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## Teachers' implicit theories of expression in visual arts education: A study of Western Australian teachers

Diana J. Brown  
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**Teachers' implicit theories of expression in visual arts  
education: A study of Western Australian teachers**

By

Diana Brown M.Ed., B.Ed., Cert.Ed.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences

Edith Cowan University

April 2006

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the differences in the beliefs of primary (elementary) class teachers about the role of expression in visual arts education. The focus is on the relationship between primary teachers' implicit theories, and expression in their visual arts lessons. 'Expression' here, refers to the manifestation of an individual student's interests or views through visual images. Students' expression of their personal responses through visual images, is a central intended outcome of the visual arts curriculum in Western Australia (Curriculum Council, 1998).

Teachers differ as to whether they give expression in the visual arts, high or low priority. They may see it as a future potentiality dependent upon the acquisition of art skills, techniques and concepts, or as an innate ability, which should be either safeguarded from adult interference or shaped by adult intervention. Despite these differences, teachers tend to understand their own teaching practice as a commonsense reaction to certain imperatives, such as the needs of the students, the limitations of resources, the time-constraints, and the apparently self-evident goals of education. The purpose of this study is to understand the implicit beliefs that underlie teachers' largely non-reflective descriptions of their teaching practice – beliefs “that are subliminally ingested as a part of general or progressional socialization ... [and] that permeate their activities on a daily basis” (Eisner, 1992b, p.306).

This study has three main aims: (1) to record and understand WA primary teachers' views on expression in art education, in order to isolate and analyse the distinct elements of their implicit beliefs; (2) to discover whether the teachers' implicit beliefs provide the structural basis for their descriptions of teaching practice; and (3) to explore the relationship between the teachers' implicit beliefs and practice, and the beliefs embedded both in the WA Curriculum Framework, and in the wider theoretical debate on expression in visual arts education.

In order to understand teachers' implicit beliefs about expression in art education, in-depth interviews were conducted with nineteen teachers in two primary schools sharing similar workplace conditions. An understanding of how implicit beliefs influenced practice was enriched by observing eight teachers' art lessons, and by collecting data

from student questionnaires. A questionnaire was also given to the teachers in order to record their explicit beliefs.

In this study, teachers with very similar workplace conditions and feelings of efficacy frequently chose radically different approaches to teaching the visual arts. This was because their implicit beliefs proved to have a strong driving effect on their teaching approaches.

Teacher's implicit beliefs about expression in art education had sufficient internal consistency and coherence, to enable for them to be termed implicit theories. These core implicit theories were then located in relation to one or other of four art education philosophies. This illuminated the similarities and differences in interpretations of expression, between the teachers interviewed and the four major art education philosophies. The results indicated that, independent of knowledge of the theoretical debate, teachers' implicit theories did align with those espoused by the art education philosophies, but that teaching approaches engendered by these beliefs, did not always correspond with those envisaged by educational theorists.

While the WA Curriculum Framework sets out what students should know, understand and value, it does not attempt to be prescriptive with content. Schools and teachers are expected to respond to the framework by devising programmes that will achieve the stated outcomes. Because of this "flexibility of ownership" (Education Department of Western Australia, 1998, p.26), it is important to know how teachers are likely to respond in particular learning areas. This study contributes not only to an understanding of teachers' views on expression, a central issue of the Arts, but also to an understanding of the teaching methods they are likely to apply in response to these beliefs.

## DECLARATION

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The Background to the Study

In his work on the Gestalt theory of expression, Arnheim (1966) defined expression as the outward display of human thoughts and emotions: “In present-day usage, the term expression refers primarily to external manifestations of the human personality .... or the temporary state of mind of the individual” (pp.51-52).

In the visual arts, these manifestations of human personality that are called expression, are not private phenomena (Godfrey, 1992), but are forms of communication. They involve what Heyfron (1983) described as “the intimate connection between inner states and the external form of the art object” (p.61). Arnheim argued that “expression can be described as the primary content of vision” (1971, p.219). Robert Hughes (1996), the art critic, similarly placed the communication of ideas at the core of the visual arts:

The desire to make and experience art is an organic part of human nature, without which our natures are coarsened, impoverished, and denied; and our sense of community with other citizens is weakened .... We place our own dreams, thoughts, and desires alongside those of others, so that solitudes can meet ... When you boil it down, that is the social purpose of art: the creation of mutuality, the passage from shared feeling into shared meaning. (p.7)

This study will argue that expression is similarly a central aspect of primary school art education. The term *art education* is used here in preference to *visual arts education*, because art education (or simply art) is the term used consistently by the participating teachers in the study.

In the context of art education, Wright and Pascoe (2004) celebrated “how expressiveness involves the searching for qualities that show how experience is felt, lived, and understood” (p.114). The centrality of expression in primary art education is supported by many art educationalists, including Lowenfeld and Brittain (1970); Barnes (1987); Herberholz and Hanson (1990); Gray and MacGregor (1991); Apple (1993); Stipek, Daniels, Galluzzo and Milburn (1992); Thompson (1995); Walker (1996); Wallace (1997); Steers (1997); Schoonmaker (2000); Sorin (2005); and Mickelthwaite

(2005). Goodlad (1984) described how “the need for expression lies just back of the human need for food, water, and socialisation .... [It is] central to personal satisfaction in a world rich in art forms, processes and products” (p.220).

Thompson (1995) claimed that expression was not only central to art education, it should also provide the litmus test for quality of experience in an art lesson: “Art products must reflect the individuality of the creator. If all art works created during a lesson suffer the sameness, I would question whether the teaching unit had taken sufficient note of art criteria” (p.39). Armstrong (1986) similarly argued that “a student’s accomplishment of effective relationships and personally unique solutions” (p.46), should be at the heart of any evaluative process in art education.

The Western Australian Curriculum Framework (Western Australian Curriculum Council, 1998) directly addressed the issue of expression within the arts in Western Australian (WA) schools. It grouped the visual arts, dance, drama, media and music together, to form the Arts Learning Area. The rationale for this grouping, was that these art forms shared a common focus on students developing “creative ways of expressing themselves .... They use their senses, perceptions, feelings, values and knowledge to communicate through the arts” (p.50). In the Arts Learning Area, there are four sub-sections, named Learning Outcomes Areas. One of these, *Arts Ideas*, focuses on expression, and is summarised by the statement: “Students create arts works that communicate ideas” (p.53).

## **1.2 The Statement of the problem**

A previous study (Brown, 1997) examined the extent to which teachers were responding to two of the four learning outcome areas of the WA Curriculum Framework: Arts Responses and Arts in Society. Although the study was limited to seven interviews with primary visual arts specialist teachers, there were strong indications that very few class teachers were attempting to include this aspect of the curriculum in their art teaching programmes. The question arose as to how teachers were responding to the two other learning outcome areas: Arts Ideas and Arts Skills and Processes. Pascoe (1997, p.1) described the relationship between the latter two aspects of the visual arts curriculum as “expression” in the visual arts.

An interest in expression within primary art education, also grew from conversations about school-practice with pre-service teachers. There was frequent complaint that supervising teachers interpreted expression very differently from the way it was

exemplified at university. When the pre-service teachers attempted to facilitate children's expression in the way recommended by their art education lecturers, for example, some teacher-mentors would insist on the use of templates. The advice given was often "forget what they tell you in uni. – you'll find this way works best" [personal communication, March 12, 1998]. Observations in shopping-precincts of local primary schools' examples of excellence in children's artwork that were based on photocopied and template images, also indicated a difference between what was being advocated in higher education programmes regarding expression in art education, and what was being practiced in schools.

A gap between the written curriculum and teaching practice regarding expression has been reported in other states of Australia (Duncum, 1995) and in other countries. Rafferty's (1987) study of Canadian primary class-teachers' approaches to teaching art, for example, found that "what can be visually inspected as the school art product does not measure up to versions of child art illustrated in textbooks of art education" (p.21). Later studies in the United States had similar findings (Bresler, 1992; and Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Mosley & Fleege, 1993). As Goodlad (1984) commented: "A funny thing happens to the arts on their way to the classroom" (p.220).

The difference between theory and practice in expression in art education, may not stem from an acknowledged disagreement as to the place of expression in art education. It is unlikely that many teachers will say that they are opposed to children's expression in art lessons. Like motherhood and apple-pie, the idea of students' expression tends to elicit warm feelings of approval. Studies have indicated that primary teachers, when discussing their aims and perceptions of practice in art education, are likely to include children's expression as a major concern (King, 1972; Boughton, 1989; Gray & MacGregor, 1991; Bresler, 1992; Spindell-Rusher, McGrevin & Lambiotte, 1992; Charlesworth et al., 1993).

The term expression, however, is open to many different interpretations. While it is generally accepted that students should express their own ideas through image making in art lessons, there may be disagreement as to the nature and the extent of the student's contribution to the process. Some teachers may argue, for example, that primary children should simply be provided with materials and given the time and encouragement to freely express their ideas and emotions. Others may have the view that primary children's skills are not yet sufficient to make satisfactory representations of their desired image. In order to avert student disappointment and frustration, these

teachers might provide templates or photocopied images. Students are then seen as expressing their ideas through, for example, the arrangement of collage materials within the teacher's outlined image.

### **1.3 The purpose of the study**

Collins and Sandell (2000) described teachers as pursuing "low-profile, idiosyncratic approaches to teaching art behind the closed classroom door" (p.367). In order to understand the reasons behind differences in teaching approaches, Choi (1992) suggested an examination of the way teachers filter the written curriculum through their personal belief systems and frames of reference:

The medium that connects the written dimension and the operational dimension is the teacher, who understands and interprets the official curriculum, and practices what he or she understands and interprets. In order to operationalize the intended curriculum, the teacher has to decipher what is intended by the objectives and goals in the curriculum material. (pp.40-41)

Teachers, however, tend to understand their own teaching practice as a common sense reaction to certain practical imperatives, rather than as an individual interpretation of the written curriculum. As Fullan (1982) pointed out, "Teachers ... do not have time for (or their culture does not support) reflection or analysis either individually or collectively about what they are doing" (p.118). However, while teachers may not be aware of having an art education philosophy, it will be shown that teachers, if only unconsciously, do adopt theoretical positions, and that these theoretical positions have an important influence on the character of their teaching programmes. Bhusham (1986), Isenberg (1990), and Choi (1992) supported this approach. "Understanding theories and teachers' belief systems helps to explain the variations in practice that appear across individual teachers" (Isenberg, p.325).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is not to examine the quality of expression in primary students' art experiences (Haynes, 2004), although this will form a part of the discussion. The focus is, instead, on teachers' implicit beliefs about expression in art education. The aim is firstly, to understand teachers' implicit beliefs about expression in their art education programmes; secondly, to discover whether their implicit beliefs on expression provide a structural base for their teaching practice; and thirdly, to relate the teachers' implicit beliefs and teaching approaches to the beliefs embedded in the wider theoretical debate, and in the WA visual arts curriculum.

## **1.4 The significance of the study**

This study has significance for curriculum leaders and teacher educators. It also has significance for art educationalists engaged in the theoretical debate, both on art theory and practice, and on the influence of implicit theories on teaching practice.

### **1.4.1 The significance of the study for WA curriculum leaders and teacher educators.**

Australian curriculum planners have invested much time and effort attempting to provide teachers with comprehensive, coherent outcomes-based curricula. In 1993 the Federal Government, as part of the National Curriculum initiative, provided the National Professional Development Programme (NPDP) with six million dollars to introduce the outcomes-based State Curricula into schools. “School teachers were the major focus group. The overall aim was to improve student outcomes. An interim objective was to change teacher behaviour” (Whittaker, 1996, p.100).

The WA Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) set out to clearly identify common learning outcomes for all students. A major outcome for The Arts was that children should develop “creative ways of expressing themselves” (p.50). While the purpose of the WA Curriculum Framework is to set out what all students should know, understand and value, it does not attempt to be prescriptive in its advice on teaching methods. Schools are expected to respond to the framework by devising teaching programmes that, while achieving the stated outcomes, will be specifically tailored to each school’s needs and circumstances. Because of the Curriculum Framework’s intention to give teachers “flexibility and ownership” (p.6) over their teaching programmes, it is important to know how WA teachers are responding in particular learning areas. So far, however, there have been no studies in Western Australia of the way in which primary teachers are interpreting the requirements pertinent to expression in the visual arts curriculum.

