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# A Personalized Art Curriculum That Promotes Art Advocacy

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A Personalized Art Curriculum That Promotes Art Advocacy

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A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

Master Teacher

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by

Nicole Marie Walters

June 2007

## ABSTRACT

**A PERSONALIZED ART CURRICULUM**  
**THAT ENCOURAGES ART ADVOCACY**

by

Nicole Marie Walters

June 2007

The following project shows the development of a personalized drawing curriculum that will encourage students to become art advocates. The curriculum is based upon art history and is designed for students to relate historical ideas to their own lives. This personalization will help students learn more about art as a form of communication. Through this art experience, students will see the value of art in their own education and it is hoped that in the future, when these students are adults they will be advocates for the arts.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. Shari Stoddard for her guidance throughout my teaching career. I am indescribably grateful for all of the advice you have given me throughout this project and throughout my teaching experiences. I would also like to thank Dr. Steve Schmitz and Dr. Debbi Prigge for being a part of my committee. I am thankful for the opportunity to teach ART 330, Art in the Elementary School, at Central Washington University; for this was the first step in developing the curriculum described in this project. Finally, I would like to thank my advance drawing students for their effort in their art work and for being participants in this project.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Overview*

Hope Irvine, Chairwoman of the Department of Art Education at Syracuse University, defines art, in a National Art Education Association Advisory (1998/99), as “Art consists of ideas, embodied in autonomous objects, created with aesthetic intent” (p. 4) which “means art is never about nothing” (p. 1). She views art as a form of communication and as a visual form of communication; art should be examined both for its formal qualities and for what the artist is trying to communicate through the piece of art.

However, Peter London (1988) believes that many students, teachers, administrators, and communities view art instruction as a decorative frill in education and he feels that if the primary goal of art education is to teach students how to make art that is visually appealing, it is doomed. “Surely a profession [art education] dedicated to the making decorative, well crafted objects of art is unessential” (London, 1988, p. 48). The problem, as London sees it, is that society views art as a simplistic, “well crafted thing” rather than a visual form of communication or something with a deeper meaning (1992, p. 8).

As a high school art teacher in the state of Washington, I have found that there is a real need to teach students that art is a form of communication. Often, when students first enter my art classroom, they are fixated on making art that is visually appealing and they do not consider the conceptual aspects of art. However, students can perceive some basic conceptual ideas when they look at art because they can identify the mood or

feeling of an art piece. This could be because “All forms, indeed all objects of perception, have moods and emotional ramifications” (Pratt, 1975, p. 403). Yet, the mood or emotion communicated through an art piece does not give the piece value to the student. I find that my high school students, fellow teachers, and parents find art most pleasing when the artwork looks realistic. Rarely do these individuals think of art beyond how realistic it looks, how visually pleasing it appears, or as a form of decoration.

In order for art education as a profession to be essential, its focus needs to be on teaching art skills in the hopes of building communication through visual expression. Students need to learn that art is never meaningless and that they can communicate their own ideas visually through an autonomous object (Irvine, 1988/89). The project reported in this paper addresses the need to promote communication through art in the high school curriculum. I have chosen to create a curriculum that allows high school students an opportunity to personalize their art experience by communicating ideas relevant to their own lives. It is projected that later in life, students will reflect upon their high school art experience and be more likely to become advocates of the arts because they will see the importance of the arts as a form of communication not just as means to create visual decoration.

I designed the curriculum to teach students conceptual meanings behind historical pieces and to guide them in creating their own personal meaning in their own artwork. It is hoped that through this guided self-directed art curriculum, students will be more likely to advocate the arts in the future. As Rita Irwin, Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia, states, “Advocacy measures must begin with and give priority to



individuals who are provided with knowledge and skills in order to create, appreciate, and respond to works of art” (Irwin, 1993, p. 72).

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this project is to create a personalized advanced drawing/painting high school curriculum based on art history. This curriculum was designed to encourage students to become art advocates in the future.

### *Significance of Project*

This project is important because program cuts in art education are common in schools. Recently New York schools were “faced with the proposed loss of \$1.7 million in state aid at a time where they need at least \$5 million to maintain the status quo” for education (Bolton, 2003, p. 1). The likely solution for schools is to “increase class size, cut staff, modify programs, reduce instructional support and cut art, music, and library services” (Bolton, 2003, p. 1). When the budget is tight in schools, art education is one of the first programs that is cut (Loschert, 2004).

Many organizations, such as the National Art Education Association, Americans for the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, and ArtsEdge offer advocacy information to promote the arts by informing legislators, principals, school board members and parents about the benefits of the arts.<sup>1</sup> However, in my research I have found that there is little in art advocacy strategies that target students. Students who have experienced the benefits of art education can be expected to become advocates for the arts in the future if

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<sup>1</sup> <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>, [http://www.artsusa.org/get\\_involved/advocate.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/get_involved/advocate.asp), <http://www.naea-reston.org>

they are encouraged to do so and have had a positive educational experience. “Students are not only the current artists, historians, and critics within the art classroom, but they are the next generation of decision-makers” (Irwin, 1993, p. 73).

