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**TEACHER ARTISTRY AND THE NOT-SO-STILL LIFE
OF ARTS-CENTERED SCHOOL REFORM**

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Cassandra Andres Trousas

March 2009

Advisor: P. Bruce Uhrmacher, Ph.D.

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Title: TEACHER ARTISTRY AND THE NOT-SO-STILL LIFE OF ARTS-CENTERED SCHOOL REFORM

Advisor: P. Bruce Uhrmacher, Ph.D.

Degree Date: March, 2009

ABSTRACT

Despite a current climate that often undervalues the arts in education, arts-centered schools and school reform continue to proliferate. This study describes, interprets and evaluates arts-centered school reform which is defined within this study as *the comprehensive and intentional restructuring and re-culturing of schools using the theories and practices of the arts and arts-learning as the primary basis for educational change decisions* to uncover its aims, practices and significance.

Four research questions guided this study: 1) What are the aims of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied? 2) What does arts-centered school reform look like in practice? 3) What is the educational significance of arts-centered school reform as it is represented in the two schools studied? 4) What educational import do these examples of arts-centered school reform have for American public school reform in general? Educational connoisseurship and criticism is the methodology used to investigate arts-centered school reform. Educational criticism is composed of four dimensions, *description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics*.

Findings suggest that arts-centered school reformers have two basic aims: 1) to offer students a balanced experience in school by embracing a holistic vision of learning and childhood; and 2) to create a collaborative culture in the classroom that supports arts-learning and arts-centered school reform. The practices of arts-centered school reformers are explained in terms of five types of *arts-embedded situations* found in arts-centered

classrooms and schools. These five arts-embedded situations include situations of: arts-mindedness, artistry, home, growth and caring, and expressiveness.

The author explores the significance of arts-centered school reform as a meaning-making enterprise by examining five realms of meaning within the curriculum: the cognitive realm, imaginative realm, the democratic realm, the community realm, and the personal realm. The author surmises that these five realms support arts-centered school reform as spaces for students to locate their own meanings in education.

Six conclusions are drawn from these examples of arts-centered school reform. 1) Arts-centered school reformers internalize arts-centered school reform as a state of mind; 2) Arts-centered school reform cannot only be internalized as a state of mind but requires vision, structure, and action; 3) Arts-centered school reform demonstrates a shared aesthetic; 4) Arts-centered school reform is best implemented as a set of relational and personal ideals expressed through teacher created experiences, encounters, and arts-embedded situations; 5) Arts-centered school reform requires a public presence in the community to thrive; and 6) Arts-centered school reformers offer an ethic of arts-engagement that is vital to our sense of cultural democracy. Finally, the educational import of arts-centered school reform for American public education is discussed and suggestions for further research are also offered.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

The arts can serve as models of what educational aspiration and practice might be at its very best. To be able to think about teaching as an artful undertaking, to conceive of learning as having aesthetic features, to regard the design of an educational environment as an artistic task – these ways of thinking about some of the commonplaces of education could have profound consequences for redesigning the practice of teaching and re-conceiving the context in which teaching occurs. (Elliot Eisner, 2002, pp. xii – xiii)

Throughout my education I have had opportunities to read and learn about a wide assortment of works of visual and performance art. For instance, as an undergraduate I read about James Whistler's *Arrangement in Grey and Black*, colloquially known as Whistler's Mother. I studied the portrait, even wrote about it, but without much appreciation. It was not until I saw the actual painting in the stunning Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France that I was able to comprehend the simple beauty of Whistler's work. It sent me on an odyssey to see other paintings and sculptures I had only read about in books; to see for myself the nuanced reality of each work of arts' existence, not in the context of reproduced pictures, but up close. I have approached this study of the contexts of arts-centered school reform in much the same way, seeing for myself the myriad ways in which the artistry of teachers plays out in the educational situations each creates for students.

Visions of Artistry & Education

I have little doubt that artistry, creativity, and innovation are destined to be the defining features of the twenty-first century. Not only have we witnessed the proliferation of digital media, computer technologies, and the internet in all of its manifestations but there is also the rumblings of new social order brewing in the wings of American society currently illustrated by popular books such as *The Rise of the Creative Class . . . and How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* (2002), *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People are Changing the World* (2001), and *A Whole New Mind: How Right-brainers will Rule the Future* (2006) which all argue in various ways that creativity will be the organizing principle of culture, economy, and society's ability to flourish throughout this century and possibly beyond. Yet, given these mainstream signs that creativity and innovation, both notions supported by artistic sensibilities and skill-sets, are on the rise, schools are continuing to restrict the experiences of students in schools to subjects that are easily measured using the most basic of methods. It might be true that creativity, the arts, innovation, and vision are the slippery noodles in an educational policy climate bent on securing an easily disseminated curriculum and rigid accountability measures, however there is a real danger in continuing on the current trajectory of over-simplified educational management techniques toward narrow aims for students who could be tomorrow's innovator's, creators, visionaries, and contributors to a better society.

As states and districts continue to de-fund the arts in their schools many are systematically redirecting students away from the possibility of becoming part of the creative future of America. Without exposure to the arts, to the lessons that the arts teach,

and the ways in which the mind is used in creative enterprise, students' inner talents and proclivities face atrophy. Many in education continue to worry about the state of affairs in math and science learning in American schools, lamenting that students are woefully behind in their understanding of important concepts. But this concern belies the fact that information is growing exponentially and that as a set of concepts is learned within the lumbering curriculum of most schools, new ideas, theories, and theses are continually emerging; schools, as they are, simply cannot keep up with content. In light of an ever-advancing realm of ideas and facts, what really should concern educators is not necessarily teaching students *what* to think but teaching them *how* to think. The arts, as Elliot Eisner (1994a; 1994b; 1998b; 2002; see also Uhrmacher & Matthews, 2005) has spent a lifetime arguing, are central to this kind of innovative creation of mind. The arts, each in their own way offer lessons to students about how to think, solve problems, and how to come to understand complex phenomena through the senses, through cognition, and through emotion. All of which focus more on a humanist and progressive vision of the educational enterprise rather than on a technical or efficient vision.

In speaking with people outside of education it is difficult to find many who do not agree that the arts matter in life and in education. When I tell people about my research almost every person has a positive story to tell about their personal relationship with the arts. Indeed participation in arts events and attendance to art museums remains high across this country (Burton, 1994) and though it should concern educators that access to public arts is becoming yet another signal of the growing chasm between rich and poor in America, the idea that the arts are a major component of our human experience remains central to our cultural consciousness. Why is it then, that only a

minority of our schools reflect this value of the arts in any meaningful and substantial way?

Keeping the arts central to our schools' missions and aims for educating young people, pre-school through high school, is therefore an important component of policy and school reform talk, curriculum talk, and quality of life discussions regarding the future of students and their public, democratic education in America. In the interest of being part of this conversation, this dissertation describes, interprets, and evaluates four highly original classroom examples of arts-centered school reform in action. Within the context of this study, I define arts-centered school reform as *the comprehensive and intentional restructuring and re-culturing of schools using the theories and practices of the arts and arts-learning as the primary basis for educational change decisions*. The teachers whose work is explored in the four stories of this dissertation bring about educational change in meaningful ways through the creation of interesting arts-embedded educational situations for their students. Moreover, each teacher brings his or her own passion, love for the arts, respect for children, families, and each other, and superior skills as teachers into the educational milieu and through artistry offers an alternative narrative to the singular, constricted, one-path story so many students are experiencing as learners in today's public schools. I further surmise such lessons of artistry model possibilities for education in general and in multiple contexts beyond those studied here.

Rationale for the Study of Arts-Centered School Reform

Arts-centered school reform, also referred to as arts-based school reform¹ is a burgeoning field of study operating both inside and outside of academia. Arts-centered school reform initiatives are predominately supported by nationally known foundations, arts advocacy groups, arts partnerships, and non-profit arts organizations, federal, state, and private. The arts agenda for schools is often promoted by educators, leaders, policy makers, and academics that have a strong personal interest in the arts and in keeping the arts in schools. The strongest advocacy comes from the passion of believing that the arts have something to offer all students and our human culture at large.

Philosophically, within the multitude of organizations and individuals supporting the arts in schools, two camps are emerging. The first constitutes arts-advocates and organizations who are working toward building a causal link between arts-learning and student achievement in other academic subjects. Examples of such advocates include the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Arts Education Partnerships (AEP), and The Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College in conjunction with scholars such as Aprill, Burnaford, and Weiss (2001), Rabkin & Redmond (2004; 2006), and Stevenson & Deasy (2005) among others. Used overwhelmingly to stave off school budget cuts that affect arts programming and curriculum and to justify the arts' presence in schools, these advocates support the scientific study of arts learning in the hopes of creating a body of

¹ I have chosen to use the phrase *arts-centered* school reform versus *arts-based* school reform to describe the phenomena I describe in this study. To some extent this is merely a visual choice in description. That is to say, I see the arts, in the contexts observed, as existing at the center of the curriculum, pedagogy, and structure of arts-centered schools. In this view it is as if the arts are at the center of a wheel and the various working aspects of schools are the spokes or grow from the center, rather than seeing the arts as a pedestal or base on which arts-learning is built. In the schools studied I have found that the arts are at the center, not at the base of learning. Though the majority of the existing literature uses the term *arts-based*, researchers can find many of the same entries using the term *arts-centered* in relation to school reform inquiries.

evidence that cannot be dismissed when policy issues regarding the arts in education arise.

Other scholars, such as Winner & Hetland (2000a, 2000b, 2008), Hetland and Winner (2001, 2004), and Eisner (2000b; 2002) caution that arts advocates and organizations that hinge their hopes for justifying the role of the arts in education on the utility of the arts as agents of cognitive transfer and student achievement may be doing more damage than good in their on-going efforts to bolster a strong arts in education agenda in schools. Indeed, so far at least, the scientific evidence on transfer remains unclear and has created a mixed picture (Winner & Hetland, 2000b) regarding causal links between arts-learning and overall student achievement. More important to promote, these authors argue, are the lessons and skills that are intrinsic to engagement with the arts which they and their colleagues call “habits of mind” (Winner, Hetland, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2007) and include skills such as “persistence, expression, [and] making clear connections between schoolwork and the world outside the classroom . . .” (Winner & Hetland, 2008, p. 29) among others. Elliot Eisner (2002) makes a similar argument in his book *Arts and the Creation of Mind*. The arts, these authors remind us, have their own cognitive, imaginative, personal, creative, and expressive lessons that benefit students intrinsically with or without any transfer potential to other school subjects. In other words, though these lessons may or may not help achievement in broader academic areas they are useful and valuable in their own right. As Winner & Hetland (2008) point out, “We don't need the arts in our schools to raise mathematical and verbal skills - we already target these in math and language arts. We need the arts because in addition to introducing students to aesthetic appreciation, they teach other modes of thinking we

value” (p.32). Therefore it is deciding and focusing on what is of value for students that ought to guide our support of arts in education and our interest in continuing inquiries into arts-centered school reform among other arts-learning topics.

As a researcher I tend to agree more with Eisner, Winner, Hetland, and their colleagues who look for the distinct and intrinsic lessons the arts offer students, than with many of the arts advocates pushing the arts-learning argument toward a focus on student achievement and cognitive transfer. While I understand the impetus to hold such a position, I do not believe that over time, such an argument for the arts will affectively support the proliferation of arts in education or arts-centered school reform in any meaningful or long-lasting way. The primary rationale for studying arts-centered school reform, therefore, is to explore the merits of the latter of these two emerging arguments for sustaining and supporting the arts in education in our public schools. We can learn a great deal about the intrinsic value of the arts in students’ lives by observing teachers and their interactions with students through arts engagement.

Second, despite an educational climate that is unfavorable to the arts, schools focused on arts-learning continue to be designed and implemented. Finding why and how this is occurring through the four stories in this dissertation add to the growing message of proliferation rather than elimination of arts-learning in schools. Moreover, administrators and teachers wishing to re-envision their schools as arts-centered need as many examples as possible of successful arts-centered school reform efforts to scaffold their own efforts. This study attempts to add to that scaffolding.

The third rationale for studying arts-centered school reform is personal. When I think of the kind of school I would like my own child to attend, I know that it must be

filled with the arts, with ideas that build up the imagination and that will help all children become part of a caring, creative community. Elliot Eisner (2005) has asked, “Can a child be anything but whole” (p. 16)? Our current education agenda tends to answer this question in the negative as school becomes more fragmented, piecemeal, and layered with shallow and arguably meaningless learning experiences. I believe arts-centered schools as a reform effort holds the greatest promise for achieving the progressive ideal of educating the whole child.

Significance of the Study

The arts are among the resources through which individuals recreate themselves. The *work* of arts is a process that culminates in a new art form. That art form is the recreation of the individual. Recreation is a form of *re*-creation. The arts are among the most powerful means of promoting re-creation. Those of us who have tried to understand what the arts contribute to the development of human consciousness can feel a sense of pride that our legacy is one that attempts to engender life at its most vital level. The arts make such vitality possible. They are sources of deep enrichment for all of us. (Elliot Eisner, 2002, pp. 240-241)

This statement by Elliot Eisner conjures the possibilities of what the arts have to offer education, to the individual, and to humanity as a whole. It speaks to the possibilities inherent in expressing oneself or one’s culture through artistic endeavor. The legacies of thousands of cultures around the world and over the ages have been embodied in countless forms of artistic representation. As Eisner (1994a) has noted, “the arts are not a second-class substitute for expression; they are one of the major means people throughout history have used both to conceptualize and express what has been inexpressible in discursive terms” (p. 222). What would the world mean to us without this legacy, preserved for all of us to learn from, experience, and enjoy on many levels and for different reasons, both personal and cultural? Moreover, what affects will be had on

future legacies if we humans fall out of practice in understanding, creating, and appreciating the arts?

Schools that are focused on the arts for the purpose of improving school life and student learning work toward fostering, what I would call, an ethic of arts-engagement in students and all those connected with the school, that will ultimately benefit society. While fostering an ethic of arts-engagement is one potential benefit of arts-centered school reform, it does not fully explain why it is important to study such a model. I offer four reasons why this study is important.

First, while there are at least seven studies that focus on some aspect of arts-centered or arts-based school reform [see e.g., Obiokor 2002; Tabereaux, 2002; Smar, 2000; Wiebe Zederayko, 2000; Sanders, 1999; Kanter 1993; Adams 1999], none have described, interpreted and evaluated what arts-centered school reform looks like in practice for the purpose of offering a detailed account of arts-centered school reform as it exists. Nor have researchers of arts-centered school reform environments closely studied such models to attempt to uncover what might prove useful in other reform settings. The current body of research on arts-centered school reform has failed to offer a more inclusive perspective built to understand the efficacy of arts-centered school reform agendas and implementation strategies. I pursued this research study to uncover the lessons to be learned from arts-centered school reform efforts for the potential benefit of other schools attempting to follow similar paths toward school improvement.

Second, the time is right for a study such as this one. There is a growing flurry of schools looking to the arts to support their agendas for school improvement. Alongside these efforts are arts organizations and advocacy groups that believe in the arts and are

trying to reach out to the schools attempting to support the arts. What is missing in this relationship between schools and arts-centered organizations is a strong understanding of how the current efforts support ideas of school reform and how arts-centered reformers can make their voices heard within the narrowing straits of school reform as it is defined by No Child Left Behind legislature and other less progressive ideologies. Strengthening the relationship between schools, arts-advocacy, and school reform is one potential benefit from carrying out a study on arts-centered school reform.

Third, against the back drop of No Child Left Behind, it is important for strong examples of arts-centered school reform to be seen and heard. And while it is doubtful that single studies can do much to change the overall state of affairs in school reform in America at this time (Eisner, 2002), I believe, like others (see e.g., Murfee & EAP, 1995) that these efforts do accumulate. There can indeed be strength in numbers and the more that rigorous studies of arts-centered school reform are designed and carried out, the louder the collective voice becomes in favor of these methods. The louder this voice becomes the more weight and authority it will have in future discussions regarding the best educational aims for students. In my mind this is one of the best avenues for lasting change in schools. This study attempts to be one such voice to be added to the collective care and concern in support of students' freedom to be actively engaged in the arts and for schools and communities to benefit from such engagement.

A final note of significance for studying arts-centered school reform is based on my belief that the arts in education strengthen important values that American society wishes to communicate to its students. These values reside in five realms of meaning to be explored in this study. These realms include the cognitive, the imaginative, the

democratic, the community, and the personal. The rationale for including these five realms are discussed in chapter three, but for now it is enough to relate that, at their core, the arts in education have the potential for affecting these five realms of meaning through the intentions, actions, and vision of teachers' work and artistry.

Research Questions

Four questions guide this study:

1. What are the aims of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied?
2. What does arts-centered school reform look like in practice?
3. What is the educational significance of arts-centered school reform as it is represented in the two schools studied?
4. What educational import do these examples of arts-centered school reform have for American public school reform in general?

Question one addresses the aims or *intentions* of arts-centered school reformers. As a researcher in this setting I am interested in how teacher aims and intentions are realized in the classroom milieu. I am interested in what aims are shared by arts-centered school reformers and what aims are particular to individual teachers. This question hones in on the *Intentional* dimension of Eisner's (1988; 1992; 1998a) ecology of schooling. The intentional dimension helps us evaluate the school in terms of its explicitly stated aims and how they do or do not manifest in the classroom and school.

Question two addresses the day-to-day lives of teachers in arts-centered school reform settings. What do the classrooms look like in practice? How is the day organized? What types of activities, encounters, and situations do teachers offer students in arts-

centered classrooms? The descriptions of Ms. Bakke's, Mrs. Fontaine's, Mrs. Ingram's and Mr. Chadek's artistry as teachers work to uncover what qualities define these classrooms as arts-centered. Toward this goal I offer five types of arts-embedded situations that teachers offer students in arts-centered school reform settings. In addition to describing and interpreting teacher artistry in each classroom, each chapter reaches beyond the classroom to the school in which it exists. Arts-centered classrooms do not exist in isolation; rather a holistic view of arts-centered school reform is therefore also explored so that readers can begin to imagine what the entire school experience is like for students in arts-centered school reform milieus.

Question three addresses the educational significance and meanings of what has been gleaned from the four stories included in this dissertation for the future of arts-centered school reform. Here I emphasize five types of meaning-making possibilities students encounter in arts-centered schools. In this way I frame the value of arts-centered school reform and teacher artistry toward a deeper understanding of the arts in education and the values this kind of education offers to students' lives.

Question four addresses significance more broadly and focuses on the conclusions drawn from this study of teacher artistry in arts-centered school reform settings and how these contribute to the larger context of American public school reform. I offer six conclusions regarding arts-centered school reform. Though one of the hopes for this study is to affect arts-centered school settings beyond the two studied here, as a researcher I recognize that not all schools are destined to be arts-centered schools, however even schools that are not arts-centered may benefit from the conclusions made

from this study of arts-centered schools, thus this final question explores the wider impact that arts-centered school reform might have on education in multiple settings.

Realms of Meaning & Arts-Centered School Reform

To deepen my investigation into arts-centered school reform I set myself the task of looking at each educational milieu in terms of its meaning-making potential for students. I borrow the term *Realm of Meaning* from Phenix (1986) and Uhrmacher (2001) both of whom have used such a conceptual framework to more deeply understand the structures of learning. I have employed this framework to consider the curriculum, pedagogy, and structure of arts-centered schools in an attempt to find its “essential meanings” (Phenix, 1986, p. 5). I originally chose four areas, *the cognitive realm, the imaginative realm, the democratic realm, and the community realm* to describe philosophical areas in which arts-engagement aids students in creating their own meaning as learners. Throughout my observations an additional area of meaning-making possibility for students emerged, *the personal realm*. These five realms of meaning, viewed together, offer an integrated vision of arts-centered learning as they appear in the four school reform contexts of this study.

Overview of the Methodology

Early on in my doctoral studies, when thinking about which methods would prove most appropriate to investigate arts-centered school reform I decided to employ the method of educational criticism (Eisner 1994a; 1998a). I felt it was important to use a qualitative, arts-based method of research to investigate arts-centered learning and I had previous experience evaluating arts-centered education using this method (Trousas, 2002) which increased my comfort level in employing this methodology. One of my enduring

beliefs is that quality knowledge and learning is created through engagement with arts experiences therefore modeling an arts-based approach to understanding arts education phenomena was congruent with my thinking. Echoing a statement made to me some years ago by the scholar Gary Lichtenstein², I believe that researchers must model their models. For me this means promoting arts-centered practices by investigating such practices with an arts-imbued method.

Educational Connoisseurship & Criticism

Educational criticism and connoisseurship (hereafter referred to as *educational criticism*), is an arts-based educational research method that “demands that the inquirer attend to the subtleties and nuances of educational materials, settings, and events” (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p. 80). Educational critics describe, interpret, evaluate, and thematicize educational environments using the expressive language of the arts and the art critic. Educational criticism allows for the salient features of educational environments to be brought forth, illuminated, and evaluated in terms of their educational significance. The task of the educational critic is to take what has been privately comprehended through connoisseurship – the art of appreciation – and made public through the four dimensions of educational criticism – the art of disclosure. Through this structure, the educational critic is able to cull and parse what he or she deems important for further learning, inquiry, and understanding of the topic toward the overall goal of improving education for students.

² In an interview for a separate arts-based project on teacher education and the arts in 1997, Dr. Lichtenstein quipped: “teachers of teachers must model their models.” I have reflected on this statement throughout my studies and embraced this notion as I have worked to maintain continuity in my goals and methods as a researcher.

Selection of Schools & Participants

Throughout my doctoral studies I was aware of a number of arts-centered schools in the Denver metropolitan area and in other states across the country. I generated a list of schools engaging in arts-centered curriculum and reform and focused my attention on these. I cold-contacted the principals of a number of schools in Colorado and explained my research agenda. I was met with enthusiastic support of my efforts and gained access to the two schools I was most interested in studying.

With the administration of both chosen schools on board, I asked each school's principal to suggest teachers in their schools who they believed would be willing to open their classrooms to my observations and have time for in-depth interviews. Based on recommendations of the two principals I contacted three teachers to request their participation in my study and each teacher accepted with enthusiasm. The fourth teacher I located by recommendation of another teacher participant. I had never worked in any capacity in the two schools studied and had never met the teacher participants or school personnel prior to scheduling and gaining permissions for my study. Though I had heard about these two schools intermittently over the years of my doctoral study, I had had no direct experience with either school and cannot be considered an insider in relation to these two particular arts-centered school settings. Both school environments were entirely new to me as I began my observations.

Data Collection & Analysis

To answer my research questions several data collection strategies were implemented. First, I engaged in direct observation of the four teachers in their classrooms. I spent approximately two weeks of full school days in each classroom

observing teachers and their interactions with students. In addition I followed my teachers' students to special classes such as library, technology, music, physical education, art, and arts-enrichment courses offered by each school as well as followed my participant classes on field trips within the community. I spent several hours outside of my scheduled observations of the classroom attending school functions that offered a sense of the larger school community in which these schools existed. I also spent a great deal of time roaming the halls, sketching the layout of the school and recording descriptions of the art present in the schools. I also observed the playground and the quality and kinds of play going on at the schools. Overall, I attempted to fully comprehend the culture of the arts-centered school experience in which these classrooms existed in addition to my observations of the specific classrooms and the interactions of teachers with their students.

Next, I took copious notes of what I was observing, often recording verbatim conversations and chatter between teachers, students, parents, and administrators and speaking informally with parents and teachers out roaming the halls while I was. I conducted a number of formal interviews with classroom parents, teachers, specials teachers, paraprofessionals, teachers' assistants and the principals of both schools. In addition I engaged in several short and informal interviews that offered a corroborative picture of arts-centered school reform.

Finally, I gathered artifacts related to the curriculum and pedagogy taking place in each classroom. Samples of curriculum, projects, student work, and class-generated artworks were collected and further aided my understanding of the full extent of the arts-

engagement and arts-embedded situations teachers were offering their students in these school reform settings.

During the analysis of my data I was often reminded of the complicated, interwoven, blurred-boundary nature of arts-centered school reform. At any given moment a multitude of teaching strategies were being used toward multiple ends. In my description and analysis I have resisted, to some extent, the minute dissection of the curriculum, pedagogy, and structure of each classroom and have favored a more fluid explication of the experiences of arts-centered school reformers. However I have remained focused on an interest in providing a clear and true, a *referentially adequate* (Eisner, 1998a) portrayal of the contextual whole of arts-centered school reform. In so doing I found I needed a large array of theories and theorists to interpret the kinds of learning I saw transpiring in arts-centered classrooms. Some theories and theorists used to interpret the artistry of teachers are not arts-based per se but reach outside of the arts and offer an integrated, inclusive, and philosophically broad interpretation of events. In chapter three I further explain the specific strategies I used to physically work with the data I collected.

The Organization of the Dissertation

In thinking about how I have explored and structured the topic of arts-centered school reform, I agree with Sandra Nieto's premise that "*context* is always implicated in learning" (1999, p. 1). Since this study had to do with arts-learning, the contexts of these arts-centered schools has become a large part of what will be presented in the following pages. In observing and coming to understand arts-centered school reform I could not extricate arts-learning (the curriculum and pedagogical choices made) arts-integration (the structure and planning of school and curricula), and arts-engagement (students

hands-on experiences with art forms) from the contexts in which such practices were observed in the classrooms and thus schools. Therefore the reader will see a layered rendering not only of the teacher and his or her classroom but also of the walls of the school, the outside community, and the events that take place at arts-centered schools. The reader will be offered a view of the larger school milieu toward the goal of vicariously experiencing arts-centered school reform in its wholeness.

Chapter two reviews the arts-based and arts-centered literature against a backdrop of comprehensive school reform in America. I focus on the thinking and research related to arts in education and arts-learning. Crucial advocacy reports are reviewed and key figures and movements within the arts-in-education landscape are discussed. I offer an overview of the efforts of arts-centered school reform so far and draw conclusions on the current field of arts-centered school reform.

Chapter three outlines the methodology used in this study, *Educational Criticism* and the conceptual framework employed throughout this investigation. Educational criticism, the methodology created by Elliot Eisner (1976, 1994a, 1998a), has experienced success and longevity as a significant form of qualitative and arts-based inquiry and has a strong presence at the University of Denver, Stanford University, and many universities across the nation and in Canada. This chapter explores the basic tenets of educational criticism and its possibilities for inquiry into arts-centered school reform. Chapter three also offers the limitations of this study.

Chapters four, five, six, and seven investigate the artistry of each of the four participant teachers. In describing the events of arts-centered school reform some liberty has been taken in displaying the order of events and how certain activities occurred

within the days observed or throughout the week. However, great care has been taken to accurately portray the activities observed and the words uttered by participants. All discussion included in quotations was either recorded verbatim in field notes or captured through taped interview or email communication. As a reminder, all names and places, etc. used in this dissertation are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants, schools, and community.

Throughout the descriptions of the four classrooms a wide array of theories and theorists are employed to interpret what is occurring in each classroom. While *interpretation* is a feature of educational criticism, the ways in which the interpretations are interspersed throughout the narrative could be seen as departing slightly from the typical presentation of educational criticism. Such *moments of illumination*³ are intended to illuminate and imbue with meaning the activities and artistry created by each teacher observed in each setting. This approach to writing proves to be more of a weaving of educational events than a rigid delineation of the ecology of the classroom and school. However, each ecological element – the structural, curricular, pedagogical, community, evaluative, and aesthetic– is contained within each chapter to varying degrees. At the end of each classroom narrative a *Summary Sketch* is included to distill the overarching ideas of the chapter including various visual representations of findings.

Chapter eight provides a brief overview of the descriptive chapters, evaluates the educational environments observed for their educational significance to arts-centered school reform, and responds to the four research questions that guided this study. Chapter eight also offers suggestions for future research.

³ I am thankful to my advisor and mentor, Dr. P. Bruce Uhrmacher, for offering this helpful term to describe the interpretive style I have chosen to use throughout my classroom narratives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

[T]he ultimate aim of education is nothing more than the creation of human beings in the fullness of their capacities. Through the making of human beings, of men and women generous in aspiration, liberal in thought, cultivated in taste, and equipped with knowledge and competent method, society itself is constantly remade, and with the remaking the world itself is recreated. (John Dewey as cited in Simpson & Jackson 1997, p. 43)

Educators and policy makers often hold differing views on what the creation of human beings should look like. Public education has witnessed many of these differing views resulting in the creation of a wide assortment of school reform initiatives. Indeed, since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education [NCEE], 1983) the school reform mechanism has been working overtime in American education. The gloomy characterization of education and the need for educational reform is captured in the first couple sentences of this document which states,

Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors around the world . . . the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by the rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. (As cited in Gordon 2003, p. 167)

A Nation at Risk proved to be the beginning of a renewed call for the reform of education manifested in numerous plans, each more laden with political consequences and more narrowly prescribed roles for school, administrators, and teachers than the last. The

Federal response to school reform has culminated in its most recent addition, the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) act, the name given to the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Acts, designed to increase the pressure on American schools to improve.

The NCLB act's focus on quality and accountability is not in itself cause for alarm. There is much to be praised in the search for sound practices in teaching and accountability of student learning. The turn it has taken, however, in reducing the number of alternatives for how schools are structured, how curriculum is designed and experienced by students, and by the elimination or marginalization of subjects of study, particularly the arts, is indeed cause for concern. In the struggle for time, attention, and resources, the arts are often sacrificed so that traditional mainstream core subjects, primarily literacy, math, and science, can be the main focus of instruction.

It is a general belief that efforts to reform schools suffer from a tide of redundancy that has led to a certain amount of cynicism. However, it could be, as Tyack and Cuban (1995) suggest, that "it is policy talk . . . that cycles more than practice in education" (p. 2). That is to say that *talk* about reform and change in schools is more prevalent than *action* or *implementation*. Rhetoric may be overstated while action may be understated or not as common. Examples of reform in *action* then, are of great importance for understanding reform as it relates to history. This research study seeks to examine to what ends our current practices serve the aims of school improvement and how, in this era of accountability and narrowed vision can arts-in-education advocates and schools use an arts-learning approach to learning as an effective model of school reform.

The Arts in an Era of School Reform

In day to day school life the focus on the traditional core subjects has relegated the arts to the proverbial, back of the bus. This despite a growing albeit fledgling, body of evidence that supports the notion that the arts in education promote student learning in measurable ways [see e.g., Deasy & AEP, 2002]. However, as advocates of the arts in education are well aware, conditions exist in today's schools that move the focus off of what the arts can accomplish for students and onto narrowly defined measures of accountability and shallow assessment of student achievement. School reform with the arts in mind is very seldom pursued. It is safe to say that within the larger comprehensive school reform landscape arts-centered school reform is under-represented.

For instance, the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center's report updated and published in 2006 (<http://www.csrq.org>, retrieved October, 2007) includes twenty-two nationally recognized comprehensive school reform models available to schools and districts at the elementary school level, of these only one reform model, Different Ways of Knowing (DWoK), (Galef Institute, 1989) mentions the arts, in this case an arts-infused curriculum, as one of its central features.

This is not to say that there are not a lot of arts going on in schools or that there are not multiple examples of research on the merits, utility of, and danger of eliminating the arts in schools posted on foundation websites and included in reports of all kinds. What it does indicate however is that the arts, within the school reform arena, still struggle to be known. The champions of arts-learning are rallying their cause by, in some cases, well-executed research reports and a collective passion for promoting the arts in every school. Hampering this effort however, is a reluctance to enter into the world of

school reform in purposeful ways. Any impact on school reform as a result of arts innovation and implementation is implied but not made explicit. It is imperative that the arts-centered world strengthen their arguments in support of the arts in school reform.

The school reform ideas of the last twenty years can be seen to exist as a series of initiatives that have simultaneously opened opportunities for research and accountability while narrowing the purposes for and potential outcomes of education. School reform in America remains a complex set of issues that exist on multiple fronts and reflect multiple perspectives on what it means to educate individuals and to what ends. However at its heart it consists of a genuine interest by all involved to improve the lives of students in schools. With such a goal in mind, this review of the literature examines the most predominant forces in current thinking regarding school reform in America creating a backdrop for reviewing and synthesizing the arts-centered efforts toward educational change and comprehensive school reform.

Sputnik & the Renewed Interest in School Reform

Although it was the launching of Sputnik in 1957 that marks the American preoccupation with the country's status in world arenas which in turn focused attention on reform curriculum and instruction in America, it is the reports that came out of the 1980's and 1990's that have created the current state of affairs for school reform in America. *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983) hailed the need to improve America's schools. This document which indicted schools and teachers for turning out mediocre students, in addition to indicting institutes of higher education for turning out mediocre teachers, induced a number of comprehensive school reforms. Most of these, occurring at the state level, proved appealing to school officials because they often came with funding attached

(Fuhrman, 2003). This initiated what was to be known as the excellence movement in education “which focused on raising standards for students and teachers by, among other things, increasing core requirements for graduation, instituting more student assessment . . . lengthening the school day, and stiffening requirements for teacher certification and re-licensure” (p. 8).

By the late 1980’s the panic and enthusiasm generated by *A Nation at Risk* was waning (Vinovskis, 2003) and a new set of goals, namely the National Education Goals, were fashioned. This manifested in “a proposed package of reforms labeled *America 2000* . . . which centered on six national education goals, school choice, voluntary national testing, and partnership with America 2000 communities . . .” (Vinovskis, 2003, p. 125). The legislation did not pass but morphed into Goals 2000, a Clinton administration educational plan that called for “systemic and standards-based reforms” (p. 125). The effort was well-intended in that it strove to provide the same level of education to all students accompanied by a streamlining of content standards, curriculum, and evaluation at the state level. The efforts of Goals 2000 were rendered futile, however, because the support needed, namely funding for research and development of school initiatives, was still lacking; a problem we are seeing today with the No Child Left Behind act as well. Over the eight years that this educational agenda served as the primary focus of our nation’s policy for education, the policy talk, and in this case, even the policy design were not enacted in a way that would make any lasting impact on school reform (Vinovskis 2003).

The most current manifestation of the federal government’s interest in educational change and school reform is the current *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) act of 2001 (U.S

Department of Education), President George W. Bush's plan for raising student achievement and providing better accountability practices and research-driven reforms in schools. The primary goal of this legislature is made clear in the initial statement of the document which states, "Satisfying the demand for highly skilled workers is the key to maintaining competitiveness and prosperity in the global economy" (p. 1). In other words, economic strength is the yardstick by which American education should measure its worth in the public domain.

Beyond this primary economic goal of NCLB, the document continues its rationale of support, focusing on educational issues such as offering high academic achievement for the economically disadvantaged, preparation of high quality teachers and principals, more choices for parents seeking, and supporting the growth of charter schools. But its hallmark initiative has been its call for accountability, compounded by strict penalties doled out to schools for failure to improve in accordance with the guidelines of NCLB. On the surface these policies may seem well constructed and able to achieve the goals of the administration and the public. But underneath this policy-sheen, the NCLB has created a high-stakes atmosphere in schools that may not ensure the goals it seeks to achieve, especially in regard to the arts in education (Chapman, 2004).

As we approach the end of the Bush Administration and look toward an Obama Administration it is unclear whether NCLB will be sustained as the primary mode of accountability and improvement for plagued schools. Critics of No Child Left Behind comment that this legislature has yet to be supported in such a manner as to ensure quality research and therefore quality outcomes of these very laudable ideas (Finch 2004). In addition, the reliance on quantitative measures in the name of scientifically-

based research may render meaningful qualitative studies and design relics of the past or equally disturbing, render them purely academic exercises [see Flinders, 2003]. This renewed faith in the types of knowledge gained from scientifically-based research discounts or at the very least ignores, the valuable information often gained from rigorous and well-designed qualitative studies in education; indeed it appears that, for now at least, quantitative studies are the only game in town. This study pushes against this restrictive state of affairs in educational research.

The Arrival of Comprehensive School Reform

By and large the federal school reform agenda during the excellence movement was perceived as a top-down approach to school reform. However, with the standards movement came more autonomy for the schools. “While ‘top-down’ actors –state policymakers –would explicate standards and expectations for student learning and hold schools accountable for achieving them, ‘bottom-up’ actors –teachers and local educators –would have greater authority to restructure their own processes” (Fuhrman, 2003, p. 10). With this compromise schools were allowed to choose among different methods of school reform provided that the model offered a way to measure student achievement.

One result of this strategy for school reform and the federal government’s agenda to support No Child Left Behind, is the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) grant program (formerly the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration grant program), a federal program administered by the states that offers grants “designed to increase student achievement by assisting public schools across the country with implementing comprehensive school reforms that are grounded in scientifically based research and effective practices” (U.S. Department of Education [www.ed.gov/programs/compreform/]

index.html], retrieved December 2008). The CSR grant program specifically targets low performing and high poverty schools, particularly those schools receiving Title I funds. The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center's report updated and published in 2006 (<http://www.csrq.org>, retrieved October 2007) offers a catalog of school reform models that are sufficiently scientifically based to be appropriate for schools implementing comprehensive school reform programs. This same report can also be accessed through the Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement site (www.centerforcsri.org). Comprehensive school reform or whole school reform can be defined as a complete structural, curricular, and instructional change versus incremental or "tinkering" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) types of changes.

In researching the implementation of comprehensive school reform models, Johnston (2002) found that schools, already crumbling under the pressure and humiliation of being labeled as "low performing," often chose a reform model that met the scientific research and accountability requirements for receiving a CSR grant but then failed to critically examine the model, communicate and develop a shared vision with faculty, and tended to "focus on the adoption of the improvement *model* and the strategies of professional development that would be employed . . ." (p. 221) rather than the implementation of the model and any long term vision of the process. These observations indicate that the stigma of being a low-performing school might push schools into adopting a comprehensive reform plan before fully determining the aims the school wishes to achieve and before the faculty obtains a clear understanding of what exactly the comprehensive school reform consists of and how to enact it.

Accountability practices as a result of NCLB have put tremendous pressure on schools to perform according to a narrow definition of success. The labeling of schools as poor performers is intended to frame schools as 'free-market' enterprises, the thinking being that by revealing schools as low performing (as dictated by standardized test scores), schools will rise to meet the challenge. Furthermore, NCLB includes a provision that protects students from failing schools, the document reads: "no student will be trapped in a low-performing school" (NCLB 2001, p. 17). To back this up NCLB offers choices to parents to move students from failing schools to other alternatives. The widespread growth of both charter schools and magnet schools is a result of this focus on choice. However waiting lists, overcrowding, and the growing popularity of some school site programs over others mitigate the promise of the public school-choice solutions.

A meta-analysis of comprehensive school reform and student achievement by Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown (Center for Research & Education of Students Placed at Risk, 2002) boasts moderate gains in student achievement on standardized tests based on studies of the most widely implemented comprehensive school reform models. Of the 29 comprehensive school reform models included in the meta-analysis, only three, *Direct Instruction*, *the School Development Program*, and *Success for All*, showed evidence of improving students' test scores (p. 37). While the authors admit that CSR "is still an evolving field" (p. v), they also asserted that the results were promising for improvement of student achievement with the implementation of a widely used CSR model.

Although results fluctuated depending on how long the model had been used in a school setting and whether the research on the model was conducted by the models'

inventors or research associates rather than outside researchers, the meta-analysis does offer encouraging results so far. This bodes well for schools wishing to implement a school reform model that fits within the NCLB requirements, however for those schools wishing to imagine and implement innovative designs it may well pose a challenge. Whereas in the past, school reform and educational improvement could be defined in multiple ways toward multiple ends, we may be entering an era of standardized school reform. Comprehensive school reform represents the prevailing attitude toward school reform today but what does this mean for arts-based school reform? How do the arts enter into this conversation?

Arts in Education & Arts Legislation in America

Arts *in* education is a relatively new term. It represents the sometimes subtle, sometimes overt shift we have seen from regarding art as a necessary part of general education to art as “a field that has transformed itself through a series of justifications that promise[s] a variety of educational benefits for students” (Eisner & Day 2004, p. 5). Historically, general art education has had a rocky relationship with general education. It could be said that the art education has been justifying its existence since the creation of the common school (Efland, 1990). Each time panic arises regarding student achievement and American dominance in world arenas the arts are pushed a little farther away from the core curriculum. This attitude has created the need for arts advocates of all stripes to help reinforce the need for the arts in education through multiple means. Paradoxically however these concerted efforts of the well-intentioned have had, at times, the opposite effect.

Today art education goes hand in hand with the arts in education and is recognized as a field of inquiry, research, and practice with two major handbooks, *The Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education* (Eisner & Day 2004) and *The International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (Bresler, 2007). While the arts travel a bumpy road littered with the fickle tendencies of the American public concerning the perceived need for the arts in schools and society we are, I believe, heading toward a revival of the best thinking and action regarding the arts in education.

Early Transformations in Arts Education

Art has been part of the general education canon since the induction of the common school. The arts were initially introduced to the common school as a function of and in support of the manufacturing industry (Efland, 1990). Industry found that it was in need of skilled drawers and individuals with imagination to come up with ideas for products so that manufacturers could remain competitive in the market place. Drawing was specifically targeted and all students in the common school took drawing (Efland, 1990). So began the precarious relationship between art and society, that is to say, art became viewed as a means to an end, a tool for, in the case of the industrial revolution, advancing businesses, mainly textile and engineering. As long as a need existed in society, particularly in the economic realm, art was able to sustain its importance in the general education canon. As the need for industry drawing and other artisan craft waned, so did the perceived need for art as a main subject in schools.

There have been intermittent periods of transformation in the arts however, inspiring different purposes for art education. Efland (1990) remarks that,

The equating of art with high moral purpose originated in arguments first voiced in the writings of German idealist philosophers, and gradually these influenced the arts through the romantic movement. Romanticism radically altered the notion of mind from that of a passive receiver of random impressions to that of an active organizer of perception to make the world comprehensible . . . the arts came to be seen as sources of profound moral insights rather than mere ornamental accomplishment. (p. 146)

Art, first seen as a high culture, than as industrial leveler, then as moral compass, echoes the current state of arts in education and the attempts to build an instrumental argument for its existence in the lives of students paired with the an explication of the human benefits of arts engagement. Today, though not so consumed with the moral import of arts engagement, the new herald cry is for the arts as cognitive skill builder and as an avenue toward increased student achievement through cognitive transfer (AEP, 2004; Deasy & AEP, 2002). Though there is debate as the true potential of the arts as instruments for student achievement (Hetland & Winner, 2001, 2004; Winner & Hetland, 2000b), the goals of researchers and policymakers are the same: to establish the arts as integral to educating students. To accomplish this, educators will need to strengthen arguments for the arts and search out new ways in which the arts can contribute to the school experiences of students in beneficial ways.

Major Influences on the Arts in Education

Many organizations, researchers, and advocates have attempted to bring light to the question of how and in what ways the arts can affectively be used in schools. To begin with, as the machinery of U.S. government's educational legislation pushed on in the early years of the twenty-first century, so did the government's research into the merits of art and programs in support of the arts. Goals 2000 legislation placed emphasis

on the arts in education and “recognized the arts as a core area of study in which American children are expected to achieve competency” (Goals 2000 Planning Committee & NEA, 1994 p. 3). This document entitled, *The Arts and Education: Partners in Achieving Our National Education Goals* (Goals 2000 Planning Committee & NEA, 1994) highlighted a deliberate maneuver to bring the arts to the school reform table. The NEA made it their responsibility to advocate for the arts at the federal level. Indeed, the arts were not going to be left behind.

Standards for arts education were established in 1994 and a minimal level of competency became a series of voluntary goals administered by schools to promote skills, knowledge, and techniques related to arts for all students in schools kindergarten through grade 12. This action brought the arts into the assessment and accountability arena but it remains to be seen what the impact of these standards will have on the cultivation of arts engagement, arts participation and above all, on deepening reverence for the arts. Fowler (1996) has noted that, “the standards stress skill development [in the arts] . . . but technical development reinforces the status quo and does not articulate the relationship of the arts to general education” (p. 133). While standards have brought the arts skill-set into the reform conversation it has neglected the broader value of the arts in education.

The National Endowment for the Arts

In 1965 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was established as part of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act passed by congress and signed into law by President Johnson. The NEA was “dedicated to strengthening the artistic life of [the] country” (Office of Communications NEA, 2000, p. 5). Since its inception the

NEA has supported some of the most important artistic creations in the world. The NEA budget for its first year was 2.5 million and increased every year so that in 1981 the endowment was at a record high of 158.8 million dollars. In 1982, the endowment experienced its first ten-percent reduction since its induction. In 1996 the budget was cut by 39 percent, the largest decrease in its history and as of 2000 the budget was 97.6 million (NEA, 2000). Since 2000, the annual NEA budget has again seen increases with a fiscal year 2008 budget of 144.4 million (www.theperformingartsalliance.org/performingarts/nea_issue_center.html, retrieved December, 2008) These monetary fluctuations highlight the waxing and waning of our federal government's view of the importance of the arts as part of its cultural heritage and points to one of the largest obstacles to full access to the arts in schools: money.

The NEA works with federal partners, namely the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, Department of Education, Department of Justice, and Department of Housing and Urban Development, to support initiatives in places where little or no arts exist, to attempt to bring arts experiences to schools. The NEA is partially or wholly responsible for a number of publications free to the public, the most important of these being the congressionally mandated *Toward Civilization*, a research report published by the NEA in 1988, "that revealed the nationwide lack of basic arts education in American schools" (www.arts.gov/about/facts/ArtsLearning.html retrieved December, 2008). In addition, the NEA has attempted to uncover all the different lines of research in the arts through its publication, *Schools, Communities, and the Arts: A Research Compendium* (NEA, 1995). This early compendium has inspired a more recent compendium on arts

research conducted by the Arts Education Partnership (2002) which will be discussed later.

Since its beginnings the NEA has been vocal in their support for the arts as an important aspect of our national heritage, a story as important to preserve as the nation's historical legacy. Furthermore its efforts to make a lasting impact on school reform have remained steady despite budget constraints. The NEA has aligned itself with the goals of the nation and has supported the standardization of the arts. By offering documents and reports to schools they are aiding schools in justifying the claim that the arts are integral to the core of education. Still, one wonders if something is not lost in thinking about the arts as just another subject to learn in school, albeit, regarded as equally important to other core subjects, but losing, perhaps, its magical and transformative powers to touch souls. In the current atmosphere, however, it is difficult to make such a case, a case that for the most part cannot be supported by statistics.

The Getty Center & Discipline-Based Arts Education

The Getty Center for Education in the Arts (now renamed the Getty Education Institute for the Arts), a program of the J. Paul Getty Trust of Los Angeles, was the solid and passionate supporter of the Discipline-based Arts Education (DBAE) movement in education since its development in the early eighties. DBAE "is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning in the visual arts, developed primarily for K-12 schooling but also useful in art museums and adult education" (Dobbs, 2004, p. 701). The marked difference between DBAE and other forms of arts instruction is that DBAE placed the work of art at the center of instruction rather than the student. DBAE consists of four basic elements: art making, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics that offer

students a rich arts experience and places the arts on equal footing with other core subjects as part of the general education canon.

The Getty Center served DBAE for over twenty years as its singular supporter. The Getty financially supported the DBAE approach in universities and in schools. No other arts-based reform to date has experienced such long-lasting and influential support. “Support for such an approach [as DBAE] existed in the antecedents of Jerome Bruner, the Kettering Project at Stanford, and the R & D efforts in regional laboratories” (Dobbs, 2004, p. 708). In addition, the Getty supported dissemination activities including professional development and training, curriculum materials, monographs and research reports, and above all exposure as one of the most important projects of the Getty Trust. “The movement grew rapidly at all levels of schooling and became popular, because it served to support the more academic claims of art education at a time when the push for excellence in all forms of schooling was strong” (Burton, 2004, p. 566). With DBAE, the arts were perceived as an academic discipline and its promise seemed formidable.

The unparalleled support of DBAE in universities and schools makes the demise of the Getty’s involvement with the movement all the more startling and perplexing. Shortly after the president, Harold Williams retired his position with the Getty in 1998 the Getty withdrew its support of the DBAE program; after twenty or more years, the partnership had ended. Dobbs (2004) points out that, “this occurred despite the widespread evidence that Getty’s program had indeed made a difference in one way or the other in the lives of thousands of students and teachers in hundreds of schools around the country” (p. 718).

Elliot Eisner, a proponent and long time advocate of DBAE throughout his career acknowledged that some critics of DBAE found it to be too “sexist, others too western in orientation, still others believed it was empty of emotion” (1998c, p. 1). Other critics “regarded [DBAE] as a dissipation of the field . . .” and “others saw DBAE as promoting an essentially passive and conservative instructional response . . . offering little room for individual creativity and expression on the part of both teacher and pupil (Burton, 2004, p. 566). In *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, feminine philosopher Nel Noddings (1992) echoes these concerns and, in response to criticisms of DBAE as restrictive and limiting asks, “what [might] happen to all those young people who for years found the art room the only place in school worth attending, whose interest in art has kept them in school long enough to qualify for a chance at life’s standard goods” (p. 161). But as Eisner (1998c), before the announcement of the end of the Getty’s involvement in DBAE reminds us,

There has never been in this country an organization whose philanthropy has been so constant and so intelligent when it comes to arts education. Federal support, like the winds, come and go. Politics and priorities change. The Getty Center for Education in the Arts has been there consistently . . . we will have to wait and see what direction the Getty Institute takes and how intelligent and sensitive its new leadership will be in pursuing its new mission. (pp. 6-7)

Indeed, it appears sensitivity was lacking in the new mission of the Getty trust and the end to DBAE was swift. Still, although the enormous financial support that Disciplined-based Arts Education programs experienced is now gone, the movement does live on. A relatively recent publication, *Readings in Disciplined-based Arts Education* (Smith, 2000), has gathered the most important works related to the field of DBAE and offers a philosophical grounding for any school interested in pursuing or sustaining an

involvement with this movement. Perhaps at another time and place, advocates will again be in the position to philosophically justify and financially support this very important contribution to the arts in education.

Elliot Eisner's Impact on Arts-Learning & School Reform

There is a larger story to be told regarding Elliot Eisner's involvement and impact on the arts in education that goes beyond DBAE as has been chronicled in the edited volume by Uhrmacher and Matthews (2005), *Intricate Palette: Working the Ideas of Elliot Eisner*. In this book, a wide range of authors familiar with Eisner and his body of work discuss his influence in four areas of education: curriculum; arts-education; research and evaluation; and teaching, teacher education, and school reform (Uhrmacher & Matthews, 2005, p. xvii). Within these broad and encompassing areas of scholarship Eisner has eloquently stated a number of enduring theories and beliefs about the arts, cognition, and educational research. I highlight just a few of his specific contributions to arts-learning and school reform in this section.

One of the most useful of Eisner's contributions for arts educators is his idea of forms of representation (1994a; 1994b; 1997) which expands the ways in which students can express their thinking in the classroom. "Forms of representation," Eisner (1994b) tells us, "are the devices humans use to make public conceptions that are privately held" (p. 39). What is made public can take on many forms – picture, number, words – and in the arts-learning contexts, can take be expressed through music, visual art, digital media, drama, and dance and movement. Through this particular theory Eisner expands the notion of cognition to relate to all of the ways in which sensory experiences create concepts in the minds of individuals and then offers a range of ways to express these

concepts publicly. Forms of representation offer students alternative ways of conceptualizing and conveying important ideas.

Eisner's ideas about how the arts contribute to mind are best encapsulated in his book, *Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002). In this book Eisner spends a great deal of time discussing the role of the arts in creation of mind. He provides lessons on what the arts teach students. He leans away from discussions regarding the transfer potential of the arts, that is to say, the arts' ability to affect other areas of student achievement in school, and focuses instead on the contributions of the arts toward "transforming consciousness" (pp. 19-24) and the cognitive contributions of arts engagement.

The term *cognition* for Eisner "include[s] all those processes through which the organism becomes aware of the environment or its own consciousness (2002, p. 9). Eisner (2002) offers three cognitive functions of the arts that are relevant to arts-centered school reform. First, the arts "help us learn to notice the world . . . and provide permission to engage the imagination as a means for exploring new possibilities" (p. 10). Engagement with the arts builds awareness and inspires the imagination and creativity. Second, the arts and the process of creation "stabilize what would otherwise be evanescent" (p. 11); the arts help us hold onto ideas, make them public, and make them permanent. Third, "the arts are means of exploring our own interior landscapes" (p.11); through the arts we come to know ourselves better and come to understand the ways in which our minds work. These three cognitive functions of the arts are useful for arts educators to consider when designing curricula. These cognitive functions of the arts are embodied in many of the activities in the classrooms observed in this study.

Eisner's major contribution to school improvement efforts is his idea of the

ecology of schooling (1988; 1994a). Eisner noticed early on that schools were fragmented in their structure and that teachers were often isolated and lacked a sense of ownership within their schools (1988, p. 25). He began to think about schools as holistic, living entities where the different facets of schools were not separate, as they were commonly treated, but part of an ecosystem consisting of the overlapping and inter-related areas of school life. He therefore introduced five dimensions of schooling that he contended would support ideas of school reform by helping educators focus in the areas that all schools shared. The five dimensions of schooling Eisner proposed include: the intentional, the structural, the curricular, the pedagogical, and the evaluative. Taken together, the five dimensions of schooling emphasize the whole of education and it exists in schools. Small changes to one area necessarily affect the other areas of schooling. For instance changing the structure of the school day from short periods to block scheduling would simultaneously alter the tools necessary for teaching for longer periods of time (the pedagogical dimension) and also alter the types of activities that could be performed in a longer period of instructional time (the curricular dimension). In examining arts-centered school reform it is useful to think about schools in ecological terms. One goal of arts-centered school reformers is to educate the whole child. It is therefore helpful to consider the whole of the educational milieu in doing so; these five dimensions help arts-centered school reformers do so.

Much more could be written about Eisner's many contributions to the field of education. The above is only a sliver of the interesting and useful contributions that Elliot Eisner has made to the field of education and arts-learning. For arts-centered school reformers three points regarding Eisner's efforts are salient. First, arts-centered school

reformers would do well to incorporate Eisner's forms of representation into their curriculum toward a goal of offerings students various ways to express and crystallize their thinking. Second, Eisner's views on the cognitive functions of the arts and the creation of mind are useful for defining the aims and intentions of arts-centered schools. Third, as arts-centered school reformers create and design arts-centered schools or alter current school designs, a focus on the dimensions of schooling should be forefront. An ecological approach to school reform offers the most promising avenue for long lasting educational change.

The Encompassing World of Arts-Learning & Arts-Integration

The term *arts in education*⁴ encompasses a wide range of activities and is referred to in multiple ways. For instance the terms arts-infused curriculum (Galef Institute, 1989), arts-based curriculum (Uhrmacher, 1995), arts-integration (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2002; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Goldberg, 2006; Finberg, 2004; Parsons, 2004), cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary arts education (AEP, 2002, 2003; Manner, 2002, Burack & McKenzie, 2005; Boston, 1996), and Learning In and Through the Arts (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999), have all been used to describe the deliberate use of the arts in schools toward educational ends. These forms of arts in education can be found in public, private, charter, and magnet schools to greater or lesser degrees but are primarily present within the curriculum of the schools and have not been used as a fully transformative tool of educational improvement like arts-centered school reformers are attempting to do.

⁴ For an informative historical and evaluative review of the literature on arts in education see Koff (1995).

Arts-Centered Schools.

It still remains uncommon for public schools to completely center their curriculum on the arts without being a conservatory-model school of the arts focusing on the development of fine art skills, although studies such as this one are changing that. Other types of schools such as the Waldorf schools created by anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner make use of aesthetic sensibilities and arts activities but are not considered arts-centered schools per se [see e.g., Uhrmacher, 1991]. In one study, Prager (2001) observed urban Waldorf-inspired schools that implemented an arts-based curriculum in conjunction with aspects of Waldorf education and found several benefits from combining the two approaches, but again these schools are not considered arts-centered. Arts-centered schools refers to schools that deliberately orient and use the arts as the starting point, or the center, of all aspects of the school including the schools' intentions, curriculum, pedagogy, school structure, evaluation techniques, and the physical or aesthetic attributes of the school itself. This departs significantly from schools that borrow arts-based concepts, tools, or activities and plug them into an existing curriculum when needed.

Arts-Integration.

Within arts-centered schools the most commonly used term and technique for implementation is *arts-integration*. Arts-integration, similar to *curriculum integration* which “deepens instruction by bringing skills, media, subjects, methods, means of expression, people, concepts, and means of representation to the service of learning” (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001, p. 7), refers to using the arts as a catalyst for making connections between school subjects to improve, support, and deepen education. Arts-

integration as a tool for learning throughout the curriculum is a major influence on arts-centered school reform and is central to the missions of both schools included in this study. Through arts-integration educators have been able to bring the fractured, separate elements of schooling together toward a common purpose.

Madeleine Grumet (2004) characterizes arts-integration in this way:

When we speak of arts-integration, we are speaking of a process of curriculum development and instruction that enriches relationships among students, teachers, and parents, as well as relationships within each of these groups. Arts-integration is an approach to teaching and learning that lives in lessons and curriculum. When a teaching community embraces arts-integration, and children meet it in different classes and experience it with various teachers over time, arts-integration is a process that profoundly changes schools embracing its approaches to instruction, and assessment, to individualization and differentiation, to values, to community relations, and ultimately to spirit. (p. 50)

Here Grumet alludes to the holistic nature of arts-integration and arts-learning in school.

Her view is of arts-integration as a transformative event for schools, that if embraced enriches the relationships between all the entities connected to schools. This view of arts-integration can only ameliorate its impact on educational change for arts-centered school reformers.

Hip-Hop: One More Future for the Arts in Education

As educators, teachers, and advocates for the arts struggle to re-invent the arts' purposes in schooling, one of the most exciting areas of possibility for arts in education and arts-learning is in the field of cultural and urban studies, specifically the inclusion of the art, poetry, and music of the "hip-hop generation" (Kitwana, 2002) into the curriculum. Arts advocates have for some time recognized that arts-integration and arts in education are particularly useful in improving the quality of learning for students in low-

income and urban schools (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005; and in multicultural settings (Goldberg, 2006). Teachers who work to integrate hip-hop youth culture in meaningful ways into the curriculum will have one more way for students to experience and benefit from arts-engagement.

Jeff Change, author of, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: The History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (2005) chronicles the rise and many lives of hip-hop and delineates its meanings along cultural, political, and humanitarian lines. Against the backdrop of post industrial New York City, Change traces the emergence of Djing, B-boying [sic], and graffiti and shows how urban youth of the recent historical past have revolutionized their immediate world and created spaces for themselves and the next generations of youths of color across America leaving workable spaces for resistance, defiance, self-actualization, and political engagement. Bringing such an awareness of society through the arts via hip-hop could add yet another layer of richness and necessity to maintaining the arts in schools. The art that has emerged out of the engagement with hip-hop ranges in quality and kind but the entry points (Gardner, 2000; see also Eisner, 2002) it offers teachers interested in arts-integration across language arts, social studies, visual art, music, dance, and drama, especially in junior high and high school for students across races⁵ and socio-economic levels, represent interesting new depths for arts-learning educators to plumb.

The two schools focused on in this study both work from an arts-integration model of their own design. That is to say, each school has created its own plan for how to

⁵ Although there is a temptation to see hip-hop as an all-encompassing genre that transcends race [see e.g., Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002] it is important to situate hip-hop accurately within the tradition of black diasporic experience (Rose, 1994). Having said that, creating a space that both acknowledges the historical roots of hip-hop while also opening this space to youth of all races has great potential for diverse school settings and one more way to support cultural democracy in schools.

integrate the arts – music, drama, visual art, and dance/ movement – into the curriculum in formal and informal ways.

Arts in Education Research Reports

Since the beginning of the federal involvement with arts in education in 1994 initiating the National Standards for Arts Education: *What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts* (National Association for Music Education, 1994), a flood of research reports have appeared on the scene. *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske, 1999) sponsored by the Arts Education Partnership and the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities was an early report that studied the impact of the arts on learning and has been integral in setting the stage for a continued interest in linking arts to student achievement. This report also is one of the first to emphasize that “the arts no longer need[ed] to be characterized solely by either their ability to promote learning in specific arts disciplines or by their ability to promote learning in other disciplines” (p. viii). This is an interesting point to contemplate when much of the research since then has focused on this latter argument for the arts.

Some other reports include: *Connections: The Arts and Integration of the High School Curriculum* (Boston, 1996) which investigated interdisciplinary arts-integration in secondary schools as part of The Role of the Arts in Unifying the High School Curriculum Project and which focused on justifying the arts based on intrinsic rewards, *Young Children and the Arts: Making Creative Connections* (AEP, 1998), a report of the Task Force on Children’s Learning and the Arts: Birth to Age Eight and *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community* (AEP, 1999a), both reports sponsored by the Arts Education Partnership (formerly known as the

Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership). The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership’s noteworthy report titled *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education* (1999) highlighted the achievements of arts instruction in schools across the nation –a moving and informative report offering clues to arts success in schools. AEP followed this with a short report titled, *Creating Quality Integrated and Interdisciplinary Arts Programs* (2002) which emphasizes creating “authentic connections” through arts-integration and interdisciplinary arts programming in schools. These early reports focused on building the case for the arts in education for their intrinsic value as well as the value of the arts in relation to other kinds of learning. This group of reports is also responsible for the initial visibility of the arts as part of the school reform landscape and each has influenced the ways we talk about the arts in education and the language used to describe such efforts. Indeed these reports are still in wide circulation today and are often cited in research and reports that have been built upon these early projects.

The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) is currently the most prolific supporter of the arts in education. AEP, which was formed in 1995, “is a private, non-profit coalition of more than 100 national educational education, arts, businesses, philanthropic, and government organizations that demonstrate and promote the essential role of arts education in enabling all students to succeed in school, life, and work” (AEP byline included in *Champions of Change*, 1999). Many of the reports listed above are a result of this partnership and its commitment to the arts for various reasons. We may never be able to escape the need to justify the arts and their inclusion in education but partnerships such as AEP continue to work toward that end.

Most recently AEP has sponsored and published a beautifully designed book entitled *Third Space: When Learning Matters* (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005) which offers detailed descriptions of thriving arts-learning programs in schools in nine schools throughout the United States. The idea of a “third space” is a metaphor the authors use to describe the “space between teachers and learners, between the various individuals in a learning group, and between the learners, teachers, and works of art” (p. vii). The book focuses on broad issues of concern to arts educators such as creativity and thinking, building community, learning from artists, teaching strategies, and making meaning in arts-based schools. Many examples of student-created works of arts are highlighted and the book makes a strong case for supporting arts-learning and the development of a third space for learning and meaning-making in arts-centered schools.

In addition to these organizations there are others that offer research reports on the arts in education. The Kennedy Center’s ArtsEdge (www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org) posts a list of articles and reports that show evidence of the arts learning on its website. In addition, Americans for the Arts (www.artsusa.org) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the support and growth of the arts in education for both education and business. We will now focus on two recent reports that attempt to uncover the connections between arts and learning as well as the intrinsic benefits and transfer possibilities for arts learning in other subjects. Although the reports come to different conclusions, each shows the importance of the arts and suggest where future research attention should be directed.

Critical Links

Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development, a research compendium supported by the Arts Education Partnership, National Endowment for the Arts, & Department of Education (Deasy, 2002), is an ambitious report investigating the links between arts and learning in educational settings engaged with multiple or particular art forms. This compendium is a meta-analysis that evaluates studies of academic and social effects of arts learning written up in short, often one or two-page summaries. The purpose of the compendium as described by Editor, Richard J. Deasy “is to recommend to researchers and funders of research promising lines of inquiry and study suggested by recent, strong studies of the academic and social effects of learning in the arts” (p. iii). Of particular interest to researchers, but also problematic, is the compendium’s focus on *transfer* in arts learning addressed in the report. I focus on this aspect of the report because transfer is often brought up in conversations about arts in education and learning as one way to justify the inclusion of arts into the core curriculum. The argument for transfer is difficult to make because studies and experiments on transfer prove difficult to design and conduct. Still, this notion is one often heralded as a promising avenue for research from the perspective of arts educators seeking a solid rationale for the arts; indeed this notion is the impetus for this particular compendium.

Transfer, a term used in the cognitive psychology literature, attempts to answer the question posed by Eisner (2002) and others: “does what is learned in the arts transfer to non-arts tasks” (p. 218)? Transfer “denotes instances where learning in one context assists learning in a different context” (Catterall, 2002, p. 151). The Critical Links

Compendium looks at 7 studies in Dance, 19 studies in Drama, 17 studies in Multi-Arts, 15 studies in Music, and 4 studies in the visual arts to attempt to lay a foundation for making claims about transfer in arts learning. The studies included in this compendium were both quantitative and qualitative in method and used a variety of tools to investigate the research questions posed.

In a summative overview of the project, titled *The Arts and the Transfer of Learning* (2002), author James S. Catterall comments that “at the level of neuro-function, learning experiences unequivocally impact future learning experiences” (p. 152). In thinking about arts in education this would suggest that the richness and quality of arts experiences in schools is of significance when attempting to impact learning through the arts. Moreover, the report highlights the multitude of relationships amongst learning and the arts in academic and social domains. Catterall’s summary includes over 65 core relationships suggesting evidence of transfer in the studies included in the compendium. The analysis concludes by stating that, “the compendium’s studies . . . all show evidence of transfer in the sense that learning activities in the arts have various effects beyond the initial conditions of learning” (p. 154). However this is a very general claim since the summaries of each study in the compendium are only discursively analyzed. The thrust of the report is mostly to show that this kind of work is currently being done, rather than initiating a deeper analysis of the design and results of each study. In many ways it serves as a showpiece for funding agencies as the statement by Deasy (above) indicates.