This study’s focus on the relationship between teachers’ implicit theories and their art teaching programmes, will assist in an understanding of how teachers may interpret the outcome statements, and the methods they may use to achieve them. It will be argued that if there is a significant gap between the theory embodied in the Curriculum Framework and the beliefs of teachers in primary schools, the benefits of the research and written development in curriculum design will not flow to the students for whom they were intended. As Bick and Kember (2004) commented: “Teachers can be

successful change agents but can also be obstacles for change when the proposed reform challenges their conceptions of teaching” (p.291).

It is not just the disparity between theory and practice, which presents a problem, however. The causes of the disparity also need to be studied to give a better understanding of the problem. Until the causes of the disparity between theory and practice are understood more fully, curriculum leaders will have difficulties in developing effective strategies to affect change. Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998) complained that the present level of research on this issue meant that there was “little consideration of their [teachers’] needs and values or how our reform agendas and actions will play out in the ecology of the education program or school classroom” (p.175).

Vandenberghe (1981), Sparkes (1990), and McBeath (1997) also noted the importance of understanding teachers’ beliefs in illuminating the processes of change in education: “Different ideologies have a pervasive influence upon the practice of teachers in schools, and they also inform the way teachers subjectively assess the costs and rewards of change” (Sparkes, p.8). Spindell et al. (1992) went further, considering an understanding and alignment of teachers’ beliefs as a prerequisite to any hope of potential change: “Regardless of the direction that is finally taken, policy-makers, principals, and teachers must be in agreement on their underlying beliefs regarding the education of young children, for beliefs come before policies or standards or practices” (p.295).

#### **1.4.2 The significance of the study for the wider theoretical debate**

The study of primary teachers’ implicit theories is an important and neglected area of investigation. Clark and Peterson (1986), Wobbles, Brakeman and Hermans (1987), Isenberg (1990), Perjures (1992), Charlesworth et al. (1993), Cleat (1997), and McMahon, Richmond and Reeves-Kazelskis (1998) regretted the lack of research in this area: “Research literature suggests that teachers’ thinking and beliefs are integral to understanding the full picture of teaching. Although increased attention is being given to teachers’ thought processes, this aspect of the teaching process is the least researched in the literature” (Isenberg, p.325).

The study of the role of expression in teachers’ art education programmes has similarly been a neglected area of investigation, despite expression being a central issue in art education. Of the few studies investigating the issue of expression in the curriculum,

most have been limited to early childhood education in America (Brawler, 1992), and were not specific to art education (Spindell et al., 1992; Charlesworth et al., 1993). None have taken place in WA.

In 1992, Brawler complained, “Although there is some research on arts specialists’ practice (e.g. May, 1989), there is little literature on classroom teachers teaching art” (p.400). In 2001, Seidel’s report on a forum reviewing arts education, noted:

[first] that the field desperately needs more and better research ..... Second, that there are not enough links between higher education personnel, education researchers, and pre-K-12 arts education practitioners .... The focus of traditional arts education research has too often been historical, rather than on investigating the relationship of the arts with education and students (p.22)

Wilson (1997), in an overview of research specific to art education, identified, as an area of inquiry in particular need of exploration, “teachers formal and informal philosophies of art education ... their consequences for practice; and the actual and implicit art educational goals teachers posit for their children” (p.15).

### **1.5 Research Questions**

Pariser (1999) advocated that educational researchers should begin by raising a big question: “Huge and unwieldy though this question is, it has the merit of being generative and of stimulating a large number of sub-questions each of which require different methodological approaches” (p.280). The big question that initiated this study was: “Why do primary teachers’ approaches to teaching art differ from each other?” From the large number of potential sub-questions which arose, the focus of the study centred on an exploration of the variations in primary teachers’ implicit theories about the role of expression in art education. The research questions for this study are:

1. What are teachers’ implicit theories about expression in visual arts teaching in WA primary schools?
2. Do the teachers’ implicit theories on expression provide a structural basis for their teaching practice?
3. How do these teachers’ implicit theories and teaching approaches relate to those embedded in the formal dimension of the WA visual arts curriculum, and in the wider theoretical debate on expression in visual arts education?

## 1.6 Definition of terms

### 1.6.1 Terms for expression

As teachers' implicit beliefs about visual-expression provide the focal point of this study, it is important to clarify the differences in usages employed in this study between expression, self-expression and visual-expression:

*Expression* is “the external manifestations of the human personality .... or state of mind of the individual” (Arnheim, 1966, p.51-52). These external manifestations can encompass both profound and limited internal explorations, and teachers' beliefs concerning these differences are the focus of this study.

*Self-expression* is “concerned with individual response to personal experience .... the cultivation of an “experience that ‘moves’ children ... that makes a significant impact upon them and provides an opportunity for them to make an expressive response through the use of materials” (Holt,1995, p.254)

*Visual expression* is the way in which students express their ideas and feelings through visual symbols.

### 1.6.2 Terms for teachers' beliefs

It is also important to explain the different usages of terms used when describing teachers' beliefs:

*Philosophies* are the conscious and coherent belief systems that dominate the debate in the literature on expression in art education.

*Ideologies* are the conscious legitimations employed by teachers for their classroom practices.

*Implicit beliefs* are assumptions that are unstated and often unconscious but which nevertheless structure and guide our actions (Doolittle, Dodds & Placek, 1993).

*Implicit theories* are collections of implicit beliefs that are predominantly internally consistent and coherent.



### 1.6.3 Other terms

*Art as Expertise (AAE)* is the term adopted in this study for teachers' implicit theories that aligned most closely with DBAE.

*Art concept* is the general term used for an aspect of the art education curriculum covering art elements, such as colour and line, and art principles, such as balance and proportion (Tarr, 2001).

*Child-centred art education* is an art education philosophy that emphasises the importance of students' self-expression and the potentially distorting effect of adult interference.

*Contextualism* is an art education philosophy that focuses on the utilisation of art education to raise students' awareness of the social context.

*Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE)* is an art education philosophy that structures the art curriculum around the study of aesthetics, art criticism, art history and studio art.

*Ecological constraints* are those constraints that are external to the teacher, such as lack of teaching support, lack of time, and lack of resources.

*Feminists* are those who challenge and seek to remedy the patriarchal nature of society.

*Individualistic-Expressive Art Education (IEAE)* is the term adopted in this study for teachers' implicit theories that aligned most closely with child-centred art education.

*Instrumental Art Education (IAE)* is the term adopted in this study for the teachers' implicit theories that aligned most closely with contextualism.

*Marxists* are those who seek to reveal the class-based inequity in society, and promote social justice for economically marginalised groups in society.

*Mimetic behaviourism* is an art education philosophy that emphasises the inculcation of practical skills and correct habits of ordered learning.

*Modernists* believe that logic and the accurate use of the senses will allow people to objectively comprehend the essential structures of the world and thus move towards the goal of rationality.

*Multiculturalists* are those who seek to celebrate the cultural differences in society and reject assumptions of the superiority of one cultural group over another.

*Personal constraints* are those constraints that are personal to each teacher, such as a lack of knowledge of how to teach art.

*Post-modernism* is a philosophical approach that seeks to deconstruct the empirical theories of knowledge, thereby revealing that attempts at objectivity are merely subjective or ideological constructs raised by social conditioning.

*Pragmatic contextualism* is an art education philosophy that regards art education primarily in terms of its usefulness in developing and reinforcing established and valued societal mores.

*Predetermined Art* is the preferred teaching approach of mimetic behaviourists and involves art lessons that progress through teacher-demonstration and carefully controlled stages, towards a clearly defined end-product.

*Predetermined Art Education (PAE)* is the term adopted in this study for the teachers' implicit theories that aligned most closely with mimetic behaviourism.

*Reconstructionist contextualism* is an art education philosophy that values art education primarily for its potentiality in challenging and changing oppressive societal values.

*Self-efficacy* “refers to a teacher’s generalized expectancy concerning the ability ... to influence students, as well as the teacher’s beliefs concerning his or her own ability to perform certain tasks” (Kagan, p.67)

*Tutored Images* describes the preferred teaching approach of exponents of DBAE, where students are judged on the expressive use of the concept taught in the introduction to the lesson.

*Visual artworks* refer to artefacts that have entered the public realm so as to embody the culture of a particular society.

## **1.7 Overview of the study**

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study and establishes the research questions, while chapter 2 describes the methods of investigation for the study. Chapter 3 outlines

the theoretical framework for the study by examining the role of expression within four major art education philosophies: Mimetic Behaviourism, Child-Centred Art Education, Discipline-Based Art Education, and Contextualism. This generates a conceptual framework for the study within which to compare and analyse the collected data.

Chapter 4 reviews the literature on the gap between theory and practice regarding expression in primary art education. It discusses (i) expression in the formal curriculum; (ii) dominant types of teaching practice regarding expression in art education; (iii) the constraints teachers face when teaching expression in art education; and (iv) teachers' beliefs regarding expression in art education.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 discuss the relationship of the participating teachers' beliefs about expression in art education with those embodied in the theoretical literature and the WA curriculum.

Finally, Chapter 9 summarises the study, and outlines its main implications.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

#### 2.1 Introduction

This study's focus is on teachers' implicit theories about expression in art education. Because of this, the data gathered was predominantly qualitative, and the foundation method of investigation was interpretive. Semi-structured interviews with nineteen class-teachers in two primary schools provided the core method of investigation. An understanding of each teacher's practice, through observation of an art lesson or through detailed descriptions of recent art lessons, provided the starting point for discussions during the interviews.

While each teacher was being interviewed, the students completed a questionnaire focused on expression in their art education programmes. The aim of the student-survey was to understand the context within which each teacher worked, and to triangulate information given in the teachers' interviews. Further triangulation was provided through teachers' written answers to a questionnaire.

Key texts in the exposition of the role of expression in the major philosophies of art education were examined, to establish the conceptual framework for the study. Documents related to the WA visual arts curriculum were also analysed, to establish the role given to expression in the WA curriculum. Interviews with the Senior Curriculum Officer [SCO] for the Arts and a visual arts specialist teacher, both active in providing professional development for teachers, provided insights as to the practical implications for teachers of these documents.

##### 2.1.1 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was gained from the ECU Ethics Committee before the data was gathered (Appendix 1). Particular care was taken of ethical considerations because minors were taking part in the study. During the student-survey, for example, a relief teacher explained the purpose of the questionnaire to the students, and read out the questions so that students with limited reading ability would not be under stress.

The issue of confidentiality was also important for this study. Anonymity was maintained so that teachers could feel free to express opinions contrary to curriculum policy, admit to areas of ignorance, or reveal administrative problems within the school.

All participants were given the assurance that the information in the interviews would not be identified. In order to do this, names have been changed and identifying information omitted from the study. The purpose of the study was explained to each of the participants and they were made aware that at any stage they could withdraw from participation. An informed consent form was discussed and signed by each participant (Appendix 2).

## **2.2 The sample of class-teachers**

The sample for this study was predominantly of primary class-teachers rather than visual arts specialist teachers.

In primary schools, the visual arts may be taught by either art specialist teachers or by class-teachers. In the UK, class-teachers have always been predominantly responsible for art education in government primary schools. In many other countries, such as the United States the role of the primary art specialist teacher is diminishing (Jeffers, 2000; Eisner, 2000b; McKean, 2001). In Australia there appears to be a similar trend. Ashton (1999), for example, found that “generalist teachers are solely responsible for implementing the visual art curriculum in Queensland primary schools” (p.41). In WA, new art specialist teachers are no longer appointed on a permanent basis, and existing visual art specialist teachers have been reclassified as class-teachers.

Taggart, Medland and Alexander (1995) argued that the “isolationist super teaching” of the specialist (p.18) was being challenged in order to integrate previous specialist subjects more fully into the primary curriculum. The SCO also stated in his interview that “part of the downside of having specialists ... is that it seriously de-skills classroom teacher” and that, while he would be interested in data about visual arts specialist teachers, it would be “even more important with the generalist classroom teacher”.