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### *Assumptions*

The curriculum I have developed is founded upon Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). DBAE includes four disciplines- art history, art making, art criticism, and aesthetics (Silverman, 1989). By using Discipline Based Art Education students will learn important elements of art as well as meet benchmarks for the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS). The DBAE curriculum in this project offers students the opportunity to learn about the present and past art world. Students will also learn how to communicate ideas visually and how to discuss works of art.

It is my assumption that a curriculum that offers students a personalized art experience will encourage them to be advocates of the arts in the future. Currently, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) found in a review of research that personalizing education for students is one way to improve Washington high schools (OSPI, n.d.). In addition, the National High School Alliance (NHSA) supports that personalizing education is a way to improve schools (NHSA, 2006). To accomplish this, both NHSA and OSPI have a few suggestions.

One suggestion from both the OSPI and the NHSA websites is that teachers have close, trusting relationships with their students to create artwork that reflects their interests. I have found by looking at what my students create I have a better insight into

current experiences they are having and their interests outside of school. I am then better able to learn about my students and establish trusting relationships with them.

OSPI and the NHSA also suggest designing a meaningful, relevant curriculum. The curriculum in this project relates art history to contemporary culture, thus creating a relevant curriculum for the students. For example, I have used pop icons such as Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt to teach students about the individuals portrayed in ancient Greek statues.

OSPI and NHSA further suggest personalizing education by allowing students opportunities to evaluate their own learning. In my curriculum students have an opportunity to participate in peer evaluation when they determine their projects and during classroom critiques. Students use self-evaluation after they participate in classroom critiques.

While my assumption is that students experiencing a personalized curriculum will become art advocates, there is no empirical evidence to support such an assumption. I intend on conducting a longitudinal study, to confirm or refute my assumptions, while earning a Doctorate of Education.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

At the 2006 National Art Education Association Conference in Chicago, Mike Huckabee, Governor of Arkansas, gave a key note address in which he shared his belief that the arts are, “a vital part of an education for every child” (Deasy, 2004, p. 1). Huckabee stated that not only do the arts help students achieve academically in other subject areas such as math and reading, the arts also help create productive, good, and well-adjusted citizens (Deasy, 2004).

Huckabee supports the arts because of his own meaningful art experience (Deasy, 2004). He is a musician and played in the school band. He was also involved in school theater. He values these art experiences because he learned skills that he now uses as a governor. For example, being in school plays helped him get over his stage fright (Deasy, 2004). Music taught him the value of practice. “As a governor of a state, I know I may have a few moments in the spotlight, but I am going to have many, many more hours toiling behind the scenes and any success I may have is not dependent upon my time in the spotlight, but rather my time in rehearsal” (Deasy, 2004, p. 3).

#### *The History of American Art Education.*

Throughout the history of art education theorists have had various ideas about the effective ways to teach art. Through examining past theories of art education, certain assumptions, values, and beliefs are made (Hamblen, 1985). In order to develop a meaningful and personalized curriculum in art education that is appropriate for today's

students, one must familiarize oneself with these movements of the past. It is hoped that from such an experience students will become art advocates in the future.

Art education has transformed throughout the last two centuries. Due to societal and student needs, art education has frequently been justified as a part of public school curriculum for reasons other than the teaching of art. In the United States during the early 19th century, there was a high demand for skilled and literate carpenters, builders, and factory designers. At school, students learned to read, write, and draw because these subjects were essential for workers of the industrial era (Efland, 1990).

As industry grew in the United States so did the need for public education. Gradually, schools became state funded and class offerings included vocal music and drawing. Drawing was the primary art form studied and it was a way to teach morals, an important aspect of American Society at that time (Efland, 1990). Art instruction still focused upon the ability to improve job skills through focusing on art making (Dobbs, 1998). Skills in drawing were continually emphasized and by the 1850's cities and towns in the northern United States were introducing drawing in public schools.

The need for drawing classes continued to grow and in June of 1869, a petition was delivered to Massachusetts lawmakers. The petition, in part, requested that free drawing instruction be offered to students in towns with more than 5,000 inhabitants. This request may have been motivated by the fact that "skills in mechanical and industrial drawing [were viewed] as kindred avenues for advancing the economic climate in America, particularly in the northeast, a region that depended heavily on industrial manufacturing" (Stankiewicz & Bolin, 2004, p. 38). The Massachusetts Board of Education formed the Special Committee on Drawing and gathered information and

insight on drawing education. The committee found that there was a real need for drawing and so, in the spring of 1870, the Massachusetts Board of Education required that elementary and free hand drawing be taught in all public schools of the commonwealth (Stankiewicz & Bolin, 2004).