Having said that, this report suggests at least five points that can be drawn from these attempts to locate transfer in arts learning that call for further attention in future investigations. First, researchers need to further explore issues of similarity of contexts or

in-domain and out-of-domain transfer (Eisner 2002, p. 219). It is as of yet, unclear if arts learning has an impact on other areas of learning because of the similarity between the art form and the other skill areas used for analysis. For instance reading may improve through drama but this might be because the skill set is similar, rather than a function of transfer. Second, though transfer may seem greater for students with more engagement with the arts, it will be important to find out whether the quality of arts experiences creates this difference rather than sheer number of experiences. Third, more studies are needed to explore ideas of transfer, specifically in visual arts and dance (4 and 7 studies included in the compendium respectively) to accumulate more evidence that will help make the case in support of these particular art forms. Fourth, the concept of transfer needs an updated, more sophisticated, and less narrow treatment in educational research.

In addition, ideas of transfer need not to have the pressure of justifying the arts in education resting solely on its shoulders. There are many reasons for the presence of the arts in schools and it is short-sighted to think that by building just one rationale for the arts, that the case will finally be won. Finally, although this point was only subtly addressed in the compendium studies, it seems that if transfer is what we are after (and this is debatable) more explicit actions regarding transfer need to be made in classrooms and amongst subjects. That is to say, perhaps transfer should not be viewed as an unspoken attribute of arts-learning but should be made explicit during instruction; a notion that has been supported by Winner and Cooper (2000) and Hetland and Winner (2004).

Overall the compendium points to the possibilities and pitfalls of diverse methodologies in the studies of the arts in education. Both quantitative and qualitative

studies in arts were used to investigate the research questions. Although riddled with methodological issues and constraints, this report was careful not to praise one form of research methodology over any other; indeed the message was predominantly one of both being necessary to tell the whole story.

Clearly researchers, teacher, parents, school administrators and arts-advocates with an interest in promoting the arts have a stake in making the kinds of claims *Critical Links* attempts to make. Of course, as a fledgling effort to this end, this report at least offers evidence that there are researchers actively engaged in setting up scientific experiments that look at aspects of the arts and their impact on learning. Unfortunately, the kind of research included in this report often uses, even requires, narrow definitions of the art forms, and aspects of each art form just to keep the studies manageable. However this requirement (or choice) discredits the complexity of the arts.

Where the arts are concerned, foundations and premises once adhered to and believed often become blurred, rules are often broken, good ideas morph into new and better ideas, at times into entire movements inspiring complete transformation of the art form itself. Attempts to bottle the arts, or map them, like mapping genomes, seems at odds with what the arts are able to provide with those who engage in them. Furthermore, that the arts cannot be mapped is a sign of their unique expansive potential for human experience and one that should be cherished. We would not be doing a service to students to portray the arts in such an artificial manner. Living and breathing the arts and modeling this for students makes much more sense.

These thoughts lead me to doubt that transfer is the smoking gun some theorists hope it to be. This is not to say there are not cognitive connections to be made through

the arts. I agree with Eisner (1994b; 1998b; 2002) that indeed there are, but that *transfer* as it has been explored in reports such as this one does not, as of yet, make the case.

Gifts of the Muse

A second major research report titled *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts* (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004) conducted by Rand Research in the Arts and supported by the Wallace Foundation has attempted to move the debate over arts in education away from the instrumental benefits of the arts and more toward the intrinsic benefits. The findings of the report suggest that by and large the instrumental benefits of the arts are not easily proven or sustained. They point to the fact that research on the instrumental benefits of the arts aligns the goals for arts education with overtly quantitative measures and the standardization of the arts for general education. Benefits stemming from the arts “are instrumental in that [they] are viewed as a means of achieving broad social and economic goals that have nothing to do with art per se” (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. xi). The report argues that such focus on these instrumental benefits reduces the intrinsic worth of the arts and works against efforts to develop and sustain the value of the arts for individuals based on the merits of art forms alone.

The researchers reviewed four types of sources: 1) evidence of instrumental benefits of the arts; 2) conceptual theories from multiple disciplines to provide insight on how instrumental effects are generated; 3) the literature on intrinsic benefits; and 4) the literature on arts participation (p. xii). The researchers offer a “framework for understanding the benefits of the arts” (p. xiii) which portrays these benefits as a two-dimensional continuum from private benefits to public benefits where the middle position

explains “private benefits with public spillover” (p. xiii) along the horizontal and instrumental and intrinsic benefits on a vertical continuum from top to bottom intersecting the horizontal. The private benefits consist of the ways in which the arts benefit the person engaging in or with the arts, whereas the public benefits include the societal and attitudinal behaviors as well as the economic support people participating in the arts engender. The researchers end by arguing,

for an understanding of the benefits of arts involvement that recognizes not only the contribution that both intrinsic and instrumental benefits make to the public welfare but also the central role intrinsic benefits play in generating *all* benefits deriving from the arts, and the importance of developing policies to ensure that the benefits of the arts are realized by a greater number of Americans. (p. xii)

The missing element in arts research then, according to this research report, is a deep and lasting discussion of the intrinsic benefits of the arts. The researchers argue that people are drawn to the arts, not for instrumental reasons but for the pleasure that engagement with the arts inspires as well as the arts’ support of communication amongst diverse individuals which benefits society at large. The researchers make the case that, “art can best be understood as a communicative cycle in which the artist draws two unusual gifts –a capacity for vivid personal experience of the world, and a capacity to express that experience through a particular artistic medium” (p. xv).

Finally the researchers list the intrinsic benefits they believe the arts contribute to individuals and society. These include: captivation, pleasure, expanded capacity for growth, cognitive growth, creation of social bonds, and expression of communal or shared meanings (pp. xvi-xvii). In addition they provide recommendations that include, developing a language for discussion intrinsic benefits, addressing the limitations of

research on instrumental benefits, promoting early exposure to the arts, and creating circumstances for rewarding arts experiences (pp. xvii-xviii).

This research report eludes to the underbelly of arts advocates motives. While those who support the arts believe in the intrinsic benefits of the arts on an intuitive level, the current climate and narrow scope of school reform initiatives have caused arts advocates to place this aim for arts education elsewhere. To fight the fight as it has now been determined by the power structure in the educational reform universe has meant focusing primarily on the instrumental benefits of the arts in education. The Critical Links report does just this; it reviews and analyzes the scientific research on arts in education that support arts learning and specifically issues of transfer in arts learning. In contrast, the Gifts of the Muse report admonishes this state of affairs and asks arts researchers to expose the underbelly of arts advocacy for the purposes, I surmise, of a more balanced approach to the benefits of arts engagement.

Reviewing Education & the Arts Project (REAP)

A third noteworthy group of research reports edited by Winner and Hetland (2000c) for *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* closely examined the claims made by researchers interested in locating the instrumental benefits of arts engagement in schools. The Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP) venture was instigated by Harvard's Project Zero. Project Zero, started by Nelson Goodman in 1967, has supported research on arts-related topics and in other disciplines for over 40 years (<http://www.pz.harvard.edu>, retrieved December 2008). Arts PROPEL: Integrating Teaching and Assessment, ARTS SURVIVE and REAP are just three of the many well known arts research projects supported by Project Zero.

The REAP project performed quantitative syntheses of existing individual research reports on the cognitive transfer effects of the arts in education. To do this they conducted “10 meta-analytic reviews of the effects of non-arts cognition from instruction in various art forms (Hetland & Winner, 2004, p. 135). Three of the 10 meta-analysis showed causal relationships. These included classroom drama and verbal achievement, music listening and spatial reasoning, and music learning and spatial reasoning (p. 135). The remaining meta-analyses showed no causal relationship (e.g., multi-arts and academic achievement and arts-rich instruction and creativity) or were equivocal (e.g., dance and spatial reasoning and music and mathematics). Hetland and Winner’s findings suggest that while there is some evidence of transfer from arts-learning to other academic areas, the evidence so far is not enough to attempt to justify the arts solely based on instrumental claims (Winner & Cooper, 2000).

Moreover Winner and Cooper’s (2000) discussion of the current evidence supporting causal and correlational links between the arts and academic achievement suggests that the effect sizes seen could be more of a indication that students drawn to the arts are naturally more high-achieving students or come from families where the arts are valued (regardless of the socio-economic status of their families). The authors also suggest that another reason the arts may be linked with increased academic success is that “schools that decided to grant the arts a central role in the curriculum also make other kinds of reforms in the way that academic subjects are taught. Schools that value the arts may also promote innovative, inquiry-oriented, project-based academic work” (p.3). These kinds of school-wide choices and intentions can obscure the true relationships between the arts and student achievement reminding advocates and arts-centered school

reformers that perhaps the best types of changes with the arts at the center are changes that affect all aspects of the school, thus beckoning an ecological approach to school reform.

Furthermore Winner and Cooper (2000) and Hetland and Winner (2004) point out that for transfer effects to increase teachers need to teach explicitly for transfer. That is to say, teachers must teach the arts in a particular academic area to specifically increase the learning in that academic area. This runs contrary to what arts-researchers studying transfer effects are striving for. The hypothesis has been so far that learning in the arts will increase academic achievement without direct transfer teaching.

This information may not be music to the ears of arts-advocates who are hinging their hopes for the arts' increased status in schools but is a cautionary tale that more well-designed experimental studies of the effects of arts-learning are needed before such instrumental effects of arts education are used as the primary reason for keeping the arts in schools. As Winner and Cooper (2000) comment,

the failure to find evidence of a causal relationship between arts study and academic achievement should never be used as a justification for cutting arts programs. The arts deserve a justification on their own grounds, and advocates should refrain from making utilitarian arguments in favor of the arts. Such arguments betray a misunderstanding of the inherent value of the arts. As soon as we justify the arts by their power to affect learning in an academic area, we make the arts vulnerable. (pp. 66-67)

In many ways the REAP project and Winner and Cooper's analysis reminds arts educators, advocates, and school reformers that the best focus of energies may be on the intrinsic rewards the arts offer and their possibility for helping students find personal meaning in their learning experiences through arts engagement. This idea is explored further in the conclusions drawn from this study of arts-centered school reform.

Efforts toward Arts-Centered School Reform

This literature review has thus far discussed the government-driven roots of both the general school reform mechanism as well as the arts-based initiatives that fit with or work in contrast to this mechanism. This review has shown the work in and around the arts in the form of research reports, advocacy agendas, and national aims for arts in education. While arts-centered school reform is implied in these sources, that is to say, the reports and groups offer ways in which to influence arts engagement in schools, none have been explicit about arts-centered school reform per se. Among the efforts toward arts-based school reform there are three that I wish to highlight in this literature review. The first is the Chicago Arts Education Partnerships in Education; the second is the Annenberg Challenge; and the third is the A-Plus school reform.

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education

The Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) is a school improvement network that “was formulated as a model for making culture a true part of school culture by forging a clear connection between arts learning and the rest of the academic curriculum” (Burnaford, Aprill & Weiss with Twichell 2001, p. xxxv). The strong interest in the arts in Chicago, Illinois in the early nineties inspired the formation of the partnerships intended to organize arts efforts in schools and to model the use of the arts for school improvement.

The CAPE program is seen as one of the most successful school reform initiatives in the nation. CAPE supports its own informative website (www.capeschools.org) and has a book titled *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts-Integration and Meaningful Learning* (2001) that outlines the history of CAPE and the philosophy of the program as

well as serves as a how-to guide for other schools wishing to follow CAPE's lead. The goals of the CAPE program include, the integration of the arts (dance, theater, music, literary arts, media arts, and visual arts) into other curricular areas, the commitment of time for co-planning meaningful connections, long-term relationships among schools, arts organizations, and community organization, a focus on long-term professional development, and democratic access to the arts (p. xxxvi). These goals guide CAPE's efforts in creating a community of arts-engagement that is its most powerful achievement.

“For CAPE schools arts-integration and school reform go hand in hand” (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss 2001, p. xlii); this means going beyond the arts standards and beyond standards in general. It means powerful connections between students and subjects that are integrated fully with the arts. CAPE is “interested in contributing to a dialogue about how each art form contributes to learning” (p. xliii). CAPE schools work closely with arts organizations of all kinds to bring artists into schools and to plan integrated activities

The CAPE model offers promise for school reform because of its comprehensive approach toward school improvement from an arts-based perspective and because the CAPE schools have already worked through many of the obstacles schools often face when embarking on a new school reform improvement plan. This makes it a replicable model which speaks to the current push in educational reform circles for comprehensive school reform plans that can be easily scaled up. While CAPE is careful to impress upon its audience that no two arts-based schools look alike (indeed this is considered one of the benefits of this type of school structure), it does provide excellent resources for asking

the kinds of important questions that lead to meaningful change for schools. The CAPE model relies on partnerships between parents, students, administrators, artists, arts organizations, and the community at large. It makes the case that partnership is the most viable avenue toward lasting change. The fact that other schools around the nation are looking to CAPE for a model of school reform speaks volumes for its appeal. It will be interesting to see how CAPE continues to influence school reform over time.

The Annenberg Challenge

Annenberg Institute for School Reform (AISR) at Brown University has undertaken the dual challenge of instigating whole-school reform and arts education. In 1995 Ambassador William Annenberg donated 500 million dollars to the improvement of public education, 20 million of which was designated for arts-based approaches to reform. A call for proposals resulted in the selection of three school programs to be supported and investigated. These included: Arts for Academic Achievement in Minneapolis, The Center for Arts Education in New York City, and Transforming Education through the Arts Challenge (TETAC); [see also Adams, 1999; National Arts Education Consortium, n.d.]. The arts-based researchers for the Annenberg Challenge “took an approach to change and improvement that emphasized the ‘human face’ of school reform” (AISR, 2003, p. 6) providing inspiration meant to “motivate” school improvement rather than “drive” it (p. 6).

The three chosen reform programs were funded for six years of implementation. The results were included in a report authored by AISR (2003) titled *The Arts and School Reform: Lessons and Possibilities from the Annenberg Challenge Arts Projects* relating the outcomes of five years of study into the reform sites. The report emphasizes lessons

for school reform as well as lessons learned from engagement with whole-school reform (i.e., comprehensive school reform plans). The report states four lessons that emerged from this work: 1) build reform from within; 2) make excellence equitable; 3) rethink accountability; and 4) begin with permanence in mind (p. 11).

In terms of motivating school improvement, this report proves useful. The four lessons seem flat and somewhat glib on the surface but are related to important concepts for arts-based school improvement. Building reform from within suggests buy-in and control on the part of the school which is important for schools to experience a sense of empowerment gained from engaging in arts-based school reform. Making excellence equitable is a central aim of education today. Insuring that all students have access to opportunities for successful and rigorous learning is the driving desire of educational improvement. The report suggests that the arts have the ability (and responsibility) to bring such equity in learning to all students. Although accountability practices are here to stay for the time being *rethinking* accountability, specifically from an arts-centered perspective, is necessary to the health and sustainability of arts-centered school reform. This is the area in which arts-centered school reformers can make the most impact on how curriculum and instruction is assessed, to what ends and to what aims. Finally, permanence is a call to all school reformers, be they arts-based or otherwise, to extend a substantial amount of time to the reform. Often schools under pressure choose a reform and if success is not easily seen in one or two years, the plan is scrapped for another. This mentality only weakens the arguments for viable models of school reform. A commitment to a longitudinal perspective in arts-based school reform is paramount if we are to find models that can actually make a difference. While a stronger presence of the

data resulting from the investigation of the Challenge sites would be useful for those interested in arts-centered school reform, the seemingly simple lessons the AISR report illuminated offer motivational support for the cause of arts-centered school reform and insights into the enterprise as a whole.

A+ Schools

A+ Schools is an arts-based school reform initiative created and supported by the Kenan Institute for the Arts in 1993. The reform agenda began with 24 schools across North Carolina that committed to a four-year pilot study implementing the A+ program into their schools. “Philosophically based on Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, A+ promotes arts-integration in core content areas through interdisciplinary, hand-on approaches” (Gerstl-Pepin & Kenan Institute for the Arts, 2001, p. 3, report #2). Today A+ School reform exists and has been implemented in approximately 42 schools in North Carolina, approximately 50 schools in Oklahoma, and 15 schools in Arkansas making it the most widely implemented comprehensive arts-centered school reform in existence.

The A+ Schools curriculum/instruction strategies include: 1) increasing arts instruction; 2) fostering two-way arts-integration; 3) tapping multiple intelligences; 4) emphasizing hands-on learning; and 5) taking an integrated thematic approach to the curriculum (Kenan Institute for the Arts, 2001, p. 3, report #8). Since its inception A+ has seen effects regarding schools (e.g., arts are legitimized and given a more focused identity); effects regarding communities (e.g., increased parent awareness of curriculum and greater parent affiliation with the school); effects regarding teachers (e.g., collaborative work and new leadership roles); and effects on students (e.g., enriched

academic environment and improved attitudes, attendance, and behavior), (p. 3, report #8).

In their executive summary A+ acknowledges that,

when the arts enter the politically charged world of high-stakes accountability, their justification may be dependent on whether they contribute to the academic success of students. Arts reforms based upon an argument that the arts should be taught because they are important in their own right will be difficult, if not impossible, to legitimate. (p. 3, report #2)

Yet despite this acknowledgment, A+ Schools have gone on to proliferate to additional sites in North Carolina and spread to two other states. A+ Schools by all accounts is a promising avenue for schools wishing to purchase and implement a school reform model based on the arts. Having said that, in talking to school stakeholders in the schools studied in this dissertation, none had heard of the A+ Schools program nor thought they would be interested in a “boxed” or prescriptive model of arts-based school reform.

This insight leads to two thoughts. First, arts-centered school reform is envisioned by its implementers as an organic reform that grows from the school site and does not come from outside. Even though the A+ Schools reform is not, by their account, a top-down reform, it risks being perceived as a reform initiative contrary to the impulses of democratic, grassroots arts-learning in schools. Second, it points out the relative isolation of schools implementing reforms. That none of the teachers and administrators had even heard of a major arts-centered school reform plan that has been in existence since 1993 is telling in regards to the glacial spread of information in school reform arenas, especially between arts organizations and school districts.

In the meantime, there are schools like the two included in this study that are implementing the arts in education through carefully created school reform agendas and are seeing many of the same results as listed above, without the box.

Conclusion & Implications for Arts-Centered School Reform

There are many conclusions to be drawn from this look at school reform and arts-centered efforts within school reform; I will focus on five. First, since the industrial revolution the relationship between the arts and American education has been primarily one focused on what the arts could do to support the aims of education. Particularly, a call for art instruction designed to train individuals in a manner that would support specific industry needs of the time. Consequently the arts have been locked into a monolithic state, explicating and justifying its existence in education. This attitude has prevailed until today and poses challenges for reform efforts centered on the arts.

Second, school reform initiatives for education reside in the realm of the federal government. Like it or not, we live in an era of reform and any effort toward school improvement must, to some extent, live within the limits dictated by the current views of school reform and specifically the *No Child Left Behind* act, at least for now. For arts-centered school reform ideas, then, the focus must be on transcending these limits imposed by the federal context of school reform through the production of original forms of arts-centered instruction and increasing the examples of arts-centered school reform. The other alternative is to continue the efforts of scientifically based research on the arts in the attempt to find evidence for increased academic achievement and evidence of transfer.

However, at some point we must ask ourselves if the scientific approach to understanding is the best for revealing the multiple nuances of arts-centered instruction and arts-centered school reform. The discussions based on *Gifts of the Muse* and Project REAP indicate that such a strategy may make arts in education vulnerable to being eliminated from schools altogether if the evidence does not, in the end support academic achievement. This would be a result not wished for by any who support the arts regardless of their approaches to that support. The answer to this question will guide us into the next era of arts research scholarship and arts-centered school reform.

Third, while arts organizations led mostly by the National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Education Partnership are working diligently to create reports that explain, justify and reveal the benefits of and opportunities within the arts, these efforts do not directly address arts-centered school reform. The resources offered by the organizations are for schools wishing to make the case for the arts for their own school improvement plans. This approach maintains the separate universe reality of school reform in general and arts-centered school reform in particular. Until arts organizations take a stand to support a form or forms of arts-centered school reform that have been proven (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to be useful in improving schools this separation will be sustained. DBAE was the best example of rigorous form of arts-centered instruction supported by an arts organization but it did not attempt to explain how it could be utilized to reform schools and now that its main supporter has abandoned the approach its impact seems even less viable. Replacing it however, could be the promises of A+ Schools, but more time and research is needed before its value will truly be known.

Fourth, the three reports specifically addressed in this literature review, Critical Links, Gifts of the Muse, and Project REAP point to the main struggle in the field of arts in education at this time. That is, the push for more scientifically based understanding of arts learning and transfer as explicated by the Critical Links compendium versus the alternative view that the power of the arts are mainly intrinsic and that this benefit should be held above the instrumental benefits explored by the majority of arts reports in circulation. Is it really possible to understand the arts in the same way that scientists come to understand organic phenomena? And if so, would we want this? What is gained by such an approach and what is lost? Lastly, as advocates for the arts in education, are we setting ourselves up for failure by hinging all of our hopes on the scientific study of the arts? My guess is that this debate will continue in our current era of school reform although my hope, like many others in the field, is that researchers, advocates, and educators are able to concentrate on what is unique to the arts and their potential for student learning regardless of how this is measured.

Finally, arts-based school reform is still a fledgling field rife with opportunities for research and discovery. Like the field of education itself however, arts-centered school reform is challenged by its inability to discard what does not work. An effort toward best models of arts-centered school reform needs to be initiated. The work that is happening in CAPE schools and to some extent from the lessons learned from the Annenberg Challenge, represent a few bright stars in a growing constellation of promising efforts in this regard. The time is right for arts-centered school reform to make itself known in the school reform arena. The exciting albeit challenging side of being part of something small wishing to become larger is the opportunities made available for

creating a thoughtful, relevant, and successful enterprise; this is what arts-centered school reform offers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Educational Connoisseurship and Criticism

Educational connoisseurship and criticism is an artistically rendered method of arts-based educational research devised by Elliot Eisner (1994a; 1998a). To practice educational connoisseurship and criticism (hereafter referred to as *educational criticism*) is to focus on seeing, describing, interpreting, and making judgments about what transpires in educational settings. Educational criticism has a strong following and is an established form of arts-based, qualitative, educational inquiry.

Educational criticism has been used in various university settings for various purposes. It has a strong history at Stanford University (Alexander, 1977; Singer, 1990; Uhrmacher, 1991; Schweber, 1999; Powell, 1994; Hawthorne, 1988; Flinders, 1987), at universities across the country (Dotson, 2000; Chirakos, 2004; Teater, 2004; Fowler, 2000; Barry, 1993) and in Canada (Kydd, 2004; Munroe, 1997; Gibson, 1992). Educational criticism has also been used to evaluate nursing (Sohn, 1991) and various elements of religion (Berryman, 1997; Proffitt 1990; King, 1988). Specifically in the arts field educational criticisms have been written on topics such as arts-integration (Newman, 1996), art education (Siegesmund, 2000), arts-standards in Puerto Rico (Rosendo, 2003), artists in residence (Romero, 1997; Perlov, 1998), dance in elementary school (Lazaroff, 1998), visual arts teachers (Rogers, 1999), and music education (Pearce, 2007).

Educational Criticism also has an established record at the University of Denver (Newman, 1996; Bryza, 2005; Austin, 2004; Smith, 2003) and has been used to investigate a wide range of topics such as the moral intentions of educators (Armon, 1997), bullying (Bennett, 2008); second language acquisition (Jacobson, 2003), ecologically minded educators (Moroye, 2007); charter schools (Kim, 2003); global education (Byrnes, 1993), expeditionary learning (Sharpswain, 2005) and outdoor education (Kime, 2008), the experiences of Columbine parents (Mears, 2005), and Krishnamurti schools and well-being in education (Cloninger, 2008). Educational criticisms ability to make fine-tuned assessments of investigated settings make it a useful and revealing approach to qualitative inquiry.

Educational criticism is field focused, relies on the self as the instrument of analysis, and is “the art of saying useful things about complex and subtle objects and events so that others less sophisticated or sophisticated in different ways, can see and understand what they did not see and understand before” (Eisner 1998a, p. 3). Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation and “the ability to see, not merely to look (p. 6); criticism is the art of disclosure; “for connoisseurship to have a public presence, we must turn to criticism, for criticism provides connoisseurship with a public face (p. 85). Appreciation is a private enterprise, it often takes place in one’s head; disclosure on the other hand means making the private, public. Educational criticism and connoisseurship is a mode of inquiry that allows researchers to “make fine-grained discriminations among complex and subtle qualities” (p. 63) and then to make judgments that lead to a “re-education of the perception” (Dewey 1934, p. 324) of the setting being studied.

The Four Dimensions of Educational Criticism

Educational criticism employs four inter-related dimensions used for disclosure: *description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics*. In description, the researcher renders a milieu vividly, through expressive language and oftentimes literary techniques that enable the reader to visualize the setting being studied for purposes of understanding. Educational critics predominantly use the written word to create a picture and a narrative of the events being studied. As Eisner (1998a) points out, “the writer always tells an incomplete story. One does not – nor cannot – tell it all. In this sense a narrative, like perception, is inherently selective” (p. 90).

Interpretation in educational criticism is the dimension in which the educational critic uncovers the meanings behind what has been described. Whereas description provides an account of the experiences had by the educational critic, interpretation provides the space for the educational critic to examine the meanings behind and the reasons for what has been seen. Critics work with theory to uncover these meanings. Eisner explains, “when critics work with theory, they use it as a tool for purposes of explanation –not to meet the rigorous tests for the ‘true experiment,’ but to satisfy rationality, to deepen the conversation, to raise fresh questions” (p. 95).

In evaluation, the educational critic is interested in the efficacy of the educational setting and also in determining the educational significance of the experiences had by the individuals within it. The educational critic concentrates on three types of experience as suggested by Dewey (1938), the non-educative, the miseducative, and the educative. The non-educative refers to experiences that have no affect on the individual whatsoever. They are neither ameliorative nor malfeasant; “such experiences are inconsequential”

(Eisner 1998a, p. 99). Miseducative experiences refer to occasions, events, or occurrences that hinder or stop the growth of the individual. Such experiences may “prohibit the enjoyment or participation in wholesome activities . . .” (p. 99) and may make the individual avoid further exploration of similar experiences, activities, or events.

Educative experiences are the third type outlined by Dewey and are the desired type of experiences to be had in schools. Such experiences encourage growth, knowledge, and curiosity and add to the individual’s understanding of the world and the possible outcomes of their participation in it. The educational critic’s task is to uncover and appraise the kinds of experiences had by individuals in educational settings to fully understand the educational value of the experiences within the observed context.

Finally in thematics, educational critics draw out the lessons inherent in the story that has been told. By this point, the educational critic has described the setting in vivid and expressive detail, has interpreted the meanings behind what has been described, and has evaluated what has transpired in the educational setting through an appraisal of his or her experiences in the setting. Thematics allows the educational critic to draw out common themes from what has been seen, interpreted, and appraised. These themes extend beyond the setting investigated and have the potential to affecting other similar settings or situations.

The thematics dimension of educational criticism holds promise for educational reform. For instance, Deborah Meier’s (1995) description of Central Park East schools in New York, while not a work of educational criticism per se, is not only provocative because of its vivid description of the school itself that fills its pages, but for the promise of possible change for other schools that such vivid rendering reveals and

inspires. The themes that arise out of the investigations of school settings can offer insight, strategy, and inspiration for change in alternate settings.

Together the four dimensions of educational criticism and connoisseurship discussed –description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics –support the structure of this methodology.

The Participants

To locate participants I contacted the principals of schools I thought might be interested and agreeable in allowing me to observe there schools to investigate art-centered school reform. Both principals, Dr. Carter of Leland Elementary School and Ms. Hansen of Edgebrook Elementary School, were immediately agreeable. Ms. Hansen suggested that I contact two particular teachers in her school who she thought would be interested in my research plan. I emailed Mrs. Fontaine and Mrs. Ingram and both agreed to be participants.

At Leland Elementary I first met with Dr. Carter in person to talk about my ideas for research. After this meeting she gave me permission to talk with Ms. Bakke. Ms. Bakke was enthusiastic about my research and was happy to be involved. I was not sure at that time who might agree to be the second teacher observed at this school. I asked Ms. Bakke if she had any recommendations and she suggested I talk with Mr. Chadek. She was of the opinion that his classroom was an interesting space that deserved chronicling. I spoke with Mr. Chadek who also proved enthusiastic about my research goals. I have included a breakdown of teacher information in Table 1.

Table 1: Participant Teachers⁶

Teacher	School	Grade Level	Years Teaching	Date of Observation	Personal Art Interest
Grace Bakke	Leland Elementary	Second	6	April 2006	Drama
Edie Fontaine	Edgebrook Elementary	First/ Second combined	30	October 2006	Dance
Natalie Ingram	Edgebrook Elementary	Fifth	22	September 2006	Visual Art
Henry Chadek	Leland Elementary	Fourth	30	May 2006	Music

In general my search for interested participants was uncomplicated. Three teachers were suggested by the principals of the two schools studied and the fourth teacher was located through Ms. Bakke.

Ms. Bakke had been teaching for six years at the time of my observation. She had come to Leland from a school that was not arts-centered. Her personal arts background included drama which she studied in-depth in college. Mrs. Fontaine is a veteran teacher with 30 years of teaching experience during the time of my observations. She had a strong interest in dance and movement throughout her years as an educator. She had been a teacher at Edgebrook for 25 years and thus had seen many changes over the life of the school. Mrs. Ingram is also a veteran teacher with 22 years experience although she had worked at Edgebrook for only four. She was not a staff member at the inception of the school's reform but came on board two years later. Her personal art interest revolved around the visual arts which she integrated often into her curriculum. Finally, Mr. Chadek, a veteran teacher with 30 years of experience in different areas of education, was

⁶ All names used in this study to refer to teachers, administrators, support staff, specialists and students are pseudonyms.

in his last year of teaching before retirement when I observed his classroom. He embodied the metaphor of the orchestra maestro which is how he conducted his classroom. He had a strong interest in music as well and in his class music was often a backdrop to learning.

The School Sites

At the beginning of my efforts to locate sites for my study, I was particularly interested in a number of schools in Chicago, Illinois that were participating in the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) program. I courted a few of these schools to explore the possibility of conducting my research in at least one of them but was met with silence during my attempts to contact the principals of my selected schools. I concluded that because the Chicago public schools in partnership with CAPE were routinely studied internally by CAPE, they could see no real need nor had much interest in allowing an outsider into their midst, although this is just speculation on my part. In the end I was unable to secure a site in a CAPE school and refocused my attention on securing both research sites in the Denver Metropolitan Area.

To locate schools that might be willing to participate I relied on a devised criterion for selection and inclusion. For instance both schools had to be public schools; they could not require an artistic talent audition for enrollment; they could be magnet or charter schools; both schools had to be currently implementing arts-integration throughout the curriculum; and the arts-centered reform model had to have been in place for at least two years. Both schools that I selected fit these criteria. I had heard about Leland Elementary School and Edgebrook Elementary School over the years as a doctoral student. At first I was hesitant to observe Leland as it was a gifted and talented/

high-achieving school and I was not sure how that would affect my data or results. However, after meeting the principal Dr. Carter and seeing her school I was very eager and enthusiastic to begin my observations at Leland.

Leland Elementary School is a community school located in the north central portion of the Denver metropolitan area. The area surrounding the school is diverse in both socioeconomic level and race. However the school itself does not reflect the same level of diversity that the neighborhood surrounding it exhibits (see chapter four for further discussion). This is due in part to the school’s status as a gifted and talented/ high-achieving school and also due to its growing popularity as a successful school in an otherwise struggling district. Thus the school attracts families of higher socio-economic status from beyond the immediate neighborhood who are seeking a successful public school without having to leave the district. Edgebrook Elementary School is also a community school located in an relatively affluent suburb south of the city. More than half of its students come from the immediate neighborhood community while the remaining population comes from other portions of the district and are drawn to the school because of its arts-centered mission. A breakdown of the demographics for both schools is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of School Settings

School	Enrolled Students	African-American	Asian	Caucasian	Hispanic/Latino	% Free & Reduced Lunch
Leland Elementary School	312	12%	7%	68%	2%	16%
Edgebrook Elementary School	430	3%	9%	77.1%	9.3%	10%

Both schools value the diversity they have been able to achieve but yearn to serve a more diverse population. This issue is particularly poignant for Leland Elementary School because of the mismatch between its population and the neighborhood in which it resides. In terms of choosing varied schools in which to conduct this study, I was pleased to be able to look at one school in an urban setting and one in a suburban setting but other issues of variance in sites remain lacking. For instance my work is concentrated in two elementary schools serving students kindergarten through fifth grade; the study would have benefited by observations of an arts-centered middle school or high school. However, mainstream arts-centered middle and high schools (versus high schools of performing arts) are rare and I was not able to locate such a school in the metropolitan area. This could be seen as a minor limitation of this study.

Methods of Data Collection & Analysis

The collection of data in this study included three primary activities. First I engaged in observation of classroom environments. I spent 10 days in each of the four classrooms focused on in this dissertation. In addition I observed what took place in the school in an encompassing manner; this included activities such as walking the halls and attending school events that took place while I was there and throughout the school year of my data collection efforts. My observations were recorded in the form of field notes kept in separate notebooks for each classroom studied. My function was to observe and record the daily interactions between the teacher and his or her students making both descriptive notes –writing down accurate details of what I was seeing –and analytic notes intended to record my reflective thoughts on what I observed (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, pp. 47-49).

Second, I conducted formal and informal interviews. I conducted interviews with the teachers of the classrooms included for observation, administrators of the schools, parents of the students in the classroom, classroom paraprofessionals, student teachers, support staff, and arts specialists working in the two school studied. Length of interviews ranged from thirty-minutes to two hours based on participants' time availability and interest. In all, eighteen interviews were conducted and transcribed. Informal interviews included casual conversations held with teachers, parents or other school personnel as the opportunities arose throughout my observations in the school. The interviews were audio-taped and interviewee approval was procured. Some of the questions included in the interview protocol were structured and some questions emerged from what is seen and heard in the classroom or inspired by some other interaction with the environment [see Appendix B for interview guide]. Finally, artifact collection served as another tool that was used in collecting data for analysis. Artifacts included such items as, student work, teaching materials, photographs of the schools, art work, bulletin boards, written information about the school or events taking place at the school and curriculum guides.

I used a number of strategies to analyze the data collected. First I kept a reflective journal as part of the analysis project. In this journal I practiced free-writing as described by Wolcott (2001, pp. 25-26). This strategy offered me, as the researcher, time to reflect on what I had observed, inspired new questions or new frames of reference to use as my observations continued, such writing kept me engaged with the material, and helped me make connections between what I am observed and the theories that could be used to make useful interpretations. Second, I typed my field notes on a daily basis which allowed me to ruminate over the days work and fill in any gaps left as a result of speedy

note taking. Later as I looked for themes and connections within the data I used a coding or labeling system for themes that reoccurred in the different settings. I personally transcribed all interviews providing yet another way of interacting with the data.

Finally, I relied on the conceptual framework concentrating on the six dimensions of schooling proposed by Eisner (1988; 1992; 1998a) and the five realms of meaning (Phenix, 1986; Uhrmacher, 2001). This conceptual framework and the realms of meaning served as scaffolding for my observations, interpretations, analysis, and helped guide the kinds of questions I asked in the interview process. However, I remained cognizant of observations or events that could be seen as going against the grain of the conceptual framework I had chosen, to assure that I did not miss any emerging themes or patterns that I may not have considered at the onset of my observations. As Eisner (1998a) comments,

The creation of patterns derived from observation as a basis for explaining and predicting is both the boon and the bane of observation. Knowing what to look for makes the search more efficient. At the same time, knowing what to look for can make us less likely to see things that were not a part of our expectations. (p. 98)

I wanted to remain open to the possibility of other areas where meaning is made by students in arts-centered schools.

Issues of Validity

The educational critic seeks to perceive and understand the setting in a manner that reveals the way it actually is and not in the way that he or she wishes it to be. However, all researchers have to deal with their own bias in research settings. In my case, I care very much about the arts in education. I was also a dancer for fourteen years and am a visual artist today; this deep involvement in art forms affects my approach to my

study. My dance and visual arts background could easily influence what I see in the classroom milieus and may also affect what I attend to as observer. This could be seen as a connoisseur's strength but these experiences, cares, and biases could also be seen as a limitation to my ability to render an honest picture of what is experienced but more likely it could keep me vigilant in my attempts to create a vivid picture that will ring truth to whomever reads it. My task has been to render the setting I describe in terms of what was seen and perceived, and through the use of multiple forms of data to support or contradict what I have found.

Using multiple data sources to check the validity of one's findings is referred to as structural corroboration (Eisner, 1994a; 1998a). This tool aids the educational critic in substantiating what he or she has asserted about the educational setting. In this study I used both interviews and teacher participant and interviewee feedback to establish structural corroboration. A second strategy an educational critic may use to support the validity of his or her report is to seek referential adequacy (Eisner, 1994a; 1998a). An educational criticism is referentially adequate to the extent that its audience is able to locate the descriptions, interpretations, evaluations, and thematics that the educational critic has addressed in his or her study. If the study is referentially adequate it will have answered the questions it set out to ask and will enlarge understanding of the setting for the reader.

As a final note on validity, the ultimate test of a research study is its usefulness to the school community it works to describe, interpret, evaluate and draw meaning from. In my case, each teacher that I worked with read the chapter based on his or her classroom and commented on it, offered suggestions, clarifications, and helpful insights. More

importantly the teachers and principals of both schools requested copies of the study to have in support of the history, importance, and value of the arts-centered school reform being implemented in their schools. The goal of educational research is to improve on the ideas, structures, and realities of schooling for the benefit of students. Based on the feedback I received from the teachers and principals of Leland Elementary School and Edgebrook Elementary School, the study has achieved this goal. My hope is that the insights uncovered in this study will aid these schools and others as they continue to work towards the creation and cultivation of arts-centered school reform.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are:

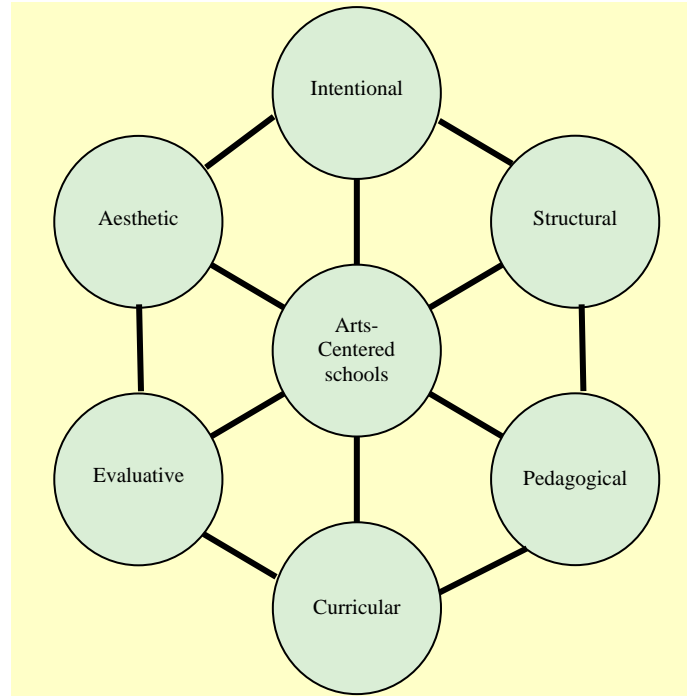
1. What are the aims of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied?
2. What does arts-centered school reform look like in practice?
3. What is the educational significance of arts-centered school reform as it is represented in the two schools studied?
4. What educational import do these examples of arts-centered school reform have for American public school reform in general?

Six Dimensions of Schooling & the Ecology of the Classroom

The conceptual framework used in this study is based on the six dimensions of schooling proposed by Eisner (1988, 1992, 1998a, 1998b, 2002) including the intentional, the curricular, the pedagogical, the structural, the evaluative and the aesthetic (Uhrmacher, 1991) dimensions in addition to five realms of meaning (Phenix, 1986; Uhrmacher 2001) including the cognitive, imaginative, democratic, community, and personal which were used to delve deeper into arts-centered school reform.

The *intentional* dimension refers to the aims of the classroom teacher, school, or administration. These aims are what school stakeholders intend when structuring curriculum and instruction as well as what actually happens in the classroom. The *structural* dimension refers to how the school day is divided in terms of both time and space. This dimension has a bearing on the kinds and quality of experiences students have in school. The *curricular* dimension refers to the kinds and quality of curricular activities taking place in the classroom. The *pedagogical* dimension describes how the curriculum is conveyed to the students and what instructional strategies or tools are used to make this happen. The *evaluative* dimension refers to the kinds of evaluation tools are used in the school to measure learning. This might include classroom or standardized tests, appraisal of student work in other forms and how these measurement tactics affect students. Finally, the *aesthetic* dimension refers to the kinds and qualities of materials used in the classroom as well as the overall level of aestheticism exhibited in the learning environment and what affect this has on students. Together these six dimensions have guided my observations and analysis and offered a framework for seeing what arts-centered school reform looks like in practice. For the purposes of my study into arts-centered school reform I envisioned the dimensions of schooling with the schools of study placed at the center and the dimensions connected to one another as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Ecology of Arts-Centered School Reform



This visual depiction serves as a reminder to me that the arts are at the center of an integrated educational experience for students.

Five Realms of Meaning-Making Possibility for Students

While the dimensions of schooling offer a framework for investigating the ecology of schools (Eisner, 1988), the five realms of meaning will be used to examine the experiences of students within the observed schools that highlight the meaning-making possibilities of arts-centered school reform. In thinking about why arts-centered school reform is a worthy undertaking I wish to examine the ways in which meaning is constructed in these five realms: the cognitive, the democratic, the imaginative, the community, and the personal in the four classrooms observed.

Looking for occasions of meaning-making possibility in these five realms provided an opportunity to uncover what is significant about arts-centered school reform

settings. These categories are ones that I both cared about and thought were possible outcomes of investigations of classrooms in arts-centered school reform settings. At the onset I knew it might be possible for there to be other realms that I might observe or that might emerge through my observations; indeed the original dissertation proposal delineated four realms. Based on my observations and analysis of the four settings, I have added a fifth possibility, the *personal* realm. While this framework provided some efficiency in seeing, as a researcher I was careful not to limit what I saw by using an inflexible framework. Like the teachers of arts-centered schools, I found myself in a position of *flexible purposing* (Eisner, 2002) as a researcher, allowing small changes and adjustments to be made as they became relevant. I turn now to a brief description of the five realms of meaning explored in this study.

The Cognitive Realm

The arts are rich in cognitive potential and meaning. The arts help us notice what we did not notice before and help us think in ways we have not thought in before; indeed “thinking, in any of its manifestations, is a cognitive event (Eisner 2002, p. 9). Eisner has been revolutionary in reframing cognition for education. Uhrmacher & Matthews (2005) summarize Eisner’s thinking on cognition in education like this,

In short, human beings interact with the environment largely through their senses which are designed to selectively take in information. From such interactions, one may form concepts. Concept formation, which proceeds language, depends upon an image derived from the sensory material. When people want to express themselves, they convert their concepts into a form of representation, which may be linguistic or mathematical, but may also be musical or visual. Each form of representation allows us to express some concepts but not others. Each form reveals and conceals. (p. 5)

The use of different forms of representation is one of the ways meaning is expressed in every day life. As Eisner (1994b) states,

Because the kind of experience an individual has depends upon the kinds of qualities the sensory system picks up and because meaning depends upon experience, the character and distribution of qualities in an environment and the particular focus an individual brings to that environment affect the kinds of meaning he or she is likely to have. (p. 47)

The interaction between the student and the world allows for meaning to be expressed in different forms of representation. Viewing educational settings in the cognitive realm then, will focus on examining the forms used by students in these settings to express their thinking and feeling experiences. Specifically, I suggest the possibility that viewing an arts-centered school reform milieu with an eye toward the quality and the number of forms of representation at work in the setting will reveal cognitive meanings created by students through their experiences with the arts. As Efland (2002), echoing Eisner states, “since each of the arts offer unique ways of representing ideas and feelings, which cannot be matched by other systems of representation, their presence can be justified in terms of the cognitive abilities they nurture” (p. 157).

The Imaginative Realm

If it is true that if American businesses and technical fields decry the lack of creative and imaginative individuals to fill skilled positions in their organizations then there is no better approach to cultivating such individuals than to expose them to arts-imbued environments. Arts-centered approaches to school reform have the potential of supporting notions of imagination that will foster creative individuals. The cultivation of the imagination, working with sensory and mental images to enhance creativity and expression is an important aspect of being human.

Children are naturally imaginative thus finding spaces within the curriculum and elsewhere for imagination to shine is important. Moreover, imagination is not only an important skill that all individuals in the future will need to prosper in work environments, as Maxine Greene (1995) comments, “it may be the recovery of the imagination that lessens the social paralysis we see around us and restores the sense that something can be done” (p. 35). Imagination, the ability to imagine oneself as a participant in future environments and endeavors or in someone else’s situation or predicament, increases the likelihood for empathy of others’ realities.

Democratic Realm

The arts have the potential to strengthen democracy thus building and sustaining a formidable democracy is one of our nation’s greatest aims. Public schooling is a large part of the democratic experiment. Arts-centered school reform has the ability to strengthen democracy because the arts support democracy [see e.g., Melzer, Weinberger, & Zinman 1998] by opening up possibilities for participation in the world. Education’s dismissal of the arts in many settings gives in to the “one-sided meanings which have come to attach to the ideas of efficiency and culture” that Dewey (1916, p. 136) talks about. Students today are fully engaged in their own forms of meaning-making within the realm of youth culture. However these constructed meanings can often be based on shallow, shortsighted experiences. Hence this engagement holds the potential of further sustaining youths’ real or perceived separateness from democracy and civic engagement and creates barriers difficult to overcome.

Cornel West’s (2004) interest in supporting democracy matters highlights the importance of engaging youth culture and confronting the “incessant bombardment of

images on TV and in movies [that] convinces many young people that the culture of gratification . . . is the only way of being human” (p. 175). Looking at arts in education as a space for experiences and discussions about democracy matters may reduce the gap between how youths experience culture and their engagement with and connection to democratic life in America.

In the arts world there is another form of democracy that matters –the idea of cultural democracy (Graves, 2005; Zuidervaart & Luttikhuizen, 2000). The concerns of scholars supporting the idea of cultural democracy are those that note the falling status of the arts not only in schools but throughout society in America. Looking for occasions of democratic meaning-making in arts-centered school reform could be helpful in further supporting the arts in the lives of students and society.

The Community Realm

The arts have great potential for building community. Studies of school reform emphasize the support of the parents and the school community because these factors improve chances for success. The arts help schools reach out into the community and help the community form a relationship with the school. The ways in which the classroom and school help build community creates meanings in the lives of all those connected to the school. Long interested in the creation of community and the contribution of the arts in this endeavor, Greene (1995) comments,

In thinking about community we need to emphasize the process words: making, creating, weaving, saying, and the like. Community cannot be produced simply through rational formulation nor through edict. Like freedom, it has to be achieved by persons offered the space in which to discover what they recognize together and appreciate in common . . . it ought to be a space infused by the kind of imaginative awareness that

enables those involved to imagine alternative possibilities for their own becoming. (p. 39)

Experience in the arts offers opportunities for communities to come together and discover what is shared, what is common, and what can be built together. Noticing occasions of community creation in the classroom and how the arts contribute help to support and define this realm.

The Personal Realm

Throughout my study of arts-centered school reform I noticed that students were offered opportunities to create their own meaning and to experience curriculum in personal ways. Building on the work of Vallance's (1986) notion of a "curriculum for personal commitment" I realized that the personal could be another very important realm of meaning-making possibility for students that helped described their human experiences as students. I therefore began looking for evidence of the personal curriculum and spaces of personal meaning-making in the two schools studied.

Students, like all of us, need meaning in their lives. Education, by its nature, can be a meaning-making enterprise if we support such a notion [see e.g., Uhrmacher, 2001]. Looking at the occasions of cognitive, imaginative, democratic, community, and personal meaning making generated in the classroom and school will first, strengthen the argument of the arts' ability to create meaning in lives, and second, will offer examples of how this looks in practice from an educational perspective.

Limitations of the Study

No research study is without limitations. In this study of arts-centered school reform I have located four limitations that mitigate to some extent the strengths of its

findings. First, the teachers in my study were all veteran and master teachers with a combined total of years teaching in classrooms exceeding eighty years. Because of this I cannot say without pause, whether the success I was seeing in the classrooms in terms of arts-integration and arts-centered school reform was due more to the experience of the teachers in the classroom than the strength and ingenuity of the arts-centered school reform models in place. More diversity in teacher experience would have strengthened the arguments made in this study in favor of arts-centered school reform.

Second, this study lacks significant diversity in student demographics. One of the claims of arts-advocates is that students of color and students in impoverished districts show increased benefits from arts-learning. I was unable, for the most part, to identify if this was true in this particular study. Although Leland Elementary School is located in a relatively impoverished district, its student body does not reflect the community in which it exists.

Moreover, since Leland Elementary is a gifted and talented/ high-achieving school it is possible that much of the success I was seeing was related to this aspect of the school culture. An examination of gifted and talented/ high-achieving education was beyond the scope of this study and thus was not addressed but this does create a limitation in fully understanding any potential affects from that aspect of Leland Elementary on the success of its arts-centered school reform model. Working to locate schools with more diversity and without any outlying characteristics such as the potential effects from studying a gifted and talented/ high-achieving population would have strengthened this study.

Third, throughout my observations and interviews in both schools many participants brought to my attention the importance of the principal of the school as the leader, protector, and catalyst of arts-centered school reform. For instance at Leland Elementary School, the school librarian described the Principal, Dr. Carter as a “buffer” and a “filter” of district mandates, directing teachers’ attentions to what was most important for the efficacy of the school and more importantly as the protector of teachers from the often caustic district realities. The principals in the two schools studied were seen as vitally important to the success of the reforms put in place. Moreover teachers and staff members at both school sites showed concern over what would happen to the reform agenda if the principals were to leave the school. While I discuss the role of the principal in small ways in chapter eight, I do not delve deeply into this very important aspect of arts-centered school reform. Therefore the relationship between the principal, the district, her teachers, and her school is left relatively unexamined in this study. This can be seen as a limitation of this study and a definite opportunity for future research. Looking at the role of the principal in comprehensive arts-centered school reform settings would yield important information regarding the efficacy and challenges of arts-centered school reform agendas and provide useful lessons for future arts-centered school reformers as they proceed with the difficult task of educational change.

Finally, as one reads this dissertation it is clear that the voices and experiences of arts-specialists are underrepresented. This is a mitigating factor in this study and the reasons for this are several. First, in many ways, arts-specialists are in between worlds in arts-centered school reform. Many share their time between schools because of the way specials-staffing works and are unavailable for large portions of the school day or week.

Second, their roles in arts-integration are unclear. If arts-integration is happening in the classroom, what is happening in the art room? Because of this, at least at Edgebrook Elementary School, there was a sense that the art teacher was not part of the arts-integration mission in any purposeful and meaningful capacity. The art teacher came in, glided through her lesson, and moved on. At Leland the arts-specialists were on campus as full-time teachers and collaboration and inclusion in the culture of arts-integration proved more prevalent but still difficult. Finally, because of my observation schedule and when I was present in the schools for observation, I missed many of the specials since they were scheduled on a rotating, quarterly basis. I included the arts-specials classes I was able to observe but because of the way specials were scheduled I was simply not able to observe them all. Because of funding and staffing issues, school leaders simply cannot offer every art special to every student every week.

One would expect arts-centered schools to include the voices and experiences of the arts-specialists in the school; while I was successful in including some of these voices and insights within the classroom narratives it remains a limitation of this study. It is indicative, sadly, of the rank of arts specials and specialists in schools –whether or not they are arts-centered –and the difficulties school leaders have in giving the formal arts their fair share within the scheduling and budget constraints of schooling.

About the Researcher

Many events can transpire for people throughout their different levels of education to shape who they become. Given my roots I was certainly not predestined for a Ph.D. and in many ways it has been a chaotic mosaic of challenges, albeit mostly joyous ones. What I do know is that having developed an early love for learning and

especially a love for reading has allowed me wonderful opportunities that in high school and even as a freshman in college, I did not yet know were possible. It was somewhat later that I took that deep breath of life formal education offers and it is then that worlds began to open for me.

I was indeed an exceptionally average student in school. I placed my social life above the academic as many young students are wont to do. I was the person everyone came to talk to about their problems and I was known to skip a class or two to travel with friends to the local Taco Bell or to 7-11 for a Slurpee. Teachers were often frustrated with my disinterest in “applying” my talents to educational tasks. But today I cringe when I hear of high school students ever so stressed about their future prospects as if life has been predetermined and their educational life is merely a means to an end with no joy along the journey as Denise Pope has chronicled in her important book, *Doing School: How We Are Creating a Generation of Stress Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students* (2001). I have known for some time that I wish for something different for students—a sense of balance between my lackadaisical undirected experience and those of many of today’s high-achieving students.

Thus when I decided on the topic I wanted to pursue for this dissertation, I knew that it would be a very personal endeavor in that many of my own educational experiences have been littered with lack of meaning and disappointment, and that these experiences would be brought to bear on my research methods, tone, and writing. In some ways I embarked on this research endeavor to prove to myself that beauty does exist in schools and that there are places where every child is valued for his or her special talents. Certainly during most of my schooling I did not get the message that what I was

able to contribute held value. Only in a few instances in high school was I perceived as adding value: as a peer counselor, as an art student, as a dancer, as a friend, in philosophy class, and in creating good relationships with a select few teachers and administrators. This last talent served me well when I almost did not get into college but for a persistent and dedicated high school counselor who made a call on my behalf.

So it was a probably surprise to many who knew me that I could, from my very average educational roots make it all the way to being accepted to Columbia Teachers College in New York for my doctoral work and though I did not accept their offer and gladly remained at DU with my mentor Bruce Uhrmacher, for my doctorate, I hold this story as the story of every child's possibility in this world –no matter their humble or average educational roots. My talents were overlooked in the beginning but celebrated in the end. I eventually found my place within the educational milieu where my set of talents had the possibility of shining and adding value.

Students and educators come in all forms; we are all student and educator at times and often at the same time. What I will finally contribute to this cosmic dance remains to be seen but I do know that the journey is worth the not knowing. I have pursued this topic of arts-centered school reform as a way to honor artfully designed and implemented educational places that help students know that they too, add value to the world, even if not in the most traditional fashion; indeed the arts help this endeavor along. As will hopefully be shown throughout this dissertation the arts bring students in contact with alternate worlds and possibility. The arts as a metaphor protect the idea of one's inner potential and the arts help make the connections for students helping them on their path of meaning-making and toward becoming an educated person. The arts widen what is

appropriate and meaningful in schools –this is the hope and the promise of arts-centered school reform and it is this hope and promise that I support.

If I could return to my days as a young student and have the opportunity to learn in the multiple forms of representation shown throughout these stories in my dissertation I would have experienced schooling and learning much differently and much more positively. I might not have had to take that long and difficult path to find out what it was that I could contribute. Clearly my talents were not those of mainly word and number as dominate most schools then and today. Indeed, I write this dissertation with a dancer's heart as it was through dance that I gained the confidence that later seeped into the other learning areas of my life. I held an artists' perspective as I conducted my research and my choices along the way, in methodology, structure, and even word choice reflect my own relationship with the arts as an artist. So in a very personal way this dissertation speaks about the sort of kid and student I once was and the artist that I am today, and it speaks to the impact and possibility of what learning can be when it is experienced through the mind-opening world of arts-engagement. Now as we look to the future of educational change, my resounding hope is that these stories within this dissertation help, each in their own small way, to strengthen the argument for a continued dedication to the arts in education.

Summary: Toward Teacher Artistry & Arts-Centered School Reform

We turn now to the chapters describing and interpreting the four teachers' classroom activities. Throughout these descriptions I will refer to five different types of *arts-embedded situations* that occur in varying intensity throughout what I observed in the classrooms that explicate the teachers' aims and artistry as educators. The five types

of arts-embedded situations that emerged throughout my observations include: *growth and caring, arts-mindedness, artistry, home, and expressiveness* which I define briefly in Table 3. The boundaries between situations are often blurred in complex environments such as those of arts-centered schools therefore what could be interpreted as one type of situation may easily fit into another; overlap is inevitable.

Table 3: Five Types of Arts-Embedded Situations in Arts-Centered School Reform

Arts-Mindedness	Refers to arts-embedded situations where students are encouraged to think like artists and to engage in the many cognitive processes that the arts inspire.
Artistry	Refers to arts-embedded situations where students are encouraged to act like artists, engaging in the many joys, challenges, and skills of being artists in the classroom. The emphasis is on performance.
Home	Refers to the arts-embedded situations that teachers create that support a home-like atmosphere in the classroom imbued with the arts toward shared meaning and responsibility.
Growth & Caring	Refers to arts-embeddedness situations that encourage student growth personally and academically and a sense of caring for themselves, each other, and ideas.
Expressiveness	Refers to arts-embedded situations where teachers encourage students to explore their inner landscapes and emotions through the arts in expressive ways.

I borrow the word, “situation” from phenomenological research which can be explained “as a form of interpretive inquiry . . . which focuses on human perception and experience, particularly on what many would characterize as the aesthetic qualities of human experience (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 405). While this study is *not* phenomenological

in nature, it does share some of the concerns of phenomenology (e.g., the lived experience of the teachers and students involved and thoughtfulness in research). The term,

“situation,” a phenomenological concept denotes those elements of a setting which are organized by the intentionality (the horizon of perceptions of understanding) of the individual or group . . . from this perspective the reality of classroom life is viewed as the construction of those who dwell within those situations. (Aoki, 1988, as cited in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 412)

Moreover, as Jim Garrison (1997) points out in explaining John Dewey’s notion of the contextual whole, or situation, he comments that, “For Dewey the quality of the situation is neither ‘in’ us nor, ‘in’ the environment. . . the quality of any situation is determined, in part, by the organism’s needs, desires, and interests interacting with its environment . . .” (p. 106). Eisner (2002) too, uses the term *situations*, in his work on the teaching of art. He tells us that “the teacher is someone who designs situations that build upon what students value or know. *Situations* are qualitatively related conditions that students experience and within which they act” (p. 47). These ideas of the term *situation* resonated with what I was seeing in arts-centered classrooms and thus became a useful tool in parsing the experiences students had in arts-centered schools in meaningful ways.

In looking at the educational milieus in this study, the interactions that take place between teachers, students, the environment, curriculum and the community among other elements take on different types of situational meaning over time through and making use of the arts; thus I speak of these situations as *arts-embedded situations*. What it means for situations to be *arts-embedded* is the extent to which teachers (sometimes in collaboration with others) in arts-centered school settings design learning situations that infuse,

integrate, explore, and celebrate the arts. In any given educational situation there emerge opportunities for arts-centered teachers to make connections to the arts and to encourage students to engage artistically within those situations. The degree to which teachers are able to do this is the degree to which the situation can be deemed arts-embedded. Looking closely at how these meanings emerge as types of situations became one organizing facet of this study as it evolved.

In attempting to interpret the educational scenes I observed toward understanding teacher artistry in arts-centered school reform contexts, I recognize that many categories could have been used. I use the aforementioned five types of arts-embedded situations because they overlap in all four classrooms of my observation to various degrees; additionally these situations are useful in characterizing arts-centered school reform in practice as we will see summarized in chapter eight.

CHAPTER FOUR

MS. BAKKE'S SECOND GRADE CLASSROOM

LELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

I feel Leland is such a happy place for children and their families to be because of the reverence each person is given by the administration and staff at Leland. Each person is considered special in their own way as well as having areas that they are working on. No person is better or worse than another, just good at some things and still working on other things. Each person is valued fully for what they can contribute to Leland, our community, and this world. (Parent of Leland Elementary Student, personal communication, 2006)

Teaching is a performance act. And it is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom. (bell hooks 1994, p. 11)

A teacher of mine once said, "Go and watch it; if it's beautiful, it's right," . . . and if you look at Dr. Carter's school, it's very beautiful and it's right. (Ms. Grace Bakke, second grade teacher, 2006)

Urban Beauty

Leland Elementary school, housed in a robust architectural structure, is nestled in a quadrant adjacent to a heavily trafficked major highway. The green and wooded public park across the street simultaneously offers a place for urbanites from the surrounding businesses to picnic and a tranquil sleeping place for some of the city's thousands of homeless persons. On neighboring streets, newly constructed high-rise apartments exist alongside withering buildings and abandoned shops, a reminder of lives once lived on

these streets while harboring the positive changes to come. A chain-link fence, the height of a baseball backstop, separates the school from these outside realities.

Parking my car across the street from Leland Elementary School I can already hear the happy mixture of children's voices, first bells, fleeting whistles and parents' voices mixing to create that medley of early morning ritual we call school. A game of soccer is taking place on the always-green Astroturf school lawn. A young girl with dark hair partly covered by a Rastafarian cap kicks a leather ball into a makeshift goal and scores a point. Her team, made up of both boys and girls, erupts in a loud *hurrah* that momentarily breaks up the constant playful chatter of the yard's other inhabitants. I walk beneath colorful kinetic sculptures churning in the crisp morning breeze. I see a mural on a short wall that encases one of the jungle gyms and the sand box. The mural is of a community of people painted in vibrant hues of magenta, yellow, green, and blue. A placard next to this painting reads: "Longitude and Latitude", the title given to this art work created by Leland students and an artist in residence who visited the school a few years back. I take care to notice these welcoming visual gestures that denote the art brought to life at Leland.

Walking into the double doors of the school I enter a large atrium where a tall Fica tree thrives at its center. Small-sized tables and chairs are scattered about; large windows brighten the spacious area. In lieu of the harsh fluorescent lights found in many schools, light fixtures throwing warm light hang from the ceilings in the common areas of the school. Walking down the hall to the office I see large pictures of African art loaned to the school from the city's local art museum. There are large murals, some student created, some not, covering the walls, and most moving, a student-created sculpture

designed to commemorate the attacks on New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. Leland Elementary School exhibits the qualities of a fine art museum. The artists are the students and teachers who have passed through these halls, inhabited these classrooms, and whose creative work has illuminated these spaces since the school's inception.

In the office, after signing in at the main desk, I am greeted by Dr. Carter, the principal of Leland Elementary. She is a dynamic woman, bespectacled and smiling; the warmth she bestows is disarming and it puts my own nervousness at ease. I am visiting Leland immediately upon the school's return from the spring-break vacation. Dr. Carter glides through the halls answering quick questions and greeting parents and students who are anxious to ask her about her own spring-break vacation spent in Washington D.C., "I soaked up the Cezanne," she says to them with a giant smile, referring to her visit to the National Gallery in our nation's capitol. She navigates us through the throngs of students, stopping many times along the way to receive hugs from students, until we finally arrive at Grace Bakke's second grade classroom. After opening the door for me, Dr. Carter quickly moves down the hall. I can still hear her lyrical voice greeting another family as the door of room 122 closes behind me.

Artistically Drawn: Origins of Leland Elementary School

Leland Elementary School is a gifted and talented/ high-achieving school⁷ in a large urban district in the west. Leland has approximately 312 students in grades kindergarten through fifth-grade. The school was designed from the ground up by Dr. Emma Carter, the principal of Leland Elementary School and her staff and is in its eighth

⁷ The impact and implications of Leland Elementary School as a gifted and talented/ high-achieving school is beyond the scope of this dissertation but the issue is addressed in the limitations of this study.

year as an arts-centered school. Leland is a small community school that attracts students in the north central quadrant of the city as well as students outside of the quadrant who qualify as gifted and talented/ high-achieving and who live in the district. The student population consists of 68% Caucasian in a district that averages 20.9% Caucasian; 12% Hispanic compared to the district average of 57.3% and 12% Black compared to 18% district wide. Leland is approximately 7% Asian and less than one percent American Indian. Sixteen percent of the students at Leland are eligible for free or reduced lunch in an area of the district that averages 73.3% reduced lunch recipients. These figures suggest Leland's struggle to maintain a diverse school body that reflects the neighborhood surrounding it; an issue that faces many magnet schools that quickly rise in popularity, despite their social justice-oriented objectives. As schools like Leland Elementary School rise in popularity, parents from higher socio-economic levels are better able to advocate for their students winning them spots in the school potentially pushing out students of lower socio-economic status. A focus on cultivating a diverse student body, one that reflects the neighborhood and offers opportunities to students of all levels and backgrounds is of great importance to the school's Principal but proves a formidable challenge at the same time.

In designing Leland Elementary School, Dr. Emma Carter responded to a need that arose within the district community for a school that could meet the needs of gifted and talented/ high-achieving students. She was given the latitude to design Leland using strategies and ideas of her choice and was able to hire the complete start-up staff; she did not inherit any teachers when she took over the building where Leland started. When

asked how her own connection to the arts informed her decision to build an arts-based school, she explains,

My love for the arts has grown over my life. I think as a very focused child from poverty, knowing I needed to be a great student if I wanted to go to college, my mother drilled that in [laughs], I left out the arts even though my mother was an artist. She had come out of art school during the depression and then didn't get to be an artist so she didn't really encourage the arts in me. I was musical and I did play instruments but I mean [about] anything else I knew nothing, we had no money for the arts but I think, I think I was disadvantaged in that area and as I have matured as a person I have added art classes for myself, just a dabbling, and I have always loved theater so it just comes naturally. . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

For Dr. Carter it was her love for the arts, matched by the absence of art in her own education and life that made her realize the arts were subjects in which students should be immersed. Leland started as a small community school with 98 students and over the 8 years of its existence, has increased enrollment every year and currently has a waiting list.

In contrast to what will be seen in the other school in this study, Leland does not incorporate the ideas of a singular theory in its design of arts-centered school reform; instead Dr. Carter is informed by several educational thinkers and theorists with useful ideas regarding the education of children using the arts as an organizing factor. Referring to some of these influences, she comments,

I discovered Elliot Eisner, just on my own, at a lecture . . . when I was a student and went directly from his lecture to the library and got his books. I had never heard of him before and then have loved him ever since and Maxine Greene... so anything I read, I love Parker Palmer and I am part of the Courage to Teach retreats and this is one of our retreat weekends and so I discovered Parker Palmer on my own and then through his writing I would meet a whole bunch of other people and then the Reggio Emilia schools, which I love their philosophy and they're totally arts-centered. I discovered them on my own by seeing a newspaper article a

long time ago. . . So I mean I just try to be aware of research that benefits children . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

While these theorists, with the exception of Elliot Eisner, do not write specifically about educational reform, they form the foundation for the leadership choices Dr. Carter makes regarding the education of the students at Leland. She shares this information with teachers and takes every opportunity to learn about theorists, whose work might make the curriculum, teaching, and learning richer for students at her school.