As McKean (2001) noted:

In many instances, the major responsibility for providing comprehensive arts education falls on the shoulders of regular classroom teachers. A critical concern, therefore, is how classroom teachers view this change and how they might be prepared to teach the arts in ways consistent with the vision provided in part by both national and state standards. (p.29)

For these reasons the sample for this study was predominantly of primary class-teachers.

### **2.2.1 The schools where the teachers worked**

In order to ensure that most key informants had recent, direct experience of teaching the visual arts, the sample of teachers in this study was selected from schools without visual arts specialist teachers. As one of the aims of the study was to try and understand the impact of teachers' implicit theories of expression on their art teaching practice, there was also an attempt to filter out, as far as possible, disparities in other factors influencing practice, such as marked variations in classroom conditions, availability of resources, curriculum content, administrative support for the visual arts, and students' socio-economic background. The aim was to find two primary schools with very similar teaching conditions, in which all the teachers would agree to be interviewed and observed teaching.

Teachers in the pilot study were pessimistic, however, about the possibility of finding two such schools. It was argued that principals would be resistant to a venture which would disturb the routine of the whole school, and that very few teachers within any school would agree to be interviewed, because of low morale. Morale was particularly low because "permanency is very difficult to get now in the state system", and because of the extra work involved in implementing the Curriculum Framework: "They think that just because they have given you a pay rise that everything will be all right now .... [but] we are having to reinvent the wheel". A teacher in the pilot study also described the acute problems associated with being observed teaching:

Personally, I'm quite a self-confident teacher and I don't mind parents, for example, working with me – I have one in most days at the beginning and at the end of the day. Other teachers just will not have parents in, or they'll make them work outside the classroom. You can imagine, someone like you, from a university, would be a real problem, even for me.

With these factors in mind, care was taken firstly to ensure that a minimum of disruption would occur while the interviews took place, and, secondly, to make clear that the observation of lessons was desirable but not obligatory. However, as anticipated by the teachers in the pilot study, while many request letters were sent to primary schools, there were initially no positive responses. It was informal contacts, established with a principal of Northfield School and a deputy-principal of Southfield School during

in-services, that proved most fruitful in providing options (Bunting, 1984; Slavin & Crespin, 2000).

Northfield and Southfield are situated in the same district on the outskirts of metropolitan Perth. They also have students from similar socio-economic backgrounds, and fulfilled the criterion that teachers worked in similar teaching conditions. At Northfield, the principal had asked me to conduct a Professional Development Day [PDD] on art education at his school, and had bought copies of my book on teaching art (Brown, 1997) for each member of staff. At Southfield, contact had been made with the deputy-principal when she attended one of my art education in-services at a local university. The disparity in the extent of teachers' familiarity with my views about expression in art education between the two schools, was at first a cause for concern. However it soon became clear, as will later be shown, that the workshops and copies of the book had had very little effect on the recipients' teaching approaches, and none on their beliefs – a humbling but, in this context, illuminating outcome.

Because of the study's focus on teachers' beliefs, it was also important that there should be a range of views about the aims and practice of art education and the role and nature of expression. Hakim (1987) called this focused sampling. Initial discussions with the principal and deputy-principal of the two selected schools, indicated that there were teachers who were both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about teaching the visual arts, as well as teachers who had a more negative attitude.

### **2.3 The Interviews**

Anderson (1999) used interviews as a primary research tool in his study of secondary art teachers, because he believed “that one of the best and most direct ways of understanding how people see the world is to ask them” (p.9). In agreement with this approach, this study's data comes primarily from interviews.

Nineteen primary teachers, a primary visual arts specialist teacher, and the Western Australian Consultant for the Arts, were interviewed individually to generate data for qualitative analysis (see Table 1 below). The primary teachers' interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. They were conducted at Northfield in June 1999, in the school library, and at Southfield in June 2000 in the reading room. An exception was the Southfield pre-primary teachers' interviews, which took place in their classrooms while the students were absent. The primary art specialist teacher's interview lasted 90 minutes, and took place in her art room and in the deputy-principal's office in April

2000. The senior curriculum officer’s interview lasted 90 minutes and took place in his office at the Education Department of Western Australia in April 1999. The interview locations were organised to avoid interruptions from colleagues or students. To reduce the possibility of distortion through inaccurate interpretations of the participants’ views, the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed, and notes were taken of observed reactions to the questions.

Table 1: *List of interviewed participants (names are altered to protect identities)*

Grade	Northfield	Southfield	Other participants’ and their places of work
Pre-primary	Mary	Wendy	
Pre-Y1		Kirsty	
1	Jane	Mavis	
2	Alan	Ann	
2/3		Moira	
3	Fiona		
3/4		Belinda	
4	Andrea	Laura	
5	Janice	Sally	
5/6		Phil	
6	Linda	Daniel	
7	Dorothy	Ken	
2-7			Jackie. Visual arts specialist teacher; Westfield
			Senior Curriculum Officer (SCO); Education Department of WA

### 2.3.1 The interpretive nature of the study

An interpretive approach seemed particularly appropriate for a study of teachers’ implicit theories about expression because implicit theories are, by definition, implied and difficult for people to articulate (Gray and MacGregor, 1991; Kagan, 1992). As Doolittle, Dodds and Placek (1993) commented, “because beliefs are nearly impossible to define and can only be inferred from what people say and do, recruits’ beliefs only become apparent in their behaviors and are intimately connected with their attitudes, intentions, values, and other components of their overall teaching perspectives” (p.355). The aim of this study, therefore, fits closely with Candy’s (1989) description of what the interpretive approach seeks to achieve: “to explain how people attribute meaning to their circumstances, and how they develop and make use of rules which govern their behaviour” (p.2).



Emery (1996) described the current interest of educational researchers in interpretive approaches, as forming part of a recognition of the importance of the teacher's voice:

[It is] a 'bottom-up' movement to define the knowledge-base of classroom teachers whose voices seemed to have been lost in 'top-down' attempts to impose teaching standards on the profession .... The task now is to probe deeper and to privilege the voice that is the only authority in the teaching profession: the teacher. (pp.25-26)

The interviews in this study encouraged participants to express their perceptions in their own words and with reference to their own experiences (Choi, 1992). They also allowed the observation of the participants' reactions to questions (Fielding, 1996). Statements often emerged in one part of the interview, which were at variance with those given in another. When this occurred, the interviews allowed an exploration of these internal contradictions (Hakim, 1987; Patton, 1990; Stewart, 1996; Luehrman, 2002). Mason (1991) regretted that qualitative research was rarely used to explore teachers' beliefs about art education: "Given that the underlying assumptions of the qualitative paradigm are said to resonate with those of art teachers ... it is surprising that its impact on art education in Britain has been insignificant to date" (pp.264-265).

### **2.3.2 The semi-structured nature of the interviews**

While interviews are designed to be conversations, they are also conversations with a purpose. A semi-structured format (Appendix 3) ensured that "a direction is given to the interview so that the content focuses on the crucial issues of the study" (Burns, 1990, p.279). At the same time, the open-ended nature of the questions allowed participants to give the more subtle and personal interpretations that would be excluded in a fully structured interview (Appendix 4).

Hatch and Freeman (1988) found semi-structured interviews to be a particularly useful research tool in their study of teachers' implicit theories. They described them as "dynamic, interpersonal social events in their own right. Interviewers enter the interview situation with certain 'guiding' questions in mind, but remain sensitive to questions that emerge from the interview interaction, the social context being considered, and the degree of rapport that has been established" (p.154).

In preparation for the substantive fieldwork, a pilot study for the interview schedule was undertaken in April 1999 with three primary teachers, one of whom taught in a school in the same district as Northfield and Southfield.

Emery (1996), Munby (1982), and Bussis, Chittenden, & Amarel, (1976) recommended using descriptions of teachers' practice as a basis for understanding teacher knowledge: "Researchers need to carefully describe the actual work that teachers do, rather than rely on interview techniques which rely on the teachers responding to questions designed by the researcher" (Emery, p.26). This was found to be the case in the pilot study. General enquiries about expression tended to illicit "motherhood and apple-pie" statements, such as "children should be allowed to express their own ideas". It was only when teachers gave specific accounts of practice that their aims became clear. Virtue (2005) described such aims as "revealed preferences – the idea that talk is cheap and actions provide the best guide to somebody's beliefs" (p.59). To facilitate this grounding in practice, teachers were asked if they could be observed teaching.

### **2.3.3 Using teachers' practice as a starting point for the interviews**

Although the teachers at Southfield declined to be observed teaching, at Northfield each teacher agreed to be observed teaching an art lesson scheduled shortly before the interview. As King (1978) found, in his classic study of early childhood teachers, this allowed discussions of interactions in the classroom that might not have been mentioned in an interview: "For the teachers the repeated day-to-day actions in the classroom were part of what they took for granted in the situation, a part of what every infants' teacher knows. Some questions about meanings were seen as questions about the obvious – the obvious to the teacher" (p.7).

#### The observed lessons

The observation of teaching varied in length between 60 and 90 minutes, and took place in the teachers' classrooms. This took three days to complete. Although it had been requested that each art lesson should be representative of the teacher's usual practice, some teachers made minor adjustments to their normal procedures. For example, Mary, the pre-primary teacher, provided more art activities for her students than usual, and the Y7 teacher, Dorothy, set up an additional still-life area for early-finishers.

During the observed lesson, I sat where the teacher requested, usually slightly to one side of the teacher during the introduction to the lesson. While the students were working, I was invited to walk around to observe the students. This proved to be a very useful time to have informal discussions with the teacher regarding the aims of the lesson, past art lessons, and the particular circumstances of the class. Students in pre-primary to Y3 classes, sometimes asked for assistance with their work, which was

accommodated briefly with the teacher's permission, but this did not occur in the other grades.

Field-notes were made that focused on the way in which students were encouraged, or not, to express their ideas visually during the lesson (Appendix 5). They included descriptions of the teacher's introduction, notes of comments and negotiations about expression made during the lesson by both teacher and students, and descriptions of the children's responses to the activity (Hafeli, 2000). Summary notes were made at the end of the lesson to record impressions, and to decide on discussion points to be raised with the teacher in the interview. With the teachers' permission, photographs were taken during the lesson for viewing during the interview, and these proved valuable in recalling incidents and promoting teacher reflection.

At Southfield, where teachers had declined to be observed teaching, full descriptions of the teachers' most recent art lessons were requested at the start of each interview. As much detail as possible was elicited from the teachers' accounts because "most of our actions are implicitly known and exercised rather than explicitly articulated and conscious" (Emery, 1996, p.27).

#### **2.3.4 The interview guide**

To ensure that the questions in the interview guide were meaningful to the participants, questions were tailored to take into account the observed lesson or the initial description of practice. In addition, teachers were asked to describe their most successful art lesson, and their least successful art lesson. Gathering information about particular situations in this way, has been described as the *critical incident technique* by Parker (1995), and *responses to dilemmas and vignettes* by Pajares (1992). Through this method, discussions were rooted in the teachers' reality. In addition, they were centred on the participants' interests, focused on information they were likely to have, and phrased in familiar vocabulary (Henerson, Morris & Fitz-Taylor, 1978).

It was important to allow the participants to couch their answers in a way that reflected their own opinions, feeling free to honestly admit any lack of certainty or knowledge. In addition, it was essential that teachers were not pressured into making responses that had no bearing on their real beliefs or practice. For both these reasons, the interview guide acted as a check-list rather than as a rigid schedule. The order of some of the questions, however, remained important. For example, a discussion of what teachers perceive to be their goals for art education was made before directing attention towards

the role of expression (Kagan, 1992). This helped teachers to explain their own priorities, and to minimise the pressure to emphasise the inclusion of expression. It was found, as Tainton (1976) anticipated, that “the emphasis placed upon each objective ... by the teacher will probably reflect their own conceptions of the nature, values and purposes of art” (p.3).

There was also a discussion of the wider aims of education (Ernest, 1989). This included brief discussions of expression in other subject areas, and the general role of the primary school teacher.

