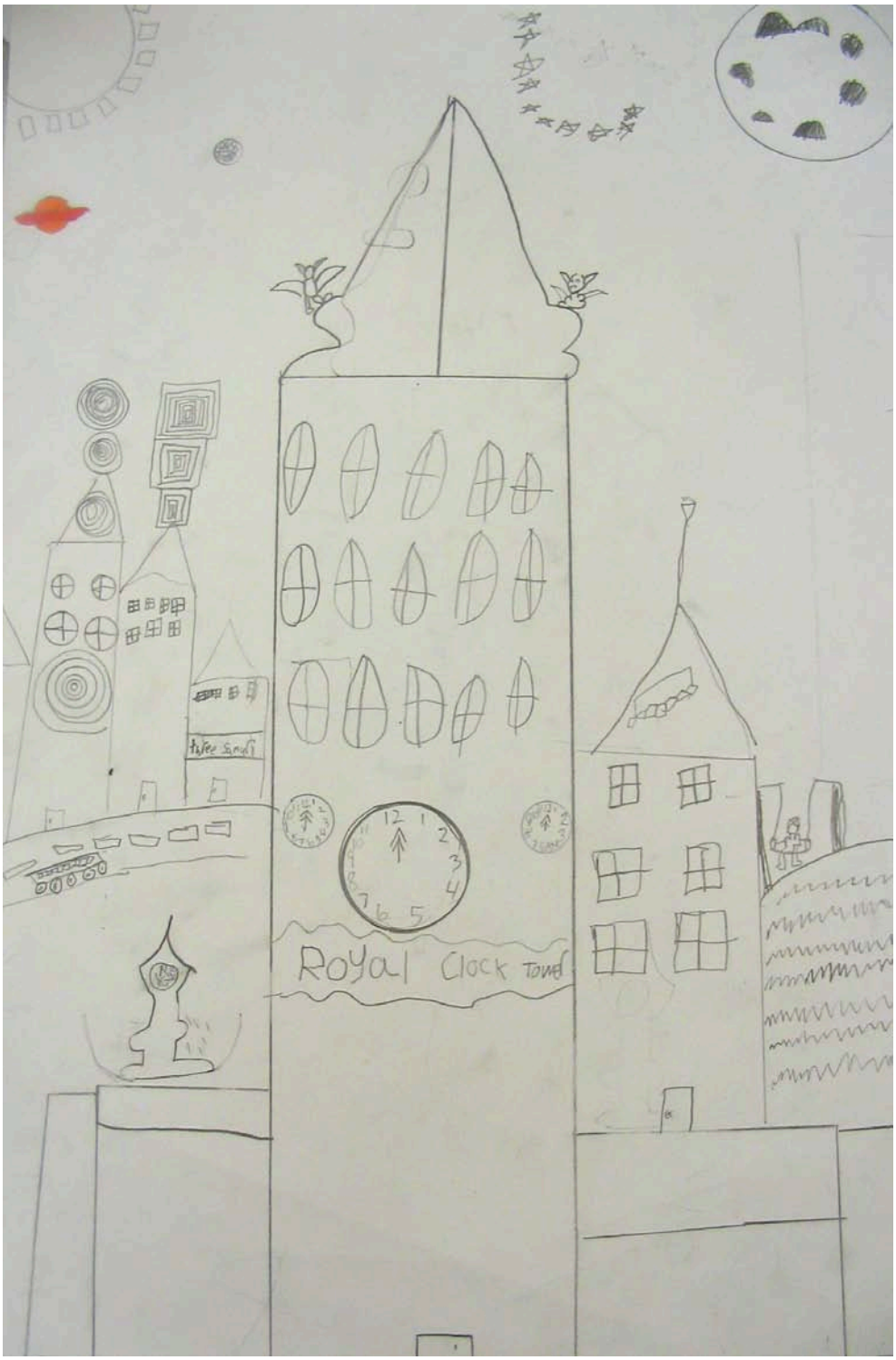

Figure 15. Anson's City Scene

Figure 16: Tayshawn's Father's House, marker.

CHAPTER SIX: WRESTLING WITH SES: UNFOLDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF PLACE, IDENTITY AND CURRICULUM THROUGH THE LENS OF SES

While the poor are offered addiction as a way to escape thinking too much, working people are encouraged to shop. Consumer culture silences working people and the middle classes. They are busy buying or planning to buy. Although their fragile hold on economic self-sufficiency is slipping, they still cling to the dream of a class-free society where everyone can make it to the top. They are afraid to face the significance of dwindling resources, the high cost of education, housing and health care. They are afraid to think too deeply about class.

bell hooks, Class Matters

I found it difficult to put into words the ways in which SES was present in the three school cultures I spent my days in. I felt it wash over me when I entered the school, most predominantly at School Two and School Three. I did not want to be presumptuous nor mold some typecast or worse yet heighten the stereotypes that already floated within the community on the "reputation" of particular schools. But it was present. Not only in story, but also in the infrastructure of the school, the teachers relationship to the school, and how the curriculum unfolded. Among all these factors, I would also say quite confidently that the "focus" children of my study all loved school, and also had a strong relationship to *their* school. All the secretaries and principals greeted me with warmth and each building felt like "school". Posters greeted you as you opened the doors, reminders of upcoming book fairs and the importance of all guests signing in at the office! Children were in rooms working on lessons both individually and in groups; often children were filing down the hall in transition from one place to the next. The smell of lunch floated through the air, playgrounds resounded with laughter and high-pitched voices, happy to catch some fresh air.

What perplexed me was my curiosity if the three students studied were aware of their socioeconomic status and what it meant in terms of privilege, education and their own identity. These were not initial questions of my research, nor could they fully be

answered in the time frame of my study. But the stories do begin to paint a picture of the impact of SES on the culture and curriculum of the school and causes pause for consideration of the ways art can both be a conduit for personal voice against a current age of mechanical testing and also a tool of social construction.

Looking In: Perspectives of the School Through the Lens of SES

Cars lined up in rows with a family name printed neatly on an 81/2-x11 piece of paper pushed against the windshield. The row would begin about 2:45 and would snake around the parking lot. I wasn't an expert in cars, but next to my small red 1999 Ford Escort, these cars seemed massive. There were Escalades and Jeeps, and vans (many with automatic doors) among others. Garbled and crackling through the speakers one might hear "Henderson, Henderson?"

The children would wait in the gym while a two-way microphone system facilitated communication between the individual outside and another on the inside. After a name was called children would file out of the gym to catch their ride home. The art teacher actually titled this afterschool ritual "valet parking", and it was my first experience with a systematic form of afterschool pick up. I was use to the clamoring of children through densely packed halls as the bell rang. At my school there was often several announcements in reference to cars blocking the driveway from the approaching buses. At School Three, however, the use of valet parking was facilitated for several reasons. It helped alleviate traffic congestion after school and it also allowed children to dodge the elements of weather.

Teachers and staff at School Three also kept students safe but for different reasons: When a cell phone was brought to school, it was asked it to go home in accordance with school policy. Upon investigation, it was determined the cell phone was actually a scale for weighing drugs. When parents could not be contacted after repeated

tries, accessing all numbers listed on their enrollment card, a sick child who needed immediate attention was watched and cared for by the nurse well after the three o'clock bell. When the gentlemen came to school frustrated because he could not find the mother of a child he had in his car, the school worked to locate the mother by passing along a handwritten note via a telephone conversation by the secretary because the gentlemen was not listed as the child's contact. When Tayshawn needed to get to school, the para educator often picked him up. When he needed a way home, his mom walked 20 minutes, crossed the busy highway with his younger sibling in tow via a stroller and arrived at school.

Despite the presence of excellent and caring teachers and halls filled with student' work, I also felt a difference within the culture and community of the schools. This was manifested in many ways, including after school events. For example, Carnival Night brought students and their families together in a fundraising event by purchasing tickets to play games, which helped raise money for the school's parent groups. School One served food from the local food cooperative and auctioned off a trip to Hawaii. School Two often had music performances and art shows during the day because parents working in the professional field found it easy to get off of work. At School Three, Carnival Night was a community builder and inexpensive way for parents to gather together, but donations of items to be auctioned off were more difficult to come by. At School One, I discovered through conversation with the principal that over a few year period, their free and reduced lunch numbers had actually doubled and therefore they were more keenly cognizant of offering afterschool activities with little cost and recognizing not all families were capable of contributing donations.

In terms of art supplies, they were more abundant in School One and Two, where at School Three the teacher often brought supplies from her other school. School One had a budget of approximately $1700 dollars for 310 students, but also had funding through a $300,000 dollar endowment left by a former teacher of forty-three years, which

brought in guest artists. At School Three, the budget was around $3500 for 500 students and finally at School Three, there was a $700 dollar budget for around 215 students. In subtle and not so subtle ways the schools had differences. It was from these experiences of the school environment, that my observations became keenly aware of how children discussed money, wealth or SES through conversation, story and images.

Simmel (1997) believed the connections to objects and things in the world became distant through the mediation of money. But more relevant was the value placed on something in terms of one's commodities. Money's value could be measured in multiple ways: Wishing for something of monetary value, the accumulation of things just to have them, (not based on any need) and the status by which one might mark themselves through the obtainment of certain goods or services. Therefore it is not money which holds value, but what can be secured *through* the mediation of money. As Simmel (1997) writes:

"…the pleasure in simply spending money as such, and finally pleasure in the possession of as many things as possible from whose specific usefulness and the reason for which they are produced, one doe not profit, but which one just wishes to 'have'" (p. 235). He goes on to explain that the enjoyment of the object is the ultimate goal. However, the means to this object through the obtainment of money, the ability to spend it and finally the actually possession of the object can also be ends in and of themselves.

Did children's conversations discussing their wish lists of toys or other items focus on the value of money or mere obtainment of their desires?

"Because it's Money": Stories from the Classroom

Balls of brightly colored yarn were strewn in boxes across the floor at School Two. Categorized by hues, the students would meander from their tables to select a color from the monochromatically organized boxes careful not to leave tails which would end in a tangled mess of yarn, similar to the "squirrels nest" I would often find in the long

blonde hair of my preschooler. Students were busy creating a double sided woven pattern on a cardboard loom which when removed from the loom would form a pouch. When asked what might be contained in their pouches, some responded rocks, others felt cell phones, ipods or spare change. When asked what they might buy with the spare change, they simultaneously responded: CANDY!! The thought of brightly wrapped sugar confections, began to illicit much dialogue:

Heather: "My mom makes me buy things I want but we don't need"

Another student: That stinks.

Anson: I get things on special occasions, like birthdays, but then sometimes every fourth month my mom buys me a random thing like legos.

Anson: "I am literally obsessed with legos"

Laurie: "Me too" She continues by describing the extensive neighborhood she has created in her basement and how further inspiration develops from accessing the lego.com website to watch animated lego comics. Well before I got to know Anson, his affinity towards building is evident early one.

Anson: I want to be an architect when I grow up, it all started from legos, probably when I was two.

In what seems to be a simple exchange, my attention to the signs and symbols related to power and wealth, allowed me an opportunity to really pay attention to what might be considered a "normal" conversation about the pleasure of consumerism and the use of objects as a marker of identity. I had intended to "catalog" the actual use of the dollar sign during the initial onset of my research. I came to discover even when teachers told me they "saw" these symbols; they were rare finds in the classroom. Much more common, were these snippets of conversation, most predominantly at School Two. It is through these everyday conversation, I am reminded of Paul E. Bolin's and Doug Blandy's (2003) discussion of material culture, that is those objects in life which encompass the everyday, moving beyond an aesthetic conversation only situated in those

things considered "fine" art. Although their conversation does not discuss art objects, a postmodern lens opens up spaces for the culture of the school to be examined beyond a purely curriculum or pedagogical stance.

A qualitative research project allows educators to focus on often unnoticed conversations within the landscape of the art room. As Bolin and Blandy state, "material culture studies embraces the investigation of objects and expressions located within the everyday world of the past. Material culture studies strive to be inclusive of the vast array of people, ideas, expressions, objects and investigative methodologies encountered through our daily experiences" (2003, p. 253). For these reasons, even the "simplest" conversation marked important understandings of how children marked their consumer identity. "

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (2002 English translation/1987) pegged the consumer as the "duped buyer in light of modern technologies. For Horkheimer and Adorno the production of cinema was a false consciousness by which individuals lived an alterative life outside the mimicry of mass production. What would they say to the "plugged" in society of instant information and access through U-tube and the ability to be hooked into radio, music and podcasts on a regular basis? The children at School Two were much more apt at discussing the latest technology, and I presumed it was because access to cell phones and ipods can be expensive. I also reflected on the type of status these objects brought; the marker of being current with the latest gadget and gizmo, the ability to obtain even more information with items like Blackberries and IPhones. Did this connection to information produce an individual with more power, able to click on a button and be inspired with design ideas from lego.com or did it allow little performance and innovation from the individual? Adorno and Horkheimer might see it this way. As they state in regards to the culture industry, specifically film:

> The required qualities of attention have become so familiar from other films and other culture products already known to him or her that they appear automatically. The power of industrial

> society is imprinted on people once and for all. The products of the culture industry are such that they can be alertly consumed even in a state of distraction…..Each single manifestation of the culture industry inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole has made them (2002, p. 101).

One view may describe the child as reproducing the adult world of consumerism, but a 21st century focus also opens another viewpoint. The facilitation of "Google access" has made things like remembering the name of a popular song or directions to the airport practically obsolete. Adorno and Horkheimer's erasure of human capacity is a bit too bleak for me. What type of new "openings" does the easy availability of information allow? Walter Benjamin (1978) gives much credit to the creative thinking of children. So even if children were "playing" with the operation of cell phones from their observation of the adult world, Benjamin would say "children produce their own small world of things within the greater one" (p. 69). I certainly rely on my cell phone and "Google access" but I have learned much from students who move beyond the basic function of the cell phone, to change and transform social networking through texting and places like Myspace. I see these as manifestations of children's and young adolescent's ability to extend the object from its seemingly basic functions.

These new ways of obtaining information allows for a new focus on the myriad of ways in which the human mind acts intelligently. When I attended school, the teacher was the "knower of all things", and like Freire's (1970/1994) banking model, I felt the teachers deposited information that they deemed important. Like a good bank, I saved that information to the best of my recollection. As the Partnership for 21st Century Skills discusses (2007), "With instant access to facts, for instance, schools are able to reconceive the role of memorization, and focus more on higher order skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation" (p. 6). These are some of the very reasons, art education has long argued its value in school. The arts allow students the ability to create knowledge, and more importantly meaning, through the use of "problem situations".

Students "pull" knowledge from various domains and critical reflection become enigmatic to the process of art making where multiple ways to approach a problem exist.

Benjamin began to see in one's relationship to objects a multiplicity of meanings. History was not teleological where events would unfold in a predetermined sequence. Benjamin strongly believed the reconstruction of history-developed form the individual's relation with their world. His ideas moved beyond Adorno's (2002) belief that "each single manifestation of the culture industry inescapably reproduces human beings as what the whole made of them" (p. 100). Benjamin wanted to turn the tables of sorts, viewing things like theater and film not as a series of sequential acts leading to the grand file, but he nature of the impromptu stage where the actors and actresses rely on the conventions of theater while inventing new characters and plots. Related to the idea of phantasmorgia, where ideas, dreams or imaginings could be constantly shifted, the life of the object could intend the same. Even when commodities might act as a form of false consciousness, Benjamin saw the potential for the fetish object to also be a source of "collective energy to overcome it" (Buck-Morss, 1999, p. 253).

What was the real significance to the objects that "consumed" the children's lives? Legos were certainly an obsession as was candy. And why not? I remember the long gleaming glass case filled with a colorful assortment of candy my father let us purchase with a few coins after church on Sunday. I liked the pop rocks that created a strange sensation in my mouth, a bubbling of tiny prickles on your tongue. My brother often purchased candy cigarettes, pretending to puff bits of smoke while it hung from the corner of his mouth as he tried talking at the same time. If he was trying to go for Marlboro man, he missed the mark. Beyond the inexpensive pieces of candy, the children at School Two were *also* familiar with lake houses, nice dinners, shopping and having too much. One day a conversation about Anson's grandmother searching for ticks in his hair sparked this conversation:

"My grandma is always buying me things I really don't know what to do with!"

Anson then responds:

"Do you believe in Santa Claus?"

Children at his table: "No, not really anymore."

Anson: My mom has kind of messed things up, [but] I pretend to believe so she gives me stuff!

A girl at Anson table: "You will never believe what my grandma bought me…a Barbie blanket"

Girl next to her: "Oh, my gosh!"

Anson: "This year I am only asking for a couple of things…scooter, DSI, or a Xbox5…oh, yeah and a lava lamp and air soft shot gun".

A girl responds: They'll only bruise you but not kill you…

Another girl at the table: I don't really ask for things, my mom just gets me things.

Things did seem important. Even in wanting only a "few things" the short-list would tally an expensive bill and these objects also seemed to qualify as status symbols. This was in marked contrast to the Barbie blanket which seemed to be labeled as absurd against the more grown up toys of video games and "play" guns. For me as a young adolescent, clothes were symbolic of wealth. My Catholic School uniform was meant to mask any reference to class, but the type of shoes and clothes worn to afterschool events highlighted difference. I loved hand me downs and mismatched ensembles, much to my brother's dismay. He was always Mr. JQ and could afford designer clothes because he was paid for some of the work he did on the farm by my uncle, such as putting in fence. For me, housework was expected and designer labels were not possible on my family's income. This made me recall my conversation with Anson about clothes. I had asked him if he cared about what he wears.

"NOOOO! As he had told me! He would just close his eyes and pick something out and wear it unless my mom tells me differently. Like today"

I ask the girls if clothes matter and the one girl tells me she randomly selects pants or a shirt and then finds something to match them. (Although, a quick survey of the room illustrated many children were wearing designer labels especially Abercrombie) Does the homogeneity of the majority of the class "having" the "in" brand, make it "normal?"

From this excerpt, children seem to wrestle with the non-importance of material goods and overconsumption by their realization that many things are not necessary. On the other hand, the pleasure of consumerism and its ability of identity marking seem evident in not wanting to let go of Santa Claus. In *What Would Jesus Buy?* A film by Morgan Spurlock the title is written in the "Walt Disney" font, commenting on the suburban white middle class families shopping "syndrome". There is sometimes a need to be part of a check list of consumer capitalism. House in the suburbs (check), 2.5 children (check), a dog (check), trip to Disney (check), Christmas presents under the tree (check). Since moving I have been placed in an identity crisis as I have moved from my small cottage like home, to a home in a very homogenous neighborhood. At my daughters new dance class many of the mother's discuss the absolute must of little girls visiting the Disney Castle. Several of my college students discuss how magical it was for them? Really? Did they know that children in foreign countries lost hands and were a used as child labor to create the "delightful" trinkets on sale at Disney shops?