School improvement expert Michael Fullan (2007) has pointed out that in implementing educational policies and practices there are three aspects necessary for change in schools to occur, the use of new materials, new teaching approaches, and the “possible alteration of beliefs” (p. 30). The theorists studied by Dr. Carter aid her in this third aspect of educational change toward *reculturing* (Fullan 2007, p. 25). *Reculturing* refers to the ways in which Dr. Carter seeks to structure her school by working toward altering teacher beliefs and thereby cultivating “shared meaning” (p. 37) amongst the teachers in her charge. “Meaning,” as Fullan further points out, “fuels motivation” (p. 39) and energizes teachers to implement innovative ideas into the curriculum that increase the efficacy of the school.

Above all, Dr. Carter sees the arts as integral to learning and gravitates to educational thinkers who support her notion of how the arts support learning. Though some may say that the arts are not as rigorous as other, more traditional forms of instruction, Dr. Carter disagrees, rather,

[The arts are] the highest level of thinking and it raises everything to a different level because it’s looking at things from different perspectives and if you don’t have that [learning is] dull, boring and low-level and that’s why I believe this is what inner-city schools need because when

they are just giving kids packets of paper or worksheets, what is inspiring, what is looking at anything in a different perspective, what is being human in that context? [The arts are] integral to me. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Her personal beliefs and her experiences observing how students learn through the arts sustain her commitment to an eclectic approach to designing schools and curriculum.

Every choice at Leland is made with the arts in mind.

Ms. Bakke's Aims as Teacher & Learner

Grace Bakke is petite woman with immense energy. I find her friendly, enthusiastic, yet relaxed nature to be infectious as I take a seat on the carpet with her students. Contributing to this feeling of ease is having met Ms. Bakke once before when visiting Leland to decide which classrooms to observe for this study; she remembered me as I walked in giving me a kind smile and small wave as she continued reading a story to her morning gathering of students. Ms. Bakke embodies an artistic style that permeates her classroom. The early spring weather is unseasonably warm, so it no surprise that Ms. Bakke is wearing a light summer skirt and sandals befitting the day's weather, her blond hair held back in a low ponytail. On her wrists Ms. Bakke wears two or three colorful bracelets and thrown over this ensemble she is wearing a turquoise, magenta, orange, and red striped apron with a couple of bright artificial flowers adorning the right side of the strap around her neck. Her startling blue eyes reveal her propensity for joy, humor, and warmth, as well as illuminate a knowing wisdom that will soon be apparent throughout my observations of her work as a master teacher.

When my observations took place Ms. Bakke was in her second year of teaching at Leland Elementary School. By her own accounts arts-integrated teaching has always been a part of her approach to education, even when the school environment was less

accepting of creative teaching strategies as her previous school, where she taught for two years, turned out to be. Of her teaching experiences prior to coming to Leland she comments,

I didn't teach at an arts-integrated school to begin with . . . I taught at a school that was very concerned with standardized test scores, but I naturally started teaching [in an arts-integrated] way during my first assignment but it was not accepted by the administration of that particular environment, so I had to stop. . . the next year I was compliant. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Ms. Bakke found that her desire to infuse her curriculum with art and creativity was not appreciated at her previous school. To survive in that environment she had to diminish her creativity to the point of eliminating it from her teaching style. From her current perspective, as a teacher at Leland, Ms. Bakke does not blame the district for mandating standards that narrowed the goals of classroom teaching, rather, she notes,

It was the faculty and administrations *response* to what the district was asking of teachers. I think they took [the district's guidelines] to the extreme so they were very well behaved and wanted me to be very well behaved and compliant but then the second year I was doing the protocols [they asked for]. . . My room was full of [instructional] charts that nobody really looked at, it made [the classroom] very uninviting . . . The year before I even had the kids make the charts, and they illustrated them and all that. The second year, even that was gone and the whole room was teacher created by me . . . there wasn't much student voice. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Entering her first year of teaching with fresh ideas from student teaching, Ms. Bakke worked to create a classroom that displayed her aims of student involvement, student voice, and collaboration with students. Unfortunately her efforts were seen as unacceptable by a rigid administration and faculty culture that stressed conformity rather than an individuated teaching presence. Her classroom environment was to be designed

to reflect the district's mandated formal pedagogy. Ms. Bakke adds that the mandated school environment,

was all protocol . . . it was too much rubric, too much protocol, too much of me, too rigid and then I just felt [that] I had to squelch all of my creative impulses and when I did that, I think it affected the kids and I was not encouraging their creativity as much and [not creating imagination] as much because by that point I was confused as to what good teaching was and I was trying to follow a format rather than trying to plan by inspiration, so the inspiration was lost and the day was heavy and tiring and I was also in a building where I was quite alone. . . so it was depressing and I was not my best. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Very quickly, within the span of two years, Ms. Bakke went from being an inspired teacher, who took risks, who intuitively infused the curriculum with creativity and the arts and who collaborated with her students, to one who was “compliant,” one who followed the rules as dictated by her school leaders and above all made the classroom, “look” as if teaching and learning, as defined by the administration, was occurring. Her creativity and identity as a teacher were being threatened and her confusion regarding what good teaching looked like was intensifying. “Good teaching,” remarks Parker Palmer (2007a), “cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and the integrity of the teacher” (p. 10). But in this particular educational environment, Ms. Bakke's integrity and identity was not allowed to flourish; this would not remain the case.

Ms. Bakke's move to Leland was creatively, emotionally, and personally necessary for her own growth as a teacher and to keep her teaching identity and integrity intact. At Leland her creativity as a teacher was allowed to thrive once again. Ms. Bakke explains her ability to reunite with her own core beliefs and her growth as a teacher in terms of her experiences under Dr. Carter's leadership,

Dr. Carter leads in such a way where she is not trying to get her teachers to be superstars all the time –you don’t have to be. You can share that spotlight and it’s all about diversification. She treats us like professionals. So I definitely think that I got [Dr. Carter’s sense of bringing in new ideas and taking risks] by being immersed in this environment. It’s trickled into my classroom to be sure and [Dr. Carter] has a confidence, because she is just radiant and when you’re around that you can’t help but have it rain down on you and fill you up with that same kind of radiance. You just want to give it too; to the people around you . . . she’s just very honest, confident enough to be honest. I’m doing this and she’s in charge of that and she’s in charge of this, so for me I naturally did that, I recruited interns on my own but she never asked me to take them, never. I started doing it because I was like, ‘wow how am I going to make [arts-integration] work?’ because the model before I was all by myself and I had very little support. . . . It was me, alone all day under the guidelines of what the district wanted and how I allotted my time . . . *no* room for spontaneity, no room, no latitude. (Interview transcript, 2006)

The generosity of spirit Dr. Carter bestows on her teachers, as Ms. Bakke says, “trickles down” and opens up opportunities for her to have her own dynamic experiences as a teacher, growing, learning from those around her and, being able to discard a “superstar,” expectation of her teaching. She finds herself free to take risks and share the responsibility of the classroom with interns and others through collaborative methods, developing a “capacity for connectedness” (Palmer, 2007a, p. 11), that is, as teachers, their ability “to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves” (p. 11) expands.

Ms. Bakke exemplifies how teaching, like the creation of art, is often a work in progress. As she moves along her own trajectory as a teacher she focuses in on qualities that make her a better teacher such as, “internal voice,” and “self concept” which she believes, “trickles down to kids too” (Interview transcript, 2006). Ms. Bakke is

continually learning while teaching. Referring to the use of a collaborative model of teaching, she describes how her teaching has evolved,

. . . I set up this collaborative model which I didn't have when I got my Masters [degree]. . . this was all coming to me, spontaneity, intuition, dynamics, working from inspiration, figuring out that this system works really well for me and it works really well for kids and it is so much fun and then you have movement built into your program, so your not stuck, movement, transitions, structure, and then varying kinds of work that has to be done in allotted time. It's not like just loosey-goosey –it's structured but fun and they're moving and also the idea of chunking where really people can attend for a good strong twenty minutes per concept and then move on. So get off of this concept and move on to the next concept and then teaching the children how to respond to that collaborative classroom and then you have to teach those routines, you have to teach how to do that, you have to refresh their memories . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

For Ms. Bakke, growth and mastery of her profession is achieved over time. This personal philosophy toward teaching as learning affects her intentions and how they are carried out in the classroom. Viewing her own teacher experiences as opportunities to improve, adjust her thinking, take risks, and continually construct and reconstruct her vision of teaching and learning supports her aims for her students. “I try to have a constructivist classroom,” Ms. Bakke mentions to me during my observations of her classroom. Through a constructivist lens, Ms. Bakke sets out to create occasions for student understanding while working to “. . . uncover parts of the world that children would not otherwise know how to tackle” (Duckworth, 2006, p. 7). We turn now to understanding Ms. Bakke's intentions as they are experienced in the classroom environment.

Creating Creative Spaces for Children

Ms. Bakke's classroom is a large rectangular space with an approximate 25 foot ceiling. Directly to the east are windows stretching vertically from a 3 foot counter to the

ceiling and stretching horizontally wall to wall, creating a greenhouse-like atmosphere. This is especially so when the late afternoon sun beams through, warming the room inside, in this case growing children rather than plants. To reckon with this, earlier in the year, Ms. Bakke's students created tissue-paper watercolor paintings depicting rainbows, hearts, butterflies, stars, clouds, and a girl with outstretched arms to a friend –the hieroglyphics of childhood. As the sun shines through the painted tissue paper it creates a stained-glass effect that washes the room in afternoon color creating vibrant warmth to accompany each day's activities.

The room itself is a collaboratively created space highlighting student work and artwork, parading the collective memory of a year nearly at its close at the time of my visit. The bulletin board near the door greets visitors with a sign that says, "Welcome to our pad" with papier-mâché heads of each student attached to tag-board bodies covered in colorful fabric with each student's name underneath their figure. Another board asks the question, "How does a community work?" A poster declares: "Good writing is clear thinking made visible." I pass by a color-coded reminder board, a tool used for class discipline. Ms. Bakke explains to me that the chart is used as a warning to students and not sanctions. The chart looks as if it has been unused for ages; I myself never saw it used during my visit. A list of morning jobs is posted for students: 1) greet friends, 2) put lunch in tub; 3) hang up your backpack; 4) take down your chair; 5) come to carpet. On another wall of the classroom I notice individual clips bearing each student's name holding their writing assignments from the first days of school to the present; the newest writing samples are on top with older assignments underneath to show growth in writing throughout the year. During my observation of Ms. Bakke's classroom, I saw many

students wander over to this board to peruse their own and others' writing. Ms. Bakke keeps these writing samples until the end of the year when they are taken down and included in a portfolio for students to take home. In describing what constitutes an educational experience, John Dewey (1938) uses the word *continuity* in reference to activities that contribute to growth. He writes,

The principle of continuity in its educational application means . . . that the future has to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process . . . In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. That is the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of experience. (p. 47)

As students revisit their experiences as writers they experience a continuity of growth in their learning. Each writing assignment or experience is brought into contact with the one preceding it and bridges to the one following. By the end of the year students have a record of their growth and a range of experiences of writing on which to draw for future learning. As Dewey reminds us the, “. . . cumulative movement of action toward a later result is what is meant by growth” (1916, p. 41). In Ms. Bakke's classroom there is an openness with which continuing growth is fostered in this learning community as well as a celebration of learning and quality of craft.

Looking at all the items in the room, from class projects and mini art projects to larger more involved creations, from the posted student writing to the colored-pencil self-portraits, collaboration between the students, the teacher, and their community educational space is obvious. Not only do the artistic contributions make the room a beautiful place to be, adding an aesthetic element to the space of learning at Leland, but there is also a feeling of empowered ownership created by the students and for the

students. In all cases, while the bulletin board themes might be teacher-inspired, the content is completely student driven. The flow of daily classroom life creates a museum-like quality to the room. That is to say layers of student or classroom generated artifacts find themselves onto the walls and onto the shelves of the classroom creating a very personal, collaborative, community space year after year.

A Shared Aesthetic: Situations of Home

Nel Noddings (2006) likens the creation of school spaces to the construction of home environments and refers to a “shared aesthetic” that is necessary in the creation of both home and school. She comments that, “part of making a home is the construction of a shared aesthetic, and the more interests and habits we share at the outset, the greater our chance of success” (p. 77). Schools like homes come to reflect the habits, intentions, and contributions (aesthetic or otherwise) of their inhabitants and often work to contribute to the success of each member. The critical lessons of house and home are not lost on arts-centered school reformers who seek to provide a safe environment for ideas, imagination, and representation. Making the environment personal or home-like in its aesthetic qualities and artifacts supports one of the missions of arts-centered schools: to be a place where students want to be.

Morning Meeting

Each day in Ms. Bakke’s class begins with a gathering of teacher and students. Ms. Bakke begins the Morning Meeting, sitting in a pastel-painted chair with the students sitting in various shapes, clumped together on the large carpet in front of her feet. Today she is reading *Strega Nona Meets Her Match* by Tomie De Paola, the author whose works Ms. Bakke’s students are currently studying. As she reads, Ms. Bakke uses a rich,

guttural, Italian accent for the voice of Strega Nona and other distinct voices for Big Anthony and other characters from the book. She interjects *oohs* and *aaahs*, as do the children, in response to the action taking place in the story in a display that echoes the melodramas of old. The story has moments of interaction for both students and teacher which pulls students into the story and keeps them engaged. In the story, the character Strega Nona blows three magic kisses to complete one of her magic spells. Ms. Bakke stops and blows three kisses to her students.

The length of the story allows for a few late-coming students to arrive, hang up their back-packs, and get settled on the carpet with the other students. After the story has concluded Ms. Bakke asks her students, “How does this story fit with coming back to school?” (Students were back for the first day after the spring holiday.) The students offer a variety of ideas about listening and being a good listener (what the character Big Anthony in the story proved *not* to be) which relate to coming back to school after a long break. Ms Bakke then adds, “So don’t pull a Big Anthony!” referring to the character in the book who does not listen and experiences the uncomfortable consequences of this. “If teachers do this (Ms. Bakke again blows three kisses at the students), then students are to remember to be a good listener and not pull a ‘Big Anthony.’”

Ms. Bakke offers a variety of opportunities for students to make positive choices in her classroom. The expectations are very clearly set, but at the same time there is a great deal of flexibility and willingness on Ms. Bakke’s part to listen to students’ ideas and concerns and to include students in the governance of the classroom. Students, in this case, internalizing the story about Big Anthony, can call upon this discussion later in their own efforts at self-monitoring in the classroom throughout the day. Finding occasions of

connection with and between students in this context explains one of Ms. Bakke's aims of education toward collaborating with students regarding the culture of the classroom among other elements. She uses several activities throughout Morning Meeting to create connections with students and to model her collaborative qualities as a teacher with her students.

Valuing a Collaborative Model

The word *collaboration* is a common term in the research and advocacy literature on arts-learning, arts-integration and arts-based schools, [see e.g., Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005], however authors rarely define the term, even operationally. In the educational literature, one simple definition of *collaboration* is “to work and play well with others, whether children or adults” (Ravitch 2007, p. 50). Ravitch also defines the term *collaborative culture*, which describes “an atmosphere of shared responsibility among teachers and administrators,” (p. 50). This latter term, *collaborative culture* is what is often seen in Ms. Bakke's classroom, although she does not limit collaborative work to between teachers and administrators but includes the students as well. In general, collaboration is thought to be a good ideal to strive for and a necessary component of working successfully with others toward common aims of education, particularly as a component of arts-learning.

In Ms. Bakke's classroom there are different types of collaboration that take place. The collaborative model she strives for includes working relationships between herself and her students, the curriculum and the arts, the students and the arts, and the students and the school among other possibilities. As Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) remarks,

. . . teachers need to know about *collaboration*. They need to understand how to structure interactions among students so that powerful shared learning can occur. They need to be able to shape classrooms that sponsor productive discourse and that press for disciplined reasoning from students. They need to understand how to collaborate with other teachers to plan, assess, and improve learning within the school and also how to work with parents to learn more about individual children and to shape supportive experiences at the school and home. (p. 297)

Ms. Bakke enters into relationships with her students, parents, leaders, and other teachers based on her aim of collaborative leadership as a teacher in the classroom. This leadership, she notes,

. . . comes from being in charge of the culture. . . it becomes part of the culture and then children become collaborators in [the culture] too and then we collaborate together and then we talk about how to get along . . . and that we are like a family and we're representing each other and then we work it into bigger things . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

Collaboration, described this way, results in an embedded set of meanings that move outward from the teacher's intentions through the students' activities and back to the teacher creating the classroom culture as part of the broader school community.

In arts-integrated learning at Leland, collaborative relationship-building becomes even more important as arts-specialists, teachers, the librarian, technology instructors, and others, come together to build the school's integrated units. This makes the school experience much richer as the librarian, Mrs. Ellis, explains as she describes how arts-integration works at Leland,

[Arts-engagement] sets the tone . . . When you bring it into the classroom and when a teacher studies [for example] South America and the library works on a project on South America and you do websites on South America in the computer lab or web quest or then you go to art and you do the art of South America, it is just a full blown emersion experience that I think kids, when they think about education and art, it becomes part of how they look at the world. . . [Our arts program] is integrated in that it is fun and the school sends a message of value. If you want to have educated,

civilized adults, then you have to start somewhere and you have to say that this is something, as a culture, that we valueSo [at Leland] if we believe that children need to have [the arts] as part of their education, then . . . Dr. Carter supports that, infuses it and asks that of teachers. (Interview transcript, 2006)

At the beginning of the year the school's faculty members and specialists meet to discuss the curriculum integration possibilities for the upcoming year. The art teacher, known simply as Coach because he teaches both art and physical education at Leland, the music teacher, Mrs. Romney, the technology instructor, Claire, along with the librarian, Mrs. Ellis and the second grade classroom teachers come together to collaboratively plan the year's integrated curriculum. Ms. Bakke describes her experience planning integrated curriculum with Coach and the music teacher, Mrs. Romney,

We plan with [Coach] for the year and he sketches – he has a pad . . . and he draws drawings of what we're going to do. So like Mexico and then he'll draw the papier-mâché or the bark paintings or whatever it is and he'll have these sketches all over the place . . . so he supports what we do. He plans with us [and] so does Mrs. Romney [the music teacher]. She just did all this Caribbean music for [the student's spring] show... her instruction supports what we do in the classroom, it is not random songs, it ties in with what we study... and it doesn't change. In second grade we do Latin America again next year so she'll change the music but she knows – we don't change [the curriculum unit]. (Interview transcript, 2006)

The trip around the world that students at Leland Elementary journey through is part of Dr. Carter's vision, who, as a Peace Corps volunteer in her earlier days, was “appalled” that the district social studies curriculum did not include world-oriented subject matter. She describes her interest in providing a world curriculum,

. . . I had done a [Peace Corp] program in Ghana and I wanted children to know the world [rather than] these silly units that they do – families . . . and so forth that have no content. We then sat down with some faculty and said okay, how are we going to do this? Because we wanted them to know the world and we just decided how we would take them on a trip around

the world and back in time over the five years. So that just evolved from us. . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

In support of this tour around the world that takes place over the five years between first and fifth-grade, Dr. Carter supplies the school with literature, curriculum idea and content books, art materials, and artifacts to be used in any possible collaboration that might arise when focusing on the exploration of the world as part of the planned curriculum. Students at Leland study the following world-oriented subjects as part of their social studies curriculum:

- First grade: Island cultures of the world
- Second grade: Central and South American cultures
- Third grade: Asian cultures and local city history
- Fourth grade: African cultures and state history
- Fifth-grade: Greek and Roman history; European cultures, and early U.S. History

Dr. Carter did not want students to leave Leland without an understanding of the greater world community. Such in-depth learning and collaboration requires a multitude of resources and the resources that are made available heavily influence what teachers are capable of doing with their students. Thus Dr. Carter placed the collection of a rich supply of resources for teacher collaboration at the center of her efforts toward school design including curriculum purchases. As Dr. Carter explains,

I want [teachers] to have these materials that they can use although we're not all using them yet; I have many more things here than get used all the time but that's okay because that will come, they're not wasted to have them here. But I just think my mind thinks that way, I want to have an array of materials so when [teachers] have that wonderful odd-duck child that they have no idea what to do with they really can pull from amazing resources in the school without having to do what my mother had to do as a teacher, go out somewhere and bring home piles of books every weekend. They don't have to do that here. We've got them, a wide, wonderful array of resources. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Having opportunities to work with a “wide, wonderful array resources” available to teachers and specialists as well as students, encourages arts-integration. Well-planned arts-integration commands a time commitment; teachers who are stretched thin may not be able to devote the time needed to fully integrate units, especially new teachers. At Leland teachers do not have to wander far to retrieve rich literature, curriculum ideas, and materials for their work as collaborative and constructivist educators. From an arts-learning perspective, the choice of materials by teachers influences what is expressed by students in cognitive ways. In creating art, using visual art and dance as examples, Eisner (2002) points out,

Each material and each art form imposes its own possibilities. In dance you must think in terms of bodies in motion . . . Painting, a physically static product, requires other modes of thinking. In dance, movement is actual. In painting, movement is virtual . . . the way composition is shaped in each of the materials differs. In dance, composition is in constant change. In painting, it is stable. What you are able to achieve will depend on what you are able to do with the material. (p. 80)

In offering different choices of materials to students and different modes of expression through the use of multiple art forms, teachers are the primary resource for students’ ability to hone their own skills of expression. Though Leland is not a conservatory environment, that is to say, the cultivation of artistic talent is not the school’s central concern; it strives for quality arts engagement. Dr. Carter supports this aim through her collection of resources while students’ facility with these materials improves over time through extended exposure. Ms. Bakke in turn uses these materials in her work toward finding ways in which students can help her create a collaborative culture in which the arts and students thrive.

Wrapping up Morning Meeting

The daily Morning Meeting concludes with different activities. On this day Ms. Bakke has all the students sit in a circle, hold hands, and pass a pulse or a hand squeeze to one another. As Ms. Bakke begins the pulse she says in the voice of Strega Nona, “You are passing three kisses to your friend” referring again to the central lesson of that story. The pulse moves around the circle back to Ms. Bakke which she then sends back in the opposite direction. The students are very quiet while the pulse travels around the circle illustrating their concentration as they wait for the pulse to pass to them. Finally Ms. Bakke has her students, one-by-one, turn to one another and with a hand shake greet their neighbor. Connor begins saying, “good morning Julia,” Julia says good morning back to Connor before turning to Emma and saying good morning to her.

As the greetings move around the circle, Ms. Bakke compliments the students on how they are making eye-contact during this activity. The greeting takes some time as students are still a bit nervous or shy; some momentarily forget their neighbors name or shake hands fervently while trying to think of a silly name to introduce him or herself as. This activity or *focal condition* (Uhrmacher, 1991) is a bit of fun but also models respect for one another and cultivates important communication skills like eye contact and name recognition as well as how to behave in formal settings. Ms. Bakke explains,

. . . you know it’s surprising, you really have to work on it, all year long, the eye contact. . . greetings, sending positive energy through the room because everyone has come off the bus and no one knows what’s going on and I know how harried everybody is, every single day . . . but that getting here . . . and that is actually a ritual in the theater, that when you come into the theater you have to be on time . . . you have to be there, show up, be present, and then you have to leave everything outside the theater, or everything outside the classroom and you need to focus on the task at hand. And you need to perform. (Interview transcript 2006)

Coming from the professional theater environment in college, Ms. Bakke uses metaphors and lessons from her training in theater and drama in her teaching. Teaching as a performance has been addressed by curriculum theorists such as bell hooks (1994) as well as Seymour Sarason (1999) who points out that teachers who believe they perform for students “do not mean they [are] in show business but rather that they [are] the vehicles by which the script (the curriculum) [becomes] a source of interest, a personal and intellectual goal to an audience inevitably heterogeneous on many variable-affecting attitudes toward learning” (p. xi). Masterful teaching has a performance quality that brings teaching alive and conveys an excitement to students.

Teaching as performance also alludes to another aspect of arts-integrated learning, namely that often teachers have a particular art form in which they excel, one for which they have a deep love, or one in which they have past experience –or all three. What could be considered a teacher’s “specialty” within the arts-integration milieu is often used as a primary mode of presenting the arts in education. As Ms. Violet, a student teacher new to arts-integration, working with Ms. Bakke comments,

I think that a teacher would have to have some experience with something [in the arts]. You have to have the know-how and the knowledge . . . if you don’t know anything about, for instance, if you’ve never done any dance classes and you’re not an artist or you’ve never done drama or it’s hard to do, I mean you believe in [the arts] and then you grow to love [the arts]. . . I think you would need to have some experience... but there’s so many variables to art, there’s so many facets of going down different avenues. . . I think that it’s good that teachers who work here have that background in art... because you know, it’s good to bring something to this school... in second grade you’re going to learn drama with Ms. Bakke, in third grade you’re going to learn dance with Ms. Sullivan. (Interview transcript, 2006)

While teachers who are hired to work at Leland are not chosen solely by virtue of their experience in the arts, it is common for Leland teachers to have a particular strength in an art form brought from their personal background. In Ms. Bakke's case, her theater training informs her arts-integration and her ideas of performance flow from this training, understanding, and orientation. Such mindfulness regarding her personal art form punctuate her teaching and is reflected in her relationships with her students as will be examined more closely when we observe Ms. Bakke's direction of her students as they learn to perform scenes from some of William Shakespeare's plays. For now, activities like "the pulse," are brought into the curriculum as a tool borrowed from the larger arena of theater training.

Student Passion Projects: Situations of Expressiveness

Still in circle from Morning Meeting, Ms. Bakke moves on to her next planned activity. Today one student is going to present his passion project. Passion projects are an opportunity for Ms. Bakke's class to pursue, through research and representation, an idea or topic of their own interest. For this presentation, Trey is going to present his research report on the sport of lacrosse. Students were instructed to independently research a topic of interest to them. Trey nervously gets his materials ready to present. His mother has come to watch and Trey is clearly excited to have her there supporting him. The classroom is quiet while Trey presents his research on lacrosse. As part of his presentation Trey made his own lacrosse stick; the handle he made out of a bent piece of plastic pipe and the head is made from thin strips of raw-hide that he wove together to make a net. After his presentation is over, Trey takes questions. One student asked, "When you said lacrosse was violent, how was it violent?" Trey answered, "lots of

pushing and shoving and sometimes the sticks get tangled and people can get hurt” (Observation notes, 2006). Ms Bakke asked Trey if he used his homemade stick and he went on to say that he had and that it worked fine. The audience applauds and Trey has completed his assignment.

The list of student independent or passion projects students engaged in included reports on topics such as, Greek gods, margays, origami, dolphins, jet fighters, penguins, cats, volcanoes, and lions. Of special note is Luke’s project on the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In addition to the oral and written portions of the project, Luke constructed a model of the twin towers of the World Trade Center and drew a map showing the course of the four planes involved in the attacks on the United States: Flights 11, 75, 77, and 93. When students are offered the opportunity to explore topics of their choosing they might choose topics that are controversial, violent, unresolved, or ones that make adults uncomfortable [see e.g., Gussin Paley,⁸ 2004]. However, allowing Luke to pursue his passion to understand the tragic events of September 11th proved to be a daring move by Ms. Bakke and showed her willingness to *see* the student in front of her (Ayers, 1993) rather than framing the student in terms of her own vision of curriculum. She could have moved to censor Luke’s interest, but the classroom culture she and her students have collectively created made the exploration of this sensitive topic insightful, moving, safe, and above all, of personal relevance to Luke. In the end, Ms. Bakke trusted Luke to tell the story he wanted or needed to tell.

⁸ Vivien Gussin Paley examines preschooler’s dramatic recreations and retellings of the September 11th, 2001 tragedy in her book *A Child’s Work: The importance of fantasy play* (2004). One of her conclusions is that, “if readiness for school has meaning, it is to be found first in the children’s flow of ideas, their own and those of peers, families, teachers, books, and television, from play into story and back into more play” (p. 11).

One of Ms. Bakke's primary goals in designing the passion project assignments is to allow students the opportunity to honor their own interests which support her democratic vision of the classroom. When I probe further as to what democracy in the classroom means to her she explains,

Being seen and heard. Valuing other countries; affirming Alex coming from Mexico, knowing from his parents, that last year Alex was embarrassed that he spoke Spanish. So when we [studied] Mexico we really deferred to him and he brought in maps and he got up in front of the class and he made a Spanish-English dictionary for his independent [passion] project. [It means] celebrating our humanity; celebrating our own little room. (Interview transcript, 2006)

By encouraging her student, Alex, to pursue his heritage as his passion project, Ms. Bakke supports Alex in locating his individual *voice* in the classroom. Issues of voice have been considered from the point of view of feminist scholarship (see e.g., Pinar et al. 1995; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan 1982) and as a practice of freedom in education (hooks 1994; 2003). Voice relates to education for democracy in creating spaces for dialogue (Greene, 1988) between students and across curriculum. hooks (1994) writes, "in regard to pedagogical practices [teachers] must intervene to alter the existing pedagogical structure and to teach students *how to listen, how to hear one another*" (italics in original, p. 150). The Passion Project assignment Ms. Bakke created worked to open spaces for students to *listen* and to *hear* Alex's voice as he shared his struggles with feelings of difference in a class of mostly white students.

Furthermore, "speaking of passions, engagements, and imaginings can become a way of speaking of an expanding community that takes shape when diverse people, speaking as *who* and not *what* they are, come together in both speech and action to constitute something common among themselves (Greene 1995, p. 155). The passion

project activity actively worked to empower Alex by supporting his voice and creating a “pluralistic” (Greene 1995, p. 155) space of learning in the classroom that supports democracy; that is, being seen and heard. “It is necessary,” writes Freire (2005), “and even urgent, that the school become a space to gather and engender certain democratic dispositions to listen to others –not as a favor – but as a duty, and to respect them, a disposition toward tolerance . . .” (pp. 116-117).

The Art of the Facilitator: Situations of Growth & Caring

Ms. Bakke sees her role in the classroom as a facilitator whose job it is to help those in her care, be they students, paraprofessionals, student teachers, parents, even visitors to her classroom, open spaces for growth and success. In her mind allowing students to pursue their passions allows them to be experts. In Ms. Bakke’s words,

I would say I am in the business of empowering people. I am in the business of empowering students, empowering student teachers . . . empowering principals, paraprofessionals, to be excited about what they do and who they are . . . and I’m a facilitator. I am definitely a facilitator and collaborator; I am not a solo act. I am my best because of the people that I work with really, really supporting me and I allow them to be experts at what they are experts at. Students were experts at their independent [projects], they researched their passions. The student teacher is the expert on the Caribbean unit; the paraprofessional was the expert on the poetry unit . . . The principal is the expert in how to create the culture and the climate and I go to her if I need support in these areas. The parents are the experts on the children and I go to them if I need help. So I am a collaborator because I seek in other people the resources and knowledge that they have, like the parents that come in and do math games [e.g.,] and the parents who make things like the flower garlands [for the Shakespeare Festival costumes]; I seek that out and my job is to facilitate the action of the classroom, the learning. I have to facilitate this and keep it dynamic and fluid and I have to accept and . . . work with the chaos. There is a certain element of chaos . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

Ms. Bakke sees this labyrinth of community collaborators as a chorus of experts offering information regarding different aspects of classroom life. Ms. Bakke steps back, in some

instances, to take cues from other members of the school community who have the insights she needs to craft a classroom that responds to the diverse set of students in her midst. The element of chaos Ms. Bakke refers to is the outcome of an active, participatory learning environment that is flexible and changing because it is geared towards growth.

The idea of chaos mixed with success is a theme that runs through the school and is echoed in the values and vision of Dr. Carter, Leland Elementary School's principal. Dr. Carter highlights the interplay between chaos and success. Trying new ideas in school curriculum, planning, even budgeting requires taking risks. Taking risks is often an uncomfortable place for teachers and administrators to spend their time and can create a feeling of chaos but within that chaos, or state of flux, real change can occur, new habits are adopted, and new experiences had, resulting in positive growth for leaders, teachers, and students.

Teachers and school personnel I spoke too often commented on the feeling they had that Dr. Carter supported them in taking risks in the classroom, trying new things no matter the outcome, and then learning from and building upon those experiences – all without judgment. As Leland's librarian, Mrs. Ellis, is quick to point out,

[Leland] is playful, it's humorous; it's a positive atmosphere. It all comes from [Dr. Carter]. Not having someone who is judgmental means that you are more willing to risk, trying new things with kids because you know at the end of the day that nobody is A) watching you so closely or B) judging you. So people are willing to go the extra step, they're willing to cross the line – 'maybe this will grab some kid, maybe this will be innovative' and so they are willing to try something. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Ellis, in describing the atmosphere at Leland for discovery and action, is referring to what Doll (as cited in Pinar et al., 1995) means when he argues that, "creativity occurs by

the interaction of chaos and order, between unfettered imagination and disciplined skill” (p. 500). Chaos in this context is construed as space for creative opportunities in the educational milieu and a “lightness of being” (Kundera, 1984) internalized by teachers working toward greater educational experiences for students. While the word, *chaos*, is normally reserved for scientific discussions of chaos theory, its metaphorical utility in explaining what occurs at Leland Elementary is useful in describing how teaching and learning plays out in the school’s educational spaces.

Embracing Chaos and Success

On the first day of my observations at Leland, Dr. Carter took a moment to show me two paintings outside her office that she says distill her thinking about education. The paintings are of the Chinese calligraphy symbols for Chaos and Success. Underneath the symbol for chaos, is written the quote: “Where brilliant dreams are born. Before the beginning of great brilliance, there must be chaos. Before the brilliant person begins something great, s/he must look foolish to the crowd” (Yunn Pann, 212 Studio 1995) and under the symbol for success: “Creating paths like the mythological Ram pushing through obstacles; the Chinese word refers to success through optimistic actions” (Yunn Pann, 212 Studio, 1995). Together these themes of chaos and success underscore the school’s efforts toward change, renewal, and growth for teachers, administration and students.

In today’s educational environment it can prove difficult for schools to discuss the idea of chaos openly as one avenue toward meaningful change and growth. A chink in the school’s armor can fuel the indignation, fears, and control efforts of district officials and concerned parents. The school’s fear to take risks can result in a very narrow vision of

school success that affects the way teachers teach. However chaos in this setting serves as a gentle reminder that in taking risks there indeed may be a feeling of chaos but that this feeling of chaos can also lead to what Garrison (1997) characterizes as the *teachable moment*. He writes,

The teachable moment is perhaps the most sought-after pedagogical prize. All teachers know what it feels like even if they cannot name its characteristics. It is as wonderful as it is elusive. Teachers long for the moment when their class has that special quality of intimacy, openness and creativity that provides the almost ineffable experience of getting through to our students, to connecting and of students learning . . . (p. 115)

Chaos and success work in tandem as points of discord along the educational path and lead to new ideas and the “aesthetic restoration of harmony,” (Garrison 1997, p. 115). Teachers who internalize the metaphor of growth represented by chaos and success are instilled with a mindfulness of the positive aspects of risk necessary for substantial arts learning. We see this in terms of the passion project assignment and how Ms. Bakke works to empower her students to choose and pursue the topics they most want to explore, no matter where their research leads them –modeling intellectual risk taking. In matters of curriculum, the ideas of chaos and success and success *through* chaos opens avenues to follow the curriculum where students risk taking it.

“How Will You Know They Know?” Assessing⁹ Arts-learning

Ms. Bakke uses rubrics as one of the ways in which she assesses arts-integrated projects such as the passion projects mentioned previously, in her words:

⁹ For this discussion I am relying on the distinction between *assessment* as the “the appraisal of individual student performance,” and *evaluation*, as the “appraisal of a program” as delineated by Elliot Eisner in his book *Arts and the Creation of Mind* (2002). An evaluation of the arts-centered reforms in this study will be included in chapter eight.

I like rubrics, especially for little kids because you can make them very simple but you can teach them each little component and they love checking it off, like a process of elimination and it is very clear to them what you expect and then they actually know what you want and they demonstrate it to you. So rubrics help in that way. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Educators who advocate for arts-integrated or arts-based schools often bristle at notion of assessment and evaluation of arts-learning (Eisner, 2002). Some see assessment of arts-learning as an affront to the foundation of what the arts offer students in terms of the expressive encounters with materials and subject matter. Assessing and especially *grading* arts-learning is suspect because it is seen, among other things, as “closely associated with testing, standardized testing at that, and standardized testing, many art educators believe, has little or no place in a field whose desired outcomes are anything but standardized” (Eisner, 2002, p. 178). But Eisner cautions that abandoning assessment of arts-learning all together is irresponsible. He points out, “the aim of assessment is not primarily to classify or to promote or to fail students, but to secure information that can be used to enhance their educational development (p. 183). Assessment by this definition serves as one more way teachers can be “in-tune” with their students and engage in what Darling-Hammond has termed, “authentic assessment” (1993; 1997; Darling-Hammond, Ancess, & Falk, 1995).

Authentic Assessment

Authentic Assessment includes alternative forms of assessment (e.g., rubrics, portfolio, oral and written performance) that allow students to show what they know in ways that are typically difficult to capture through the use of the multiple-choice type tests that proliferate today’s schools. Authentic assessment “. . . is internal, in the sense

that it is under the control of the teacher and directly tied to ongoing instruction” (Darling-Hammond 1993, p. 23). Authentically assessing student work means looking closely at what students are *doing* in the classroom, allowing students to assess their own learning and offering them the opportunity to “present their work and defend themselves publicly and orally to ensure their apparent mastery is genuine” (Darling-Hammond 1993, pp. 23-24). The goal here is to include teachers and students in the assessment process in deeper, more collaborative, ways that honor both the learning designed by teachers as well as the students’ efforts in mastering knowledge. For arts-learning, authentic types of assessments are a natural way of finding out how students are benefiting from their engagement with materials, curricula, and the arts. Asking the important questions with arts-learning in mind, as Ms. Bakke does when she asks,

How do you know they know? What’s the enduring knowledge? What’s the product? A lot of times it’s, “what’s the product?” A more casual assessment is, “what are they saying?” But I think the best thing is when they map it mentally, diagram it, label it, paint it, sculpt it, perform it, make it into a book, make it into a story, then you have something tangible . . . every child [in my class] has [a portfolio] and it’s like anecdotally, it’s something tangible. (Interview transcript, 2006)

While the process of arts-learning activities is often the main concern for arts educators, master teachers like Ms. Bakke do not shy away from talking about the product.

Assessing the *product* that results from arts-learning is another way to meaningfully assess learning in the arts. Eisner (2002) suggests three features to look for when assessing students’ artwork: “The technical quality of the work produced, the extent to which it displays an inventive use of an idea or process, and the expressive power or aesthetic quality it displays” (p. 183). In providing opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know the passion projects “help [also],” Ms. Bakke explains,

. . . because you openly allow [students] all of these different ways to express their learning. They can make a scrap book; they could make a mobile, anything they want, a bookmark . . . so all different modes of expression which appeals to kids' different learning modalities. You know some kids want to do a poster, other kids would like to write a poem, some are more musical . . . and that is very engaging to other kids because we're all surprised, I'm surprised every year! I don't know what they're going to do. This year, Izzy made [a] mobile with different fruits and things and she made smoothies; she had the recipe and the history of the smoothie and why they were good for you so they engage the other learners because they [each] have a different approach. (Interview transcript, 2006)

When students are responsible for the construction of their own learning, wonder, joy, and surprise are likely outcomes. "To pursue surprise," writes Eisner (2002) "requires the willingness to take risks, for while surprise might emerge, its pursuit is a choice. In choosing to pursue surprise one selects an uncertain path, and it is here that familiar schema and customary techniques may prove ineffective" (p. 79). Students whose work demonstrates chosen paths to surprise deserve to be assessed in ways that honor the risks taken. Finding methods of assessment that get at the subtleties and nuances of students' work provides a counter-argument to the standardized assessments used by most schools in America. Arts-centered reformers are inspired to find alternative ways to assess the wonderful learning that goes on in arts-centered schools. Unfortunately until schooling is re-reconceptualized in more human terms, arts-centered reformers will continue to be pressured to work in parallel assessment worlds; on the one hand, embracing authentic assessments and on the other, having to cater to the standardized testing measures foisted on them by districts, state, and nation.

Refocusing Interlude: Work & Play in the Classroom

As students transition from Morning Meeting to centers, one student plays a Caribbean CD with a tune that all the students know well enough to sing out loud. As

students move around the classroom to scan the pocket chart listing the day's four learning centers and their first center assignment and as students get out their reading books moving to desks or the carpet to get comfortable, sharpen pencils, or open handwriting books to the right page, I hear the children singing the words of the chorus to "Farewell Jamaica" by Desmond Dekker,¹⁰

. . . Sad to say
I'm on my way
Won't come back for many a day
My heart is down
My head is turning around
I had to leave a little girl in Kingston town . . .

Half way into the second refrain, the students are settled into their first learning center of the day, another student turns off the music and students get to work for the next twenty minutes before centers change again.

Music is used often in Ms. Bakke's classroom, mostly as a way to transition from one activity to another or, at times, serving as a back drop to ongoing classroom work. Students sing out loud to the song and have a penchant for listening to the same tune over and over until invariably Ms. Bakke or someone else will say, "I think I'm getting tired of this song; who wants to change the music?" and a classroom of hands shoot up in the air. A student or Ms. Bakke puts a different CD in the player, replacing the former and the classroom gets back to work.

Using music as transitions punctuates the arts-learning environment with small rituals or *refocusing interludes* that work to center students on their activities, give them ownership of the classroom space, and create a comfortable atmosphere that looks

¹⁰ Kids Present: *Caribbean Playground*, Putumayo World Music, 2004

different than more traditionally designed classrooms. Uhrmacher (1991; 1993) has referred to such occasions in the classroom as *focal conditions*, a term he uses to describe occasions when teachers establish, confirm or discontinue contact with students (see chapter five for more discussion on focal conditions). This scene also serves as a reminder that arts-centered schools are places where students' child-ness is honored and not limited or squelched – that is to say, *fun* is not rejected but is embraced as vital to the development of students' emotional world.

Moreover, many actual hours are spent in school classrooms. Creating a warm, fun, yet rigorous environment that is both structured *and* free is one hallmark of a democratically designed arts-integrated classroom. Arts-learning environments are often more comfortable with combining work and play or seeing play *as* work resembling a “studio” model where “. . . interacting forces create a cognitive culture that has as much to do with developing dispositions as with developing aesthetic and analytic abilities” (Eisner 2002, p. 74).

The kinds of small freedoms Ms. Bakke's students experience in her classroom from listening to music while working, to moving around without it being considered disruptive to the teacher, and meeting one's own needs in terms of sharpening pencils, finding materials, getting a drink of water or going to the bathroom without asking the teacher and a host of other small actions, work to create students who see themselves as autonomous learners within the classroom milieu.

The Artistry of Improvisation: Making Learning Centers Work

Ms. Bakke uses learning centers to structure the one hour and forty-five minutes of instructional time that occurs between Morning Meeting and recess/ lunch. Ms. Bakke shares her view of using learning centers as part of her pedagogy,

. . . when we have group time and we have centers it's structured, there's a lot of movement and there can be choice built in within the center but not completely random – "I'm going to go off and do whatever I want to do..." I don't like working like that, I say "this is what we're doing right now," and it's very light and you just throw it away, "this is what we're doing right now,"; "this is what we're doing right now..." and they start to think, "this is what we're doing right now" because . . . the ritual of school has to be internalized physically because what you are asking them to do is strenuous and rigorous. And at this school [instruction] is rigorous but not rigid. It's not rigid, it's *not* rigid but it's very rigorous and we strive to keep them engaged and all teachers of *all* children, these kids happen to be designated, but all teachers should strive to keep [students] highly engaged and that means lots of energy and lots of tasks throughout the day. There is a fine balance between rigor . . . you don't want to burn them out and you don't want to be rigid but you want to have the structure in place.
(Interview transcript, 2006)

Ms. Bakke designs her learning centers to be both rigorous and structured to instill an independent style of learning in her students. Learning to navigate the "ritual" of school is an important lesson for her students. Ms. Bakke maintains a balance between the fluidity of centers, and the movement such pedagogy requires, with the learning objectives of each instructional moment. This requires *improvisation* in her thinking (Kincheloe, 1993) and in her actions. Like an actor on the stage keeping time with the beats of the theatrical moment, Ms. Bakke attends to the beats of the teaching moment using her improvisational skills to keep the classroom moving.

In busy schools with relatively high teacher to student ratios, finding a way to do centers can be challenging. Ms. Bakke relies greatly on her paraprofessional Ms.

Jacobson to help her implement centers in her classroom. For centers, Ms. Bakke breaks students into small groups devoted to different activities. Today's centers include, independent work in student's handwriting books, Everyday Math with Ms. Jacobsen, free reading at desks or in the Morning Meeting area, and Shakespeare scene rehearsal in the atrium area outside of the classroom with Ms. Bakke. Using music to transition, students, who have been assigned to groups, look at the pocket chart posted on the wall telling them with which center they will begin their day. When the music stops the students are settled into their particular center for the next twenty minutes. Students will rotate four times over the next two hours to complete the tasks at hand. With twenty-seven students in her class, this structure allows Ms. Bakke to work with 6-7 students per small group. Once a week, on Wednesdays, parent volunteers come in with organized math games for students' which take the place of one center on that day.

During this spring semester Ms. Bakke has a student teacher in addition to Ms. Jacobson, her paraprofessional. This means Ms. Bakke now has three adults to assist her in running centers in addition to the parent-volunteers who come in on Wednesdays to coordinate math games. Ms. Bakke sees this chorus of adults as opportunities to work differently with her students. Throughout Leland Elementary School there are volunteers, artists-in-residence, student teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and interested community members serving different functions throughout the school at any given time. Intuitively Dr. Carter understands that it takes a community to support a school, especially an arts-centered school. She is always on the lookout for community members and educators who share her vision of what makes this arts-centered school work. The

community is invited to rally around the school and the school's commitment to the arts and this affects the quality of the arts-engagement that takes place in the school.

Performing Shakespeare¹¹ in Second Grade

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall;
O' it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets . . .

(Duke, Twelfth Night, Act I, scene i)

Throughout the time of my observations in Ms. Bakke's classroom, she was deeply engaged in the process of rehearsing Shakespeare scenes with her second graders in preparation for the annual Shakespeare Festival in the city where the school resides, scheduled to take place the next month. Today during learning centers she will work with three separate groups of students who are working on learning Shakespeare. Onlookers of such an endeavor may think that Shakespeare with second graders could prove to be a daunting task and some might question the value of the abilities of second graders to engage in literature that has often reserved for high school and college. However, under Ms. Bakke's direction of these second graders, Shakespeare's words are taking flight. Working from multiple scenes, from a handful of the William Shakespeare's plays, Ms. Bakke works with her students toward an informed understanding of the language, action, and performance of some of the author's best known plays. Ms. Bakke invites her students into Shakespeare's poetic world helping poetry and action come alive in second grade.

¹¹ All Shakespeare selections taken from the Riverside Shakespeare edition of William Shakespeare's collected plays, © 1974, Houghton-Mifflin Company, Boston, MA.

Ms. Bakke began their work on William Shakespeare with an author study of the playwright and poet. She introduced students to the structure of the *play* as a form of story telling. As a class, students discussed Shakespeare's poetry, his use of iambic pentameter including examples and explanations of terms such as, *foot*, *iamb*, and *pentameter* as well as the vocabulary of the page and stage including the terms, *fourth wall*, *in media res*, *metaphor*, *prologue*, *protagonist*, *prose*, *simile*, *verse*, *alliteration*, *personification*, and *imagery*. Students brought in Shakespeare texts from home and the library and Ms. Bakke had students compare texts to find their similarities and differences. These activities occurred before the rehearsals started so that once students began going through their performance scenes each had a wealth of background information and tools to help them work through the complicated language and theatrical blocking.

In the atrium Ms. Bakke has assembled her first group of students who are with her to rehearse their lines for their Shakespeare scenes. Her second graders will perform scenes from the plays: *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer's Night Dream*, *As You like It*, and *Romeo & Juliet*. Leland Elementary School has both its second grade classrooms preparing to perform at the festival this year.

An African-American boy is rehearsing a scene from *Romeo & Juliet* with a girl whose parents moved to the United States from Italy just before she was born. The girl playing Juliet is standing on a chair to show that she is speaking to Romeo from her balcony. As the students rehearse, Ms. Bakke stops the action intermittently to talk to the actors and the students in the audience about breaking the fourth wall in drama and what that means and how the actors are to use this strategy within the scene. Ms. Bakke uses

terms like *blocking* and *projection*, and tells the students to “blast her,” reminding them that the festival performance will take place outdoors and will require loud voices in order for the actors to be heard. The *Romeo and Juliet* scene comes to an end and Ms. Bakke asks the student actors to use their recess to go over the scene a couple of more times. “The *whole* recess?” asks a third student somewhat incredulously; but the two actors do not seem to mind Ms. Bakke’s request for this extra bit of homework.

The next group up to rehearse is comprised of three students preparing a scene from the play, *As You like It*, between the characters Touchstone the clown, Audrey, and William. As one of the props for the scene, a student is carrying a plastic container of grapes that are used as a comical element in one of the repartees in the script. As students run through this part of the scene, Ms. Bakke expresses her joy at what is taking place on stage. “That’s funny,” she says as she laughs out loud. The students in audience with her are smiling and laughing at the actors’ performances too. The laughter, I must stress, is what I would call, “authentic,” rather than polite or instigated. I point this out to illustrate that the engagement with the process of learning this dramatic art form is a genuine and joyous occasion for students, actors, and audience as work and play. Ms. Bakke explains why she thinks Shakespeare works for second graders,

. . . Because they’re fearless; they are not intimidated by the text. When I first experienced [Shakespeare] in high school it was very intimidating and again it’s just how you react to it, “this is what we’re doing right now...”
[Interview transcript, 2006]

Ms. Bakke's students, all of whom are considered good readers,¹² tackle the language with purpose and gusto. As director of the scenes, Ms. Bakke offers many pointers along the way throughout rehearsals, "You need to play to the alliteration," she says to one actor, then to another, "make sure you breath, use your voice." Addressing the group as a whole, "take stage, take presence, take focus," and to a student directly in the scene, "you can do a British accent if you want." "Enunciate better," she gently admonishes one actor whose lines are swiftly running together as he recites them.

Ms. Bakke speaks to the students about muscle memory and often stops the scene to get up to model blocking and theatrical positions for the actors. She explains the concept of *cheating* in stage presence, when a body is turned toward the audience when addressing another actor in dialogue. Ms. Bakke explains to me that the students have been rehearsing rigorously for approximately one month and are now completely off book. "The kinesthetic is a bit tough," Ms. Bakke confides, as we watch her students work with blocking and their use of props. When the scene we were just watching concludes, a student sits down next to Ms. Bakke and Ms. Bakke kisses the student on the forehead, confirming a job well done.

Aside: Love & Affection in the Classroom

Arts-engagement invites emotional human interaction; indeed it is often impossible to avoid. It is difficult to engage in art forms without an exploration of the emotional state of affairs for those engaged because arts-engagement is often deeply

¹² Mrs. Ellis, the librarian, contends that the arts program at Leland is successful mostly because of the high reading ability of the students who attend there. High reading ability, Mrs. Ellis claims, allows students to go deeper into the arts and cover more material in less time. This issue relates to teachers efficacy in providing rich arts experiences to students and could be considered a limitation for schools with lower reading performance or less homogeneity in reading skills.

personal. Having said this, I marvel at the daring show of affection at Leland Elementary. Students show affection to one another by holding hands or putting arms around each other. Students often approach Dr. Carter, who, in the mornings and throughout the day, is always available to them for a hug, a few words of encouragement, and a warm smile. Teachers hug their students and as I saw Ms. Bakke do, offer an occasional affectionate kiss on the forehead, a noteworthy sign of pride, approval, and warmth. It reminds us that love is very much a part of education. These acts are evidence that caring (Noddings 1984; 1992) takes place; moreover love is not avoided.

Paulo Freire (2005) and bell hooks (2000; 2003) have addressed the issues and conflicts surrounding as well as the necessary condition for love in schools and classrooms. If school cultures continue to become more controlled there will be fewer opportunities to show open displays of caring and affection toward students however arts-centered schools model the humane aspects of schooling and dealing with humanity means addressing issues of love. As hooks points out, “when we speak of love and teaching the connections that matter most are the relationship between teacher and subject taught, and the teacher-student relationship” (2003, p. 127). At Leland such relationships are core to the schools strengths. “It seems to me,” the principal Dr. Carter muses, “if you have a humane, caring atmosphere as a foundation for any school you can do marvelous things” (Interview transcript, 2006).

Rigorous Work with the Arts: Situations of Arts-Mindedness

Students, throughout the Shakespeare rehearsals take Ms. Bakke’s direction and work these notes into their rehearsal performance. Ms. Bakke does not need to adjust the Shakespearean language to be more easily accessible to second graders; indeed her

students seem to relish the complexity of the words and actions in the text and are willing to work through the rough spots. Having engaged in acting and theater in high school and college myself, I note that this experience feels like professional theater. Ms. Bakke's strives to create a similar model to what she experienced as a student in a conservatory university in the west, she explains,

I liked the studio model that I had [in college] which was long sessions. . . I kind of had to teach the kids to sit and watch [the rehearsals], they know all the lines, they know each other's lines but they learned the discipline of what rehearsal looks like. [Which is] I just need to sit and be a good audience member while she works this scene and then we break off into groups. That's what you do in the theater actually, you do break off like that; you do have different directors who coach people [in small groups] like that so that's a theater model. And they are really getting good at sustaining themselves during rehearsals and I think that is a good discipline. Yes, sustaining themselves and looking for new things in their performance. Some of them are acting, some of them are not but some of them are trying, new things and cracking me up and really finding the character. . . it's so good, so they are starting to get less self-conscious, they are starting to naturally play objectives and again getting less self-conscious and becoming their characters. Some will not, they want to recite, [and think] 'don't look at me' and others of them are in character and to see seven year olds do that, get into character and not have any care in the world about how silly or awful they look, it's kind of refreshing, that's what I think . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

The variation in abilities of student actors does not diminish the lessons each student takes away from this experience with the art form; such experiences can later be used in other educational settings in which the student participates. While the arts-in-education advocacy field has recently spent considerable time scrutinizing arts-based activities and research studies for evidence of cognitive transfer, that is, evidence of how the arts-learning transfers to learning in other areas [See for e.g., Hetland & Winner and their meta-analysis of the Reviewing Education and the Arts Project (REAP) in Eisner & Day,

2004], currently this line of justification for the arts in education is still fledgling and relatively unsubstantiated.

Many advocates remain hopeful that the continued attempts to execute studies based on experimental design may, over time, add credence to the cognitive claims for arts-learning. However, I agree with Eisner (2002) who hesitates to attach too much hope to the promise of cognitive transfer as the anchoring *raison d'être* for arts-learning; instead Eisner describes ten lessons the arts teach (2000a) that stand on their own as valuable. The lessons include the following:

1. The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships.
2. The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
3. The arts celebrate multiple perspectives.
4. The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstances and opportunity.
5. The arts make vivid the fact that neither words in their literal form nor number exhaust what we can know.
6. The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects.
7. The arts teach students to think through and within a material.
8. The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said.
9. The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.
10. The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important. (p. 14)

Cognition is the main ingredient in many of the above ten lessons and one could surmise that some element of transfer is inherent in all learning; certainly in integrated learning where topics overlap, grow out of one another, and morph into other ideas leading to new avenues for exploration. But it remains unclear at this juncture whether the scientific study of arts-learning will yield what its supporters hope for. In the meantime,

strengthening a philosophical argument, even a moral argument, for the arts may help sustain arts-centered school reformers' efforts in getting their message out.

For her part, Ms. Bakke engages her students with the process, rules, and expectations of deep engagement with a serious art form. Even if students do not go on to performing arts-based middle or high schools, or take a performance courses in college, they will have had direct experience with the underlying lessons of the arts. Among other lessons, Ms. Bakke will have been successful in the 10th lesson the arts teach:

“symbolizing,” to the young that arts are an important part of meaningful curriculum.

Making Art & Making Meaning

As Shakespeare rehearsal for this group of students comes to a close, a small group of one boy and two girls stand center stage to rehearse Puck's speech from the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act IV, scene iv), speaking in unison:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumb' red here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding than a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, you will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

As the three actors sharing these last lines reach the end of their words, the other actors come on stage for a final bow to the audience. Ms. Bakke claps for them and offers some

final notes on the cadence of Puck's speech said in unison and looks approvingly on her young actors. Reflecting on her students' abilities in pulling it all together – the language, the emotion, the memorization, the blocking, the exaggeration, meaning, mannerisms, the comedy – and the value of this arts experience as it relates to the arts in general, she says,

We want students to care about their work and each other and character [at Leland means] being appropriate and mature, having high expectations for the children's behavior, and looking at the whole child and understanding that art is primal to human beings. People have always expressed themselves with art. Before we had text people performed. The Greeks performed; people performed myths to deepen their understanding of what it was to be a human being. Then people performed the passion plays of the bible to try to understand the bible. Shakespeare did political things, humorous things. It became more and more intricate. Art became more and more intricate, more and more political. Art has always been first and in fact when we teach preschool, crayons, paint and clay are what we give children first, we know innately to do that first, we don't hand them a pencil. So on the first day of school I don't hand students a pencil when we do writer's workshop. We do writer's workshop with clay to start, they feel much safer, it smells good, they can squish it and their nervous and *I'm nervous . . .* they can use their hands to make an object and they can tell a story. *Then* you give them a pencil. "Now I need you to craft your story with a pencil and use the elements of what it is to be a good writer and how do we do that? By modeling other good writers." So it's woven in but I think that for the children, the arts are the first thing. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Arts-centered teachers, administrators, and school reformers often begin education with the arts. In arts-centered schools, the arts are positioned as the origin of the story, the canvas on which the rest of their educational aims are painted. From this perspective, arts-centered school reform merely sustains and continues what human beings have been doing for ages.

The time is 11:30 and the instructional block devoted to learning centers in Ms. Bakke's class is coming to a close. All the students have completed all four of the day's centers; they have worked rigorously through their Shakespeare scenes, have finished

their math, reading, and handwriting center assignments and are ready to break for a half-hour recess and afterwards, lunch for fifteen minutes.

Under the Canopy: Students Recreate the Rainforest in the Classroom

It is Wednesday after lunch, and students are clustered around Ms. Bakke and a giant outdoor patio umbrella she has brought into the classroom. The umbrella canvas is a deep forest green, the post is made of hardwood, and the canopy of the umbrella extends approximately 9 feet in diameter. Students can hardly wait to get the skinny on what this umbrella is going to be used for. Some students are conjecturing as to its possible uses as Ms. Bakke slides open the large circular swatch of canvas.

“Say *ooh*,” Ms. Bakke says to her students, “say *ahh*. . .” and the students follow her queue, ooh-ing and ahh-ing this new arrival to the classroom. “Don’t touch the umbrella,” she says to the group, using her most convincing Italian *Strega Nona* voice. Ms. Bakke blows three kisses to the students, reminding them once again to be good listeners and to follow the rules. “Repeat after me,” Ms. Bakke says as she raises her right hand and the students raise their right hands too, “On my honor/ I promise/ to do my very best/ not to let my hands/ touch that umbrella.” The students repeat her words and then lower their hands. Ms. Bakke reminds them of the stuffed paper fish hanging throughout the Leland hallway, placed there by another classroom’s voyage under the sea project that often prove tempting (even for adults) to swat and swing aside while walking down the halls as they hang directly within headshot of anyone walking through the center of the hall. “We don’t touch the art,” reminds Ms. Bakke in a kind voice.

Earlier Ms. Bakke had explained to me that at the beginning of the year she takes the students on a tour of the building with her to look at all the art on the walls of the

school, to set good rules, and show reverence for the art that has come before her newest group of students' arrival, some from the outside world, and some of which they themselves helped create in previous grades. Back to the umbrella, she asks the students, "Why do you suppose I don't want you to touch the umbrella? Students offer myriad unfortunate accidents, some outlandish, some horrific, that might result from touching the umbrella. "Wow!" says Ms. Bakke, "You are really visualizing what could happen!" Finally Ms. Bakke explains to students that the umbrella's purpose is to be used for the students to recreate the rainforest. The umbrella will serve as the canopy and will eventually be transformed into a cloistered reading, resting space for students through the creation of vines, flowers, and hand-made creatures of the rainforest.

For this unit of study, students will each choose a rainforest animal or creature to research, study and understand, and finally represent it in some meaningful way. Mrs. Ellis, the librarian, visits Ms. Bakke's classroom to help students make their choice of rainforest creature so that she can later pull the books students might need for research and set them aside for the class to use as they build their reports and presentations. As she and the students work through the list of possible creatures for students to research, a plethora of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and primates are mentioned. Various students chose to study the hummingbird, the Bengal tiger, anaconda, toucan, Tasmanian devil, Andean Condo, red-eyed tree frog, boa constrictor, the sloth, the chinchilla, monkey, Amazon River dolphin, and the Honduran wing bat, among others.

Throughout the rainforest unit which will take place over a couple of weeks, students will need to gather information on how their creature communicates, and socializes. They will research to discover "what cool things it can do," the creature's

habitat, country/ continent of origin, how long it lives, what it eats, whether it is an herbivore, carnivore, or omnivore, what other creatures eat it, what other living creatures are its enemies, and how it protects itself. Essentially, each student will work to uncover all the pertinent facts of their chosen creature. Students will put this information in a report, will give an oral presentation, and finally will perform or create an extension to the project in the form of a diorama, poem, skit, song, etc.

Motivation & the Personal Curriculum¹³

Such in-depth study requires commitment and motivation over a sustained period of instructional time. For this particular unit each student is motivated to explore his or her creature because it was chosen by the student establishing an attachment to the topic.

As Ms. Bakke explains the value of this integrated unit,

When students study the rainforest, each child is researching his or her own rainforest animal and each is reading to get the information so they're driven by their need to understand more about the animal that they *want* to know about. So there's the motivation. They're not just sitting in a reading group reading what I've chosen. It fits the curriculum, you know, the objectives are there, they meet the state standards, they meet the city standards for the district but they are a little different and they are exciting, they're compelling and so the kids are motivated. . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

The motivation comes directly from the students' interest in his or her chosen creature which makes the learning acquired more meaningful. When we talk about making

¹³ The idea of the personal curriculum has also been investigated by Connelly and Clandinin (1988). In their work, the personal curriculum is used as a metaphor to promote teacher understanding of his or her own personal creation of the curriculum toward a deeper understanding of the students. The authors stress that when teachers understand the very personal nature of the curriculum they have created for their students they will inevitably come to understand their students better (pp. 24-32). The idea of the personal curriculum set forth in this study differs from Connelly and Clandinin's characterization in that it focuses on the students' engagement with and their experiencing of the curriculum rather than the teacher's creation of the curriculum and uncovering the personal nature of the created curriculum from the teacher's point of view.

learning meaningful, it requires something more than cognition. As Gardner (2000) notes,

Educator's understandable focus on cognition has sometimes had the unfortunate consequence of minimizing awareness of other equally important factors. Probably the most crucial is motivation. If one is motivated to learn, one is likely to work hard, to be persistent, to be stimulated rather than discouraged by obstacles, and to continue to learn even when not pressed to do so, for the sheer pleasure of quenching curiosity or stretching one's faculties in unfamiliar directions. (p. 76)

Students are motivated to learn when given a choice within the curriculum and a chance to make the curriculum *personal*. I see this reflecting what Elizabeth Vallance (1986) was talking about when she introduced the idea of a "curriculum for personal commitment," that is,

. . . the conception of education that we may hope the *student* carries with him or her when formal schooling is finished It is the conception which sees the purpose of schooling as creating a *personal commitment to learning* . . . I mean instead an underlying passion for the hard work and joys of intellectual exploration, whether it be in the humanities, mechanical engineering, [or] nutrition science . . . (As cited in Pinar et al., 1995, p. 30)

Arts-centered teachers encourage students to make the curriculum personal by engaging them in activities that require their personal commitment and agency. Furthermore, offering students the opportunity to *perform* their learning is another way that Ms. Bakke and arts-integrated teachers help students make the curriculum personal. As was mentioned earlier, teachers of arts-integrated learning are never sure what avenue students are going to take when given the opportunity to extend their learning into performance. Performance is also personal.

In addition to the explicit, implicit, and null curriculum discussed by Eisner (1994a), describing curriculum that is overt, the result of school culture, or missing from

the school's explicit curriculum (respectively), the hidden curriculum (Jackson 1968), and the out-of-school curriculum (Schubert, 1981), there could also be I suggest, building on Vallance's work, a personal curriculum that refers to the parts of these other types of curricula that students actually choose to receive and work into their lives and carry forward in their learning. Arts-centered curriculum offers more opportunities to cultivate this idea of personal curriculum because there are many more points where the student is making contact with and construction of the curriculum. Ms. Bakke helps her students develop their personal curriculum in her design of a constructivist classroom that promotes choice and freedom.