Art education continued to grow in the United States catalyzing different views on how and why art should be taught. Nearing the twentieth century, there were three major themes propelling art education. One theme focused on decoration “as a method of cultivating children’s sensitivity to that which is beautiful” (Jones, 1974, p. 13). Ross Turner, an MIT architecture instructor, spoke at the 1896 National Art Educator meeting about decoration and art education. He felt it was important for students to be surrounded with art in their classrooms so that their full potential could be reached (Jones, 1974).

Langdon Thompson, 1884 Art Department President of the NAEA, also felt that it was important for a child’s development to be surrounded by art. He thought that classroom ceilings and walls should be decorated with historical art pieces. Specifically, he recommended that classrooms follow art history chronologically. For example, first year students’ classrooms should be decorated with Egyptian art, continuing with Greek art their second year, and “continuing to their eighth year where a ‘modern style of ornament’ could be used” (Jones, 1974, p. 13). Another man who was interested in art as decoration was Henry Turner Baily, a supervisor of drawing and agent for industrial drawing for the Massachusetts State Board of Education (Efland, 1990). In 1899, he and Sevverance Burrage wrote a book titled, *School Sanitation and Decoration*. This book detailed where art pieces should be displayed in the classroom and what art pieces to display for particular age groups (Jones, 1974).

A second theme in art education in the late 19th century focused on beauty. In 1899, a committee for National Art Endowment, or NAE, was formed to create goals for art education. One of the goals specifically focused on beauty and was taught through a number of art lessons (Jones, 1974). Nature Study was one art lesson that taught students to appreciate beauty through nature (Efland, 1990). Other goals in art education included teaching students the elements and principles of art through Model and Object drawing. During a model and object lesson, the elements and principles of art were emphasized and students would arrange still-life objects and draw them to look three-dimensional (Efland, 1990). This focus on the formal elements began to divide art from vocational training and by 1910, a separation of industrial or vocational art and art education was noticeable.

Charles Elliot Norton was the man responsible for bringing a third theme into art education (Jones, 1974). He desired art appreciation at Harvard to be elevated to an academic course and more importantly, to be a class that would “cultivate an attitude toward art as being of historical importance” (Jones, p. 13, 1974). Art appreciation courses grew tremendously in the late 1800’s as elective classes at colleges and universities. Harvard’s creation of a required art appreciation course influenced other colleges to add art appreciation as part of the general course requirements (Jones, 1974).

Around 1920, there was an increase of interest in studying masterpieces as a school subject (Jones, 1974). This subject became known as the Picture Study Movement. “The importance of picture study no doubt grew out of earlier efforts to expose children to art: it can be theorized that as classroom teachers became aware of the limited effect that ‘decorations’ had upon students” (Jones, 1974, p. 15). In 1900, Fred J.

Orr described picture study at the annual meeting of NEA. He felt that picture study was valuable because it taught students morals and improved their techniques with various art mediums. Lead partially by Oscar J. Neale, picture study was an important part of art education for twenty years and in the 1920's, Neale traveled throughout the country lecturing about masterpieces and writing books on pictures study (Jones, 1974). Both his books and his lectures consisted of image reproductions and brief explanations about the piece (Smith, 1986). However, none of his books covered any pieces created before the Renaissance, nor did his books include any modern art pieces (Smith, 1986).

In the 1920's and 1930's, John Dewey and the Progressive era emphasized creativity, play and human development. Dewey took a particular interest in how art and psychology interacted. Children's artwork was analyzed because it showed the world "with an innocent and personal vision" (Dobbs, 1998, p. 18). The investigation of art and psychology made Dewey a "forerunner of modernist conceptions of art education" (Stankiewicz & Bolin, 2004, p. 38). Dewey's theories helped art become a part of school curriculum because it helped students focused on problem solving through student inquiry (Dunkel, 1959). His book, *Art as Experience*, was influential on the art education community; however, for some the book seemed to be "an attack on 'the idea of art for art's sake'" (Kuspit, 1968, p. 93). During this time, Arthur Wesley Dow, author of *Composition Series of Exercise in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers* and professor at Columbia University, focused more on the elements and principles of art.

The Great Depression caused many schools to close and teacher salaries to be reduced (Efland, 1983). While some art programs in schools were cut or reduced, the arts continued to be taught in many school districts. This was because "the arts were



identified with centralized tendencies in shaping the curriculum, especially the move to integrate with the social-studies” (Efland, 1983, p. 42).

In the 1940’s and 1950’s, art textbooks were written on themes that encouraged art as a means of accomplishing moral and social goals, specifically to promote good citizenship. This type of art instruction was more common for students in the elementary school. If there were art lessons in secondary school, they were typically, “holiday-based craft activities and decorating bulletin boards in school corridors with ‘look-alike’ student projects” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 18). These lessons did not teach art skills and reinforced the belief of teachers, administrators, and parents that art was insignificant (Dobbs, 1998).