The movie "follows Reverend Billy and the Church of Stop Shopping Gospel Choir as they go on a cross-country mission to save Christmas from the Shopocalypse: the end of mankind from consumerism, over-consumption and the fires of eternal debt" (from http://wwjbmovie.com/about.html)! I wondered through these conversations, how children negotiated the buying power they had through parent wealth with the playfulness of material objects and the understanding of limited access of material goods to others.

Children were exposed to many service oriented projects within School Two and according to the art teacher; there was often an overwhelming response. For example, when there was a food drive at school the teacher commented not only on the shear

number of donations, but the type of food that was brought in as well. (i.e. name brand and gourmet foods) A bulletin board hung in the hallway promoting donations to the local Ronald McDonald House, a service for families whose children were hospitalized. This was in stark contrast to the School Three who seemed to struggle with raising funds for a playground, had less money for art supplies, and fewer financial resources through the PTO.

Objects, no matter the school, had importance to the child. For all the children, money was delightful, not only for what it could buy, but also for what they *imagined* it could buy. For a young boy who loves farming at School One, his work was dominated by farming symbols; a kernel of corn stitched on burlap among several drawings of tractors. He shared the number of John Deere tractors his family owns, and was proud of the fact his family had two combines (the machine used to harvest corn) one of the most expensive pieces of farming equipment on the market.

At School Three, children received trinkets for earning tickets for "good" behavior. Children would adorn themselves with beads as they left the art room. Tayshawn often discussed the trips to McDonald's he earned as a reward for having a good week at school, this treat was provided by the paraeducator who had become Tayshawn's friend. His favorite objects included video games, and X-men characters which found their way symbolically transferred in his work.

How is the significance of the object measured even if replaceable and replicable? I grew up in a household that held precious material objects, because we didn't have the money to replace things, there were things which were considered priceless. I had a desire to sew, but my mom's fear of me breaking the only machine she had to repair clothes and to fuel her creative energies, was off limits. My own daughter, often mesmerized by the sheer number of any object in a store, has seemed to let go of this preciousness. Her fascination with ducks abounds, but she is easy to let one go if mold has settled in from being in the bathtub too long. Reminding me, "We can buy another

one mommy!" But is this really better? I can't recall how many conversations I have had with individuals about how "things use to be made"…to last. We have become a throw away society. My mother loved "stuff" but we were also were taught to make the object last.

The Value of the Thing in and of Itself

Simmel (1997) discusses the "controversy over whether money is itself a value or only a symbol of value…" (p. 237) which to him disregards the psychological factors of associated with money. As I work to understand Benjamin's ideas on how we come to understand the aura or mysticism related to an object, I am also drawn to the predominant notion of the object as replaceable. On one hand, the object seems imbued with multiple stories because of the way in which it can be reused, recycled and replaced. For example, in the art world even the mundane or mass-produced is now equated with significance, but often related to design versus story.

Walking down one of the many long walkways at O'Hare International Airport, modern day appliances were on display featuring the design elements in technology systems such as cell phones, radios, computers, etc. The selection of design might very well indicate something about the individual's identity based on style or color selection. Also, noteworthy is the progress evident in the new styles' capabilities to be smaller and more compact. But is the story told in full?

Missing from the picture is the story behind the object. Does the object have a life of its own? Even if produced in a factory what story would the object tell of how it was created, who created it and for what purposes? Even when a mass produced object is placed in the hands of the public, how does that object's life live out? For example, there are items an individual might purchase which are seen as merely replaceable, such as clothing or dishes. But then, these same objects become markers of significance, or points of reference in one's individual history.

I am reminded of attending my grandmother's auction the fall before she was placed in a Nursing Home. Watching from through the front window of her house, she saw everything in her life loaded on wagons to be auctioned. The history present in each object was revealed through the stories of her twelve children as they bid on the items. These objects would take on new lives now, and the objects had the potential to be transformative in recreating significance. My grandmother's life was never easy, raising twelve children on a farm was challenging work, physically, emotionally and financially. I visited my grandmother often as a child and have both fond memories, intertwined with those moments where I caught glimpses as why my own mother seemed haunted with the harshness of farm life and inflexible gender roles. Standing among the long wagons, I wanted an object, which would envelope a memory of fondness; I chose the green plates, painted with fall leaves we ate dinner on as we quietly chatted and then they clicked and clattered in the warm water, as each one was always hand washed.

Benjamin dwells in his own memories of the past from childhood, recollecting stories of his own grandmother as he replays the stories of the rooms in his house. For Martin Heidegger (1996), dwelling is to spare and preserve. I believe the relationship between Benjamin's ideas related to the memory and aura or breath one translated to the object, hints at the lived experience based in phenomenology. Drawing one's idiosyncratic ideas from experience, to understand self, history and the present. Heidegger expresses this in his reference to Da-sein (being there/here) when ontologically we may pass over those things in life which are seen as "everydayness", but this constitutes the ontic immediacy of this being" (Heidegger, 1996/1953, p. 41). Examining the notions of memory and mysticism in the object, we connect this interplay to the art object and the work and play of children. The creation of art is a manifestation of their stories of everydayness as they construct a personal history among intersecting histories of family, school, and society.

Through my observations, it is the process of creating where the child is able to form an object embedded with the life force of the child. Even when mixed with elements of pop culture, there is a transformation because the child gives the work relevance. This significance derives from the physicality of creating the piece with their own senses and body, but also from the conscious act of uses signs and symbols in the construction of an image. This is a form of language, and according to Benjamin, language is not absent in any human endeavor. "All language communicate itself"" meaning the essence of what is described in the language, the expression of the thing, "the capacity for communication is language itself" (Bullock & Jennings, 1986, p. 63-64).

Gadamer explains the notion of play as a *conscious* act by humans which differentiates itself from animal play. This is present in and through the use of signs and symbols created by the artist, in which play becomes making (see Zurmuehlen, 1998). Reading a text or examining a work of art is, according to Gadamer, a way in which individuals "see" an image created by the artist or writer. This is the open space created by language and visual art, where individuals are capable of creating a concrete experience for themselves, even though others will interpret the work in a different way (1986, see p. 27). As he follows with, "a synthetic act is required in which we must unite and bring together many different aspects" (1986, p. 27). Even in the reproduction of mass produced images, children find ways to claim those symbols as new as personal forms of representation. During one of my visit, and as the class was finishing for the day, one student requested I write her classroom code on the back of the loom. The warp and weft threads had consumed a large area of the cardboard and she was finding it difficult to write the letters SH. These represented her teacher's last name, Ms. Sharon.

Glancing at my writing, Amelia responded: "I like your money symbol".

I said, "Money symbols?"

And then it quickly dawned on me that when I wrote the SH I must have melded them together and it appeared to be a dollar sign.

"Why do you like my money symbol?" I asked.

"Because it is *money*". She replied.

Several students piped in, "She likes money. She was the mayor of our class and her dad likes money. He is a banker." The conversation illustrated the value of money from a psychologically standpoint. As the dialogue continued, I also observed how money and the conversations surrounding it acted as a form of cultural capital.

Cultural Capitol and the Value of Money

The ideas surrounding money, started during my rote conversation with a child named Riley when I was asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. This seemingly basic question elaborated into a lively discussion and debate between the students at the table. One student piped in: "Did you know the senate is trying to close the banks?"

Then another student added, "I'm pretty sure some people want the government to control the banks which is sort of weird." A student asked why and a child responded, "but the government *is* smarter than the banks."

It was this story that sparked my curiosity in what was considered a "normal" conversation about money in relation to one's SES and what might be considered an anomaly. For me, listening to third and fourth grade students at School Two discuss politics was fascinating. At the dinner table (actually called supper as a child) of my childhood, conversation revolved around the events of the day, such as what we did at school, or was meant as a time to simply listening to our parent's discussions. These often were situated in stories (gossip) of the neighbors and events related to the farm, like the domineering weather, falling prices, or every so often the glory of knowing the crops were in and the sun was shining.

I shared this story with my husband, who grew up in an affluent neighborhood in the district and he responded, "What's the big deal?" To him a conversation about politics was "normal" and a lively discussion or debate was expected to occur both among his peers and his family. In my home, one did not discuss religion, politics or sex…one can see it didn't leave much.

Annette Lareau (2003), in her discussions of concerted cultivation emphasizes the ways in which this type of upbringing affords a different repertoire of language skills, points of conversations, and negotiating abilities. From her extensive ethnographic study of families she found "(T)the verbal world [of] middle-class children inhabit offers some formidable advantages and some significant costs" (p. 132). She discusses how within these environments adults seek out the opinions of children, spend time searching for books or articles related to their interests, use extensive vocabulary in conversations and provides child "votes" in family decision-making. The down side to some of these seemingly advantages include the extensive time needed to obtain resources and often a blurred line between the adult world and child's world.

It seemed evident at School Two, through several snippets of conversation, children felt a right to share opinions and also to negotiate their own decision making process. During a lively conversation about Anson's desire to be in a Christmas play, he was disappointed by the fact the only parts remaining included being a singing Christmas tree. He had vision! These visions included being at least a shepherd boy. The thought of dressing up as a Christmas tree adorned with lights and waddling on to stage was equated with looking ridiculous and the children at his table nodded in agreement. Being part of the play was important to him, but he had his limits on his acting license and standards, and felt confident to express these.

At School Three, conversation seemed to circulate around attaining some sense of power or control. This seemed evident in several scenarios, especially when focused on

attention or responses to public displays of their artwork outside the art room. This is highlighted in this excerpt from my field notes:

Gathered at the rug, Ms. C was explaining the opening children's art show at a local bank. Sponsored by the bank during youth art month, students were encouraged to do artwork they had created at home to be hung for display. Each child would receive a ribbon for their submission and a panel of judges would select two pieces from each school for special recognition. One piece would be framed and hung in a local business for a year and the other piece would be copied and displayed in a calendar given out to the community. Ms. C had received few pieces from the students, so she selected projects they had done at school. Some students inquired if they could still enter and Ms. C had to explain that the due date was past and that they could try again next year. One student piped in "I'm not going to be here next year!"

This was a comment I occasional heard in my classroom as well, and then they would be gone, often to Chicago. One child was outwardly upset about never being chosen. Children had a tendency to feel they were missing out, or not understanding everyone couldn't be selected. Unlike Anson, who chose not to be in the Christmas Play because he was unhappy with the part he had been given, the autonomy of decision making by children at School Three was less present. Instead, children's use of language often related to their need for attention or feeling left out of something.

Another phenomenon related to SES, involved relations with adults. Children seemed to take their parents'decision making as the final word. As Tayshawn was carefully carved his self-portrait into his clay he "dressed" himself with a basketball uniform. When I asked if he played on a team, he said "not yet but I have been practicing". I had also wanted to see him before or after school so asked if he was part of the program. He told me he had attended last year, but then his parents said it cost hundreds of dollars and took him out of the program.

Although, I can't generalize on the opportunities for outside activities, I did know from conversation with the art teacher that the majority of Tayshawns "outside" school experiences occurred because the paraeducator treated him to these events (such as trips to the races, McDonalds, etc.). Lareau discusses, how in middle class families, parents often "follow up on children's interests, often by enrolling them in organized activities" (p. 82). As she further describes "Parental involvement is a key component of the child-rearing strategy of concerted cultivation. As a result, middle-class children gain a sense of being *entitled* to have adults focus on the minute details of their lives" (p. 82).

When Lareau describes the daily life of children from poor and working class families, she sensed a much different parent child relationship. Parent's words are taken as final and children "do not pressure adults to cater to their wishes" (Lareau, p. 83). It seemed, in Tayshawn nonchalant response to my questions regarding after-school activities that *not participating* in some organized activity was his "normal". Instead of a summer filled with numerous camps or vacations mentioned by many of the children in School One and Two, Tayshawn looked forward to visiting his father and seeing the individuals his father hung out with.

It was within these experiences I was reminded of all the ways I felt "denied" access to after school programming because of our working class status coupled with the parenting practices held by my mother and father. They grew up families of twelve; you simply didn't go anywhere (except church on Sunday) because you simply wouldn't all fit in the car. Things were too expensive and there was work to be done on the farm. This philosophy carried through in my own childhood. We were expected to make our own fun (after doing a long litany of chores) and if we mentioned the word "boredom" *more* work was readily available. I won't deny that in many cases this work was pleasurably, I did enjoy baking with my mother and exploring my vast 380-acre "playground". Lareau (2003) is cautious of not painting one parenting practice as "better" than another. She also sees advantages in the parenting models aligned with working class values. Children

are given paramenters, but then left to their own devices facilitating more open ended and creative "self-structuring". My own perspective of these parenting practices are colored with my own experience of what I considered a deficit-not being able to participate.

As I got older, I strongly desired to participate in organized clubs. I was allowed to be afterschool one night, but typical high school students seemed to spend every afternoon after school and I was often frustrated by the fact we lacked the transportation (the school was fifteen miles away) to attend such events. We did own a car and a truck, but the truck was needed on the farm and my mom feared if I took the car and had an accident they would not have the money for any minor or larger fender benders. My brother had a car, but this was also possible because of the money he earned for the work he did on the farm. I don't want this to be filled with a bitter tone, gender roles were more specific in the community I grew up in and my father would often say if I needed something, he would do the best he could. I did want to do more, but I also understood my parents words were final.

This story illustrates the types of cultural expectations and constraints embedded in my working class family dynamics. For the students at the schools I observed this was evident as well. Tayshawn seemed to take his mother's words as the final say. At School Three, the students also searched for ways to gain attention through both positive and negative forms of power.

Signs and Symbols: Marking Oneself through Image, Art as Personal Voice

As I enter the art room, students are energetically participating in a conversation with the docent from the local University Art Museum. Today, they are hearing a presentation about the works from the permanent collection. As the class period rapidly ticks by, the children remain quite focused by the images and the docent's sweet rapport.

A few restless bodies emerge, but the docent's casual conversation style and genuine attention to their observations seems to elicit an engaged audience.

During art class, Ms. C who they enjoy for her humor and relaxed style would often spend time discussing projects in length before they got their hand on the materials. This aligned with Ms. C's philosophy and she felt it important to give them detailed information on the project, including relevant historical or culturally information. A new face however, seemed to give them a renewed focus as the docent quietly leads them from and open-ended student directed conversation to a discussion of terminology in a more formal sense.

Advancing to the next image a brown haired, blue-eyed Caucasian boy holds up an all beef patty while dressed in a white shirt accompanied by red and white-checkered bibs (See Figure 1.) Standing at 150 inches, the figure doesn't have trouble attracting the viewer. As a piece of Americana, it beckoned the weary and hungry travel to its doors. I loved the kid's menu as a child, featuring spaghetti and meatballs topped with aged (canned) Parmesan cheese. Referring to a previous relief sculpture titled "Tom" by Tom Arhearn (See Figure 2.), she reminds them that the statue of Big Boy is not as natural looking as "Tom". Instead they are looking at a piece of abstract art.

D(Docent): "Let's all say it!"

Children respond: "Abstract!"

From here they proceed to painting a painting by Lyonel Feininger (See Figure 3.)

D: "Do you notice that these people are abstract?"

A child responds, "One guy has a really big body and a really small head."

The docent asks the students to discuss what they notice about the sky.

C(Children): "The sky is pink!"

Another child responds, the windows are not the right size…

D: "Do you notice how the buildings are not completely straight?"

D: "Would you like to live in this town?"

D: “What would be cool about living in this town?”

As the docent is posing these questions, there are a few students who are near me who make comments about stepping on a little dude if they were in the painting. They comment this would be good, because they would be bigger, “and we could squash them!”

In a culture where one might easily equate power and status with wealth, how do children come to view themselves through the values associated with money and power? Might one conclude, as children create playfully imagine being the “domineering” figures of the painting they take on a role of being powerful or wealthy? I thought to myself, does the child feel squashed, unable to fully articulate what their lives are like against the backdrop of middle class ideology?

According to the art teacher, dress is a symbolic measure of status in the school and with the families. She tells me of a child who comes to school showing off his new fur coat or children wearing expensive leather coats. This is set is side by side with what else I know about theses children’s lives. The children are also often living in low-income housing or using food stamps. The teacher has heard some of the things come from pawnshops, or “black market” stores. I often see the students wearing long t-shirt with embossed letters catching light from their bold color. Pants hang a bit lower, sometimes revealing patterned boxers. I love to look at their necklaces, and often I am allowed a close up view. Skeleton heads set with “diamonds” are hung securely on gold plated chains; dollar sign necklaces and white high tops complete the ensembles (See Figure 4). The art teacher often comments on the rap culture the students are drawn to, where lyrics both speak of status through clothes as well as the ways in which culture has set up a particular “path” for minorities. The students didn’t share particular rap songs they listened to, but I did search to find lyrics that might speak to the class issues that form the backdrop/frontstage to how they see themselves in a “middle class” culture.

"I dont have a car

i own a pair of reeboks/it gets me where im goin til my damn feet stop"- redman

"The odds are stacked against us like a casino

Think about it, most of the army is black and latino

And if you can't acknowledge the reality of my words

You just another stupid mother fucker out on the curb

Trying to escape from the ghetto with your ignorant ways

But you can't read history at an illiterate stage

And you can't raise a family on minimum wage

Why the fuck you think most of us are locked in a cage"

-Immortal Technique (retrieved from http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/immortal_technique/harlem_streets-lyrics-491912.html)

Do their voices feel squashed in school? Do they feel on a track to a certain income level or an inability to attend college? The art teacher believed anger over situations was valid and they generally have more frustrations “They act out to mask the fact that they can’t read, it’s a defense. They have many valid reasons for being angry.” I am cautious how to read this exchange between the docents and the students. In my mind, I wonder how they understand their SES status. I wonder how they interpret the work. Especially sine the symbol of Americana (Big Boy) is white and the statue by Arnheim is black. Here the individual is celebrated for his “everydayness” but the use of a bust relief sculpture traces its roots to Greek Antiquity. Is everydayness equated with blackness? How does taking on the role of the white gentlemen in the Feininger painting?