The rainforest unit planned by Ms. Bakke in collaboration with the art teacher, technology instructor, and librarian is fully integrated in terms of using all the school's resources to create multiple possibilities for learning. As the librarian, Mrs. Ellis, illustrates in her description of the process of planning:

How we feel is that we [the staff] demand that learning be integrated . . . So what they [the teachers] do, they will sit down at a table, all of us together and we will say, okay you are doing the rainforest, walk me through an imaginary way you think you want this to look and we'll start to talk about it and we'll say, if the kids pick their animals with you, could they do the research packets in the library? Well, yes, they can do their research packets in the library. Now if they do their research packets in the library what could the computer lab add to this? Well when they came to the computer lab if we know the animals they are working on we could pull up the websites for them to do additional research . . . Okay so then what can Coach [the art teacher] do? . . . so then we'll throw out all sorts of ideas . . . when they come to the library, since they will have the measurements on how big a hummingbird is, what we've decided is that we're going to see if maybe they can, to scale, make a picture of their hummingbird in duplicate and then staple them together and then color them so that they will literally be a two-dimensional animal and we can hang them in the rainforest that they are going to build in their classrooms. So it gets bigger . . . but that is what you can do here when you are not tied

to district curriculum or you can take district curriculum in a whole new direction. (Interview transcript, 2006)

What Mrs. Ellis describes here is difficult, time-consuming work that requires that all staff members are on board and committed to the idea of collaboration and building an integrated unit that will be a great experience for students. To be sure, not everything planned happens in integrated units that one expects. However the differences are slight and in the end, with mindful teachers who take the time to ask, ‘how will I know students know?’ regarding the intended outcomes and then looking also at the unintended outcomes of learning, and finally allowing students to present what has become personal.

The Arts & the Outside Community

It is Tuesday and my observations of Ms. Bakke’s classroom are coming to a close but before I leave to study another Leland classroom, I accompany Ms. Bakke’s class on a field trip to the botanic gardens located close to Leland, a short bus trip away. Upon arrival, the scene at the gardens is a bit of a melee as throngs of students from Leland’s entire second grade class pile out of the buses into the small courtyard that opens up into the large outdoor gardens. Soon however, everything is ironed out and Ms. Bakke has organized her class into small groups, each of which will share a “backpack” given to the groups by the botanic gardens which includes activity booklets with information and questions for students to answer. There are seven adults, including myself, Ms. Bakke and her student teacher, as well as parents.

The interior of the botanic garden’s tropical rainforest conservatory is a large area with meandering pathways that run through thousands of varieties of trees, plants, and flowers. A pond in the center hosts lily pads, small fish, and amphibians. A two-story

replica of a banyan tree is a favorite spot for students and visitors to get an aerial view of all the tropical rainforest below. The air in the conservatory is very moist and the smells are glorious. So I am somewhat saddened to see that many students are engaged more with answering the questions in the botanic gardens booklet than exploring the amazing space and specimens. Looking at the backpack materials, they appeared to be directed and were, it seems, geared toward keeping students occupied and controlled. This is a common tale where museums and cultural or natural centers are dedicated to bringing visitors and school groups through their doors, offering educational extensions and curriculum add-ons but not having the docent or professional staff available to take students through a guided tour or offer any assistance beyond the do-it-yourself packets and booklets.¹⁴ Luckily these students have Ms. Bakke to enthusiastically lead the tour which alters this tightly focused activity into more of an imaginative exploration.

Ms. Bakke leads the group through the rainforest stopping to point out interesting plant life and asking students questions. While the botanic gardens has geared its program toward keeping students' heads buried in booklets, Ms. Bakke is more interested in having students engage with their surroundings than making sure the question booklet is completed. Having said that, Ms. Bakke makes use of the booklet in class later on when students are remembering what was seen, what was interesting, and what was learned from their trip through the botanic gardens.

The trip to the botanic gardens is not an arbitrary field trip to see something beautiful. Ms. Bakke and her fellow second grade teacher is using the trip not only as an

¹⁴ For a compelling critique of the education-oriented and consumer-driven models of museum design see Stephen T. Asma's (2001), *Stuffed animals and pickled heads: The culture and evolution of natural history museums*. New York: Oxford University Press.

extension of the writing, reading, research, technology and art students will engage in throughout the rainforest unit but also to build science into the unit as well. As Ms. Bakke explains,

When we are planning grade-level wise we seek out field trips to integrate into our curriculum. For example we are visiting the botanic gardens because they have a tropical rainforest . . . it actually makes teaching and planning easier to be holistic, simplistic, to think outside the box. The students get really into the rainforest trip, [and then] we build the rainforest in the classroom. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Ms. Bakke and her colleagues use the outside resources available to augment the classroom work. She told me of another trip students took to visit a local arts and cultural center. While visiting the cultural center students were invited to learn about “Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) which ties in with Halloween . . . and we did Dia de los Muertos masks” (Interview transcript, 2006) to commemorate the memory of someone who had passed away as is the tradition. These masks were later used as props in the Shakespeare rehearsals and will be used as part of students’ costumes for the Shakespeare festival. Field trips, visits to museums, cultural centers and live performances create more meaning for students when the visits are timed with ongoing curriculum and tie into what the class is learning. There are many levels of what can be termed “partnership” with outside arts and cultural resources with schools participating or forging partnerships in more and less formal ways.

Creating Arts-Partnerships

Many arts educators and advocates promote the idea of partnership between schools and outside community arts organizations, museums, cultural centers and working performing artists (Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss 2001; Fowler 1996; Taylor 1999;

Stevenson & Deasy 2005; Rabkin & Redmond 2004). Leland Elementary School has forged a strong relationship with the city's art museum which as I mentioned earlier, has even loaned works of art to be added to the walls of Leland. While Leland may not have a large number of arts organizations specifically devoted to working with the school as is recommended by the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) and the Arts Education Partnerships (AEP) and is detailed in their literature as well as examined in chapter two of this dissertation, Leland Elementary has forged relationships with Young Audiences, Inc. which hosts artists-in-residence at the school, with the city art museums, and most importantly with people from within the community, including parents, who have art talent and interests to share.¹⁵ Over time, Leland has created a vibrant, connected community of arts-rich living and learning.

Summary Sketch

This chapter serves as a lengthy journey into one classroom teacher's work in creating an arts-centered environment. Surely time and space have not permitted me to describe all that I witnessed but within this portrait that I have offered, a few lasting impressions are worth recapping.

First, Ms. Bakke has shown herself to be a committed collaborator. She works hard prior to the school year and throughout to create and execute an arts-rich and arts-centered curriculum that reflect her values as a teacher. She see herself as a facilitator who collaborates with everyone in her realm and looks to her community of collaborators for needed insights that help her create a classroom of possibilities for her students.

¹⁵ We will examine the community arts connection in further detail in chapter seven when discussing fourth grade teacher Mr. Chadek's classroom and the electives program created by Leland principal and parents constructed to support, include, and celebrate community talent.

Furthermore, she collaborates with her students through the arts to create a shared aesthetic in the classroom.

Second, Ms. Bakke is a teacher who is not afraid to show love for her students. Throughout my observations I saw affection and even love in her teaching and classroom behavior toward her students. This works to create a home-like, caring environment within which students feel free to be themselves, take risks, and are respected and honored for their differences as well as their similarities.

Third, in her efforts to create a constructivist atmosphere Ms. Bakke is as much a learner as she is a teacher and is one who celebrates the element of surprise in the outcomes of her students' (and her own) learning. She "puts herself in the place of the learner," (Ms. Bakke, interview transcript, 2006) when designing arts-centered curriculum and classroom activities and creates opportunities for students to make their own discoveries and to become responsible for their own learning.

Fourth, Ms. Bakke works to support her vision of democracy by helping her students be seen and heard, create their own identities through fortifying their voice, and by honoring their intellectual choice-making in the classroom. Small and large freedoms in the classroom promote learning as fun and rigorous at the same time. Students experience an "earned freedom," (Greene, 1988) in her classrooms.

Fifth, Ms. Bakke helps students sustain motivation in learning by helping them cultivate a personal curriculum based on choice and freedom. She offers multiple opportunities for students to engage in arts-centered learning and performance helping each student to make contact with the personal. The personal curriculum is what students

will internalize as important; that this curriculum is centered on and infused with the arts bodes well for future learning.

Sixth, in considering Ms. Bakke’s classroom and the activities observed, she provided five types of arts-embedded situations. These activities are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Arts-Embedded Situations Enacted in Ms. Bakke’s Classroom

Situations of Home	Situations of home are experienced through a shared aesthetic that encompasses shared habits and values that permeate the classroom through arts-engagement. This shared aesthetic resulted in the creation of a home-like atmosphere that supported ideas of childhood, family, and caring for one another.
Situations of Expressiveness	Situations of expressiveness were experienced by students through the creation, research, and production of their passion projects.
Situations of Growth & Caring	Situations of growth and caring were exhibited through Ms. Bakke’s focus on students’ growth as writers and by facilitating students’ care for ideas, the arts, and each other through multiple opportunities to engage with the arts in the classroom and in the community.
Situations of Artistry	Situations of artistry were experienced by students through rehearsing, mastering, and performing Shakespeare’s plays and discovering the joys of performance.
Situations of Arts-Mindedness	Situations of arts-mindedness were illustrated by rigorous work with the arts in students’ rehearsals of Shakespeare and the difficult work of being a performing artist as well as internalizing the cognitive functions of working daily with the arts.

These five types of arts-embedded situations describe Ms. Bakke’s practices as an arts-centered school reformer and bring attention to the ways in which the arts balance educational experience in the classroom.

Finally, the experience in Ms. Bakke's classroom reminds me that in observing arts-learning there is more happening than can possibly be captured in a descriptive narrative. What is shown can only offer a glimpse of the array of wonderful activities and learning going on. Like a pointillist painting that is reduced to tiny specs on a canvas when one stands up close to it, in viewing and understanding arts-centered classrooms, one must stand back, just a bit, to watch the various colorful points coalesce into a meaningful portrait. Before turning to the next classroom in a different school offering a different portrayal of arts-centered teaching and learning, I rest this chapter with a story written by a second grader named Mike whose work releases the imagination inspired by Ms. Bakke's teaching,

The blue bird feels like he's in an oven. The weather is boiling hot. The fish is talking to the bird and agreeing that the sun is burning the earth. They are both drinking cold glasses of lemonade to try to cool down. Both of them are sweating like crazy. "Even the ground feels like it is 75 degrees!" the bird said. "My glass of lemonade is almost gone, and I don't know where I can get anymore." The fish said in pain from the sizzling, sizzling sun. The blue bird even had an umbrella. "Well I better be going," The fish said, "before I breathe in some air. (Mike, second grader, Leland Elementary School, 2006)

Ms. Bakke's Response

Dear Cassandra,

I am amazed at how you captured our program at Leland Elementary School. Thank you so much for honoring our school, its founder, Dr. Emma Carter, and our mission to engage and educate highly gifted children through integrated arts curricula. I think you captured the essence of our school and my classroom with integrity and thoughtful descriptions. I wish you continued success. I am deeply honored that you valued my work that very special year with those remarkable students.

Thank you,

Grace Bakke

CHAPTER FIVE

MRS. FONTAINE'S FIRST/ SECOND GRADE COMBINED

EDGEBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We are interested in education here, not in schooling. We are interested in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or quantifiable, not in what is thought of as social control . . . education signifies an initiation into new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, moving. It signifies the nurture of a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching out for meanings, a learning to learn. (Maxine Greene 2001, p. 7)

. . . the arts make education more acceptable to more kids, you know, especially the kids that are not paper/ pencil, are not academic even, you see kids that shine at different things and they get to step up into the spotlight and I just think it makes school fun and interesting for a lot of different kinds of kids. (Mrs. Fontaine, interview transcript, 2006)

Autumn Greet the Students of Edgebrook

The path leading up to Edgebrook Elementary takes a number of concrete curvy turns as students make their journey indoors for a day of learning and enrichment. The school itself is a large, brown, sprawling brick building sunk into the ground in such a way that the rolling grassy hills surrounding it provide a cloistered, snug effect. A split rail fence demarcates the school yard from the neighborhood skirting the school and its three separate play areas. Large deciduous and pine trees, as old as the circa 1970's neighborhood, tower over the school extending their skeleton-like branches in a beckoning fashion. Autumn leaves move close to the ground as small gusts of wind whirl and woo them around, reorganizing the natural scenery of the school yard.

A double set of doors separates the outdoors from a foyer and the foyer from the lobby of the school building. Parents heading in the doors with children and heading out without, crisscross paths with warm greetings for each other laden with the delightful small talk of school life. All who enter Edgebrook are compelled to stop at the front desk to sign in and pick up a visitor sticker before making their way to the classrooms. At once a reminder that safety and schooling for students, staff, and families is of great importance at Edgebrook Elementary and a symbol of the ethic of care surrounding the school community. I quickly sign in, adorn my visitor sticker and make my way to Mrs. Fontaine's first and second grade combined classroom.

This early in the school year, the walls of Edgebrook are just beginning to bud with student artwork and classroom projects. During the first weeks of schools, to welcome students and visitors, Edgebrook students have created a border of foam-board pennants. Each pennant bears the name of the student and is decorated with the interests of the student, something they like doing or identify with for instance soccer or flowers or reading or playing the piano. These brightly colored pennants hang side-by-side skirting the tops of all the hallways throughout the entire school and hint at a vibrant community of action and arts alive in this school.

The Transformation to an Arts-Centered/ Arts-Integrated School

Edgebrook Elementary School is an arts-integration magnet school located in a suburban district of large metropolitan area in Colorado. Edgebrook transitioned to arts-integrated magnet status approximately five years ago. Its student population is primarily Caucasian (77.1%); the remaining population can be described as Hispanic (9.3%), Asian/ Pacific Islander (9.0%), Black (3%) and less than 1% Native American/ Alaskan

Islander. Only 10% of students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Prior to the move to arts-integrated magnet status, Edgebrook was struggling with a significantly decreased enrollment as a result of being a neighborhood school in an aging community. Edgebrook was faced with a decision to make a drastic change in structure and mission or face closure by the district. Principal Jean Hansen explains how Edgebrook got its start as an arts-integration magnet school,

It started primarily because of our enrollment, to be perfectly honest, we only had 350 kids and we had just had a 5.8 million dollar renovation and the school can hold 425 to 440 kids. So the district said, “do something and if you can’t figure it out then we’ll figure it out for you.” And so we were given the latitude to come up with whatever we wanted as long as our student achievement maintained or increased and our enrollment went up. So we as a staff went back to our core beliefs, what do we believe about kids, about how kids learn best, what do we want for our personal children, and that’s where the concept of arts-integration and multiple intelligences came from. (Interview transcript, 2006)

As staff and principal discussed the renewed vision for Edgebrook, they found they wanted a theory on which to base their instruction, curriculum, and culture of the school. Eventually the group settled on combining Howard Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences with arts-integration both of which mirrored their own beliefs about how children learn. Hansen explains, “. . . we talked about how kids learn best by doing and we said, “yeah but what does that mean?” and so we started really studying [Howard] Gardner’s work [and his] eight intelligences”¹⁶ (Interview transcript, 2006).

Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences began with seven distinct categories of intelligence including the 1) musical; 2) bodily-kinesthetic, 3) linguistic; 4) logical-

¹⁶ There are currently nine intelligences but Edgebrook Elementary is not comfortable integrating the ninth, the spiritual intelligence, as Ms. Hansen said to me in our interview. “we don’t touch the ninth” (Interview, 2006)

mathematical; 5) spatial; 6) interpersonal; and 7) intrapersonal (Gardner 1983, 1993).

Since the original seven intelligences were formed, over two decades of work has pushed the number of intelligences from seven to nine with the additions of 8) the naturalistic and 9) the existential/ spiritual. It is of particular interest that Gardner has not delineated a separate artistic intelligence, as he writes in *Multiple Intelligences: Theory into Practice* “. . . each of these forms of intelligence can be directed toward artistic ends: that is, the symbols entailed in that form of knowledge may, but need not, be marshaled in an aesthetic fashion” (1993, p. 138). Edgebrook Elementary embraced this view and refined their methods of arts-integration in the classroom to allow the students’ to experience each of their varied intelligences throughout the curriculum by way of the arts.

Edgebrook implements what Ms. Hansen describes as a three-pronged approach to education that focuses on the head, the heart, and the hand of the student; the thinking, feeling, and doing is another way to put it. Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences addresses this thinking component or the head, engagement with the arts through the eight intelligences addresses the doing or the hand, and an anti-bullying program, a district wide initiative to address character through education, supports the feeling component of the three-pronged approach. Together these three facets of school life at Edgebrook help teachers and students collaborate on fulfilling its mission of tending to the whole child and his or her development.

The kindergarten through third grade classrooms are organized in pods along a hallway with a floor that slopes down from the main corridor to the classrooms. These classrooms sit lower than those on the main floor. Although the school is designed in a sprawling ranch-style architecture the building has multiple levels, using stairs, wheel-

chair accessible ramps, foyers, and rising steps leading into and out of rooms throughout the building that give it a multi-layered depth. The walls are lined with bulletin boards showcasing the work of students and each classroom has rows of coat hooks overflowing with brilliant colored jackets, sweatshirts and soft-sided lunch boxes, some partly opened with tiny plastic bags peaking out with half-eaten snacks. I open the door of Mrs. Edie Fontaine's first/ second grade combined classroom but the students are not at their desks, instead they are gathered on the floor, singing.

Creating Community: Mrs. Fontaine's Aims

When I enter the classroom on my first day of observations the teacher, Edie Fontaine is meeting with her entire class in the front of the room. Mrs. Fontaine is a slim woman in her early to mid-forties wearing a cozy red sweater, khaki pants, and woven leather brown flat loafers with a thick black sole. She has short hair, wavy with a bit of curl, and she wears glasses. Today I notice she is wearing a fun bracelet of sparkling green, orange, and brown flowers. The students are sitting in clusters on a large area carpet while Mrs. Fontaine is sitting in her rocking chair, she is pointing to words handwritten on a giant paper tablet set on an easel. The words are to a new song the students are learning, called *This Pretty Planet*:

This pretty planet
Spinning through space
You're a garden
You're a harbor
You're a holy place

Golden sun going down
Gentle blue giant
Spin us around
All through the night
Safe till morning light

The song is playing from a CD in the corner of the room and all eyes are focused on Mrs. Fontaine as she shows her students the physical movements that go along with the song. Eventually Mrs. Fontaine's class will learn to sing this song in musical canon or rounds.

The Spirit of the Classroom

According to Mrs. Fontaine, this song has been chosen purposefully to support the student's awareness of the naturalist intelligence as proposed by Gardner. The induction of the naturalist intelligence is Gardner's way of honoring those who study distinctions amongst categories in the natural and social world. He writes,

Turning to the role of the naturalist in human culture, it is worth noting that a full-blown naturalist does much more than apply taxonomic capacities . . . the naturalist is comfortable in the world of organisms and may well possess the talent of caring, taming, or interacting subtly with various living creatures. Such potentials exist . . . with many other roles, ranging from hunters to fisherman to farmers to gardeners to cooks. Even apparently remote capacities – such as recognizing automobiles from the sounds of the engines, or detecting novel patterns in a scientific laboratory, or discerning artistic styles – may exploit mechanisms that originally evolved because of their efficacy in distinguishing between, say, toxic and non-toxic ivies, snakes, or berries. Thus, it is possible that pattern recognizing talents of artists, poets, social scientists, and natural scientists are all built on the fundamental perceptual skills of naturalist intelligence. (Gardner, 1999, pp. 49-50)

While perhaps a small action, taken as part of Edgebrook's commitment to bringing students together with their naturalist sensibilities, Mrs. Fontaine's inclusion of the *Pretty Planet* song is one way she engages students with the importance and the beauty of the natural world. Engaging the natural world may be an endangered practice, as Louv (2005) points out in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*,

Our society is teaching young people to avoid direct experience in nature. That lesson is delivered in schools, families, even organizations devoted to the outdoors, and codified into the legal and regulatory structures of many

of our communities . . . the postmodern notion that reality is only a construct – that we are what we program – suggests limitless human possibilities; but as the young spend less and less of their lives in natural surroundings, their senses narrow, physiologically and psychologically, and this reduces the richness of human experience. (pp. 2-3)

Creating spaces in the classroom for an enlivening of the senses and inspiring her students' sense of wonder, Mrs. Fontaine works to reacquaint children with the direct experience of nature, in this case, through song.

The students practice their new tune a few more times and I take a moment to look around Mrs. Fontaine's room. Even though it's only the sixth week of school, the walls in Mrs. Fontaine's room are exploding with student work. Instead of an alphabet strip, a staple of most American classrooms, the students have created their own set of alphabet letters. Each letter has been created by a student and is accompanied by a picture and the name of the student who created it. In addition to the alphabet, students have created their own numbers, 0 -10, and an array of colors in the same fashion. A large spread of blue paper hangs from one wall where a vocabulary list has been started. Throughout the year students will add words that are discovered through readings and activities.

In the back corner of the room, a reading space has been designed for students with an area carpet and comfortable pillows for students to relax on and read. A book shelf separates this area from the rest of the room and includes a wide variety of early readers, children's picture books, and chapter books. A small table with a lamp makes the little area complete and on the table is a book entitled, "Sweet Reads." Sweet Reads was created by Mrs. Fontaine's class to recommend books to other readers in the classroom. The front cover is laminated, the book is plastic spiral bound, and each page has the title,

description and a picture created by one of Mrs. Fontaine's students. On the wall are laminated quotes about reading from the students. "You can find out what's happening in the world," reads Melina's comment; "It feels good to finish a book," comments Charles; "It makes you write better words," says Iris; and "It gets your heart pumping," reads Ollie's quote.

There is one large window in Mrs. Fontaine's room that looks out onto the green grass and trees of the mature Edgebrook neighborhood. On the window sill of the large window Mrs. Fontaine has placed a variety of musical instruments laid out on a colorful piece of cloth. Some of the instruments I notice include, large gourds covered in beads that rattle and roll, a rainmaker, tambourine, small drums, and shells. She has other, smaller instruments contained in small baskets such as finger cymbals and castanets. Hanging from the ceiling in the room in different places are three different wind chimes. Each wind chime has a different quality to its sound when moved. Mrs. Fontaine uses these wind chimes to quiet the classroom. Each chime has its own strength of sound; the first chimes a light tinkling sound, the next one a medium hollow sound, and the last one, a strong full sound that resonates in your teeth. When the class is noisy she begins with the chime with the softest sound and works up to the heaviest chime. Definitely by use of the third chime, though usually by the second, the class is fully quiet.

From my observations of the physical and aesthetic aspects of the room I begin to understand that Mrs. Fontaine has taken considerable time to involve students in the creation of the learning environment. She has included their words in the creation of not only the reading space created for students quoted earlier but in the mission of the classroom which is posted on the wall along with photographs of the students that reads:

“We promise to take care of each other and ourselves. We will respect one another and our school. We will always try hard and do our best.” Students in Mrs. Fontaine’s classroom have entered a community of their own creation. I turn now to exploring the sorts of activities and learning that transpires in Mrs. Fontaine’s first/ second combined classroom.

Getting the Day Started with Math

Edgebrook Elementary practices fluid grouping for math instruction therefore some of Mrs. Fontaine’s students move to one of the other classrooms during the math block that takes place everyday school-wide from 8:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., while others stay and are joined by students from other classrooms. Mrs. Fontaine’s group has twenty students; she has no paraprofessionals to help her with instruction.

Each morning Mrs. Fontaine has her students perform a couple of tasks to get the day started. On the wall she has hung a pocket chart for the month of October. Each of the 31 days of October have been numbered and colored on small squares of tag-board by the students in Halloween colors of green, orange, brown, black and gold. Put together, the student-created dates of the calendar create a spooky autumn mosaic that summarizes the season we are in. Together the class is singing a song to the tune of *Frère Jacque* to introduce the days of the week and today’s date:

Today is Tuesday
Today in Tuesday
October 2nd, October 2nd
Sunday, Monday, Tuesday
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
Saturday
2006

The students repeat this two times and Mrs. Fontaine points to the letters of the days of the week on the calendar and the date of the month as students sing. After the song is finished, one child is chosen and she takes one chain off a long paper chain that hangs around the walls of the room counting down the days of the school year. The final task in the morning ritual is the counting of straws. One straw for every day of the school year grouped in rubber-banded sets of ten. Together the class counts, “10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27,” twenty-seven days of school so far.

Mrs. Fontaine then moves the group over to the big carpet in the front of the classroom to work on some more number counting and movement in a math warm-up. First students count by five and clap on tens: 5, clap 10, 15, clap 20, 25, clap 30 – all the way to 100. Then Mrs. Fontaine has the class count one to 30, jumping on the two's: 1, jump-2, 3, jump-4, 5, jump-6 and so on. Using movement in this way stabilizes the concept being learned and strengthens the mind-body connection between and the sensory awareness of the student (Mullen & Cancienne, 2003). Finally Mrs. Fontaine has the students count backwards from 14 and with each number the students are to shrink their bodies smaller and smaller towards the floor until they are sitting on the carpet. Students are now warmed up and are ready to settle into today's math instruction. Activities such as these math warm-up activities reflect the Gardner's mathematic-logical and kinesthetic intelligences. Throughout many of the activities implemented in Mrs. Fontaine's classroom, different intelligences are combined to fully engage students with the multiple intelligences mission of Edgebrook Elementary School.

Edgebrook Elementary school uses Everyday Mathematics (EM) as their primary math curriculum school-wide. Everyday Mathematics is an immensely popular math

curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. The curriculum's website reports that over 175,000 classrooms and 2.8 million students are currently using EM. (<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu>). The curriculum includes comprehensive math workbooks and textbooks for grades kindergarten through sixth grade. The University of Chicago School Mathematics Project is a National Science Foundation-funded center founded in 1983 that offers support to schools, administrators, parents and students for the implementation of the EM curriculum.

Mrs. Fontaine is following the EM curriculum very closely. She must adhere to a pre and post assessment of students' skills in content areas for this math curriculum but while she maintains the standards of the curriculum she also uses methods that reflect her commitment to arts-integration to the extent that she is able. Students are studying money in the unit that I observe. To introduce students to the penny, the first monetary unit being studied, Mrs. Fontaine hands out a penny and a magnifying glass to each student. Students use the magnifying glass to study the features of the penny and report out loud to the class what they have found. One child reports that she sees the Lincoln Memorial on the back of the penny. Mrs. Fontaine asks the same student if she knows where the Lincoln Memorial is located when another child pops up and says, "In the fake Washington." Mrs. Fontaine lets out a light-hearted laugh and says, "It's not fake; it's real; one is a state and one is a district." She then moves to the front of the room, pulls down a map and proceeds to show her students the difference between Washington, the District of Columbia and Washington the state.

When a number of different features of the penny have been identified, Mrs. Fontaine sings a song with the students about the penny. This song is sung to the tune of children's tune, *Bingo*:

“There is a coin that's made of copper and penny is its name-o
P-E-N-N-Y; P-E-N-N-Y; P-E-N-N-Y and Penny is its name-o”

Students move to their desks and begin working on the textbook assignment related to the unit on money. I watch Mrs. Fontaine move through the group as students work independently, although I notice that students have many questions about what to do. Mrs. Fontaine alternates between offering individual instruction to students and calling the groups attention to issues that she thinks might be affecting the entire class. If she feels the classroom slipping into distraction, confusion, or unnecessary chatting, she will say, “Boys and girls please keep looking at me so you know what to do.” In this way Mrs. Fontaine re-focuses her group to the task at hand. She gathers the students' wandering attentions and helps them get back to the task before them. This strategy is useful in a room of twenty students with no para-professionals to help work with students individually.

Because Mrs. Fontaine does not have an assistant she relies on whole group instruction the majority of the time. She divides her math block into warm-up and direct instruction while trying to include hands-on activities such as the work with the pennies and the magnifying glass, using song to help students become acquainted with the monetary unit being studied, and to help students create tools for remembering features of the penny. She uses movement activities to warm kids up to numbers, allowing them to get some of the kinesthetic energy out of their bodies so they are ready to sit and learn. Math instruction is primarily a sit-and-learn type of instruction but Mrs. Fontaine's

mindfulness of her arts-integration and multiple intelligences mission propels her to plug in different types of small learning moments that help her in fulfilling her aims for her students.

Arts-Integration Aims & the Acceleration of the Curriculum

I observed the math block every day of my observations in the classroom. Where I was sitting taking my notes I had two and sometimes three students sitting with me who occasionally had questions and would ask me, as the adult sitting at the table, for answers to their questions. This caused me to pause to consider whether the developmental level of the Everyday Mathematics curriculum written for first-grade was somewhat above the typical first-grader's ability and to further consider the challenges faced by teachers who are responsible for relaying a hefty, mandated curriculum that is not easily integrated with forms of arts-learning. Clearly, in talking to Mrs. Fontaine, the challenges of meeting district requirements in addition to her arts-integrated and multiple intelligences goals can be challenging. Indeed, as Mrs. Fontaine explains,

I just think teaching is challenging, you know, and I feel lucky that I'm here, it's a very nurturing place . . . the team, the school, everything but I just think it seems like we are always adding something new, you know, how can we incorporate that and how *do* the arts fit into everything because sometimes they really don't, you really have to stretch it to make it work. And also making it so it really is truly integrated and not just to stick the arts in there, although art for arts sake is okay but if you really want to try to build the philosophy you have to be really thinking, sometimes it's hard . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

The mission of Edgebrook Elementary is focused on arts-integration and multiple intelligence theory but this does not mean that the curriculum is an open space for exercising this mission. It can be hard to balance inflexible curriculum, like the math curriculum mandated by the school and district with the goals of arts-learning. Mrs.

Fontaine works hard to find spaces within her curriculum where the arts can thrive and not become a token or an add-on activity but can extend the learning in a meaningful way. Moreover in times of heightened concerns over student achievement, the arts are routinely scrutinized as to their efficacy in the wider curriculum. As Mrs. Fontaine notes,

Sometimes I think we've always struggled . . . [to] make sure our test scores are high so people don't go, 'well they do the arts, you know, of course . . .' but so far it's been okay . . . I think we just, we know that [the arts] don't always show exactly how well students are doing but I think people feel strongly enough that they really helps kids learn and know what they're doing. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Furthermore, arts-learning can often be compromised in educational settings where mandated curriculum takes center stage. This seems to me to be a result of what I have observed to be a ratcheting up of performance for younger and younger students in classrooms as a result of the emphasis on accountability and performance in schools. Veteran teachers like Mrs. Fontaine have felt these consequences keenly, as she comments on recent advice to parents reported in the news to build, "down time" into their children's busy lives, "they have been saying that a long time," she tells me, "[even] when I taught kindergarten . . . now kindergarten is more like first grade was, everything has moved up a level . . ." (Interview transcript, 2006).

What I call the ratcheting up of curriculum where skills normally introduced at one level are being taught to younger and younger students might have its social and cognitive consequences for students. With less time to play, to be curious, to feed the imagination, children quickly lose site of childhood in preparation of the future; a future largely engineered by concerned parents. As developmental psychologist William Crain (2003) observes in talking with parents of young children, "parents . . . recognize the

charm of childhood, but this isn't their greatest concern. What they really want to know is how to help their children get into a prestigious college and become highly successful adults" (p. 124). Well-intentioned parents who are genuinely concerned about the lives their children will lead as adults are quick to forget the simple learning that happens in places other than formalized school settings or outside of the basic curriculum; the learning for instance that takes place when children engage with nature, fantasy play, and of course the arts.

In some cases curriculum passes by so quickly students have difficulty sustaining an awareness and engagement with subject matter. Indeed, the current emphasis on the acceleration of educational instruction reduces much of what is learned to ". . . a single very long buzzing tone, like the endless sound [Beethoven] heard the first day of his deafness" (Kundera 1995, p. 93). At the very least one of the things that the arts do in schools and classrooms is slow down the tempo of learning. Arts-engagement asks that students take a closer look at what is being created, the arts ask students to go inside themselves for the interest and the answers and these interests and answers re-emerge from the young artists' soul in slower-paced and more meaningful ways, always in a new form. Slowing the tempo of classroom life is apparent in many of the activities and lessons I observed in Mrs. Fontaine's classroom as we will see later during a poetry unit presented by Mrs. Fontaine.

Literacy Block & Centers

Like the math block, literacy at Edgebrook Elementary is also given an hour and ten minute block of time for study. Mrs. Fontaine has created an innovative way of using this time for her students based on her own interest in providing learning centers for her

students. This is not an easy task given that she does not have a devoted paraprofessional to help her structure the classroom; therefore Mrs. Fontaine has had to design the literacy block concentrating on her own one-on-one work with readers and setting students on a course of self-directed learning on multiple literacy tasks. Moreover, Mrs. Fontaine has both her first and second graders together in the classroom for the literacy block so differentiating their learning is one of her goals.

Mrs. Fontaine stands in front of her students and explains the to-do list she has created for the first graders and the second graders. The to-do list¹⁷, explains Mrs. Fontaine, “is a way for you to take responsibility for your own learning.” While Mrs. Fontaine works with one small group at a time on reading skills, the other students are sitting at their desks working on their to-do list items. During this time I watch students work independently at their desks, continually checking the board for the next item on the list.

From a curricular standpoint an activity such as this could very easily descend into a long list of busy work designed merely to keep students occupied while Mrs. Fontaine does the ‘serious’ work of reading instruction in small group. But Mrs. Fontaine includes a range of activities that are simple enough to be worked on independently by her students and complicated enough to be meaningful learning experiences. Today as one of their tasks, second graders are working on letters to one student’s father, a firefighter who came to talk to the class about his job. First graders will work on their autumn poetry books, an on-going project in the classroom and all students begin their at-

¹⁷ See Appendix D for a sample of Mrs. Fontaine’s “to-do” items.

desk time reading independently for twenty minutes. Mrs. Fontaine uses a kitchen timer to mark the twenty-minute increments.

Rainy Day & Raindrops: Situations of Expressiveness

On one particularly chilly, rainy and generally drizzly day halfway through my observations, Mrs. Fontaine designed an activity for her class that used the day's rainy weather as inspiration for creative writing and poetry. She first had the students generate a list of rainy-day words that she wrote down on the white board as students thought of them. Students suggested words including:

Thunder	Avalanche of floods	Gray	Cloudy	Mysterious	Cozy	Crack	Crackle
Tornados	Freezing	Sad	Misty	Lightening	Fudge	Flash	Gloomy
Hurricane	Flashlight	Dark	Windy	Fluttering	Rainy	Fog	Stormy
Flashing	Pitter-pat	Cozy	Puddles	Warm Cocoa	Mist	Floods	Pit-a-pat

One student in the group added the word, “fudge” to the list. Rather than Mrs. Fontaine assuming that this student was suggesting a nonsensical answer to be silly or to disrupt the exercise by not following directions as some teachers might, she asked this student what he meant when he suggested “fudge” for a rainy-day word. He answered that on cold, rainy days he and his mom make fudge together. By probing further into this student’s meaning when he suggested the word “fudge” as a rainy-day word Mrs. Fontaine was able to allow the boy to interject his own personal experience of what rainy days mean to him and his family. His suggestion was therefore honored and included in the list of rainy-day words. In this moment Mrs. Fontaine created a space for imagination and personal experience for her students. She did not make an assumption regarding the

boy's internal reasons for suggesting a word that on the surface did not appear to have anything to do with the other rainy-day words suggested by the class. Mrs. Fontaine's openness to different kinds of answers creates a safe place for students to include their personal experience as part of their learning.

After the list of rainy-day words was created Mrs. Fontaine introduced a schematic for writing a poem called the six-room poem.¹⁸ The six-room poem helps students organize the sections of the poem by asking to students to fill the rooms with particular kinds of words or phrases which when put together, form a poem. The six-room poem schematic looks like this:

Image	Light
Sound	Questions
Feelings	Repeating

One example of a six-room poem filled the rooms in the following manner. For image, a student suggested the word, "thunderstorm"; for light, another student suggested the phrase, "flashes of lightening through dark"; for sound the words, "boom, boom, boom" where added; and finally for a question, one student asked, "How does the thunder make

¹⁸ From *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School* by Georgia Head, 1999. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

a sound?” When asked what feelings the image of a thunderstorm awakens, students threw out: “scared,” “cold,” and “so cold, it’s hot” as suggestions. Finally students chose one of the words or phrases in the other five rooms as a repeating phrase to end the poem. Thus this student-created poem looked like this:

Thunderstorm
 Flashes of lightening through dark
 Boom, boom, boom
 How does thunder make a sound?
 So cold, it’s hot
 Boom, boom, boom

After Mrs. Fontaine has the students contribute to the class poem to model how a six-room poems is constructed. She divides the classroom into couplets and has her students work on rainy-day poems together. Students immediately go to work filling their rooms using the words generated by the class that were still on the board in the front of the room as well as their own ideas and words. I walked around the room as the students worked on their poems together. Mrs. Fontaine circulated the room as well, answering student questions and making suggestions to students as they worked. At one point a student was stamping his feet to show his partner the sounds of thunder clapping, Mrs. Fontaine noticed this and said to the student, “that’s a good idea, at the end of the day we’ll make our own thunderstorm.” The other students, overhearing this, began to chirp their excitement about this new possibility.

I could see that the students were engaged in this lesson and excited by the final part of the project which was to transfer the final version of the poem to a grey paper cut out of a giant raindrop and then, using black felt-tip pen, transforming the poem into its final form. As a final touch students used silver glitter to decorate their raindrops.

Following are a couple of examples of the poems I saw being created by the duos in Mrs. Fontaine's classroom:

A poem by Astrid and Sadie:

Rain drops
Shady rays
 Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat
How does it make the raindrops?
 Scary
 Pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat

A poem by Henry and Georgia:

Tornados
Lightening
 Crash-bang, crash-bang, crash-bang
How does a tornado start?
 Scared
 Crash-bang, crash-bang, crash-bang

A poem by Ani and Franklin:

Sun shower
Shiny, rainy
 Swish, swish, swish
How does rain drop?
 Warm
 Swish, swish, swish

Cognitive Processes & Arts-Integration: Situations of Arts-Mindedness

Within the rainy-day poem activity Mrs. Fontaine stressed four distinct stages of the writing process. She began by introducing students to an idea-generating phase in asking them to create a list of rainy-day words, she then had students work with a schematic, having students draw out the six rooms of the poem structure and filling those rooms with the words, phrases, and questions they had agreed upon as partners while

creating the rough draft of their poem. She then had students bring their rough drafts of their six-room poem to her for editing and correction of misspelled words. Once corrected, students took their poem and transferred it to the large grey paper raindrop using felt-tip pen putting the poem in final version form. After the writing process is over students are then allowed to decorate their rain-drops with glue and glitter. Mrs. Fontaine would later create a bulletin board to showcase these rainy-day poems.

This activity reflects distinctly cognitive functions that occur in the act of representation through the arts as outlined by Eisner (2002). This cognitive process includes three phases, *inscribing*, *editing*, and *communication* (pp. 5-7). Mrs. Fontaine had students *inscribe* their artistic effort by, in this case, having students build a six room poem. “It is through ‘inscription,’” Eisner tells us, “. . . that the image or idea is preserved –never, to be sure, in the exact form in which it was experienced, but in a durable form: a painting is made, a poem is written, a line is spoken, a musical score is composed” (p. 6). Next Mrs. Fontaine was purposeful in having students edit their poems. “*Editing* is the process of working on inscriptions so they achieve the quality, the precision, and the power their creator desires” (p. 6). As students refined their poems, edited them for errors, and copied them to grey cut-out raindrops they engaged in editing.

A third cognitive function of representation Eisner has termed *communication*. “The transformation of consciousness into a public form, which is what representation is designed to do,” Eisner tells us, “is a necessary condition for communication; few of us read minds” (p. 6). The communication of forms of representation is one way that cultures evolve. The sharing of work, ideas, and performances engage others. “What is clear,” Eisner concludes, “is that culture depends upon these communications because

communication patterns provide opportunities for members of a culture to grow” (p. 7). Working with art can be seen as a conversation between the work, the artist, and the audience that experiences the work creating a *transactional aesthetic* (Garrison, 1997).

The Place Where Imagination Grows

Throughout this activity Mrs. Fontaine again showed a mindfulness of her commitment to arts-integration. She began with the cultivation of the imagination in having students visualize the qualities of a rainy day and what that experience was like for them. She used the physical environment of the world outside the school window – that is to say, she introduced this activity on a rainy day which would add to the students’ memory of the lesson and further connect them to the natural world as is one of her multiple intelligence goals. She worked through the draft-revision-final draft phases of writing, teaching her students the value of planning, creation, and revision. She then invited them to create an artistic visual representation that would showcase their poem and finally she had students create a musical thunderstorm using instruments and voices to crystallize the arts-learning experience. In this activity Mrs. Fontaine engaged her students’ the sensory faculties, allowing them to find their own meaning in this poetry literacy activity. With the repeated representations of the event in different ways, a strong experiential bond between the student and what was learned is formed, feeding the imagination.

Mrs. Fontaine’s Artistry as a Teacher

This arts-integrated project illustrates a number of qualities of Mrs. Fontaine’s teaching. First, it shows Mrs. Fontaine’s commitment to imagination in terms of helping students visualize the topic being introduced and in using sensory information to describe

an event and create a poem based on that event –in this case, a rainy day. Mrs. Fontaine illustrated a respect for student voice in the way she planned this activity. She made sure that the poems in the classroom used words that the students themselves created. She did not edit their thinking or their creativity, once students created their shared poem she then helped them to make the necessary corrections for their final version which offered Mrs. Fontaine the opportunity to further instruct students on spelling and other editing skills. Finally Mrs. Fontaine allowed students to express their final products in both visual art and music. As was shown above this process mirrors the cognitive functions involved in the act of representation: *inscribing*, *editing*, and *communicating*.

Moreover, in the way Mrs. Fontaine designed the activity she modeled a useful method of approaching the creative writing process stressing, idea-generation, writing a first draft, the revision process, and creating a final draft. All in all the class spent thirty minutes on this activity but it seemed like a much longer time. I stress this because in the rushed atmosphere of today's school day, the arts infuse the classroom with a feeling of slowness. Engagement with the arts seems to slow time down and offers students the chance to engage in thinking, feeling, and imagination in a combined effort that produces and integrated experience and adds to their learning. As Maxine Greene reminds us, "to see the arts in relation to curriculum is to think of a deepening and expanding mode of tuning-in . . . there have to be the kinds of grounded interpretations possible only to those willing to abandon already constituted reasons, willing to feel and imagine, to open the windows and go in search" (1995, p. 104). Mrs. Fontaine creates the spaces to make this search a real possibility.

Critics of arts-integration and arts in education often say that arts activities take too much time out of the day that should be spent on more rigorous types of learning, the so-called three 'R's or basics, but as I saw in Mrs. Fontaine's class, students were engaged in an arts activity that stressed the rigors of the writing process as well as the rigors of artistic representation –both goals of her literacy instruction. As Eisner has written,

Work in the arts contributes to the development of complex and subtle forms of thinking. Ironically, the arts are often thought to have very little to do with complex forms of thought. They are regarded as concrete rather than abstract, emotional rather than mental, activities done with the hands not the head, imaginary rather than practical or useful, more closely related to play than to work. Yet the task that the arts put forward – such as noticing subtleties among qualitative relationships, conceiving of imaginative possibilities, interpreting the metaphorical meanings the work displays, exploiting unanticipated opportunities in the course of one's work – require complex cognitive modes of thought. Examined analytically, work in the arts provides an agenda rich in such opportunities. (2002, p. 35)

The interplay between the cognitive processes of the mind, imagination, and art are fertile ground for some of the most rigorous pedagogy because it demands that students look at knowledge or what is being learned from multiple perspectives. Again reiteration and the use of multiple approaches strengthen experience and memory, supporting learning as it is constructed.

At the end of the day students were able to create their own thunderstorms as promised, using instruments from Mrs. Fontaine's windowsill and their own bodies stamping, howling, making wind noises with their lips and using the many varied instruments to create the sounds of thunder, lightening, and rain – their auditory poem.

Personal & Community Meaning: Intrapersonal/ Interpersonal Intelligence

Today the first graders are to attend I-I which stands for intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence class. The personal intelligences were first proposed by Howard Gardner in the original conception of his theory of multiple intelligences as outlined in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983). The purpose of these two intelligences is to help students develop and draw strength from their emotional selves and address the affective components of human intelligence. Intrapersonal Intelligence Gardner explains, is the “knowledge of the internal aspects of a person: access to one’s own feeling life, one’s range of emotions, the capacity to effect discriminations among these emotions and eventually to label them and to draw upon them as means of understanding and guiding one’s own behavior” (1993, pp. 24-25). Interpersonal intelligence, explained in tandem to intrapersonal intelligence, “builds on a core capacity to notice distinctions among others; in particular, contrasts in their moods, temperaments, motivations, and intentions (1993, p. 23). Having students work from within and with one another is the project of the personal intelligences.

Mrs. Fontaine’s first grade students walk down the hall to the music room for I-I class and join the other group of first graders who all immediately go to the risers in the music room and sit down. There are approximately 60 first graders in the room. Mrs. Scott the music teacher and Ms. Hansen, the principal are there to facilitate I-I class, the first-grade teachers do not attend I-I class with their students. Mrs. Fontaine’s first graders are learning a new song that is being taught to every student in the school called “Make a Difference.”¹⁹ The lyrics are:

¹⁹ © Teresa Jennings, 2006.

Everyone has got a chance to make a difference big or small.
Ev'ryone can give a little for the good of one and all
Opportunities knock ev'ry minute. They're comin' along.
Ev'rything that we face together helps make us close,
To make us strong!
We are strong together!

Chorus:

We can make a difference! We can lend a hand!
We can make some changes when we take a stand!
If we put our heads together, we can find a better way!
When we put hearts together we can make a difference today! We can!

Ev'ryone has things to offer that could help so many ways.
Ev'ryone can make an effort working toward some better days,
Look around and you'll see lots of chances. Just look anywhere.
All the tings that we do together-giving, working, showing how we care!
How we care together!

Repeat Chorus

At the end of the song, for the words, “we can!” students yell out the words and punch their right arms in the air. The students are learning this song quickly and will sing it for the first time on Grandparents Day celebrated later this month. Then the instructors, Mrs. Scott, and Principal Hansen, switch to the character trait lesson for day; the theme today is ‘Caring’. Mrs. Scott addresses the large group and begins by saying, “We’re learning about different character traits that keep us strong, that make us strong” (Observation notes, 2006). The I-I classes are one hour in duration. The time is split between practicing new songs that relate to the character-building mission of which, “Make a Difference” is the first, then a lesson is presented on the particular character trait being studied and finally the students will work on a visual-art project as a culmination of the I-I class experience for the year.

Edgebrook Elementary school devotes a great deal of time to the development of the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (I-I). At Edgebrook the I-I piece is taught to students by grade level as a class, separate from the main curriculum and is taught by the principal Jean Hansen and the school's music teacher Hazel Scott. Ms. Hansen describes how Edgebrook settled on their approach to teaching these two intelligences,

The music teacher and I teach [I-I], intra and interpersonal skills and it came from [when] we went to Massachusetts and Connecticut in that area, looking at schools similar to ours before we started, we wanted to see how they do it. And we were at . . . I think it was the Howard Gardner multiple intelligences school, I can't remember but one of the things that they had as one of their specials was I-I and so you would rotate just like you do for music and P.E. and philosophically we had a problem with that . . . so the music teacher and I offer it and every other year we rotate the project. So last year we had the school musical and this year we're doing a visual art project where they're creating shields and the last time [we did a visual arts project was] the mosaic [tile project]. So it's fun, and gets me some teaching time. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Last year Edgebrook put on its all school show. The title of the show was called, "Celebrate You and Me" and involved every classroom in the school and was performed to the entire Edgebrook neighborhood community. The theme of the show celebrated aspects of character that fit with the Edgebrook Elementary mission for its students such as respect, good judgment, friendship and belonging, fitness and nutrition, faith or belief in others, and a belief in self. The all-school show explored these character ideas in song and dramatic skits that had students role-play different school-related scenarios. At the end of the show, the character traits were fed into a giant "Self-Esteem Machine," the outcome of which was self-esteem for everybody as shown in this exchange between the students and the anthropomorphized Self-esteem Machine,

Student: "What's the prize?"
Machine: "Self-esteem of course!"

Student: "Who's the winner?"
Machine: "You!"
One student: "You mean me?"
Machine: "No, I mean you, each of you!"
Student: "So none of us?"
Machine: "Oh, quite the contrary!"

Through the performance students were reminded of the language of self-esteem and belief in oneself. Watching the video of this all-school performance recorded when it was performed in June 2006 offered a striking example of Edgebrook's commitment to the intra and interpersonal development and intelligence of its students. It proved to be an emotional experience for students to sing together as a school about their shared values as a community of learners, celebrating themselves, each other, and the community of Edgebrook Elementary. Above all working together to create an "in-between" (Greene 1995; Arendt, 1958) among each other as students and the school and community

The time commitment of such an undertaking is enormous as Mrs. Scott explained to me during our interview,

We teach the songs and the lessons [of the character traits] in I-I [class]. I support it in my music classroom, when kids come down to assemblies we sing a little bit and it takes a lot time. It takes a lot of time to give up out of the classroom for teachers at the end of the year we're pulling all the kids into the gym to rehearse and we do, there are little skits and other segues that tie the show together. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Students only attend I-I seven times a year so rehearsing for an all-school show is happening whenever a time and place presents itself. The time commitment is one reason Edgebrook only performs an all-school show every other year. On the off years the I-I class still concerns itself with mini character-building lessons that then culminate in a common visual arts project that all students create individually as a group. It is the same project for the entire school so it takes some energy coming up with an idea that will easy

enough for kindergartners to work on independently and complex enough to hold the interest of the fifth grade students at Edgebrook.

Risk-Taking & Multiple Forms of Representation

At this particular I-I class that I am observing, Mrs. Fontaine's students along with the other first graders are working on a visual arts project that celebrate the six pillars of character that are part of the mission of Edgebrook Elementary school. A mural depicting these character traits has been made out of paper and hangs on the wall of gymnasium as a constant aesthetic reminder of the affective and character goals for students at Edgebrook. The six pillars of character include: Caring, Trustworthiness, Respect, Fairness, Citizenship, and Responsibility. The visual arts project chosen is a shield or coat of arms, divided into six areas, each devoted to one of the six pillars of character. Students will draw pictures in each section of their coat of arms illustrating what is inside of them for each character trait, showing their understanding of self and developing their intra-personal intelligence.

Being music-oriented people, Mrs. Scott and Ms. Hansen felt some trepidation regarding facilitating a visual-arts project. Mrs. Scott describes her and Ms. Hansen's feelings the first year they planned a visual arts project for I-I,

We began a lesson with character assets and we did a [mosaic] tile project . . . and we both were struggling, although it turned out great, we were thrilled with the ending process [but] we were both a little insecure [laughs] doing the visual arts piece and in the midst of this we decided, "we're going back to music!" (Interview transcript, 2006)

Trepidation aside, pushing each other to approach an art-form different than one they were used to doing is a common challenge in arts-centered schools. Many teachers find that they are more prone or experienced in one art form rather than another. In an arts-

centered school this can have a lop-sided affect in how students are exposed to the arts but Ms. Hansen notes that the teachers at Edgebrook are very good risk-takers and she has seen some great efforts in this area. She describes the challenges teachers experience moving outside of their comfort zone in the arts and shares an example,

Some inherent problems [with starting an arts-integrated magnet] was everyone's comfort level with the arts so we defined the arts and then people's comfort level around that and being able to say, just take one small risk. Let's just start with what you're good at, if you really feel that music is your strength then let's go with that. If you really feel that kinesthetic is your strength let's go with that. We've only had a couple of teachers emerge with kinesthetic and the dance and the movement aspect, [laughs], but that's okay. And my favorite example is a third grade male teacher who [said], 'yeah, yeah, I agree, I agree, philosophically, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah,' and we had asked everyone to do a musical lesson with their kids to somehow use music, not music as ambiance but music in a lesson, and I happened to be walking through his classroom that day, and everyone else was singing songs and creating songs about the constitution or whatever and he had three horses on his computer singing, "Awoom-buwah, Awoom-buwah, Awoom-buwah" and they were each doing a different beat [laughs] and I thought this is interesting so I stayed a little longer. And he was having the kids pick a horse, any horse, and move to that horse's beat, rhythm and then they had to go back and write a story from that horse's perspective beat, so if it was really fast horse it was [Ms. Hansen speeds up her talking], "I was galloping through the forest really fast" and if it was the really slow horse [Ms. Hansen slows down her talking], "I -- was -- munching --away --on -- the -- grass . . ." I was blown away! (Interview transcript, 2006)

Teachers' strengths, like those of students, are going to yield different results when engaging with the arts. Finding space outside of one's comfort zone for new risk-taking opens teachers and students up to new experiences and the unexpected. Recalling Eisner's words, "to pursue surprise requires the willingness to take risks, for while surprise itself may emerge, its pursuit is a choice" (2002, p. 79). The staff at Edgebrook Elementary continually works toward refining the arts-integrated experience for students. Whether it is Mrs. Scott and Ms. Hansen in I-I class or a teacher like the one described by

Ms. Hansen, staff members take risks and challenge themselves to integrate the arts in areas where they may not have a lot of experience widening possibilities for themselves and their students.

The I-I class is coming to a close for the day. The students are spending the second half of class in the gymnasium where markers and cut-outs of the coat of arms or shield the students refer to it, to be used for the visual arts activity are set up. Students worked for about twenty minutes on detailed pictures of the ‘Caring’ trait. Eventually students will be able to take home their completed emblem but for now they are collected and put away until the next I-I class where they will explore another of the six school-reinforced character traits listed earlier. Students leave the gymnasium chatting quietly and joking as they walk back to class to resume their regular classroom work.

The Arts & Moral Intentions

Moral and character education has taken on renewed importance in the last ten years. The tragedy at Columbine High School has shaken awareness into teachers and other educators of the importance of their participation in the moral lives of students. As Nel Noddings points out, “everything we do . . . as teachers has moral overtones. Through dialogue, modeling, the provision of practice, and the attribution of best motive, the one-caring as teacher nurtures the ethical ideal” (1984, p. 179). Interestingly, the character-building component through the exploration of the intra/interpersonal intelligence at Edgebrook Elementary appears to have a lasting affect on its students, even after they leave the school. The music teacher Mrs. Scott remembers a story about a boy whose experience in the very first all-school show, “Choices Count” helped him adjust to middle school. Mrs. Scott explains,

I had a parent from the first year show that we did, her son then went on to middle school and was dealing with [difficult] peer situations [so] she bought a CD of the music [from “Choices Count”] for her son and she based her parental guidance on what we had done with those songs saying, “okay Daniel, remember back when you were doing...” and she called me back just to let me know that that was helping her so much to help [her son] Daniel work through some problems with school and I thought, “oh wow!” (Interview transcript, 2006)

Edgebrook Elementary School’s study of the interpersonal and intrapersonal landscapes

of children’s lives is a strong proponent of their mission to educate the whole child.

Music and visual art integration is a large part of how the school carries out this element

of their curriculum. Here as elsewhere in the Edgebrook curriculum the arts are a point of

entry into the inner landscape of student lives, “opening windows on possible realities”

(Greene 2001, p. 44).

Refocusing Interlude: The Language of Trees

As Mrs. Fontaine prepares her students for an upcoming anti-bullying activity with the school psychologist, Corrine, she first has the students spread out throughout the classroom, finding their own space. She tells each student that they are an oak tree in the summer time, “stretch your leafy branches out and up,” she tells them. Each child stretches their arms in a skewed fashion, jutting from their bodies with their fingers outstretched. “Now you are a willow tree,” Mrs. Fontaine calls out, “with the branches down as low as you like.” The students bend their bodies from the waist extending to the floor, their arms hanging down, swaying side to side in some cases. “Feet together,” Mrs. Fontaine calls out, “Now you are an evergreen tree, straight and tall, your roots are down in the ground.” Students straighten their spines making their bodies rigid and tall. Mrs. Fontaine walks over to her wall of instruments and picks up a small drum that she bongs

rhythmically, signaling for students to change into different trees. To the sound of soft steady bongs students move as the kind of tree Mrs. Fontaine called out would move. Then Mrs. Fontaine tells the students to choose a tree of their choice; some students planted as evergreen trees move rigidly around the room, showing their straight tree spines; others are willow trees swaying flexibly as they move through their space. One student is an apple tree, shaking its apples from its branches to the ground. Students are effectively visualizing the kind of tree they have become. Each time, the loud bong comes, students switch to another tree and movement. Finally, Mrs. Fontaine asks the trees to slowly glide over in tree-fashion, over to the carpet to get ready for Corrine and the next activity.

These small efforts throughout the day constitute what Uhrmacher (1993) has termed *focal conditions*, which he used to refer to “activities designed to establish, confirm, or discontinue contact between students and teachers” (p. 438). In Uhrmacher’s research (1991; 1993), *focal activities* serve four primary functions, as “a diagnostic tool for teachers” to assess how students are doing on a daily basis, “to personalize teacher-student relations, to create classroom feelings or moods, and at times, prepare students for the upcoming activity by capturing in an expressive form its essential character” (p. 441).

Uhrmacher’s research worked to characterize aspects of Waldorf education in his description of focal activities; for my purposes from a specifically arts-centered approach, I refer to activities like the tree activity and other activities Mrs. Fontaine engages in with her students as *refocusing interludes*. In musical terms an *interlude* is defined as a short piece of music inserted between the parts of a larger composition.²⁰ Interludes in music

²⁰ American Heritage College Dictionary, 3rd edition. 1997. Houghton-Mifflin Co.

are no less resonating, beautiful or enjoyable as the larger pieces of music they connect – so it is with refocusing interludes.

While these small activities are useful to teachers to center students in relation to the next activity, help students take ownership of the educational space, and work to create a comfortable, arts-enriched space, they are also beautiful in their own right, and no less important than the larger activities they link. A point made by Uhrmacher as well, as he has pointed out, “although some focal activities are used in a catalytic manner, I do not think these activities should be viewed as playing a subservient role to other kinds of activities” (p. 437). Refocusing Interludes in arts-centered schools are one way among many to make the presence of the arts known within particular teacher-created situations. Mrs. Fontaine, in her use of this bodily-kinesthetic activity, worked to support the arts in her classroom, helped her students refocus their attention onto the next task, and allowed her to share her own passion for dance and the kinesthetic intelligence with her students.

Fostering a Bully-free Environment: Situations of Growth & Caring

With Mrs. Fontaine’s students settled on the carpet in the front of the room, Corrine, the school psychologist begins her weekly activity in support of Edgebrook’s mission of creating a bully-free environment at the school. “Remind me why I’m here,” begins Corrine. “Bully-proofing!” report the students in unison. Corrine takes a moment to remind students of a strategy they have learned to deal with teasing and bullying in school referred to as HA HA SO.²¹ These six letters are a mnemonic to help students remember six strategies for confronting or dealing with teasing and bullying: get Help,

²¹ © Bully-Proofing Your School, 2000.

Assert yourself, use Humor to get out of the situation, Avoid the bully, use Self talk to process the situation, and Own it. HA HA SO gives students options when dealing with bullying and teasing.

The bully-proofing program is part of district-wide initiative in support of character education. As principal Jean Hansen explains,

Everybody had to put together a character education program, a bully-proofing program . . . I think it's more alive at Edgebrook Elementary than at other schools, this is my fourth school. And I tell you I believe it's because we have a great mental-health team. I think it empowers [students], you know there is always going to be a bully or somebody you don't get along with but I really believe it empowers them to say, "Okay at least there are six things I can try besides always going and telling on a bully." (Interview transcript, 2006)

Posters explaining the HA HA SO strategies are posted in many different places around the school. Corrine the school psychologist and Roy the district social worker are both on hand to lead the bully-proofing classes. After the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colorado in 1999, many schools have had to face the growing problems of bullying and the lack of a supportive caring community within schools. "We take it all seriously," Principal Hansen tells me,

So much so that, you know, we spend 30 -40 minutes a week thinking about it. The cool thing, I think for kids is that they know that if they are going to be a bully they're going to be called on it, not only by the adults in the school, but by their peers, and I think the peer pressure is worse. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Part of building a strong community is inspiring a moral code from within. This begins by giving students the skills for confronting bullying behavior and working to cultivate caring sensibilities amongst the students, as a group. It also requires a feeling of community, a togetherness that transcends the differences amongst people, and it requires

imagination –the imagination to see situations from another’s point of view. The bullying program at Edgebrook helps teachers and students to continue, “. . . reaching toward an idea of imagination that brings an ethical concern to the fore, a concern that, again, has to do with the community that ought to be in the making and the values that give it color and significance” (Greene 1995, p. 35).

This community in the making sets students on a path of understanding the larger issues of our humanity all contributing to our sense of “wide-awakeness” (Greene 1978; 1995) as active learners in the world. As part of the larger picture of an arts-integrated school, a commitment to a healthy student community increases the quality of learning throughout the school. “Next week we’ll talk about building a caring community,” Corrine tells Mrs. Fontaine’s students, “a caring community is a group of kids who care about each other.” But in observing Mrs. Fontaine’s classroom, it is clear to me that this particular lesson has already been set in motion at Edgebrook Elementary.

Mixing Colors: The Challenges of Teaching Art in Arts-Integrated Schools

On a rotating tri-weekly schedule, Mrs. Fontaine’s first grade students attend art class. I was able visit art class only one time while I was observing because of the way in which arts specials are scheduled and was only able to observe Mrs. Fontaine’s first graders in art class. On the day of my visit the first-grade students were learning about primary and secondary colors using tempura paints and medium size brushes. The art teacher, Mrs. Trilling provides students with a pre-fabricated sheet of circles that students are to paint in using the primary colors of blue, yellow, and red. In turn, students will use the primary colors to mix and make secondary pigments of orange, green, and purple creating a color wheel on paper.

Mrs. Trilling is a spitfire woman, fast on her feet and exudes a no-nonsense sort of attitude. Students in her presence are dutiful, responsive, and a sense of ‘play’ in the classroom is not readily evident. Having said that, the quality of art work I saw was amazing as I took a tour around the room viewing the walls of the tunnel-like hallway leading into the classroom where previous projects have been hung and paintings have been left to dry on racks in the room. The art room is a large space with one sink, several countertops, plenty of storage, and large butcher block tables with stools adjusted for both smaller and larger children. Track lighting shines on bulletin boards that highlight student work. The space is strikingly clean and orderly.

As I observe Mrs. Trilling she embarks on a methodical explanation of the day’s lesson. She begins with a short discussion of color and pigment, she explains the procedure for the upcoming activity and the clean-up procedure children are expected to follow after the activity has concluded; she then demonstrates the activity by painting in her own color wheel and afterwards how she cleans her paint brush while the students watch. This portion takes about 15-20 minutes of class time and students have yet to have any contact with art materials. Finally students are set free to choose their brushes, retrieve their paint-in handout, and find their seats to begin the activity.

I watch as students carefully paint in the primary and secondary colors. Most are careful to paint inside the lines and most are finished within ten minutes. Once finished students place their sheets on the ledge to dry, clean their brushes, take off their smocks and look around to see what is to happen next. With approximately fifteen minutes of class time remaining students are invited to come to the floor in front of the classroom room to play with clay. However, within seconds, Mrs. Trilling changes her mind, puts

away the clay and brings out paper and markers for students to draw pictures. Throughout my observation after an initial introduction and explanation of what I was doing there, Mrs. Trilling did not say a word to me but now, as students are planting themselves on the floor to draw with markers, Mrs. Trilling turns to me and says, ““I love when [the students] are down here like this [finished students are on the floor drawing with markers] because then I can clean up!” I find this statement telling as to her philosophy of art instruction; a philosophy, in fact, prevalent in my own experiences as a student in public school art class. However I do not get to pursue this idea as Mrs. Trilling rushes off before I could ask her a question; soon after, the bell rings for students to pack up and head back to class.²²

The Role of the Art Teacher in Arts-Integrated Schools

My experience in this one fifty-five minute art class for first graders at Edgebrook left me with several thoughts. To begin with, I recognize that I am limited in my ability to assess the visual arts education curriculum from observations of one hour within three weeks of observation; having said that I could not help but feel that the relationship between this particular art teacher and the rest of the school with its arts-integration mission showed some incongruity. As arts-integration has worked to take its foothold in schools, the relationship between arts-specialists and arts-integration can be characterized as ill-defined and difficult as Burnaford, Aprill, and Weiss (2001) point out, art teachers and classroom teachers can be “reluctant to give up the boundaries of their

²² I did not get the opportunity to interview Mrs. Trilling during my observations at Edgebrook Elementary School as Mrs. Trilling shared her teaching time with another school and was not available for discussion or interview. Because of this, I wrestled with whether my descriptions of the art class at Edgebrook should be included in the study but because the issues related here have broader implications for models of arts-integration I decided to include this section. Further study would want to address these issues with the art teacher directly to fully corroborate these findings.

own disciplines . . .” (p. 161). If classroom teachers fully integrate the arts in their subject matter, it makes the role of the art teacher unclear. Art teachers also worry that by teaching the arts in the classroom with an ‘anyone-can-do-it’ attitude the potency of art training is watered down or rendered inconsequential (Parsons, 2004).

At Edgebrook Elementary School the collaboration between arts specialists and teachers is relatively weak. Mrs. Fontaine, for instance, when asked if more collaboration with arts specialists would benefit her work in arts-integration in the classroom responded,

Yeah, it would be nice. I mean I think we do as much as we are able . . . I think they’d be willing [to] do some [collaboration] but I think it’s hard just to do our thing. It’s hard just to have your team and get all that together so I think adding [collaboration with arts specialists] to the mix would be tough. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Often specials are a time for Edgebrook teachers to plan either by themselves or collaboratively, but rarely with the art/ enrichment specialists within the school. Art class, drama, music, physical education, and more recently technology class, often serve as breaks in the teacher’s day to plan amongst themselves and catch up on their own work. This is a traditional view of the purpose of specials within school scheduling. Curriculum matters between the classroom teachers and art specialists are often kept separate. Mrs. Fontaine agrees:

[Art specialists] have their curriculum, they’re not really willing to collaborate, although the best thing would be is for them to get their standards across using [the arts] . . . I know teachers who do it and sometimes . . . [the arts specialists] helped a little bit . . . so there’s a connection that’s kind of not really a people thing but they do have really nice skills because of what they do, like [the music teacher], anytime I want to do a performance, everything is open to me, instruments, costumes . . . They are supportive but I wouldn’t say we [collaborate] on what we’re going to teach. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Fontaine is grateful for the help she sometimes receives in planning an activity. For example she told me of a Native American unit she did where she was able to use the art room to have her students work with pottery or as mentioned above the use of instruments and costumes for a music activity. However time restraints, scheduling issues, as well as undefined roles for art teachers in the mission of arts-integration leave this area of collaboration practically unplumbed.