In 1947, psychologist and art educator, Viktor Lowenfeld, wrote his seminal book, *Creative Mental Growth* (Smith, 1988). The book focused on the creative individual, self-actualization, and the theory that individuals should release their creative abilities “without any interference from the outside world” (Kauppinen, 1985). By the 1960’s, *Creative Mental Growth* was embraced by most art educators.

At Pennsylvania State Conference in 1965, Manuel Barkan called for k-12 students to experience art through the perspective of artists and other art related persons. School curriculum should include aspects of the artist, art critic, and art historian (Dobbs, 1998). At this time, researchers investigated “issues associated with student perception, responses to works of art, talk about art, cross-cultural differences, and other topics with consequences for curriculum and instruction” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 19). Through this research, findings suggested that visual perception and visual language greatly influenced mental functioning.

From 1968 to 1970, Elliot Eisner began an experimental programs focusing on “art ‘domains’ (production, criticism, and history)” in art curriculums (Dobbs, 1998, p. 20). Eisner’s program, the Kettering project at Stanford University, also emphasized “written curriculum, art reproductions, field trips to museums, and systematic evaluation” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 20). The project focused on three teachable art domains: the productive, the critical, and the historical. The productive domain focused on teaching art skills that later students utilized to make art products. The critical domain focused on teaching students to “see the aesthetic aspects of visual forms” (Eisner, 1970, p. 4). The historical domain dealt with art as a part of culture. The project was split into two years. The first year was spent recruiting teachers and teaching them the Kettering Curriculum. The second year the Kettering curriculum was taught to elementary aged students (Eisner, 1970).

In the 1980’s new art education leaders demanded that art be brought out of the margins of education. New goals began to form, raising the expectations of how students should experience art. One program, the Elementary Art Program at the Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL), developed different levels of instruction for elementary school students that focused on “art-making, art history, and art criticism” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 21, 1998).

Manuel Barkan, the Kettering Project, and the SWRL program all focused on more than just art making in art education. These programs were discipline-oriented practices that were implemented in art education previous to the term Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE). DBAE was first referenced in 1984, in an article by Dwaine Greer (Dobbs, 1998). Disciplined Based Art focuses on four disciplines of art education-

art criticism, art history, art aesthetics, and art making but “DBAE is not a promotion of any one of the art disciplines over the others” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 6). The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, or as it is titled now, the Getty Education Institute for the Arts, declared its views in a 1984 publication entitled, *Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America’s School*. This publication emphasized DBAE because through research, they found that a discipline-oriented art curriculum was most beneficial (Dobbs, 1998). The Getty Center ran workshops for elementary education teachers and professors that taught the principles of DBAE. Although some principles of DBAE had been around for more than two decades, with more research, theses, and dissertations published, DBAE took center stage and created a paradigm shift in art education (Dobbs, 1998).

From 1980-2000, DBAE was a focal point in art education but not all art educators accepted it. Some art educators felt that art should focus on art making and not be intellectualized. These art educators feared that by introducing art aesthetics, criticism, and art history that studio art classes would become more like a regular academic class (Dobbs, 1998). However, “the effort to sustain a discipline-based approach was further supported by the movement to create national standards for art education” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 23). During the early 1990’s, the national standards were set at different grade levels and included a disciplined approach to art education. See Appendix A for the National Standards of Visual Arts for 9-12<sup>th</sup> graders.

In the past 10 years there has been an emphasis of visual culture, personalization and technology. Tom Anderson and Melody Milbrandt wrote a book, published in 2002, that emphasized the importance of creating a personalized art experience for students. As Anderson and Milbrandt explain in their book, *Art for Life: Authentic Instruction in Art*,

the chief purpose of art education is for students to understand something about themselves and others through art. This, in turn, will contribute to students' personal growth, social progress, and sense of global community (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2002). Anderson and Milbrandt also believed that art education should promote communication and attend to important aspects of students' lives. One of the important aspects in life is the need to express one's thoughts and experiences. The goal of art, in various cultures, is to tell human stories. Therefore, art can be seen as a form of communication that tells how an individual sees himself or herself (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2002).

The project in this paper sets forth a curriculum that does promote a personalized, meaningful art experience as a form of communication. It is hoped that from such an experience students will become advocates of the arts.

### *Art Advocacy*

Jollie Jenson, author of *Is Art Good For Us?*, questions society's acceptance of art throughout her book. Jenson sees the public's perception of the art world as a factor that contributes to the lack of funding in art education. She thinks that the arts are often seen as an elitist, high-culture activity. Due to this perception, art education carries with it a stigma that can impede funding because it is perceived as enhancing an already elite art crowd (Jensen, 2002, p. 144). Indeed, "how can arts supporters respond to hostility from people who resent being told that stuff they don't understand, don't like, and often find offensive is still good for them and for America, and should be funded by tax dollars" (Jensen, 2002, p. 145). To justify the idea of bringing the arts to the masses (so funding can be more widely supported) arts supporters have attempted to convince the public

through a number of theories and ideas that art can not only be positive, but also that their children should not go without at least a basic art education.