As the semester progressed, I came to be known as Wonder Woman and was told by the teacher when I missed a day there were pangs of lament. They craved attention. I wondered what my research could do, and my curiosity in what stories their signs and symbols related to money might tell me. I became more fixated on my work as a means of advocacy to tear away the shell that cloaked many students at School Three in an early

onset of cynicism. I kept writing and I kept asking questions. Some were not originally on my IRB list, but good qualitative research and my years of reading Zurmueheln told me to follow where the students would lead.

Signs and Symbols: Art as a Means of Social Construction?

At School One, I was also witness to the students' visit by a docent from the museum. The students were gathered on the rug, and were even quieter than the norm, especially since half the class (the fourth graders) were in their regular classrooms. The teachers used the WOW (short for Widen Our World) visit as an opportunity to present the sex education program to the fourth graders. From my field notes (Spring 2009) I wrote*: The students were comfortable and interested and the docent asked a few questions, but the majority of the time she shared information or causally answered her own questions. "I think all art is interesting" and then the bust relief sculpture titled "Tom" was pulled up on the slide projector (See Figure 2.) and the students are asked if it is a sculpture or painting. Two students respond, "Sculpture!" She compares the bust of Tom (an "everyday person) to busts made in Roman Days. This would include a poet, or well-know individual as a means of special recognition. She compares how in Roman times they would be sculpted using stone or marble while Tom on the other hand is made of plaster. She points out that the image is quite realistic and that this would be called a portrait. She then asks the students to share what they see when the look at the sculpture.*

A student responds that he is looking down and the docent adds "he is black, which is fine…" followed by asking the students if he was a professional or laborer. Without waiting for a student response she continues. Focusing on his large biceps and adding he is muscular she shares he does manual labor and because he is wearing a cross, perhaps he is a bit religious. Tom happens to also be smoking, and the docent adds that smoking is bad because it turns your lungs black and she shares that she wants to keep everyone healthy so they can appreciate art for a long time.

The students also see the image of Big Boy and the students are asked to share why the like this image. A student responds that they like it, because it looks like he wants to eat the hamburger! The docent shares that she likes it, because the kids like it. After a quick discussion of Big Boy, the docent heads into the painting by Lyonal Feininger and as the slide is shown she adds, "Ah a painting-now we are getting to real art!" Later she adds that art is becoming more than just a painting, which is a good thing…

When the students move on to the African collection she discusses how lucky the students are to be living in this small midwestern town because of the strong collection. She also shares that hundreds of years ago they [Africans] were making things that people were not aware of and didn't know about. She passes out a Bogolian cloth and passes it around, "This is what they wear in Africa." One student, who happens to be the only black student in the class, shares that he has been to Africa for three years. The docent responds, "That is great-everyone seems to be traveling more!"

What do these exchanges tell us about children's relation to art? More specifically how might we use critical discourse to deconstruct the type of language used in the descriptions of the work to understand the ways in which language acts as social capital? It is important to note that I have not provided all the images or conversation shared within the almost forty minute presentations at both School One and Three. I have focused on the exchanges above because in subtle ways they gravitate towards a notion of privilege. As the docent at School One added when discussing the painting by Feininger, "We all like to go out and buy nice clothes, don't we? Especially in Paris!" I believe the docent was being playful and truly enjoys her work, especially since her time in the schools is voluntary. However, it is also vital to be continually cognizant of the ways certain literacies act as dominant ideologies within particular spaces.(Bourdieu, 1994, Lindquist & Seitz, 2008).

For example, there are a couple stereotypical references made concerning class when viewing Tom. It is pointed out that Tom's muscles indicate he is a manual laborer. The artist Tom Ahearn, did specifically focus on "regular" individuals extending the idea of "hero" sculptures from Roman and Greek Antiquity to celebrate the "everyday ordinary individual". This however, is not a dominant aspect of the exchange. Instead the focus is on the color of his skin, his job as a manual labor and the fact he might be a bit religious. Do the student then begin to take up these subtle descriptions in how they view others? In the sharing of handmade fabric from Africa, what does it mean to a child living in the Midwest, if one piece of cloth represents what all Africans wear against the fine clothes of Paris in the Feininger piece? What aesthetic value is giving to painting versus sculpture over the work of individuals from African countries through dialogue and image in a forty-five minute presentation?

In terms of dominant ideologies, I believe this example highlights a keen awareness of the images selected within a giving classroom and the importance of revealing one's biases and background when discussing a work of art. Mary Ann Stankiewicz (2002) describes the transfer of high art ornamentation to those in the middle class as a means of "social advancement" and "social control" (p. 2). One of the continual discussions in the field of art education is the means by which the use of images from popular culture contributes to the hopeful establishment of art as a classless entity, where art represents the people in a democratic sense, stripping away labels or narrow definitions of aesthetic finesse.

The docent at School One does find painting to be real art, but she does add that the definition of art has changed and expanded and even remarks this is a good thing. Kevin Tavin (2007) discusses the long legacy aesthetics focused on formalism which removes subject from the interaction. Quoting Freedman (2001) he writes, "focus on these models in education is to prepare students to approach art as a series of objects about form and feeling isolated from meaning…the assumption [is] that any object can be

effectively analyzed using such models" (p. 42) Whereas Grant Kester (2004) highlights the importance of a dialogical art, where artists take a on a "performative, process –based approach" (p. 1). As he states, artists become "context providers" rather than "content providers". He is interested in the type of projects that bring dialogue, especially in the disruption of the global market place and the ways in which the world has begun to realign itself, especially in terms of class and economics.

In addition to a broadening of aesthetics from mere formalism is the ways in which children read the work from a multicultural perspective. A "culturally competent art educator" as described by Lucy Andrus (2001), is sensitive to others' cultural backgrounds, has an understanding of the traditions of diverse world cultures and has examined and resolved personal biases and are aware of and accept their own cultural backgrounds (p. 15). Although I have not included the complete list of factors which contribute to a culturally competent educator, I find the examination of biases to be essential. I disagree that these biases need to be resolved. The consideration should be for an open dialogue between student and teacher cloaked in an honesty of the fluidity by which we continually construct knowledge of the world and the myriad of ways in which one comes to understand self and other.

From a Foucauldian perspective, how does the description of a "culturally competent educator" disrupt ideas of museum education, fine art, or the engaged and interested student? If I compare the two exchanges, I felt at School Three the children were encouraged more to engage in the work in reference to their own worldviews and ideas. At School One, the format of a more lecture style exchange among particular comments pertaining to the work created an exchange of a "knowledgeable docent" sharing information to the students as opposed to learning with them.

One of the continued debates in terms of education stems from a philosophy that knowledge becomes an act of enlightment. Questions arise such as, is it produced and controlled through institutional systems and social hegemony or authored from the

subject as an active agent in learning and understanding? Thomas S. Popewitz and Marie Brennan (1997) investigate the way in which Foucault's commitment to Enlightment involves an "attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them" (p. 5). Popewitz and Brennan examine two forms of knowledge construction, the philosophy of consciousness and the privileging of subject.

The philosophy of consciousness views knowledge as a means towards progress. School would be seen as a place of social redemption which intended to give the subject power against the former use of a theological model of governing (p. 6-7). This form of knowledge construction is questioned because as it speaks towards a construction of "equality, justice, and diversity [it] may inscribe systems of representation that construct "otherness" through concrete pedagogical practices that differentiate, compare, and normalize children along a continuum of value" (p. 8). In terms of museum education, a practice of "enlightenment" still seems present in the gallery spaces of many museums, often set apart by their grandiose staircases and towering columns. The great masters have often brought the public to the museum through false pretenses. Lynne Munson (2000) exerts that individuals awed by the great masters or what I would deem traditional realms of making (painting and sculpture) "are not responding to the power of the monuments, say revisionists, but flocking to well known sites for the purpose of acing out culturally dictated reactions" (p. 139).

As the docent at School One shares information from the permanent collection with the elementary children she vacillates between expressed opinions about what she deems "real" art and the openings that art has also created by extending and expanding art's definition. Not only in terms of mediums but also those aesthetic factors which looks at the mass produced image as seen through the icon of Big Boy. How then might one imagine how the child sees the work? Are they active agents who give meaning to

the work because they recognize a love for hamburgers as the Americana boy in red and white plaid bibs gleefully holds up an all beef patty? What do the children at School Three tell us when an image of fine painting is given meaning by taking on the persona of a large adult, eager to squash someone?

Popewitz and Brennan also describe social epistemology "to place the objects constituted as the knowledge of schooling in historically formed patterns and power relations (see Popewitz, 1991, 1992) (p. 9). This means deconstructing the terms education, child artist, and learning to better understand the multiple discourses which enact a particular definition of the "schooled child". Popewitz and Brennan later add, " a social epistemology enables us to consider the word *learning* not as standing alone, but as embodying a range of historically constructed values, priorities, and dispositions toward how one should see and act towards the world" (1997, p. 9).

I continue to wrestle with all the various ways we deem the child artist along with the artistic capitol which seemed present in the museum exchanges. I seek to further explore notions of agency through the ways children respond to curriculum with both tension and acceptance as means to constructing knowledge. What stories did I enact in what I decided to record in my notes and what I seemingly left out? I attempted to focus what I recorded on the value of money both physically and psychologically while simultaneously telling my own versions of class through my viewpoint as an adult, looking back at my childhood. Beyond the stories from the children, I wondered how the art teachers would describe the students understanding or recognition of SES. I had the advantage of being somewhat a fly on the wall as I documented their conversations, but wasn't present in the everydayness of their lives, where I would most likely get an even broader sense of how class revealed itself with family and friends.

At School Two, with the least amount of students on free and reduced lunch, I asked the teacher to share how she viewed the students. The teacher felt it was hard to say, because when they talk about things and their experiences, there are a lot of

commonalities; many have cell phones and ipods. She shared, "They all have a lot. They all do." She felt, that surely they know and they are somewhat aware of this through the fact they do service learning projects, they know they *have* in order to give. Ms. G countered this with an example of a student who was briefly enrolled while living in an apartment, and was viewed as "fish out of water". She was an anomaly against the majority who were privileged. She eventually moved to a different school. She felt the child stood out to the students as one who was not as "fortunate" or did not have the same financial stability as the majority of the other children.

At School Three were I wondered if their need to squash someone was a form of power, the teacher felt there was commonality too, but this time many shared that they were on free and reduced lunch. This was not seen as "other". For the majority, their normal meant receiving assistance. At School Three, Ms. C talks about the fact that "other" then becomes race, as children have asked her if she likes crackers? (a white person) or they might add, "I'm half cracker". As I mentioned earlier, she saw status evident by the clothes students wore and often notices new clothes and "complete sets" like rapper outfits and coordinating jogging outfits. The teacher at School One felt "class" was a non-issue, and something that children were not completely cognizant of. She felt the culture of her school was one based on acceptance of difference and children didn't use class as tool of creating friendship circles. School One's families had a range of family incomes.

Through wrestling with SES both in the broader school culture and the intimate conversations I was welcomed into, I began to get a sense of how identity and the versions of child artist might be understood through a class perspective. At the heart of these interpretations, lie the pedagogical approaches and use of a common curriculum to provide a well-rounded art education. I turn now to critical examination of the curriculum practices within the art rooms. First, examining how the curriculum enacted a particular aesthetic in both hidden and overt ways through public displays of student art work and

business sponsorship. Then I examine vignettes from each school to describe pedagogical teaching practices. Within these examples, I use the lens of SES to critically examine how the projects/products/process allowed for personal meaning.

CHAPTTER SEVEN: PEERING IN: THE UNFOLDING OF A COMMON CURRICULUM AT EACH SCHOOL

If teachers were to approach their classes with an appreciation of how much their pupils already knew, helping to bring the structure of that informal knowledge into consciousness, students would have the feeling of being on familiar ground, already knowing much about how to know, how knowledge is organized and integrated. This might be one way for schooling to assume the flavor of learning as homecoming: learning to learn, knowing what you know, cognition recognized, knowledge acknowledged.

Mary Catherine Bateson, Peripheral Visions

The room is filled with the quiet activity of children. At School One, it is often hard to find much conversation. During my visit, many are finishing monochromatic paintings of fish focused on the element of line. For those who are done, they come to the center of the room to sit on a rug and draw. A bike is propped up and the children look comfortable as they use drawing boards and keen eyesight to extrapolate the detail of the bike to paper. Before they begin to draw they are asked to reflect on the fish project. One student writes: *We put some paint on a piece of paper. Then we draw fish on one by the paint. Finally, we put the paper on a bigger paper and we glued them on. (Spelling corrected from the original notes)* As the children are drawing the bike, Ms. S walks by and tells them: "Just remember to take your time on the bike drawings-this is a slow kind of drawing."

Among the drawers, the painters continue their work. One girl asks another how she made a color. There is little conversation from the drawers, but a bit occurs from the painters. A rhythmic, thump, thump, thump is heard. Upon investigation students are bouncing basketballs against the glass blocks again. When Ms. S checks in with the students, they apologize not realizing a class was in session. The painters find freedom in a workday and one girl reveals a hand colored in paint. Ella does the same. Ms. S begins talking with a student about a focal point in their work. She asks them if they want to

change it around or add it to other places. As a girl is painting, Ms. S comments, "I like the use of little dots of blue on there that's nice". The girl with the paint begins adding it to other places. Then Ms. S gives a reminder on how to properly use sponges. All the children stop to listen but one. Another boy, presumed to be closing the glue bottles is slowly picking off the dried chunks of a now transparent and solid substance. Class is almost over.

Setting the Scene: Questions around the Common Art Curriculum at Three Schools

The art classroom is a multifaceted space. The teacher models a studio workspace and children create art within parameters and expectations set forth from the teacher. The teacher facilitates, leads, and teaches but allows for opportunities around process, product and critique. As I examined and listened to the ways in which children discussed SES and how they negotiated ideas related to power and wealth, something surfaced. References to power and wealth were subtle and not so subtle in the school culture. It was here I considered the ways in which art and the art room may act as a conduit for personal voice as well as a tool of social construction. In the rich description of the WOW program the position of the teacher/docent shows discussions on the schooling and background of the teacher have direct impact to the type of expectations of a child socially and in terms of curriculum (Brantlinger, 2003).

Stemming from the discussion in how children negotiated identity in the space of the art room through the lens of SES, I turned to my third research question: What does the lens of socioeconomic status tell us about how curriculum functions and unfolds within a given school culture? Through story and rich description I attempted to map out several "vignettes" of lessons as they occurred in the classroom to explore these questions. Where data provided, I also included student's verbal responses to the lessons, although this was not always possible. However, a critical view of the products produced

by the children revealed much. By grouping student work according to schools, similarities and themes highlighted the student's lived life.

At the backdrop of my "peering in" into the school art curriculums and school cultures were my own experiences with implementing the district curriculum. I often wrestled with expectations by parents, administrators and my own tensions from my limited school art experiences. I also couldn't ignore the effects on my teaching because I grew up in a working class family and what this meant for how I viewed my students. Brantlinger (2003) found in her research that teachers who came from working class backgrounds often focused less on the rigors of the academics and more on the social and moral agency of their students. Teachers of affluent background often promulgated a more "academic" agenda, often to continue a particular status quo and hierarchy in social class. Charles Garoian (2002) writes: "In traditional school environments where emphasis is placed on historically and socially determined ideas, images and behaviors, children learn to perform the academic knowledge imparted by their teachers who are also performing it. Exclusively school curricula and the teacher's lesson determine what they say and do" (p. 122). These ideas permeated and colored the ways in which I examined and eventually analyzed the school art curriculums.

To begin I provide an example of the very public curriculum as by the nature of working in a visual arts program. This is influenced by the fact teachers are often asked to put work on display. I then give background information on some of the unique aspects of the curriculum in the district. This follows excerpts from school districts' art curriculum document. From here, I ask the reader to engage in vignettes from each school to explore the central research questions of the project: What does the lens of socioeconomic status tell us about how curriculum functions and unfolds within a given school culture?

Spaces and Places: The Curriculum and Student Art Work on Display From Each School Site

Walking into the local bank I was always mesmerized by the sheer number of pieces of children's art that covered not only the walls, but also the outsides of cubicles, the support beams in the building, and every inch of flat surface that had not already been adorned with some type of image or print. Each year the local bank hosted an art exhibition featuring the student work from each of the elementary schools in the SDMUT (School District in a Midwestern University Town), as well as a few smaller districts in nearby communities. The local Christian schools, and art from homeschooled students were included as well. Each teacher in the school district was allowed to enter fifty pieces for the exhibition.

The flyer sent home describing the show promoted the student creating a piece of work at home, as opposed to artwork created within the school curriculum. When the exhibition was hung, some projects had developed from the "outside" the space of school, versus those done in the structured atmosphere of a school curriculum. Evidence of a school project could be seen through multiple pieces with a similar theme, material or style. As part of my research, I took special note of what pieces were selected and hung from each of my research sites. School One included a wide array of images. There was a somewhat stiffly drawn pony in colored pencil (see Figure 18) and a tiger in markers (see Figure 19) countered with an energetic robot made on cardboard (see Figure 20) with a red sharpie and duct tape. There was also the image of the earth with a handprint (see Figure 21)"stamped" in the middle with the phrase, "Many Friends, One World." Nearby a cartoon looking image of a frog "sat" atop the name LILY spelled out in yellow ribbon with the edged with dainty curls (see Figure 22). Not to mention, a cat saying "Yum, Yum!" (see Figure 23), dancing ballerinas(see Figure 24) and "Bobo the Monkey" (see Figure 25. At School Two the images were finely tuned compositional images of local sports events (see Figure 26), imaginary fairylands (see Figure 27) and

fire breathing dragons (see Figure 28) next to picturesque garden scenes (see Figure 29). There were numerous pet drawings-mostly dogs including one which featured three dogs with an American flag in the background (see Figure 30). On the bottom of the page it read: *United We Stand*. At School Three, I was initially drawn to energetic and colorful paintings of dragons (see Figure 31), highlighted with glitter. There were also portraits of students in Halloween costumes (see Figure 32); winter scenes with glitter glue (see Figure 33) and a series of multicultural projects examining the art of Asian cultures were displayed, including Chinese calligraphy (see Figure 34) done by the fifth and sixth graders. In chatting about the show with the art teacher, I found out all the artwork from School Three were school projects.

Prior to the "opening" of the show, the work was judged by teachers in the district and other artists in the community. Each child received a ribbon for participation. One of the selections from each school would be framed and then hung for one year in local businesses. Artwork was also selected to be featured in a calendar.