Adding to the role-confusion some art teachers experience in an arts-integrated school can be attributed, also, to the inclusion of outside professional artists as part of artist-in-residency programs like those offered through Young Audiences Inc. Advocates of artist-school partnerships [see e.g., Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004] see artists-in residence programs as yet another resource to aid schools in their arts-integration mission, preliminary at first and then growing in sophistication over time. Having said that Rabkin & Redmond (2004) concede, “No teaching artist can replace the role of art and music specialists in a school²³ . . . as full time faculty members, these specialists can play teaching, leadership, planning, and coordinating roles that visiting artists simply cannot. They knit together fragmented classroom practices and curriculum into a coherent whole school program” (p. 142). Unfortunately this is not or cannot always be the case for arts-integrated schools with limited budgets as well as differing visions about the importance of the arts specialists in schools.

²³ Rabkin & Redmond (2004) note also that, “this is likely to be true of dance and theater teachers as well, but they are so rare in public schools – only eight percent of elementary school have dance specialists and just four percent have drama specialists – and these figures are even lower in low-income districts (National Center for Education Statistics, 1995)” (p. 142).

There are two problems with Rabkin & Redmond's statement. First, the reality for many schools is that art specialists do not hold full time faculty positions in schools. A common practice, particularly among elementary schools, is to share arts-specialists in two, sometimes three schools. This practice excludes arts specialists from the daily activity of schools and excludes them from collaborative opportunities. Second this perception that arts specialists are fully prepared, present, and able to contribute to the arts-integration mission belies the fact that many art teachers are often working artists who in order to work on their own professional body of art work do not, rightly or wrongly, see teaching as their primary concern (Zwirn, 2006).

At Edgebrook Elementary School, the art teacher described above holds a half-time position at the school which might explain what appeared to me as a disengagement from the arts-integration mission of the school; her part time position perhaps renders her sustained involvement as collaborator impossible and impractical. On the other hand, the music teacher, Mrs. Scott holds a .75 position at Edgebrook with the remaining .25 of her position dedicated to other needs of the school; she is able to stay "in-house" as a fulltime staff member. This could mean supporting the gifted and talented strand within the school or the proficiency center; she goes where she is needed. Mrs. Scott recognizes the struggle some music specialists between being a musician and a teacher. She comments,

I've been to schools where [music teachers] say, "I won't do anything else but music," and I'm going, "you're missin' out," because I go home [after teaching enrichment in other subjects] and I'm so excited, I've had such a great day with my little Kindergartners, first, and second graders doing reading or math. . . I love it, I would not want to give up my gifted and talented stuff if I got bull-headed and said I only want to do music and then they would have to find that piece for me someplace else [at a different school]. I am much happier being here all the time then going and being at two schools. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Scott finds that being part of the Edgebrook community is more important to her than having the status of full-time music teacher at Edgebrook:

When you are between two schools one is the home and one is not. And unfortunately the year I was teaching at [another school and Edgebrook], the other school was the home because I was there three mornings and I came over here every afternoon and this was home for so many years previous, and that was one year, [our principal at the time], bless his heart said, this is not working in our building. There was no longer choir, he wasn't seeing the music program, it was really dying . . . I've been blessed with staff support . . . if another principal comes in I don't know whether that would continue. Maybe they won't want to find my other staffing allotment out of this building, maybe he or she will want to use it in another way. [My past and current principal] valued me here in the building and in my program. I know I will always have a music piece... (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Scott alludes to a reality many arts specialists experience of being perceived as dispensable depending on the philosophy of the leadership at the school. In Mrs. Scott's case she feels "blessed" to have the support of staff and principals during her tenure at Edgebrook. The year she shared her time between schools strained both her relationship with the Edgebrook as well as the efficacy of the music program at the school. Because the music program was a priority of the administration, changes were made to keep her solely at Edgebrook but many arts specialists are not as lucky, even within schools, as evidenced by Mrs. Trilling, Edgebrook's art teacher who shares her time between schools.

Dancing the Mist: Keeping Creativity Moving

Later in the day, Edgebrook Elementary School has planned a school-wide fall walk planned to welcome the autumn season and have students at Edgebrook engage with nature. In the morning literacy block before the fall walk, Mrs. Fontaine leads her class

through an autumn-themed poetry and performance activity as a warm up to the walk taking place later in the day. Mrs. Fontaine invites students to choose of the autumn-themed poems the students have recently been studying. Students are put into three groups between five and seven students in each group. Students are instructed to read the poem to themselves and then to read it out loud to get a feel for the language. Then students are asked to design a performance to showcase the poem. I am working with the students who are working on the poem, *The Mist and All*²⁴ by Dixie Wilson:

I like the fall,
The mist and all,
I like the night owl's
Lonely call
And wailing around
Of wind and sound . . .

Students decide as a group to read the poem together in one voice which gives an ethereal quality to their child's voices. Students use a rainmaker instrument to accompany their reading and are careful to slow their reading of the poem down which they had on paper on the floor to cue them if they dropped a line. Each student has a chance to turn the rainmaker over and then passing it on to the next member of the group. Students then independently added their own dance movement as they read the last stanza of the poem:

. . . I like to sit
And laugh at it
And tend
My cozy fire a bit.
I like the fall,
The mist and all

²⁴ The poem in my archives is called *The Mist and All* but in researching the year, the poem is also titled: *The Mist and I* by Dixie Wilson and used in the movie, *A Child is Waiting* (MGM 1963). The original year the poem was written is unknown.

The Pleasure of Performance: Situations of Artistry

I chose this particular group out of the three to highlight here because I was assigned to this group to help, if needed, in the design of their performance; I was not called upon to help but I was able to observe firsthand the decision making processes of these first and second graders and some differences between them. The first graders were very focused on working out the instructions related by Mrs. Fontaine, making sure all elements were covered: the reading of the poem, integrating movement, and the use of musical instruments. The second graders in the group were a little more focused on the fairness of the execution of the assignment (for example making sure everyone had a chance to turn the rainmaker during the performance) and creating a beginning, middle, and end of the performance (for example one second grader made a card that said: “presenting . . .” adding the names of those performing in the “Mist” poem group and students in this group took a bow when the performance was over).

Both first graders and second graders however were occupied, from my view, with what Eisner refers to as artistry (2002; 2003) which he tells us,

. . . consists in having an idea worth expressing, the imaginative ability needed to conceive of how, the technical skills needed to work effectively with some material, and the sensibilities needed to make the delicate adjustments that will give the forms the moving qualities that the best of them possess. (2002, p. 81)

While these first and second graders were given a teacher-directed assignment of performing a poem of their choosing. The design and integration of the different art elements to fulfill the assignment were the students’ original creation. Together, in collaborative effort and with little time (fifteen to twenty minutes at the most), Mrs. Fontaine’s students approached issues of structure, design, aesthetics, form, performance,

fairness, and happiness (that is to say the rewarding feelings that are often the outcome of engagement with the arts) by breaking the poem down into parts, dividing labor –who should do what, and rehearsing multiple times before the performance for their peers took place.

Different groups focused on different things but the end performance proved a worthwhile experience for both the students and teachers as judged by observable student excitement and enthusiasm during rehearsal time, during the performance and at the end of the assignment. Mrs. Fontaine not only sees how students benefit from engagement with the arts but experiences her own benefits. When asked how she herself benefits from an arts-integrated environment Mrs. Fontaine related that working with arts,

. . . is much more fun, I think it's more stimulating and I think being creative is a positive in so many ways. I mean I don't like doing the same things all of the time . . . I think it makes me more enthusiastic, I think it makes me appreciate the kids more because I think you see more . . . I think you can look at kids differently and maybe relate to them better (Interview transcript, 2006).

A great deal of advocacy for the arts focuses on how students benefit from arts-engagement but it is important to stress that teachers, too, benefit from a curriculum that incorporates more of their own beliefs and personality and allows them an outlet for their own creativity and nurturing of students' creativity. For both students and teachers the shared fluidity of creation is beneficial. "When we see more and hear more," Greene points out,

It is not only that we lurch, if only for a moment, out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted but that new avenues for choosing and for action may open in our experience; we may gain a sudden sense of new beginnings, that is, we may take an initiative in the light of possibility. (1995, p. 123)

Mrs. Fontaine has been able, in designing different kinds of arts-engagement and arts-embedded situations, to create opportunities for students to initiate artistry in their own possible lives.

Cultivating the Sensory World of Students

The beginning of the school year is an exciting time; a time of renewal for students and teachers. The leaves on the trees are changing colors, the air is crisp and clean in the mornings, students are reuniting with friends separated by summer's solace, and the smell of new school supplies is a faithful companion to new beginnings. To commemorate autumn, Edgebrook has planned an all-school fall walk. For thirty-five minutes the entire school is out on the expansive Edgebrook school grounds taking a tour of the senses.

In the afternoon as students embark on their fall walk with classmates, they are asked to focus on what they can see, hear, smell, and touch. On clipboards students write down what they experienced through their senses. I watch as students meander in a warbled line across school grounds peering high and low for sounds, sights, and smells and items of nature to touch. At different points students sit down to record some of their findings and talk to one another about what they are experiencing or ask a question. Students categorize what they find on a sheet given to them much like a naturalist might do.

Edgebrook has created this school wide learning experience to draw students into the natural world, to awaken the senses, and to feed the imagination. Louv states, "Children are able to attune themselves to all kinds of learning if they have appropriate learning experiences" (2005, p. 73). The nature fall walk is one way for students to not

only further develop the naturalist intelligence, an MI goal the school is committed to, but also to cultivate the sensory capacity of the imagination. This work with the imagination is a mighty aim of education for arts-integrated schools and vital to communities. As Eisner cautions, “a culture populated by a people whose imagination is impoverished has a static future. In such culture there will be little change because there will be little sense of possibility (2002, p. 5). The fall walk is one way Edgebrook invites students into the world of imagination to cultivate “that form of thinking that engenders images of the possible . . .” (p. 5).

When Mrs. Fontaine’s students return from the fall walk they take a few moments to share what they experienced. “Blackish blue mountains,” says one student; “crunchy leaves,” says another. One girl says, “I smelled nature; it smells like trees!” Another “heard the trees shaking.” Mrs. Fontaine took all the students various comments and wrote them on the board. These will remain on the board and students will keep their own catalogs of sensory experiences from the fall walk to be used later in another unit working on improving sensory language in writing and again in creating fall-inspired six room poems like those discussed earlier. In arts-integrated schools activities done today are not necessarily finished and forgotten about tomorrow; often an activity done today will be used again and in different ways for different arts-integrated purposes and will be represented in multiple ways.

A Day in the Arts Life: ArtsEnrich at Edgebrook Elementary

I am revisiting Edgebrook Elementary School just one-month after my initial observations and it is exciting to see that the walls of the school are positively popping with autumn art work. I have returned to Edgebrook Elementary to observe their

ArtsEnrich immersion days; three days of enrichment classes devoted to experiencing and exploring multiple intelligences and arts-integration in a more concentrated way outside of their regular classroom experiences with arts-integration and MI. Teachers, administrators, and school support staff together, teach sessions to students based on a particular intelligence while integrating an art form to do so. The ArtsEnrich program has been a part of the Edgebrook mission since its transition to an arts-integrated magnet.

Mrs. Ingram, a fifth-grade teacher at Edgebrook explains,

ArtsEnrich is our way of integrating the arts and focusing on intelligences by dealing with kids' and teachers' passions. So the way it works is that teachers submit what they're teaching for ArtsEnrich and that's goes out in a brochure and kids pick their top three choices. The way it's worked until this year is that every Tuesday and Wednesday from about 2:10 until about 3:00, it's fifty minutes at the end of the day, kids go to the gym, they are called by music to walk down in mass to the gym and line up in their ArtsEnrich groups and then they go to [a planned session]. As a fifth-grade teacher I can teach a primary ArtsEnrich class or an intermediate, they're divided -kindergarten does their own thing. Then the ArtsEnrich sessions are divided with first and second grade and then third, fourth, and fifth. We have had things like fly tying for fly fishing. My first year here I did one ArtsEnrich session on whales . . . and then my second ArtsEnrich class was story quilts and kids brought their picture books with them to class and designed their own and then they actually made quilts and I used lots of senior volunteers to help with that. And my last ArtsEnrich was on rhythm sticks so we learned some things on rhythm sticks and they made their own and painted them and performed them. (Interview transcript, 2006)

The activities engaged in during ArtsEnrich are wide and varied and include everyone in the school. This year however, ArtsEnrich is being run slightly differently. Instead of 50 minutes at the end of the day twice a week, the school has planned three days of immersion in arts-integrated and multiple intelligence activities for the first trimester of the year. Afterwards teachers will discuss how that worked and adjustments will be made for the second and third trimester accordingly.

Mrs. Fontaine is set up in the music room for her ArtsEnrich class which is based on the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence focusing on dance and movement. As Mrs.

Fontaine had explained when I interviewed her during my initial observations,

I have pretty much always participated in ArtsEnrich classes and since I like movement so well it always has some of kind of movement in it. I've done Creative Dance and African folktales –it just depends. I like to use something broad enough that you can put a lot into it. We offer the classes eighteen times [throughout the year], at least the way we used to do ArtsEnrich before this year, they were 18, one-hour blocks so when I did folktales I could do drumming, I could do writing stories, I could do dance, retelling the story through dance, you know that kind of thing. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Teachers and instructors are allowed quite a bit of flexibility in their offerings as shown in these statements by Mrs. Fontaine and fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Ingram. The objectives of these activities are two-fold: first, to remind students of all the multiple intelligences at play throughout the Edgebrook curriculum and second, to engage students in particular art forms. While not all ArtsEnrich activities touch on the arts, as a whole they work to describe an artistic and aesthetic approach to pursuing ones interests and passions through activity and community.

Supporting Arts-Integration & Cultural Democracy

Mrs. Fontaine has a group of third grade students sitting in large circle on the carpeted floor of the music room. She is going around the circle having students brainstorm autumn-themed images to get her session moving. “Leaves in a pile,” says one student. “Raking leaves,” says another. “Shaking a tree and watching the leaves fall, then jumping in them,” responds another. “Picking up a big pumpkin,” suggests a fourth student. “And making pie,” follows up another. “Carving pumpkins,” adds one girl.

“Blowing like a leaf in the wind,” says a boy, waxing poetic. “Very good ideas,” replies Mrs. Fontaine.

After everyone has had a chance to contribute an image of an autumn-type activity, Mrs. Fontaine has her group of students spread out, each finding his or her own small space in the room. “There’s no talking now, take an image and exaggerate a movement, make it bigger.” One student is pantomiming the raking of leaves, one of the images suggested by the group. His hands, holding an imaginary rake are moving in a forward and backward motion, pulling a seemingly large quantity of leaves into a pile. Another student is carrying an imaginary pumpkin around, her knees bending with weight of the giant load; a grimace of exertion contorting her face as she staggers across the room. In the background, soft, melodious African music is playing, the consistent thumping of the drums adding a rhythmic cadence to the students’ movements.

After dancing freely for two or three minutes, Mrs. Fontaine freezes the group and allows each student to show his or her movement while the other students guess what the student was performing. For the next activity, Mrs. Fontaine has the students get into groups of two or three and piece their movements together into a dance. “Try to make a dance using the movements of each person in the group. Abbreviate the movements and put them together,” she tells the group. With just a few minutes of rehearsal, the students have put together some of each other’s movements and have created a dance. Mrs. Fontaine plays some soft jazz music while each group performs for the class, at the end there is applause and much laughter.

Again in a seated in a large circle on the carpet the twenty students and Mrs. Fontaine prepares to debrief this activity. “Raise your hand if this is your intelligence?”

She asks. Ten students raise their hands. “Good,” says Mrs. Fontaine, “How many of you changed your mind about body smarts?”²⁵ Seven students raise their hands. “How many of you want to explore this intelligence more?” about six students raise their hands. She then recaps what they learned about pantomime, dance, movement, space, and choreography and with a round of applause, the session ends.

Edgebrook Elementary School’s school day is twenty minutes longer than other schools in the district to make time for the ArtsEnrich programming so that it does not cut into other curriculum and pedagogical goals. This is testimony to the commitment of the faculty, staff, and students to the school’s arts-integration goals, not to mention the commitment of the parent community in bringing such a program to fruition. “[The parent community’s] belief in what we do is gigantic,” Principal Hansen explains,

You know, we go to school for an extra twenty minutes compared to all of our other counterparts so that was an adjustment for some of them to get used to and changes in family schedules or whatever it may be and then it costs about \$33,000.00 to run our arts-integration program, that’s ArtsEnrich, and the district doesn’t give us money for that so we either raise that or we take it out of our decentralized budget or we’ve gone without. So [for instance], teachers are doing their own copying because we only have two teaching assistants versus three. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Without the support of parents, teachers, and students willing to extend the school to make room for ArtsEnrich program and without Ms. Hansen finding the needed money to run the program, it would not exist. Even so, maintaining a program that requires an extra fifty minutes a week of arts-integrated programming can be exhausting which is why the

²⁵ Some teachers use a less formal way of talking about the intelligences when talking to students. Instead of using the prescribed terms as laid out by Howard Gardner such as the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence or the linguistic intelligence, many teachers use body smart or word smart (respectively) to convey the same meaning. Both conventions are used throughout the school, although some teachers have a personal preference regarding the formal versus informal usage.

Edgebrook faculty made some changes to this year's ArtsEnrich scheduling. As Ms. Hansen explains,

I said to them, "we've been doing [Arts Enrich] for three years let's talk about what's working, let's talk about what not working; let's recommit ourselves." Because you know sometimes it becomes stale and through that some of the current concerns, were teacher workload and the feeling of "it's a lot of prep and I want to do something different each time and I want to do it well but it's a lot of prep". The other part that came out of it was, "I just don't have enough time, I just get into the room and it's time to go," and then the other concern was: were we holding true to our core value? What we say is that children will know the eight multiple intelligences and understand how it impacts their instruction when they leave us. . . . Then we decided this first time, this first session, to do this MI immersion and just saturate them, if you will, back through the intelligences. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Ms. Hansen understood that given that her staff was only in the fourth week of school, a tired and exhausted staff would detract from a successful year of arts and MI enrichment. Taking a moment to reflect on the ArtsEnrich program and reworking it to better suit the teachers' current needs imbued the program with new life. "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think – it's as simple and complex as that" (Fullan 2007, p. 129). Even the best-planned programs cannot succeed if teachers are not capable or interested in supporting them. Ms. Hansen's ability to recognize her teachers' burn out regarding implementation of the program and, with the help of her staff, make adjustments supports the likelihood that the ArtsEnrich program will be sustained over time and will continue to add life to the school's arts-centered reform efforts.

Successful arts-learning requires continual assessment of how things are going and *flexible purposing* (Eisner, 2002). While Eisner, building upon Dewey, uses the term flexible purposing to refer "to the improvisational side of intelligence as it is employed with the arts" (p. 77) when one is working to create an individual work of expressive art,

I suggest that the term relates also to the improvisational nature of the broader purposes of educational choices concerning the arts in the schools and as a reform model. While Ms. Hansen and her staff began with one set of purposes regarding the ArtsEnrich program in terms of its core value and implementation, they recognized the need to change direction and recast the program in a way that would potentially build upon its current efficacy rather than diminish it over time through burn-out and exhaustion.

In summarizing the achievements of the ArtsEnrich program, three points should be made. First ArtsEnrich allows teachers, administrators and support staff to pursue their passions with students. Sharing their love for their own particular talents sends a strong message to students to follow their own passionate interests. Second, the program supports the school's arts-integration mission. By providing students with multiple opportunities for arts-engagement through ArtsEnrich, Edgebrook sought and found an effective vehicle for supporting their stated mission of integrating the arts into their school. Finally, the ArtsEnrich program is crucial in articulating Edgebrook's commitment to disseminating the theory of multiple intelligences to its students. Through ArtsEnrich students are offered a range of experiences to gain formal knowledge and understanding about MI theory, helping them cultivate their strengths in some of the multiple intelligences while discovering their talents in others.

Summary Sketch

Mrs. Fontaine's classroom and teaching, as a function of arts-centered school reform and as part of the overall mission of Edgebrook Elementary School, reveals her strong commitment to offering a range of experiences and arts-embedded situations. In

observing Mrs. Fontaine’s classroom she provided four types of arts-embedded situations for students which are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: Arts-Embedded Situations Enacted in Mrs. Fontaine’s Classroom

Situations of Expressiveness	Situation of expressiveness were apparent through the rainy-day poem activity as students used their imagination, sensory experience and were encouraged to explore their inner landscapes.
Situations of Arts-Mindedness	Situations of arts-mindedness were supported as students engaged in the cognitive processes of the arts in constructing the rainy-day poems, in designing the autumn poem music performances, and through the MI immersion experiences.
Situations of Growth & Caring	Situations of growth and caring were supported through the anti-bullying program as well as through interpersonal and intrapersonal class which focused alternately on visual art and music as vehicles toward the understanding of self and others.
Situations of Artistry	Situations of artistry were provided for students as they worked to create their performances of the autumn poems through musical representation.

These four situations of arts-embeddedness describe the kinds of opportunities and experiences Mrs. Fontaine created for her students in her attempt to fully support the integration of the arts in a meaningful and tangible way throughout the curriculum. The particular examples of arts-embedded situations highlighted illustrate how curriculum activities that fit within one type of situation overlap into others. The lines are often blurred as teachers strive to educate in a holistic manner.

Moreover, the collaborative construction of the aesthetic environment, engagement with the imaginative realm through sensory experience, the display of and the expressive nature of arts engagement through multiple arts activities and MI immersion in the classroom, and finally the celebration of the community through I-I class, the bully-proofing program, and the involvement from the community in the

support of the arts-integrated mission of the school worked to create a multi-layered learning environment of arts-embedded situations and meaning for young children. Not only a “Third space” (Stevenson & Deasy, 2005) where arts-learning happens but multiple spaces created with the arts at the center moving towards humane aims.

As I leave Mrs. Fontaine’s classroom I discover a poem on the wall titled “*Together,*” which characterizes much of what I have observed during my time in her classroom:

Because we do
all things together,
all things improve,
even weather.
Our daily meat
and bread taste better,
trees, greener
rain is wetter.

The “together” quality of classroom life in the creation of learning environments heightens the quality of living and learning for Edgebrook Elementary School Students.

Mrs. Fontaine's Response

Dear Cassie,

I really enjoyed reading your chapter on Edgebrook Elementary and my classroom. You did a wonderful job of sharing our philosophy. I loved how you included so many details about my children and our classroom activities. That was so much fun for me to read. I read Eisner and Greene for my Masters in Arts-integration, so I enjoyed reflecting on those wonderful quotes on the importance of arts in education.

To answer your question about Waldorf education, I know about the philosophy, but have never really experienced it firsthand. It always sounded cool to me, in fact the other day while taking a walk in our new neighborhood, we walked by a Waldorf school and I explained what I knew about it to my husband. Arts-integration has played a part in my own education from the beginning. I went to Metro State College in Denver (early seventies) and had some amazing professors who thought experiential based education, including the arts, was paramount. I remember taking an education class on creativity that made a huge impression on me. The British Primary Philosophy also influenced me. A group of teachers came here for a few summers for three-week workshops, in which we participated as the children would, and then debriefed. It was very art/ experiential based and that influenced my early teaching. I believe the Stanley British Primary is still in existence in East Denver. Throughout my career I looked for schools where the arts were an important part of the curriculum and was lucky enough to work in some great ones.

Thank you again for your help in my classroom and for sharing your work with me. Best of luck with the completion of your doctoral study.

Best Regards,

Edie Fontaine

CHAPTER SIX

MRS. INGRAM'S FIFTH-GRADE CLASSROOM

EDGEBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Classrooms should be places in which students can legitimately act on a rich variety of purposes, in which wonder and curiosity are alive, in which students and teachers live together and grow. I, too, believe that a dedication to human growth . . . will not stunt or impede intellectual achievement, but even if it might, I would take the risk if I could produce people who would live nonviolently with each other, sensitively and in harmony with the natural environment, reflectively, and serenely with themselves. (Nel Noddings 1992, p.12)

Our mission is to educate the head, the heart, the hand and I think that we turn out kids here who really have that strong heart piece, that greater acceptance and tolerance of all people. I see that here and you feel that when you walk in the building. So in that way I think that one of the things we add to the world is that we're helping to provide the kind of citizens that we want in this country that care about other people and that are just more tolerant of traits other than what they know. (Mrs. Ingram, fifth-grade teacher, interview transcript, 2006)

Navigating the Edgebrook Neighborhood

Maneuvering through the morning activity on route to Edgebrook Elementary School requires finesse and a little patience. Bevy's of parents with children in tow teeter down the sidewalks that skirt the school, many pausing along the way to chat briefly with other parents or to allow a trailing child time to catch up. The cars, in the meantime, patiently crawl through the neighborhood streets; some moving toward the school to drop off students, others driving away toward work and other daily routines. A parent volunteer clad in a brilliant orange crossing guard safety vest, holding a stop sign works the traffic while the inching herd of community-folk, cross the crowded street to the

school. Students on bicycles race each other up the school path toward the entrance blithely avoiding pedestrians. These students secure their bikes to the rack stationed outside the front door, squeezing their bikes in with others of various sizes, the smallest of which still sports training wheels hinting at the age of its owner. Approaching the entrance of the school, parents and students squeeze in and out of the double doors like the notes of an accordion; a father swiftly kisses his daughter good bye in front of the doors and just as swiftly jogs back to his car left idling at the curb.

The Morning Community

Inside, Edgebrook Elementary School is buzzing with activity as I enter the building in mid-September to begin observations in Mrs. Ingram's fifth-grade classroom. A group of parents are hanging out in the large tiled atrium connecting the office with the school's classrooms, chattering together about their children while others are staring up at the community television encased in the wall of the atrium showing a video message pre-recorded by Principal Jean Hansen. This television, with its permanently scrolling loop of messages is a beacon of information for parents and students announcing the dates that mark the end of the semester, when parent-teacher conferences will take place, when grades can be expected, and upcoming school and community activities. The morning bell has not yet rung and parents and students make use of the last minutes before class begins to hang up coats, gather notebooks, and wave goodbye before cruising to their desks to begin their day in the classroom.

With these same few minutes before Mrs. Ingram's class commences, I wander into the lunchroom where assorted students are finishing up school breakfast, to take a look at the student-created visual art work that was completed two years ago as the

culminating community project designed as part of the intrapersonal-intrapersonal class that all students participate in every year.²⁶ The art work of small bathroom-sized tiles put together and displayed in three separate panels, approximately 3 feet across and 5 feet. Each of the approximately 320 tiles have been designed, drawn, and colored by Edgebrook students as a way of ruminating on and honoring the six pillars of character that guide Edgebrook Elementary School’s mission including: Trustworthiness, Respect, Citizenship, Fairness, Caring, and Responsibility.

The hand-painted tiles create a glossy quilt-like mosaic celebrating Edgebrook Elementary School’s six pillars of character, as seen through the students’ eyes. My eyes catch on numerous crooked little hearts in pink, red, and unexpected blue. I see that some children have drawn stars; some have drawn their friends or two or three friends holding hands. Some tiles have been transformed into mini American flags. Many students have illustrated their tiles with treble clefs, staves, and musical notes and instruments—homage perhaps to one of the project’s leaders, music teacher, Mrs. Scott. I notice the symbol for “no bullying,” a strong message of the Edgebrook Elementary School mission on a few tiles. Captured rainbows, sunny suns, and outdoor scenes adorn many of the tiles; celebrations of friendship and community adorn them all.

I leave the cafeteria with the remaining students and head to Mrs. Ingram’s classroom. Outside of her room, on the bulletin board, hangs a bright display of artwork created by her students. The title on the bulletin board above the art reads, “My Perspective,” and the portraits show each student’s downward gazing perspective which

²⁶ See chapter five for an in-depth look at how Gardner’s intrapersonal/ interpersonal (I-I) intelligence is enacted at Edgebrook Elementary School as experienced by Mrs. Fontaine’s combined first/ second grade classroom.

mostly includes colored-marker drawings of the shoes the student was wearing on the day the art work was created and the floor beneath their feet. The pictures are large, and all the space has been used illustrating the time spent on creating each student's perspective during the first week of school. Each drawing is well-balanced and very colorful. The art activity was paired with a poetry activity where students created, "I am poems . . ." that allowed students to create a first impression to fellow classmates offering a series of "I am . . ." statements describing the person with the last line stating their name. These poems are placed next to the perspective drawings and introduce Mrs. Ingram's class to passers-by. I enter the classroom to make my own introduction.

Meeting Mrs. Ingram

I locate Mrs. Ingram in the classroom and introduce myself. We speak briefly and I am shown to a small table arranged perpendicular to Mrs. Ingram's desk in the back of the room where I will sit while observing her class. Mrs. Ingram quickly tells me that any time she is sitting at her desk I am welcome to speak to her about the class and ask her questions; I am appreciative of her support and active role in my research as well as the way in which she has set clear boundaries for me as an observer of her classroom. The students' desks are arranged in five cooperative groups of four desks each with one group of six, all somehow facing the long white board taking up most of the front wall of the classroom. Mrs. Ingram's desk is situated in the back of the room, facing the front white board. The board has a message written to the students that reads:

September 18, 20—

Good morning and Happy Constitution Day (9/17). Please sign in. Put your reading minutes in the reading box, fill out your planner, be seated and get ready for math. Wow! That's a lot.

♡ Mrs. Ingram

Messages much like the one above are a daily greeting for students in Mrs. Ingram's classroom letting them know what's on board for the beginning of the day. The classroom itself is rectangular in shape with two windows on the wall opposite the door to the room. In the corner is a television on a built-in shelf that is used primarily for principal announcements and student performed newscasts. A small area in front of the television, marked with the presence of a medium-sized blue carpet, is reserved for classroom meetings with Mrs. Ingram and group presentations. A small reading area is located in the opposite corner from the television/ group area on the same wall near a window. Book shelves stocked with books and comfortable pillows rest about in this area, ready and waiting for students who are able to catch a few moments of quiet reading time.

Math is the first subject of the day, every day. The three fifth-grade classrooms at Edgebrook teach math using the same curriculum and the same activities. This allows the teachers to engage in fluid grouping between the three fifth-grade classes of students based on their math abilities. This practice has also been referred to as ability grouping but fluid grouping differs in that it moves students around more often. Students might be strong in one unit of math study and weaker in others; as new units are taken on, students move to groups reflecting their true abilities. In this way students are not assumed to be all of one ability, teachers recognize the differences in student ability even within

different units within the same subject. Commenting on the work of planning math instruction with her two fellow fifth-grade teachers, Mrs. Ingram tells me, “you give up some ownership of the curriculum; you have to be flexible” (Interview transcript, 2006).

Working on some estimating and rounding problems as part of the math unit, Mrs. Ingram asks, “Did anybody do something different?” A few students raise their hands and show Mrs. Ingram and the class different methods for working out the problem that result in the same correct answer. “Estimating is a real world skill,” Mrs. Ingram tells her students, “I like to go to the store; I like to bring cash and I have to estimate the whole time. So I am estimating all the time in real life.” With this, Mrs. Ingram moves on to the next problem. She works through the unit with her class, answering questions and raising points. At one point, Mrs. Ingram is called into the hall. When she returns she discovers the class working quietly. To this, Mrs. Ingram responds, “thank you fifth-graders for being so quiet while I was gone, that definitely raises my level of trust.” Mrs. Ingram resumes her facilitation of math class.

Of course fifth-grade students have their failings in paying attention and quiet behavior too. At one point while Mrs. Ingram was lecturing, one of her students was being disruptive; she stopped her lecture and addressed the student directly:

“Is that interfering with my teaching?” Mrs. Ingram asks.

“Yes,” replies the student.

“Is that interfering with your learning?”

“Yes.”

“Then is it an inappropriate activity right now?”

“Yes,” the student concedes and turns his attention back to Mrs. Ingram.

At all times Mrs. Ingram is very purposeful in molding class behavior in positive ways through clear expectations in the classroom, using the Socratic Method in the above interaction is just one example of how she works to do this. Mrs. Ingram also takes opportunities to openly compliment students and to encourage their positive classroom behavior. For example, at the end of math instruction she says, as students are preparing to leave, “Hey, by the way, awesome job today, I liked the noise level and the way you worked together, it’s going to be a great group!” Her outward demeanor is very much tied to her aims as a teacher in the classroom.

Teaching is Personal: Mrs. Ingram’s Aims

Natalie Ingram is a veteran teacher with over twenty years of teaching experience. She came to Edgebrook Elementary two years after the school transitioned to an arts-integrated magnet. Therefore she was not part of the decision making process regarding the direction or shape the school reform efforts would take, but is a firm believer in Edgebrook’s mission nonetheless. From the outset, Edgebrook’s mission to educate the head, the heart, and the hand resonated with Mrs. Ingram personal vision of education. Moreover her previous experience with Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (MI), the theory that is the basis for the mission of the school, fed her desire to join the teaching staff at Edgebrook. As she explains it,

Early on in my career I was introduced to Gardner’s multiple intelligences and the more research I did on that, in fact I did my Masters paper around some of that philosophy . . . [the more] I’ve been a firm believer in Gardner and at one time had dreams of opening my own MI charter school. Working within this school district, the first school I was at we did a lot of things through MI through the [curriculum] and our media center and developing units that way. I took that philosophy with me to [my former school] and tried to integrate it whenever I could there. While at [that school] Edgebrook decided to open its doors as a Magnet school for

arts-integration with Gardner's theory being the underlying belief of that. At the time my daughter was getting ready to enter kindergarten and I was going to bring her with me to [my current school] and as soon as I found out that they were doing [MI] here, this was our home school so I had to come here. And it's kind of been my goal since then to be here because I have always felt constrained in the classroom to focus on MI and I felt that if I was here that MI could be the underlying part of what I do as a teacher. There are still some constraints, but in my heart of hearts I believe that teaching to students' strengths and using the multiple intelligences is the way to help them achieve their greatest success. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Ingram's belief that she would have more opportunity to delve deeper into MI theory being a teacher at Edgebrook Elementary made the decision of moving over to the re-invented school attractive. This, combined with the fact that Edgebrook is her neighborhood school, made teaching there the natural choice for her to strengthen her own talents and to further her teaching goals while also being able to teach at the school where her two children attend.

Mrs. Ingram's depth of teaching experience allows her to have a fun presence in the classroom while also being very much in charge of the classroom culture. She has a warm demeanor with her students and refers to them as "friends," when speaking to them in large group or individually as in, "my friend Gabriel." Mrs. Ingram's light but respectful manner of addressing students communicates both care and concern for her students. "Teaching is very personal for me," Mrs. Ingram tells me, "I know it isn't for some people, but it is for me. I'm the teacher who is crying at the end of the year." This quality of her teaching is apparent as she coaches students through the classroom curriculum and interacts with them throughout the day. She tells me that she makes a point of learning each of her student's names by the end of the first day of class.

A Sense of Wholeness: Situations of Home

Keeping teaching personal is a central feature of Mrs. Ingram's identity and integrity as a teacher. "*Identity*," writes Parker Palmer (2007a) "lies in the intersection of the diverse forces that make up [one's] life, and *integrity* lies in relating to those forces in ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death" (p. 14).

Among the many roles Mrs. Ingram inhabits including teacher, wife, and mother of two, she is able to maintain a continuity that compliments her teaching in an arts-centered setting where relationships are valued. In speaking about how she treats students, Mrs. Ingram comments,

I do feel that I treat my kids with the utmost respect and that when they are being disrespectful to me, I call them on that. And then they see that as not this big thing but as something personal for somebody who puts out a lot for them every day. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Part of Mrs. Ingram's identity and integrity is valuing her own worth as a person and a teacher who cares about her students. Indeed Mrs. Ingram even refers to her students as her kids and her own children as her personal kids thus there is an inclusiveness in her manner of teaching that connotes a feeling of family. When asked directly whether she uses the metaphor of family in her teaching with students she answered, "I don't know that I say that but I feel like I live that" (Interview transcript, 2006).

The sense of wholeness, feeling of family, and continuity that I observed in Mrs. Ingram's teaching shows her value of "connectedness" that she passes on to her students.

As Palmer (2007a) writes,

Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subject, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves. The methods used by these weavers vary wildly: lectures, Socratic

dialogues, laboratory experiments, collaborative problem solving, creative chaos. The connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts –meaning *heart* in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit and will converge in the human self. (p. 11)

Working to create spaces of trust and connectedness or as I often heard Mrs. Ingram and other Edgebrook teachers iterate to students, working to create a “safe, inclusiveness environment where teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn” (Observation notes, 2006), cultivates the heart of teaching at Edgebrook Elementary. The following example is one more way Mrs. Ingram strives for connectedness in the classroom.

Group Rating: Mrs. Ingram’s Relational Aims

With a little time to spare before students leave for specials, Mrs. Ingram gathers her students together in the community gathering place. Having not much space in this area of the room, Mrs. Ingram’s students are sitting in a lazy circle on a blue carpet with Mrs. Ingram sitting in her teacher’s chair. She is leading a discussion she calls group rating. Group rating serves as an opportunity for students to share how they are doing, a litmus test, so to speak, of their inner world for the day. Mrs. Ingram asks students to rate how they are doing on a scale from 1 to 10; one being terrific and ten being horrible. If a student reports one or ten as his or her daily rating, the student is asked to explain the reason behind their seemingly ecstatic or conversely, melancholic state of being.

While the students are going around the circle offering their rating for the day, I notice that Mrs. Ingram sits back on her small chair, relaxed with her legs crossed, her arms folded in front of her, tilting her head slightly and making eye contact with each of

her students. Although students whose rating is between 2 and 9 are not compelled to explain the reason behind their rating, almost all do.

“I’m a 6 ½ because I am tired,” says one student.

“I’m a 10 because I’m not tired anymore and I’m not sick, says the next student.

“A 1”, says a third student, “because I didn’t get any sleep this weekend.”

“Exited or nervous?” probes Mrs. Ingram.

“Probably nervous because of our presentations,” she answers. (Students have a book project to present to the class later on in the day.)

“9 and 4/32 for no reason,” says another student.

“Why wouldn’t you just say, 9 and 1/8’ queries a fellow student?”

“I didn’t want to,” answers the first.

“I’m a 10 because I changed bunk beds and I have the top now and it’s warm,” reports another student.

Finally the last student answers. Linh, a fragile, shy little girl with a small disability, reports her rating as a 10 and offers a quiet explanation for this that proves barely audible where I am sitting in the back the classroom but one that Mrs. Ingram is very happy to hear. “It was a big day for me, she tells me later referring to this student, “that’s the first time Linh gave an explanation during group rating – she is always just a nine.” I could tell Mrs. Ingram was pleased with this small victory in bringing a shy student into the caring community of her classroom.

Sometimes students want to share a group rating with Mrs. Ingram that they feel uncomfortable sharing in front of the group for instance, one student named Gabriel came

up to Mrs. Ingram, before the group met to give his rating to her privately. “I’m a 2 today because I have this zit near my nose but I’m not going to say that in group rating because everyone will laugh.” Mrs. Ingram smiles warmly and says that really it’s a great thing since it means he is coming into an exciting time of life and reminds him to “try not to touch it. “Gabriel chuckles and joins the others for group rating.

A Place Where the Arts Can Thrive: Situations of Growth & Caring

Throughout my observations of Group Rating and other interactions between Mrs. Ingram and her students her ethic of care shines through and illustrates the four elements of moral education as described by Nel Noddings (1992), *modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation* (p. 22). Mrs. Ingram shows her students that she cares for them in being respectful of their presence in the classroom, she models an ethic of caring in her daily interactions, the words she chooses, and the activities she designs. She creates an atmosphere that is supportive of openness and dialogue in her classroom and celebrates small victories as in the example of her students opens up and joins the dialogue for the first time. “Attitudes and ‘mentalities’ are shaped, at least in part, by experience” (Noddings, 1992, p. 23) and through practice. Thus Mrs. Ingram offers students opportunities to practice an ethic of care in her classroom in addition to practicing her own moral purposes in the classroom for her students’ benefit. Finally Mrs. Ingram confirms and validates students when they exhibit the types of behaviors that fit with the moral environment she is striving for in the classroom. As Noddings (1992) tells us,

When we confirm someone, we spot a better self and encourage its development. We can only do this if we know the other well enough to see what he or she is trying to become. Formulas and slogans have no place here. We do not set up a single ideal or a set of expectations for everyone to meet, but we identify something admirable, or at least acceptable,

struggling to emerge in each person we encounter. . . . Confirmation lifts us toward our vision of a better self. (p. 25)

Mrs. Ingram is successful in confirming her students because she strives to *see* them while she also works to build a “circle of trust” (Palmer, 2004; 2007b), “the kind of group that can facilitate deep and difficult learning” (Palmer, 2007b, p. 11), within the classroom encouraging students to build relationships with one another as they share small parts of their lives. This study is not focused on the moral intentions of educators²⁷ but such intentions can hardly be ignored in studying arts-centered classrooms, as work with the arts is often personal in nature and exacts vulnerability in students while inspiring a moral sensibility on the part of teachers. Moreover, moral or character education is a large part of Edgebrook Elementary Schools’ three-pronged mission of educating the head, the heart, and the hand and is supported in the school curriculum through an anti-bullying curriculum presented by the school social worker and school psychologist. Mrs. Ingram works closely with these educators to create a caring community within her classroom which contributes to the efficacy of Edgebrook as a safe and caring place to learn –and a place where arts-learning can thrive.

Balance & Composition: Mrs. Ingram’s Arts-Integration Aims

The themes of care and concern, connectedness, and wholeness apparent in Mrs. Ingram’s relationships with her students feed directly into her thinking, choice-making, and planning of arts-centered learning. In what could easily be considered a jammed curriculum, making room for arts-centered learning and integration can be a challenge.

²⁷ For a brilliant study on teacher’s moral intentions see Joan Armon’s, *Teachers as moral educators: A study of caring in Waldorf and public school classrooms* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1997).

Mrs. Ingram paints a picture of the many curriculum demands on her time throughout the year, she explains,

As far as math goes, it was a building decision to adopt the Everyday Math Program and that is the foundation and basis of our math program K – 5. So it is the most consistent program throughout the building. As far as other curriculum goes for example, [the district] just rolled out their Guaranteed Viable Curriculum (GVC) and it is what is essential to teach at each grade level. But it does not include content so even though it is curriculum, this is what's essential, the content is not included so then there is content that needs to be taught and that is determined by district wide expectations, for example in social studies we are required to teach geography in fifth-grade, explorers and colonies, revolutionary war, and civil war. Our optional curriculum is western expansion, immigration, and civil rights. Needless to say there is absolutely no way we can cover the optional curriculum in the course of the year being that we share time to plan with [the] science [state standardized tests], fortunately this isn't one of those schools, but there are schools in the district where the teachers say that their principals say, "don't teach any social studies until March – we're going to focus on science because of testing." I haven't heard that here which is good and my team and I work real hard to make sure that social studies gets equal time . . . So we are still kind of struggling with how do we make that GVC work and still be responsible for all the content and how does that all mesh together. And then how do we do our arts-integration on top of that. The agreement was made when this school opened as a magnet that teachers would plan units with MI experiences involved in the unit and that's kind of where it stayed, as far as in the last two years we've gone back and revisited –is that happening at every grade level? (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Ingram works diligently to bring that sense of wholeness that she desires in her students' lives into the curriculum and to carry the value and mission of arts-integration and multiple intelligences throughout her planned activities in the classroom.

In her commitment to balancing the curriculum, Mrs. Ingram must be continually mindful of the arts and MI in terms of making sure her classroom activities reflect her personal goals for her students. Maintaining this balance between what the district

mandates and what the mission of Edgebrook as a specific school within the district requires, can be difficult. As Mrs. Ingram notes,

It is very challenging, but I am of the thought that in the course of two-three weeks I can get every intelligence in. Right now [this early in the year] I'm doing really well because it is, even in an arts-integrated school, not where we live from, but what we add to, to enrich. (Interview transcript, 2006)

What Mrs. Ingram alludes to here is a common problem in today's arts-integrated schools and a problem for arts-centered school reform in general, that is, the issue of schools having to maintain dual roles. That is, having to, in many cases, mold a curriculum that favors, in Howard Gardner's terms, a logical/ mathematical and linguistic learning model while also relentlessly pursuing an arts-centered approach that is often undervalued or missing entirely from more traditional forms of curriculum planning at the district and state levels. As Eisner (2002) notes,

Although the arts in American schools are *theoretically* among the so-called core subjects, and although school districts and indeed the federal government identify them as such, there is a huge ambivalence about their position in the curriculum. No one wants to be regarded as philistine. Yet at the same time privilege of place is generally assigned to other subject areas . . . the arts are regarded as nice but not necessary. (p. xi)

Unfortunately, this state of affairs creates two possible realities for teachers.

Either teachers struggle, as Mrs. Ingram does, to balance her curriculum over time, that is, making sure that over the course of two to three weeks all of her MI and arts-integration goals are met, or, as might be the case for less experienced teachers, or teachers who are less committed to the MI and arts-integrated mission of the school, pushing arts-integration and MI aside for mainstream pedagogy that makes meeting district mandates easier for teachers albeit less interesting and growth oriented for

students. In many cases these dual roles can become dueling roles resulting in the marginalization of the arts in the school. At the very least, these conditions often render arts-integration an *add-on* form of curriculum, meaning the arts or art activities are merely tacked on to a classroom unit or project rather than being integrated into it as a meaningful aspect of the teacher's pedagogy and curriculum. Reflecting on the arts as an add-on curriculum rather than integrated, Mrs. Ingram notes,

It's hard [but] if you try to infuse it in, you can . . . like I've said, I can get [arts-integration] in there every couple of weeks or so, [but] as far as us living there and living that every day, it's almost impossible. And there's no time to do it... you have to plan to do arts-integration, it doesn't just happen . . . you can't just throw a craft project in and [have] that count. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Assuring that the arts have a daily presence in the classroom requires mindfulness, good scheduling, and finesse on the part of the teacher.

Teacher as Researcher

Throughout her planning, Mrs. Ingram focuses her attention on keeping arts-integration centered in her curriculum because she strongly believes that arts-integration and MI provide the best learning opportunities for students. In support of her beliefs, Mrs. Ingram has chosen to devote her personal time to a research project intended to uncover the benefits of MI and arts-integrated learning. Mrs. Ingram describes her work in this area,

This year I volunteered to head-up the research committee because I had this idea. Last year I was feeling really frustrated about the amount of time we are devoting to integration as staff development and planning and I thought maybe what I need to do for myself and my profession is see if I can find some statistical information to support arts-integration, as it relates to student achievement so the research proposal that I came up with is based around that...Gardner's ideas have been around for twenty years now –a little over twenty and kind of looking at –see if I can find some

data about schools around the country that are using his philosophies and what their standardized tests scores look like to see if I could find a correlation between those tests scores going up, because I did see that trend in our test scores with a couple minor glitches in that and I know that it can't totally be attested to arts-integration but I figure it factors in and if I can find that trend in a number of schools then it gives more credence to that . . . (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Ingram's care and concern for the cognitive transfer aspects of arts-learning has sent her on her own research odyssey to understand whether relationships exist between arts-learning and student achievement in what Eisner (2002) refers to as, "out-of-domain" (p. 219) areas of the curriculum. That is, to ask the question: does arts-learning have any effect on success in non-arts related subject matter? She is not alone. The transfer potential of arts-learning is of major interest to many arts-advocates, arts-institutions, researchers, and school-administrators and teachers who want to see arts-learning and integration thrive in schools yet who struggle to make the case for arts-integration to districts and states without hard data to support their claims. Because of this, many advocates and researchers have rallied the call for scientific studies that are designed to garner the evidence they feel is needed to make their case. However as Eisner (2002) has noted, arts-learning research requires broader treatment within the research community that focuses on multiple types of research studies and an agenda all its own.²⁸

Furthermore, like Mrs. Ingram, many arts-learning advocates are pursuing other ways in which arts-integration can be promoted in schools as a viable path toward

²⁸ Eisner in his book *Arts and the creation of mind* (2002, pp. 209-229) sets forth a research agenda for arts education. In it he seeks to broaden the definition of what constitutes arts education research while also acknowledging that if out-of-domain transfer is to be shown, experimentally designed studies would need to be carried out to begin building such a body of evidence based on sound scientific practices. While, Eisner in his own words, does not, "endorse the practice of justifying the arts on the basis of their putative effects on academic achievement, [he] supports the pursuit of research in this domain because such effects might exist and because studying the relationships between learning and thinking in one area on performance in another might advance our general understanding of cognition" (p. 224).

comprehensive school reform. To this end the intersection of the theory of multiple intelligences and arts-integration has piqued the interest of some arts-advocates. Indeed Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss in their book, *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts-Integration and Meaningful Learning* (2001) promote the use of MI theory as a scaffolding to sustain and justify arts-integration in classrooms and in arts-centered school reform settings. In their view MI provides a framework and an underlying theory that gives credence to arts-engagement in the classroom and a cognitive rationale for such actions. The authors write,

MI theory is a wonderful approach for teachers. Many have begun to realize that not all children learn in the same way, nor do they access information and ideas through the same conduits. Arts-integration takes that initial insight and builds a real depth of knowledge and experience, coupled with reflection in the art form as well as the content field(s) that are studied in the classroom. Howard Gardner (1999) asserted that “every intelligence has the potential to be mobilized by the arts,” that is what arts-integration intends; its processes help create the environment necessary for learning to occur and for the brain to be engaged in a complex way. (p. 9)

Mrs. Ingram’s belief in the efficacy of multiple intelligence theory in uncovering student talents has propelled her thinking about the ways in which MI and arts-integration can be brought together with the realities of standardized testing and other goals in today’s educational milieu. Her beliefs regarding how students learn best and under what kinds of conditions, drives her towards asking the big questions and pursuing the important issues in arts-learning. Mrs. Ingram reflects on her beliefs about teaching from students’ strengths:

I’m a firm believer that if you approach things from kids’ strengths, if you know what their strengths are and you can provide them a way to learn information through their strengths that this will transfer over into other areas. [Students] will have a deeper conceptual understanding of it and then be able to show what they know in a variety of ways. My biggest

frustration with arts-integration right now is that it still seems to be back burner even in an arts-integration school in that when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of tests scores we revert back to paper and pencil and part of that is what the state requires. The state requires us to take a paper and pencil test so it would be unfair not to train kids for how to take that test. I would like to see the state open up a little in terms of other ways for kids to show what they know other than tests... but I don't think that that is going to happen anytime in the future. (Interview transcript, 2006)

District and state expectations for student learning are seldom in step with the work of classroom teachers. Arts-integration goals are often pushed aside to focus on the content areas that parents, teachers, and administrators think are most pertinent to educating students – the content students will surely be tested on. For Mrs. Ingram and her colleagues, arts-centered school reform efforts are sometimes marginalized as concerns over testing take central stage. Moreover, institutional or *large-scale* (Fullan, 2007) changes can prove slow to implement and teachers often feel isolated in their attempts to keep focused on arts-integration goals amidst some of the more traditional concerns of school and district administrators.

Living in the Space between Theory & Practice

In the meantime Mrs. Ingram lives in the space between theory and practice. Her thinking about education and her work with theory, in this case, the theory of multiple intelligences, informs her teaching and grounds her work as an arts-integrator. From a *teaching as research* (Duckworth, 2006) perspective, Mrs. Ingram is, “. . . in a position through teaching to pursue questions about the development of understanding that [she] could not pursue in any other way” (p. 185). As she observes her students and creates learning situations that are focused on drawing on and drawing out student strengths, Mrs. Ingram is learning about her students *and* about her own teaching. Duckworth

comments, “By ‘teacher’ I mean someone who engages learners, who seeks to involve each person wholly –mind, sense of self, sense of humor, range of interests, interactions with other people – in learning” (p. 185). Finding out how to do this over time constitutes research. Like Eisner, Duckworth seeks to broaden the definition of research and focus in on what practitioners similar to Mrs. Ingram do on a daily basis in an effort to create the best kind of learning environment and curriculum for students.

As a teacher and a researcher into arts-integration and MI theory, Mrs. Ingram elevates her students’ and colleagues’ respect for the arts in education as a meaningful mode of learning and as a “pursuit of meaning through reflective action” (Fullan, 2007, p. 41). As she imagines new possibilities in teaching, so too, do her students imagine new possibilities in learning and thereby discover meaning in their actions. In the book by Uhrmacher & Matthews (2005), *Intricate Palette: Working the Ideas of Elliot Eisner*, Schubert (2005) has noted that “two of the greatest resources a teacher can have are philosophical sensibilities and imagination” (p. 17). Mrs. Ingram’s intentions in the classroom exhibit both. I turn now toward the bigger pictures of how Mrs. Ingram’s intentions are woven into the fabric of her teaching as students engage with arts in different facets of school life at Edgebrook Elementary

Working the Arts into Constitution Day

As Mrs. Ingram’s daily message reports, today is Constitution Day, a federal holiday passed into law in 2004 as a one-day holiday celebrating the United States constitution. As part of the act that passed Constitution Day into law, all publicly funded schools and institutions are obliged to create curriculum activities for students that focus on the history of the United States constitution on this day. The official date for

Constitution Day is September 17th of each year but this year. Mrs. Ingram's class has created a performance that they are planning to share with Edgebrook's first, second, and third grade classes.

As the morning activities close and the time for the Constitution Day performance draws closer, Mrs. Ingram and her students busily move the students' desks from the center of the room, pushing them to the back to make space for their audience. A short time later a large group of first graders file into Mrs. Ingram's classroom and sit in long rows up against the squished cluster of desks. Mrs. Ingram works the crowd while students get seated asking them what kinds of fun things they did over the weekend.

A desk and chair have been set up in front of the classroom as a mock setting for the Constitutional Convention where eight students playing the likes of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, and other historical figures are standing on the makeshift stage, a couple of feet away from the rows of first graders, preparing to act out the ratification and signing of the U.S. constitution. A large group of first grade students eagerly anticipate Part I of the Constitutional Day performance.

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." recites one student before another takes over until the entire preamble to the constitution has been recited. After the preamble is declared each actor has the opportunity to ratify the new constitution by a vote and finally moving to the desk on stage for the ceremonious signing of the new constitution. The audience claps and the first group has completed the dramatic section of the three-part performance.

The second group made up of 14 students, line up in front of the audience. Another student presses play on the boom-box in the back of the room and the selected

music begins. In unison students begin with a small jumping, clapping move and in jazz-like high-hat drum riff sing to the beat in a whisper:

Con | sti | tu | tion
Con | sti | tu | tion

Their voices growing louder in strength as they say:

Pre | am | ble
Pre | am | ble

Jumping and clapping on each of the broken syllables of the words constitution and preamble, the students continue in singing voices, the following lyrics:

All of us in the USA family will work together to make a better country, we will make fair laws, we promise to keep our family peaceful and safe, we will protect our USA family. We will encourage our country to do their best and keep us safe and free now and forever. We will work hard and create this promise to America. (Observation notes, 2006)

The lyrics are the deconstructed lyrics of the preamble created by the Mrs. Ingram's students. Taking the original preamble of the constitution and rewriting it in language that would be more tangible for their first, second and third grade audiences, Mrs. Ingram's students learned a meaningful lesson in creating lessons that are relevant to younger students. Mrs. Ingram helped her students underline all the difficult words in the preamble which students then looked up in a dictionary to help them understand the wording of the preamble, to get to its meaning, and then to rephrase it for further representation in class.

Part three of the performance is a visual art piece that includes an array of visual symbols related to the U.S. constitution and American History included for presentation on one giant banner. While each picture or symbol was created by a single student, they decided to combine them into one display to allow the audience a better chance to see

them all as a collaborative effort. Each student was able to introduce their particular contribution to the mural. Among other items, students created a shield of protection signifying safety; stars and stripes and an explanation of how the American flag was designed. Of particular note was a colorful picture of the Statue of Liberty which the maker explained like this:

Liberty is to be free to make choices within the laws. To make fair laws [like] you can play on the playground, freedom on the playground, to play on anything you want, not just the swing but on anything –choosing what playground equipment you want. (Fifth-grader, Edgebrook Elementary, 2006)

This real life example seemed to resonate with the third grade audience especially, as I watched many of their heads bobbing up and down in agreement as the student spoke. All three audiences attending seemed to enjoy the performance. One second grader commented, “The song was kind of groovy,” and there was a smattering of questions about the preamble by the other third grade students. Mrs. Fontaine, who we met in chapter five of this dissertation was in attendance with her first and second graders offered a compliment, “I loved how you all used your different talents on this; really good!” Mrs. Ingram ends the last performance as she has ended each one by saying to the audience, “We’d like to thank you for sharing in our learning.” With that The Constitution Day events for Mrs. Ingram’s class had ended.

The Lessons of Performance: Situations of Artistry

After the last group files out of the room about an hour after the performances began, Mrs. Ingram asked her students, “What was the best part of the whole project – anything you learned about the process?” One boy answered, “Teamwork and trust.” His sentiment seemed to be the consensus within the class as other similar comments were

shared. Watching the three separate performances over the course of the hour I recognized how each performance of the skit, song, and visual art presentation became smoother and more polished as students repeated their efforts. By the third and final performance the students had a sparkling performance, albeit with a hiccup or two.

Finishing and polishing performances and works of art is a challenge for all working artists as well as students of the arts. When is a work of art finished? Is it ever finished? There is always more work that might be done, always more rehearsal that could help. The magic of live performance is that it lives in a constant space of “incompleteness” (Greene 2001, p. 154). There is, Greene (2001) further tells us,

a certain mystery associated with the arts To remove their mystery is to tame the arts, to eliminate the tension that always exists between the arts and ordinary, conventional life. Most seriously of all, it is to remove their interrogative power – that which springs from their persistent incompleteness, from the questions to which they must give rise.” (p. 158)

Students who engage in live performance engage with what Greene calls “active learning” (p. 154) that results in the answering of questions and the solving of problems, even if only until the next performance creates new ones.

Even the task of finding a resting place when working on a performance or visual art piece can be difficult. On a practical level, for arts-integration in schools, it is often time constraints and deadlines that dictate the resting place, rather than artistic vision or decision; certainly that was the case for Mrs. Ingram’s students. She explained to me that the class had only forty-five minutes of class time to work on their performances as a group and only a total of two hours and fifteen minutes to plan, rehearse, create props, and visual art work in preparation of the day’s performance. “The Constitution Day activity was actually a five-day lesson that I planned at the [Aesthetic] Institute that

turned out to be a two-day lesson, [five days] kind of squished into two days . . .” After watching the first performance, Mrs. Ingram quietly lamented that the students were not given all the class time she had hoped for, to fine-tune their contributions. Nor were the students able to run through their sections before the day’s performance; there simply wasn’t time in her busy curriculum.

There was however some fine-tuning that occurred between the first, second and third performances. “I have a wish,” Mrs. Ingram said to her students after the first performance concluded and the audience cleared out; she then proceeds to tell them that the group needs to keep going and not to stop during the performance to critique or direct one another, “The show must go on! Now you have five minutes to tweak your performance before the next audience arrives.” This short amount of time proved useful in smoothing out the rough edges and allowing students to shine.

Team work, solving performance problems and learning that “the show must go on,” are just a few of the minor lessons learned in this short activity. Mrs. Ingram also made sure students were able to self-select into groups for the performance so they could pursue their interests and cultivate one or more of Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences in a way that was meaningful to them. Certainly this short activity drew upon many of eight intelligences that support Edgebrook’s curriculum mission. For example, students rewriting the preamble and writing the script for the skit were working with the linguistic intelligence, the constitution song tapped into the musical intelligence, the visual art used the spatial intelligence; the dance movements paired with the music worked the bodily-kinesthetic and music intelligences and working together in

cooperation and compromise made use of both intra and interpersonal intelligences.

Integrating the intelligences with the arts is the central goal in Mrs. Ingram's classroom.

Mrs. Ingram could have chosen any number of curriculum possibilities to commemorate Constitution Day. She could have had students study the constitution and later tested them on bits of knowledge gleaned from their study of it. There was no mandate as to *how* the constitution was explored and celebrated. By offering students the opportunity to deconstruct and represent the constitution in multiple ways through an art form, Mrs. Ingram resisted a narrowly defined curriculum. As Eisner notes, "when the curriculum of the school defines representational options narrowly –when such options are largely restricted to the use of literal language and number, for example – it creates educational inequities and, moreover, fails to develop the aptitudes that many individual students possess (1994, p. 86). Mrs. Ingram's focus on her multiple intelligence goals as fostered by her understanding of Gardner's theory and her commitment to arts-integration dovetail into a meaningful curriculum for students where their various interests are nourished and aptitudes developed. Mrs. Ingram's class will study the constitution in closer detail later in the semester; this preliminary artful rendering of the meanings behind and within the constitution will serve this broader curriculum goal.

Bingo & Boomwhackers: Music with Mrs. Scott

Music class with Mrs. Scott occurs once a week at Edgebrook Elementary. The school coordinates a complicated specials schedule. Fifth-graders attend music every Wednesday for fifty minutes; in addition students attend physical education and library twice a week for fifty minutes, and rotate their attendance to theater, media/ technology, and art twice a week for fifty minutes. Thus students receive one hour and forty minutes

of art instruction, for example, every third week; students attend theater and media on the alternate weeks. Because of when my observations were scheduled in Mrs. Ingram's classroom, I was able to observe music and theater class, but not art or media/ technology class. The specials schedule changes each trimester.

On the first of my two days of observation in music class, Mrs. Scott is leading the fifth-graders through a fun game of music-note bingo. Students are scattered about, sitting on the floor with a large bingo-type placard in front of them but instead of numbers, the squares show notes of different sizes on bass or treble clefs. Mrs. Scott uses a microphone as she calls out the notes, simulating the bingo halls of old, and students use small scraps of paper to mark the spaces on their board. Mrs. Scott calls out, "Treble clef; second line G," Students look for this note on their card and several students mark this space. She goes on, "bass clef; first space A," then, "bass clef; fifth line A," and another, "treble clef; first line E." It isn't long before the first booming child's voices hollers out, BINGO! Students are chattering excitedly as Mrs. Scott goes over the winner's board to verify the bingo. She offers the winner a small prize, this time a pen with the Edgebrook Elementary logo, before moving on to the next game.

Mrs. Scott's music room is a spacious area attached to the gymnasium and is partitioned by a sliding wall. As the students study their bingo boards, the muted sounds of the PE class's radio Disney, filter through. On the wall is a poster with the word *practice* spelled out vertically, each letter designating traits required of musicians, "Patience, Responsibility, Attitude, Consistency, Tenacity, Imagination, Concentration, and Energy". There are many different kinds of instruments in the room, a three-tiered riser for choir practice, an upright piano, and component stereo equipment. Mrs. Scott is

an enthusiastic teacher who commands her class with a jovial spirit. If students are too rambunctious she is quick to quip a funny one-liner reminding students of the expected behavior. When one student is talking over Mrs. Scott's bingo call, she quips, "I should not hear your voice, Sydney; I am the diva now!" Sydney and Mrs. Scott laugh together at Mrs. Scott's moxie, as do the other students; it was just what was needed to get everyone back on track.

An Integrated Music Curriculum

As a full time teacher at Edgebrook with over twenty-five years teaching at this school alone, and splitting her instructional time between teaching music and teaching in the gifted and talented strand within the school, Mrs. Scott has an encompassing view of the school. In discussing Edgebrook's success as a school, she cites the students, community, and leadership as central,

I have worked here for twenty-five years and I think the children are my most important aspect. I love the mix of the kids. There are kids that are not at the same economic level, there's a mix of cultures here so I think the children make the school, number one, so exciting to come to teach at. The community; I think we've got an amazing, supportive community—they're very busy people, they're usually dual income, working families but they're a very supportive community and very trusting. They seem to trust our school a lot. Involvement is very supportive and I know from being in a couple of other schools that this community is very trusting . . . so that makes a huge difference and the size of our school. I think the size makes a huge difference too. I taught, my first few years, at a school that was 640 kids—it starts to get a little impersonal [and] then you don't make the connections with people or kids . . . I taught here when it was down to 280 and I taught here when we were even larger . . . I don't know how but we did, we are up to about 520 at one time. I believe our leadership has [contributed also] . . . over the years, I saw our school decline. Our school was dying with a lack of leadership and the last two principals that we've had in this building have brought new life . . . Then [Principal Jean Hansen] came and they invited her to look at other options for our

building [and] the process that we went through . . . it was our decision . . .
. We all decided that arts-integration was where we wanted to go which
was wonderful. I was thrilled! (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Scott has seen Edgebrook Elementary go through many changes over her career as a teacher in the building including the declining enrollment that nearly shut its doors and consequently prompted the arts-centered school reform model the school is now implementing. As Mrs. Scott's words allude to, school reform initiatives have a greater chance of success with buy-in from teaching staff and community support. As Fullan (2007) points out,

[School reformers] are not only dealing with a moving and changing target; [they] are playing this out in social settings. Solutions must come through the development of *shared meaning*. The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in everyday situations is where change stands or fails. (p. 9)

The combined support and shared meaning of staff, administration, community, and students work to give arts-centered school reform a greater chance of success at this school.