The theories on why art is important can be separated into two groups, the intrinsic-value argument or noninstrumentalists and the essentialist argument also known as the instrumentalists (Dobbs, 1990; Jensen, 2002). The noninstrumentalists view art as a “source of knowledge, beliefs, and values about ourselves and about our world and that these are a critical and necessary part of the education of a citizen” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 9). They also believe that “Art offers access to knowledge, insights, and types of meanings that are not available elsewhere in the curriculum of most schools” (Dobbs, 1998, p. 9). Other art advocates who fall into the category of noninstrumentalists stress that art education is important because art is a part of our human nature; the need of self-expression and the creative process is part of our ever-evolving biology (Dissanayake, 1988).

The instrumentalists believe art is vital to education because of its impact on students. An instrumentalist views art as a tool to improve test scores, to civilize students to a higher social code, and to elevate moral behavior (Jensen, 2002). Instrumentalist art advocacy proclaims that art should be in schools because it benefits students in many other areas. This idea, that art is a crucial part of education due to its causation of improvement in other areas, has been with humankind throughout history. Even Plato held the idea that art is a way to help manage students- art is “an indulgence which may, with due caution, be extended to children at that stage of their education when they are liable to revolt against the strictness of a wholly rational regimen” (Read, 1937, p. 219).

Still today, art advocates loudly proclaim art's ability to improve other disciplines and help maintain the peace in schools.

In 2001, YouthARTS Development Project was a study consisting of troubled teens' exposure to the arts. The primary focus of the experiment was to see how the teens' involvement with the arts correlated with and thereby influenced their behavior. "Some of the findings reveal that in Portland, while only 43 percent of the program participants demonstrated an ability to cooperate with each other at the start of the program—a full 100 percent did so by the end of the 12 week program" (YouthArts, 2001, para. 3).

The idea that art classes can improve test scores in other disciplines is another common claim for advocating the arts. "Data from The College Board shows that students who take four years of arts and music classes while in high school score 103 points better on their SATs than students who took only one-half year or less" (Americans for the Arts, p. 1, 2007).

There has been an abundance of research conducted correlating art with improving basic test scores, attendance, moral behavior, and performance in other academic arenas. For example, a recent campaign for the arts which stated that "public support of the arts funds better education, job preparedness, economic growth, and increases in home values, promotes tourism, and is a cost-effective means to deal with social problems such as crime and drug use" (Jensen, 2002, p. 147).

The other argument taken on by art advocates has a more expressive, Dewian prospective. Dewey, a twentieth century pragmatist, was a great influence in American philosophy (Freeland, 2001). His theory of art was a cognitive approach in which art

served as an active component in our lives because it allowed us an opportunity to interact and merge with our environment. Dewey viewed art as an instinctual way of communicating what one found valuable or good.

There have been various studies conducted which emphasize the importance of students' enhancing their expressive abilities. *Champions of Change*, a compilation of seven studies edited by Edward Fiske (1999), found that art involvement can "connect students to themselves and each other" (p. xi). This statement is supported by the idea that when a student is creating a piece of art, he or she draws upon personal experiences for inspiration. Because of this self-reflection, students "feel invested in ways that are deeper than 'knowing the answer'" (Fiske, 1999, p. xi).

This expressive view also stresses the idea that art is an outward manifestation of internal creative processes. "The fact that people everywhere value the arts and take the trouble to express themselves aesthetically suggests to an evolutionary biologist that there is a reason, doing this (rather than not doing this) contributes to human evolutionary fitness" (Dissanayake, 1988, p. 62). Therefore, art is important in education because it is linked to a crucial component of our basic human nature.

Many advocacy groups such as the National Art Education Association (NAEA), American's for the Arts, and National Endowment, express both the expressive and instrumentalist views for the arts. Most of these organizations target legislators, teachers, parents, school board members, and administrators towards their advocacy efforts. However, rarely, if ever, do these organizations target students in their advocacy efforts.

## CHAPTER III

## PROCEDURES OF THE PROJECT

*Introduction*

This goal of this project was to create a curriculum that encourages art advocacy in high school students. I designed the lessons to teach advance-drawing students about European art and to require students to relate historical concepts to their present life and society. I wanted to personalize the curriculum and create a meaningful art experience for my students. I hope that these students will become motivated to advocate the arts in the future.