I had attended this show even when I had worked for an adjacent district. As part of the local gallery walk, I enjoyed the range of artists featured and delighted in the children's work. I did notice that some schools featured all "classroom" projects, similar to School Three. Many included both classroom and projects created at home while others (often smaller numbers) included only student work done at home. I had slowly discovered a way to increase student participation so it was less centered on my interpretation of curriculum or adult notions of child art making (Kellogg, 1970) to include all work that was done by students at home. I discovered promotion was key along with supplying paper. Showcasing student's work outside curriculum was important-essential. But I felt a tug to show the community the type of curriculum that was occurring in the classroom-especially in an age of accountability. This was fulfilled in another show.

The University Performance Center held a student art exhibition each year with the philosophy of highlighting the school art curriculum in the district. Both art shows offered opportunities for celebration. Music, food and an often-packed space brought families out to celebrate the young artists. It was in these venues, more predominantly the bank show, I could see the influences of curriculum, parents and the child's own "visions and versions"(Eisner, 2002) of what was important to them, what they imagined and their personal aesthetic affinities. There was also the fact the work was in a product form. It was finished, matted and displayed. It was recognized-by children, adults and an organization. I was reminded of the few times when as a child, despite not having a formal art curriculum or even class, I was recognized by my creative energies at home. Which in turn made me think of access to art images, the positives and negatives of student displays and how student's interpretation of being selected.

During Catholic Schools Week each year students would often be asked to create a poster promoting Catholicism. During my 5th or 6th grade year there was a catchy tune playing on T.V. airways via a commercial related to my dad's favorite soda pop…Dr. Pepper. The song went, "I'm a pepper, you're a pepper, wouldn't you want to be a pepper too…" My "brilliant" young circa fifth grade mind changed the little ditto to go like this, "I'm a Catholic, you're a Catholic, wouldn't you want to be a Catholic too…" Now, I wouldn't be belting that song out in public at this point in my life (I still consider myself to be a spiritual person…but Catholicism is in constant question, and in light of the politics surrounding the Catholic church at the moment, I think I need say no more). But I do remember my poster (although I can't remember the illustration) along with the graphic lettering and song receiving a lot of attention. I returned to Brent Wilson's (2008) dialogue on examining the art children do on their own (first site pedagogy) with that which is done at school (second site pedagogy) with those spaces that become a site to where teacher and student create new visions and ideas of visual culture (third site pedagogy). In the space of the art shows, it was interesting to ponder the combination of

first and second site pedagogy to think about what the children found relevant in art making set side by side with what the teachers and curriculum deemed important and essential.

From the lens of socioeconomic status, a few things are important to note. I wondered if the venue of the show inhibited attendance by some families? Both shows were a big production in terms of food, entertainment and number of guests. The bus station was near the bank show and on route to the show in the performing arts center, but this could be time consuming due to number of transfers depending on where one lived. The bank show also had a competitive edge as students hoped to be selected to be in the calendar or to have their work framed. By having a competitive edge, it seemed quite plausible it had an affect on what the students chose to draw. For example, many children created images, which celebrated the seasons with the hope it would be part of the calendar. Also student competitions often bring parent competition and there were occasionally questions about who did more work…the student or the parent? In addition, I picked up subtly that some of the teachers had reservations with the bank show. Some were concerned whether the art show was a tool to recognize and celebrate children's artwork or a tool to promote and market the bank.

The art shows were not the only contributing factor to how the art curriculum unfolded and was interpreted in each of the art rooms. One of the unique components about the position of art educators in the SDMUT is that many teachers work at two schools, often these schools are quite different and afford an opportunity to examine the unique setting of each school and how it contributes to the overall culture of the school community.

The Influence of Spaces and Places: Teachers Working in Two Distinct School Cultures

Perkins Elementary is located in a growing bedroom community near several smaller communities and is short distance from School Two. This is the other school that Ms. L teaches at. Children who attend the school come from a mixture of socioeconomic backgrounds. Perkins Elementary not only has a more diverse population economically-it is also housed in an older facility. There are several new housing developments so the dynamics of the community continue to change, but the heart of the town reflects a more conservative small town with a rural feeling. The town is a marina town and is located near a reservoir and large wooded state park and recreation center. According to the art teacher, children from Perkin's Elementary tend to spend more time in the outdoors and their lived experience reflects this. Students at School Two discuss trips to Chicago, Lake Houses, and overseas trips. Outdoor activities seem to exist around a more rigid and scheduled format. At Perkins Elementary, Ms. L often hears stories related to hunting or fishing. One of her students proudly shared their hunting excursion with grandma and dad. Hunting started with "securing a squirrel" in preparation for a culinary delight. She learned one might grill it but also alternatively make the meal pot roast style.

Even though Perkins Elementary was only a short distance from School Two, Ms. L saw a distinct difference in how children's lives operated. From her vantage point, the students at School Two did seem less focused on the outdoors and have more structured lives. As discussed earlier, School Two is a fairly new development and many who live in the neighborhood are professionals, the wealth is relative new for these families. The neighborhood is not representative of "old" money as Ms. L describes it. The lived experience of what constitutes free time for the students also manifests itself in the type of artwork students create. When students were working on weavings at Perkins Elementary Ms. L saw the children taking more risks and were more experimental with

their work. At School Two she feels students tend to be more conservative with their work. As Ms. L states:

"I sense from the parents that they want the kids to do well in art because they want them to do well in everything. At Perkins (elementary they are) more open to possibility because they are not on the Harvard track, anything is possible, they'll (the parents) foster what the children are interested in" (Translated notes, 2009).

The differences are also evident in the expectations by parents and teachers. When teachers leave the children off for art, they tend to linger more and want to know how the students are doing. At home, the general conception is students at Perkins elementary are disciplined with a heavy hand while at School Two students are put on a pedestal. The descriptions of the two schools caused pause for reflection in terms of concerted cultivation and natural growth as described by Lareau (2003). In terms of entitlement and the child feeling on a pedestal she writes:

Middle class children also learned (by imitation and by direct training) how to make the rules work in their favor" (p. 6). Children often feel comfortable in the role of negotiating and voicing opinions. Lareau noticed in poor and working class families that the parents are "in charge" and that goes for the teacher's role as well. She writes, "Boundaries (in poor and working class families) between adults and children were clearly marked; parents generally used language not as an aim in and of itself but more as a conduit for social life (p. 238-239).

Although this quote is in reference to language acquisition, I continue to use Lareau's work to also examine the type of aesthetics and subject matter that appears in the visual language of children. This, of course is greatly influenced by families, but I also wanted to see how the common curriculum in the district was interpreted and used with Lareau's ideas of concerted cultivation and natural growth. As I pondered my questions in relation to curriculum and a particular aesthetic that may or may not be promoted I reviewed the School District in the Midwestern University Town's (SDMUT)

art curriculum guide. Here I could examine how a common curriculum was enacted in particular school environments. In this case, the three schools I spent a semester in. What follows are several excerpts from the district curriculum. The philosophy of the SDMUT Elementary Visual Art Program:

The School District in the Midwestern University Town Teachers believe that each student is a creating, thinking and responsive being with something significant to contribute to society. Through a variety of art experiences, students build self-esteem, technical skills, perceptual skills and critical thinking skills by making art, studying and appreciating art. Students will build a better understanding of themselves, of history and of cultures. Art education provides students with the tools to communicate visually as well as to analyze and interpret the visual world. We believe that art is essential to each student's education. It confirms the individual's uniqueness, encourages creativity, promotes higher order thinking skills and builds a better understanding of our world.

The SDMUT Visual Arts Curriculum includes studio experiences for all students in grades Kindergarten through sixth with the following media: (listed the same in the curriculum guide)

Drawing	*Painting*	*Printmaking*
Ceramics	*Fiber*	*Mixed Media*
Sculpture		

The visual arts curriculum is organized with a thematic focus for learning for each grade level:

Kindergarten: "I am an Artist"

First/Second: "Self/Others"

Third/Fourth: "Community"

Fifth/Sixth: "I Know…I Wonder"

The visual art Scope and Sequence is organized around five components for each media experience:

Thinking-The big ideas in question format, drawn from the thematic focus. These questions focus the direction and content of visual arts learning.

Processing-The specific skill that children will acquire and practice. These reflect standards and benchmarks.

Learning-The areas of theme content that children will explore, apply and come away with after the lesson.

Vocabulary-The necessary art terms needed for understanding and mastery of the lesson.

Suggested Artists-The list offers possible artists and art groups to use in art lessons to enrich and further understanding of the lesson goals.

Many of the art classrooms in several of the schools within the district worked with multi-age grouping of students. This meant that third and fourth graders would be in one class. The advantage was students would spend two years with the classroom teacher, with the intention of knowing the student better academically and socially. The art curriculum included both 3rd grade and 4th grade suggested activities for students. If they were a combination classroom, the art curriculum used a rotating schedule. The third grade curriculum was used year one in a third and fourth grade combination classroom. The fourth grade curriculum was used for year two of a third and fourth grade combination classroom. To give further back, I have provided some of the suggested art lessons for implementing different mediums. I did see a wide variety of mediums being used within all the art lessons I observed. Many of the suggested activities were addressed, but in an approach facilitated by the art teacher's interests, passion and areas of expertise often in concert with the student's interests and passions as well.

Suggested Painting Activities for Third Grade or Year #1 of Third and Fourth Grade

Rousseau painting-tempera (3-4 weeks)

Color Theory (2 weeks)

Watercolor (1 week)

Brush Technique (1 week)

Paper Weaving-color theory (warm/cool painting)

Fiber

Weaving Pouches-Navajo (5 weeks)

Paper Weavings (6 weeks, including designing paper)

Fourth Grade or Year #2 of Third and Fourth Grade

Painting

Dreams/Symbolism (watercolored pencils and thin markers)-Chagall (3 weeks)

Australian Bark Dot Painting (2-3 weeks)

Abstract painting (objects from the art room)-S. Davis (3 weeks)

Fiber

Weaving Dolls (4 weeks)

Gods Eyes (3-4 weeks)

Paste Paper (1 week)

Vignettes from each school

As I reflected on the formal curriculum, I also thought about how the lens of SES might color my observations in terms of what vignettes and stories I included, but also those which I left out. The questions I had asked each of the administrators and art teachers became revealing in reference to the type of curriculum which was promoted in the school. These questions also highlighted how SES played a role in terms of curriculum development. I asked these specific questions:

1. What is the main focus of the art curriculum at your school?
1. Do you consider the socioeconomic status of your student population when planning curriculum?

Within these questions, I also tried to get a feel for what the parent expected from the art curriculum. This also came about through casual conversation with the teacher, but was also addressed more directly during the interview process. As the research unfolded, I couldn't help but wonder if the curriculum promoted adult notions of what constituted art and Eurocentric models of art making. Where children given opportunities to explore and create from within their own ideas of what it meant to express oneself or be human? What follows are curriculum vignettes from each school, to highlight the lesson design of the art room within each school culture.

School One: Curriculum as Learning Tools and Techniques

As I entered the room, the students were engaged in a couple of activities, some were finishing their weaving and stitchery project, while others began painting. As typical for this class, they were almost completely quiet and were all on task. The directions and expectations were listed on the board, along with examples of the project they were starting. Ms. S typically had lessons run only two to three days. This fit with her own way of working as an artist. She often produced her own chalk pastel or watercolor paintings in a short time frame. The assignment listed on the board was the fish project. This is the project where students painted three fish in tints of blue and then added designs using oil pastels. Here I examine it from a curricular lens, versus the potential for identity marking. These are the directions listed on the board:

1. Complete weaving and stitchery
2. Journal your thoughts on your ideas
3. Line

4. Tint

For the line aspect of their project they were to make as many different types of lines as possible, working to fill a page in their journal before moving on to creating a tint with purple paint on blue construction paper. In the curriculum under *Paining for third and fourth grade* one of the questions listed in the *Thinking Section* asks: How do artists use paint and color in their artwork? The curriculum suggests that in terms or process children should have opportunities to understand warm/cool colors, color families and the use of various brushes. This can be facilitated through abstract painting, dot painting, symbolic painting and the set-up and organization of the painting station. In addition under "learning", students should have opportunities to "expand knowledge of color theory and paint techniques, identifying how paintings are used to communicate ideas, exploring ways of using observation, imagination and emotion in two-dimensions and using and understanding the elements and principles of design in a painting. The teacher developed the idea from a book which she had recently acquired: *The Usborne Complete Book of Art Activities.*

Flipping through the pages, she showed me the "lesson" where the artists created collaged fish using "line paper" and shared the adaptations she made to the lesson for the students. Students had been asked to complete a page of lines in their journal. This meant using pencil to copiously add lines of various sizes and widths from scribble, to zigzag to "castle top lines" to brainstorm a wide variety of choices which would later be transferred to their paint project. When students were ready for the next step, they gathered their own paint from the choices laid out for them- purples, blues and whites were squirted on a paper plate to make different tints of cool colors. Students then painted three different fish bodies; these were then carefully laid out on drying racks where they would await the next step in the process.

On the second day they worked on the project they used oil pastels to give their fish a personality and more detailed body. Here they were directed to use cool color pastels to add line designs on the contour of the body. The originally line sketches in their journal were used to inspire ideas for the fish bodies. Ms. S also directed much independence in the project in terms of display. Students were expected to glue their three separate images on to a large white "frame" for display. She showed them how to start with the image that would be placed in the middle so they would be evenly spaced. She described it as "eye balling" it followed closely by the question, "What does and artist always do when they are done with their work? Sign it on the bottom corner.

Within the structure of the lesson, students also looked for possibilities around their aesthetic choices. Some students asked if they could decorate around the fish and Ms. S answered, "Yes! -If you don't decorate so much you lose your shapes." The expectation was to finish the fish, mat them and then journal when on what you liked or didn't like about the project by the end of class. As the project came to a close, I glanced at Ella's journal. It read: " I made a fish with paint and pastels. Then I made a line a line of 3 on a white piece of paper" (See Figure 35).

School One: Viewpoints and Observations of the Unfolding Lessons

My first examination of the lesson would conclude that the lesson was more technique based. Students learned vocabulary pertinent to color mixing by making tints with white paint and cool colors. The teacher introduced this process, but then there was a hands off approach as students busily mixed the "new" colors on their own. The creation of lines to "personalize" the body was also an exercise in recognizing how pattern can facilitate a particular aesthetic. Here the students had an opportunity to see how the use of repetition through repeated color use and subject matter created unity in the work. When asked what the main focus of the art curriculum was in the school Ms. S

shared she used the School District Curriculum, adding, "which is what we are suppose to do. It's excellent-it's very open ended." This fit with her choice to use the idea of creating the fish. She had just purchased the *Usborne Complete Book of Art Activities* and it became an inspiration for her lesson. At the same time, it fit district expectations on skills and processes related to implementing paint into the curriculum.

When I asked the principal what was the focus of the curriculum he responded," I would guess, just by going in to the visit the classroom every now and again that to expose kids to a variety of genres…" I saw this as well in the time I was conducting research. Children worked with clay, painting, drawing, fiber and mixed media. This also supported the district expectations. Ms. S, also made sure lessons were less teacher directed. Although the students had less opportunity for choice making in the previous project, there were also many lessons which facilitated more autonomy on the part of the students.

School One: Unfolding Curriculum Choice Making and SES

Scattered on the tables were boxes of colored yarn to coordinate with the colors of each table. Each table also had a caddy filled with scissors, a ruler, pencils and tape. These were also colored coded. Strips of yarn and burlap were strewn out among the tables and children intently used needles to run vertical lines through the burlap along the outer edges. In the center of the burlap, many children had drawn an image with chalk that would later be stitched.

One of the ways in which Ms. S structured her lessons was to provide "mini" lessons throughout the class period. The directions and expectations along with an example created by Ms. S would be hung on the board. At this same location an old wicker rocker and rug created a welcoming gathering place where periodically

throughout the class Ms. S would call the students up for directions, reminders or a demonstration.

For example, during the stitchery project Ms. S quickly asked the students to gather on the rug. They quickly and silently came up front ready to work. She used this time to demonstrate how to stitch a drawn image on the burlap, checking to make sure it isn't going through on the other side. She showed them how to do - - - - - - stitches.

Then students would rapidly return to their seats to finish were the left off, or to start the next aspect of the project. The class always ran very smoothly and students seemed to have few questions. Ms. S was very attentive to noticing where students were in terms of process and had an acute sense of when to gather them together for reviews and reminders. This structured methodology fit with the way the art room was set up. In the room the sinks are colored coded with a rectangular box above each of the sinks, so students know which sink to use for clean up. In addition, when selecting yarn color, each color-coded table "hosted" yarns in those different shades and hues. For example, the yellow table (marked by a yellow colored sign above the table) had a large box lid filled with yarn in various colors of yellow. In terms of the structure around the stitching students were expected to complete at least two different types of stitches to learn the technique. However, when it came to the middle of the piece, Ms. M added, "I used to be particular about what was in the middle, but I told them to do something they liked."

From the curriculum perspective, Ms. S operates within a structured yet flexible approach.

School One: Interpretations of Curriculum through the Lens of SES

After examining the main focus of the curriculum through a description and conversation, I then looked at to see if SES was considered when planning curriculum. In terms of adaptations made for SES, I received conflicting responses. This in turn also

had contradictions to the principal's response. Here are excerpts from my field notes with Ms. S in a conversation we had on adaptations in the curriculum because of the socioeconomic status of the students:

I asked, "Have you ever adapted your curriculum to meet the changing dynamics of the student population?"

"Oh Yeah-Um-we are always adapting-even just the size of the class causes adaptations." She discussed how in the past she had students attend her with severe profound behavior disorders so she made sure to have adaptations so students could be successful. I was curious if any of the adaptations were due to socioeconomic status so I added, "Adaptations for SES?" She shared the following:

"Yes, I suppose-some kids come from school districts with no art and they are starting from the beginning" For example she shared teaching them to cut and paint. Our dialogue continued with me wondering if she considered SES when planning curriculum. Here she shared, "Not really". This response made sense when I asked the following:

"Do you believe the socioeconomic status of your students and families alters the way you teach?"

Her response again was to the negative, "No-pretty stable population."

The same set of questions with the principal elicited a different response. I began by asking, "Do you consider the SES of your student population when planning curriculum or in-services: Is that something you have had to be cognizant of with the changes in (demographics) at your school…looking at free and reduced numbers?"

He shared that it is something "we have started to look into". He mentioned that in planning activities for the school community they have become more cognizant of costs involved for families. When planning activities that "we are doing hear is to be aware of the burden of fund raisers trying to have a balance of things that parents can come to for free or a relatively low cost" and in terms of curriculum "I think it is important for kids to be able to experience things I think experience is a wonderful

teacher…so when we look at things like field trip or things like that asking for donations to help or having scholarship type of funds."