While collaboration is not easy at Edgebrook because the curriculum is so full and time for meeting with teachers is so scarce, Mrs. Scott makes a concerted effort to work grade-level curriculum into her music curriculum and school shows. As she explains,

I always like to pull the social studies curriculum for the year and for my third-grade show; in fact, I gear that towards their social studies curriculum . . . Sometimes I can match well and sometimes I just want to do a show that's just so darn cute. But there are times that it works well and so [for instance], our fifth-grade social studies curriculum is Colonial America. There's lots of things that I can connect with there. Yeah, I do look at their social studies curriculum. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Echoing Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Ingram also agrees that the social studies curriculum is one of the most fruitful areas for arts-integration. "I try to do all of my social studies units with

something hands on,” she explains, “It may be more paper based but then your final product is the arts-integration part, or the show what you know part It is the place where I feel is the richest for building that arts-integration part” (Interview transcript, 2006). While Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Ingram do not have the opportunity to plan their units together, Mrs. Scott’s personal commitment to Edgebrook’s mission of arts-integration helps define her curriculum goals and to collaborate with the grade-level classroom curriculum, if not the teachers. Mrs. Ingram hopes collaboration between specials teachers and classroom teachers becomes a reality sometime in the future. Her previous experience as a collaborator has proved useful. Mrs. Ingram recounts,

We haven’t [collaborated] at this school but I will tell you that when I was at [my previous school] which was not an arts-integration school, that was a regular part of our planning. We were given a half day of planning time at the beginning of the year and we met with our GT person, our media person, our computer person and we planned our long-range units with them and then we also met with art and music and whatever theme we were working on for that year, the specials teacher would take it on so it was part of the curriculum for the year. They would cover what we were covering... (Interview transcript, 2006)

Collaboration with arts-specialists in arts-integration settings requires time and space. It also requires interest on the part of both parties and the belief that a fully integrated curriculum is a worthwhile endeavor. For Mrs. Ingram and Mrs. Scott collaboration appears to be a goal both would enjoy pursuing. In general, Edgebrook has some work to do in this area if they are to see full integration between arts-specialists and classroom teachers. Growth in this area could strengthen an already flourishing arts-integration agenda.

Educating the Head, the Heart, & the Hand

The students are finishing up their bingo game and it is now time to put their primed note-recognition skills to work in making music. Mrs. Scott sets up seven music stands with sheet music for students to perform a Halloween song called, ‘Dem Bones.’ For instruments, Mrs. Scott passes out Boomwhackers. Boomwhackers are tuned plastic percussion tubes, tuned to the C major, diatonic scale. The Boomwhackers are color-coded and allow students to make tuned melodic sounds by gently striking them against any surface. Each Boomwhacker is a different color depending on the note it represents. Mrs. Scott, buddies up the students, two to a music stand and sheet of music and each pair has their part to play as the song begins. Students read the notes on the sheet music and gently bang out the melody of the song using their Boomwhackers.

The bingo note-recognition activity has proved its usefulness as students steadily work through the song, slowly at first, but then gradually building up to the correct tempo.²⁹ While the students work through *Dem Bones*, with their Boomwhackers, Mrs. Scott moves around the group, conversing with them and explaining the notation in the music. A few of the lyrics of the song are:

Dem bones.
Dem bones,
Dem dry bones . . .

Which Mrs. Scott sings out loud to the music, then switches again to a speaking voice to work through the measures of notes with students while they continue to play: “measure nine: play, rest, play, rest, play, rest, rest, rest.” Mrs. Scott reminds the playing students

²⁹ It should be noted that only a small number of Mrs. Scott’s students are involved in Edgebrook’s symphonic band or orchestra as an before/after school extra-curricular activity. Mrs. Scott’s classroom music instruction comprises the whole of musical training and exposure to the technical aspects of music for the majority of Edgebrook’s students.

that a “ta,” signifies a quarter note and “tee-tee,” signifies an eighth note. She calls out, “ta / tee-tee / ta / tee-tee / ta / ta / ta,” and finally a string of quarter notes, “ta / ta / ta / ta / ta / ta / ta . . .” The students perform the song a couple more times with Mrs. Scott leading them and then they perform the song on their own.

During my interview with Mrs. Scott, she took a moment to reflect on how her music program supports Edgebrook Elementary School’s mission of educating the head, the heart, and the hand:

I think that music can address the head, heart, and the hand exceedingly beautifully. The head . . . I believe that music is way of facilitating brain development. All those studies that show the connections that can be made through music is more valid than technology so the brain part in music is definitely an area where we can connect with the brain. I think that music communicates in ways that helps children feel and express emotions, so the heart in ways, a very unique way. I think my ELA kids can come in here and if they speak very little [English] they can feel a unity together and they can feel part of the group and they are very successful in here whether they can say verbally because what they can do or show in movement. So I think the heart is definitely a part of music and the hand, I see lots of development and motor skills. I do hand chimes, rhythm, I think the rhythm improves gross motor skills and you can get down to fine motor skills with instruments. I think music is probably all encompassing. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Scott’s mindfulness regarding how music can educate the whole student permeates her curriculum and helps her students achieve “crystallizing experiences,” (Gardner, 1983) in which their strengths are revealed to them. As Mrs. Scott alludes to in her comments, not all children come to class with the same skills, educational experiences, or cultural background. Music as an affective and expressive *language* (Goldberg, 2006) taps into these different experiences and realities, offering diverse students alternative paths to learning and understanding. As Sonia Nieto (1999) has noted in regards to

Gardner's theory of intelligence and students with multicultural backgrounds and experiences,

Part of the reason for the differences in how intelligence is manifested differently in individual people . . . is how children are socialized into their particular families and cultural groups. Viewing intelligence in this way not only opens up the possibility that learning is more complex and multifaceted than the usual focus on abstract thinking – whether related to ethnicity, but it also suggests that other ways of thinking – whether related to ethnicity, gender, or other differences – may be just as legitimate. (pp. 10-11)

Mrs. Scott is an inclusive teacher. She concerns herself with the individual needs of her students in relation to her subject of music and helps each student express themselves through music in multiple ways. Mrs. Scott keeps the school's mission in mind and she creates a fun, constructive environment where difference can thrive and skills are honed.

The students end their rehearsal of *Dem Bones*, and Mrs. Scott applauds their efforts; she sends them back to Mrs. Ingram with a cheerful smile and hugs for those with outstretched arms.

Story Boards: A Wish & a Star Assessment

Back in the classroom after music, Mrs. Ingram has her students gather together on the carpet for book project presentations. Mrs. Ingram has planned monthly book projects for her students which include a wide variety of methods for highlighting their reading within particular genres. For example for fantasy/ adventure books Mrs. Ingram has students find three gifts he or she would give to the main character and to create or come up with three symbols that represent the main character; these six items are placed in a paper bag and the students present the book through their explanation of the gifts and symbols. For biographies Mrs. Ingram has students create a puppet or another type of

visual representation of the book and then retell the story in first person. Mrs. Ingram designed the free choice book project option to support her MI goals in the classroom. Students, in this case, are invited to choose one of Gardner’s multiple intelligences and create their book presentation using that intelligence. However, today’s presentation is a story board activity requiring students to break down the book they’ve read into eight parts representing the book they have read:

Cover	Protagonist	Setting	Plot
Problem/ conflict	Climax	Resolution	Bibliography

Using a combination of writing and colored drawings for each of panels, students retell the story using the eight parts shown above. For the presentation part of the storyboard book project, students get up in front of the class and explain the story and its elemental features. Mrs. Ingram asks the audience to critique the presentations by offering two stars and a wish. One star went like this: “I liked how you illustrated the fight that happened in the book with the pile of dust and the arms and legs sticking out;” or, “I think it’s really great that you spoke about your book rather than reading the words on your project.” One student said, “I wish you could speak louder next time; it was kind of hard to hear you.” Each presenter heard two stars and a wish regarding their performance before exiting the stage.

By asking her students to comment using the informal two-wish-and-a-star method, Mrs. Ingram creates a structure for students to respectfully critique one another’s work while keeping the discussion fluid. After the presentations ended, Mrs. Ingram asks

her students to reflect on their book project presentations, “I want you all to write a note to me about the process of the book project. I want you to reflect on the process, what was easy, hard, about yourself as a learner.”

Peer critique of projects and performances is just one of the assessment tools Mrs. Ingram uses in her classroom. Mrs. Ingram implements both formal and informal assessments throughout her classroom. Moreover assessment takes three possible forms in her classroom: teacher-student assessment; student-student assessment; and student-self assessment or self-reflective assessment. Each form of assessment is carried out in multiple ways depending on the project being evaluated. Mrs. Ingram explains the kinds of assessment tools she implements,

I use rubrics a lot . . . I use rubrics for writing, rubrics for reading, rubrics for social studies. Math is pretty much still percentages based on unit tests and then I do student-led conferences in my class so the kids develop a portfolio of their work and at the fall conference their focus will be to share goals that they’ve written this year and how they are going to achieve those and to show one writing piece [the students did] which was an assessment I did at the beginning of the year. I have a wordless picture book called *The Silver Pony* –it’s a seven chapter book and what I did was ask the kids to write the book for me. It took us the first 2 ½, almost 3 weeks of school to get that done and what I did was say, chapter one, I am going to focus on assessment and ideas and content so we took one trait of writing for each chapter and had that be their focus so by the time they were done I have an assessment that is specifically based on all the traits of writing that I can look at which I use to build my mini-lessons for the whole year and it’s quite an accomplishment for fifth-graders to write a seven chapter book which means like seven whole pieces of paper for most of them and the thing that we haven’t done is the creative part of that... I take a manila folder and wrap it in tin foil so it’s silver and then they get to design their own cover to put their work in and they’ll have the rubric that I use for assessment in there... I’ll have them go back re-read their whole story and put in some reflective comments on what they like about the piece and they’ll show that to their parents at the conferences. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Arts-integrated learning often requires a different, more encompassing view of assessment. Most paper and pencil assessments are not capable of capturing the nuanced work of arts-learning therefore creative forms of assessment become necessary.

Assessing from multiple perspectives holds the best promise for measuring arts-learning.

By using multiple forms of assessment, Eisner (2002) stresses,

. . . the number of “data points” that a teacher has in assessing the student’s work and development is much greater than the single shot high-stakes test score. Evaluation practices at their most useful are formative; they help improve the students’ learning or the teachers’ teaching or the curriculum itself. This improvement is achieved by using evaluation not as a device for scoring children but as a means of securing information about what a student is doing and what needs attention. (p. 238)

In the same way that Mrs. Ingram seeks to create experiences for students that build on their strengths across the different intelligences, she also seeks assessments that prove informative regarding the efficacy of the curriculum experiences she is offering. Her ultimate goal is to help students assess for themselves where their learning needs support, attention and enrichment. One way she accomplishes this is by implementing student-led conferences. She explains,

[Each] spring [students] lead their whole conference, I help them gather materials all throughout the year, tests and things so that they have something from each subject area and then they write reflective pieces on what they liked about it, what they could do better. I can have three or four conferences going on at a time. . . . They’re talking about what their strengths are and what they need to improve on. What more could you ask from a ten year-old than that they know that about themselves, and that –I would have say, throughout my entire career is the most powerful, powerful thing I’ve done as a teacher is that part of it, helping kids. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Student-led conferences help empower students, making them active members in the assessment process and the transforming the ritual of parent-teacher conferences. Sara

Lawrence-Lightfoot, in her book *The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn from Each Other* (2003), comments that parents and teachers participating in conferences “must challenge the platitudes and pleasantries, the formalisms and rhetoric of empty ritual. The challenge needs to be in the service of seeing the child more fully and clearly, keeping the child in focus” (p. 95). By placing students at the center of their learning as well as at the center of the assessment of their learning, Mrs. Ingram creates spaces of communication and growth where students own their learning. To the question Mrs. Ingram asks most frequently to her students: “Who is responsible for your learning?” The students’ answer is always the same, a resounding: “We are!”

Balancing the Picture: The *Tuesday* Activity³⁰

“Tuesday evening, around eight . . .” reads Mrs. Ingram to her class, all of whom are sitting cross-legged and comfortable on the carpet in the gathering space. To begin a new unit in language arts, Mrs. Ingram has planned an arts-integrated activity based on the nearly-wordless picture book, *Tuesday* by David Wiesner. *Tuesday* is a beautifully illustrated book that tells the fanciful story of a knot of frogs flying on their lily pads through a small town during one event-filled Tuesday night. As Mrs. Ingram flips slowly through the pages of the book, her students study the pages closely, following the odyssey of these chubby amphibious creatures. The book is designed using many two-page spreads, picture inserts and frames to divide, accentuate, and create a sensation of movement as the story unfolds. The illustrations are intricately detailed and contain many small surprises to the acute observer. Mrs. Ingram goes through the book twice with her

³⁰ The *Tuesday* activity took place over three days using the time devoted to language arts. For narrative purposes the three days of activities have been conflated to take place in the course of a day.

students before asking them to generate a list of action verbs and adjectives that came to mind as they viewed the vibrant pictures.

For action verbs students shared a variety of words: Sleeping, hovering, soaring, levitating, fishing, spinning, dodge, move, invading, crashing, watching, chasing, running, sprinting, dropping, diving, tumbling, and free-falling. The list of adjectives included: swampy, misty, sleepy, spooky, old, funny, blue, dark, freaky, shocking, super, elderly, green, invisible, lush, bright, and lonely. After the list is generated, Mrs. Ingram articulates to the group that the next set of language arts projects will be arts-integrated. Students are clearly excited as they begin to chatter about what this might mean.

I notice that Mrs. Ingram often articulates her arts-integration and multiple intelligence aims directly to her students in the classroom. She makes the connections between the curriculum and her goals highly visible for her students by articulating them, almost announcing them. “I tend to be a big picture person,” Mrs. Ingram tells me during our interview together,

[So] it’s really easy to make things connect with each other. I have always been that way and even more so in teaching, I can always find a way to draw connections between something I’m doing with something we’ve done or to make that philosophically work for me and I don’t think that everybody can do that. (Interview transcript, 2006)

By articulating that the next projects are going to be arts-integrated, Mrs. Ingram, lets students in on the big picture as well. Being part of the picture means that students have the opportunity to become agents in their own learning. Moreover, Mrs. Ingram sees arts-engagement as an entitlement to her students. At one point during observations I heard her inform her class, “We’ll do poetry on Friday; I owe you all poetry time. We are going

to get your brain so full of thoughts, words, or ideas you're going to be dying to write poetry." (Observation notes, 2006).

Mrs. Ingram also articulates the messages of MI in her classroom. Whereas other teachers throughout Edgebrook may talk about "body smart," for the kinesthetic intelligence or "word smart," for the linguistic intelligence, Mrs. Ingram prefers to use the technical multiple intelligences language when speaking about the curriculum and her pedagogy. As students are working on different projects she will stop and point out what intelligences the activity draws upon. Though these are actions that to the casual observer may seem small, I would argue these small actions strongly support the efficacy of arts-learning and MI in the classroom. By articulating her messages of arts-learning and MI to her students, with *intention*, Mrs. Ingram improves the likelihood that her students will actually hear the intended message and continue to build on their strengths and talents.

Taking it Outside: Tuesday in Three Scenes

Using the list of words generated during the reading of Wiesner's picture book, *Tuesday*, Mrs. Ingram takes her group outside onto the school lawn for a movement activity. Mrs. Ingram instructs students to get in groups of three making up seven groups for this activity. Each group is then instructed to choose three words from the list of action verbs and adjectives the students generated in the classroom and to construct a movement that illustrates a scene from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story. The goal of the activity is to use three separate movements to represent the story in three scenes. The audience is instructed to close their eyes between scenes to get the full effect. Mrs. Ingram is in charge of saying, "black out," when the audience is to close their eyes and "scene" when the performers are ready with their representation.

“Scene!” says Mrs. Ingram. The first group begins by representing the flying frogs shown in almost every page of the story. The students are crouched in leap-frog position and then begin flying, they then freeze and the audience closes their eyes for the second scene: the frogs eating, and finally the third scene: the frogs diving and tumbling. After a round of applause from the audience, the next group gets up and performs the beginning of the story depicting a scene where the frogs, again flying on their lily pads are chasing a flock of birds from the high wires of a utility pole, their second scene depicts the part of the book where a man, eating a sandwich, notices the throng of flying frogs pass by his window – expressing the adjective *funny*. The group’s final scene was designed to represent the pages where the frogs are soaring away from the neighborhood houses, back to the swamp after the wild affairs of the evening have come to an end. Another round of applause and it is time for the next group to get up and perform. Many of the scenes the students presented prove humorous and the audience is enjoying the other groups’ creativity as they spot the particular scenes the performers have chosen to summarize from the book.

In this activity Mrs. Ingram had students move from actively viewing the illustrations of the book to the act of generating action verbs and adjectives that described the nearly wordless picture book, then had them use these words to represent the action and feelings of the story nonverbally through movement. If it had remained the case that the students’ only experience with the book *Tuesday* was having Mrs. Ingram flip through its pages during class, her students may not have achieved any kind of lasting experience with the story. By re-experiencing the book through a performance using a different form of representation (Eisner, 1994b; 2002) students were able to forge a

deeper connection to the story and therefore derive their own meaning from it. “. . . In the process of creation,” Eisner states, “[the arts] stabilize what would otherwise be evanescent” (2002, p. 11). This, Eisner notes, is one of the cognitive functions of the arts.

He further comments,

Ideas and images are very difficult to hold onto unless they are inscribed in a material that gives them at least a kind of semipermanence. The arts as vehicles through which such inscriptions occur, enable us to inspect more carefully our own ideas, whether those ideas emerge in the form of language, music, or vision. The works we create speak back to us, and we become in their presence a part of a conversation that enables us to, “see what we have said.” (2002, p. 11)

By reworking the story through movements that depicted scenes from the beginning, middle, and end of the *Tuesday* picture book, students were able to contextualize the story in a different way and recreate the story for meaning. Although this kinesthetic activity holds no tangible permanence per se, its contribution as a memorable and inscribed experience with the arts cannot be overstated.

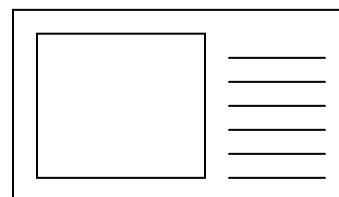
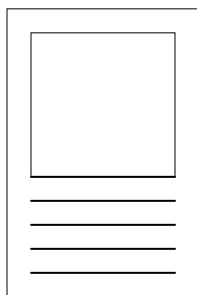
Recreating Tuesday: Visual Art & Poetry

The next phase of the *Tuesday* activity is focused on creating a visual art representation from a scene from the book. Mrs. Ingram begins by showing her class a website highlighting the art of David Wiesner. The website explains how the illustrator/author works to create the detailed watercolor paintings that have become a hallmark of his picture books. The website is hosted through his publisher’s³¹ website and describes his creative process from rough concept drawings to storyboard thumbnail sketches to dummy pages which are full-sized spreads that show what the book will look like in print, all the way through to the finished drawings and the final paintings. In each of these

³¹ <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/wiesner/home.html>

categories the website features the book *Tuesday* so students in Mrs. Ingram class can really see how this beautiful book came to fruition.

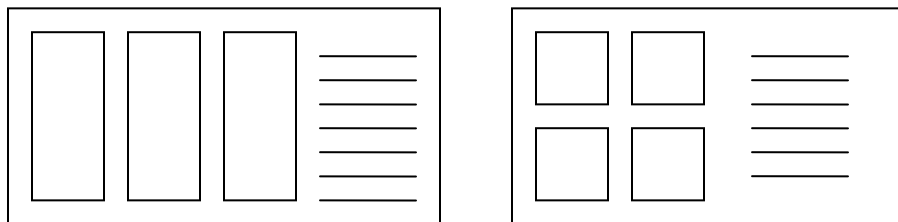
Mrs. Ingram has another reason, however, for introducing the Wiesner website. She wants her students to emulate portions of Wiesner’s creative process in the creation of their own visual art work based on the same book. She begins by having students create thumbnail sketches of images from *Tuesday* depicting scenes they might be interested in representing visually for their final project and as an inspiration for an original poem. Thumbnail sketches are small, loosely drawn pictures that “are just enough to spark the brain,” as Mrs. Ingram explains. Students work diligently, creating five or six small-sized sketches on piece of white paper; one of which they will choose to be the subject of their dummy page. The dummy page or storyboard picture is useful for students to decide exactly how the picture will fill the space and how they would like to organize the drawings. The dummy page is an exact replica of the final product without the fine details filled in or the painting/ coloring completed. The two schematics students used most often were the following:



This allowed for the picture to command most of the space. Mrs. Ingram asked that students use approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the space for the visual portion, leaving the remaining third for the poem to go along with the visual. Students are responsible for dividing and

framing the large piece of construction paper for the final product on their own. That is to say, the paper has not been prepared for them; students use rulers to construct the frames for their representation.

Some students split the visual portion into frames closely replicating those that Wiesner accomplished in his book. The frames were useful in depicting movement and action within the scene they were creating. Some of these configurations resembled the following:



Mrs. Ingram emphasized the use of space in their creation, encouraging students to fill each frame with colorful forms leaving no or very little white space. “I don’t want you to leave any white space in your picture,” she tells them. “Think of where your eyes go when looking at Wiesner’s illustrations.” She shows the students many examples in the picture book explaining balance and composition of art work for this visual representation.

Some students wanted to create their own expression of what they saw and felt when reading Wiesner’s book but Mrs. Ingram is purposeful in her directions. Unlike some activities where students are encouraged to experience a work of art and then express their thoughts and feelings through a self-chosen form of representation, Mrs. Ingram’s activity is semi-directed to fulfill her goal of teaching one particular artists’ understanding of the creative process. She wants her students’ representations to show a

connection to and inspiration from Wiesner's book. By showing students how one particular artist creates his works of art, students are introduced to a particular method of creation. In this way Mrs. Ingram demystifies art; it is not magic, it is imagining and methodically planning and executing an idea. When his readers ask him if his ideas come from personal experience, Wiesner has replied, "The truth is that the imagination needs no outside stimulus."³² Mrs. Ingram seeks to inspire the same spirit in her students' understanding of creation.

Saying that this visual art activity is semi-directed does not, however, detract from Mrs. Ingram's emphasis on the use of imagination in the process of re-creation. "I'm not asking you to copy David Wiesner," says Mrs. Ingram to her students, "What I am asking is that you use what you got from viewing the book and use your imagination to create your own ideas" (Observation notes, 2006). In this activity and others, students are encouraged to put their own "personal signature" (Barone & Eisner, 1997) onto their work. In their imaginative rendering of what they have perceived, in this case as a reflection of Wiesner's picture book, students make personal choices regarding the public communication of their inner ideas. As Eisner (2002) explains,

Awareness and idea are part of the process of meaningful artistic activity; but an idea needs a vehicle that will carry it forward, that will make it into an object or event that has a place in the world. To do this requires an imaginative leap into a form in which that transformation can occur. . . . To say that an imaginative construction must be formed is to embody a purpose. Imagination provides the initiating conditions that make genuine purposes possible. But imaginative constructions and plans developed from them should not be regarded as specifications or scripts; the act of expression is also an occasion for revising, even discovering and altering purposes. (p. 99)

³² <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/authors/wiesner/process/process7.shtml>

Although students were directed to execute their visual art in the *style* of Wiesner's illustrations, each student's representation reflected his or her personal imaginative vantage point – his or her “personal thumbprint” (Eisner 2002, p. 236). Furthermore, each visual representation illustrated the differences in student perspective regarding Wiesner's work and the personal importance of some images from the book over others.

Most students have finished their visual art and poetry; Mrs. Ingram is very impressed with the final products. The students' use of white space, framing, color, and dimension have fulfilled her wish that the students create a work in the style of David Wiesner's book. Even so, each student has created a personal work of art that represents his or her personal style as an artist and a poet. For instance, Cedric's picture uses soft colored pencil drawings of the frogs; accompanying his picture he has written an acrostic poem using the word *nature*:

Night skies
Adventurous
Trees
Under-appreciated frogs
Rivers
Engaging

George's work by contrast uses three separate frames within which he has drawn a clock tower during three phases of the evening. He used rich, vibrant oil pastels to complete his detailed illustration. Dora, a student whose illustration features a giant frog disproportionately sized to the roofs of the neighborhood houses, uses the title of the book as the basis for her acrostic poem:

Tonight frogs will fly
Unusual things will happen
Even a canine will be scared
Some will just stand and stare

Don't be scared
A little courage will help you
You will see this again.

Dora's last line alludes to the mysterious ending of the *Tuesday* story which reads, "Next Tuesday at 7:58 pm," and on the next page portrays a drift of pigs setting flight for their own eventful night.

Reinterpreting Tuesday through Music: Situations of Expressiveness

The final phase of the *Tuesday* arts-integrated activity is an exploration into representing the story through music. To do this, Mrs. Ingram scheduled a time for her students to visit Mrs. Scott's music room. There, Mrs. Scott has pulled out all of the instruments in her collection for students to play with and explore as they attempt to represent *Tuesday* through music. This is an opportunity for Mrs. Ingram's students to experience the story in yet another way. So far students have represented the story kinesthetically, through movement, visually through recreation of a personal work of art and linguistically through the creation of poetry. Each form of representation both reveals and conceals (Eisner 1994a; 1994b; 2002) in its attempts to communicate experience. As Eisner (1994b) has written,

. . . the public transformation from what is private into public form makes its communication possible. . . the opportunity to represent through some material or device provides the occasions for the invention or discovery of ideas, images, or feelings that were not necessarily present at the inception of the activity. Put another way, the act of representation is also an opportunity for creative thinking. (p. 80)

Mrs. Ingram provides a layering of interactions with arts engagement which increases opportunities for aesthetic experiences. "What is aesthetic is pervaded by an emotional tone made possible by the process of being engaged in a work of art" (Eisner 2002, p.

81). Increased exposure to aesthetic experiences cultivates students' intrinsic interest in the arts and arts engagement. "Intrinsic satisfaction," as Eisner refers to it, "in the process of some activity is the only reasonable predictor that the activity will be pursued by the individual voluntarily, that is, when the individual is able to make a choice about the activity" (2002, p. 203). This point is not lost on advocates concerned with stretching arts engagement into the future in support of a cultural democracy (Graves, 2005) in America.

Sitting on the choir risers in the music room, the delirious cacophony of sounds is slightly overwhelming as students try out one instrument and then another in their attempt to find just the right sound for the images they are trying to represent through music. Mrs. Ingram has divided the class into three groups for this activity and performance one to represent the beginning of the book mainly taking place in a swamp; the second group is to represent the middle of the book where the frogs are getting into their mischief, and finally the third group is responsible for expressing the ending. As I wander around the room amidst the groups I hear a lot of planning and negotiating. One student picks up at least four different instruments before settling on one he wants to signify the flying of the frogs through the neighborhood. Mrs. Ingram encourages the students to choose a specific image from the book. "You want to stay true to the book," says Mrs. Ingram to the groups as they rehearse, "the pictures, the feel, the mood" (Observation notes, 2006).

Listening to the students to rehearse all at the same time it is difficult to discern the making of music from the constant din but slowly the students carve out a workable musical performance and are ready to share it with the group. The first group plays the image of the swampy forest at night time to represent the beginning of the book. Their

musical interpretation included high cricket-like sounds, harpsichord chimes signifying the droplets of water and a rattle and hissing sound that signified a snake. The group increased and decreased tempo adding different instruments at different times that created a well-orchestrated affect. Mrs. Ingram was very impressed with their performance.

The second group, representing the middle of the book added the element of conductor to the performance to let the musicians know when to enter, when to stop, when to get louder, and when to subdue their instruments. The conductor controlled the tempo and kept the performance running smoothly. Interestingly this group was critical of their own performance citing it as having “too much drama.” Neither Mrs. Ingram nor the audience agreed. By all accounts the representation of the middle of the book offered an affective rendering of flying frogs and the unfolding of the odd events that took place in *Tuesday*. The third group’s performance mirrored the first in that the end of the book shows the frogs returning to their swampy home after their long adventurous night. The instruments used create soft, gliding, and peaceful sounds signifying the end of the story as well as the end of an interesting day of learning with Mrs. Ingram.

Forms of Representation & Cultivating Intelligences: Situations of Arts-Mindedness

From Mrs. Ingram’s point of view, the *Tuesday* activity reflects her work with multiple intelligences and to be sure, this activity touched on many of the multiple intelligences. For example the movement activity touched on the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, the visual art activity promoted the visual-spatial intelligence, the poetry portion, the linguistic intelligence, the interpersonal intelligence was touched on every time students came together to make decisions and perform and finally the last phase of the *Tuesday* activity cultivated the musical intelligence. In each of the creative tasks

involved in this unit of study, students were engaged with the arts in such a way that their intelligences were allowed to shine and become more developed.

While Gardner (1999) worries that the shadow side of MI theory is the risk that students will be confined to or labeled with a single intelligence at the exclusion of others, Mrs. Ingram's emphasis is on broadening students' experiences across the intelligences. Her work follows Gardner's basic philosophical purposes behind the theory, namely that, "we are not all the same; we do not all have the same kinds of minds (that is, we are not all distinct points on a single bell curve); and education works most effectively if these differences are taken into account rather than denied or ignored" (p. 91). Mrs. Ingram creates a classroom environment where students can develop all of their intelligences to the fullest capacity and experience many opportunities to do so.

Moreover Mrs. Ingram's *Tuesday* activity reflects what Eisner (1994b; 2002) describes as the three modes of treatment of forms of representation, that is, the forms or vehicles students use to display aesthetic experience. He has named these modes the *mimetic*, *expressive*, and *conventional*. Two of these, the *mimetic* and *expressive* are particularly apparent in assessing the *Tuesday* activities. The mimetic mode of treatment "conveys through imitation, that is, it represents by replicating within the limits of the medium employed, the surface features of some aspect of the qualitative world" (Eisner 1994, p. 48). Eisner's mimetic mode, I argue, also extends to replicating the qualitative aspects of particular works of art – an activity that digs deeper than merely the surface aspects of the qualitative world.

Master painters, for example, are often trained by re-creating the works of renowned artists. Likewise, students engaged in replicating the style of Wiesner's book

were engaged in the mimetic mode by imitation. In their effort to render “true” representations of images from the book, for instance the images of the frogs, the clock tower, or the swamp, Mrs. Ingram’s students strived to achieve a skilled treatment of qualities of the work of art. Students worked deliberately with artistic qualities such as space, linear and aerial perspective, and dimension. Furthermore, students focused on replicating a form of realism that worked to capture the essence of Wiesner’s own paintings from the book.

“Mimesis,” Eisner (2002) notes, “is not the only way of representing images and conveying meaning. The arts can depict not only what is seen or heard; they can also depict what is felt (p. 16). Representing this feeling mode of treatment through forms of representation is what Eisner has labeled the *expressive* mode. As students engaged in representing the *Tuesday* book in different ways, through music, movement, and visual art, each had to call upon different aspects of composition in the creation of feeling in their rendering.

As students worked together to create movements to characterize the story, or as they chose musical instruments to convey the mood and feel of the story as they performed it, students were working in the expressive mode. ‘The meaning secured from a work depends not only on the features of the work but also on what the individual brings to it (Eisner 2002, p. 17). Each musical performer, movement actor, and visual artist brings his or her own expressive feeling to the work through his or her technical expertise or as Eisner points out, “through accident” (p. 17). Over time as technical skills mature students will be able to express deeper and richer feelings in what they have created. The other side of this is the reception of the expressive mode of treatment by the

audience. As performances become richer, more technically apt, more deliberate in their expressive rendering, the received aesthetic by others has the potential to become more powerful and move beyond the boundaries of art into the creation of culture and society.

As Dewey (1934) has noted,

Expression strikes below the barriers that separate human beings from one another. Since art is the most universal form of language, since it is constituted, even apart from literature, by the common qualities of the public world, it is the most universal and freest form of communication. Every intense experience of friendship and affection completes itself artistically. (p. 270)

The expressive form reveals the feeling and meaning of works of art and through the transactional quality of rendering and aesthetic experience between the creator and the audience; it is this important lesson that Mrs. Ingram is teaching in creating spaces for students to explore the expressive mode of treatment.

Building Imagination: Bringing Artists into the School

At the end of the day I walk with Mrs. Ingram's class down to the gymnasium where the whole school is gathered to experience a "Rhythmic World Field Trip," with Dan the drumming man. Dan is a working artist in the city who works with schools to introduce students to various styles of drumming. Dan is visiting Edgebrook as a result of their teachers' participation in the Aesthetic Institute through a university-based program in the city. Dan will spend an hour engaging students in the artistic qualities and sounds of his vast collection of percussion instruments.

Students file into the gymnasium and sit down, younger grades in the front, older kids in the back. As students continue to file into the gym, Principal Hansen is leading the group in the newest all-school song they are learning called, "Make a Difference." When

the song concludes and Ms. Hansen has introduced Dan to the students, he takes over launching immediately into drum riffs on a large, tall bongo drum. He has the students use their hands to clap a steady beat while he improvises, playing different riffs on the bongo drum, blowing a whistle as he does. He finishes to loud and enthusiastic applause. As the students quiet again, he tells them: “Through music you can learn about different cultures and cultural expressions” (Observation notes, 2006). He begins drumming again on the bongo drum, showing the range of what the drum can do. His hands move swiftly as he performs a rapid-fire beat that creates a frenetic cascade of sound, then, a few moments later slowing down his movements and at the same lightening his touch creating a calmer, smoother, moodier sound. The students are rapt in their attention to Dan’s hands as they move expertly over the surface of the drum. Dan explains that drums have been used throughout the history of the world as a form of communication and for celebrations, rituals, and dance.

Dan demonstrates use of the West African *Djembes* drum which is shaped like a chalice and uses a single skin as its drum head, usually made from the skin of a goat. The inside of the drum is completely hollow which creates the distinctive resonating sound that is its trademark. Next Dan shows the students a percussion instrument used in Arabic, Jewish, Assyrian, Persian, Balkan, Greek, and Turkish music called the *Darbuka*,³³ which is a drum that somewhat resembles the Djembes, although the sound is quite different. With the *Darbuka*, Dan places his hand inside the drum from the bottom, to change the timber of the sound it makes. This drum is often used for the music that accompanies belly dancing.

³³ This instrument goes by different names depending on the country using it, for instance in Greece it is known as the *Toumberleki*; the name *Darbuka* is the general name used to refer to this instrument.

Dan has three students come up to the front with him and help him perform. He plays a Cuban box drum known as a *Cajon* and the students play a bell, *maracas*, and *claves*. He performs a call and response common to Cuban music: “*Cha, cha, cha –awa – heeta*,” while the trio improvises along with him. The *Cajon*, box drum is one he made himself out of dresser drawer with the help of his music teacher. The box drum is used in creating the rhythms used in the Cuban *Rumba*. A boy and girl from each class come up to dance and then Dan invites the teachers up to dance as well, to the thunderous applause of the students.

The performing students and teachers sit down and Dan continues, “Close your eyes and let your ears go wild with imagination.” Dan uses sleigh bells, pea-pods as rattles and a single-stringed percussion instrument called a *Berimbau* that hails from Brazil and is used in a martial art styled dance called a *Capoeira*, to awaken the students’ imaginations. “Each and every one of you has an imagination,” Dan continues, “Imagination requires food and food for the imagination includes books, music, theater etc. We’re here to help you to develop your imagination!” I look around and see that every student and teacher has his or her eyes closed working to create the images from the sounds Dan plays using his varied percussion instruments.

The Workings of the Imagination

Dan’s collaborative performance with Edgebrook students treats imagination as a capacity that can be constructed over time and strengthened through experience, opening spaces for their future collaboration with artistic life and invention. Greene (2001), too, has noted, “. . . the capacity imagination gives us to move into the ‘as if’ – to move beyond the actual into invented worlds [and] to do so within our experience” (p. 82).

Perhaps many of Edgebrook students will never have the opportunity to travel to West Africa, Brazil, or Cuba in their lifetime, but through imagination –through imagination and memory – students can visit there any time. Greene further tells us, “To enter a created world, an invented world, is to find new perspectives opening on our lived worlds, the often taken-for-granted realities of everyday” (p.83). Drawing students out of their lived worlds toward possibilities is a strength drawn from the arts and imagination.

Imagination, Dewey (1934) tells us,

. . . is a way of seeing and feeling things as they compose an integral whole. It is the large and generous blending of interests at the point where the mind comes in contact with the world. When old and familiar things are made new in experience, there is imagination. When the new is created, the far and strange become the most natural inevitable things in the world. There is always some measure of adventure in the meeting of the mind and universe, and this adventure is, in its measure, imagination [*italics in original*]. (p. 267)

Arts-centered schools that provide students opportunities to engage in flights of the imagination are offering students fresh ways of seeing, thinking, and even behaving in the world. Recognizing imagination as a useful capacity for growth and innovation is an important characteristic of arts-learning and arts-centered school reform.

Dan ends his visit with a participatory, improvised hip-hop rap performed by Edgebrook students by inviting a couple of students up to the stage to bust a rhyme about their school experience. Dan explains to the students that hip-hop music has a long tradition going back to the roots of African music. Like the spirituals of old, like jazz and the blues, hip-hop music relates the stories of different times, places, and diverse peoples’ endeavors to live an expressive life in America. Through the use of their imaginative

capacity, Edgebrook students have the opportunity to share an awareness of previous times, in this case, through the musical styles from home and around the world.

Summary Sketch

Mrs. Ingram's intentions as an arts-integrated teacher and an arts-centered reformer are evident in the learning environment she creates in a number of ways. First, for Mrs. Ingram teaching is a personal endeavor. She treats her students like an extension of herself and her classroom as an extension of home life. Though she does not articulate the comparison of her classroom to the milieu of home, there are aspects of her classroom and her teaching that fit this characterization. It is this aspect of Mrs. Ingram's teaching that successfully builds a sense of community in her classroom.

Second, Mrs. Ingram's interest in creating a home-like atmosphere in the classroom supports her moral intentions. Her interest in the well-being of her students and her excitement when she experiences breakthroughs with students who might be shy or are not experiencing the full benefit of her classroom is testimony to her care and concern as an educator.

Third, Mrs. Ingram views her classroom activities and teaching pedagogy as would an interested researcher. Her own growth as a teacher relates to her continued understanding of multiple intelligence theory and arts-integrated learning. She works to implement strategies and pursues research ideas that add to this growth and understanding. Moreover, like other arts-integrated teachers we have seen, Mrs. Ingram values the ideas of theorists who disseminate useful information regarding what she is trying to achieve in her classroom. By continually expanding her knowledge of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and creating novel ways of experiencing these in the

classroom, Mrs. Ingram insures that her students will continue to strengthen their talents in multiple ways.

Fifth, using the *Tuesday* activity as a rich example of work in Mrs. Ingram’s classroom, it is clear that Mrs. Ingram’s students experiences a high level of arts-engagement in the classroom in support of the cognitive and imaginative aspects of arts-learning both from an Eisnerian perspective of continued exposure to multiple forms of representation and through the strengthening of talents from a developmental perspective.

Sixth, Mrs. Ingram’s creation of the classroom curriculum offers students a varied experience with the arts. In observing her teaching and classroom activities Mrs. Ingram provided five types of arts-embedded situations for students which are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Arts-Embedded Situations Enacted in Mrs. Ingram’s Classroom

Situations of Home	Situations of home are supported in the connectedness Mrs. Ingram conveys to her students and her desire to keep teaching personal, to teach respect for each other, themselves, and the arts.
Situations of Growth & Caring	Situations of growth and caring are supported in the ways Mrs. Ingram relates to her students in very personal ways and in her creation and usage of Group Rating which builds community and relationships in the classroom.
Situations of Artistry	Situations of artistry are supported through activities like the Constitution Day presentation that focused on performance, on the process of construction of a performance, and the challenges of being a performing artist
Situations of Expressiveness	Situations of expressiveness were present in the <i>Tuesday</i> activity and in the music extension of that curriculum activity.
Situations of Arts-Mindedness	Situations of arts-mindedness were supported through the <i>Tuesday</i> picture book activity that focused on the cognitive processes behind creation and multiple forms of representation. This multi-faceted activity taught students to think like artists.

For Mrs. Ingram, a central theme of her style of instruction and choice of curriculum activity was focused on building relationships in the classroom, relationships between students, and relationships between students and the arts. She focused on home, growth, caring, and connection and built these ideas into her personal mission as a teacher. The arts augment these central themes and help her fulfill her mission as an arts-centered school reformer.

Finally, Mrs. Ingram's classroom and Edgebrook Elementary School has been delicately fashioned by its students, teachers, and artists, into a space that is friendly to the possibilities of the imagination, as this poem by one of Mrs. Ingram's students reminds us:

My Imagination . . .

A blazing desert,
or tiny islands,
stranded out at sea
A mountain range,
or magic castle,
in a fantasy
It doesn't matter
where or when
it doesn't matter why
But when I start to imagine things,
I can seem to fly (Rachel, fifth-grader, Edgebrook Elementary school, 2006)

Mrs. Ingram's Response

Dear Cassie,

First, I wanted you to know how honored I felt when I read the chapter you wrote. I thought you captured the atmosphere in my classroom and my teaching style and philosophies perfectly. When you observed in my classroom, I would totally agree that the sections of your chapter interpreting arts-integration in my classroom got to the heart of what we were trying to do at our school. However, it seems we have moved farther away from that in the last two years. I am sure a change in building leadership has something to do with that. However, as individual teachers, I see the push still being to integrate the arts in a thoughtful way in all of our curricula. For me the next step would be to develop arts and MI based interventions to help students struggling in the content areas. Please keep in touch; I would love to hear how things go for you.

Sincerely,

Natalie Ingram

CHAPTER SEVEN

MR. CHADEK'S FOURTH GRADE CLASSROOM

LELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In the first place, the school must itself be a community life in all which that implies. Social perceptions and interests can be developed only in a genuinely social medium – one where there is give and take in the building up of a common experience That involves a context of work and play in association with others. The plea which has been made for education through continued constructive activities . . . rests upon the fact they afford an opportunity for a social atmosphere. In place of a school set apart from life as a place for learning lessons, we have a miniature social group in which study and growth are incidents of present shared experience. Playgrounds, shops, workrooms, laboratories not only direct the natural active tendencies of youth, but they involve intercourse, communication and cooperation, – all extending the perception of connections. (John Dewey, 1916, p. 358)

My goal is to simply give students the best year of schooling that I can. They are going to have a fun year, they are going to like it, they're going to remember it and everything feeds into that. I still believe that if kids are having fun they're going to be receptive to learning. I believe that's true. (Mr. Chadek, fourth grade teacher, interview transcript, 2006)

Everyday People: Art & Community at Leland Elementary School

It's a cool night in the city as I head over to Leland Elementary School for their annual community arts event. Outside the front door a crowd is gathered around a cauldron of fire. The fire glows its warm reflection on the faces of the observers, a Leland Elementary School parent and metal-work artisan is demonstrating how he crafts his whimsical metal creations out of the flames. The hollow banging beat of the artist's hammer punctuates the swishing sounds of the passing traffic creating an industrial

harmony; the sparks from the hammer brighten up the evening sky, drifting ever-upwards until they disappear.

I pass this growing mass of observers and make my way into the school. A sign over the front door reads: Kennedy Center West, heralding the atmosphere of the famous John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in New York City. Inside, Leland is hopping with activity. The halls are full of parents, students, siblings, and community members who have come to this annual arts event that invites the community in to share its art-making lives. Though many schools celebrate and honor the artistic work of its students, fewer schools invite parents and community members to participate, as artists, in such a celebration. Dr. Emma Carter, principal of Leland Elementary School discovered early on that there was rich artistic talent within the community, particularly in the parent community. Wanting to reach out to include the community in the mission of the school Dr. Carter asked a group of parents to coordinate a night of celebrating the arts. Such celebrations have taken place at Leland every year since its inception.

Leland Elementary Cultivating a Love for the Arts

The front doors open into a large atrium with the cafeteria located through a door on the left. The atrium and surrounding hallway areas are filled with works of art hanging from movable, cloth-covered bulletin boards. On one panel I see a group of watercolor paintings painted by a Leland student's grandfather and mother. The card presenting the paintings reads: "My grandfather's paintings from England and my mother's animal pictures." On another panel a plaster sculpture of a woman's pregnant belly has been painted mostly blue with colorful flowers over one side of it; the title of this work reads, not surprisingly, "The Big Blue Belly." At a table sits a parent displaying her work as a

landscape architect with a placard describing her journey from the business world to the more creative work of landscape architecture. Nearby another parent is offering artistically-crafted haircuts, another way of expressing creativity. In the library a gifted storyteller has drawn a crowd of children and adults. He is spinning a yarn using the children's suggestions as fodder for his story. There is much laughter as students throw out whacky non-sequiturs and improbable turns of events. However, the storyteller proving unshakable keeps the story spinning to the audience's delight.

I head to the auditorium where a placard near the entrance announces the evening's performances:

- 6:30 Clarinet –Ronnie Wanamaker's dad!
- 7:00 African Dancing/ Drums
Flute
Flamenco Storytelling through Dance
- 8:00 Rock!!

The seating in the auditorium is filling fast as people prepare for the forthcoming performances. Ronnie Wanamaker's dad gets up and with a couple of nervous squawk begins playing a set of tunes representing the Folk Blues circa 1905-1935. The audience's sincerity in listening impresses me. Not one person in the audience is chatting or moving around; their respect for the performer and understanding of audience responsibility is clear, yet the performance is not solemn as several young children dance to the bluesy music in the area below the front of the stage. Ronnie's dad finishes to a sustained burst of applause; smiling widely, he leaves the stage.

In the break between performances I wander back into the hall to observe the people. This event has drawn a large community of people illustrating a diversity of lifestyles. I see one parent, both arms embellished with sophisticated and colorful tattoos

and some body piercing, stealthily navigating a stroller through the cramped hallways chatting alongside a father sporting a lemon yellow sweater thrown over his polo shirt holding the hand of his young son. A small blonde-haired little girl with the beginning twists of dreadlocks walks by sipping on a sprite and taking in the art. Strollers in different sizes jockey amongst the pedestrians as moms and dads stop to chat or turn their attention to works of art hanging on the exhibit walls. Many others are standing around casually talking to one another sipping on lattes and snacks that have been donated by a local independent coffee house. The mood at this event is relaxed. People do not seem restless to head home nor are they urging one another to get through the event. The spectators are here to enjoy a night with the arts; indeed celebrating their love for the arts as part of a collaborative community.

A group of African drummers and dancers push through the hallway crowd and make their way into the auditorium, the drummers already beating out a steady rhythm as they walk. I follow the dancers and other spectators through the double doors of the auditorium and am quickly caught up in the electrifying energy of this dance and drumming troupe. The entire audience jumps to their feet, clapping to the complicated rhythms the drummers are thunderously beating out. The dancers ululate and holler and many of the audience members do the same as the musical beats become more intricate and the dancing more frenzied and elaborate. There is a magic and energy in the participation between the artists dancing and the audience taking it all in.

Chairs that have been set out for the performances are being pushed to the side of the room as the audience works to widen their space for dancing. The temperature of the room is rising with the more and more people from the hallway are squeezing in to see

the dancing for themselves- to work themselves into the performance. The performance ends leaving dancers, drummers, and audience nearly breathless. The dancers take a bow in time with the music and rhythmically spill out of the auditorium, back into the hall.

Aesthetic Encounters, Building Community, & Cultural Democracy

Leland's night with the arts is a culmination of a vision for the Leland Elementary School community – a vision held by the principal, Dr. Emma Carter as well as the teachers, parents, students, and community members associated with the school. Its purpose is to illuminate the talent within the community and in doing so to awaken, in a personal way, the aesthetic sensibilities of both the performers and audience. “Aesthetic encounters are situated encounters,” writes Maxine Greene (2001), “that means that the perceivers of a given work of art apprehend that work in the light of their backgrounds, biographies and experiences” (p. 175). As the spectators at this event soak up the generous offerings of art through dance, music, visual art, storytelling, and artisan craft among other forms, each is affected in a singularly personal way; through the personal experience of encountering these artistic renderings, the community is “. . . made conscious, sometimes abruptly, of alternative modes of being alive, of relating to others, of becoming what [they] are not yet” (Greene, 2001, p. 99).

Witnessing such experiences at Leland Elementary School works to convince me that the depth of arts-embeddedness – that is the extent to which the arts permeate the whole culture of the school could be the most important and defining characteristic of successful arts-centered school reform. The arts, in this setting and in the classrooms I observed at Leland Elementary School, in Ms. Bakke's class in chapter four, and throughout my observations all over the school, are a state of mind. Arts-learning as a

state of mind is a crucial aspect of arts-centered school reform. Sustaining and cultivating such a state of mind amongst the members of the school community is the important work of arts-centered school reformers.

Walking toward the school parking lot after Leland Elementary School's lively evening with the arts, I once again reflect on the diversity in color and lifestyle of this school community and the passionate effort involved in creating memorable experiences with the arts. This perfect blending of vision, community involvement, and passionate love for arts cannot help but be infectious; with this in mind, I turn my observational attention to the aims and activities of fourth grade teacher Henry Chadek.

Meeting Mr. Chadek

Upstairs on the second level of the two-story Leland Elementary School building resides the fourth and fifth-grade classrooms. On the hallway wall at the top of the stairs, a former group of students have painted a mural with a banner above it that reads in hand-drawn lettering, "Secret Garden." Puffy clouds made of cotton adorn the blue-painted banner creating the sky above the secret garden. The small mural depicts a brick wall with an arch-shaped doorway, through which observers can view a park bench in the distance set along a dirt path leading up to it. Painted trees, flowers and bushes complete the colorful ensemble of pretty outdoor images. Below the mural is an actual wooden bench that runs along the wall, a permanent fixture of the school's architecture. On this, students have laid bright green tissue paper to simulate grass and have affixed multitudes of tissue paper flowers with pipe cleaner stems, leaning in discordant angles to one another along the space where the bench meets the wall.

Mr. Henry Chadek's classroom is down the hall on the left. I am observing Mr. Chadek's teaching at the suggestion of second grade teacher, Ms. Bakke and the principal, Dr. Emma Carter. Both were persuasive in convincing me that Mr. Chadek's masterful teaching deserves chronicling; based on my initial observation of his classroom, I agreed. With more than thirty years of experience in education including eleven years teaching fourth grade in Minnesota, two years as a sixth grade teacher, ten years as head of teacher training for a large suburban district, three years as a consultant, several years of teaching summer teaching institutes and college level courses, and a stint as a school librarian, Mr. Chadek's range of educational experiences in different types of learning environments run deep. It is this depth of experience that draws me to want to learn more about Mr. Chadek's aims as an educator.

I quickly reintroduce myself to Mr. Chadek as he breezes by, taking pictures of his classroom. A few parents are lingering in the classroom too, some catching Mr. Chadek as quickly as I did to exchange a few words, others working out the final details of the morning with their children before leaving. Mr. Chadek exudes enthusiasm as he moves blithely through the intricate organization of his classroom, his keen, kind eyes peering through glossy lenses, expertly scanning the room. Mr. Chadek is a medium-built man, over six feet tall. Today he is wearing long pants and a Hawaiian-print button-up shirt. On his feet he wears a pair of grey-blue Crocs, a plastic slip-on style shoe currently popular and worn by many of the Leland students; on his wrist he wears a Mickey Mouse watch with a bright red band. His style is leisurely while serious, hinting that he knows when to be playful and when to get down to business; his room reflects this attitude as well. A couple of students wander over to where Mr. Chadek is still taking pictures and

begin telling him stories about the weekend, he laughs with them and makes jokes. An African American student named Aurelius walks by and Mr. Chadek gives his hair a squeeze and says, “I’m the only one allowed to do this; it’s a stress reliever.” The boy laughs and shakes his head at the shared joke, heading in the direction of the Gathering place.

The Gathering

School begins at 9:00 a.m. Each day at approximately 9:05 a.m. after the attendance and lunch count has been recorded, Mr. Chadek’s class gathers on a large oval carpet sequestered amongst three sides of book shelves, counter tops holding school paraphernalia and other odds and ends, and the students’ wire cubbies. It’s a relatively small space, where students, once gathered together there, are often overflowing into the walk way. The Gathering is a chance for Mr. Chadek to explain what will take place throughout the day and to disseminate other important information as needed. Each morning Mr. Chadek writes out the day’s activities on a giant tablet so students can refer to it throughout the day and know where they need to be at any given time. However sometimes the activities are quirkily and mysteriously titled such as “Three Ring Circus,” “Sam I Am,” and “Mine all Mine.” Each of these particular cryptic titles refers to an activity based on the three branches of government, a poetry unit, and a tactile task of mining rocks and minerals (respectively). Each of these activities has been designed to pique students’ interest in the upcoming lessons –“it keeps them guessing,” Mr. Chadek says to me³⁴ with a smile.

³⁴ See Appendix E for an example of a typical day’s activities in Mr. Chadek’s classroom.

Infusing Creativity into Curriculum Activities

The students are sitting down while Mr. Chadek is explaining the next in a series of seven book reports students have been doing on a weekly basis. “For The Book Parade book report,” explains Mr. Chadek, “you need to make a miniature float to represent the story you read. The book must be a novel with chapters, register the book me before starting.” For this activity students will construct and decorate a float like those seen in a parade. Mr. Chadek’s directions suggest that students use a flat-bed type trailer made of cardboard, a lid form a shoebox, or the entire shoebox fitted with toy wheels and hitch connections on both ends so each float can be connected to the other floats in the parade. Students are to decorate the float in any creative way using any materials but must be sure to display the book’s title, author, setting, and characters. Once completed, each float will connect to the other in a long parade of the books read for this book report activity. Ribbons will be given for floats in the following categories: Best Fiction Design, Outstanding Non-fiction Design, Best over-the-top Outlandish Design, Most Colorful, Glitzy Razzle-Dazzle, and Most True to the Print. The book float is the fifth in the series of books reports.

The first book report completed by students was a traditional, handwritten essay but had students create an artistic cover for the project; the second was what Mr. Chadek referred to as a tri-orama, a three sided representation of the book made of construction paper and pictures, highlighting details of the story. For the third book report, students typed their narrative report in 14 or 18 point font and then shrunk it down using a photocopier. Fellow students then used magnifying glasses to read each other’s work. For

another, students typed their reports on a 3 x 5 index card which were then posted on the ceiling of the classroom; students then lay on the floor on their backs and used binoculars to read them. The current book project has students working on the book floats which will be “paraded” outside the classroom for visitors to see. The next book project will be to create a mini-book, about the size of a match book, summarizing the story in miniature. The seventh book report will use a representation of the student’s choice. Each of these creative activities pairs the rigors of school, in this case a fast pace of reading seven books in seven weeks on top of all their other in-class and homework responsibilities, with the opportunity to engage in a set of fun, engaging activities displayed in artistic form often involving a problem that needs solving. For instance some activities involve solving small problems such as figuring out how to make cardboard float roll or working to get an entire book report to fit on a 3 x 5 index card. “Most of my arts [activities] are based on some sort of problem solving,” Says Mr. Chadek (Interview transcript, 2006). The intricacy and varied requirements of the Seven Books in Seven Weeks activities keeps students focused on the constructive and aesthetic aspects of their book reports, shaping what they learn as a result. In addition, Mr. Chadek works to mold a learning environment that is conducive to their exploration of creative ideas. “If you put kids in an exciting, creative learning environment,” Mr. Chadek comments, “they will get that creativity, even if by osmosis” (Personal communication, 2006). Mr. Chadek designs activities that appeal to student creativity in various ways. As Eisner (2002) observes,

The curriculum activity shapes the sorts of thinking that children are to engage in. . . . Every time a teacher designs a curriculum activity, events are planned that have an impact on students’ thought processes. Thus, how

curriculum activities are designed, the modes of cognition that are evoked, the forms of representation that are presented or which students are given permission to use all affect what students are likely to think about. (pp. 150-151)

Though simple in their design, the Seven Books in Seven Weeks project provides students with several provocative ideas for displaying what they know about the stories they read in multiple artistic and creative forms. This in turn may spur them on to further imagine and generate their own ideas whether in regards to displays for book reports or representations of other inspirations; in this way, Mr. Chadek models “lateral thinking” (de Bono, 1970) for his students, that is, a way of thinking that focuses on “generating as many approaches as one can even *after* one has found a promising one” (p. 39). Mr. Chadek generates multiple approaches to projects which subsequently affects what students think about. The more opportunities students are given to experience creativity and imagination –indeed the more they are given to think *about* – the more they are primed to think laterally themselves as they engage in future projects in the classroom. Mr. Chadek’s lesson opens up possibilities for ways of thinking that cultivate creativity for students as learners.

A Wide & Varied Experience: Mr. Chadek’s Aims

For the first couple days of my observations I find myself fully absorbed in the colorful menagerie of experiential, tactile, and aesthetic materials in the classroom. Every wall of the classroom, every nook, cranny, shelf, and counter is filled with a wide array of learning materials, activities, books, and artifacts that invite closer examination. The room itself is long and rectangular in shape with two entrances, one toward the front of the room, one toward the back. Originally two smaller classrooms, the wall dividing the

two rooms was knocked down when Leland Elementary moved into the building providing a much larger space for Mr. Chadek to create his classroom environment.

In the area near the front entrance of the room is the Gathering place. On the floor is a large oval-shaped woven rug. In this space is where students' work crates are located. Each student has his or her own wire crate serving as a place to hold and display their school work and projects. The crates or cubbies, as Mr. Chadek and the students refer to them, are no larger than a milk crate and sitting on their sides and stacked on top of one another, are just big enough to display projects and hold small artifacts created by students. Mr. Chadek encourages students to make projects no larger than would fit in their cubby knowing that for many of his students their tendency is to create large and elaborate projects. By limiting the size of projects to fitting in their cubbies, Mr. Chadek emphasizes "intricacy, quality, and attention to detail" (Personal communication, 2006). Short counters and bookshelves inhabit this space; a collection of CDs sits next to an ipod that plays eclectic styles of music throughout the day. In the same area there is also a boom-box with a collection of CDs displaying selections by Liberace, The Music of Ancient Egypt, and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Collection.

Behind the stacked rows of student cubbies, on the north end of the large room is a line of four desks facing the back of the cubbies with a vantage point peering through the wire of the crates into the Gathering spot. Behind these four is a group of six desks clustered in a group and perpendicular to these a cluster of six more. Student desks are interspersed in and throughout the classroom, in and amongst tall bookshelves that fully skirt the room and are jammed with reading books and learning materials. There are milk crates stuffed with binders bearing titles such as, Sharks, Wolves, Science, Indians, Maps,

Continents, and boxes full of items that can be used as materials for other projects and activities, some labels on these boxes include: String, Ribbon, Frogs, Noses, Compliments, Ideas, Straws, Colored Glasses, and Animal Mask Pieces. Everywhere one's eyes wander in the classroom there is something new or formerly unnoticed catching one's gaze. All materials are made available to those who want to look, to play, and to experience.

On the South end of the classroom in the back left-hand corner is the classroom reading library. Book shelves, six shelves high, are overflowing with reading books categorized by topic and genre. An Oriental carpet has been thrown down and pillows have been strewn about; a small table with a lamp washes the area in a luminous glow creating a comfortable atmosphere for the small space's inhabitants. Also at the same end of the classroom is a small portioned off section with four large wooden letters spelling CAFÉ over its makeshift entrance. Inside the café a table and chairs, enough tea cups for everyone in the classroom, a breadbox that routinely holds café-type snacks and a Deep Rock water dispenser standing next to a sink for washing up. The small alcove is a place made ready and waiting for students who have finished their work to come in and relax – a functional space but also a space intended for students to congregate in a society and community. Along one of the walls of the café area is a curio-type cabinet displaying a large collection of origami creations made by the students. This personal touch reminds visitors that this space is for students. This area is a privilege for Mr. Chadek's students - one they take very seriously and work to maintain. Each student helps out in keeping the

tea cups clean and the place orderly on a daily basis; indeed if they do not, there are consequences.³⁵

The south end of the classroom holds the remaining ten student desks. Amongst these desks there sits a round worktable and a “lab” of four Mac desktop computers in a row dividing the north end of the classroom with the south end. A line of windows run the length of the wall opposite the entrances to the classroom. The school is not equipped with air-conditioning so these windows are mostly left open now in the warm spring weather. Nearby construction, however, makes this arrangement difficult as the noise from the work site often proves overpowering in this classroom environment. Having said that, in general students do not seem affected by noise interruptions; their ability to concentrate in the midst of a high level of activity in the classroom is undeterred. Looking from the south end to the north I count thirteen lamps in various places, the kind of lamps one would have in their own home, some with large shades and ornate pedestals. The light cast from these lamps softens the ambiance of the room and provides warmth and home-like atmosphere to this learning space.

Persian and Oriental style rugs are placed in different places throughout the room under tables and in areas where students lounge. Carousal bookstands hold popular fiction books, the shelves are stacked with DVD’s, small games, and whimsy is all around. For instance on a table against a wall in Gathering spot, the stuffed, soft, heads of

³⁵ For a brief time during my observations students were not sharing the responsibility of keeping the cups cleaned and the area free from crumbs etc. Mr. Chadek closed off the café with a sign that read: “Out of Commission.” Mr. Chadek told students to talk amongst themselves and draw up a plan to get the café back. “If it’s to be, it’s up to you,” he told them. Three days later, without provocation, the students came back to Mr. Chadek with a written proposal regarding how the students would handle the cleaning of the café. Every student signed the proposal and the café was opened once again. This example illustrates the democratic pulse of this classroom in the sorts of situations Mr. Chadek devises through the construction of his classroom learning environment.

the original Three Stooges, Moe, Larry, and Curly, a little larger than the size of tennis balls, resting on a wooden crate of books, liven up the space. Elsewhere a clipper ship, robot, Viking cap, and a giant silver-wrapped Hershey Kiss share space with a teddy bear and Bugs Bunny on the top shelf of one bookcase. A basket filled with bunch of plastic pieces on an overturned milk crate says, “Put together the parts; see what you get...” Other baskets hold collections of kaleidoscopes, magnifying glasses, and binoculars. There are puzzles, erector sets, Lincoln logs, the Zome construction toy, building blocks and legos– all available for Mr. Chadek’s fourth graders. In various places around the room there are markers, construction paper, scissors, and assorted art supplies available for use at any time. There are collections of gem stones and minerals named and categorized ready for students to study during a free moment.

Several works of art adorn the limited wall-space high above the book shelves. Suspended from the ceiling are large orange, yellow, and fuchsia paper flowers scattered around a hanging poster with hand-drawn messages written in bubble lettering on bright-colored paper recalling the feel-good sentiments of the nineteen-sixties and seventies saying things like, “Enjoy the journey,” “Choose to make today the most productive, satisfying, joyous, fun day of your life,” “Laugh a bunch,” “Improve yourself,” “Show you care,” and “Be the best you can be; Do the best you can do.” Small cards on the many wooden shelves throughout the room ask questions like, “Did I tell you today you’re terrific?” A general feeling of support and togetherness emanates from these small additions to Mr. Chadek’s classroom environment and the students eat it up; this is a space in which students know they are cared for. Part workshop, part science lab, part art

studio, part historical museum, and part home-environment, Mr. Chadek has designed the room to be its own education.

A Specialized & Crafted Learning Space

Students are given a great deal freedom to roam this room, to touch, to feel, to listen, to play with, to find, to uncover and discover, all of its richness. The only guideline Mr. Chadek has for the educational environment he has created is: “if you can reach it; you can have it.” Therefore many of the items he does not intend for use are at the top of the room, hanging from the ceiling or otherwise unreachable by the average fourth grader. A message written by Mr. Chadek posted on the wall of the café captures the mood of this chockablock learning environment, it reads:

Welcome to Leland,

You are entering the world of gifted kids. As you walk around remember that through manipulation, experience and exploration we learn best. Intriguing, cozy niches are purposely designed for reading, imagining, thinking, playing, and relaxing. If we’re noisy and chatty, it’s because we’re excited about exploring our passions. Engage your own curiosity and wonder as you take in the environment. Enjoy your experience and our space and feel our enthusiasm for living and learning.

And oh, yes, find a comfortable spot, make a cup of tea, relax, converse and enjoy! -Henry Chadek, 2005

This message describes the heart of this educational space which beats with the interests and passions of students and teacher; students are invited in to live in this space for the year and to experience (or develop) their personal love for learning. The simple message above prepares visitors – be they teachers, students, parents, or community members – for what they are going to witness. As student teacher Emily Dane commented about Mr. Chadek’s classroom:

It’s a wonderland; adventures in wonderland. It’s totally unconventional. It’s just totally different from anything I’ve ever seen. It’s unique and I

thought I could really learn a lot from being in here. I could push my own boundaries and break out of the box. [That's] what I've been telling Henry, I need to break out of the box. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mrs. Dane, a student teacher working with Mr. Chadek for the spring semester, looks at his classroom as a learning opportunity in forming her own style of teaching and creating learning environments and activities for students. The room's unique qualities, the enthusiasm for learning that inhabits every space as it overflows with the stuff of curiosity and learning, works to develop a teaching sensibility in those who seek a broader view of what it means to create a workable learning environment and what it means to educate.

Mr. Chadek's room hosts many visitors throughout the day, week, and year. To begin with, this classroom has a legendary reputation within the school, especially amongst younger students who hope to be a student in it one day. But even amongst adults (who are not parents of a student in Mr. Chadek's class), the room is alluring. As Mrs. Dane notes,

There are always people just walking through the room and I always say to them, "touch things, feel things, it's okay" because everyone kind of has the same reaction when they walk in like, 'Oh my gosh...' You know, they're overwhelmed and then they get used to it. It's an ideal situation; an ideal environment. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Observing the many visitors to the classroom over my two week stay, the reactions were very similar. Visitor's eyes would widen, mouths spreading into a grin before immediately pointing to recognizable relics and books in the room that perhaps awakened their own memories of school or childhood. Indeed, many of the toys, manipulatives, books, and artifacts evoke the milieus of previous generations. Mr. Chadek's own fascination with popular fads of recent eras permeates the classroom in small but telling

ways making the classroom a flashy scene of serious learning and educational devices with a sprinkle of light-hearted kitsch. While it is a requisite of teaching to afford students a classroom space to inhabit, Mr. Chadek has taken the customary idea of a classroom to an entirely different place. His room is a very intentional reflection of his values as a teacher and a useful tool to communicate his style of learning. “Space may sound like a vague, poetic metaphor until we realize that it describes experiences of everyday life” (Palmer, 1993, p. 70). One of Mr. Chadek’s aims in educating is to provide students with experience living within a specialized and crafted learning space.