### **2.3.5 The issue of rapport**

The interviewer’s pre-conceptions can have a potentially powerful impact on rapport:

One major impediment to clarifying our perceptions about other people’s experiences of art-making is the clutter of preconceived notions and personal prejudices which we all bring to our observations .... There was a need to sense when the researcher’s personal ideas were dictating the flow of the conversation, his stereotypes limiting the questions and his personal preferences skewing the answers. The task was one of approaching the art makers so that they were informed about the broad area of enquiry, but not the stance nor the parameters of the researcher to it. (Gentle, 1990, p.264)

Rafferty (1987), described the implied contempt theorists sometimes show for teachers and their problems, a situation I was anxious to avoid: “In designating what goes on in the classroom as ‘school art’ and the ‘school art style’, we have simply acknowledged the presence of what goes on as troublesome obstacles standing in the way of the better reasoned orientations, while doing little to understand the motivations and reasoning that informs a teacher’s choices of art-activities” (p.4).

Most of the participating teachers expressed some apprehension at the prospect of being interviewed or observed teaching. As Spindell et al. (1992) commented, “Having to commit to some of the belief statements may arouse concern or ambivalent feelings among respondents” (p.291). Nervousness at having an observer in the classroom is also a common and understandable teacher reaction. Fullan (1982) noted that teachers seldom invited other teachers into their classrooms, and that “being private has a long tradition” (p.118). Moreover, as King (1978) observed, teachers are aware that “most adults make value-judgments of what they see” (p.6).

McKean (2001) described the recent increase in reasons for teachers' sensitivity to being questioned:

There is no shortage of accounts of what is wrong with teaching, teachers and teacher education in the media or even in the display windows of popular bookstores .... Much of that effort is directed at teachers and the work they do everyday in their classrooms. The standards movement ... has contributed to an increased anxiety on the part of teachers as to whether and to what degree they can meet the demands for increased accountability to the public at large. (p.29)

It was particularly difficult for those teachers who felt that they were discussing an area of weakness in their teaching programme, and art education is a subject particularly vulnerable to this:

The problematic character of the most valued subjects makes them continuous objects of attention, whereas those subjects that are marginalized or neglected altogether never achieve a problematic status. Anthropology, for example, is simply not a problem in the schools' curriculum because it is seldom considered important enough to care about. The same holds for the arts. (Eisner, 1992b, p.303)

Comments from the teachers included: "I don't know what I'm going to talk about for an hour. I don't know anything about art" [5A]; "I think I'm like every other teacher [being nervous about being observed], well we're a very thin-skinned lot" [4A]. Even the art specialist teacher, with a widely acknowledged leadership in the field of primary art education, used strategies to avoid beginning the interview schedule.

Despite these initial expressions of apprehension, the teachers' responses at the end of the observed lessons and interviews were generally very positive. The Northfield pre-primary teacher, Mary [PPA], for example, commented that "I have to admit that I was dreading you coming in [to the classroom], but I was really pleased at the way you fitted in so nicely". She also stated that the interview: "has been most delightful". Teachers generally became deeply involved in the interview discussions, were surprised when 45 minutes had passed, and were generally reluctant to finish: "Gee, that's gone quickly" [PPS]. Because of this, only one interview [2S] finished within the allotted 45 minutes. Typical comments from teachers were: "It's been very nice. We fumble along and it's nice to get a chance to think things through"; and "Is that it? Oh,

wow, that was good [very enthusiastically]. That was interesting. You've helped me. That last thing about specialist teachers [not having the same intimate knowledge of students as class teachers]. I hadn't thought about that one. Because we're all quite critical of ourselves" [2A].

Isenberg (1990) and Sidestep (1995) recognised that time to reflect on teaching practice was of benefit for teachers, and an important function of research into teachers' implicit theories: "If classroom teachers are to be seen as 'thoughtful professionals' and assume decision-making roles, they must acknowledge the influence of their thoughts and beliefs on their practice. Such roles mandate a clear understanding of the complexities and interrelationships of practice" (Isenberg, p.325).

The shift from dread to enjoyment in most teachers' perception of the interviews and observed lessons, reflected the importance of the rapport between teachers and the researcher: "The way an interviewer acts, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and, therefore, the ways participants respond and give accounts of their experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p.413). In this study, an ability to enter the world of the interviewee was aided by my experience as a primary teacher. Another important influence on rapport was making the teachers' practice, rather than abstract questions, the starting point for the interview questions.

### **2.3.6 Analysis of the data**

Full transcripts of the interviews with the teachers were made, and each sentence was coded detailing the grade the teacher taught, the school they taught at, and the page of the transcript. Page references were invaluable for later cross-referencing, and for understanding the sequence and context of the teachers' statements.

The transcripts of the interviews were read repeatedly, whilst simultaneously listening to recordings of the interviews, in order to catch significant pauses, intonations and laughter. Bamford (1999) described this as a "period of free investigation that ... provides a multitude of resources that gradually become pooled into a more coherent whole as the work progresses" (p.27). In this way, the distinct elements of embedded implicit theories, which provided the structural basis for the teachers' initial, unexamined descriptions of teaching practice and teaching aims, were excavated and isolated.

Coded sections were grouped together and kept in an index system for each participant. The index system allowed "the user to create and manipulate concepts and store and

explore emerging ideas” (Richards and Richards, 1994, p.457). Sullivan (1996) described this as a process of qualitative analysis “which can be seen to move from an initial stage of dealing with problematic queries, through to proposing possible, probable, and ultimately, plausible interpretations” (p.20).

#### Analysing implicit theories

McMahon, Richmond and Reeves-Kazelskis (1998) argued that the fact that “studies of teachers’ implicit theories constitute the smallest and youngest part of research concerning teachers’ thinking ... may be partially attributed to the lack of instrumentation for measuring teachers’ assumptions” (p.174). Direct questioning can reveal teachers’ conscious aims, but as Smith (1985) commented, analysing teachers’ “thinking and dreaming” (p.146) are essential elements in understanding implicit theories. Eisner (1992b) also argued that implicit theories are manifested in “delicate shadings of language about education, including language that is intended to be purely descriptive” (p.304).

Teachers’ implicit theories were also revealed through choices that were made, for example, about the time allocated to art lessons. When learning areas compete for limited time, teachers create an order of importance in the learning areas. “Curricular exclusion tells a great deal about a school’s values” (Uhrmacher, 1993, p.13) over and above any declaration of conscious beliefs. McKean (2001) found that primary teachers in her study, for example, believed that “time for the arts ... was seen as a limited commodity and one that out of necessity took a back seat to their other concerns” (p.30).

The placement of the art lesson within the timetable, may also reflect teachers’ implicit theories about art education’s cognitive content (Tignor, 1985; McRorie, 1996). A comment such as “I usually do it on Friday afternoon” (Bresler, 1992, p.403), could suggest a view of art education, described by Chapman (2005) as a “hands-on, minds-off activity”.

Central to this study’s understanding of teachers’ implicit beliefs was a close and careful analysis of descriptions of teaching practice. After reading Rafferty’s (1987) Canadian study of elementary teachers, it was thought to be of particular important to avoid any rigidly pre-defined categories of art teaching practice. Rafferty’s preconception of acceptable teaching practice was based on an experimental version of child-centred free-expression, advocating a totally free choice of subject and materials. Because none of the teachers in her study followed this teaching model, all of them were classified as

teachers of “structured art ... where art is reduced to a set of instructions for action and the production of an exemplary art product” [p.150]. This meant that significant variations of teaching approach within the group (Teacher A, for example) were not noted or accounted for.

In this study the assumption has been that similar teaching approaches could stem from very different beliefs. As Noddings (1995) observed, “We have to remember that you and I, starting with mostly different premises, may occasionally choose like positions, but we would defend these positions differently” (p.45). In summary, it has been vital, in this study, to avoid what she described as “summing up unique parts of human experience in one grand description that emphasises similarities and covers up differences” (p.74).

While Richards and Richards (1994) saw qualitative research as generally working “up” from data to gain theoretical results, they argued that most qualitative studies also include elements of working “down” from theory:

Decisions are being made about what is a category of significance to the study, what questions are being asked, what concepts are developed, what ideas explored, and whether these categories should be altered, redefined, or deleted during analysis .... Decisions about what text segments are relevant to a category are never merely clerical decisions, they always involve some theoretical considerations. (p.447)

### Theoretical considerations

The theoretical considerations that informed the analysis of data in this study, are located in the aims and teaching approaches advocated by exponents of four art education philosophies. These will be described in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

By locating the participating teachers’ implicit theories in relation to the framework of art education philosophies, it was hoped to gain an understanding of the extent to which the teachers’ implicit theories aligned with those of each of the four philosophies. It was also important to see whether the teachers’ practical response to these beliefs were comparable to the teaching practice recommended by the philosophies’ exponents. This was in order to explain, not only the differences between individual teachers’ practice, but also the differences between teachers’ visual arts programmes, and those envisaged by the WA curriculum documents.



## **2.4 Triangulation**

Luehrman (2002) discussed the importance of acquiring data from different sources in a study primarily using data from interviews. Patton (1990) referred to this as, “methodological triangulation” (p.187), which should be used during the analysis and interpretation of results. The main source of data in this study has already been described: the qualitative data from the teachers’ interviews. There were also three other sources of data that proved invaluable for the purposes of triangulation: (i) observations of art lessons; (ii) a teachers’ questionnaire; and (iii) a survey of the participating teachers’ students.

### **2.4.1 Observation of art lessons**

As well as providing useful starting points for discussions of teachers’ practice, data from the observed lessons acted as triangulation for information given during the interviews (Patrick, Anderson, Ryan, Edelin, and Midgley, 2001). As Anderson (1999) remarked, “Beyond the internal coherence of a story, the best check I know ... is to see whether someone ‘walks their talk’” (p.9).

### **2.4.2 Teachers’ questionnaire**

Initially it was planned that a wider survey of teachers’ views on expression in art education would form part of this study. A questionnaire was designed with items regarding teachers’ beliefs and actual teaching practice (Appendix 6). The questions required a response on a Likert Scale. Charlesworth et al.’s (1993) study of early childhood teachers, had found that this format allowed a more accurate recording of their beliefs and practice than agree/disagree responses. Items of reverse scoring were designed to aid in triangulation, and spaces were given for participants to write answers not anticipated by the questionnaire.

#### The pilot studies for the teachers’ questionnaire

The format of the questionnaire was favourably evaluated by two class-teachers in April 1999. They discussed the appropriateness of the questions and the lay-out, and minor changes were made in response to their suggestions. In Question 1, “general primary education” was written in capital letters to bring teachers’ attention to the area of enquiry. In Question 1c the full list of arts subjects was included in case teachers did not realise the scope of The Arts. In Question 3a “rather than given a separate time slot” was added to underline the implications of a fully integrated curriculum. Following this, a small pilot study of three primary teachers (May 1999) checked

responses to the revised questionnaire. They suggested that the statement “1 gives your first priority” was added to question 5 to avoid confusion. Finally, the questionnaire was given to the teachers who had been interviewed for the study, as a means of evaluating the questionnaire in relation to data gained in the interviews. These questionnaires were begun at the completion of each interview, but finished in the teachers’ own time, and returned in sealed envelopes to the researcher.

### The change in plan

From the responses to the questionnaire of the teachers who were interviewed, it became clear that a general survey would not provide a subtle enough instrument for the focus of this study. The problem did not arise because of the teachers’ lack of care while completing the questionnaire. Some teachers completed the questionnaire very quickly, but most took time to think about the questions. One extreme case of this was Dorothy [7N]: “I found that it took me practically all evening to do. Some I kept leaving, because I felt that I had to think about them so much”.

The questionnaire was useful in recording quantifiable data such as the practical problems teachers face or their preferred art in-service. It was also useful in identifying the ways in which teachers described their explicit beliefs (Hitz and Wright, 1988) and some aspects of teaching practice. But what it could not do was reflect accurately the teachers’ implicit beliefs. While most teachers agreed with the rhetoric of expression in the questionnaire, for example, interviews were needed to discover the teachers’ interpretations of its meaning and the boundaries they imposed on it. A similar problem arose with Apple’s (1993) survey of elementary teachers’ views on the importance of art education. She found a puzzling mis-match between teachers’ stated beliefs and their actual teaching practice, and concluded that qualitative interviews would have been needed to explore this discrepancy.