Because of my .48 appointment, I often go to the art teachers in-services, but often don't make it to the school wide meetings. I ask for examples of the other in-services available to teachers, so I am up to date on how the needs of students concerning SES are being addressed. This is what he shares with me:

"I think we attempt to, whether directly or indirectly, talk about students who tend to achieve lower on the skill based assessment so talking about how to address those needs and also spending time on how to work with the families and maybe that doesn't come out as much in in-service setting but maybe in a team meeting setting or things like that where we are trying to work together to help the student or support the family and what do we do and how does this work…and even comes out in those settings even more so."

School One was in a unique situation as the demographics of the school had been slowly changing over the course of several years. A mostly white collar community and neighborhood which also served as residences for many graduate students, the use of free and reduced lunch funding by the parents may have been considered a more short term need. However, the influx of students from the Chicago area has also begun to have an impact on School One. This was quite different than School Two, here the population of the student body remained stable and more homogenous.

School Two: Interpretations of Curriculum as Learning

Tools and Techniques

Hanging subtly but importantly, the words ALL CHILDREN ARE ARTISTS, was displayed on the wall adjacent to the door to the art room. It was a room I always loved to visit. Even on a snowy day, beautiful light streamed in from the large window which reflected the snowy playground and iridescent light of the powdery dusting of

snow which had occurred earlier in the day. From the ceiling, paper cranes hung in vibrant colors. The wingspan of butterflies and dragonflies reached to the corners of the drop ceiling panels and the room felt alive with a calm creative energy. Like many art rooms, paints and brushes made their place near the sink, paintings filled the dry racks, and bulletin boards displayed the topics of the most current lessons.

This room was unique from School One and School Two in that it was designed as an art room. On this particular day, my attention was drawn to a large winter day mural made by first and second grade students. The mural had a natural storytelling quality, with houses of various sizes surrounded by trees and children playing the gamut of snowy day activities; snowboarding, skiing, ice-skating and sledding. This lesson portrayed the philosophy of Ms. L well. She believed in giving students the necessary tools to be successful and them "letting them be to create." She also found the narrative quality of the work important, and in the majority of her lessons students were asked to connect the work and use of symbols to their own lives. Outside the walls of the art room she had taken it upon herself to gather images to hang in the halls. Walking the halls I would see poster prints by Grant Wood, Renoir, Claude Monet and Faith Ringgold.

At School One, Ms. S had discussed the importance of the sequence of the lessons in order to provide independent skills in the children. This was also the case at School Two. On one particular day, students were weaving using hot and cold colored paper they had painted in previous classes. They were instructed with the patterning technique indicative of weaving (over, under, over, under…) and also were shown how to weave in other materials such as ribbons, rick rack and raffia. Ms. S had also done paper weavings with her students. This lesson eventually led to yarn weavings (see Figure 36). In the district students often did small yarn weavings of some sort in third or fourth grade, often using cardboard looms. Then in 5th or 6th grade students would weave on larger wooden looms.

As in Ms. S's room, the students are very independent and there were very few reviews of directions once they began. I only observed the last working days of this project. Vocabulary on weft and warp along with books on weaving were present in the room. In order to facilitate more creativity in the project, the students had each designed a warm color and cool color expressive paper before they even began to weave. Students filled the paper with cray pas or crayon prior to painting to implement more personality into their work. When it was time to weave, Ms. L was much more systematic in her directions. She would always have them gather around the table for directions, showing them step-by-step how to proceed. In this case, she had them use the ruler to mark a "cut zone" and then continued to use the ruler to mark approximately one-inch widths to create the warp "threads". Then using a similar technique they marked the other paper so they could cut strips (one at a time) to become the weft of the project. Supplies were always well organized on tables, this time pencils, scissors and tape. They would use masking tape to secure the weft pieces. At the front of the room, was a large rug area where the younger aged children gathered during class. With the older grades, this area became host to novelty supplies related to the current project. During this project, students could select beautiful ribbon, colored raffia, sequins or other embellishments to enhance their weavings.

Ms. L did see this as a more structured lesson, but it afforded opportunities to learn a skill. In addition, it would help them be successful in subsequent lessons. This lesson fed into the yarn weavings students would do later on, and discussed in previous chapters. Again, the more technical lessons were balanced with lessons that allowed more choice making and creativity.

School Two: Interpretations of Curriculum as Self-Expression

Another thing I loved about walking into School Two, was the large glass cabinets filled with the creative work of children. The whimsical creatures welcomed me over several months, which made their home in the glass class. Beneath the florescent painted creatures of all shapes and sizes were the backbones of the creatures. The animals were constructed out of toilet tubes, golf tees, small jewelry boxes and an assortment of other small cardboard components along with beads and small wood pieces. As mentioned earlier, Anson describes his as a Libbot, a lizard and bird robot combination. There was also the "three legged three eyed, um two faced porcupine. As was the case of most conversations I caught during the "building of cities" students used image and story to construct the work. Absent of the dialogue, the pieces would not have been as meaningful to the viewer.

On a rare occasion, I was also able to catch sight of children in free time.

"Would you like to meet Bob?" and up close and personal, I see a piece of 81/2 by 11 typing paper that has been transformed into "Bob". A smiling face peers out from the center of the paper and four flabby and flimsy limbs extended from each corner of the paper. As the student stands next to the dry rack, he informs me, "Bob's going down the waterslide."

I use this opportunity to ask him, "Do you like free time in art?" With out saying a word, he gives me an excited nod of his head.

"Do you get free time a lot?" I ask.

This time a quick nod from side to side indicates no.

The noise level is different on this day; it is louder yet the students are very active and engaged. Some students are finishing their weavings, and they seem to view me as a helper. Many students ask for rulers or to spell words on valentines they are creating.

The creation of Bob has sparked interest by others; “Hi My Name is Jim Bob Fred Pants” speaks another transformed white typing sheet of paper.

School Two: Interpretations of the Unfolding Lessons:

Philosophy of Teacher and SES

The excitement over free time as well as the very strong narratives shared in the construction of their city scene images highlights Ms. L’s philosophy. One of the things she shared with me during the interview was how she rethought her curriculum when she moved from a school with a more at risk population to School Two. One of the most important things she had to think about was “I had to figure out how I was going to fit into their life here.” She strongly desired for the students to see a connection between art and their lives. When I asked her how she thought children viewed art at her school she shared this:

“It is important to them…I am always pleasantly surprised that it is important to them…I really think …” (next part hard to hear) it is place they fully get to be themselves.” She also adds how they feel complete awe when they attend the art show at school.

Her administrator shares the same view. She views art as fitting into the whole curriculum and sees it as important in young children’s lives. This is first and foremost, but she also views art as a means to building community. (Transcribed notes from Ms. L, 2009). Both Ms. L and her principal share very similar philosophies on the role of art education in student’s lives. Her administrator has this to say when I ask her how the Ms. L sees art education in the lives of her students:

“I am trying to think of a simple way to say, she sees everyone as an artist and that art is not just a certain type of medium or just in the art room but it is in everywhere and everything and part of life. I think she also really tries to help students learn that there is truly a curriculum that she follows and a very intentional plan but yet it is flexible and

open ended so that students have the opportunity to just develop their own understanding and own appreciation of what they think of as art."

Also interesting to note in my conversation with the principal is her interpretations of art as a community-building tool. Here she feels the parents have a specific view that art is a product and should have a specified purpose versus an element of expression. The parents have certain expectation that some projects in the art room are made to support the school. For example, making cards for a fundraiser during the holiday time. After sharing this example she remarks, "I also know that parents place a high level of emphasis on academics so they appreciate the art aspect but yet it is not their main focus". Ms. L is very firm to state "but what I am not, is I am not an enrichment for their curriculum, I absolutely refuse to be that." For example, I don't do an artifact to go with the social studies lesson…it is concept you bring into the art curriculum (from the other subject matters). For Ms. L her focus in the curriculum is to really make ties to *their* lives. When I asked what do you focus on when planning curriculum she shares, "Their life experiences I really do look at…I've always done that…"

One of the things that her principal touches on, also fits with Ms. L's observations that many of her students believe art should "look" a certain way. They often want to know exactly "how to do something." Ms. L certainly sets up the room as a space for self-expression, but there are also adult expectations that push back on these ideas. For example her principal shares this when I ask how she thinks children view art in the school:

"I believe it is influenced by the current art teacher that we have so I am going to answer a two fold way. I think that a lot of our kids come into us with an idea that art should be a certain way because that is the way they view their life; it is structured and activity orientated and a lot of things that happen in their life is done to them or for them. So I see a kinda connection, nothing scientific but a connection in the way they view any

learning situation in our school that they make it fit the mold of what they think it is supposed to be like. For example in math, if it is just kind of opened ended problem solving they have a difficult time saying where do I start, aren't you going to tell me exactly what I am supposed to do it? I see some kind of connection (in art) where there is this open ended opportunity to express themselves to figure out how to solve a problem and are kids, they kind of struggle with that even if they are high academically they just kind of struggle with Oh I can take initiative and figure out my own way to do this…She then adds the art teacher really "helps guide them and opens door so that they understand art is what it is to you…"

The ways in which the curriculum is interpreted by the parents of School Three aligns with both Annette Lareau's work (2003) and Ellen Brantlinger's (2003) interpretation SES and the child and school. Lareau notes the more structured lives of children in middle class and upper middle class families and what this means in terms of students understanding of learning. This has a direct relationship to Brantlinger's examination of mothers influence on the curriculum. She discusses that often mothers of middle class and upper middle class children promote a progressive education for their children when in actuality their actions show they prefer more traditional school structure. When Brantlinger interviewed mothers to look at how they positioned curriculum this is one relationship between mothers and curriculum that she discovered:

Mothers often concluded their own progressive statements by adding that they were based on impractical or impossible ideals given the constraints of local circumstances or particular conditions of the times. Mothers clearly wanted to avoid a pushy, selfish, or elitist image. Yet children's school success surfaced as foremost on their minds. As Brantlinger states, "Similar to the findings of Ames and Archer (1987), those mothers' pragmatic desires were for academic push and measurable achievement in curriculum that has clear-cut status definers" (2003, p. 76).

I can't make a conclusion about this in terms of the mothers' role in School Two. I do, however, find the responses to parent's expectation of the art room curriculum and students' desire for "knowing" desired outcomes interesting in light of Brantlinger's findings. As educators, I believe it serves us well to examine the overt and covert ways in which desires and intentions by others drive the students relationship to learning.

Interpretations of the Unfolding Lessons: The Impact of Classroom Management

What did these snippets into the daily unfolding of the art room have to say about the main focus of the curriculum? One of the similarities between School Two and Three that I had a direct impact on curriculum was the ways in which the students worked and the general classroom management. As the teachers shared, at both school students were less "needy" socially and academically, which afforded the teachers opportunities to spend less time on matters related to classroom discipline. At School One a school wide "management" system was in place. I would visit the school on Monday and often would hear the cheers associated with students receiving the coveted trophy for being an outstanding class. Since there were several sections in each grade level, one combination class (K, $1^{st}/2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}/4^{th}$ and 5^{th} and 6^{th}) from each grade level was selected each month. This was based on performance in the area of specials-Art, Music and PE. Students received up to four points, depending on how they did with coming into class, work time, clean up and line up. The points were tallied at the end of the month to select the winner. The class I observed always did quite well and had received the trophy several times. Ms. S and the classroom teacher were quite playful in supporting and "bribing" the students to be the "winners". The classroom teacher even offered to do cartwheels if they reached a certain number of points.

At the same time, if the class struggled they showed their disappointment, even if the slightest infraction (i.e. talking in line) occurred. Ms. S admitted that sometimes she

was a “nag”, giving them clean-up reminders, however, this was rarely observed and Ms. S needed very few reminders about clean –up. The students respected the high expectations and would quickly alter behaviors, or use group voice to encourage classmates who were making negative choices.

Expectations for student behavior are also quite prevalent throughout the school. I saw many signs, one, which stated “Take Pride in Your School”, and another, which read, “Please hang up your coat and book bag.” The principal made himself very visible during “high traffic” parts of the day. I often left the school as the buses were pulling up. Almost daily, I would see him mingling with families outside as students shuffled off to carpools, bus rides, or short walks home.

At School Two, the use of a school wide discipline plan (that would eventually be used district wide) caused some tension. The use of the Positive Behavior System or PBS which was being piloted at a few schools in town (such as School Three) often was implemented due to the challenges the school was experiencing. This centered on encouraging positive choice making in school or to help combat a perceived notion that skills related to self-control were less enforced in the home environment or that the home environment was less structured.

As School Two, meetings were often held for teachers about the new system. The PBS system was based on a reward system where students who exhibited positive behaviors (such as the teacher “spying” someone helping another student) would receive a ticket. This ticket could then be turned in for prizes. Classes were also rewarded for accumulating the most tickets. Ms. L, at School Two was hesitant about the program because it rewarded students for something they were expected to do. She felt the home environment of her students prepared them for school and many had a very strong pre-school background. Many had attended a Montessori pre-school and had been socialized for school.

Even briefly traversing the management styles of the classrooms causes pause for reflection in the role of the school environment of the child. If we take another glance at the art curriculum document we are reminded that belief about education from the school districts' perspectives is *that each student is a creating, thinking and responsive being with something significant to contribute to society.* Ellen Brantlinger pulls from Beane: "The goal of education for progressives is to promote positive social change based on a student-center pedagogy that will result in an appreciation for democracy, dignity, and diversity for all individuals in the educational system (cited in Brantlinger, 2003, p. 173) How then do curriculums create opportunities for students to build community with self, others and the larger human community? This was certainly an area Ms. C wrestled with at School Three as she balanced the district curriculum and art room pedagogy with the diverse needs of her student population.

School Three: Curriculum and Multiculturism

"Is this library, because she (referring to the librarian) talks a lot." shares a student as Ms. C brings a lesson on Australian Dot paintings to a close. Ms. C is quick to respond, sharing with them that artists do research, and the first day of the lesson is about spending more time learning things. "My job as a teacher is to teach you things, even in art we use books." Despite some resistance from students, this project developed from the suggested painting activities in the curriculum for year two of the third and fourth grade class.

Ms. C holds up a map of Australia to explain the origins of dot paintings. Ms. C had brought many resources into the lesson, I believe she is trying to "paint" a picture of the origin and influences of the Aboriginal art. Even with a planned lesson, the responses from the students are not always what the teacher might have expected. As she shows a photograph of an Aboriginal man, children seem unable to control themselves. Laughter erupts from several of the children. The image shows an older Aboriginal man with a

painted face and a stick piercing his nose. One child adds (my paraphrased notes), "I saw someone at the store with something like that (referencing the stick in the nose) and he was white." It seems during my observation the photograph provoked a need for dialogue and conversation on how one views "other". Ms. C is quick to say if someone looks different it doesn't mean we laugh, it just means it is something we are less familiar with.

Students then look at two dot paintings to compare and contrast of the images, providing good insights about what they see. She explains that they will eventually pick out an animal from Australia to use as the subject matter for their work. She shows them a packet they will all have to use as a reference. It is filled with black and white photocopies, and she mentions that she wishes they were in color. As she is explaining they will use an animal from Australia, one student chimes in, like a camel? She continues with the lesson.

Ms. C also explains that even thought they won't get to paint for a while she reminds them the packet is a motivator. Holding up the images she shares, "You don't have to do what you see here-you can do your own thing". Throughout the lesson she is always cognizant of classroom management. She pauses to compliment a child for "…meeting my expectations" and the student receives a ticket. "I am going to talk for quite a bit of class today…" and then you will have time to work on your symbols. Ms. C further discusses how the lesson is going to unfold. She explains they will watch a video she thinks is "pretty good" next week. Then she reads an Australian Folk Tale called *Rainbow Bird*. Tayshawn comes in when the lesson is almost to a close. During the last part of class, students are given a practice sheet to explore the symbols used in the bark paintings. Students are asked to draw the symbols from the sheet. Ms. C reminds them that today they are going to draw the symbols and next week they will have a chance to draw the animals.

When I return the next week, students are working on their final drawings and a guest teacher (substitute) is in the classroom. I find my times for writing field notes are limited, as I take on the role of teacher. Spread out at the tables, the students have large 9x12 light brown construction paper and some have begun to draw their animals on with pencils and erasers. I see a lot of erasing, much chitter chatter and a bit of a frustration across faces. The guest teacher is an older gentleman with a white and gray beard, he seems warm and friendly, a long snake of tickets draped around his neck. He stands in the center of the tables or walks around from table to table. He repeatedly reminds the students to get to work and shares with me "This is a tough group."

I begin to help a student draw a frog, showing them how to look at the edges and create a contour line. Many students begin to gather around me. I feel a bit like a cartoonist at the fair. Eager children ask if I can draw for them next. I explain I will show them some "tips and tricks"…but they have to draw the animal themselves (See Figure 21). When I have a moment to talk with the substitute, he tells me he is a professor of science and has his PHD from Missouri. He came to Iowa so his daughter would be near her family while she attended medical school. I get a sense he has changed his dreams so his daughter might realize hers. From the onset of the lesson, I can't help but think about all the ways in which the students positioned "other" and how they have been positioned in turn.

School Three: Curriculum and Self Expression

Towards the end of my visits at School Three I arrive in the art room with a very warm and cheery welcome. Many students chime in "Mrs. Wunder!!" It is a beautiful day outside and the hallway even feels light and cheery. After I park, I have a bit of a walk and often find myself walking through the grass. I am anxious to feel the soft earth beneath my feet as opposed to the hard surface of the sidewalk. The long hall to the classroom allows me a chance to take in how many "tickets" are filling the window and

to glance at the student artwork in the halls. It is becoming sparse as people prepare for the end of the school year.

Today, the students are working on a lesson that has a personal connection. They have received their anxiously awaited clay portraits and are adding wire to the top with beads. Many students want me to photograph their work. They are excited about their projects-the task consists of adding wire to the top and then stringing beads to create a decorative "handle" by which it can hang on a wall. Many finish with twenty minutes still left in class. They grab their visual art journals and many begin to draw. Across the room, one boy (who was removed from class) stands at the door. When I ask him what is going on, he tells me he can't do what he wants. He is given many chances to come back to the room and he eventually decides to go and talk to the principal.

One girl intently draws in her journal. The lines of the markers forming a gecko and she creates a SSSS sounds. She tells me she likes animals and had a rabbit named Thumper. She shares with me that she is trying to sweet talk her parents into getting a Chi Wawa or a gerbil.