A written narrative cannot possibly fully capture the wealth of interesting artifacts in Mr. Chadek’s wonderland of learning however the above description offers some insight into the experiential, exploratory learning Mr. Chadek desires for his students as defined by the classroom environment. When asked about his philosophy of teaching, Mr. Chadek answers: “I don’t know. It’s eclectic, I don’t have any idea. [Laughs] I really don’t know what that would be –I don’t know one thing.” But then with the next beat, he adds this:

I think kids should be smarter every single day when they leave school than when they come in and I think they should like themselves more when they leave school than when they came in. Two things, they go together. You don’t teach self-esteem at 9:30 in the morning, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday –that’s not how you do it. It kind of goes through everything –that line, that ribbon that ties everything together. You feel good about it, you know, and I think that’s basically it. I *do not* think that education is tied up in the curriculum, I think the curriculum is a vehicle on which we ride through education and they learn skills and concepts and we tie the stuff to it. The more kinesthetic we can get it for more kids, the better it is. The more visual, because that’s another big block, less auditory, fewer lectures, [more] hands on, experiential. I think the experiential learning places are at the top of the learning heap –they put everything into play. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Perhaps Mr. Chadek does not consider his views on education a comprehensively formed philosophy of education but in his explanation of what he believes, his pedagogic creed (Dewey, 1897) shines through.

Four ideas emerge from the statement above. First, that for Mr. Chadek educating is first and foremost about the individual student –their feelings, self-esteem, and concept of themselves as people and learners. Second, that curriculum, while it is what is designed to propel students’ thinking in various ways is not the panacea for learning that some may think it is; for Mr. Chadek, there are bigger ideas at work, for instance his aspirations in keeping students’ interests awakened. Third, for Mr. Chadek the learning is in the doing, in the touching, the seeing, and as he says, the visual, each sense providing experiences that “put everything into play” in terms of what is learned and captured by the students’ imaginations. Indeed a fluidity of curriculum, experiences, and educational space permeate his classroom. Finally, as illustrated in the description, it is through a personal eclectic spirit and collection of artifacts that Mr. Chadek supports the first three accomplishments listed.

Crafting a Social Community: Situations of Growth & Caring

Mr. Chadek’s students do not spend a great deal of time at their desks. Movement throughout the room is customary and students often find their own place to work on projects, papers, and in-class assignments. A basket of clipboards are ever-present for students to use, allowing them a hard surface to work on wherever they land. Students use the Gathering place or a bench or plant themselves virtually anywhere they are able to focus their attention on their work with minimal distraction. Moreover students are free, almost at all times, to engage with one another. This might mean working on

assignments together or in parallel partnership –each students working on his or her assignments, readings, or projects but doing so within a community of fellow students.

During several activities throughout my time in Mr. Chadek’s room I observed students responsibly making use of the immense freedom in this classroom space. For his part Mr. Chadek acts as the facilitator in the classroom. He walks around the room as students work, always in tune to what kids should be doing; he doesn’t get distracted by his own affairs. He is aware of where kids are at, who is on task and who is not. He clearly has a lot of faith in their talents and thus students are afforded freedom as individual learners. Mr. Chadek moves through the room answering questions, offering challenges and validation as he goes. He is thinking about teaching while he is working. In some ways Mr. Chadek resists “conventional pedagogy” (Palmer 1993, p. 39) by fostering a more participatory classroom environment in which he shares power with his students and thus responsibility for their learning. In his style of teaching, Mr. Chadek points the way, he clarifies but he does not directly instruct very often. He allows for a lot of creativity because he offers opportunities for creativity and imagination based on his own values as an educator.

My observations, however, took place in the spring term toward the end of the year so I did not have the opportunity to experience Mr. Chadek’s room at the beginning of the year. “[It is] vastly different [now] from the beginning of the year,” Mr. Chadek explains. “[Students] have to have experience with the act of being able to choose and they have to have a lot, a lot of false starts before they get it right.” What Mr. Chadek offers students throughout the year is a never-ending supply of experiences that help build students’ capacity for being able to choose, to make wise (and perhaps sometimes

unwise) choices about their actions in class and with others and thus contributing to their learning. “Options, options, options,” Mr. Chadek explains in describing his aims for students. For Mr. Chadek learning centers are not a matter of plopping work down on a table and splitting kids into groups but in providing integrated thinking experiences appealing to kids’ curiosities in purposeful ways (Mr. Chadek, personal conversation, 2006).

In this way Mr. Chadek devises situations that are opened for students to experience the freedom of the physical space potentially leading to other types of freedom (e.g., intellectual or artistic). Such spaces also encourage student agency as they locate spaces in which to pursue personal interests and thus learn to be part of social learning community in communication with others in the process. As Greene (1995) observes,

Freedom is an achievement in the midst of life and with other human beings. People achieve whatever freedom they can achieve through increasingly conscious and mindful transaction with what surrounds and impinges, not simply by breaking out of context and acting in response to impulse and desire. And it seems clear that most people find out who they are only when they have developed some power to act and to choose in engagements with a determinate world. (pp. 177-178)

Mr. Chadek’s classroom environment serves as a determinate or defined world where students are able to explore the realms of freedom, communication, and community in a supportive environment. From my observations, student growth from the beginning of the year full of mistakes and false starts to the cohesiveness of the present is illustrated in student interactions with the environment and with each other in active construction of educational and personal freedom.

Facilitating the Learning Space

While watching Mr. Chadek as a facilitator in his classroom I observed an interest in cultivating a sense of industry in his students paired with a concern for their social skills. His classroom is designed to keep students working toward both goals of becoming more knowledgeable about subject matter while also gaining the social skills necessary for a meaningful life. While Mr. Chadek may not frame the discussion in these terms, his work as an experiential educator shares a common spirit with what John Dewey was seeking when he designed his laboratory school at the University of Chicago circa 1896.³⁶

For Dewey creating a laboratory school worked toward his aim of providing an education that established itself as a “working model” to pursue the merits of both psychological and sociological concerns in educating students (Dewey 1902, p. 94). In Dewey’s view the goal in creating a laboratory school was to create the idea of schooling as “. . . an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect life of the larger society and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science” (p. 29). Furthermore, Dewey (1902) maintains,

When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guaranty of larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious. (p. 29)

Although we do not see students sewing, working with wood, or gardening, among the many laboratory school activities that took place in Dewey’s school, in Mr. Chadek’s classroom, we do see an invested interest in creating a social, industrious atmosphere that

³⁶ Dewey’s school was first named the University Elementary School in 1896 and was renamed the Laboratory School in 1902 (Jackson in Dewey 1902/1990, p. xii).

at its center is concerned with student growth. Mr. Chadek's intention is not to replicate the laboratories of science or psychology as Dewey intended to do, although certainly there are aspects of his classroom that remain open to this possibility, but the laboratory model in this case, serves more as a metaphor for the ways in which Mr. Chadek has set up a learning environment intended to appeal to students' interests and formation of self, working toward both through arts as well as non-arts activities. In this respect the learning lab idea becomes symbolic of the type of arts-rich and integrated learning taking place in Mr. Chadek's classroom and the larger school environment.

Mr. Chadek's Broader Vision of Arts & Integration

Unlike Ms. Bakke, Mrs. Ingram, and Mrs. Fontaine, teachers whose classrooms are deliberately centered on the integration of the arts into the curriculum, Mr. Chadek encompasses a broader vision of arts-centered education. In Mr. Chadek's view, arts-learning is yet another manner in which students can engage with an experiential classroom environment (as well as the community environment) through their independent and collective exploration. Thus arts-integration takes on a different presence in Mr. Chadek's classroom as is apparent is his description of how students benefit from arts-learning at Leland,

I think they benefit [from arts-integration] because then they're learning more, simple as that. I think they see more . . . it makes the learning kind of stick out; it makes it purposeful other than just reading a book and talking about it, or doing something like that, but maybe going some place to reinforce ideas . . . when we went over to the Contemporary Museum of Art and there were still-life pictures in there and I personally didn't care for any of them, a few of them might have been a might bit expensive, you know and we were [saying] "that person's not wearing any clothes -why would anyone take that picture?" You know I was saying it to myself, why would you want to take a picture of that because some of them were portraits? Why would you want to take up all that talent and draw that?

And obviously somebody bought it. But then the kids came back and did some of these [portraits] with poems and stuff that they created. I like that, but I don't like it to be that everybody has to do it; I didn't chew on them that everybody had to turn one in. I don't even know if everybody did turn one in. There were ten or so and now we have a space for them and there were a few that didn't get them in and I like that. And I liked the way that Coach [art teacher] set it up, we went along with it and we did something and he did something downstairs with it. I like that because it keeps reinforcing art integration. But it isn't everything and it doesn't have to be every single year but it's kind of what we do. (Interview transcript, 2006)

What Mr. Chadek describes in this passage is a slightly different approach to arts-learning than we have seen in the previous three chapters but one that is equally important in representing the multiple voices in arts-centered school reform. Arts-learning, in this case, is not treated as a directed set of curricular ideas or activities but as an embedded artistic sensibility that colors all that takes place in the classroom. More often, students are allowed the freedom to engage or not to engage in arts-extensions and experiences. Thus students were offered an opportunity to create visual representations of what was seen at the Contemporary Museum of Art and to write poems to accompany them, or not. This kind of freedom of pursuit exemplifies Mr. Chadek's interest in allowing his students to construct their own meaning in the classroom. As Eisner (2002) has pointed out,

When the teacher's perspective is one that might be called emergent rather than prescriptive, the stakes for pedagogical innovation are higher and the demands greater. And when students themselves are invited to have a hand in defining their own purposes and in framing their own curricular activities, uniformity among students with respect to what they do and what they learn is much less likely. (p. 151)

Mr. Chadek's classroom structure and his sense of collaboration with both his classroom environment and outside entities describes his perspective as one that is emergent in Eisner's terms. In allowing students flexibility in defining their own purposes, in this case

regarding whether or not to engage in the arts-extension activity related to the Contemporary Museum of Art, he supports two important ideas. One, the need for students to be agents in their own learning, taking responsibility for their interests, thereby making what is learned a personal endeavor, and two, creating an individual presence within a broader learning community. As Dewey (1902) says, “the moment children act they individualize themselves, they cease to be a mass and become the intensely distinctive beings that we are acquainted with out of school, in the home, the family, on the playground, and in the neighborhood” (p. 32). Mr. Chadek merely offers his students environments, situations, and encounters with meaning-making in which to pursue this, to grow in the manner that reflects their individual cares, concerns, and talents.

While I did not get to visit the Contemporary Museum of Art with Mr. Chadek and his students, I was able to view the work that came out of this experience both in Mr. Chadek’s classroom and as part of Coach’s activities in art class (see section on Coach’s art class later in this chapter). On Mr. Chadek’s classroom wall, constructed as a small mosaic of poems inspired by an exhibit titled, “See into Liquid” at the Contemporary Museum of Art that showcased drawings, prints and photos based on water by artists from all over the world using water as the focus of their work. One student creation by Aurelius depicts a colorful surging wave encroaching land and short poem written in diamante style:

Water
Plain healthy
Hydrating surviving drinking
H2O bottle/ sugar flavor
Treating opening tasting

Fizzy sweet
Soda

This poem activity, tied in with a poetry unit that students were studying in class at the time, introduced different styles of poems such as haiku, cinquain, diamante, I Am poems, and free verse. The trip to the museum, poetry unit, and art installation in Coach's art class embody the Leland spirit of collaboration amongst curricula, teachers, and pedagogy, supporting Mr. Chadek's arts-integration vision in tangible form as "the kind of thing we do."

Including the Community in Pedagogy

A major component of the fourth grade curriculum is studying state history in various ways. To this end, on the second day of my observations in Mr. Chadek's classroom prepared to embark on a walking tour of the city surrounding the school and a guided tour through the state capitol building. For this trip Mr. Chadek's class was joined by Leland's other fourth grade classroom led by teacher, Mr. Rubens. I was able to accompany both classes on this field trip through the streets of the city and to the capitol.

Seeing the Sites: Field Trips & Integrated Curricula

After an early lunch at 10:30 a.m., a large group of approximately fifty-five students and four adults (including two teachers) headed out of Leland Elementary School to walk a wandering path through the city to the capitol less than one mile away from the school. The students were abuzz with excitement for their outing as they stood outside the doors of the school getting instructions. "Choose a partner that won't cause you drama," said Emily Dane, Mr. Chadek's student teacher. Students fumbled around getting paired up for the walk maneuvering their bodies into a haphazard two-by-two

formation. Before setting out, all students were handed a sheet with the title:

“Architecture Scavenger Hunt” written on the top and a list of items to find on the short walking trip to the capitol. Scavenger hunt questions included:

- Looking at your architectural terms list, how many architectural features can you find?
- Keep track of the columns you see on the trip. What is the most common type of column? What is the least common?
- Did you find any architectural features that were particularly interesting to you? Describe why?
- Can you note some differences between old and new buildings?
- What materials would you use to build a monument that you wanted to last forever?

This last question about monuments will emerge again in art class with Coach where Mr. Chadek’s students will begin an art unit on monuments.

The double line of students swarms and straggles along the city sidewalks peering up to the tops of buildings scouring for elements of architecture from their scavenger list; the adult chaperones are evenly stationed throughout the entourage and prod the students along if they linger too long in one spot. Mr. Chadek and his fellow fourth-grade teacher, Mr. Rubens led the group. As the students continue their walk Mr. Rubens halts in front of an older historical building and says, “Look at this building; is it rich or poor?”

“Rich,” more than one student answers.

“Why?” probes Mr. Rubens.

“More color, more texture,” answers one student.

“It’s not as simple and plain as a poor building,” says another.

Without further comment the Mr. Rubens and the group travels onward. In a few moments, Mr. Chadek and Mr. Rubens stop again and point out some gargoyles at the top corners of another historic building. The teachers walk together pointing out buildings that exhibit different architectural styles. One student stops the line and observes,

“Look at those columns, are they ionic?”

“What do you think,” responds Mr. Rubens.

“I think so,” responds the student, pointing out a few the characteristics of ionic columns.

“Yeah they are; good observation.”

A little while later, the group studies the features of a Methodist church built in 1859 and an historic hotel built in 1892, entirely made of stone.

“Why are newer buildings able to be taller?” Mr. Rubens asks.

“They found better ways to support the building?” suggests one student.

“Right; older buildings are stone, newer buildings are steel and concrete, both are stronger materials.”

On another stop along the path to the state capitol, Mr. Chadek and Mr. Rubens point out the State Trust Building which was built in 1923, close to the same time the building that houses their school was built. The State Trust Building has many similar features as their school which students are able to quickly identify. The group then moves on to an old cathedral basilica built in the gothic revival style of the 1200’s, although the cathedral began construction in 1902. “If you have binoculars, now would be a good time

to use them,” Mr. Rubens reminds the large group, but many have been viewing the historic city through these eye-pieces all along.

Arts-Centered School Reform & the Wider Community

Many arts-integration supporters advocate for schools to tap into the local community for extensions to learning through building relationships with artists, museums and arts organizations [See e.g., Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Fowler, 1996; Goldberg, 2006; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005]. This can be accomplished, among other ways, by inviting the arts community into the school as is a common feature of Leland Elementary School through the artist in residence program³⁷ and other grant-funded opportunities. Another way is to go out into the community and locate the arts that exist there. Mr. Chadek believes there should be more use of the surrounding community in arts-integrated experiences. Field trips are therefore an integral part of his curriculum planning. As he remarks,

We’ve learned a lot of different things throughout the year, within the school, outside the school and with the arts...for instance we go on a lot of field trips. I wish that we could go on more . . . I would like to go on a minimum of one [field trip] a month. And they could be walking; I would like to do two every other week and go some place even if it’s just out onto the mall to have a cup of coffee or a cup of tea or something or go on journeys maybe give kids some problem solving tasks and they have to solve along the way . . . I would have liked to have done more of that since it is a downtown kind of school, let’s use the downtown more. Maybe get more contacts, specific people contacts at businesses and go and have some fun and do some learning things, not to go there and see, “these are our people who type over here on a computer” [kinds of activities], I don’t mean that. Maybe channel 4, that isn’t so far away, you know, maybe we could go there and see a live broadcast or something. That’s what a field

³⁷ As was described in chapter four, Dr. Carter is committed to having community artists visit the school in different capacities throughout the year. For instance a Hispanic dancer visits the school yearly to enhance the second grade curriculum unit on South America. Other community artists supported by grants come through the school on a regular basis.

trip [coordinator] could do. Kids are interested in that. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Enlivening the curriculum with field trip experiences is one of Mr. Chadek's learning goals and serves as a useful way to sustain student interest or inspire interest in the first place. "Field trips," as authors Burnaford, Aprill, and Weiss (2001) have pointed out, "are ventures out into the world where students collect sensory images and experiences. These experiences are access points that can bring the classroom curriculum to life" (p. 46). A walk through downtown, a tour through the capitol, or a trip to the local art museum become internalized experiences that students carry with them into future learning. Howard Gardner (2000; see also Eisner, 2002) makes a similar point when discussing what he calls *aesthetic entry points*³⁸ which refer to using the arts, arts related topics, or works of art to introduce topics in the classroom. The experiences Mr. Chadek's students gained from field trips, engaging with art in the streets, at the capitol or in a museum, serve as entry points into topics students will study later such as architecture, design and particularly the study and creation of monuments. These field trip experiences then are not isolated events disassociated from the curriculum but will be more broadly drawn throughout additional collaborative school activities supporting the deeper democratic purposes of arts-integrated learning.

Such democratic purposes, for example the inclusion of multiple voices in the construction of a collective culture as well as the ways in which "the arts teach learners to know themselves as capable citizens in a democratic society, observing, creating, reflecting, making choices, and taking responsibility for actions in the world" (Burnaford

³⁸ Gardner (2000) discusses seven types of entry points of which aesthetic entry points is one such point. Others include: narrative, numerical, logical, existential/ foundational, hands-on, interpersonal entry points as ways to introduce topics to students in conjunction with his theory of multiple intelligences.

et al., 2001, p. 21), support the overall tenor of arts-centered school reform design at Leland Elementary School. Arts-learning *with, through, and in* (Goldberg, 2006) the community is an important aspect of arts-centered school reform and the learning that takes place in these environments.

The grandeur of the beautiful state capitol building with its stone and granite work and its colorful history was not lost on the fourth-grade students of Leland Elementary. Their silence in the presence of the docent and their thoughtful questions were testimony to their interest in their state's history and their respect for the hard work that contributed to the architecture as well as the government work that commences there. The walk back to school was quicker than the meandering, scavenger-hunt-filled path the students took to their destination. Arriving back at school, back in Mr. Chadek's classroom, students took the few moments before art class with Coach to relax with a book amongst the scattered pillows in the reading area, take care of some work at their desk, or roam the stuff-filled room, catching glimpses of their state's history in the artifacts Mr. Chadek has collected through the years that are now undoubtedly imbued with more meaning for each of them after their field trip experience.

Reflections from Above: Art Class at Leland

Mr. Chadek's students line up outside the classroom door to prepare to leave for "Picasso training with Coach" as it is described on the class schedule. As Leland's quarterly specials schedule dictates, Mr. Chadek's students have art and music this quarter for fifty minutes twice a week. Last quarter they attended library/ technology and drama. "Coach" is the nickname given to Leland Elementary School's art teacher since he is also the school's physical education teacher. Similarly Leland's music teacher, Mrs.

Romney, also serves as the school's drama teacher. Coach's double role meets Leland's needs as he is an accomplished artist in his own right and also has the abilities required to run a skilled and play-filled physical education program for Leland Elementary School's students.

Designing Specials at Leland

Funding for Leland Elementary School's wide variety of offerings and arts programming is a challenge. Moreover because maintaining a full-time teaching staff in the school commands the majority of the school's budget, Dr. Carter has approached the staffing of school specials differently than her district counterparts. She has chosen to rotate specials on alternate quarters and has one teacher for two specials as described above. Dr. Carter explains that for successful arts-centered school reform to work what is needed is:

A sense of how to put a schedule together that will benefit not only teachers, but specialists and not burn them out. . . As we grew we couldn't do all the specials for everybody every week or we would have burned out people so then we divided the school in half and figured out a system and we, just by working right through it. We figured that out on our own but I have a strong sense, having been a librarian and a specialist of not wanting to be an entertainer, not wanting to be just a loose canon out there trying to figure out what to do with all these kids with no link to anything else we're doing. (Interview transcript, 2006)

While some might see this scheduling as a limitation in school design, it proved necessary to keep full-time art/ P.E. specialists in the school which helps the specials teachers become strong, contributing members of the school community. Many schools must share art, music, and drama teachers who, in order to maintain full-time employment in the district hold part-time positions at multiple schools. Often because of

this, school specials teachers do not feel connected to any one school and their ability to become part of the collaborative fabric of the school is diminished.

Dr. Carter's approach to scheduling specials provides continuity in staffing. Instead of having four part-time arts specialists who share their time at multiple schools, Dr. Carter chooses to rearrange the school's schedule in such a way as to keep the specials staff intact on a full-time basis. These scheduling choices allow Leland's specials teachers to maintain a close connection to the school and allows them to contribute to the construction of the school culture and community; such choices furthermore meet Dr. Carter's goals for a fully arts-integrated curriculum.

Coach's Goals for Students in Art: Situations of Artistry

As Mr. Chadek's students enter art class Coach is scuttling about doing some last minute organization and clean-up. The students park themselves on short stools skirting two large work tables laden with the colorful tracks and nicks and scars of previous art projects and prepare for Coach's directions. The art room is a large space although crowded with materials and art-making machinery. Where the students are sitting is just one half of the space of the room divided by a bookshelf holding large books on different styles of art; there are also racks for drying paint projects, and large easels scattered about. Indeed this is not a pristine classroom space with ultra-clean counters and polished floors; this is a working art studio characterized by an organized messiness that demonstrates the depth and intensity of work with art and art materials that takes place here.

"I understand you went on a hike, looking at architecture," Coach says to Mr. Chadek's class. As Coach chats with various students about their trip to the state capitol

and the architecture they saw along their route, he passes out sticky notes to each student. “Write down one building you saw,” he tells them. The state capitol is the most popular architectural site written down by students as it was there that the students spent the most time. But other buildings crept in such as the cathedral and the gothic-style buildings en route to the capitol. Students describe qualities of the buildings they saw and many of the artistic elements they learned about the capitol building. Coach wrote many of these on the board.

Coach then introduces the next topic the students will be studying in art class: the study of monuments. Coach motions to a student to pass out Leland’s shared art textbooks and students are instructed to open the book to the unit discussing monuments and commemorative art. “For our next project we are going to identify a person, event, or idea which will be commemorated through a monument that you will design and build.” Coach then tells a personal story about a contest he entered to construct a monument designed to commemorate the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. “Custer had a monument erected to him, now it was the turn of the Native Americans involved in the same struggle,” Coach explains. Coach then describes his idea for the monument he designed to commemorate the Wounded Knee massacre as well as the estimated cost of the project (students were surprised to find out the estimated cost was approximately \$90,000 to construct Coach’s monument idea) and finally his feelings about not winning the bid. “Your job, like mine was,” Coach tells the class, “is to invent. You’re the artist; your job is to design.”

Coach’s personal experience as a working artist designing a monument intended to commemorate an important historical event resonates with the students as they begin

the process of thinking about what kind of monument each would like to design. “When you start designing and sketching your monument idea,” says Coach, “ think about: who it honors, what it honors, where you would put it, what materials you would use to build it, in what form, and for whom.” Each of these practical and aesthetic choices, begin to uncover the potentially deep democratic work going on in the creation of monuments.³⁹

Broadening the ideas of what sorts of ideas monuments can honor, one student raises his hand and asks about the possibility of commemorating the idea of education. Coach nods his head yes and responds: “Think about how your monument will honor education. What form will it take?”

The students spend the next several minutes discussing monument ideas with each other and Coach. Coach hands out plain white paper to students who have focused in on an idea, to begin the process of sketching monument ideas. After a few moments Coach calls the students’ attention and introduces a rubric for how the monument project will be graded; the elements that will be looked at for scoring this project include:

- Ability to follow instructions
- Preparation/ preliminary work
- Class participation/ cooperation
- Design, craftsmanship, and attention to detail
- Creativity, originality, quality, and imagination
- Individuality/ expression
- Effort, learning, and progress
- Use of higher-order thinking skills and problem solving ability

³⁹ In Uhrmacher & Tinkler’s (2008) essay “Engaging Learners and the Community through the Study of Monuments,” the authors outline three types of analysis: an analysis of referent, an analysis of design, and an analysis of reception that each help students understand issues of commemoration, aesthetic choices, and meaning (respectively) in the creation of monuments. While Uhrmacher and Tinkler’s focus is on the study of monuments and not necessarily on what occurs for students when they *create* monuments, these points of analysis can also prove useful, I suggest, when students think about how best to design and construct a monument with meaning for community. This essay and Uhrmacher’s (1999) earlier work on a *democratic commemorative curriculum* highlight the salience of studying monuments and their relevance to democratic and community aspects of memorializing a community’s collective memories.

- Attitude and respect for materials, time management

Coach's rubric combines the important elements that should imbue all art projects like craftsmanship, design, and attention to detail but his rubric also focuses on the deeper meanings relevant to art making such as creativity, originality, imagination, and expression.

As with many of Ms. Bakke's classroom activities in chapter four and Mr. Chadek's constructed learning environments, there is, in Coach's work, an interest in cultivating social skills also relevant in an art-making environment such as participation, cooperation, attitude, and respect for art materials. Inevitably Coach focuses more on *expressive outcomes* (Eisner, 2002) than curriculum objectives; "expressive outcomes are the outcomes that students realize in the course of a curriculum activity, whether or not they are the particular outcomes sought" (p.161), or as Eisner put it another way in an earlier work, expressive outcomes are "essentially what one ends up with, intended or not, after some form of engagement (1994a, p. 118). Coach's activity is designed with openness and an invitation to the unexpected. Judging by this rubric one cannot anticipate what the students' end results will look like. This attitude towards curriculum design and assessment lends a culturally democratic spirit to the work that goes on in his classroom in that students are invited to add their voice to the collective understanding of art creation. This however, does not mean that Coach is not concerned with what students produce; indeed he pushes his students thinking in areas of design and skill-building, but it does illustrate that he is more interested in students' engagement with art than with "getting it right" in any narrowly defined manner.

Moreover, Coach's focus on *progress* in this rubric is underscored by how he runs his classroom. Coach is interested in students have a valuable experience with the arts and this requires flexibility in accommodating how students create, work, and complete projects. "It's hard," Coach explains to me outside of class, "a class like this, because everyone is at different levels and it's important to let them finish, so we have catch-up day where everyone can catch up on different projects and then we all start something new" (Personal conversation, 2006). Thus Coach will often have multiple projects going on in the classroom at the same time. Each student is encouraged to complete projects at his or her own pace. Many times in art classes students begin and end projects at the same time following a rigid set of curriculum goals; indeed some advocates for the arts believe this is important for supporting the legitimacy of the arts in school curricula [see e.g., LeMoine, 2001, pp. 59-60] However when following a timeline is the primary goal, some students may never finish their projects which then detracts from their overall arts-learning experience. Coach's awareness of this aspect of art making informs his decisions on how to pace his classroom.

After Coach finished his instructions on the new unit on monuments, half of the art class went to work sketching their monuments for the new unit while the remainder of the students moved to the hall to complete their work on a multi-paneled art-installation project based on an exhibit the fourth graders viewed at the city's Contemporary Museum of Art titled "See into Liquid." For this project a long piece of brown paper was tacked to the floor outside the classroom divided into equally-sized panels measuring 2' x 2'. Students worked with oil pastels to show various objects viewed through water. This art work mimicked the work exhibited at the museum and served as an extension of that field

trip experience for students. As students worked on both projects, Coach used the opportunity to speak with students, facilitate their work, and answer questions.

“If you’re viewing water from the top would the reflection be darker?” Coach asks one student as he continues walking around the art work. To another he probes, “if you were viewing something in the water, would it look distorted? What do you think?” The student answers in the affirmative and begins manipulating the view to show this. The instructions for this assignment entailed specifically viewing the object through water from the top; some students struggled with this directive wanting instead to create an aquarium-type design that viewed the objects from the side. Coach was persistent in having students challenge themselves with what proved to be the tougher “seeing” involved in this activity. “Why are we doing this,” asked one student. “Because it’s a good exercise in vision,” Coach responds. In the next beat the same student leans over his panel and gets back to work filling the entire space with color.

Classroom Fluidity: Situations of Arts-Mindedness

The fluid quality of Coach’s classroom demonstrated in how projects are introduced, coordinated, and completed resembles an art studio model where students, as artists, work on projects focusing more on their individual progress and arts-engagement rather than the official deadline for the project. Coach’s flexibility regarding deadlines supports a wider notion of making art and art curriculum. While Coach does establish deadlines bringing an official “end” to projects, he keeps his intentions for students in sight: allowing students to experience art first, to create a rich and integrated experience and worrying about deadlines later. Although there is a text book for this class, Coach uses it more as a overarching plan than as a dictum of what will transpire in the

classroom. “I am very happy with the textbooks in art class,” he tells me in an informal conversation, “it moves the [students] along. Before we just went along without a plan, now with texts we hit important things and it moves us along” (Personal conversation, 2006). Having said that, the plan the text offers remains secondary to the experience students have as artists in the classroom.

In Coach’s studio model students work on their art projects until they come to a natural resting place or complete the project. In this learning space Coach is not overly concerned with keeping the room cleaned-up and tidy; rather he wants students to spend their time at work on art. When space becomes an issue, Coach often allows students to work in the hallway to get the space they cannot find in the crowded art classroom. In essence, he models for his students a way of going about art-making that resembles what such creation is like for working artists outside of schools. Students are also encouraged to interact with one another, talk about their art work, and ask questions of one another as part of a creative, social culture focused on deep arts-learning. As Eisner (2002) observes,

Social norms, models for behavior, opportunities to converse and share one’s work with others are also opportunities to learn. This broad social conception of the sources of what, where, and how children learn, not only in the arts but in all areas, is referred to as *situated learning*; the child is situated in a social and material context, and this context, viewed as a culture, teaches. (p. 93)

Coach’s creation of an arts-learning and arts-making culture –of situated learning – through the curricular and structural aspects of this classroom makes his class a memorable experience for students. It builds on the collaboration that takes place elsewhere at Leland Elementary School, in Mr. Chadek’s class, in music class, in the arts community that the school celebrates and supports, and in places like gym class too. As

Coach says, “there are ties between art and gym, the movement, the visual, spatial planning and also a sense of making your team out of the players you have” (Personal conversation, 2006). This collaborative spirit is supported throughout the school revealing Leland as a work in progress, a place for making meaning out of the varied learning experiences to which students are exposed, and a space where various ideas meld together and are shared with one another and the community –much like the art Mr. Chadek’s students viewed for themselves at the Contemporary Museum of Art. “Yeah,” Coach says glancing around the art-filled walls and floors of Leland as we talk, “this place *is* installation art!”

The Living Curriculum & Creating Space for the Personal

The following morning I arrive to Mr. Chadek’s room a few minutes past nine in the morning. I find Mr. Chadek in the Gathering place beating softly on a Native American drum that he keeps in this space. He repeats a simple rhythm: dum, dum, dum-dum, over and over again alerting the students that it is time to meet at the Gathering place. “Good morning to you,” Mr. Chadek begins once everyone is squeezed together on the carpet. On the television kept in this area, a DVD is playing a continuous loop of a crackling wood fire giving the space a cozy ambiance that quiets students down. Mr. Chadek takes a moment to introduce the next integrated social studies project the class will engage in. “You are going to pick a significant moment in history and research it.” He then asks the class to come up with some significant moments in history. “The assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” responds one student.

“The end of segregation,” says another.

“We still have it today,” quips Mr. Chadek, “but not like before.”

“9/11,” says another student, referring to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

“The Red Socks winning the World Series!” says another which brings on a slew of sports related significant moments in history.

“No more sports comments,” says Mr. Chadek, moving the class along.

“When Ray Charles passed away,” offers another student.

The Bombing of Pearl Harbor and World War II,” adds a male student.

“The Boston Tea Party and the Revolutionary War,” counters a female student.

“The Holocaust,” contributes an African American girl who has been quiet for most of the discussion. Mr. Chadek takes note of these suggestions and then adds: “You can also choose a fad or foible for your significant moment in history or a disaster or triumph. Research something of interest to you. For example, the San Francisco earthquake of 1906; a 44 second earthquake and thousands died but they didn’t bother counting poor people.” He also offers students a list of fads and foibles they may want to explore such as the pill box hat, the pet rock, jitterbug contests, the bee-hive hairdo, and mini-skirts.

The students are talking amongst themselves about different moments in history and ideas to explore and research. Mr. Chadek reins them back in, “You’re getting too excited and you’re interrupting.” Though his manner is pleasant and not perturbed, the students immediately quiet down in response to his gentle admonishment. Mr. Chadek offers students a number of books, DVDs and materials available for generating ideas. One book and DVD explains the impact of television on culture “for example,” says Mr.

Chadek, “Elvis’ swaying hips on TV or the show *All in the Family* - the Sammy Davis Jr. episode which did more for race relations in America than many other things did” (Observation notes, 2006).

Mr. Chadek goes on to explain that the significant moments in history project will culminate in an illustrated accordion-styled timeline that will include each students’ ‘moment’ placed in chronological order. This project will occupy the last few weeks remaining in this school year. By the end, students will have written an accompanying essay, created a visual project representing their moment, and included their moment in history in the collaborative historical timeline for display. This activity helps answer a thematic question that has guided the fourth grade year: What is civilization?

Integrating the Big Ideas; Asking the Big Questions

When my observations took place at Leland Elementary the principal, Dr. Emma Carter was experimenting with the curriculum planning ideas of backward design as described in the book *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTigue (2005) and using them in the fourth grade curriculum. Backward design refers to a set of strategies for curriculum, assessment, and instructional planning that keeps the ends or “desired results” in mind when thinking about the kinds of instructional experiences teachers should offer students. As the authors note, “Understanding . . . is *not* a single goal but a family of interrelated abilities” (p. 4, italics in original). This is accomplished using a three-stage process which include identifying the desired results or outcomes of learning, determining acceptable evidence and assessments of learning, and creating learning experiences and instruction to reach the desired results (pp. 17-18).

Dr. Carter's interest in backward design compliments her interest in "focusing on the big questions" (Interview transcript, 2006) in curriculum and schooling. To this end, she and her staff came up with one overarching question for both fourth grade classrooms to focus on throughout the year's studies. The question they worked to answer was: What is civilization? Mrs. Ellis, Leland's school librarian, explains how this worked in the fourth grade:

Fourth grade is trying to [implement backward design] this year which is focused on asking the big questions. In fourth grade they do state history, they do ancient Africa, but they really focus on ancient Egypt and they also do the Anasazi because they go to Crow Canyon so what we came up with for the question of the year was: What is Civilization? So that when they start the year with ancient Egypt and the mummified chickens, they have to get the kids not just learning about ancient Egypt but what they want them to do is learn about, what makes a civilization? How do you know people are civilized? What is it about the arts? What is it about their family life? What is it when we study ancient Egypt that will tell us that it is a civilization, and then, two quarters later when they go to Crow Canyon and they study the Anasazi they can say, well we've already done that, now we're going to study the Anasazi, did they have a culture? Were they civilized? Then at the end of this,[the students] can compare the ancient Egyptians to the Anasazi culture. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Through the lens of backward design, Dr. Carter, Mrs. Ellis, and the fourth grade teachers chose one big question to answer in thematic form. This question compliments the existing curriculum and offers teachers an overarching objective around which to center other kinds of learning for example in the arts, in music, and with field trips. The goal of which was for students to gain a nuanced understanding of what it means to be civilized from different cultural and historical points of view and to prepare them to answer the question, 'what is civilization?' in multiple representations and in different contexts.

Backward design is one more way in which Dr. Carter hinges her arts-centered school reform efforts on theory-based ideas, strategies, and research. Incorporating

backward design into the fourth grade curriculum goals places a larger emphasis on student understanding and works to focus teachers' work on students' enduring knowledge, in this case, of the myriad ways in which cultures or persons construct civilization. For Mr. Chadek's part, he tied the larger thematic question of 'what is civilization?' to many of his curriculum activities. His units on fads and foibles, rocks and minerals, the branches of government, the study of Ancient Egypt, and Crow Canyon all centered on different ways in which the question, 'what is civilization?' could be answered through historical, political, scientific, and pop-culture lenses. The question chosen proves important enough to keep students interested in the many ways in which it can possibly be answered and proves broad enough to encompass varied curriculum ideas and activities. Finally, the question asked proves rich in arts-integration and arts-learning potential.

Crow Canyon: Artist Renderings of the Personal

Another main component of the fourth grade curriculum, and one that supported students' investigations into understanding the idea of civilization, is the students' three-day overnight trip to Crow Canyon in the southwestern portion of the state. For Mr. Chadek, the trip to Crow Canyon is a wonderful experience for students as he describes, "For fourth grade Crow Canyon is always a highlight and this year they did an outstanding culmination activity with their books and their essays during that one. It was awesome. They looked great, they did great; it was a very good experience" (Interview transcript, 2006).

The logistics of planning the trip to Crow Canyon are time consuming. It costs approximately \$365.00 per student which students must pay themselves. However

discounts and scholarships are offered and this year parents pooled their resources and raised money through two different fundraisers, a jog-a-thon and a silent auction, both of which were successful in raising the needed funds. While some families are able to furnish the money needed for their son or daughter to take the trip, for many families in the Leland community coming up with \$365.00 can prove difficult. Mr. Chadek believes the community ought to rally around one another and help each other out. He says, “I think it’s all for one and one for all, I think everybody needs to help parent-wise because it’s for all the kids and it’s especially good if you give some time and effort that helps somebody else” (Interview transcript, 2006). The parent community came through and successfully worked to get every student on the bus to Crow Canyon; an achievement of which Mr. Chadek is proud.

For the trip each student was given a camera to document their experience and to create a photographic essay as a culmination project upon their return. These Crow Canyon photo-essay books were out on display the rest of the year in student’s cubbies. During free time in the classroom I observed many students leafing through one another’s photo-essay book reading the captions and studying the pictures often laughing and remembering. One such book titled: “I Will Never Forget Crow Canyon: Memories and Photographs,” successfully documents the day-to-day activities of one student’s experiences. Over the three days students took notes on what took place at Crow Canyon to be later included in the project. Students documented the living and eating quarters the campers experienced and the people they met. While they were there students learned about local history and acted as archeologists using tools to dig out and uncover ancient artifacts. Students heard the stories and legends of the area and people who inhabited the

land long ago. They listened to the music of a Native-American flutist who played the traditional songs of the Pueblo culture that existed there. Students were invited to ruminate, to experience and to create their own memories of time and place. In a poem trying “to make sense and describe what [she] is feeling” while listening to the flute music, one student named Emma wrote the following poem:

The flute music
Soft reverent music fills my ears.
And I close my eyes.
The music takes me far away
To a peaceful place,
A place that is free of all harm and bitterness. (Observation notes, 2006)

Students described what they experienced on the trip in different ways; some used short captions to describe what was going on: “I found a bowl on the dig,” wrote one student alongside a picture of him digging into the earth for archeological finds. Others, like Emma, combined thought with imagination in capturing the sensory experience of the music and this particular experience at Crow Canyon. Crafting her experiences through word and representation in this way made this learning experience personally relevant and meaningful and therefore an experience she is not likely to forget.

Encounters with Meaning-Making: Situations of Expressiveness

The trip to Crow Canyon supports situations of expressiveness and the personal – that is to say, this extended field trip offered students opportunities for meaning-making and arts-learning from a personal and expressive vantage point. Over the three-day excursion students were invited to live in a different setting, to observe the remnants of a past culture, to use their senses in coming to understand the environment in which they were situated, to become part of a “community-in-the-making” (Greene, 2001, p. 173),

and to create memories of the experience toward an integrated learning experience. These experiences culminated, upon their return, in the photographic essays that each student created. As students retell the stories they experienced at Crow Canyon in various forms, they are “making connections, creating patterns, making sense of what seems devoid of meaning” (Greene 1995, p. 105) at first glance. The personal meaning is made in the retelling, in the re-experiencing of the story. Such experiences offer students opportunities to invent themselves as “active learner[s] . . . conceived as ones awakened to pursue meaning and to endow a life story with meaning” (Greene 1995, p. 132).

Arts-centered classrooms offer spaces for the making of personal meaning. As Greene (1995) notes, “the idea of making spaces for ourselves, experiencing ourselves in our connectedness and taking initiatives to move through those spaces” (p. 134) is important for students. The journey to Crow Canyon, the exploration of its spaces, and the experiences students had there were not planned as some curriculum objectives might be; students were simply engaged in a number of activities during their stay and it was hoped, plausibly, that students would benefit from these experiences and could distill them into some personally meaningful form. Such open outcomes of educational experience have become less and less popular in schools.

However in arts-centered schools such experiences are still relevant because, at the core of arts-centered school and arts-centered school reform, there exists a desire to make learning personal, relevant, and remembered. When the possibilities of outcomes are left open, students engage in creating their own meanings – they engage in *personal purposing* (Eisner, 1994a, p. 119). Personal purposing can occur when students shift or alter their goals for their own learning through their interactions with educational

experiences that help them begin to visualize their own personal standards⁴⁰ in learning as opposed to standards imposed from outside, from their teachers, or from the curriculum.

Players Welcome: The Leland Electives Program

Friday afternoons at Leland Elementary School are lively. As part of the school curriculum Leland has designed an enrichment program that is completely planned and implemented by parent volunteers. The enrichment program offers short classes every Friday afternoon on a quarterly basis. Students can choose two enrichment courses, four times a year; these courses range from robotics to bread making to watercolor painting to, for the older kids, returning to kindergarten for some simple play time. Inevitably, students are invited to follow and pursue their own interests. All enrichment courses are taught by Leland teachers, parents, and interested community members. The first hour is taught by the teachers of Leland and the second hour is taught by a parent, other school staff, or a community member. For the enrichment courses, every member of the adult school community teaches an enrichment course of their choosing; indeed the lunch room attendants, cooks, and custodial staff members are invited to participate as instructors and they all do. The second hour during which the teachers at Leland are not teaching an enrichment course is a free hour for collaborative curriculum planning.

⁴⁰ Maxine Greene has said, “My own experience . . . is that a standard has to do with the way you reach outward to do something well . . . it has to be something for me, that I create, that says I’ve got something” (Greene in Uhrmacher & Matthews, 2005, p. 224). I agree with this assessment of the word standard –I believe standards ought to be made personal and once they have been, have real power in fostering learning.

While exhausting to plan and implement, the teachers and parents appreciate this feature of the Leland educational experience and believe it is a benefit to the students. As one parent explained to me,

The Leland kids benefit from the enrichment program in so many ways. Aside from the obvious information, skill, or enjoyment of the subject itself, the children learn about the wonderful adults in the school and a community that can contribute richly to their education. It offers the children an opportunity to be in control of their education and that their choices are valued. It teaches them appreciation for someone willing to give their time to teach them (not just because they have to teach them). This will hopefully model contributing to their own community as adults. It teaches them that each person has something interesting to contribute to others. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Allowing and encouraging students to be an integral part of their own learning and education is a strong component of the mission at Leland. Students are encouraged every day to make decisions about subject matter and topics that later help them become purposeful human beings. This also sends the message that students' interests are respected. Students are empowered to follow their passions, which keeps them invested and engaged in their own learning.

The Place to Play: Mr. Chadek's Room as Elective

It should come as no surprise that Mr. Chadek's room has obtained legendary status throughout Leland Elementary School. It has become a favorite spot for students from all grades to visit whenever possible. Mr. Chadek's room is a place students like to be; a homelike scene, a community of students and place of caring and social interaction. It's also just loads of fun. Therefore for the electives program Mr. Chadek opens his room up to students in grades two through five for exploration, playing games, and engaging their interests, whatever these may be. On the Friday that I observed the

electives program in Mr. Chadek's room there are approximately 20 -30 students in his classroom, some of Mr. Chadek's current students, some past students, and many from around the school.

With relatively few rules, students come to Mr. Chadek's room to look around, to be part of the scene, to pursue their interests, and to relax and have fun. As I wander through the room during the elective hour, I see many students reading in cozy niches, having tea in the cafe, conversing, playing board games, surfing the internet, some spending time on creative writing projects while others are playing math games and puzzles and exploring the vast shelves of artifacts all over Mr. Chadek's room.

Again we see Mr. Chadek using his classroom environment as pedagogy in implementing his aims for educating students. In this case his intentions are broader than his immediate classroom of fourth graders and are part of the larger mission of Leland Elementary School towards creative, experiential, and arts-integrated learning. Opening up his classroom to all students he models his personal approach to learning. In this approach Mr. Chadek sets up situations for students to immerse themselves in creativity and hands-on experiences while they pursue their own passions and make use of the many materials made available to them. When such immersion is made possible, learning is the unavoidable outcome.

For arts-centered school reform finding practical ways of furthering an arts agenda is an important facet of reculturing (Fullan, 2007) schools towards arts-centered aims. The course offerings for the electives program at Leland Elementary School address student and teacher/ instructor interest. Much like the community arts event that opened this chapter, the electives program pulls the learning community into the milieu

and celebrates its talents, utilizing the wealth of passionate interest already in existence and in turn cultivates similar interests in students. Such school-wide activities constitutes work towards a saturated, arts-embedded environment casting the arts as the central agent in the change-making process throughout the school. The work of arts-centered school reform requires such strategies for its success.

Diversity, Personality & the Evolutions of Teaching

Arts-centered schools are colorful and interesting places to be, this is apparent not only in the art that adorns the halls and the walls of the classroom, but also in the personalities of the teacher staff and the personality and diversity of the students. Differences amongst individuals come together in striking ways in arts-centered schools, particularly at Leland Elementary School. Each member of the Leland community makes his or her own contribution to its success. As one Leland teacher told me, “we are all the glue that holds this place together; Leland brings out the artist in all of us” (Personal communication, 2006). Teachers, students, and the school community are encouraged to bring their personality into the school, to bring their differences and though Leland has struggled to keep its population a true reflection of the diversity of the city in which it exists,⁴¹ it strives for an ever-openness in ideas, arts-representations, curriculum,

⁴¹ In conversation with Dr. Carter, the principal of Leland, it became clear that Leland is struggling to maintain the diversity that reflects the city it represents. Partly this is due to the gentrification of the area around the school and partly because of district practices and policies that tag kids as “gifted and talented”. To attempt to remedy this, Dr. Carter has opened her school to students labeled, “high-achieving,” which helps her work towards a more diverse student body as more often students of color are tagged high-achieving rather than gifted and talented. The differences between and ramifications of labels such as gifted and talented and high-achieving are beyond the scope of this study but it should be noted that issues of diversity are of concern to Dr. Carter as her school grows in popularity and students from lower-socioeconomic segments of the area are pushed farther away from the school. Moreover, several studies [see e.g., Deasy & AEP, 2002; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005] have shown that arts-learning benefits students living in low income areas thus the very education that is essential for low-income students is harder and harder to achieve because of these issues surrounding arts-centered schools. One might ask then, if so many families want arts-centered schools, why are not there more of them?

pedagogy, and learning styles that work to achieve diversity on many levels. What this results in is a very happy place for students, teachers, and the community to live in as learners and educators. As Mr. Chadek's student teacher, Mrs. Dane shared during my interview with her,

[Leland is a happy place to be] because people are free to be who they are, no body has to fit a mold. I mean there are certain things like you have to be nice, we talked about that this morning, you have to be nice –those normal things that you have to be, respect, things like that but you can be whoever you want to be. The first day, and this will tell you exactly how I felt the first day, the first day that I walked in here when the kids were here, [a student] was wearing a chicken costume on the top with Jersey cow printed pants on the bottom and nobody made fun of him. Everybody told him how great he was for wearing that and they were excited to see him in that costume. That right there tells you what kind of community this is and why everybody is happy because they can be who they really are; they are free to be who they are and I remember thinking at first, 'oh my gosh, what have I gotten myself into?' but then it was really neat to see that nobody made fun of him for his costume, that everybody was so excited to see how great his outfit was and telling him how fabulous and how wonderful that he made it himself. So it was just neat to see that and that sets the tone right there and I knew that I was not in [a typical school]; it was something very special. (Interview transcript, 2006)

The supportive environment that exists at Leland is a reflection of the understanding and awareness of diversity and individual difference arts-learning offers students. In this classroom environment there is a great deal of acceptance and understanding of difference. Mr. Chadek, as we saw earlier is proud of the level of diversity he sees in his classroom –not merely in the comparatively higher numbers of African-American and Hispanic students in his classroom but diversity also, in interests, personality, and in their learning. He considers the culture of his classroom as an achievement in growth as he observes,

A highlight with the kids is just seeing them from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, how much they've grown. To see that options

and multi-mixing - it does work. That they can pull a project out of the depths of despair into something as magnificent as they want to do –you just never know . . . Yes, I like that; I wish there was even more [diversity] in here but it's, I don't know if that's an accomplishment but I think it's an achievement just to do that and to see the intermingling and although they have a lot of troubles and problems and they argue –they're kids. And they're pretty darn good. I'm very happy with that; that's an achievement. I think I've got specific achievements with some of the kids too. I just think [some of my] kids . . . are so much better now than they were before. They still have their personalities; they haven't tarnished, just better, so those are major achievements. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Vibrant arts-centered schools are capable of striking a balance between the individual personality and the community-in-the-making mentioned earlier in this chapter. Such classrooms do not “teach” diversity but afford students situations in which issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and personal identity can safely be explored in lived contexts. Moreover students are propelled, through arts-learning and engagement with curricula, to explore their inner landscapes – the artistry of their own selves through their own learning stories – but are also involved in learning situations that make them part of a caring community culture. Mr. Chadek sees the intermingling of his students as an achievement despite the challenges of building such a community. As Greene (1995) has noted,

To help the diverse students we know articulate their stories is not only to help them pursue the meanings of their lives – to find out *how* things are happening and to keep posing questions about the *why*. It is to move them to learn the new things . . . to reach out for the proficiencies and capacities, the craft required to be fully participant in this society, and to do so without losing the consciousness of who they are. (p. 165)

Both the inner world of students and the outward collaborative construction of a diverse community of learners are equally important in arts-centered school reform and depend in large part on teachers guiding and devising meaningful educational situations.

Arts-Centered School Reform & the Personality of Teachers

For personality to be cultivated in students it must exist in teachers. Cultivating the passions of teaching, keeping teaching and therefore learning new, and using one's teaching skills to "lift students up" (Mr. Chadek, personal communication, 2006) is a beneficial aspect of successful arts-centered school reform. In speaking about teacher personality what I mean to address is the teacher's personal presence in the classroom. Personality in this context refers to the teachers' interests and personal identity that infuses the classroom and situations for learning that students become a part of throughout the year. Taken in this light, teacher personality speaks to the enthusiasms of teaching. In Mr. Chadek's case it is his desire to keep teaching and learning new at all times and working to avoid, in his words, "having one year of experience twenty times" through the course of one's teaching career (Personal communication, 2006).

The personality of teachers speaks to the artistry required to mediate learning in arts-centered school reform contexts. A teacher's personality in the classroom is a reflection of the personal experiences that inform their teaching and make teaching their calling or their *vocation*, ". . . that finds its expression at the crossroads of public obligation and personal fulfillment [and] takes shape through involvement in work that has social meaning and value" (Hansen, 1995, p. 3). Ruminating on her own understanding of how teacher personalities shape learning, Dr. Carter observes,

[The arts are] what feeds me intellectually and I know what it does, I know what the arts can do every day... I don't care what curriculum area, it lifts it to a different place because the arts asks you to be more whoever you are and they ask you to look with new eyes to try to understand something you may not understand rather than acts that are not ever going to touch your life and that you're never going to remember anyway. And I think often as an adult, what do I remember about my education? I don't

remember many facts. I remember personalities of teachers. I remember people who changed my life as teachers because they believed in me as a little girl who didn't have too many people who believed in her. That's what I remember but we don't allow, we don't even think about the personality of teachers anymore being what could transform children, we think about facts, basic, basic, stuff that will never touch their hearts and touch their memories in a way that's going to transform their lives. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Often in today's educational settings there is a lack of emphasis on what particular teachers contribute to the student learning. In efforts to replicate strong programs the contribution of teacher personality can be overlooked in educational leaders' attempts to de-emphasize the crucial role of the teacher in student learning, achievement, and school reform (Fullan, 2007; Hansen, 1995). While this may strengthen arguments for replication of particular programs, it diminishes teaching as one's calling or chosen vocation. As Hansen points out, "the idea of vocation . . . underscores just how central the person is who occupies the position of teacher. It highlights the fact that the role or occupation itself does not teach students. It is the person *within* the role and who *shapes* it who teaches students, and who has an impact on them for better or for worse" (p. 17).

From this point of view then, the teacher is central to successful arts-centered school reform. However such a view may render the replication of programs problematic as Mr. Chadek similarly points out, "You can't replicate great classrooms and schools because it so largely depends on the human factor, the personality of the people there" (Personal communication, 2006). But replication is often exactly what advocates of comprehensive arts-centered school reform are attempting to do. "Yes," Mr. Chadek agrees,

That is what [school reformers] want, they want repeated success. Repeat, repeat, repeat... but with this tactic you don't get any new things or

innovation. A lot of teachers are like that too, a lot. It doesn't change, they take the curriculum and they want the comfort, I did it one year, then they do it the second year, the third year and fourth year and so on. I don't like doing that, I like to change it up, throw it out and I'll do it all over again. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Mr. Chadek's interest is in the "soul of teaching, in maintaining enthusiasm, keeping teaching exciting and keeping it rigorous at the same time; I have never stopped loving to be around kids, which is also crucial to good teaching" (Personal communication, 2006). *Person, personal, personality* – these three words sum up what teaching can contribute to the efficacy of arts-centered school reform.

Finally, deep and lasting arts-centered school reform may very well prove to be an individualistic, school-by-school endeavor that requires an acceptance of a certain amount of uncertainty throughout the school reform process, an acknowledgment of the impact of teacher personality, and the need for high levels of flexibility from teachers in diverse arts-centered settings. On this last point, Mr. Chadek quips,

I tell people, to work in this school, *especially* this one, you have to be at least a willow tree if not a palm tree, you cannot be an oak because you'll crack –Oaks are sturdy, they don't bend. But a willow will bend, a palm tree will bend. And they will go boing [makes sound] back to the middle again and they gotta be that. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Flexibility is necessary to create a vibrant arts-learning environment like those found at Leland Elementary School. A successful arts-centered school reform agenda is one that embraces diversity and personality in its students and its teachers and works to cultivate and deepen both.

Summary Sketch

In one the many short discussions I had with Mr. Chadek throughout my classroom observations he mentioned in passing that in his role as teacher he saw him

self as a conductor of an orchestra. This metaphor resonates with what I observed in Mr. Chadek's classroom. As maestro of his classroom Mr. Chadek succeeds in providing many different kinds of experiences for students, each coordinated in an artistic fashion.

First, Mr. Chadek orchestrates an elaborate experiential learning environment that metaphorically at least, is reminiscent of Dewey's laboratory school. His classroom is packed with sights, sounds, artifacts, learning material, books, and whimsy that students love and love to interact with. It is these interactions – these collaborations with the learning environment – that provide situations for different types of learning. This environment supports Mr. Chadek's vision and desire to offer students a wide and varied experience contributing to their growth through immersion in a experience-rich environment.

Second, Mr. Chadek's broadens the ideas of arts-integrated learning to include providing an arts-embedded environment for students. The arts, for Mr. Chadek, is a strand running through his curriculum activities. While he may not be as intentional in his efforts at integrating the arts in his classroom as other teachers focused on arts-learning, he does provide many instances for aesthetic experiences in students' interaction with the environment and as extensions to the curriculum. Indeed the environment is the aesthetic experience in Mr. Chadek's classroom.

Third, Mr. Chadek shares the responsibility of learning with his students by allowing them widely drawn freedom in experiencing the classroom environment. Students are encouraged to make their own meaning through engagement with different classroom experiences. Mr. Chadek devises situations where students can make their own

meaning, have control over their own learning and above all learn to pursue their passions with rigor and verve.

Fourth, Mr. Chadek in collaboration with others provided four types of arts-embedded situations for his students which are summarized in Table 7. Mr. Chadek's goal was to offer a varied experience in the classroom. His choice of activities involved a great deal of freedom and personal choice on the part of students. He did not necessarily push for total arts-integration in his classroom but he made sure that the opportunities for students were present. Students could take a project and work with it to the extent that he or she wanted to. Mr. Chadek worked and collaborated with the art teacher in the school and insured that connections were made between the classroom curriculum and the art curriculum. In these ways, Mr. Chadek provided arts-embedded situations that responded to and supported student interest. Ultimately Mr. Chadek's goal was to foster student growth, caring, and personal responsibility for learning. His classroom as a place where students can practice these skills was one the strongest aspects of the curriculum he offered his students.

Finally, Mr. Chadek is interested in developing the social skills and self esteem of his students through lived experience in the classroom. He appreciates the intermingling of a diverse set of students and recognizes the importance of developing personality in students. Furthermore, as a teacher with his own broad set of experiences as an educator he sees personality as a key component to teaching and teaching well.

Table 7: Arts-Embedded Situations Enacted in Mr. Chadek’s Classroom

Situations of Growth & Caring	Situations of growth and caring were exhibited in Mr. Chadek’s creation of a social community, in creating his learning space as a way to bring students together. He was interested in students showing growth in academic and personal areas of their lives.
Situations of Artistry	Situations of artistry were apparent through Mr. Chadek’s collaboration with the art curriculum and allowing students ways to cultivate their own artistic talents.
Situations of Arts-Mindedness	Situations of arts-mindedness were supported through activities such as attending the contemporary art museum and encouraging students to recreate installation art in the classroom and through their design and creation of monuments.
Situations of Expressiveness	Situations of expressiveness were cultivated through students’ Crow Canyon activity rendering the personal through the artistic creation of the culminating book activity.

In closing I share this collaborative haiku poem created by Mr. Chadek’s students describing their experience as learners in his vibrant classroom setting:

Old thoughts were shaken
As new thoughts were awakened
We learn as we grow

Thus Mr. Chadek’s classroom becomes a symbol for growth, experience, and social and personal responsibility. Mr. Chadek attempts to create a microcosm of living in the world with all of its distractions, temptations, and opportunities; as maestro he orchestrates these different arts-embedded situations to allow learning to thrive in a multitude of ways while resisting a conventional pedagogy. For Mr. Chadek’s students their immersion in his intricately-crafted educational environment lives within them as a metaphor for deep learning, personal responsibility, and awakening to the possible.

Mr. Chadek's Response

Cassie,

I have read the chapter and enjoyed it. You can use the fictitious name or my real one – your choice. Also, thanks for the hard copy... now I don't have to print it out.

I hope you finish up the degree and get on with your career. Hopefully, a few of the "things" you saw and heard at Leland will stick with you and spur you on to new thoughts and heights. God knows, education needs to be confronted with sense and imagination – it seems to be getting into a rut and you know, the only difference between a rut and a grave are the dimensions.

I remember in the late sixties, the Golden Era of education, I was at a national conference in Minneapolis on education for the future. Someone astute person spoke and said that we were, then, experiencing the demise of the education system as we now know it. He further said that in about 40-50 years, we would have completely changed. Well, even during my last semester at Metropolitan State College in Denver, teaching classroom management, writing, and things that would include the heart of learning, etc. my comments after returning from observing my student during their practicum teaching, I would say, " One of the only differences in what I see and the 50's and maybe the 60's was the desks were not screwed down to the floor." Yikes. Where was all the imagination, the creativity, the verve, the panache? Are there any teachers out there who are really excited about kids and learning? They all seem to be drones.

Anyhow, now I'm really retired and living in northern Minnesota. I'm giving myself as long as it takes to do nothing and just sit and think and a lot of the time just sit! The longer this continues, the further away my past life slips. I don't miss anything about it – imagine that! By July of 2009 I will have divested myself of everything: professional books, materials, learning things, etc. I'm counting on something entirely different to emerge, whatever that might be. And if nothing does, then I'll simply enjoy the moments and wait for something to present itself. We're just loving it here!

Take care, and let me know where you end up after all your hard work.

Henry Chadek

CHAPTER EIGHT

EVALUATION, THEMATICS, & CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the Study

Arts-centered school reform has been defined in this study as the comprehensive and intentional restructuring and reculturing of schools using the theories and practices of the arts and arts-learning as the primary basis for educational change decisions. In chapter one I laid the groundwork of this study highlighting my rationale for undertaking such a project and outlined some of the possible benefits of a study intended to describe and interpret the intentions, activities, and practices of arts-centered school reformers.

In chapter two I explored the landscape of literature and research reports on arts in comprehensive school reform and relevant issues related to arts in education. I showed arts in education to be a wide field of interests with multiple stakeholders: teachers, artists, arts-advocates, government based and non-profit arts-organizations, scholars, and researchers. Though these stakeholders sometimes differ in their philosophies about the reasons the arts in education are important for students, their goal is one and the same: to increase the prevalence of the arts in education for the benefit of students in schools. In many areas of education they are succeeding. I ended this chapter with implications of the arts in education literature for arts-centered school reform.

In chapters four through seven I described in detail four classroom teachers' artistry as arts-centered school reformers. I borrow the term *teacher artistry* from Elliot Eisner (2002) who speaks of artistry in teaching as being "able to make educational gold

out of emerging activities in the classroom . . .” (p. 152). Teacher artistry in the arts-centered schools in this study grows out of each teacher’s love for and interest in the arts which they exhibit in their choices throughout the curriculum, in their pedagogy, and in their evaluation methods among others aspects of classroom life. The arts-centered schools in this study exhibit their support for the arts in its structural elements and in its aesthetics –that is, the kind of learning environment created for students to immerse them in arts learning. Both Leland Elementary School and Edgebrook Elementary School proved to be rich in arts-learning and to be positive models of arts-centered school reform. Below I summarize the four classroom chapters.

In chapter four, I began by introducing Ms. Grace Bakke⁴², second grade teacher at Leland Elementary School. I spent some time at the beginning of the chapter introducing the reader to the origins of Leland Elementary School as a gifted and talented/ high-achieving arts-centered school, focusing on the insights of the principal, Dr. Emma Carter. In describing Ms. Bakke’s activities in her classroom I offered examples of her arts-centered curriculum, the structure of the classroom and how the day was organized. I discussed her choices in assessment and described her style of pedagogy as a facilitator, collaborator, and caring and enthusiastic master teacher. I emphasized her art specialty, drama, and the ways in which she uses this artistic passion to infuse her classroom with the skills of that art form through her work teaching Shakespeare to second graders. I introduced the idea of a *personal curriculum* and discussed the use of the outside community as part of the arts curriculum –an important feature of arts-centered learning. I located five types of situations of arts-embeddedness in her

⁴² All names used throughout this study are pseudonyms.

classroom teaching (discussed in detail below) and at the same time placed her classroom in the context of the arts-centered school in which it exists.

In chapter five, I focused on my second school observed in this study and introduced Mrs. Edie Fontaine and her classroom of first and second graders at Edgebrook Elementary School. Again, as in chapter four, I devoted time to unearthing how the school came to fruition as an arts-integrated, arts-centered model of school reform relying on the historical knowledge of Principal Jean Hansen. I then focused on Mrs. Fontaine's aims as an arts-centered teacher. I highlighted Mrs. Fontaine's interest in creating community through her activities, curriculum choices, and her skills as a teacher. Her classroom exhibited a shared aesthetic of student made art work that adorned the walls; I could see that she focused on creating a collaboratively created space for student learning. Observing the curricular dimension of Mrs. Fontaine's classroom I described her work in math class and the literacy block, both which show some of the challenges and rewards of attempting to integrate the arts into the curriculum. I emphasized how Mrs. Fontaine's arts activities hone in cognitive processes brought to light by the work of Elliot Eisner (2002).

I also pointed out how Mrs. Fontaine uses her own interest in dance in two areas, first in what I call *refocusing interludes* and second as her specialty in the school's arts enrichment courses that I discuss in the chapter. I follow Mrs. Fontaine's students to intrapersonal/ interpersonal class, one of Gardner's (1983; 1993) multiple intelligences, the theory that pervades the school's arts-centered school reform efforts. I also shadowed her students during art class and later explored the complicated roles of art teachers in schools centered on arts-integration and arts-learning. I witnessed Edgebrook Elementary

School's commitment to a bully-free environment through their programming to empower young children. Finally, I recount my return to the school after my observations had concluded to observe an immersion program created to reinforce arts-learning and their use of multiple intelligences, the theory on which the school is based. In Mrs. Fontaine's classroom I find four types of arts-embedded situations being used.

In chapter six, I remain with Edgebrook Elementary School focusing now on fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Natalie Ingram's classroom. Here I spent less time on the origins of the school and more time on Mrs. Ingram's very personal style of teaching. I focused on her holistic, relational, arts-integration aims as I observed them in her classroom. Mrs. Ingram's classroom exhibits a care and concern for teaching and for her students in her curriculum choices, pedagogy, and especially in her assessment techniques which I explore. I took note of her deep interest in Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI), the theory that supports the arts-centered school reform agenda at Edgebrook, and explore her own research investigations into MI theory for the benefits of her students. I followed Mrs. Ingram's students to music class where I met Mrs. Scott who shared insights into the Edgebrook community and its mission to educate the head, heart, and hand. I spent a great deal of time on one particular arts-based activity that highlighted the strengths of arts-integration and uncovers several cognitive processes and Eisner's forms of representation (1994b). I discussed imagination and art in relation to an assembly I attended with the Edgebrook students led by an outside musician visiting the school. In Mrs. Ingram's teaching I discovered five types of arts-embedded situations

Finally in chapter seven, the last of the classroom chapters, I revisit Leland Elementary School and Mr. Henry Chadek's classroom of fourth graders. In this chapter I

focused on arts-learning as an extension of the learning lab experience inspired by John Dewey's Chicago Lab Schools (Dewey, 1902; see also Tanner, 1997) in the experiences students had in the classroom environment Mr. Chadek provided. I used the learning lab experience as a metaphor for what I saw transpiring in his classroom. I took particular note of the spaces that Mr. Chadek created for his students and the expressiveness and curiosity these spaces encouraged. I followed Mr. Chadek's students to art class and discussed the goals of Coach, the art teacher, and explored how Coach instills the habits of an artist through his studio model of instruction. I described events Mr. Chadek coordinated that allowed students to experience freedom in the classroom, cultivate expressiveness, and find personal meaning in their choices as students. I discussed the importance of the personality of teachers, an idea Mr. Chadek brought to my attention and incorporated this into my thinking about arts-centered school reform. I located four types of arts-embedded situations in Mr. Chadek's teaching.