A further limitation was that teachers could identify with the same teaching practice described in the questionnaire, but be motivated by radically different aims. For example, two teachers agreed that they “frequently tried out an art-activity first, and showed the children the finished piece so that they can get a clear idea of what to do”. It was clear from the interviews, however, that their aims differed considerably. One teacher, Alan [2N], drew an image on the blackboard in order to stimulate maximum variation in his students’ work. Another teacher, Ann [2S], used the same technique in order to quell deviation from a prescribed image. It was my experience that these subtle

but important differences could only have been excavated through detailed follow-up questions in interviews.

Because of these problems, the idea of a general survey of teachers was abandoned and the questionnaire was used instead, as a means of supplementing and triangulating information gained in the interviews.

### **2.4.3 The student-survey**

Another important part of the triangulation process in this study was to gather data from the key informants' students (Patrick, Anderson, Ryan, Edelin and Midgley, 2001) A relief-teacher was employed to present a questionnaire to the students at each school. These teachers were instrumental in stimulating interest and clarifying questions. They also released the class-teacher for interview. The aim of the questionnaire was to compare the students' perceptions of teaching strategies and teaching practice, with those of their teacher. A comparison between students' and teachers' perceptions of practice has been illuminating in other research areas (Haladyna and Thomas, 1979; Wubbel, Brekelman & Hermans, 1987; and Pavlou, 2004), and proved equally valuable for this study.

#### A summary of the student-survey

Two days before the student-survey, the relief teacher for each school was briefed for three hours on what was required, and this was reviewed for 30 minutes immediately prior to the survey. The full questionnaire consisted of four parts (Appendix 7). Y4 to Y7 completed all four sections of the survey. This decision was influenced by studies such as Tignor (1985), Sokrocki (1991), and Robinson (1993), which had successfully used written questionnaires for these grades in their studies of American and British primary students' views on art education, as had Moroz (1995) for his study of students' perceptions of their social studies lessons. The questionnaire was made briefer and simpler for younger students, as will be described below.

#### Structure of the student-survey (Y4-Y7 completed all these sections)

1. *Favourite school subject (questionnaire)*: Students were asked to select their favourite school subject before they were informed of the focus of the survey.
2. *Description of the two most recent art lessons (oral group discussion)*: The class teacher provided samples of students' artworks from each lesson to the relief-teachers, to act as prompts. The verbal descriptions of the lessons from

the students were tape-recorded, and then immediately summarised on the blackboard, for the students' approval.

3. *The students' perceptions of recent art-activities (questionnaire)*: Some questions required a tick, some a written response. The relief teacher read out each question for the benefit of those children who had difficulties in reading.
4. *The students drew an image (questionnaire)*: As a stimulus, the relief teacher read a story suitable for all primary grades (*One Inch Boy* by Ussomboshi), while displaying enlarged illustrations from the book. These excluded any images of the monster in the story. Students were asked to close their eyes and imagine what the monster looked like. "Mars" from Holtz's "Planet Suite," was played to increase the vividness of students' internal images. The monster in the story was chosen as the subject of the drawing, because it was open to individual interpretation by the students. The aim was to see the extent to which students were dependent on adult images, even within this free-ranging topic. After hearing the story, and visualising their image during the music, the students were given six options for their drawings: (1) thinking up their own ideas; (2) looking at an artist's work for ideas (Tenniel's image of the Jabberwocky); (3) using a template to draw around; (4) colouring-in a photocopied drawing; (5) talking about ideas with a friend and then drawing; (6) writing a story and then drawing the picture (see Appendix 8 for images offered in 2-4). Oil pastels and coloured pencils were offered as drawing materials.

#### Adaptations for junior primary students

Y2 and Y3 completed Part 1 and Part 4 with the relief teacher. After the teacher interviews, groups of three children gave oral responses to the questions in Part 2 and Part 3. This only occurred at Northfield as permission for student interviews was not given at Southfield.

Pre-primary and Y1 completed Part 4 only. They also had their choices reduced to three: think up my own ideas; use a template to draw around; colour in a photocopied drawing. This was in order to simplify the procedure and accommodate a lack of writing skills.

#### The pilot study for the student-survey

The student-questionnaire was shown to three class-teachers in February 1999, who discussed two areas of change. Firstly, they raised doubts as to whether students would

be able to articulate the reasons why they preferred some art classes to others. However, they felt that the recent emphasis through the Curriculum Framework on students evaluating learning experiences would support the retention of these questions, and these questions did prove very fruitful sources of data. Secondly, each section in the questionnaire had been sign-posted by an image of an animal in the margin. Although it was agreed that they would be useful markers, two teachers thought that the older students would find this babyish and suggested that they be replaced by some other images. In response to this, sporting images replaced the animals at the side of each section. A second pilot study of the revised questionnaire with two different teachers (March, 1999) raised no further problems.

A pilot study of the student-survey was conducted with five students, grades 7, 5, 4, 2 and pre-primary, in March 1999. There was a very clear and thoughtful response to the discussions of art lessons, and the written questions for grades 4-7 were clearly understood. A slight curl of the lip from the Y7 student indicated his disapproval of the sporting images in the questionnaire. When asked, he said that he would have preferred just numbers. It was decided to keep the images, however, as the younger children in grades 4 and 5 found them to be useful markers. All five students enjoyed the motivational story, including the more sardonic Y7 student.

#### The response from the students in the main study

The response to the survey from the students in the two schools was very positive. They took the task seriously and gave considerable thought to their answers. A recent UK survey (Watts, 2005) on primary students' opinions on the reasons for making art, found a similar "reflective" attitude. During meetings after the student-surveys, both relief-teachers commented on how pleased the students were to be asked their opinions on their education. There were very few omissions to questions, and these all came at the last question, because the relief teacher had started to discuss Stage 4 (the drawing), and students still answering the questionnaire became distracted.

The stimulus-story for the drawing was well received by all the grades. When students were asked to choose how to develop ideas for their image, there was some occasional shifting from initial choices. This was particularly the case when students saw the photocopied images and templates. In these cases, students' final preferences were recorded, but the shift was noted by the relief teacher and tabulated in the results.

The younger students (PP-Y3), were initially a little reticent in their interviews, but become more eloquent in their opinions as a rapport was established. The children had been selected by the teachers to give a cross-section of ability. Although the number was limited to three to make it easier to hear all opinions, some children tended to dominate the discussion, and one Y2 student simply agreed with whatever her friend said. The interviews were given by the researcher, lasted for 30 minutes, and took place at various locations outside the classrooms.

#### Analysis of the data from the questionnaire

Students' written replies in the survey were legible, but spellings were occasionally difficult to interpret, until phonetically enunciated. For example: fashle eksprechens, exsershens, expretions, exsreshens, ecsbreshen, expreshons, acpresion, expretion, exspresions, expreshens, were all variations given when spelling *facial expressions* within one Y4 class.

Data collected from students' verbal and written comments was transcribed, encoded and then compared to the data gathered in the interview with each teacher. These comparisons are discussed in the teacher-profiles, and in the themes arising from the analysis of data in Chapters 4 to 8. A summary of data useful for making comparisons between grades and schools, is in Appendix 9. All percentages have been recorded to the nearest half percent. Items with the same score, when placed in order of preference, have been placed alphabetically.

#### **2.4.4 How the triangulating data was used**

Information from the observed lessons triangulated teachers' description of practice in the interviews. Information from the teacher-questionnaires triangulated data from the interviews regarding teachers' ideologies, teaching circumstances and teaching practice. Information from the student-survey triangulated data from the teachers' interviews regarding the teachers' priorities and approaches when teaching art, and the general context within which they worked, particularly regarding students' views on visual-expression,

### **2.5 Presentation of the data**

Given the exploratory nature of this research area, if researchers are to gain an understanding of how teachers "react to new curricular orientations, consider their teaching roles, and interact within the diversity of classrooms, then they [the researchers] must begin to assemble a set of descriptive portraits ... of how teachers

view the nature of art and art teaching” (Marsh, 1986, p.87). Stokrocki (1986), Bullock and Galbraith (1992) also used descriptive portraits for presenting data in their studies of elementary and secondary art teachers in the United States, as did Pavlou (2004) for her study of primary art specialists and class teachers in Cyprus. They argued that descriptive portraits facilitated an understanding of how teachers view the nature of art and art teaching, consider their teaching roles, and interact within a diversity of classroom situations. This was found to be the case in this study. Short descriptive portraits have been written for every teacher in the study. Those who provided the richest data, either in terms of their willingness to be observed teaching or in their responsiveness during the interviews, were selected for detailed teacher-profiles.

When it is not clear from the context who is speaking, quotations are referenced in two ways. Initial letters are used for the Senior Curriculum Officer [SCO] and the visual arts specialist teacher [VAST]. Quotations from the class teachers are indicated by the number of the grade they taught, and the initial letter of the school. For example, [7N] indicates that the quotation is from the Year 7 teacher at Northfield.

## **2.6 Limitations of the study**

The research sample in this study was small, so teachers’ views on expression cannot be said to be representative of those of WA primary teachers. Because one person collected and analysed the data, there is a danger of bias. In recognition of this danger, every attempt was made to remain objective in the analysis of the data, so that, rather than evaluating the teachers’ beliefs in terms of my own preferences and views, the intention has been to interpret them as systematically and objectively as possible in relation to the major theories of art education. These major theories of art education thus provide the theoretical framework of the study and will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### The theoretical framework

#### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the structure of the theoretical framework within which primary teachers' implicit beliefs on visual-expression can be located. First the term "expression" is discussed. Then four distinct philosophical positions regarding expression in primary art education are identified as nodal points around which teachers' responses may be mapped. These are characterised as: (i) mimetic behaviourism; (ii) child-centred art education; (iii) Discipline-based art education (DBAE); and (iv) contextualism. Each is a Weberian *ideal-type*, and as McLeish (1993) stated, "Not all the characteristics present in this [each] model would actually be present in the real world, but a better understanding of any given situation could be reached by a comparison with the 'ideal type'" (pp.359-360).

One position, that of mimetic behaviourism, is considered by many to be opposed to any expressive function in art education. The other three positions see art education as promoting expression, but they understand expression in very different conceptual ways. Child-centred art education sees it as self-expression; DBAE sees it as visual-expression informed by aesthetics and a knowledge of artists' work; contextualism sees it as expressing the awareness of the social construction of their individual identity.

#### 3.2 Expression

As already discussed, Arnheim (1966) defined expression as "the external manifestations of the human personality .... They permit conclusions about the personality or the temporary state of the mind of the individual" (pp.51-52). In the visual arts, these external manifestations of the human personality appear in the form of artists' visual artworks, such as paintings, prints and sculptures.

The aesthetic value of expression focuses on how emotions, feelings or ideas may arise from a sustained encounter and response to an artist's work (Goodman, 1968; Sparshott, 1970; Collingwood, 1971; Ridley, 1997). In this study, this aesthetic dimension of expression is not under consideration.



Apart from expression as the feelings evoked in the viewer, is expression as the intention of the artist (Langer, 1953; Hosper's, 1971). In this study, the "artists" are the students, and artistic expression is located in the ways in which "students find their individual capacity to feel and imagine" (Godfrey, 1992, p.595). However, while the expressive elements in the student's artworks are reviewed and discussed, they do not provide the central focus. Instead, expression is seen from an alternative perspective: that of teachers' beliefs about how students should express ideas within primary art education programmes.

### **3.2.1 The importance of expression in art education**

Sorin (2005) has argued that when students explore and express ideas through visual images, it not only exercises the imagination, it also helps "to develop deep and rich understanding" (p.9) in general education. Eisner (1992b) analysed the importance of this process:

Firstly, the ability to use a symbol system or form of representation makes it possible to stabilize evanescent thoughts and feelings: Nothing is more elusive than an idea. Second, such stabilization makes it possible to reflect on what has been represented and to edit one's thinking. Third, the public transformation from what is private into a public form makes its communication possible. Fourth, 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. Finally, and most important ... they are foundational in the construction of our personal worlds. (pp.317-318)

Bleiker (1999) explained the importance of these symbol systems in primary education: "For some children drawing is their most eloquent way of expressing themselves .... If they cannot draw it, they cannot express it" (p.50).