*Development of the Project*

In the beginning of this project, I used JSTOR to access art education resources, books, and journals. As I gathered more information, I became aware of the fact that there were no art history curriculums similar to the one I had created. In addition, I found that most advocacy programs target parents, administrators, art educators, school board members, and legislators. I found there was a need for a curriculum that would create a personalized, meaningful experience for students that would encourage them to become art advocates. Although research aided my justification of the project, it was through my experience teaching ART 330, Art in the Elementary School, at Central Washington University that gave me ideas for my curriculum. The class is intended to teach elementary school teachers how to teach art. One of the assignments was for students to create their own art lesson for their future elementary classroom. To do this, students were required to look at a culture and create an art project based upon that particular



culture. After writing the lesson, students were to create the art product described in the lesson. The art product could not copy the culture; rather, it had to reflect the students' own culture. The result of the lessons and art products were very successful; students learned about a culture and had an opportunity to make an art product meaningful to them.

After my experience teaching at Central Washington University, I was hired at Gig Harbor High School to teach art. One of the classes I was responsible for teaching was advance drawing. Since there had been four different art teachers at Gig Harbor High School in the last two years, I was not sure what students had previously learned. Therefore, I decided to create the curriculum described in this project, based upon art history. I assumed that students knew little about the subject and I am passionate about art history. As an undergraduate and graduate student at Central Washington University, I took six art history courses taught by Dr. William Folkestad. I used the information that I learned during these classes to create the slide presentations contained within the curriculum.

### *Procedures*

I have used my curriculum two times and each time I completed the curriculum, I modify the lessons in hopes of improving student learning. The first time I taught my curriculum, I used lectures and slide presentations to teach students information on art history. Students were required to create an art piece, but the requirements were open-ended; students determined on what they would focus. Students were tested on their knowledge through slide recognition tests and critiques.

The second time I used my curriculum I decided to refine the lessons but found focusing on art history chronologically to be effective. I decided previously that I had relied too much on direct instruction. Therefore, this time I required students to be more involved in the formation of the information they learned. I did this by creating different ways of relaying the art history information. I still presented some of the information through direct instruction, but I also designed some lessons so that students could create the tests and the slide presentations. For the first lesson, students were given a picture of an ancient Roman or Greek art piece and were asked to find the title, artist, location, and concept behind the piece using only the picture. This was too difficult and confusing for the first lesson because many sources gave conflicting information. For the third lesson, Renaissance art, students worked in partners and chose an artist to create a slide show. They also created a handout and test questions for their peers. This guided, self-direction was successful and students retained much of the information they were responsible for teaching.

I also formulated more direct instructions on what students were expected to create. The first time I presented the ancient art history information and told students they were expected to create something inspired by the ancient pieces. They were very confused and many of their art projects just copied the style of ancient art. The second time I used my curriculum, when I specified that they needed to draw a person who was ideal in some way, students created improved projects that demonstrated more understanding of the objectives.

The second time I used my curriculum, students were still assessed primarily through slide recognition tests and classroom critiques. I implemented slide recognition

tests so that students would familiarize themselves with artists' names and titles of work. I hoped that when they saw the work in the future, either in an art history class in college, in a book, or in person, they would remember some information about the piece. For college bound students, slide recognition tests are especially important because this will largely be the assessment format for university level art history courses.

Similarly, I chose to continue using classroom critiques as a way of assessment because this is how most college studio art courses are assessed. Regardless of whether a student is college bound or not, it is important for students to feel comfortable talking about their work as an artist. Critiques also helped students improve their communication skills. During a critique, I ask students to comment both on the positive and negative aspects of each other's work. Knowing that their work was going to be displayed in front of the class and that their peers would be evaluating their work helped motivate students to do their best.

The following chapter presents a brief overview of the project curriculum. The five lessons follow the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROJECT

#### *Overview*

The following advanced high school drawing/painting curriculum consists of five lessons. Each lesson contains a lesson plan, lecture handout, slide recognition test, project determination form, and critique form. The curriculum is intended to create a meaningful art experience for students and encourage them to become future art advocates.

Lesson one focuses on art from ancient Greece and Rome. Students first receive a lecture handout that they will fill in as they watch a slide show and listen to a lecture. The lecture handout also serves as a test review. Next, students are given time to research and determine what they will create for their art piece. Specifically, students are expected to draw a person in correct proportion. Once they decide whom they will draw, students complete a project determination form. This form requires students to receive peer input on their idea. Students have class time to create their piece of art and are tested on their art history knowledge through a slide recognition test. At the end of the lesson, students participate in a class critique by hanging up their work and explaining their concept to the class. Both their peers and I give them suggestions and praise for their work.

Lesson two, Gothic art, follows the same procedures as lesson one in order to give students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the typical class procedures. One difference is that students are asked to create an illuminated manuscript instead of drawing a portrait.