"How do you sweet talk them?" I ask.

"I keep asking them…." I try to wear them down but it doesn't work" (Field Notes, May 2009)

She informs me it is especially hard with her dad (to wear him down). Her dad lost a pet when he was little and doesn't want dog hair in the house.

I enjoy this time to hear their desire and wishes on a personal level. I also use this time to reflect on how the curriculum has transpired at School Three.

School Three: Interpretations of the Unfolding Curriculum

Beyond using the suggested activities and philosophy of the school district curriculum, I found Mrs. C also made sure to create a space in the art room where students could make and take things. From Valentine Day cards to Mother's Day

projects, she recognized the children might not always have opportunities to purchase gifts. The art room space acted a place where children could make meaningful work because it would be shared with others. This type of sharing was not just in dialogue about the work itself, but the object as a representation of relationships often between family members. The work had personal relevance because it was meant for others.

It is interesting to think about "other" in terms of how children viewed work when Ms. C brought in a multiculturalism lesson. Multicultural education can often be taught at a surface level where children are exposed to other cultures, emulating the art of a particular place without a full understanding of the diverse and multifaceted nuances that make a particular culture. What can often be lost in a surface level "exposure" lesson are the opportunities for a dialogical classroom setting (see Zander, 2005) where students can engage in conversation that is open and reflective on how they "see" or know a particular place, group or culture. It is also within multiculturism education that children are given opportunities to learn sensitivity and empathy in the way individuals or a group may be positioned because of race, culture, economic standing, or gender. Children understand the importance of discussing themselves and other, even if said in a manner by which adults might read it differently. One boy had shared this while working, you have to be weird in the world or it would all be the same…someone else chimed in if you weren't weird the world would be creepy.

I thought about the ways in which a lesson on Aboriginal art certainly exposes a group of children to the art and people they may be less familiar with. In a global and pluralistic world it seems reasonable to teach children about the diverse world around them. I also wondered, what would happen if students at School Three had opportunities to use art making to discuss issues which "surrounded them" more in their daily lives. Sheng Kuan Chung (2008) discussed the importance of an issues based art education (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2004; Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002) which involves "a process of critical questioning that teaches students to actively examine prejudicial social conditions

and to reflect upon cultural attitudes, beliefs, and values manifested in particular aesthetic practices such as advertising and popular media programming" (p. 22) "Social issues-based art education emphasizes the actuation of human agency through the examination and reconstruction of one's personal and social experience" (Kuan Chung, p. 22). I thought about what might happen if when looking at the image of the Aboriginal man, what would happen if Ms. C had asked why they think it is funny or why it mattered that a similar piercing had been seen on a white man. This classroom story is an example of the ways in which curriculum must function in a more transparent and more flexible realm. Students bring complex backgrounds, stories, and experiences with them to school. Lesson development must act in concert with the students; this often means the exact path of how students might enter into a study of other groups of people, or discuss salient social issues which surround them, is often unpredictable. Ms. C certainly thought about her students' needs as she created lessons. She worked very hard to create a community in the art room and allowed students an opportunity to be expressive in their work. Stories certainly emerged as students created. As Maxine Greene (2001) states,

"Creation does not imply a making of something out of nothing. It has to do with reshaping, renewing the materials at hand, very often the materials of our own lives, our experiences, our memories" (Greene, 2001, p. 96).

Maxine Greene's ideas area reminder of what curriculum should function around in order to create meaningful experiences for children…so they can tell their stories and "reshape" and "renew" their lives.

School Three: Curriculum and SES?

As Mrs. C reflected on the needs of her student population this had direct impact on her curricular choices. The class sizes were small because of the high needs of the students, but also because the families were more transient. As Ms. C explained, the classes could be quite needy. In addition, students could show anger more and fights

would often break out. A behavior interventionist was one staff member. During several of my visits the principal was called to the art room to act as a neutral liaison to help solve concerns. Students responded well to receiving tickets and trinkets for positive behavior, but often this method seemed to hit the surface level instead of addressing real issues and concerns of the students.

I often felt this when working at the homeless shelters. Students seemed to "hunger" for material goods because they lacked so many basics in their life. Some also expected things because they were conditioned to survive through the donations of others. When Ms. C compared this aspect of her job at School Three to working in the other school a short distance away, this was the component which could be most daunting. At times, managing behavior made it difficult to address each aspect of the curriculum because she spent a considerable amount of time creating a positive community.

At her other school, Harkin School, which is under ten miles away, students came from predominantly middle class families. Here she had larger classes, usually around thirty, but felt she had less management concerns. Squabbles often were centered on "small" concerns like pencils not having "tip" erasers. There were similarities too. Ms. C felt students at both schools felt safe in the art room, liked coming to art, and loved to express themselves.

One element that drove the curriculum at School Three was "testing" the lessons at Harkin School. Ms. C was very concerned that students feel successful with the projects in the art room. She was especially attentive to this at School Three, so she shared how she was always very cautious and thoughtful in her lesson designing. She felt students often struggled academically or in general needed more positive experiences to draw from. "…Because there are so many melt-downs-but not related to school." During my interview I asked her if she every changed the lesson due to SES and I

wondered if she varied the lesson because the demographics of the two were quite different. I asked,

"Do you see a difference in how you present lessons, in outcomes?"

"I do see a difference, I think at both schools the kids love art and they know to do their best work… I think with more life experience, my kids at my other school having more opportunity to travel with their family…makes a difference."

She also shared that she noticed a difference in outcomes. This involves not putting firm due date for projects. She prefers an open timeline because it often takes her more time to present lessons or for students to complete the project. I ask, "Can you give you an example [of what you mean] by different outcomes?"

"Well different because of a number of reasons, different because of behaviors, difference because of actual abilities. If I give a big packet on Egyptian life it might take longer, we might take turns reading…sometimes I will scale a lesson back, it is not because I have different expectations but sometimes reading levels…it's just different, I don't have as many disruptions at my other school, even though my classes are twice as big…for a number of reasons it is very different."

As we discuss the impact on SES, I ask if there are any considerations given to SES when planning the curriculum. Ms. C is most offended by the fact she has such a smaller budget for School Three than the other school she works at in the district. As she shares, "I feel like these kids deserve the same opportunities if not more then some of the other schools where kids have some more advantages…"

This question seemed to cause contradictions in response to how SES is considered in the curriculum. In the end she answered, "… um so I would say no but I think but you have to but I don't consciously do it." From my vantage points her words and actions were not congruent. Although she may not consciously "do it" (consider the SES of her students when planning curriculum), it seems evident she certainly does whether one would argue consciously or unconsciously. In the end, as she considers the

choices she makes on what to teach and how to teach it, the presence of the very unique art room culture made up of diverse student interests, abilities and stories can't help but be considered. This is done with what I see as the constant push and pull between the adult centered ideals of what constitutes meaningful curriculum with the wishes and desires of the students in the classroom. Ms. C's principal highlighted this when I interviewed prior to completing my research in the school. Kerry Freedman (2003), writes in support of a postmodern curriculum where this push and pull between varying ideals operates:

> Curriculum could be seen as a collagelike combination of information-like other aspects of life-which is necessarily ambiguous and suggestive of multiple meanings. It is a vital part of lived experience. We put it together as if telling a story or creating painting-to make internal sense-but it is necessarily ambiguous and can never exactly reproduce ideas in the professional field (pp. 110-111).

The varying responses by teachers and principals at each of the schools, is a reminder that the curriculum should truly act as transparent mixture of layers, representative of all who hold a stake in what they believe children should know and do. I asked Ms. B, the school principal, if she considered the SES status of her student population when planning curriculum. She shared that first and foremost you think about the needs of your students. SES is part of that, but more importantly is the needs of the individual child. She shared that one of the discussion points that has come up in staff meetings is the possibility of home visits, because the goal of conference attendance is 95%, and they are not there yet. One of the things (which she said so beautifully) is that when you go into the homes you do not bring a cultural bias but a thoughtful way of understanding their home, realizing (very deeply) that is the child's home, this is where they come from and what they know. I shared how being a parent has made me more cognizant of the story each child brings to school and Ms. B continued discussing how when we connect to their home lives and their (I would say culture and unique world)

then we can make connections to the text (responses to reading/writing projects in school). As Mrs. B concluded, "You don't want to frame their home as a deficit model."

Reflections

Most of us cannot do a great deal about the macroenvironment. There is not that much we can do about the wealth of the society we live in, or even about the institutions in which we work. We can, however, gain control over the immediate environment and transform it so that it enhances personal creativity

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery of Invention.

From a practical research lens I think I could conclude at each of the schools, the personal decisions around curriculum align well with the district curriculum. Projects emphasize using a variety of media and the lessons are technique based but also allow for autonomy by giving students opportunities for choice making. Building self-esteem through art also was an important component. Ella, Charlie and Tayshawn all had a positive experience in terms of art/education, albeit some in ways both "inside and outside" the official school curriculum. Beyond these elements, I believe the stories of the classroom and the curriculum have much to remind us as educators.

It is noteworthy to return to the words of Dewey as we examine the ways curriculum functions within the current emphasis on testing. Former Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch, recently shared that her positive views on the NCLB have changed. She worries about the competitive business model that has been taken up within school districts, due to fear of losing state and federal funding if schools do not meet the expected yearly progress. She believes what we need in schools are places that function more like families. Dewey writes in *The Child and Curriculum and the School and Society* (1956), his concerns of the "old education". "…its passivity of attitude, its mechanical massing of children, its uniformity of curriculum and method. Stating that the center of gravity is outside the child may sum it up. It is in the teacher, the textbook, anywhere and everywhere you please except in the immediate instincts and activities of the child himself" (p. 34). During this time period Dewey saw a change coming to

education. "…the child becomes the sun about which the appliances of education revolve; he [she] is the center about which they are organized" (p. 34). Although his words are written in 1956, American education seems to have an ever-swinging pendulum. What educators pushed against then isn't so different with what educators and the public push against today: Accountability, yet at the same time openness to the *student* learning.

The art room is conduit for energized connections between the child and experience. The curriculum becomes a foundation by which the education of the child unfolds. This of course cannot be divorced from the life of the child. What I offer here is nothing new, but I do believe the expressive stories and engaged narratives of the children in this/my story is a vibrant example of not forgetting that teaching can never be completely delineated by hard and fast standards. As Eisner discusses, "No professional curriculum designer can know the details or specifics of individual classrooms or the needs of particular children. The person closest to the situation-the teacher-does know and hence is in the position to make the sorts of adjustments that are needed to suit the local circumstances" (2002, p. 149). In the same discussion, I whole-heartedly agree with Eisner's discussion on the use of standards and objectives within the school curriculum. He reminds us that certainly having intended outcomes is important, but one of the beauties, which lie in art education, is the "encouragement of improvisation and the cultivation of a personal rendering of one's ideas" (p. 160). He further adds that this means art education efforts do not always "lend themselves to the kind of predictability that is inherent in an objectives-orientated approach to curriculum" (p. 160). I felt as a researcher I was able to see this, to touch the tangible lives children wanted to share in their work. To be present fully in what their stories might reveal to us. I felt this because to a certain degree I could step back a bit from my identity of teacher. Instead, I felt a welcomed participator in what students were wrestling with, what was important to them and what they wondered about. Here the lesson plan needed to act like a GPS system. As

I have traversed a new part of the country, I have taken many wrong turns. The GPS is quick to say "recalculating, recalculating" and with the amazement of satellite and 21st century technology it quickly reroutes my trip. It gives me the knowledge I need to get where I want to go, but it let's me decide the course.

As teachers, we must allow our students to choose paths, and we then must recalculate the curriculum to meet their needs. As Csikszentmihalyi (1996) shares, this is the environment *we* can control. The weight of how SES affects students lives cannot be taking lightly, we cannot completely "solve" the disparities of wealth distribution in this country. Teachers though, can be quite powerful when they create a space where stories emerge, not just the narratives that accompany their lessons, but opening up curriculum to talk about the students lived worlds. We must always be willing to "recalculate, recalculate."

Figure 17. School One: Horse drawn on loose leaf paper with colored pencil.

Figure 18. School One: Tiger with marker.

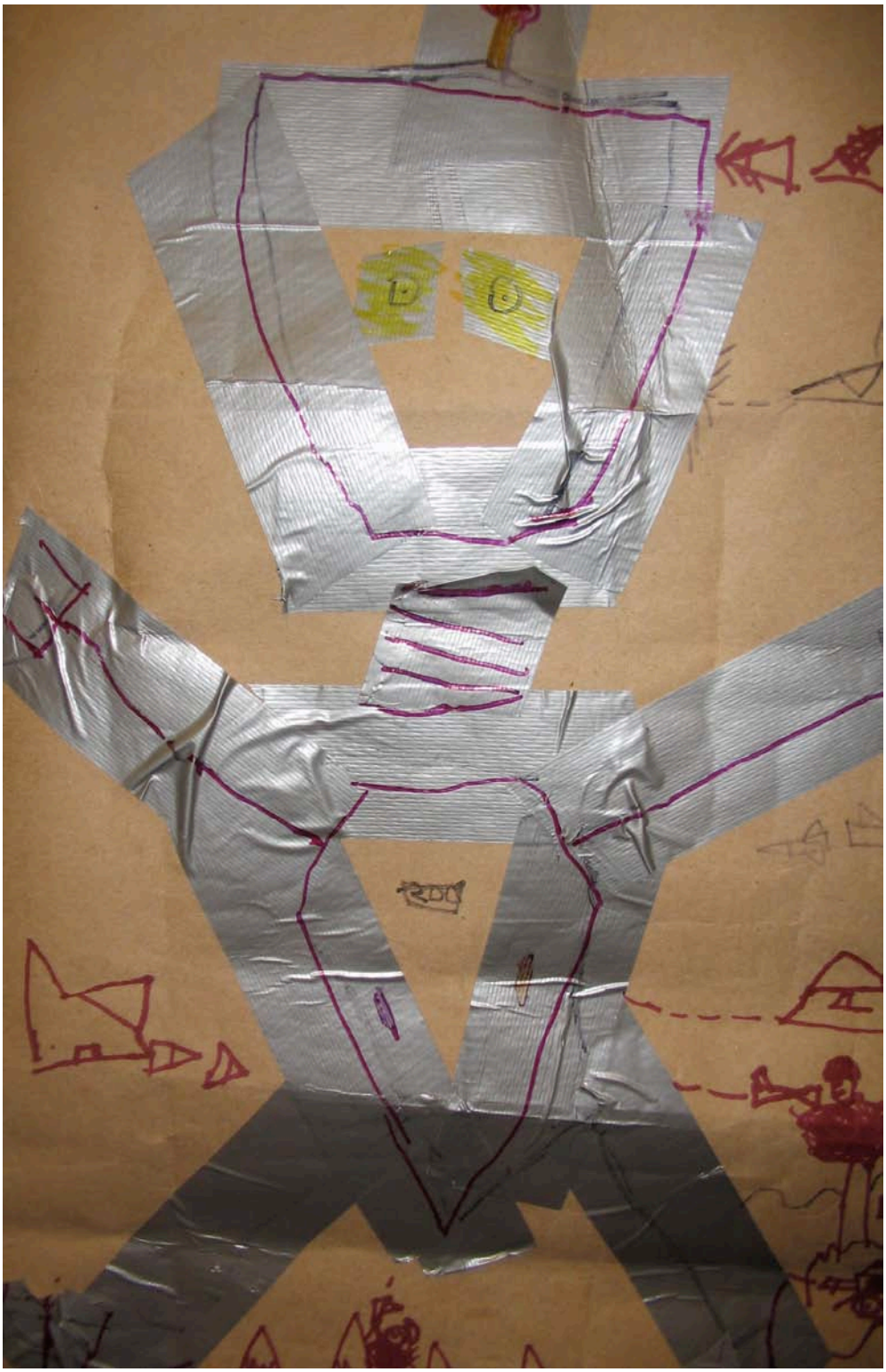

Figure 19. School One: Robot created with duct tape and permanent marker.

Figure 20. School One: Handprint: Many Hands One World, crayon.

Figure 21. School One: Frog and LILY in ribbon.

Figure 22. School One: Cat with pencil.

Figure 23. School One: Ballerinas

Figure 24. School One: Bobo the Monkey, marker.

Figure 25. School Two: Baseball game, marker.

Figure 26. School Two: Imaginary Fairy Land, marker.

Figure 27. School Two: Fire Breathing Dragon, marker.

Figure 28. School Two: Garden, colored pencil.

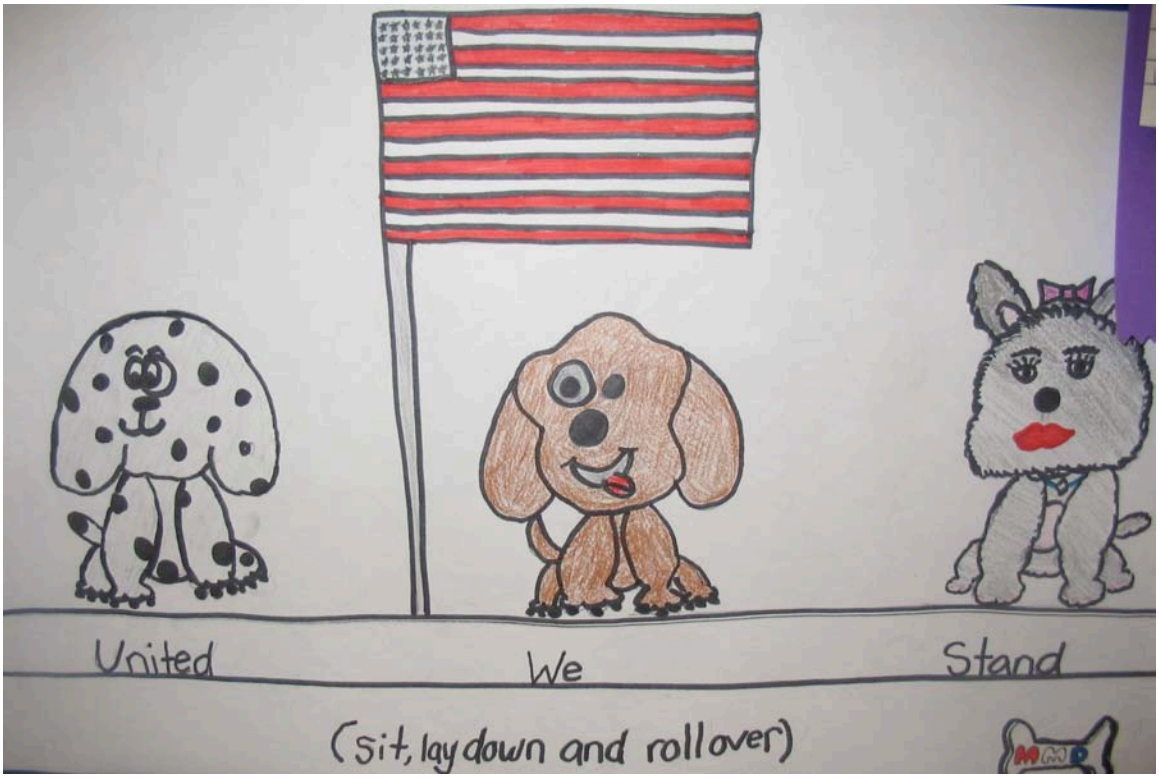

Figure 29. School Two: United We Stand Puppy Dogs, marker and colored pencil.