Expression has generally been accepted as a central component of the arts (Haynes, 2004). As Godfrey (1992) observed, "The arts expressively represent; they provide the forms through which insight and feeling can emerge in the public world .... humans invented the arts to serve expressive functions" (p.595). Art educationalists from a wide variety of philosophical positions agree that expression is equally central in art education, and this is reflected in the current general literature on art education (Dyson,

1988, 1990; Herberholz & Hanson, 1990; Greenberg, 1996; Kellman, 1999; Burton 2002). Fichter (2000), an advocate for DBAE, for example, argued that “art is personal and unique to each human being who experiences it and therefore ... the exact doing or making of an art is an individual act” (p.14). While in general opposition to DBAE, the postmodernist Smoke (1996) agreed that “the ‘experiencing of expression’ as a quality of self-awareness is the foundation for the individual student artist regardless of age” (p.118).

Gentle’s (1990) study on the significance of art-making for students over 12 years old, found that personal exploration, the expression of personality, and the expression of the way students relate to the world, featured high in their views of the purposes of art education: “There seemed to be a strong need to find a relationship with self and the world around, expressed most cogently in the following comment: ‘registering my mark, my existence, in the world’” (p.272).

Teachers also frequently place expression at the core of art education. Gentle (1990) found that it was “acknowledged generally, that the manner in which art making is handled by teachers cannot avoid trespassing on areas of very personal experience and feeling” (p.274). Kellman’s (1999) elder-teacher stated that “this is the purpose of art for children, to be able to imagine and create their own reality” (p.42).

### **3.2.2 Expression can be interpreted by teachers in a variety of ways**

While there may be a general consensus by art theorists and teachers that expression is an important aspect of art education, the term is nebulous enough to invite many subtle variations of emphasis. Grallert (1991) was an American primary visual arts specialist teacher who centred all her art programmes on expression. She called it “working from the inside-out, in an individually directed thought process” (p.260). The children she taught, however, were often expected to work within imposed limits, in order that they should learn particular art skills and understand the concept of colour grouping. In kindergarten, for example, children were allowed to paint only in shades of red for one week, and then in shades of blue for another week. Some teachers, while sympathetic to Grallert’s interpretation of expression, might argue that this was too rigid a constraint, and would inhibit a full and accurate expression of the students’ visual imagery. Other teachers might feel that the students’ expression of ideas is more appropriately limited to smaller variations within a prescribed image, in order to ensure the acquisition of even more technical skills.

Thus expression is a term that can be used in several different ways: sometimes to refer to the expression of the child's current feelings, sometimes to the expression of that aspect of the child which the teacher seeks to highlight or promote, sometimes to the expression of ideas within the framework of skills and images the teacher wishes to inculcate. From this, it is clear that primary teachers are likely to approach the issue of children's expression differently, both because of their different understandings of the psychology and development of the child, and because of their differing emphases on the goals of art education, and of education generally.

As McArdle (1999) explained, when describing her study of early childhood teachers' views on art education, "My interest is in mapping and reporting what is happening now – identifying the competing and conflicting discourses in the texts which shape and are shaped by teachers' work, and how this works in teaching art with young children" (p.103). Similarly, the purpose here is to develop a theoretical framework of art education philosophies which will provide a map that links and illuminates the differences and connections between the participating teachers' narratives, and which also relates the teachers' narratives to the discourses employed by art educational theorists.

### **3.2.3 Expression and the main philosophies of art education**

Siegesmund (1998) argued that debates on education philosophies were a "liability for educational policy" (p.199), because the "epistemological rationales" (p.211) were too exclusive. In contrast, J. S. Mill's (1840) position was that "sound theory is the only foundation for sound practice, and whoever despises theory, let him give himself what airs of wisdom he may, is self-convicted of being a quack" (p.195). A contemporary philosopher, John Armstrong (2004), explained that this was because the function of philosophies is to clarify "thoughts that are difficult to think about" (p.1). He argued that philosophy did this in two ways. The first was "to enrich our thoughts by giving ourselves different ways of looking", and the second was to "classify and try to simplify". In this way "you create interesting thoughts that are clear as well .... Philosophies enrich and clarify disparate thoughts" (p.1).

As has been indicated, the term expression has an ambiguous meaning for many teachers. It became apparent that the teachers in this study, faced at the practical level with how to structure their art lessons, were responding, albeit often unconsciously, with a question central to the theoretical literature on art education: what influence should the teacher have on children's expression? Once it became clear that both teachers and the

theoretical literature were seeking answers to the same core question, it became apparent that the categories developed by the theorists would be useful in analysing and illuminating the interview responses of the teachers.

While the similarities and differences between teachers' perceptions of expression can be made visible through an examination of the main philosophies of art education, it is important to emphasize that there was no attempt to impose a rigid structure on the participating teachers' views. As McArdle and Piscitelli (2002) explained, philosophies tend to merge and overlap:

The complexity and diversity of influences that have shaped views on the teaching of art can be understood as a "palimpsest". A palimpsest is ... the way in which the ancient parchments used for writing were written over, but new messages only partially obliterated the original message beneath. Both the new and the original messages still stand, albeit partially erased and interrupted .... Traces of previous thinking ... recur, shape and interact with new developments. (p.11)

Despite the very obvious connections and overlaps between philosophies of art education, Jeffers (1999) noted that their proponents "have been engaged in heated, and at times, politicized and polarizing debates over ... shifting conceptions of teaching, philosophical approaches, instructional strategies and outcomes, and curricular rationales" (p.275). While recognising the width and vigour of this debate, the aim of the present review of literature is not to give a comprehensive account of the histories and exponents of the different art education philosophies. Rather, the aim is firstly to establish the role of expression in the contending theories, and secondly, to summarise and elucidate the analytical categories that structure the debate.

#### Grouping the theories into distinct philosophies and teaching approaches

There have been many attempts to clarify the distinctions between art education theories (Anderson & McRorie, 1997; Efland, 1990 & 1990b; Jeffers, 1990 and 1999; Bick & Kember, 2004). Lindstrom (1994), for example, outlined five rationales for art education: art as creativity, art as therapy, art as play, art as communication, and art as understanding. Lindstrom's typologies, however, do not include one of the most influential traditions of art education – art as instruction, where students are expected to copy the skills and images of the teacher.

More useful in the context of visual-expression is Burton's (2000) presentation of two radically opposed positions: "the dichotomous views that children are naturally creative if left alone and untrammelled by social and educational influences or, alternatively, are creative only if their predispositions are nurtured by the direct intervention of teaching" (p.331). Eisner (1972), however, argued that art education philosophies were orientated towards three points of a triangle, a "triadic relationship" of orientations (p.58): society-centred, subject-centred, child-centred. Each orientation tended to emphasis one point over the other two. Dorn (2000) described five distinctions between "child centered, education for taste and beauty, art in everyday life, art as instrumental learning, and art as disciplinary study" (p.17). Burton, Eisner and Dorn, however, did not elaborate on their typologies nor discuss in any detail their implications for practice.

In contrast, Efland (1990b) developed a typology that not only identified four distinct philosophical approaches to art education (mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and formalist), it also detailed their ideologies, learning theories, and implications for teaching practice (Table 2).

Table 2. *Efland's model of the relationship between aesthetic learning theories and their implied ideologies (1990b, p.13):*

Aesthetic theory	Learning theory	Implied ideology	Implied teaching practice
Mimetic Art is imitation	Behaviourism Learning is by imitation	Traditional morality Social control	Presents the student with models to imitate
Pragmatic Art is instrumental	Learning is instrumental	Social reconstruction	Students transact with their environment
Expressive Art is self-expression	Psychoanalytic: Learning is emotional growth	Personal liberation	Provides nurturing support and no direction
Formalist Art is formal order	Cognitive: Learning is concept attainment	Technocratic control by experts	Facilitates concept attainment

Because of Efland’s connection of art education philosophy with broad aspects of teaching practice, his model has proved most useful as an explanatory tool for this study; although Efland’s terminology has been slightly revised to employ more widely used terminology for the same type-contents (Table 3).

Table 3 *This study’s terminology for art education philosophies and implied practice:*

The art education philosophies	The philosophies’ preferred teaching approaches
Mimetic behaviourism	Predetermined art
Child-centred art education	Child-centred art
Discipline based art education (DBAE)	Tutored images
Contextualist art education	Contextualist art

It is important to emphasise that while the implications for teaching practice are useful, they cannot be definitive: “It is not possible, analysts said, to derive specific programs of action from basic philosophical positions. Most philosophers would agree with analysts on this, although they would admit that certain patterns of belief and action are more compatible with one position than another” (Noddings, 1995, p.45).

Thus, four distinct approaches to expression are identified here as nodal points around which to map teachers responses, and each of these is related to the art education philosophy in which it is embedded. In chronological order, the first to be discussed will be mimetic behaviourism, which prioritises the inculcation of technical skills and processes. Second, there will be an examination of the role of expression in the philosophy of child-centred art education, where it is regarded as a pivotal concept. Third, there will be an analysis of the role of expression within DBAE, which emphasises the importance of teaching children the formal aspects of aesthetics, art history and art criticism, through a response to artists’ works and the production of tutored images. Fourth, the role of expression will be discussed through an analysis of contextualism, which seeks to position art education away from the narrow confines of personal expression and modernist ideas of aesthetics, by placing it within the wider framework of important societal issues.

Each section will start with an outline of the art education philosophy. Next there will be a discussion of the role given to expression. Finally there will an examination of the implications this has for teaching practice.

### **3.3 Mimetic behaviourism**

At the core of mimetic behaviourism is the belief that children lack the necessary internal structures to aid them in understanding complex ideas (Kennedy, 1988). Because of this perceived deficiency, children are thought to need the firm guidance of an adult (Bussis, Chittenden and Amarel, 1976). Schickedanz et al. (1983) described this as the *environmental-behavioral view* of child development. Efland (1990b) used the term *mimetic behaviourism*, which has been adopted in this study. He gave this summary of the main tenets of mimetic behaviourism and its practical implications for teaching:

Art is imitation, while learning is by imitation. The teaching process presents the student with models to imitate while students' learning is discerned as new behaviours are noted in the learner's repertoire. Instruction utilises specific stimuli placed in the learning environment by the teacher who controls what should be presented, in what sequence, level of difficulty, frequency, and intensity. These stimuli can take the form of demonstrations of skills to be mastered. (p.14).

An early manifestation of mimetic behaviourism was *hand-eye training* or *manual training*, which developed in the nineteenth century (Kliebard, 1982; Stankiewicz, 1997). Later and contemporary responses to mimetic behaviourism will be described as *predetermined art*, due to the predetermined nature of the outcomes.

#### **3.3.1 Hand-eye training**

The aim of hand-eye training was to provide children with the manipulative skills and good work habits that were in demand from manufacturing industries (Buchman and Schwille, 1983; Freedman, 1985; Boughton, 1989; Amburgy 1990). The idea of educating children for their future place in society, can be traced to Plato's (1966) functional model of education described in *The Republic*. "Plato's model of education is 'functionalist' – a model designed to produce competent adults to meet the needs of the state." (Noddings, 1995, p.10). This position also reflected Aristotle's (1966) and Kant's (1966) view that, in order to be educated for their future station in life, children must be taught modes of behaviour that are morally appropriate.

Wolf (1992) described Walter Smith's mid-nineteenth century American industrial-design movement, based on hand-eye principles:

Systems like Smith's were designed to give school children the tools with which to be industrious and to rise beyond what their social origins might predict for them – without encouraging either authorship or invention .... The arts were in the schools ... as exercises rather than as sustained artistic projects, judged by neatness and precision rather than by insight or imagination .... Without the bargain they struck and lived by, it is unlikely that the arts would have become a part of our definition of the school curriculum. (p.948)

Students were deemed to have no internal structures to aid them in comprehending complex ideas. This made them reliant on teachers carefully structuring their experience by breaking down tasks into sequential skills (Mandelson, 1984). Freedman and Popkewitz (1985) described these practices:

Children developed industrial skills by perfecting the elements of design in a cumulative manner. Skill was achieved through the precise and repetitive copying of linear designs that were originally drawn by adults. As with industrial manufacturing, there was a breaking-up and a construction of wholes, without the appearance of human variation. (p.19)

Work was usually graded, success being judged on the results produced by the students. Had the students followed instructions closely? What was the degree of technical competence? Did the artwork conform closely to what had been demonstrated by the teacher? (Hammond, 1978). Success was rewarded with praise or prizes, while failure was often discouraged with reprimands or punishment (Entwhistle, 1970).