Lesson three, Renaissance Art, is different from lessons one and two because students create the slide show, present the lecture, and make test questions. Students still fill out a project determination form, take a slide recognition test (student created), and participate in a class critique. Students choose a partner to work with and receive the Renaissance Group Project Handout. The partnered students choose an artist that they will study and then create a slide show and test questions. Students present their information to the class and I create a test using the groups' questions.

I designed lesson three to be more student centered for three reasons. First, I found by the third lesson students were beginning to get bored with direct instruction so I decided to let them become even more involved in creating the curriculum. However, after they experienced trying to find all the information themselves, they are more cooperative for the last two lessons and appreciated receiving information from me. Secondly, students usually have some previous knowledge of Renaissance artists so they are less likely to feel overwhelmed. Finally, designing lesson three this way gives students an opportunity to experience Constructivism and construct their own knowledge of art history.

Lesson four, Academic verses Avant Garde Art, is similar in procedures to lessons one and two. One difference is that instead of a slide recognition test, students take an essay-format test. When students take the test, they first read four descriptions of art pieces. Then, they determine one piece that is Academic and explain why. Finally, they choose one piece that is Avant Garde and explain why. This is done in order to give students a more diverse assessment of their knowledge.

Lesson five, United States Modern Art, follows the procedures in lessons one and two. The artwork students create must use a non-art medium. A non-art medium would be something other than typical mediums commonly used in art such as paint, graphite, pastels, charcoal, pencils, or markers. In the past, students have created art for this lesson using fabric, pigment from flower petals, cosmetics, and nail polish.

Please note:

Pages have been redacted due to copyright concerns or restriction.

Chapter 4: After page 24 - to the end of the chapter, Lessons 1 - 5 have been redacted due to copyright concerns or restrictions. These pages have variant pagination. Total pages redacted is 140.

## CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Summary*

After reviewing the history of American Art Education history, I found there was a need for a personalized art curriculum for high school students. The personalized art curriculum included in this project was created to promote art advocacy while teaching students some European art history, having them create personalized art pieces, and taking an active role in their own learning. The curriculum is composed of five lessons, Ancient Art, Gothic Art, Renaissance Art, Academic versus Avant Garde Art, and United States Modern Art. Each lesson consists of a PowerPoint slide show, slide recognition or essay test, and classroom critique. Students are required to understand the art history period enough to create their own piece that is inspired by that particular period. Through these experiences, students build trusting relationships with each other and with me, the teacher. Creating a meaningful art experience will hopefully encourage students to become art advocates in the future.

*Conclusions*

This project has shown the importance of building trusting relationships. In order for the students to fully participate in my curriculum, they must feel comfortable in the classroom. If they do not feel this trust, students may feel too vulnerable to create personal art pieces, explain their concepts to the class, or critique one another's work.

After building a rapport with students, they often tell me that they were not looking forward to learning about art history. It seems that my students enter advance



drawing with a negative outlook on art history. This is interesting because rarely do I encounter students who have actually experienced a course dealing with this subject, yet they have assumed it is boring. However, after the class, some students are more interested in it and tell me they are planning to take art history in college.

Although many of my advance art students are going to attend college and some plan to pursue art as a career, advance high school art classes cannot be managed as if they were college art classes. Initially, I assumed advanced art students would be more self-directed and disciplined than my beginning drawing students. However, although my advanced students generally enjoy creating art, some students would rather relax and not work. It is therefore, important that students have an active role in their learning along with clear guidelines for their art projects. I have found that this helps advanced students to stay motivated and on task.

Indeed, most advanced high school art students cannot just come up with their own historically-inspired idea; they must be guided to do so. The first time I taught my curriculum, I expected students to easily come up with their historically-inspired art piece. Most students were not able to do this and consequentially, their art pieces were weak. The second time, I started the curriculum with Ancient Art by giving students specific guidelines that their pieces must follow. Later, I check to make sure that they have plans for their projects through going over their Project Determination Form. This has helped students understand the art history portion of the curriculum and create more original and personalized art pieces. As the curriculum progresses and students become familiar with developing art concepts, they require less guidance.

I can not guarantee this curriculum will cause students to become art advocates in the future. I have had several students inform me that they have decided to pursue art after taking this course. I am encouraged by these students whom have been motivated to pursue art outside of high school. Therefore, I conclude that from this personalized art experience, students will become art advocates in the future.

### *Recommendations*

In order to empirically prove that this curriculum will create art advocates, a longitudinal study is needed. I would like to continue this project by keeping records of the students who have successfully completed the curriculum described in this project and over the years, study their involvement with the arts. Reflecting on whether or not the students involved in this personalized curriculum became art advocates would help the reliability of this project.

I would also like to expand the art history portion of the curriculum to contain a more diverse collection of art images from more areas of the world rather than just the United States and Europe. Focusing on other countries will help personalize the curriculum for students from multi-cultural heritages and also build a more diverse knowledge of art for students.