Together these four chapters offered a rich and oftentimes lengthy insight into arts-integration, arts-learning and arts-centered school reform. I took care to weave the experiences I observed in the classroom into a colorful narrative in the hopes of creating as close to an eidetic composite of the reality of these schools as I could muster. I used an array of theories to interpret the activities of classroom teachers offering moments of illumination within the narratives. While my style of writing departs slightly from how many other educational criticisms are structured in how the ecology of schools is carved out and explicated, the descriptions address each of the six dimensions of schooling, the *intentional*, the *curricular*, the *pedagogical*, the *structural*, the *evaluative* (Eisner 1994a),

and the *aesthetic* (Uhrmacher, 1991), albeit less explicitly than typical educational criticisms might.

To investigate each classroom I relied on educational criticism as my methodological guide (discussed in depth in chapter three, pp. 65-89). Educational criticism, devised by Elliot Eisner (1994a; 1998a) is composed of four dimensions: *description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics*. Each of these separate dimensions aids the educational critic in coming to understand educational settings and phenomena. In chapters four through seven, I used the dimensions of description and interpretation to reveal the aspects of each classroom that characterize, explain, and contextualize arts-centered school reform to answer my first two research questions: 1) *what are the aims of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied?*; and 2) *What does arts-centered school reform look like in practice*. The dimensions of *evaluation* and *thematics* are the primary ways through which the significance and import of arts-centered school reform is explored in this chapter and will answer questions: 3) *What is the educational significance of arts-centered school reform as it is represented in the two schools studied?*; and 4) *What educational import do these examples of arts-centered school reform have for American public school reform in general?*

My main forms of data collection included observation, interview, and the study of school-related artifacts. I spent approximately two weeks observing each classroom teacher and spent additional hours attending school and community events. I relied on hand-written notes to record events and conversations which resulted in over three-hundred pages of observational notes. Where and when I could, I recorded verbatim what the words, phrases, and conversations I overheard during my observations and in

conversation with teachers, parents, administrators, support staff, specials teachers, and paraprofessionals. I collected samples of student work which helped me remember certain activities and curriculum moments throughout my observations. I took pictures of the walls of the classrooms and schools, again to aid my memory in recalling the details of what I saw. I conducted eighteen interviews with teachers, parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, student teachers and assistants, and arts-specialists; I tape recorded these interviews and transcribed them myself. In all I clocked approximately three-hundred hours observing teachers with their students, interviewing participants, and attending school functions. After the initial observations had concluded I communicated via email with my teachers with follow-up questions and clarifications as needed throughout the writing process. I also sent drafts of the classroom teachers for their input, clarification, and corrections. All teachers responded to my inquiries and their comments are included at the end of each classroom chapter.

In analyzing the collected data, I looked for themes that existed in varying degrees in each of the classrooms. Though there were many ways in which to think about arts-centered school reform based on what I was seeing in the four classrooms I observed, I located three themes that were common amongst arts-centered school reformers. I found that in general teachers in arts-centered school reform settings embraced a *holistic* vision of education and childhood, shared a commitment to *collaboration*, and provided a rich set of *arts-embedded situations* for student learning. Within this third theme I found five types of arts-embedded situations that teachers provide for their students. These include the arts-embedded situations of *growth and caring*, *arts-mindedness*, *artistry*, *home*, and

expressiveness. I explore the first two themes in my response to research question one and the third theme in response to question number two.

Prior to embarking on this study I had also set myself the task of looking deeply at the kinds of meaning-making possibilities that existed in arts-centered school reform settings in four realms: the *cognitive*, *imagination*, *democratic*, and *community*. Through my observations of arts-centered school reform I discovered a fifth realm in addition to the above four, the *personal*. My analysis also revealed six conclusions regarding arts-centered school reform that hold intellectual import for arts-centered school reform and school reform in general.

It was not possible to include every aspect of what I saw as an observer in the narratives of the classroom chapters, I have therefore made specific choices in crafting the narratives of this dissertation to draw out what I considered salient to addressing my four research questions; in essence this is the work of an educational critic and connoisseur. While each classroom chapter can be seen as a self-contained essay drawing out the subtleties and lessons of that particular educational setting, the chapters also hang together as a composite portrait of arts-centered school reform in practice. As my research progressed I found many interesting avenues that could be pursued in this last chapter however I simply could not follow every idea to fruition in this final analysis. Future research will allow me to further explore some of the lines of thinking that I uncovered in my observations for instance the idea of chaos and success in chapter four, the personality of teachers in chapter seven and the ramifications of multiple intelligences on arts-centered school reform in chapters five and six. In the meantime I have

concentrated on selected points of interest that work to answer my research questions and summarize my experiences as a researcher in these classrooms.

Discussion of Research Questions & Themes

I now turn to responding to the four research questions which have guided this study: 1) what are the aims of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied? 2) what does arts-centered school reform look like in practice? 3) what is the educational significance of arts-centered school reform as it is represented in the two schools studied? and 4) what educational import do these examples of arts-centered school reform have for American public school reform in general?

1. *What are the Aims of Arts-Centered School Reformers in the Two Schools Studied?*

Arts-centered school reform exists as a menagerie of educational experiences created through the artistry of teachers. Each teacher whose work has been highlighted in this study embraces and values the arts, personally and professionally. Ms. Bakke, Mrs. Fontaine, Mrs. Ingram, and Mr. Chadek, each in their own way, have manifested their beliefs about the arts' ability to improve, enhance, and enliven student learning through their insights, thoughts, actions, and vision. Though each teacher illustrated an individual flair in how they presented, articulated, and fulfilled their educational beliefs about the arts in education, there exists among them commonalities that might extend beyond these settings to other arts-centered school reform settings. I identified two themes that were pervasive in arts-centered school reform as it is carried out in the two schools studied and describe the aims of arts-centered school reformers. These are detailed in Table 8.

Table 8: Three Themes that Describe Teachers' Aims & Practices

	Aims		Practices
	Holistic Vision	Collaboration	Arts-embedded Situations
The Artistry of Teachers in Arts-centered School Reform Settings	Teachers embrace a holistic vision of learning and childhood that balance students' experiences in arts-centered schools.	Teachers share a commitment to creating a collaborative culture for students in arts-centered schools.	Teachers provide arts-embedded situations that create arts-centered classrooms as meaning-making environments for students.

Teachers Embrace a Holistic Vision of Learning and Childhood

Teachers in arts-centered school reform settings embrace a holistic vision of learning and childhood. That is to say, each is interested in the education of the whole child. This means not only teaching students the academic content required but taking a deeper interest into the kinds of qualities of learning that help create happy and successful human beings. This was apparent in the ways in which Ms. Bakke, Mrs. Fontaine, Mrs. Ingram, and Mr. Chadek planned their curriculum, in the way in which each interacted with their students, and the ways in which they structured their classrooms as detailed in chapters four through seven. While the teachers in this study did not use the word *holistic* very often in their descriptions of their work; this idea shines through in multiple ways.

Ms. Bakke's holistic vision is present in the way she plans her curriculum for her students. Meeting with arts-specialist, Coach, and librarian Mrs. Ellis among others, allows her to create curriculum that addresses the whole child, always with the arts in mind. Creating learning centers with choice built in and working to empower students to think for themselves, make good choices, and to be in charge of their own learning are other ways Ms Bakke's holistic vision is made apparent.

Mrs. Ingram, fifth-grade teacher at Edgebrook Elementary School, as we saw, spent a great deal of time thinking about her students' well-being in the classroom. Her group rating activity, a daily ritual she employs to check in with her students, is an example of this. Mrs. Ingram also relied on the holistic nature of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. She spoke of working to balance her classroom and fitting in each of the intelligences within her curriculum. Her pedagogical style attended to the sensitivities, and emotional well-being of her students which she often articulated to her students, helping them in building awareness of themselves as whole human beings.

Mrs. Fontaine's holistic vision for her students included cultivating students' sense of self in the natural world. While I was observing her teaching she continually called attention to students' senses, creating sensory images, she sang songs that at times bordered on spiritual. Her activities allowed students multiple ways to explore and express their inner landscapes as human beings.

Mr. Chadek's vision of the whole child was wrapped up in the meticulously crafted learning environment he offered his students. Through their interaction with the environment, students were able to attend to their varied interests. Mr. Chadek spoke of offering students a wide and varied experience and built a great deal of choice and freedom into his pedagogy. Mr. Chadek as facilitator and conductor of his classroom "orchestra" made himself available to students for consultation but supported students as agents in their own lives; he helped each student craft their learning in terms of their own interests and the aspects of their selves that each wanted to pursue.

A holistic vision was also apparent in how each arts-centered school was designed. For instance in my interview with Leland Elementary School's principal, Dr.

Carter, she talked about her devotion to arts-integration and noted the holistic nature of her school community:

I think more than anything else there's a welcome-ness to be who you are here and everybody has some interest or artistic bent that comes into this school and so for the first time they have the freedom to take the time to do art with children or just express interest in the arts with children so that it becomes a holistic thing through our whole program. (Interview transcript, 2006)

Dr. Carter's holistic vision for arts-centered school reform consists of creating a welcoming environment where teachers and students can be who they want to be; feeling free to explore the arts is a large part of that vision.

At Edgebrook Elementary School Principal Jean Hansen spoke of the staff's commitment to educating the head, the heart, and the hand. Together the staff explored what such a vision meant in terms of integrating the arts, building character in students, and attending to the intellectual needs of children and how these big ideas could be translated into successful practice. In Edgebrook Elementary School's case a holistic vision or a commitment to educating the whole child proved central to their mission of their arts-centered school reform agenda.

To speak of *holistic* education or of educating the whole child means "address[ing] the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels" (Hare, 2006). Arts-centered school reform is not holistic education per se but it does share some of the qualities and interests that holistic education proffers. Elliot Eisner (2005) reminds us that the idea of "attending to the whole child – emotionally, socially and physically as well as academically . . ." (p. 18) was espoused by the progressive educators earlier in our educational history. However, this progressive ideal

of educating the whole child is often cast aside in lieu of the “measurement mania” (p. 17) going on in schools today.

Eisner further characterizes what it means to educate the whole child. “First,” he tells us, “it means that those of us in education try to recognize the distinctive talents that individual children possess and to create an environment that actualizes these potentialities” (p. 18). As we saw in Ms. Bakke’s classroom and her students’ pursuit of their own “passion projects” allowed each student’s distinctive talents to flourish. Her classroom environment empowered students to cultivate their own body of talents, to show growth in their learning, and to be part of an arts-engaged community. Mr. Chadek’s classroom environment offered similar opportunities for students to engage in their talents and to follow curiosity wherever it led. At Edgebrook Elementary School both Mrs. Fontaine and Mrs. Ingram focused on the strengths of individual students and used this information in their construction of the classroom. Moreover, as a function of the theory of multiple intelligences, both teachers helped students focus in on their strengths and areas of challenge using the language of that particular theory.

Next, Eisner points out “teachers need to take into consideration the various ways in which students respond to what teachers plan” (p. 18). Teaching and teacher artistry requires some improvisation and what Eisner (2002) refers to as “flexible purposing.” Depending on how students respond to different activities in the classroom, teachers ought to be prepared to “shift direction, even to redefine one’s aims when better options emerge. . .” (p. 77). Eisner uses Dewey’s term flexible purposing in relation to the teaching of visual arts but it is easily understood as a concept that arts-centered teachers might rely on as well. Improvisation and a shifting of aims throughout the course of an

assignment or unit is a common occurrence in arts-centered classrooms, especially in those included in this study.

Third, Eisner tells us that “assessment should try to provide a more complex picture of the developing child” (2005, p. 18). In the classroom chapters we saw multiple examples of assessment intended to look at the whole child. For instance Ms. Bakke talked about her use of both formal and informal assessments, her use of rubrics, and her use of portfolio assessment to show growth in student writing. Mrs. Ingram used an art-centered activity intended to give her a full assessment of her students’ writing skills, spoke of empowering students to plan and conduct their own parent conferences, and also spoke of the different kinds of assessments she needed to use to get the most useful information about her students in different content areas. Each in their own way, these teachers are looking at the student in their midst and *seeing* the student, rather than only focusing on one aspect of the student or the aspects of student learning that can only be measured by standardized tests.

Fourth, Eisner states that, “the social and emotional life of the child needs to be as much a priority as measured academic achievement.” We saw in Mr. Chadek’s room an open and instructive learning environment that worked to teach students to make wise choices when confronted with immense freedom in the classroom. He encouraged students to be social, to work together as a group, and planned activities that brought students together but also planned activities that allowed students to go inside themselves to explore their inner worlds. We also saw an anti-bullying program at Edgebrook Elementary that specifically addressed the students’ emotional lives in addition to the intrapersonal and interpersonal class which integrated music, drama and visual arts to

allow students an avenue to express their inner worlds and to strengthen their bonds to one another. Indeed, the arts help in such endeavors. The arts, Eisner (2002) has stated, “help us discover the contours of our emotional selves [and] provide us sources for experiencing the range and varieties of our responsive capacities” (p. 11).

In a complex world such as ours, schools can no longer afford to focus solely on academic achievement if what is desired is balanced human beings who care for themselves, others, ideas, and the world. Though we see a narrowing vision of student and child in many schools since the implementation of No Child Left Behind, arts-centered schools are in existence to remind us of the value and importance of attending to the whole student throughout their education.

Teachers Share a Commitment to Collaboration

The teachers included in this study experienced the notion of collaboration with varied success. Depending on the constraints and supports in place that either facilitated collaboration, as we saw in the case of Ms. Bakke and Mr. Chadek at Leland Elementary or hindered it as we saw to some extent in the case of Mrs. Fontaine and Mrs. Ingram at Edgebrook. What remained consistent throughout my conversations with teachers in both schools however was their commitment to the idea and benefits of collaboration as arts-centered school reformers and the benefits this translates into for students.

Collaboration, as I noted in chapter four, is a term that is widely used in the advocacy literature on arts education, arts-learning, and arts-integration [see e.g., Burnaford, Aprill, & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005] but looking at the research literature, this concept is rarely studied. Teachers at the two schools in this study incorporated the language of collaboration in their understanding of

arts-integration and supported the concept of collaboration as valuable to learning. Ms. Bakke articulated a collaborative model as one of her main objectives in creating a constructivist classroom; Mrs. Fontaine construed collaboration as a sharing of resources, Mrs. Ingram lamented the time constraints and difficulty of collaborating in a school with a jam-packed curriculum and district mandates, and Mr. Chadek openly collaborated with his environment, somewhat redefining the idea of collaboration in arts-learning.

Collaboration as I observed it in these two arts-centered school reform settings occurred between classroom teachers and arts specialists, between teachers and students, the school and the outside community, students with each other, and students with the educational environment. In this sense both schools cultivated a collaborative culture that encompasses the wider school and community.

Strand (2006) conducted a study on arts-integration and collaboration and identified four elements necessary for collaboration in arts-integration settings to thrive: the philosophical mission of the organization, the characteristics of the teachers involved in collaboration; the administration's relationship with the teachers, and a focus on process over product within the curriculum of the schools (pp. 36-37). First, Strand found that collaboration was more successful when the school was able to select like-minded teachers to be part of the school's collaborative efforts; that is to say teachers who agreed with the mission of the school and were therefore a better fit. This is born out in my investigation of arts-centered school reform. Dr. Carter, principal at Leland Elementary School was able to build her staff from the bottom up. Because of the way her school started up she did not "inherit" any teachers who might have held views unsympathetic to

arts-learning. This strengthened her ability to try new curricula and support the arts in every aspect of her school through a collaborative model.

At Edgebrook Elementary, Principal Hansen was not able to hand-pick her staff but the reform itself originated through consensus of the staff. Indeed other types of reform were suggested with the majority of teachers choosing an arts-centered approach. Having said that, Ms. Hansen did concede that working with an existing staff to implement a comprehensive school reform is challenging. In our interview when I asked her if arts-centered schools could be replicated she commented,

I think you could replicate it. I don't think you can replicate it with an existing staff. . . I don't think you can throw the philosophy on a staff and make it happen like it has here. They have to have the buy-in and the belief, and the passion because it *is* work, you know, so if you get to start with a blank slate then I think it could work. We inherited the whole staff; I mean our whole staff was here. But I didn't feel like it was top down, we built it together. And some people just need the training and the ongoing support. So yeah, I believe it can be replicated but with a blank staff.
(Interview transcript, 2006)

Building a reform effort from a “blank staff” allows school leaders to bring people on board who share the philosophy of the school. Even if they lack training as Ms. Hansen notes, if they have the buy-in and the commitment, the agenda for school reform has a better chance of succeeding. Though collaboration was difficult at Edgebrook Elementary, those teachers who shared a commitment to collaboration for instance Mrs. Fontaine, Mrs. Ingram, some of their colleagues, and music teacher, Mrs. Scott, were able to find ways to make collaboration work for each of them in various ways.

Second, Strand notes the importance of the characteristics of the teachers involved in collaboration. Teachers have to be open to the idea of collaboration. They have to be able and willing to take risks. The atmosphere of the school must also encourage risk

taking as we saw that it did at Leland and more quietly at Edgebrook Elementary. Strand notes that a balance in teacher characteristics is important (p. 36). Teachers come to schools with very different dispositions but what proved important was balancing these dispositions, building trust, and being flexible (pp. 36-37). More than one teacher in this study mentioned the importance of flexibility, of perhaps giving up some control over the curriculum for the good of collaboration. For instance Ms. Bakke saw this in terms of empowering the people around her and sharing responsibility for learning with students and teachers.

Third, Strand found that the relationships between administrators and teachers were important for collaborations to be successful (p.37). This turned out to be true at Leland Elementary. More than one teacher and art specialists sung the praises of principal, Dr. Carter. She was seen as a very kind and even loving authority figure, one who helped buffer teachers from the realities of the district in addition to offering other types of support to teachers. As librarian Mrs. Ellis commented, “Dr. Carter understands the art of filtering . . . she filters what the district is mandating so that it is not so oppressive for teachers” (Interview transcript, 2006). Dr. Carter’s support garnered her much praise and admiration from teachers who respected her style of leading immensely. Such strong relationships between teachers and school leaders support collaboration because teachers are more likely to take risks and risk-taking is a very important aspect of successful arts-learning.

Fourth, successful collaborations placed process over product. This last necessary component to successful collaboration is a tough sell in an educational climate where results end up mattering more than the journey students take to get there. However,

especially at Leland Elementary, the process of learning is valued by teachers and the principal more so than product. In arts education and arts-integration it is recognized that not every idea will work every time. Freedom to take risks and try new ideas is an aspect of successful arts-centered school reform. Teachers I spoke to at Leland Elementary appreciated Dr. Carter's willingness to allow them to try out new curriculum ideas and new ways of teaching –even if these ideas failed. Dr. Carter's metaphor of chaos and success in learning indicates this value. At Edgebrook there was a little more trepidation about trying new ideas, not because of lack of support from Principal Hansen –every teacher I spoke to articulated a feeling of support – but because taking risks appeared to be a high-stakes venture when standardized tests matter so much and because, as a fledgling school reform model, the school needed to show improvement on standardized tests or at the very least see them not slip in order to keep the model in motion. Such realities hinder teachers' ability and willingness to take risks; collaboration very often necessitates risk taking and, as Strand points out, an emphasis on the process of teaching and learning over the product.

These two themes of holistic vision and shared collaboration describe the common aims of arts-centered school reformers. Both are necessary for successful arts-centered reform initiatives to succeed. Schools that wish to replicate arts-centered school reform models would do well to consider their mission in light of these important concepts. On the larger scene of American education, I suggest it will be important for schools to consider planning curriculum, pedagogy, school structure holistically and to begin thinking about students in a more holistic manner –which emphatically includes arts-learning. For those concerned and interested in the future of American education and

the common values they would like children to have when they enter adulthood, the metaphors of thinking holistically and collaboratively will be two important skills. If such skills are modeled in school by their teachers and in the educational activities in which they are immersed, the probability of such values taking hold will be greater.

2. What does Arts-Centered School Reform Look like in Practice?

Describing what arts-centered school reform looks like in practice takes on two meanings in this evaluation. First, I was interested in what makes classrooms arts-centered as a function of arts-centered school reform through teacher-student activity. Second, I wanted to understand the overall picture of the arts-centered school reform agenda from a whole-school perspective. In the classrooms descriptions for example, I spent time describing and interpreting activities that took place outside of the classroom, in the school, and in the community in an attempt to fully understand arts-centered school reform. I also spent time talking to administrators about the arts-centered school reform process. This question therefore covers not only what the classrooms of arts-centered school reform looks like in practice but addresses the practices of arts-centered school reform planners in an attempt to understand this form of comprehensive school reform.

Teachers Provide Arts-Embedded Situations for Students

Artistry in teaching requires intention. In arts-centered school reform it is often the case that the curriculum, structure of the school, district mandates, or general educational climate are not conducive to easily working the arts into every subject as is the goal of arts-integration and arts-centered schools. Teachers in the arts-centered settings in this study *wanted* students to engage in the arts as often as possible and in as many rich and wonderful ways as each could devise. One way I noticed that all four

teachers achieved this was by creating educational situations in which arts ideas and activities could be experienced by students. Greene (1994) writes that,

If educational reformers are to respond to a postmodern world caught in whirling and changing realities, contingent on unending perspectives, we have to begin to think in terms of *situated knowing*. That has to do with living beings, aware of being located specifically in the world, making diverse kinds of sense against their own landscapes and reaching beyond them to constitute something they might call, along with others, a common world. (p. 505)

The idea of the educational situation is based on Dewey's 1901 essay of the same title that discusses the constructed character of experience. (Eisner, 2002, p. 94) "That construction," Eisner further summarizes, "was not only activated by the prior experience the child brought in the situation; it was also the result of the child's interaction with the social and material conditions in which he or she worked. In this view learning and culture were inseparable" (p. 94). Seeking such situated knowing was one of aspects of teacher artistry I became aware of throughout my observation in the ways in which teachers in this study crafted their curriculum, classroom, and teaching. For my purposes, I began referring to these as *arts-embedded situations* because they were often the times within the classroom when the arts were intentionally integrated into the curriculum or honored or infused in some other way.

As was covered in chapter three (pp. 65-89) creating arts-embedded situations is a part of teacher artistry in arts-centered schools. As Eisner (2002) has pointed out,

The teacher designs environments made up of situations that teachers and students co-construct. Sometimes the major responsibility for their formation resides with the teacher, sometimes, with the individual student, often with other students, but the process is never entirely independent; the student always mediates, and hence modifies, what will be received or, better yet, *construed*, from the situations in which he or she works. (p. 47).

Though I specifically focus on arts-embedded situations that teachers offer their students within the curriculum and the structure of the classroom, the notion that students mediate and modify such situations cannot be overlooked. Students' interactions with the arts throughout the curriculum are possible to the extent that teachers plan for such interactions. Good arts-learning is not "loosey-goosey" as Ms. Bakke noted in our interview, "but structured and fun" (Interview transcript, 2006); arts-centered learning can be fun (like *all* learning can be when it appeals to students' interests and proclivities). As was mentioned previously, a crowded curriculum makes arts-integration difficult – even in arts-centered schools. One way that inspired arts-centered school reformers have found to make the presence of the arts known in everything that transpires in the classroom is to construct what I am referring to as arts-embedded situations.

Five types of arts-embedded situations were evident in the arts-centered classroom and appeared in various intensities through the activities, curriculum, pedagogical styles, and evaluation methods I observed. These five types of arts-embedded situations include: *arts-mindedness*, *artistry*, *home*, *growth and caring*, and *expressiveness*. Together these arts-embedded situations begin to explain what arts-centered school reform looks like in practice. Below I present the five types of arts-embedded situations found in classrooms tying these to the literature; I then draw some conclusions about arts-embedded situations as an aspect of arts-centered school reform.

Situations of Arts-Mindedness.

Arts-mindedness refers to the opportunities that teachers offer students to think like an artist and to participate in the cognitive functions of arts-engagement. We saw in Ms. Bakke's class the rigorous work students engaged in while learning the language of

Shakespeare and the mental work of learning what it means to create a dramatic performance; in addition we saw students work through the planning and execution of their passion projects. Both areas of arts-learning demanded that students make choices in the way that artists make choices, crafting a performance or a work of art using the tools of the arts. The same can be said about the stages of the creative writing process Mrs. Fontaine led her students through using the six room poem structure. Finally Mrs. Ingram spent a great deal of time working with her students on the *Tuesday* picture book activity which used multiple forms of representation (Eisner, 1994a; 1994b) and addressed Gardner's multiple intelligences (1983, 1993; 2000) honing the cognitive skills necessary to think like an artist. The arts, Eisner tells us, "teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail" (2000a, p. 14).

Although researchers disagree about the strength of the ties between arts-learning and arts-mindedness and student achievement in other content areas and rightly so, there is a growing consensus that arts-engagement trains the mind to think in creative and innovative ways (Eisner, 2000a; 2002; Winner & Hetland, 2008) that move beyond and prove more important than viewing the arts in instrumental terms (Winner & Cooper, 2000; McCarthy et al., 2004). The situations of arts-mindedness designed for the students in this study allowed them the opportunity to build skills that will prove necessary in the future.

Situations of Artistry.

If situations of arts-mindedness refer to the thinking like an artist, situations of artistry, refer to the opportunities teachers offer students to *be* artists. Ms. Bakke's second

graders engaging in Shakespeare performance is one example; Mr. Chadek's students creating installation art is another; Mrs. Fontaine's students performing their autumn poems through music is another; and Mrs. Ingram's classroom performance of Constitution Day is yet another. Teachers created arts-embedded situations of artistry to help fulfill their goal, not of creating fine artists, although some students may grow up to be just that, but of instilling in students a genuine love for the arts, mirroring the teachers' passions for the arts as well. This can only be achieved by having the experiences of an artist.

Situations of artistry invite students to exercise the imagination (Eisner, 2002, p. 82) and to envision themselves as working artists. This occurs when students have an opportunity to perform as artists. Stevenson and Deasy (2005) in their book, *The Third Space: When Learning Matters* comment that,

The arts are meant to be performed or exhibited. They culminate in a real product that has meaning to students, a product they can share with others – a teacher, classmates, the whole school, parents, the community. The prospect of exhibiting or performing their artwork endows the arts learning experience with a purpose that focuses energies and heightens the importance of its challenges, adding another dimension to the power of the arts to matter to students. (p. 28)

Through performance, the arts take on an additional meaning for students as personal achievement and emphasize the importance of putting on a great performance for the audience. Performance poses its own challenges as we saw in Mrs. Ingram's classroom as her students worked to iron out their Constitution Day performances but as they learned, such challenges are the real work of being an artist. Offering students such entries into the world of an artist is one more way teachers practice the arts in arts-centered school reform settings.

Situations of Home.

The idea of home is not often related to the arts and learning yet an idea of home was transparent in all of the classrooms I observed in various ways. Arts-embedded situations of home refer to the ways in which teachers along with their students create a home-like atmosphere imbued with the arts. Arts-embedded situations of home support the aesthetic dimension of art-centered school reform settings. In Ms. Bakke and Mrs. Fontaine's classrooms, students collaborated in the aesthetic environment. In Mr. Chadek's classroom the social relationships between the students and their teacher created a home-like atmosphere in addition to the qualities of the physical space, for instance the café and the nooks, crannies, and reading spaces set up for student industry and enjoyment. Mrs. Ingram noted that she fosters a feeling of home and family in her classroom although she did not use those words she noted that she "lived that."

All of these examples support Noddings (2006) notion of a shared aesthetic. As we recall from chapter four, Noddings has pointed out that, "part of making a home is the construction of a shared aesthetic, the more interests and habits we share at the outset, the greater our chance of success" (p. 77). Creating a school and creating a home are very similar in that disparate, individual human beings are faced with negotiating ways to live with one another. The teachers in this study involved students in the creation of the classroom space. They allowed students to feel a sense of ownership. On every wall in all four classrooms there was evidence that those particular students had been there, had contributed projects, art work, and a personal sense of their individuality to the environment. Teachers are in charge of designing situations for such an aesthetic, home-

like culture to be constructed but it is the students who create and live in these spaces sharing habits and interests supported by arts-learning.

Situations of Growth & Caring.

In the four classrooms I observed I noticed several instances of arts-embedded situations that involved growth and caring. Growth refers to educational situations that encourage growth in students as learners and artists. For instance the way in which Ms. Bakke honored growth in her students' writing skills from the beginning to the end of the year. The growth Mrs. Ingram supported in having her students develop their own portfolios and plan their own parent conferences is another example. One of Mr. Chadek's central aims as an educator was to see the growth of his students from the beginning to the end of the year and to be a facilitator of that growth. At the school level we saw an interest in student caring evolve into an anti-bullying program at Edgebrook Elementary and special emphasis on character education through cultivating inter and intrapersonal intelligences in students as explored through visual art and music. These examples of growth and caring allude to the benefits of arts-learning for students' emotional and personal worlds. I think of these kinds of activities as supporting an ethic of arts-engagement that shows a care for the arts and guides one's participation in continued arts-engagement and an understanding of self.

Engagement with the arts offers students opportunities to care for ideas (Noddings, 1992) and to care for one another. Building relationships with people, expressing oneself through art, slowing down and directing one's attention to the subtle nuances of craft –these qualities affect learning and these qualities are encouraged by the arts. Perhaps it is a stretch to look at growth and caring through the lens of artistic

engagement but empirically the arts-in-education do help cultivate students who are sensitive, aware and respectful of differences, and who are better able to creatively solve problems. Additionally this reminds us that within this type of situation there is room for even more possibility regarding what the arts can accomplish for the growth of students and their ability to care for, among other things, the arts as they exist (or do not) in the broader democratic culture (Graves, 2005; Zuidervaart & Luttikhuizen, 2000). Indeed, the arts transform consciousness (Eisner, 2002), and offer rich experiences for students.

Eisner comments, “experience is central to growth because experience is the medium of education. Education, in turn, is the process of learning to create ourselves, and it is what the arts, both as a process and as the fruits of that process, promote (2002, p. 3). Creating ourselves is a function of growth; the arts help students achieve this.

Furthermore, teacher artistry, as shown in this study models care for students and for the arts by placing them at the center of schooling. Growth and caring as an arts-embedded situation is of great importance in these arts-centered schools and an area that could be further developed.

Situations of Expressiveness.

Expressiveness is a central feature of arts-learning. Arts-embedded situations of expressiveness refer to situations teachers design for students to explore their inner landscapes (Eisner, 2002) as learners and human beings through the arts. But expressiveness does not stop there; indeed students work to crystallize or “stabilize what would otherwise be evanescent” (p. 11). Mrs. Ingram’s class learned this in working with the *Tuesday* picture book activity and using different forms of representation to make their ideas public. In Ms. Bakke’s class students were encouraged to seek out and express

their passions through personal projects of their design and implementation; students learned about themselves and each other and surprised Ms. Bakke through each projects' creativity and originality. Mrs. Fontaine's rainy day poetry activity allowed students to approach the construction of the six room poem from a sensory and expressive vantage point and Mr. Chadek's students did similarly in their personal renderings of their field trip to Crow Canyon. These projects allowed students significant time and space to go inside and to ". . . discover the self as someone with a sense of agency, the author of a life lived among others and not merely a passive observer or an accidental tourist or a member of a crowd" (Greene, 1995, p. 177). As authors of their own lives, students are offered opportunities to explore, through expressiveness, their inner thoughts, feelings, and crystallize those expressions through forms of representation of their choosing.

Arts-learning and arts education should not *only* be expressive. It is not enough, in regards to the aims for learning, to simply express oneself in an artistic form of representation. However expressiveness is one function of engagement with the arts that addresses the students' inner worlds and contributes to the holistic view of arts-learning and education addressed earlier in this chapter.

This discussion of arts-embedded situations offers one way in which the practices of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied can be explained. Arts-embedded situations occur in various intensities throughout the classrooms I observed and reveal one of the primary ways teachers in arts-centered school reform settings maintain a mindfulness of the arts. Teachers create and design situations that foster arts-learning, situations that at times are made explicit while at other times prove more allusive.

In my view arts-embedded situations provide four functions in arts-centered schools. First, they reinforce the arts in the daily lives of students. Second, they open spaces for deeper learning, and deeper relationship building amongst a community of learners. Third, arts-embedded situations help create the classroom as a more beautiful place to be since many of the situations offered to students result in creations of art. Finally, arts-embedded situations place the arts in a high position within the curriculum and “symbolize to students what adults believe is important” in schooling (Eisner, 2005, p. 14).

Understanding Arts-Centered School Reform & Educational Change

In looking at what the arts-centered school reformers are trying to do in the two schools studied, it is useful to look at aspects of Michael Fullan’s (2007) work on educational change in schools. Fullan speaks of the *meaning* of educational change and the reculturing of schools; both ideas that relate to the experiences of arts-centered school reformers in the two schools studied and further illustrate the practices of arts-centered school reformers.

Shared Meaning & Program Coherence.

“Acquiring meaning, of course, Fullan (2007) tells us “is an individual act, but its real value for student learning is when *shared* meaning is achieved across a group of people working in concert” (p. 37). Shared meaning in educational change contexts refers then to the shared goals and mission that informs the changes taking place and the practices in classrooms that support the organizational changes. Without shared meaning in school reform, change has very little chance of success.

Leland Elementary School experienced the greatest level of shared meaning in regards to the vision of the school. The strength of the staff's shared meaning comes from Dr. Carter's ability to hire staff members who held beliefs about the arts, not necessarily similar to hers but conducive to the school culture she was attempting to create. Because she started her school from the ground up and personally hired her staff, she was not in a position to have "inherited" staff members who may not have held beliefs about the arts that fit with her vision of education for students.

Edgebrook Elementary School's story was somewhat different. Prior to the restructuring to an arts-integrated school, Edgebrook was suffering from low enrollment and thus had to come up with a reform plan that would increase enrollment and maintain academic achievement. While the majority of the staff chose to be an arts-centered school, there were teachers less comfortable with the arts and less convinced of their power to benefit student learning. In the first couple of years of the new reform model's implementation, Edgebrook saw significant turnover in staff. However, this attrition may not have been the worse scenario. As teachers who could not fully commit to arts-integration and the new direction of the school, other more like-minded teachers were able to be hired. Over time then, the school could achieve a sense of shared meaning and commitment to the mission of arts-centered school reform.

Edgebrook Elementary however saw slightly stronger program coherence which Fullan defines as "organizational focus and integration" (p. 164). The school's mission of educating the head, the heart, and the hand was very clearly laid out. Remember in chapter five that Principal Hansen mentioned that her staff believed children learn by doing but had to ask themselves what that exactly meant in practice. Through this process

of asking questions they came up with a three-pronged approach that included basing arts-integration on Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, focusing on strong mainstream academics, and supporting character education through their anti-bullying program. Teachers did not have to wonder about the focus of the reform program in place which was very clearly laid out.

Leland Elementary School's principal, Dr. Carter, used multiple theories to support her arts education agenda. She focused more on creating the right community of teachers than having a coherent school reform plan in place. Nevertheless she experienced great success in her school because the shared beliefs of her teachers fueled their motivation to integrate the arts and meet the expectations of Dr. Carter and the parent and student community. Moreover because Leland proved a very happy place to be where risk-taking was valued, teachers were willing to work toward program coherence over time through thinking deeply about arts-integration. This conclusion became apparent in my conversations with Ms. Bakke and Mr. Chadek both of whom spent considerable time thinking about their classrooms, making adjustments, and concerning themselves with the improvement of their teaching and curriculum goals.

Shared meaning and program coherence are two valuable components of successful arts-centered learning, both observed to various extents in the two schools studied. Can arts-centered school reform work without these components? In general, any kind of school reform, arts-centered or otherwise, would be challenged without these two important aspects. Arts-centered school reformers may have an edge in that the arts encourage connection and collaboration both of which help build consensus, shared meaning, and program coherence in school reform.

Toward the Reculturing of Schools.

Included in the definition of arts-centered school reform used throughout this investigation I included the “intentional restructuring and reculturing of schools” as part of that definition. *Restructuring* schools, Fullan (2007) tells us, happens all the time. Plans arrive on the doorstep of schools, are chosen by the principal, or mandated by the district, changes are implemented and evaluations occur. The reform initiative either succeeds or fails or sometimes merely fades away or is absorbed into the status quo of daily school life. Both Edgebrook Elementary School and Leland Elementary School engaged in restructuring. Each school deliberately reorganized their school curriculum, structure, evaluation techniques, and pedagogy around the arts. The arts were placed at the center and all the changes to the ecology of the school permeated outwards from the arts. From what I have shown in this study the restructuring has been effective and in general these school reform initiatives can be considered successful.

Reculturing, however, Fullan tells us is even more important than restructuring. Reculturing refers to “how teachers come to question and change their beliefs and habits” (Fullan, 2007, p. 25). Although I would argue that both schools have undergone a form of reculturing, they differ in how this occurred and in the level of success each has experienced. Leland Elementary School has experienced more success in reculturing partly because every teacher on staff came on board with commonalities and shared beliefs about the arts’ ability to affect learning in positive ways. Dr. Carter as an inspirational leader who offers unrelenting support to her staff to develop their interest in the arts, to become an integral part of the community, to seek resources and professional development to hone their teaching craft, and who allowed and encouraged risk-taking in

the classroom, is in charge of the culture of school and is the driving force behind its coherence. She has proved to be a dynamic leader, so much so, that over and over again in interviews with parents, teachers, arts specialists and other staff, a concern crept in over what would happen to the school once Dr. Carter retired or left the school.

The reculturing of Edgebrook unfolded rather differently. Again, I would still say the school has for the most part been able to change the majority of the beliefs of the teachers present at the time of my investigation but in the course of their six year history the school had seen much turn over. Furthermore, as was reported to me through interviews, it became clear that some teachers who were not in line with the changes the school had made were able to continue teaching in much the same way as they had prior to the school reform implementation without much interference. Again, this is a result of “inheriting” an existing staff which as Principal Hansen noted earlier in this chapter, is an impediment to replication of an arts-centered school reform in other settings.

Overall I see reculturing as a central feature of arts-centered school reform. As my definition of arts-centered school reform reads: the intentional restructuring and reculturing of schools using the theories and practices of the arts and arts-learning as the primary basis for educational change decisions. I noticed through my observations and in conjunction with Fullan’s work that schools do not just change practices, they change minds or they attract the minds that fulfill the mission of arts-centered school reform. In the two schools studied we have definitely seen both.

3. *What is the Educational Significance of Arts-Centered School Reform as it is Represented in the Two Schools Studied?*

The significance of arts-centered school reform reveals itself in two ways. First, in the meaning-making possibilities arts-centered school reform offers students and second in the overarching conclusions that can be drawn from these four examples of arts-centered school reform. I looked for occasions of meaning-making possibility in five realms, the *cognitive, imaginative, democratic, community, and the personal*.

Several of the educational theorists pertinent to this investigation of arts-centered school reform have concerned themselves with education as a meaning-making enterprise (Greene 1978; 1988; 1995; Dewey 1934; Eisner 1994b; Phenix, 1986; Uhrmacher 2001). Phenix (1986) states that “. . . the special office of education is to widen one’s view of life, to deepen insight into relationships, and to counteract the provincialism of customary existence – in short, to engender an integrated outlook (pp. 3-4). In this way Phenix set out to create a philosophy of the curriculum in such a way as to fully describe human experience. Here my reasons for exploring meaning-making are not quite as encompassing but I am interested in the areas of arts-centered school reform that encourage meaning-making and in this sense work towards describing the significance of arts-learning and arts-centered school reform.

Returning to my rationale for looking for occasions of meaning-making in the classrooms in chapter three, I suspected that arts-centered school reform would hold meaning-making potential for students. Indeed I was able to locate these five realms of meaning-making possibilities in the arts-centered schools in this study primarily in the

curricular dimensions of schooling (although these five realms were present to some extent throughout the ecology of the school), which I discuss below.

The Curricular Dimension & Meaning-Making.

By far the most prevalent and accessible space for students to create meaning in arts-centered school is through the curriculum. Within the classroom chapters we saw multiple examples of teachers planning curriculum that provide opportunities for students to make meaning within the five realms introduced in chapter three including the cognitive, democratic, imaginative, community, and personal realms. Some examples of the spaces created for meaning-making drawn from the teachers' work are highlighted in Appendix F.

In the cognitive realm we saw students engaging in activities that exercised the cognitive functions inherent with working with the arts that Eisner (2002) speaks of including: noticing the world, engaging the imagination, stabilizing the evanescent and exploring one's inner landscapes (pp. 10-11). This was apparent in Ms. Bakke's work with students on the rigors of learning Shakespeare, in Mrs. Fontaine's work with sensory experience and forms of representation in her literacy unit, in Mrs. Ingram's work with the cognitive aspects of creation with the *Tuesday* activity, and in Mr. Chadek's students' work on installation art and the creation of monuments in art class. We saw the meaning-making possibilities in the different types of arts-embedded situations teachers designed for students, specifically in situations of arts-mindedness with the working curriculum. .

We saw teachers infuse their lessons with imagination and schools that invite artists into the school to inspire the students' imagination. The imaginative realm is a wide space for meaning-making for students. Imagination in the curriculum is used in the

curriculum as a tool to grasp and hold onto sensory images or thoughts that have not been experienced first hand and as a metaphor and idea-generating process. Efland (2004) defines *imagination* similarly as “the act or power of forming mental images of what is not actually present to the senses, or what has not actually been experienced” (p. 757). Efland further makes the case that imagination too, is highly cognitive. “Cognition is not purely literal. It has metaphorical and imaginative attributes as well” (p. 766). Therefore students engaged in arts curriculum focused on the imagination are most likely creating meaning in the cognitive realm as well.

Every time teachers offer students opportunities within the curriculum to engage in the arts they are offering students the opportunity to make meaning in support of cultural democracy (Graves, 2005; Zuidervaart & Luttikhuisen, 2000) within the democratic realm. The very act of arts-engagement improves the chances that students will engage in the arts through school and into adulthood. Scholars concerned about the state of affairs of the arts in society worry that the lack of arts in schools will affect participation, patronage, and support of the arts for future generations.

Both schools in this study offered programming that added extra enrichment in multiple art forms to students. Leland Elementary offered a quarterly electives program touting an astounding array of classes for students to choose from that are intended to inspire, to engage, and keep students connected to the idea of arts participation. Edgebrook offers their own program they called ArtsEnrich which also invited students to participate in a wide array of classes in the arts, humanities, and beyond. In both schools, it was teachers, parents, knowledgeable adults in the community, and support staff who led these courses. Such care and participation exhibits the practice of cultural

democracy in the curriculum. Moreover bringing a society or community of people together toward common interests (Dewey, 1916) brings us closer to the democratic ideal. Democracy is supported in multiple ways in our culture; supporting culture is one way to maintain a democratic spirit in our schools.

In the community realm meaning-making possibilities exist to the extent that the curriculum in arts-centered schools supports the creation, cultivation, and growth of individuals as a group. Both Leland and Edgebrook made great strides in building a sense of community into the curriculum. For instance Leland brought teachers, community members, and parents into the school to share their love for the arts which proved to be its own learning experience for students. Edgebrook worked to create community through their all-school show which brought the community in to see a performance developed through the classroom and music curriculum and also supported this space for meaning-making through the intrapersonal and interpersonal class offered that combined the arts with the creation of community. These actions open up meaning-making possibilities for students. As Stevenson and Deasy (2005) state, “when the arts are taken seriously by teachers, artists and school administrators, as works that make visible students’ knowledge, insight, and experiences, learning begins to matter and a third space is created” (p. 92). As community participation grows, so grows the meaning-making potential for students.

Finally, supporting the personal realm, in chapter four I revealed the idea of the *personal curriculum* which I noted was the curriculum choices made by teachers that inspire motivation in students and that in turn motivate students to make curriculum personal. The personal curriculum is that which students choose to carry with them into

their future learning –the piece students keep for themselves. In this sense, students are choosing to make meaning out of particular curricula to which they were exposed.

Teachers may never know that this happened, indeed, as Eisner points out,

In reflecting on the effects of teaching it must be acknowledged, yet again, that students learn both more and less than what we intend to teach. They learn more because of the personal meanings they make of what we have taught. Since meaning is located in the interaction between the student and the rest of the situation, and since each student brings a unique history to that situation, the meanings made by each student will differ from those of others, sometimes in very significant ways. In this sense what students learn exceeds what the teacher intended to teach. But they almost always learn less as well. Our educational aspirations for students are almost never completely realized. (Eisner, 2002, p. 51)

Although I am more hopeful that students receive more, rather than less than teachers intend, I recognize the truth of Eisner’s statement that indeed meaning-making is personal. The personal realm is the space teachers have afforded students in which to create their personal meanings as learners.

These five realms of meaning are meant to describe the whole experience of arts-centered school reform and arts-learning. Successful arts-learning appeals to these areas of value and meaning throughout the curriculum. As arts-centered school reformers design their programs and agenda, attending to these five realms and assuring that the curriculum offers opportunities for meaning-making within them, is an important aspect of educating students in arts-centered schools.

Six Conclusions Regarding Arts-Centered School Reform

There are six conclusions regarding arts-centered school reform and arts-centered school reformers that emerged from this study and point to the significance of arts-centered school reform. First, effective arts-centered school reformers internalize arts-

centered school reform as a state of mind. Arts-centered school reform is first and foremost a vision of education. It is a belief, a belief that the arts can benefit students in social, cognitive, and emotional ways. The teachers, administrators, and staff I spoke to involved in arts-integration and arts-learning at both schools held deeply ingrained beliefs about the arts and what the arts bring to the learning experiences of students. *Beliefs* as the “pedagogical functions and theories underlying a particular program” (Fullan, 2007, p. 30) are an important dimension of effective school reform. School leaders in both settings of this study were careful to make particular theories central to the mission of arts-centered school reform. Ms. Hansen relied on the theory of multiple intelligences while Dr. Carter conveyed the values of multiple theorists like Elliot Eisner, Parker Palmer, and Maxine Greene.

Moreover, arts-centered school reform as a state of mind reminds us that teachers can either make changes in their actions or in their *thinking* about their actions (Schwab, 1972). Arts-centered school reform as a state of mind is perhaps the first step to successful arts-centered change. It promotes the *shared meaning* mentioned earlier in relation to arts-school reformers practices and it contributes to teacher artistry as a complex act.

Second, arts-centered school reform cannot *only* be internalized as a state of mind but requires vision, structure, and action. If arts-centered school reformers merely *believe* in the efficacy of arts-learning, of course nothing would happen. Finding that balance between thought and action is central to the mission of arts-centered school reform. Fullan (2007) makes a similar point when he states that “educational change is not a single entity” (p. 30) but includes interacting dimensions including the use of revised

materials and the use of new teaching approaches in addition to beliefs about the underlying theories of the change taking place (pp. 30-34). Without both the practical and the theoretical *in action*, educational change has little hope of succeeding.

We saw Dr. Carter and Principal Hansen share a vision of school reform with their staffs that was then mediated through action. Dr. Carter was careful to provide materials and resources to teachers to encourage constant improvement. Principal Hansen devoted time and resources to further developing the arts-integration skills of her staff. Both attempted to provide the three aspects of change Fullan speaks of in executing their vision – shared meaning, program coherence, and reculturing – as a useful structure for arts-centered school reform that would eventually lead to action and change on the part of teachers.

Third, successful arts-centered school reform demonstrates a shared aesthetic and community culture that supports arts-learning. As Ms. Bakke quoted, “if it’s beautiful, it’s right.” The examples of arts-centered school reform in this study are both beautiful and right. Both schools and its teachers, through artistry, reach into those areas of meaning spoken of above to create interesting spaces where learning can occur. We recall Noddings (2006) notion of the shared aesthetic in creating home and how teachers design situations of home that build upon this idea of a shared aesthetic. We saw multiple examples of these schools striving for beauty in the community, in the classroom, through the curriculum, and in their relationships with students.

Fourth, arts-centered school reform is best implemented as a set of relational and personal ideals that are expressed through teacher-created experiences, encounters, and arts-embedded situations. The majority of this discussion has centered on the aims of

arts-centered school reformers as holistic educators, interested collaborators, and designers of educational situations. Though speaking specifically about teachers of art, Eisner notes that,

art education should help students recognize what is personal, distinctive, and even unique about their work . . . one of the important contributions that art education can make to students is to help them become aware of their own individuality. The arts if they are about anything, are about the creation of a personal vision (p. 44).

I believe this holds true for the arts *in* education as well, in the curriculum, and in the ecology of the school. The arts-centered school reformers, as has been pointed out, have offered students multiple spaces for creating personal vision, meaning and even curriculum. This is an area that arts-centered school reformers will want to pursue further, especially in convincing outsiders of the intrinsic value of the arts in education.

Fifth, Arts-centered school reform requires a public presence within the community to thrive and the creation of communities within the school. As Eisner (2002) recounts,

Dewey's emphasis on the importance of creating communities of learning so that children could learn from each other was a hallmark of good progressive education practices. Indeed the opportunity to work in a group on common tasks was a way go help children not only find practical meaning in academic ideas but also to learn what democratic life entails. (p. 94).

Arts-centered school reform in these two settings exhibited a number of opportunities for students to work in groups and in collaboration with one another toward their learning goals. We also saw arts-centered school reformers reach out into the community and make connections through the arts with the outside community. In addition the community was brought into the schools through arts performances and events. As was discussed in chapters four and seven, working with the community as a partner in

education is an aspect promoted by arts-advocates and one that serves arts-centered school reform well.

Sixth, arts-centered school reformers foster an ethic of arts-engagement that is vital to our value of cultural democracy. Providing rich arts-experiences to students instills the idea of the arts as important to the human condition. “Humans beings are artistic animals no less than political ones. Everywhere, they are found in groups; and everywhere, they are seen to dance, sing, and tell stories” (Melzer, Weinberger, and Zinman, 1999, p. 1). Why then is it that we still struggle to sustain the centrality of the arts in society and in education? This question surely has multiple answers but I think the experiences detailed in this study suggest that arts-centered school reform is difficult and deliberate work. Nevertheless, the teachers in these stories have done this difficult and deliberate work by instilling what I have called an ethic of arts-engagement; a caring concern for one’s participation in the arts world. In the end, as Graves (2005) states, it will be “schools that can fundamentally embrace artistic creativity as central to their missions and goals that will excel; others will not. The accelerating pace of globalization places new demands on our schools that cannot be answered by retreating to yesterday’s fondly recalled basics or the European canon” (p. 142). In my view, although still imperfect, these examples of arts-centered school reform are well on their way to creating a viable twenty-first century model of education for students.

The above are six conclusions inspired by my observations of arts-centered school reform. In summarizing these six conclusions it should also be pointed out that arts-centered school reform is most successful when teachers see themselves as artists in the classroom as Eisner (2002b) does:

Artistry and professional judgment will . . . always be required to teach well, to make intelligent education policy, to establish personal relationships with our students, and to appraise their growth. Those of us who work in the field of education are neither bank tellers who have little discretion nor assembly line workers whose actions are largely repetitive. Each child we teach is wonderfully unique, and each requires us to use in our work the most exquisite of human capacities, the ability to make judgments in the absence of rules. Although good teaching uses routines, it is seldom routine. Good teaching depends on sensibility and imagination. It courts surprise. It profits from caring. In short, good teaching is an artistic affair. (p. 577)

Highlighting artistry in arts-centered school reform has been a major component of this study. Through the detailed descriptions of teacher practices in chapters four through seven what is meant by artistry has accumulated strength as a central feature of arts-centered school reform. Teacher artistry is defined by the qualities that Eisner outlines above and one more: the idea that integration and school reform through the arts can allow artistry to flourish.

4. What Educational Import do these Examples of Arts-Centered School Reform have for American Public School Reform in General?

In viewing the entire landscape of arts-centered school reform from my vantage point as someone who has been immersed in these ideas for some time now, I see five ways in which the insights into arts-centered school reform that resulted from this study could benefit American public school reform in general.

First, arts-centered school reformers are building experience on how to successfully support learning from a holistic perspective. The view of the student and child as whole, harkening back to progressive education, should be a central feature of all reform efforts. In an integrated and globalized world it no longer suits us as a society to dwell on piecemeal and fragmented forms of learning. Looking at the whole child when designing

and implementing school reform agendas, regardless of whether the reform agenda is arts-centered will be instrumental in a successful vision of education.

Second, the model of the positive affects of an integrated curriculum for school reform in general should not be overlooked. Arts-centered school reformers embrace the idea of an integrated curriculum because it supports the notion of the whole child and how students learn best through the arts. Even without the arts in the picture however, an integrated curriculum offers a balanced view of learning. Finding connections between ideas, concepts, and practices is a skill students of the future will require.

Third, general school reform models must emphasize the ideas of shared meaning, program coherence, and reculturing (Fullan, 2007) discussed in the chapter. Again, even comprehensive school reform models that are not centered on the arts must work to encourage teacher and community buy-in, base their reform practices and agenda on an underlying educational theory of significance, and must work towards changing or reculturing the belief systems of teachers and the community toward the educational aims of the reform.

Fourth, school reformers in public schools would do well to look closely at the joy, fun, enthusiasm, happiness, and meaning-making possibility that work in arts-centered school reform settings engenders. Schools ought to be fun places to be, to learn, and to become part of a caring community. Arts-centered school reform models as seen in this study thrive because of the diverse mixture of people who love the arts and love the learning that emerges from them. Though other school reform models may not emphasize the arts as central to their mission, they must find a point of interest around which

teachers, students, and community can rally. Art-centered school reform models provide excellent examples of what such rallying looks like in practice.

Finally from a conceptual standpoint, I have predominantly used two different frameworks which I employed to interact with the data I observed and recorded. The first, the five realms of meaning delineated above and in chapter three, was the framework I began with. I used this framework to look for the ways in which arts-centered school reform settings provided occasions for meaning-making in the classroom. I wanted to see if arts-learning supported these five realms: the cognitive, the imaginative, the community, the democratic, and the personal. However as I looked further into the data this conceptual framework left out phenomena that I felt was pertinent to describing and interpreting arts-centered school reform in its totality. At this point, a second conceptual framework emerged, which I delineated as arts-embedded situations including: arts-mindedness, artistry, home, growth and caring, and expressiveness. I saw over and over again, ideas, activities, and phenomena that could be seen through this alternative lens of understanding. In this chapter I have attempted to work with both conceptual frameworks to show alternating qualities of arts-centered classrooms, first in their ability to provide meaning-making opportunities for students (realms of meaning) and second in their ability to provide rich experiences that advance learning (arts-embedded situations).

As I look at these two conceptual frameworks I am not certain that they are or are not related to one another. In my mind, as of now, each describes different elements of arts-centered learning. The five realms of meaning approach the more ethereal and intangible aspects of arts-centered learning –the big ideas, so to speak – while the arts-embedded situations address the tangible and performance aspects of the day-to-day life

of arts-centered schools. In my view, each conceptual framework is rich in potential and significance for researchers and school reformers in other settings and could be a rallying point for future research into school reform settings.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research into arts-centered school reform would do well to focus on five possible areas. First, in this study, and throughout the literature on arts in education and arts-centered school reform, the voices of arts-specialists are limited (also a limitation of this study). There are several reasons for this which I have discussed in the limitations section of this study; however future researchers would do well to incorporate the experiences, concerns, and practices of arts-specialists in arts-centered school reform in a deeper way than I have been able to in this study. Studies that examined the conflicting roles that arts-specialists hold in arts-centered and arts-integrated schools would be very useful in rounding out the picture of arts-centered school reform that I have painted in this study.

Second, future researchers of arts-centered school reform may consider focusing studies on collaboration in arts-centered school reform. In the research literature collaboration is understudied, yet arts-advocates mention the notion often and arts-centered school reformers articulate ideas of collaboration as well. It would be useful to know the true strength and power of collaboration in arts-centered school reform settings in more formally studied ways.

Third, future researchers of arts-centered school reform would be wise to investigate the role of the principal and the impact of his or her leadership on the success and challenges of arts-centered school reform. Many of the participants in this study were

very vocal about the importance of the principal in advancing the arts-centered school reform agendas. While this study focused on the teachers engaged in arts-centered school reform and his or her interactions with students, a study focusing solely on the principal's role within arts-centered school reform environments would be useful and would offer important lessons to future arts-centered school reformers as they attempt to replicate their own models of arts-centered school reform.

Fourth, this study focused on veteran teachers for the most part. It would be interesting to know how the experiences with the implementation of arts-centered school reform are different for teachers new to arts-centered schools settings. Connected to this would be looking at the experiences of teacher education candidates and how (or if) those experiences support teachers' abilities and efficacy as arts-centered school reformers.

As a final note, this research study has been confined to the examination of elementary schools kindergarten through grade five. Many of the superb ideas and experiences occurring in arts-centered schools at the elementary level are lost or are non-existent at the high school level. Research that focused its investigations on ideas such as the creation of a shared aesthetic or the creation of home from an arts-centered perspective at the middle school or high school level would be tremendously helpful in coming to understand the strengths and challenges of arts-centered school reform.

Closing Remarks

This study examines many different facets of the arts in education, arts-learning, and arts-integration and how these facets create a dynamic learning environment for students. As a person who believes in the power of the arts for learning based largely on early personal experiences that convinced me, I am very hopeful that arts-centered school

reform will continue to proliferate in schools faced with a severe need to improve or in schools that are doing just fine but would like to offer their students a balanced, beautiful, and whole education. I believe the students in the settings I have described are truly fortunate to have the slew of engaged and committed teachers I observed and spoke to attending to their educational experiences. My continued hope is that all children are presented with the possibilities that the arts are capable of offering.

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APPENDIX A

List of Websites Included in the Literature Review

National Endowment for the Arts
<http://arts.endow.gov>

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
<http://www.pcah.gov>

Arts Education Partnership
<http://www.aep-arts.org>

Kennedy Center ArtsEdge Marcopolo
<http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org>

APPENDIX B

Interview guide

Teacher questions

- Briefly describe your curriculum philosophy
- Describe your approach to arts-integrated learning
- What do you believe the arts do for your students?
- What personal benefits have you experienced working in an arts-based school?
- What limitations or barriers have you experienced when implementing an arts-based curriculum in your classroom?
- If you could change one thing about your school what would it be?
- How has the community been affected by the emphasis on the arts in your school?

Parent questions

- How did you come to choose this school for your student?
- What about [this school] do you like?
- What frustrations have you experienced in working with [this school]?
- How do you feel your student has benefited by being a part of this school community?
- Do you feel involved in the community of this school?
- What more could [this school] do to improve the education its students experience?
- What kinds of things does your student tell you about school?

Administrator questions

- Tell me a little about the history of [this school] as an arts-based school?
- What barriers has your school experienced in implementing an arts-based or arts integrated curriculum?
- From your experience how do your students benefit from an arts-based approach?
- How does your school help build community?
- What are your thoughts about using the arts as a vehicle for school reform?
- If you could change one thing in your school, what would it be?
- What do you think are the instrumental benefits of the arts for your students?
- What do you think are the intrinsic benefits of the arts for your students?

Arts administrator/ specialist questions

- What can you tell me about your experience working in [this school]?
- What benefits have you seen as a result of student engagement with the arts?
- What barriers have you experienced working in [this school]?
- If you could change one thing at this school what would it be?
- How do you perceive the general public's interest in the arts, from your personal and professional experience?
- How do you work to cultivate imagination in students?
- In your opinion, how do the arts contribute to society?

APPENDIX C

Sample Elective Offerings at Leland Elementary School for One Quarter

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle and Conserve • Let's Go to the Movies • Mixed Media Art Class • African Art • Elementary Latin • The Stock Market Game • Kid's Choice Super Club (Mr. Chadek's elective offering) • Technology Club • Science and Chemistry • More about Egypt • Ceramics • Cooking • Sewing for Kids • Collage Art • Dissection • Fencing • Yearbook Club • Easy, Fun (and Healthy) Snacks • Japanese Cooking • Rock Climbing • Screenplay writing • Building • Bugs! • Space • Mobiles: Art that Moves • Astronomy • Storybook Art and Action • Anatomy and Your Health • Yoga • Fashion Design and Business • Student Council • How does That Work? • Different Strokes from Awesome Folks • Hip-Hop Kinder • Dinosaurs • Beginning Spanish • India • Origami II 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opera • Erik's Crazy Music Class • Fabulous Fossils and Radical Rocks: A Geology Lab • The Green Thumb Club • Creative Body Works • Photography • Rhythm and Song • A Midsummer's Nights...Mare Shakespeare Performance (Ms. Bakke's elective offering) • Creative Cross Stitch • Design It and Create It • Discovering Great Artists • Map Making • Dreams and Mythology • Jump Rope • Schoolyard Ballistics (physics) • Filmmaking • Robotics • Stagecraft • Radio Theater • Trading Cards • Outdoor Games • Aerobics • Ballet • Calligraphy • Tae Kwon Do • Bread Making • Color Theory • Soccer • Kept in Stitches • Earth Exploration • Performance Arts Development • Young Explorers • Play Chess • Drama • Beginning French • Architecture...and more...
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APPENDIX D

Example “To-Do” list from Mrs. Fontaine’s Class

From Monday October 2nd, 2006

To do this for literacy block: Pretty Planet Poetry.

First graders

The word THEY worksheet
Fall books
Sequence cards

Second graders

Months
Cover USA book
Letter to Fireman Dave

From Tuesday October 3rd, 2006

To do list on the board is stated in pictures.

1. Read
2. Write in journal
3. Listening to music/ draw picture on clipboard
4. Word games/ rhymes/ sequence cards
5. Magnetic letters/ building
6. Read with a partner
7. Browsing books
8. Sniff Sniff (smells) center
9. Under the glass, practice writing classmates’ birthdays.

From Thursday October 5th, 2006

To do List

DLI –Direct Language Instruction

Independent/ small group with Mrs. Fontaine reading for 20 minutes

2nd grade

Copy paper game [?]

Letters to Nathan

Leaf rubbings

1st grade

Halloween stories (read)

Letters to Nathan

Leaf rubbings

APPENDIX E

Examples of Daily Activities from Mr. Chadek's Class

Monday April 17th, 2006

- 9:00 Check in –attendance and lunch count/
- 9:05 The Gathering
- 9:30 Quiet working time
- 10:15 Quiet outside break
- 10:30 Math
- 11:40 Lunch
- 12:30 Sam I Am (I Am Poems)
- 1:15 Mine All Mine
- 2:00 Mini Brain Break
- 2:15 Picasso training with Coach
- 3:00 Quiet reading time
- 3:30 Good clean up
- 3:45 We will see you tomorrow

Enjoy the Science Fair!

Thursday April 20th, 2006

- 9:00 Check in (attendance, lunch count)
- 9:05 The gathering (compliment a teacher day, field trip/ sharing, top 5 books)
- 9:30 Miss Kris writing extravaganza
- 10:15 Mini break
- 10:30 Math; Chapter 9 –test of knowledge
- 11:40 lunch
- 12:30 The three ring circus –house, senate, exec., judicial etc.
- 1:15 Significant moment in history
- 2:00 Quiet time/ reading
- 2:15 Gym with Coach
- 3:00 TBA
- 3:30 Clean up
- 3:45 Go home and have a great night

APPENDIX F

Meaning-Making through the Curricular Dimension of Schooling

	Cognitive	Democratic	Imaginative	Community	Personal
Ms. Bakke	Exploring the cognitive aspects of arts-integration in the classroom particularly working with - Shakespeare and the rigors of rehearsal.	Providing opportunities for students to be seen and heard; engaging in the passion projects.	Inspiring students to follow their own interests, fostering risk-taking, and leading to 'surprise.'	Creating a collaborative culture together and a shared aesthetic in the classroom.	Providing personal choice in curriculum activities. Fostering student voice.
Mrs. Fontaine	Working with multiple forms of representation in the creation of arts-integration projects such as the rainy-day poems.	Inspiring and cultivating the creation of student voice through choice in the classroom. Building a community that cares about the arts.	Enlivening the sense and imagination through the Rainy-day poem activity, the fall walk, and the fall poem performances.	Creating community through intra/interpersonal class, the all-school show, and creating a bully-free zone in the school.	Encouraging students to make curriculum personal through inter/intrapersonal class and cultivating students' multiple intelligences.
Mrs. Ingram	Working with the cognitive aspects of representation, creation and multiple intelligences in arts-integrated activities such as the <i>Tuesday</i> activity.	Empowering students through student-led conferences, and broad exposure to the arts and participation in classroom life.	Learning and coming to understand the impetus of creation through the <i>Tuesday</i> activity; adding students' personal signature to their work.	Building a caring community in the classroom; the anti-bullying program and the ritual of group rating which brought cohesiveness to her classroom.	Fostering connectedness in the classroom, the group rating ritual, and building relationships in the classroom.
Mr. Chadek	Creating arts-centered activities that involve problem-solving and working to hone the skills of an artist in their "seeing into liquid" art installation project.	Fostering cultural democracy through the study and design of monuments and allowing students to pursue their interests in the arts.	Cultivating the imagination through innovative projects, book reports, fads & foibles, and arts-integration extensions of outside class experiences.	Providing an environment for social interaction amongst students and engaging with the outside arts- community through field trips and experiences.	Fostering examination of students' inner landscapes through their Crow Canyon experience and culminating arts-integrated project.