Besides promoting physical dexterity and social acquiescence, hand-eye training was seen as a form of mental strengthening exercise: "Under the theoretical influence of 'mental discipline' (derived from the ideas of faculty psychologists), many educators believed that certain subjects strengthened the brain, much like certain exercises strengthen body muscles" (Uhrmacher, 1993, p.2).

### **3.3.2 Hand-eye training and expression**

Because hand-eye training sought to teach children to control their impulses and learn adult-directed skills, students' expression was marginal to this teaching approach. Rugg



and Schumaker (1928) described how Grade 1 students were taught to draw a sparrow through tracing and cutting out, until the image was secure: “They expected him to follow set rules of procedure, leaving his own variations and interpretations out of consideration until the schema had become more or less fixed” (p.219). Children were seen as “imperfect adults, and the art they produced (when it was noticed at all), inchoate and defective” (Richardson, 1992, p.70).

Adaptation of adult images was allowed once the adult schema had been internalised, but expression of original ideas was seen as something to aim at in the future, for a few artistically talented adults. Even students in art schools were discouraged from expressing individuality in their drawing styles. “Originality was usually condemned as ‘delusive innovation and false assumption’” (Blocker, p.196).

In primary schools, the Puritan concept of original sin added another justificatory dimension to the rejection of children’s’ personal expression. Cleverley and Phillips (1987) described the impact of Mary Wesley’s eighteenth century educational precepts: “Break their wills betimes .... Whatever pain it costs break the will .... Break his will now, and his soul shall live, and he will probably bless you in eternity” (p.29). This issue of teachers remaining in control in mimetic behaviourism became important, not only in ensuring the correct direction of the curriculum, but also in preventing students’ unhealthy preoccupation with self-expression. A comment on Peter Ustinov’s primary school report, illustrates this position: “He [Ustinov] shows great originality, which must be curbed at all costs” (“Obituary”, 2004).

Macdonald (1970) described attempts by some British teachers in the nineteenth century, to introduce varied and interesting objects for drawing, rather than using the usual geometric forms or copied line-drawings. The Platonic view of art remained, however, that each drawing should accurately mirror reality and remain separate from expression (Blocker, 1979).

Brown (2001) observed that “before the advent of child psychology, there was no tradition of acknowledging children's spontaneous expression in practical domains” (p.83). When child psychology started to gain influence in the first half of the twentieth century, however, there was a corresponding growth of interest in children’s expression in art education from Pestalozzi, Froebel and Montessori in Europe, to Dewey, Rugg and Schumacher in the United States.

Although, in Australia as in most other western countries, hand-eye training methods continued to dominate primary art lessons in the early twentieth century, there was a gradual increase in the use of the language of expression. Froebel's influence even manifested itself in manuals for hand-eye drawing techniques: "In 1908, Carew-Smyth stated that drawing 'is a means of recording visual impressions – a means of expression'" (Hammond, 1978, p.65). Gradually it became accepted that children's expression had some place, however tenuous, in an art education programme. In the 1920's, for example, Australian primary teachers were "urged not to 'force a child beyond his years', but to provide experiences in open-air, imaginative, and memory drawing." (Chalmers, 1990, p.83).

### **3.3.3 Contemporary mimetic behaviourism**

Mimetic behaviourism continues to be an influential approach to art education. Tarr (2001) described how in many contemporary American primary schools:

The image of the child is one who must be protected from the outside world in order to learn. The child is seen as an object to be filled with information distilled and dispensed in regulated doses beginning with simple concepts leading to more abstract concepts .... The typical North American classroom reflects notions of preparation for the future world of work. (pp.35-39)

The influence of child-centred ideas of creativity, however, has ensured that expression has some place in this approach. Holt (1995) identified teachers who organised art lessons to maximise their students' experience of creative art media, while still remaining in full control of the image produced. King (1978) described how primary teachers may invite suggestions from their students, while subtly but overwhelmingly controlling the direction of the dialogue. Describing such a teacher, Brittain (1979) observed:

Other teachers considered this particular teacher to be creative and able to design and plan so many wonderful and creative activities for the children in her room .... The creative thinking was done by the teacher; the children were being told how wonderful and creative they were when they had merely followed directions and sprinkled the sand on the glue or pasted the cottonwool tail on the Easter bunny. (p.158)

The role of expression, therefore, remains marginal because, central to mimetic behaviourism, is the teacher's control over the image the students produce (Hitz &

Wright, 1988; Gray & MacGregor, 1991; Charlesworth et al., 1993; Duncum, 1995). Mimetic behaviourism, therefore remains as one of the paradigms of art education that “shriek control and management” (Haynes, 2002, p.13).

The teaching approach respondent to mimetic behaviourism and used in schools today, was named *Curriculum as Technology* by Eisner and Vallance (1974). Herberholz and Hanson (1990), and Stipek, Daniels, Galluzzo and Milburn (1992, p.14) referred to these practices as *didactic art*. Barnes (1987, p.31) referred to them as *predetermined art*, and this will be the term used in this study.

### **3.3.4 Mimetic behaviourist teaching practice: predetermined art**

Predetermined art teaching methods share many characteristics with approaches advocated by hand-eye training manuals.

The curricular model that derives from behaviorist beliefs is a teacher directed approach ... taught predominantly through teacher directed discussions and paperwork. Lessons are highly structured, with teachers continually assessing student competence, modeling correct procedure, and giving feedback. (Spidell et al., 1992, p.279)

Herberholz and Hanson (1990) outlined similar distinguishing features: “patterns, prepared outlines, step-by-step instructions, and copying adult examples ... the end product is pre-determined by the adult” (p.xxiv).

Rafferty (1987) found that the step-by-step teaching approaches of predetermined art, characterised the art lessons of all six elementary teachers in her study:

The making of the project can be seen proceeding in linear fashion with a distinct beginning and end, and requiring only readily available materials and space. Directions for production are straightforward and can easily be disseminated to an aggregate of 20 or more children. Because of the uniformity of approach to production, a teacher can check the pace and flow of action in a brief scanning, thus ensuring that everyone is on task. Art-activities, such as the above Easter project [a recipe book in the shape of an egg] have a predictable process and end product that ensure the child a successful experience, thus becoming desirable. (p.97)

Like Rafferty, Bresler (1992), in her USA observational study of art education (K-3), found that:

assignments are chosen based on the imitation of a product, where criteria are clear and easy to judge even if formal evaluation never takes place. The reconciliation with the need to evaluate (as a means to maintain authority) with teachers' disdain for negative feedback in the arts, is achieved by giving unchallenged assignments in which everybody (i.e. everybody who tries) can succeed. (p.411)

These broad characteristics of predetermined art common were common to all the grades in Bresler's study:

The projects were one-time projects, with no continuity and building of skills. Craft objects prevailed. Evaluation consisted of mostly checking that directions had been followed, and the expression of personal likes and dislikes, with few attempts at reasoning or the drawing of students to aesthetic qualities. The great majority of the products seemed to be oriented towards crafted schematization (e.g. bearded Santas, glittering trees), with little attempt to convey expressivity, or broaden associations. For the most part, products appeared standardized, reflecting diverse ability levels rather than diverse visions and ideas. Ms. Collington, a third-grade teacher, summed it up in a sentence: "It is seasonal: cut, paste, color, draw, and I usually do it on Friday afternoon". (pp.402-403)

### **3.3.5 Art educationalists condemnation of predetermined art**

Ms Collington's summary of art education described above, incorporates many assumptions about the visual arts that run counter to those advocated by most art educational theorists: "It is seasonal" (art does not have an autonomous teaching agenda); "cut, paste, color, draw" (there are a limited number of purely manipulative skills involved): and "I usually do it on Friday" (there is so little academic content in this subject that I can safely leave it until the children's brains are tired). Because of this, art education publications for primary teachers often condemn predetermined art as educationally unsound.

Barnes (1987), for example, argued that:

predetermined, teacher-directed ways of working can have the effect of undermining children's self-confidence and independence of thought. Instead of becoming used to making their own artistic decisions, the security they derive is gained from 'getting things right in the teacher's eyes' .... Very often what happens is that we decide what the end-product will be and set about devising the means to produce it .... The more clearly defined the end-product is in our minds before we start, the less creative it is likely to be. (p.31-32)

Other ways of clearly defining the end-product, is by requiring students to copy adult images or use templates to draw around, resulting in what Burton (2001b) called "the kind of dreary uniformity of outcome in making and appraising that is the consequence of "telling" and "demonstration" (p.39).

Similarly, the practice of requiring students to colour-in adult-drawn photocopied images, popular in predetermined art, has "long and consistently been considered by art educators to be as pernicious as it is recognised as common" (Duncum, 1995, p.33). Herberholz and Hanson (1990) argued that it tends "to destroy a child's ability to think for themselves, and to foster stereotyped and dependent responses" (p.123). Duncum (1995) replied to the argument that colouring-in teaches students pencil control, by saying that this can be equally achieved by children in-filling their own drawings. He was similarly dismissive of the argument that children enjoy the soothing nature of colouring-in: "While vegetation seems to be frequently necessary for children and adults alike, it is not usually condoned routinely, let alone promoted, in educational settings" (p.36). He further argued that colouring-in has a negative effect on drawing skills, because the concentration needed to keep within the lines "requires children to ignore shapes and details, which are the most important aspect of drawing" (p.35).

In the theoretical literature, King (1991) has been one of the few voices to challenge the almost universal condemnation of colouring-in. He wrote partly in response to teachers' criticism of the primary mathematics booklets he had written, which required students to colour-in pictures. King outlined the flimsy nature of the research indicating that colouring-in was damaging, and condemned the extremity of the implication that a child who copied images would become emotionally and mentally stunted. King's main justificatory reason for colouring-in, was that it taught children to complete a task. This argument was taken up and linked to hand-eye training by Duncum (1995). Why was it

necessary to learn “to complete a task which is inherently unnecessary? The argument smacks of the 19<sup>th</sup> century view that we should train students in regimented tasks and so eradicate sin” (p.36).

### **3.3.6 Summary**

While, there has been a softening of the rigidity of hand-eye training in contemporary mimetic behaviourist thinking and its manifestation in predetermined art, certain central tenets remain. Children are regarded as deficient in skills and knowledge, so that expression is seen to relate to a few artistically talented adults rather than children. Art education is considered to be a useful training ground in the acquisition of motor skills and the completion of set tasks, all useful for future employment. The implications for teaching is that, in each art lesson, there is a clearly defined technique, and an equally clearly defined product, and that the teacher’s role is to carefully break the task down into sequential skills for the children to learn. Success is then judged on how skilfully the techniques are used, and by how closely students’ artworks approximate the prescribed image.

## **3.4. Child-Centred Art Education**

Child-centred art education emerged as a reaction against hand-eye training, and took a diametrically opposed view of the role of expression in art education. While mimetic behaviourism and hand-eye training regarded the child as deficient, child-centred art education regarded the child as a valued resource (Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel, 1976). Instead of directing students towards a narrowly defined goal, child-centred teachers encouraged children’s self-expression; self-expression being the cultivation of images that spring naturally and spontaneously from the child’s own imagination and psyche. Ambury (1990) argued that “‘psychologizing’ the nature of art severed it from work and morality, so that new forms of art education did not become overt means of fitting working-class children to industrial labor” (p.113).

Efland (1990) categorised the art educational approach where expression is paramount, as the Expressive-Psychological Model of Art Education. Herberholz and Hanson (1990) called it creative self-expression, and Marché (2002) described it as the Romantic-Expressive approach. Postmodernists such as Emery (2002) and Barbosa (2001) called it modernist art education. Burton (2000) argued that “the more ‘naturalist’ view has framed what came to be called child-centered art education” (p.331). This term will be adopted here because it acknowledges the commonly

recognised link with the general education philosophy of child-centred education, and because it is in current usage by art educationalists such as Erickson (1999), Jeffers (1999), Michel (1999), Burton (2000), Dorn (2000), Ashton (2002), Henry (2002), and McArdie and Piscitelli (2002).