I hope that other art teachers in the field reading this thesis will consider altering their curriculum to make theirs more personalized with the intention of creating a body of art advocates in the future. For it is with strong art advocates that art education will remain as a vital component in the development of our future citizens.

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APPENDIX A

The National Standards for Arts Education

## **The National Standards for Arts Education**

Developed by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts), the National Standards for Arts Education is a document which outlines basic arts learning outcomes integral to the comprehensive K-12 education of every American student. The Consortium published the National Standards in 1994 through a grant administered by MENC, the National Association for Music Education.

### **NATIONAL STANDARDS VISUAL ARTS (9-12)**

In grades 9-12, students extend their study of the visual arts. They continue to use a wide range of subject matter, symbols, meaningful images, and visual expressions. They grow more sophisticated in their employment of the visual arts to reflect their feelings emotions and continue to expand their abilities to evaluate the merits of their efforts. These standards provide a framework for that study in a way that promotes the maturing students' thinking, working, communicating, reasoning, and investigating skills. The standards also provide for their growing familiarity with the ideas, concepts, issues, dilemmas, and knowledge important in the visual arts. As students gain this knowledge and these skills, they gain in their ability to apply knowledge and skills in the visual arts to their widening personal worlds.

The visual arts range from the folk arts, drawing, and painting, to sculpture and design, from architecture to film and video -- and any of these can be used to help students meet the educational goals embodied in these standards. For example, graphic design (or any other field within the visual arts) can be used as the basis for creative activity, historical and cultural investigations, or analysis throughout the standards. The visual arts involve varied tools, techniques, and processes all of which also provide opportunities for working toward the standards. It is the responsibility of practitioners to choose from among the array of possibilities offered by the visual arts to accomplish specific educational objectives in specific circumstances.

To meet the standards, students must learn vocabularies and concepts associated with various types of work in the visual arts. As they develop greater fluency in communicating in visual, oral, and written form, they must exhibit greater artistic competence through all of these avenues.

In grades 9-12, students develop deeper and more profound works of visual art that reflect the maturation of their creative and problem-solving skills. Students understand the multifaceted interplay of different media, styles, forms, techniques, and processes in the creation of their work.

Students develop increasing abilities to pose insightful questions about contexts, processes, and criteria for evaluation. They use these questions to examine works in light of various analytical methods and to express sophisticated ideas about visual relationships using precise terminology. They can evaluate artistic character and aesthetic qualities in works of art, nature, and human-made environments. They can reflect on the nature of human involvement in art as a viewer, creator, and participant.

Students understand the relationships among art forms and between their own work and that of others. They are able to relate understandings about the historical and cultural contexts of art to situations in contemporary life. They have a broad and in-depth understanding of the meaning and import of the visual world in which they live.

### **Content Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes**

#### *Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks



Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes they use  
*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students communicate ideas regularly at a high level of effectiveness in at least one visual arts medium

Students initiate, define, and solve challenging visual arts problems independently using intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

**Content Standard #2: Using knowledge of structures and functions**

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgments about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal, or other purposes of art

Students evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions

Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students demonstrate the ability to compare two or more perspectives about the use of organizational principles and functions in artwork and to defend personal evaluations of these perspectives

Students create multiple solutions to specific visual arts problems that demonstrate competence in producing effective relationships between structural choices and artistic functions

**Content Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas**

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students reflect on how artworks differ visually, spatially, temporally, and functionally, and describe how these are related to history and culture

Students apply subjects, symbols, and ideas in their artworks and use the skills gained to solve problems in daily life

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students describe the origins of specific images and ideas and explain why they are of value in their artwork and in the work of others

Students evaluate and defend the validity of sources for content and the manner in which subject matter, symbols, and images are used in the students' works and in significant works by others

**Content Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures**

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students differentiate among a variety of historical and cultural contexts in terms of characteristics and purposes of works of art

Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places

Students analyze relationships of works of art to one another in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture, justifying conclusions made in the analysis and using such conclusions to inform their own art making

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students analyze and interpret artworks for relationships among form, context, purposes, and critical models, showing understanding of the work of critics, historians, aestheticians, and artists

Students analyze common characteristics of visual arts evident across time and among cultural/ethnic groups to formulate analyses, evaluations, and interpretations of meaning

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**Content Standard #5:** Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works

Students describe meanings of artworks by analyzing how specific works are created and how they relate to historical and cultural contexts

Students reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of visual art

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students correlate responses to works of visual art with various techniques for communicating meanings, ideas, attitudes, views, and intentions

**Content Standard #6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

*Achievement Standard, Proficient:*

Students compare the materials, technologies, media, and processes of the visual arts with those of other arts disciplines as they are used in creation and types of analysis

Students compare characteristics of visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues, or themes in the humanities or sciences

*Achievement Standard, Advanced:*

Students synthesize the creative and analytical principles and techniques of the visual arts and selected other arts disciplines, the humanities, or the sciences

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/overview.cfm>