Figure 30. School Three: Dragon, mixed media.

Figure 31. School Three: Halloween, oil pastel.

Figure 32. School Three: Winter Scene, mixed media.

Figure 33. School Three: Chinese Calligraphy, paint.

Figure 34. Ella's Fish, mixed media.

Figure 35. Weaving in progress.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

It is, of course, comparatively easy to lay down general propositions like the foregoing; easy to use them to criticize existing school conditions; easy by means of them to urge the necessity of something different. But art is long. The difficulty is in carrying such conceptions into effect-in seeing just what materials and methods, in what proportion and arrangement, are available and helpful at a given time. Here again we must fall back upon the idea of the laboratory. There is no answer in advance to such questions as these…mere reasoning cannot give it because it is a question of fact. It is only by trying that such things can be found out. To refuse to try, to stick blindly to tradition, because the search for the truth involves experimentation in the region of the unknown, is to refuse the only step which can introduce rational conviction into education.

John Dewey, The Child and Curriculum & The School and Society

I have had the rare occasion of having a long expanse of time to think. That long time frame has been the journey of a dissertation that started with a story and a curiosity. I began by noticing the raining money of a little boy in my classroom and his infatuation with wealth. It drew me to a desire to examine what these signs and symbols might tell us about the identity, culture of the art classroom, and the ways in which the curriculum operated within these school spaces. This journey will not end with this final chapter. Instead the questions I asked will be carried with me as I continue to find myself in a wide range of school cultures implementing various art curriculums. I began with the research questions:

- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children construct identity within different school cultures and similar curriculums?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how children use story to negotiate and explore their understanding of class, status and power?
- What does the lens of socioeconomic status tells us about how curriculums function and unfold within a given school culture?

However, these questions developed around the various ways one defines the "child artist" and how these "profiles" might be different from a socioeconomic standpoint. As I looked at how educators, institutions, "culture of self" and local and global discourses enact these various definitions of the child artist, I paused to frame my

own identities and the identities. By using a mixed methods qualitative approach, I brought in my own experiences to allow for further reflection on how I examined my initial questions. This allowed for my "professional narrative" (see Rolling, 2010 & Stankiewicz, 1997) to emerge, a call to action of sorts. This involved my own call to action, to think deeply about my identity, and its impact on my teaching.

Throughout the telling of the student's experiences within the art classroom through the lens of SES I simultaneously attempted to integrate the narratives from my own classroom. James Haywood Rolling, Jr. (2010) discussed the importance of using a new framework (the narrative) to inform curricular practice. "Looking deeper, narrative is a fundamental process of human research and development." (Rolling, p. 6). As he cites Brent Wilson, "I like to think of research as *re-search,* to search again, to take a closer look…"(p. 6). By using a case study approach informed by autoethnography, my critical lens allowed me to carefully examine things that might have otherwise have passed unnoticed. Through the telling of my story to "fill out the hermeneutical arch required for a more complete interpretation" (See Ellis and Bochner, 2000) I also wanted to look at how I positioned the students at each school against each case. By examining the school culture, this also meant how I positioned the teachers. What did I seemingly leave out or make my focal point? How did I position other in order to position myself(see Pfeiler-Wunder, 2010)?

What I attempted to do was tell the story with passion and honestly with heart. In the end, I am sure there will be multiple viewpoints and readings by those who engage in the lives of the children I highlighted through this project. But that is the point, the story is never really completed, others only add it to. I hope as others read they are reminded of their own story in teaching, and the importance of reflection and dialogue as we engage in conversation of the multifaceted "job" called teaching. What does it mean to our teaching when we examine the school culture through the lens of SES?

As I set the scene for each school, I attempted to have the audience feel a connection to each school place and to the individual students art and story that would be highlighted in subsequent chapters. As the identity chapter unfolded, I examined the lived experiences of each child to understand their world. This entailed what interested them, how they interpreted curriculum, and the outside spaces of school where their multifaceted identities were further revealed.

As the chapter on SES unfolded, I wanted to understand how students made sense of power and wealth. Although I had initially planned to examine this through signs and symbols related to power and wealth, I soon learned these were not as prevalent as I had hoped. In the end, I think the stories and vignettes I collected where more illuminating. I was intrigued by their conversations of wants and needs, as well as their dialogue that highlighted how one's class and family sets the stage for particular understandings of power and wealth. As I mentioned in the chapter, I attempted to focus on how money was understood physically and psychologically while I constantly examined my own perspectives and understanding of class as a child. Writing my own story to illuminate further the story of the children, has allowed me to reflect on what my working class background has contributed to my teaching and to my scholarship. I think I can honestly frame it as both a deficit and as an advantage, depending on the social sphere I am engaged with. This acts as forms of power and resistance, and I remind myself to pay heed to how we "function" in and through different identities.

Class will continue to be a difficult conversation to discuss, because it stands at the roots of what we want to hold so dear in our country. Even as corporations crumble, the economy suffers and job loss is at its all time high, I think we still want to believe that class wars will eventually melt away. In the end, I think the use of a case study research project highlights the ways in which children should have meaning making opportunities, both from curriculum and from the unofficial curriculum children bring into school through story.

In the curriculum chapter, this was highlighted by the ways in which students used the projects as access to expression, story, and potential for dialogue. Through setting adult expectations side by side with the children's interpretation of various projects (inside and outside the curriculum), I wanted to open a space for the viewer to examine the type of aesthetic that was present/promoted in the curriculum and within each school culture. When curriculum is "opened" to the interests and intents of the student's lives this is not meant to advocate for a loss of skills or content, but a reminder of the vitality of the arts when tied to the personal. I drew from Csikzentmihalyi (1996) who speaks in terms of having control of the "immediate environment and transform(ing) it so that it enhances personal creativity" (p. 140).

The immediate environment is a locus of possibility, but I also need to be reminded of the impact of change beyond the space of my classroom or institution. As I have spent five months in a new place and a wide range of school settings, I have become increasingly aware of how easy it is to see only our little slice of the "world". I think I lived in a bubble for a long time of what resources are available for students in schools. I have recently been in schools with the latest technology and most up to date equipment for producing photography. I have been in classrooms where teachers push carts onto elevators so they can get to the second floor of a building in need of structural repair. I have seen art galleries in some buildings, while a short drive away dilapidated countertops and sinks and a general feel of disrepair exists. I have watched student teachers struggle with the magnitude of working with at risk students and rejoicing in a moment where a connection was made. I see and feel pre-service teachers thinking about the multifaceted role one embarks on when one becomes teacher. I see how these spaces and places that children attend school also create notions of who that student represents.

As I began to observe student teachers in the field, one of the schools I visited came with many stories, reputations and stereotypes. As the largest high school in the East, it is home to a very diverse student population in a city that has suffered great

economic downturns in the last fifteen years. Many had shared with me that the city is the third most dangerous city in the country. Before I ever knew I would visit the school, many teachers I came into contact shared random vignettes. I was told of the teacher who witnessed a stabbing outside her classroom, of fire crackers being shot off in the stairwells that snowballed into running and scared students who thought it was gunfire. I was told of gangs. My student teacher was told there could be the potential for pipe bombs. I didn't know quite what to think. I have to admit I had a bit of hesitation in visiting. I know my student teacher did.

When I entered the art room, I was reminded of how those stereotypes frame place, and frame students. I saw students working on self-portraits learning tools and techniques. I saw respectful students who said "Ms". When they needed the student teacher's attention. I saw engaged students as they worked on a collaborative project. My conversation with the cooperating teacher was a reminder of the often strong investment teachers make to their students and a place. Why had I thought this would be any different than the same investment I made with my students? Why had I allowed others to define a place without really knowing that space?

When I had told a fellow colleague I was a bit unsure of going into the inner city schools, because honestly I felt maybe my small town midwestern roots had "sheltered" me, her response was "Are you getting all white on me?" A necessary reminder of how I had positioned others and myself. I had to be dislodged from the stereotypes I had placed on myself along with the pervasive stereotypes of what it means to attend or work at a school labeled "inner city". It was a firm reminder to myself that making assumptions are never good for the students you teach. This highlights Stuart Hall's work (1997, 2000) where subjectivity needs to be understood in terms of how we construct ourselves against others and those who we silence. My student teacher reminded me through her own discoveries, she never made assumptions of what they could or could not do, but began establishing a relationship which opened up possibilities for learning that met the students

where they were. I hold strongly to what Debrorah Britzman (1998) reminds us about education:

> At once, it has something to do with whether in fact education can be more than colonization, more than the impulse to invent-through its technologies or correction-the needy student, the dangerous individual, the attention deficit, the ignorant parent, the docile body, the dysfunctional gender, and all the other tragic roles that spring from the moral panic that stages education. It also has to do with something quite intangible, something to be done. At work in Greene's text, as I mentioned earlier, is a method of interpreting the unconscious of educational life, for puzzling over the strange dream of education, and for imagining education as something different than repression and normalization, something that is capable of surprising itself, something interested in risking itself. p. 58

From my use of autoethnography and multiple case studies I believe this work has begun to illuminate several important strands in art education.

Unfolding the Impact on the Field

Conducting Action Research

One of the important aspects of my project was my multiple identities of teaching art in K-6 setting, along with the role of teaching assistant and researcher. I strongly believe the work of this case study is a reminder of how important it is for teachers to conduct research in the very complex realms of their own classrooms. I agree with Kerry Freedman (2007), when she calls for "Good research questions [that] are often troublemaking. They can challenge what has been "known", confronting previously conceived facts and beliefs" (p. 216). As I have begun to work with graduate students, I have reminded them the importance of beginning with story, often involving their classrooms to highlight their curiosities, passions and advocacy strands that we need to discuss further in art education. Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein (2006) discuss several outcomes of research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms. "Teacher inquiry is a form of resistance against both authoritarian mandates and professional or public apathy. It allows us to rebuild our educational independence in the pursuit of authentic,

non-mandated change" (p. xvi). I too find action research the revealer of possibilities that develop when individuals in the school setting examine what might seem the ordinary or the norm, to illuminate the very dynamic site where the theory lives and breaths-our classrooms.

Although my school was not a research site for the case study, it still informed and influenced the ways in which I interpreted my data. It was also the signs and symbols related to power and wealth that first emerged in my classroom, that brought me to my research questions. The district curriculum was a part of my art room and the case study allowed me to spend more time to examine the document and to analyze how it operated within the art room setting. Also, essential to the research was the fact that the role of teacher-researcher helped me become a better teacher. This is another aspect that Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein highlight in their work. It is through "action research" or "teacher research", as they call it, that we gain more agency as teachers, in turn this gives our students more agency as students and teachers understand ourselves better as learners (2006). I believe the work of case study informed by autoethnography highlights this call to "teacher research" and this type of research should continue to be given precedence and merit in schools, colleges, and university settings.

Meaningful Curriculum

In my use of a mixed methods qualitative approach, I also highlighted the call to action by art educators in the field such as Brent Wilson asking for more research that scrutinizes the use of signs and semiotics in the art room and what these signs tells us about student lives. I believe the children's dialogue along with the images they created magnifies their multifaceted identities and the ways in which they think about class, race, gender, and culture. It is through these discoveries that I firmly believe art education needs to continue celebrating the ability of the arts to bring in an issues based curriculum (see Speirs and Gaudelius, 2002) partnered with the use of Big Ideas (see Stewart &

Walker, 2001). These approaches provide occasion for curriculum and lesson planning to release its ties to only the formal aspects of art training. It allows the artist, no matter the age, to have voice about the world and about selves. Freedman (2007) discusses research on creativity which "indicates that we are continually creating meaning" and therefore "art education should be based, at least in part, on students' interests and concerns" (p. 216). I firmly believe that meaning making should be front and center in the art curriculum.

When Big Ideas enter the curriculum, the lesson/curriculum develops from broad human issues that represent a host of concepts that form an idea (Walker, 2001). Big Ideas allow students to think about artmaking as "more than crafting of a product. Big Ideas are what can expand student artmaking concerns beyond technical skills, formal choices, and media manipulation to human issues and conceptual concerns. Big ideas can engage students in deeper levels of thinking" (p. 1). When I teach undergraduates to begin lessons with a Big Idea in mind, it often challenges them to think beyond merely the construction of a product. The use of Big Ideas in curriculum doesn't dismiss the use of a product, but calls for the type of thinking and learning that allows for a more engaged relationship with one's world. Art making certainly can be pleasurable in using the hands or technologies to create an image which speaks through semiotics. The use of Big Ideas and Issues Based Art Teaching provides opportunities to break silences.

Revealing Identities

I thought about the silences that opened up when my undergraduates worked in an inner city school setting to teach their first lessons they had developed using Big Ideas. In one school, first graders discussed identity by looking at images on a power point about Cindy Sherman and Yasumasa Morimura. For this one-day lesson students embellished frames with markers, symbols and stickers while they waited to dress up and have a polaraid picture taken. Many children put on bandana's, smiling into the camera in a

macho sort of pose. When the images were displayed in the hall, some teachers felt the images made them appear criminal in nature. How was this playful act imagined by the adult world? What were they children trying to say in their pictures? What did teachers want to silence in their remarks?

As Elliott Eisner highlights "*Among all the fields of study in our schools, the arts are at the forefront in celebration of diversity, individuality, and surprise."* Against the discourse of standarization and what I call the culture of "mechanical testing" Eisner states:

> Works in the arts invites students to use their imaginative capacities to conceive of possibilities that are distinctive to themselves: the arts invite the application of a personal thumbprint upon one's work" (p. 236). When all products are to look alike, the evaluation task is essentially one of matching the student's work to some benchmark or rubric. But when the promotion of productive individuality is the aim of the exercise, then evaluation criteria need to be employed flexibly in order to determine how far a student has come…growth is revealed not in an instant, but in a process. (p. 236)

This research is meant to be an advocate for the power of art in student's lives, but also a reminder of not forgetting. Jonathan Silin (2007) reminded me of this when he used memory to recall and deconstruct his childhood. He situates his identity in his story as a Jew of Eastern European decent. His childhood identity and experience informs him later in his life as he speaks about his identity as a gay individual, caring for his sick ailing father in adulthood and as a male teacher in a predominantly female career. He writes of the tensions in the expected identities placed on him culturally, professionally and from his family. He uses his prose to unveil the inherently heternormative ways in which he feels he should "be". In writing his story he works to "make up for that was left unsaid" (p. 104) and to call individuals "to engage children in authentic conversations about the world they will inherit and to promote their active commitment to social justice…" (p. 104). Voice needs to be seen beyond a representation of what one hopes to be, but voice and dialogue as agents of change.

It is easy, to make assumptions, it is easy to think about all the ways we feel governed in what and how we should teach. In the end, it might seem simple, but we must not lose touch of the lives of our students. Many in the field of education reiterate this idea. Brantlinger (2003), shares:

> In focusing on community welfare, Dewey urged educators to adopt a curriculum that would cultivate an awareness of social ties. Dewey wrote that children can only be successful in society if they are given the chance for the same experiences in the classroom that they will find in society. With this in mind, it is researcher's belief that it is crucial for students to be enriched by a diversity of experiences while in the classroom. This includes working with students of all different ethnicities, social class levels, and all abilities. (Brantlinger, 173).

The ideas related to caring for other, while also maintaining individual freedom as discussed by Foucault's "care of the self" have relevance here (see Infinito, 2003). Justin Infinito (2003) explains Foucault's idea of the "care of the self". He states, "A close reading of Foucault supports the view that individual liberty *results from* concern for others; freedom is the outcome of acting ethically toward others and ourselves. (p. 162). As I asked these questions at the beginning of my research:

- In all the myriad of ways we can position the child artist, which ones do I knowingly and not so knowingly use to describe my students?
- How does the governance (surveillance by parents, administrations, other teachers) silence the interests and voices of my students?
- How does my identity through a working class background change or affect the way I view my students?

I don't think I can help but to position my students in various identities. Ethically speaking and in terms of strengthening my teaching I can only hope that silence escapes the work of my classroom and my research. As Infinito (2003) highlights, "Foucault also did justice to *particular* versus *generalized others* by recognizing that the presence of others has everything to do with the self I become, and that who I am effects anther's self-construction" (p. 156).

One of the ways we open up silences is by being both cognizant and receptive to the identities in which we bring into the classroom and curriculum. As Congdon, Stewart, and White (2002) state: "Teachers, as do all people, exemplify and actualize the beliefs and values that emerge from their active participation with the world" (p. 108). I believe by dislodging our identities from the various lenses we ourselves operate within, we allow for continuous reinterpretations. Several strands of art education practice and theory heighten one's sensibilities to a classroom space of possibility.

Paul Duncum (2002) among others (see Kevin Tavin, Kerry Freedman) speaks of this through visual cultural studies. Visual culture studies allows children to explore issues for themselves, to create opportunities for dialogue, and to expand students' own cultural experience (2002). Kerry Freedman (2007) discusses her previous work (2003) where she reiterates the importance of reform in art education which involves "teachers' knowledge of student interests, sociocultural conditions, and fine art and popular culture" (p. 212). This occurs in the classroom when one is willing to step aside from the teacher driven curriculum, and pay keen attention to the stories, lives and interests of the children.

Kristin Congdon (2005) illustrates this through her discussion of "Other" in how we identify "Artist". She discusses how the folk artist or "outsider" artist (a term she dislikes, as do I) has been "placed" within a particular aesthetic-many see the work of the folk artist by the nature of defining it as "other" outside the scope of fine art. Congdon describes how the folk artist experiences a state of transcendence because of the ways in which experience drive their work. She states, "It is about transcending our circumstances, making dreams a reality, and creating worlds that meet our deepest and most pressing needs" (2005, p. 144). I have seen this transcendence in the act of making for children. I have seen transcendence in my own act of revaluing, redefining, and resituating the ways in which the art room functioned. It is about understanding the other, so one can enter their world, their voice, and their vision.

In the end, three components should drive art room pedagogy. Action research which involves a focused attention on illuminating theory in the field of art/education. A meaningful curriculum which engages students in dialogue on the visual and material complexities of their world. Finally, a willingness to map teacher identity and its relationship to how one "sees" their children, school/art room and selves. These factors are essential to a classroom that opens new possibilities. One important factor that I believe has been silenced in art education research/curriculum discussion is the story of class. I tell this story, the children's/my story through the lens of class for simple reasons: So others will tell theirs.

REFERENCES

Altmaier, B. (2009, May 16). P-C should contribute to solution of race issues. *The Press Citzen*, pp. 14A.

Ames, Carole, & Archer, Jennifer (1987). Mother's beliefs about the role of ability and effort in school learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *79*(4), 409-414.

Anderson, T., & Mildbrant, M. (2004). *Art for life: Authentic instruction in art*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Andrus, L. (2001). The culturally competent art educator. *Art Education*, *54*(4), 14-16.

Apple, M. W. (1992). Education, culture, and class power: Basil Bernstein and the neo-Marxist sociology of education. *Educational Theory, 42*(2),127-145.

Bates, J. K. (2000). *Becoming a teacher*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Bateson, M. C. (1994). *Peripheral visions*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Beane, J. (1990). *Affect in the curriculum: Toward democracy, dignity, and diversity.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Benjamin, W. (1936). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. [Electronic version]. (Andy Bluden, Trans., 1998). New York: Schoken Books.

Blandy, D. & P. Bolin, (2003). Beyond visual culture: Seven statements of support For material culture studies in art education. *Art Education, 44*(3), 246-264.

Bochner, A. & Carolyn, E. (2001). *Ethnographically speaking*. Oxford, UK: Rowmant Littlefield.

Boldt, G. (personal communication, 2008).

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. (Original work published in 1979).

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state of nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. (L. C. Cloug, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Brantlinger, E. (1993). *The politics of social class in secondary schools: Views of affluent and impoverished youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Brantlinger, E. (2003). *Dividing class: How the middle class negotiates and rationalizes school advantage*. New York & London: RouteledgeFalmer.

Britzman, D. (1998). *Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning.* Albany, New York: State of New York Press.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Buckingham, D. (1996). *Moving Images: Understanding children's emotional responses to television.* New York: Manchester Press.

Buckingham, D. & Sefton-Green, J. (1994). *Cultural studies goes to school.* London: Taylor and Francis.

Buck-Morss, S. (1999). *The dialectics of seeing.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Bullock, M. & Jennings, M. (1996). *Walter Benjamin: Selected writings.*Cambridge,MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University.

Burkhart, R. C. and Neil, H. M. (1968). *Identity and teaching learning*. Scranton, P. A.: International Text book.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

Carlson, Dennis (1999). The rules of the game: Detracking and retracking the urban high school. In Frederick Yeo & Barry Kanpol (eds.), *From nihilism to possibility: Democratic transformation: Democratic transformation for the inner city* (pp. 15-35). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Carlson, Dennis (2002, April 4). *Small victories: Narrative of hope in a neo-conservative age*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Chapman, A. (1997). "Undercurrents of gender: The hidden and null curriculum," A great balancing act: Equitable education for boys and girls. Washington D.C. *National Association of Independent Schools*. 13-38.

Chapman, V. (2005). Making a good Victoria sponge cake: Schooling, empire, class, gender and sexuality. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(3), 259-284.

Chiseri-Strater, E. & Sunstein, B. (2006). *What works: A practical guide for teacher research.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Coles, R. (1986). *The moral life of children*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Congdon, K. (1988). Toward a theoretical approach to teaching folk art: A definition. *Studies in Art Education, 28*(2), 96-104.

Congdon, K, Steward, M. & White, J. (2002). Mapping identity for curriculum work. In Y. Gaudelius & P. Speirs (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in art education* (pp. 97-107). Upper Saddle River,New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Coronel, F. A. (2010, March 18). Re: Immortal technique lyrics/Harlem street lyrics [online artist archive]. Retrieved from http://www.allthelyrics.com/lyrics/immortal_technique/harlem_streets-lyrics-491912.html

Crawford, L. (1996). Personal ethnography. *Communication Monographs, 63*(2), 158-170.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry research & design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications: London and New Delhi.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention.* Harper Perennial: New York.

Daniel, R. (2009, May 26). Dads look to perform a good DEED. *The Press Citzen,* pp. 3A, 4A.

Delacruz, E. & Sandy B. (2010). Creating history, telling stories, and making special: Portfolios, scrapbooks, and sketchbooks. *Art Education, 63*(1), 33-40.

Demetz, P. (Ed.). (1978). *Walter Benjamin: Essays, aphorisms, autobiographical writings.* New York: Schocken Books.

Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York, NY: Berkley Publishing Group.

Dewey, J. (1956). *The child and curriculum and the school and society*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Diamond, J. Randolph, A. & Spillman, J. (2004). Teacher's expectations and sense of responsibility for student learning: The importance of race, class, and organizational habitus. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 75-98.

Dibos, Allessandra (2002). Democracy as responsibility, meaning and hope: Introductory reflections on a democratic project in education. *Journal of Thought, 37*(1), 54-65.

Dillard, A. (1974). *Pilgrim at tinker creek.* New York, NY: Harper Collins.

DiPardo, A. (1993). When teachers become graduate students. *English Education 25*(4), 197-212.

Dorn, E. (2005). The end of ART in education. *Art Education, 58*(6), 47-51.

Duncum, P. (1999). A case for art education of everyday aesthetic experiences. *Studies In Art Education, 40*(4), 295-311.

Duncum, P. (2002). Children never were what they were: Perspectives on childhood. In Y. Gaudelius & P. Speirs (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in art education* (pp. 97-107). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Duncum, P. (2004). Visual culture isn't just visual: Multiliteracy, multimodality and meaning. *Studies in Art Education, 45*(3), 252-264.

Duncum, P. (2007). Nine reasons for continuing the use of an aesthetic discourse in art education, *Art Education, 45*(3), 252-264.

Dyson, A. H. (1997). *Writing superhereos: Contemporary childhood, popular culture, classroom literacy.* Columbia University, New York & London: Teacher College Press.

Efland, A. (2005). Problems confronting visual culture. *The Journal of the National Art Education Association, 58*, 35-40.

Eisner, E. (2002). *The arts and the creation of mind*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Emerling, J. (2005). Theory for history. New York & London: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. (Alan Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality*. (Robert Hurley, Trans.) New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1984). What is enlightenment*?* In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 32-50). New York: Pantheon.

Freedman, K. (2001). How do we understand art? Aesthetics and problem of meaning in curriculum. In P. Duncum & T. Bracey (Eds.), *On Knowing, Art and visual culture* (pp.34-46). Christchurch, New Zealand: Canterbury University Press.

Freedman, K. (2003). *Teaching visual culture: Curriculum, aesthetics, and the social life of art.* New York & London: Teachers College Press.

Freedman, K. (2007). Artmaking/troublemaking: Creativity, policy, and leadership in art education. *Studies in Art Education, 48*(2), 204-217.

Frederick, M. & Finn, C. (2007). Introduction. In M. Frederick & C. Finn (Ed.), *No remedy left behind*. (pp. 1-10). Washington D.C., The AEI Press.

Freirie, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. (Myra Bergman Ramos, Trans.). New York: Continuum.

Freud, S. (1961). Civilization and its discontents. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company.

Frisby, D. & Featherstone, M. (Eds.). (1997). Simmel on culture. London & New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Gadamer, H. (1986). *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays*. (Ed. R. Bernasconi & N. Walker, Trans.). Cambridge: University Press. (Original work published in 1967 & 1977).

Garoian, C. (2002). Children performing the art of identity. In Y. Gaudelius & P. Speirs (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in art education* (pp. 119-129). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Gee, J. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. New Jersey: Routledge.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Kids for sale. In G. Dines & J. M. Humez, (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in the media*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Graue, M. Elizabeth, Kroeger, Janice, & Prager, Dana (2001). A Bakhtinian anaylsis of particular home school-relations. *American Educational Research Journal, 38,* 467-498.

Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Gros, F., & Davidson, A. (Eds.). 2005). *The hermeneutics of the subject: Lectures at the college de France 1981-1982*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gude, O. (2004). Postmodern principles: In search of a 21st century art education. *Art Education, 57*(1), 6-14.

Hall, S. & Gay, P. (1996). *Who needs idenity?:* London: Sage Publication.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural representation and signifying practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Hall, S. (2000). Old and new identities: Old and new ethnicities. In Solomos, J. (Ed.), *Theories of race, racism: A reader*. London & New York Routledge.

Heiddegger, M. (1996). Being and time. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

Hegel, G.W. F. (1956/2004. *The philosophy of history*.(J. Sibree, Trans.) New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Hess, F. & Finn, Jr. C (Eds.). (2007). *No remedy left behind*. Washington, D.C.: The AEI Press.

Hooks, b. (2000). *Where we stand: class matters*. New York: Routledge.

Horkheimer, M. & Adorno, T.W. (2002). *Dialetic of enlightenment.* Standford, California: Stanford University Press.

Infinito, J. (2003). Ethical self-formation: A look at the later Foucault, *Education Theory, 53*(2), 155-171.

Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodern: Or, the cultural logic of late capitalism.* Durhmam: Duke University Press.

Kaomea, J. (2000). A curriculum of aloha? Colonialism and tourism in Hawai'i's elementary textbooks. *Curriculum inquiry*, *30*(3)*,* 319-344.

Kellogg, R. & O'Dell, S. (1967). *The psychology of children's art*. Random House Publishing.

Kellogg, R. (1970). *Analyzing children's art.* Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Kester, G. (2004). *Conversation pieces*. Berkeley & Los Angeles Press: University of California Press.

Kindler, A. & Darras, B. (1997). Map of artistic development in A. Kindler (Ed.), *Child development in art.* Reston, Virginia: NAEA.

Kindler, A. (1997). *Child development in art.* Reston, Virginia: NAEA.

Kindler, A. (1999). "From endpoints to repertoires": A challenge to art education. *Studies in Art Education, 40*(4), 330-349.

Kuan Chung, Sheng (2008). An exploration of the issue of stereotyping in the artroom. *Art Education*, (*61)*3, 22-35.

Labaree, D. (2004). *The trouble with ed schools*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Langer, S. K. (1953). *Feeling and form*. New York: Scribner's.

Langer, S. K. (1958). *Reflections on art*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press.

LaPierre & Zimmerman. (1997). *Research Methodologies*, Reston, VA: NAEA.

Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lasch, Christopher (1984). *The minimal self*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Least Heat-Moon, W. (1991). *PrairyErth.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Lemke, J. L. (1998). Metamedia literacy: Transforming media. In D. Reinking, M. C. McKenna, L. D. Labbo, and R. D. Kieffer (Eds.). *Handbook of literacy and technology: Transformation in a post-typographic world*. (pp.283-302). Mahway, NJ: Lawerence Erlbaum.

Lee, V. & Burkam, D. (2002). *Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school*. Washington D.C.: Economic Policy Institute.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lindquist, J. & Seitz, D. (2008). *Elements of literacy*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Lindroos, K. *Now-time| Image-space: Temporalization of politics in Walter Benjamin's philosophy of history and art*. Finland: SoPhi University of Jyvaskyla Press.

Leavy, P. (2009). *Method meets arts: Arts-based research practices*. New York: The Guildford Press.

Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago and London: The Chicago University Press.

Lowenfeld, V. & Brittain, L. (1970). *Creative and mental growth* (5th ed.). London: Macmillan Company.

Marx, K. (1978/1972). Grundrisse. In R. Tucker (Ed.), *The Marx-Engels reader* (2nd ed.) (221-293). New York & London: W. W. Norton and Company.

Marx, K. (1978/1972). The German idealogy. In R. Tucker (Ed.). *The Marx-Engels Reader* (2nd edition) (146-200). New York & London: W. W. Norton and Company.

Milbrandt, M., Felts, J., B. Richards, & N. Abghari. (2004). Teaching-to-learn: A constructivist approach to shared responsibility. *Art Education, 57*(3*)*,19-33.

Mirzoeff, N. (Ed.). (1998). *The visual culture reader*. London: Routledge.

Munson, L. (2000). *Exhibitionism: Art in an era of intolerance*. Chicago: ivan r dee.

Murray, D. (2003). Teaching writing as a process not a product. In V. Villanueva (Ed.), *Cross-talk in comp theory* (pp.3-7). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers In English.

Owens, C. (1999). The allegorical impulse: Toward a theory of postmodernism In B. Wallis (Ed.), *Art after modernism: Rethinking representation*. New York: Museum of Contemporary Art.

Paley, V. (2004). *A child's work: The importance of fantasy play.* London: The University of Chicago Press.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2007). *The intellectual and policy foundations of the 21st century skills framework.* Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/route21/images/stories/epapers/skills_foundations_final.pdf

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualatative research and evaluation methods*. California, Sage Publications.

Pfeiler-Wunder, A. (2007). Let's play: Dewey, aesthetics and the elementary art room. *Journal of Philosophy Society of Australasia*, 1-9. Retrieved from http://www.pesa.org.au/html/04papers.htm

Pfeiler-Wunder, A. (2010). Understanding and using case study informed by autoethnography in M. Buffington and S. Wilson McCay (Eds.) Practice theory: seeing the power of teacher researchers. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Phelan, P. (1993). *Unmarked: The politics of performance*. London Routledge.

Piaget, J. (1954). *The construction of reality in the child*. NY: Ballentine.

Piaget, J. (1970). *Genetic epistemology*. NY: Columbia University Press.

Plank, David N., & Boyd, W. L. (1994). Antipolitics, education, and institutional choice: The flight of democracy. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*(2*),* 263-281.

Plugge, L. (2009, March 3). Frequently asked questions #1 retrieved from www.iowa-city.k12.ia.us/district/SFIP/FAQ.pdf

Popekewitz, T. & Brennan, M. (1988). Restructuring of social and political theory in education: Foucault and a social epistemology of school practices. In

PopekewitzT. & Brennan, M. (Eds.), *Foucault's challenge: Discourse, knowledge, and power in education* (pp. 3-35). New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Popkewitz, T. & M. Brennan. (1997). Restructuring of social and political theory in education: Foucault and a social epistemology of school practices. In Popkewitz, T. & M. Brennan, (Eds.), *Foucault's challenge: Discourse, knowledge, and power in education.* (pp. 3-35). New York and London: Teachers College Press.

Rolling, J. H. (2010). Art education at the turn of the tide: The utility of narrative in curriculum-making and education research. *Art Education, 63*(3), 6-12.

Rosenberg, M. & Thurber, F. (2007). Gender matters: View of gender and how they affect art students. In M. Stewart (Ed.), *Gender matters in art education* (13-33).Worcester: Massachusetts: Davis Publication.

Rousseau, J. J. (2007/1762). *Emile or on education*. NuVision Publication, LLC.

Sarup, Madan (1993). *Post-structuralism and postmodernism*. GA: University of Georgia Press.

Seiter, E. (1993). *Sold separately: Children and their parents in consumer culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Silin, J. (2007). *My father's keeper: The story of a gay son and his aging parents.* Boston MA: Beacon Press.

Simmel, G. (1997). Georg Simmel in N. Leach (Ed.). *RethinkingaArchitecture: A reader in cultural theory* (pp. 65-79). London and New York: Routeledge.

Smith, R. (2006). *Culture and the arts in education*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.

Smith-Shank, D. (Ed.). (2004). *Semiotics and visual culture: Sights, signs and significance.* Reston, VA: National Art Education Association.

Stankiewicz, M. (2001). *Roots of art education practice*. Massachusetts: Davis Publications.

Stankiewicz, M. (2002). Middle class desire: Ornament, industry, and emulation in 19th century art. *Studies in Art Education,* 43(4), 324-38.

Tarr, P. (2003). Reflections on the image of the child: Reproducer or creator of culture. *Art Education,* 56, 6-11.

Tedlock, B. (1991). From participant observation to the observation of participation: The emergence of narrative ethnography. *Journal of Anthropological research, 47*, 69-94.

Thompson, C. (1995). Transforming curriculum in the visual arts. In S. Bredekamp & T. Rosegrants (Ed.), *Transforming early childhood curriculum and assessment.* (pp.xx-xx). Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of the Young.

Thompson, C. (2005). Under construction: Images of the child in art education. *Art Education, 58*(2), 18-24.

Thompson, K. (2003). Forms of resistance: Foucault on tactical reversal and self-formation. *Continental Philosophy of Review*, 36, 113-138.

Tobin, J. (1995). The irony of self-expression. *American Journal of Education, 103*, 233-258.

Tobin, J. (2000). *"Good guys don't wear hats": Children's talk about the media*. New Teachers College Press.

Tucker, R. (Ed.) (1978). *The Marx-Engels reader*. (2nd ed.) New York & London: W. W. Norton Company.

Tavin, K. (2007). Eyes wide shut: The use and uselessness of the discourse of aesthetics in art education, *The Journal of the National Art Education Association*, 60, 40-46.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* The University of Western Ontario: London, Ontario.

Veyne, Paul (1997). "The final foucault and his ethics" In Foucault and his Interlocuters. (Davidson, A., Ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 225-233).

Warrior Poets Releasing, LLC (2007) What would Jesus buy? About the film. Retrieved June 8th, 2009 from http://wwjbmovie.com/about.html

Wilson, B. (2008). Contemporary art, the best of art, and third-site pedagogy. *Art Education, 61*(2), 6-10.

Walker, S. (2001). Big ideas and artmaking in M. Stewart (Ed.), *Teaching meaning in artmaking* (pp. 1-17). Worcester, MA: Davis Publication.

Woodhead, M. & Faulkner, D. (2000). Subjects, objects or participants? Dilemmas of Psychological research with children. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), *Research with children: Perspectives and practices* (pp. 9-35). London: Falmer.

Zander, M. J. (2005). Becoming dialogical: Creating a place for dialogue in art education. *Art Education*, *57*(3), 49-53.

Zurmuehlen, M. (1974). Meaningful children's art. *School and Community, 33*, 12-13.

Zurmuehlen, M. (1990). *Studio art: Praxis, symbol and presence.* Reston VA: National Art Education Association.