Inspired by the pioneering work of Cizek and Schaefer-Simmons in the early twentieth century, Cole (1940), Richardson (1946), Read (1956), and Lowenfeld and Brittain (1964) became leading exponents of child-centred art education. Today, the pre-schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, are considered to be centres of excellence for child-centred art educational practice (Quinlan, 2005). Here, children “have different understandings but equal rights to express [them]”, and teachers “look at the child with love and complicity” (Rinaldi, 2003, p.4-5). Pitri (2001) described how these schools provided “examples of art-based programs that allow children to learn through play ... The child is viewed as competent and full of potential and active in constructing his or her own knowledge, through interactions with peers, adults and the environment” (p.47).

### **3.4.1 The philosophical roots of child-centred art education**

The concepts of self-expression and the child “as competent and full of potential,” derive from various philosophical roots. These are shared with the general approach to education called child-centred education. At the core of child-centred education is the value given to the individual’s view of the world, and the need to nurture this individuality through self-expression. Eisner and Vallance (1974) described child-centred education as *Self-Actualization, or Curriculum as Consummatory Experience*. Another term used is the *Progressive Movement* (Henry 2002; Marché, 2002).

#### Child-centred education: Seeing the child as “the divine essence of man”

Macdonald’s (1970) classic study of art education philosophies traced the beginnings of interest in children’s self-expression to the publication of Rousseau’s *Emile* (1969 [1762]). At the basis of Rousseau’s educational philosophy was the belief that human nature was essentially good. In *Emile*, Rousseau argued that children had their own ways of thinking and feeling, and that adults should support and encourage these inborn predispositions. The evils of the world were due to departures from this blessed state of nature. Birch (2005) described how “in 1798, Wordsworth was urging his readers away from books: ‘Come forth into the light of things/ Let nature be your teacher’ .... So the Romantic mind pursued its own inwardness, its uncompromising drive towards the spiritual growth of the individual” (p.14).

Nineteenth and early twentieth century social reformers and psychoanalysts also supported Rousseau's concept of childhood as a vulnerable and formative time:

Social reformers like Jane Addams and Lewis Hine drew attention to the plight of the industrial poor of cities, with a poignant emphasis on the waste of children's lives ... From an entirely different vantage point, Freud proposed that the very sophisticated mechanisms of the mind ... had their origins in the early years .... The upshot was a picture of childhood as utterly formative. (Wolf, 1992, p.949).

The post-Freudian, Maslow, not only agreed that children's early years were utterly formative, he also believed, along with Rousseau, that people were basically good. Hall and Lindzey (1985) summarised his argument that people would achieve *self-actualization* or fulfillment if they "experience things fully .... let the self emerge .... In his view, the typical goal in school is to please the teacher. Instead, he proposes, students should be helped to find their own identities" (p.201-220). Froebel (1966) described the primary role of teachers as ensuring the unfolding of "the divine essence of Man" inherent in each child (p.251).

In order to allow each child's self to emerge, child-centred educationalists, such as Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, Isaac, and Neil in Europe, and Dewey, Rugg and Schumacher in the United States, formulated programmes of education where "the child's own instincts and powers furnish the material and give the starting point for all education" (Dewey, 1966, p.178). They rejected the prevailing practice of instructing children in large groups through carefully formulated teaching programmes and emphasised the importance of imaginative play in educational development, a view supported and developed by Vygotsky (1978). The pre-primary classrooms of Reggio Emilia remain centres of exemplary child-centred practice because of their response to each child's individual needs based on the belief "that children are resourceful, curious, competent, imaginative" (Tarr, 2001, p.37).

#### "Self-expression is a mode of expression"

The concept of self-expression in child-centred art education followed naturally from the belief that children should to be allowed to express their divine essence, unhindered by adult interference. Smith (1996) described how "Cizek's phrase for what his students were to do in the art lesson was *sich auszuprechen* or express themselves" (p.76), and self-expression remains a core concept in child-centred art education: "Working from



within themselves to create with art materials, showing how they feel, what they are thinking about, and how they are approaching their daily lives, allows children to produce first hand rather than ‘third hand’” (Greenburg, 1996, p.116).

There is, therefore, an important distinction between child-centred self-expression and the general term “expression”. For child-centred art educationalists, it is not enough that the child should initiate an image. The image has to be generated from deep within the self, otherwise expression can take the form of stereotypes. Lowenfeld (1982) discussed this important distinction:

If a child expresses himself according to his own relationships, we call this type of expression ‘self-expression’. Self-expression is a mode of expression. It means, then, that the child expresses himself according to his own level of thinking, feeling and perceiving. So self-expression means that the outcome of it is different for each child because it refers to each child’s own self. It is wrong to think that self-expression means expression of thoughts and ideas in general terms of content. This is a great mistake, because thoughts and ideas can be expressed imitatively .... If a child brings me a drawing and the child says, “I like football playing; I love football playing; I have just played outside with others”, and he brings me a drawing of football players, is this self-expression? .... Not necessarily. He could have copied the football players from the Daily Sentinel Times ... Unless the football players are experienced by him and are expressed on his own standards ... it is not self-expression, although it expresses an activity which is closely related to his football playing. (p.42-43)

Richardson (1954) summarised this central adherence to self-expression in child-centred art education: “Unless the child is expressing his own vision he is expressing nothing at all”. To help give birth to the expressive self in every child, Read (1956) stated that teachers should regard themselves as “attendant, guide, inspirer, psychic mid-wife” (p.237). Haynes (2005) described this sublime experience as “when the wonder of things come together, when the child has a genuinely creative moment” (p.9).

“Art is less a body of subject matter than a developmental activity”

Integral to a cherishing of self-expression, was the total acceptance of images appropriate to each stage of the child’s development. The universal emotional and

intellectual developmental stages described by Freud and Piaget encouraged child-centred art educationalists to advocate similar universal developmental stages in children's image-making: "As children develop, they deal with creative experiences in predictable ways" (Brittain, 1979, p.49). Lowenfeld and Brittain, in their seminal work *Creativity and Mental Growth* (1964), outlined the stages developed by Lowenfeld twenty years previously. They were (1) the scribble/manipulative stage in which children develop from random scribble, through controlled scribbling (with no visual references), to named scribble (with visual references); (2) the preschematic stage in which children create constantly changing images for people and objects; (3) the schematic stage, when children arrive at more fixed schema to represent people and objects; (4) the early realism stage, when children focus on adding realism to their images through observation of details; and (5) the realism stage, when there is an urge for a strongly realistic depiction of three-dimensional images. It was argued that, instead of training children in adult modes of expression, they should be allowed to develop unimpeded through these developmental stages. Cole, in *The Arts in the Classroom* (1940), explained, "The growing process is more important than the end product – the child more important than the picture" (p.23). Adult-imposed images were anathema. In Cizek's case, to the extent that "students should be kept from exposure to adult art" (Smith, 1996, p.176).

The idea that the developmental stages in child art are universal, and that children should proceed naturally through them, remains influential today (Thompson, 2005), but its initial significant impact on art education was in the mid-twentieth century. Henry (2002) described how, for example, the National Art Education Association's policy statement of 1949, stated that "art classes should be taught with the full recognition that ... art is less a body of subject matter than a developmental activity" (p.8). Because of this emphasis on allowing children's talents to unfold freely through natural developmental stages, Schickendanz, York and White (1983) described child-centred education as the *Genetic-Maturational View*.

"Living creatively is a healthy state ... compliance is a sick basis for life"

Blocker (1979) and Cuncliffe (1999) described how many child-centred art educationalists were influenced by the Romantic Movement's view of the artist, who was thought to make "an absolute out of the subjective, feeling, expressive self" (Cuncliffe, p.16), and who interpreted expression as predominantly "the venting or exhibition of emotions" (Blocker, p.79). Artists, therefore, revealed their inner lives not only to others, but also to themselves. As Golding's (1966) artist-hero stated, "Art is

partly communication, but only partly. The rest is discovery” (p.79). Thus, Rugg and Schumaker, in *The Child-Centred School* (1928), described the aim of art education as ““taking off the lid’, letting the child reveal his genuine self” (p.235).

Emery (2002) pointed out the distinction between this Freudian view of art-activities as a cathartic experience, and Lowenfeld’s idea of art-activities as simply expressing the pure beauty of the child’s spirit. Lowenfeld wanted children’s art education to be “such that artistic expression becomes an integral part of their whole stream of living” (Burton, (2001b, p.42), so that “art should become their friend to whom they turn with their joys and sorrows, their fears and frustrations” (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1964, p.11). There was agreement, however, with the post-Freudian Winnicott (1971) “that living creatively is a healthy state, and that compliance is a sick basis for life” (p.65). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1964) explained how compliance affected the wider health of society:

A child who loves to trace or do copy work may gain individual satisfaction from such an occupation. However, such satisfaction is based upon a false sense of security and the fear of being exposed to new experiences. Instead of being actively engaged in his own world of experiences, the child escapes into a passive state of mind, which is undesirable and unhealthy for life adjustment, citizenship, and a healthy personality. (p.63)

Lowenfeld and Read’s experience of the rise of fascism in Europe, caused them to make a connection between freedom of expression in art education and societal freedom. When a child could only identify her rabbit on a frieze because of her dirty thumb-print, “the children were regimented into a sameness of expression. This is fascism .... Every human being has a right to his own reaction, especially on the level of creativeness” (Lowenfeld, 1982, p.41). During the German threat of invasion of Britain, Read (1943) wrote, “The secret for all our collective ills is to be traced to the suppression of spontaneous creative ability in the individual” (p.202). He later (1956) argued that an educational system based on child-centred ideas would promote the type of democratic, sane society envisaged by the neo-Freudian, Fromm (1955). This connection is still being made. Ilhan ((2005), for example, described how Turkey’s predominantly “authoritarian and submissive world-view” (p.230) caused teachers to frown on expression and creativity in primary art programmes.

### “Finding the potential artist in every child”

In child-centred educational practice, children’s freedom of expression in art-activities often produced work of exceptional directness and energy (Burton, 2001b). Macdonald (1970) commented that viewing children’s work produced in this regime often provided an intensity of experience comparable to that of viewing a great artist’s painting. Many twentieth century artists such as Klee, Miro, and Picasso sought to emulate children’s directness of expression in their own work.

“Between Victorian times and the 1930s, children went from being “seen and not heard” to being viewed as the great originals .... Children were artists. And they were to play, discover and invent, rather than to be taught, to practice, or to copy” (Wolf, 1992, p.949). Richardson (1954) made a similar observation: “In the past, when drawing was a hand-eye training, there were seldom more than half a dozen children in the class who excelled. Now that we have the loftier aim of finding the potential artist in every child, our task ... is far more worth while and full of hope” (p.61).

Far from being seen as deficient, children were believed to have an innate ability to organise their images in a coherent and aesthetically pleasing way. “How little the children know, and how right they are!” (Richardson, 1954, p.82). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1964) analysed children’s innate ability in more detail:

Aesthetics can be defined as the means of organising thinking, feeling, and perceiving into an expression that communicates those thoughts and feelings to someone else .... This integration can be seen in the harmonious organisation and expression of thoughts and feelings through the lines, textures, and colors that are used. Young children organise intuitively. (p.40)

Day (2000) argued that regarding children as artists had implications for teachers’ qualifications: “Arguments in favour of the artist-teacher model are found in the expressive-creative approach to art education .... [because] The teacher is unable to raise pupils to ‘the highest human level’ unless the teacher is also an artist.” (p.354). The idea of the artist-teacher has been supported by Riccio (2001), Jarvis and Lewis (2002), and the Reggio Emilia schools (Fawcett and Hays, 2004) as a fundamental of art education.

Sir Kenneth Clark, in his introduction to Richardson’s *Art and the Child* made a link between Richardson the artist and her exceptional teaching abilities: “Miss Richardson was a very remarkable artist, who, for some mysterious reason, could only express

herself through her influence on others. It was this deflected creative power which was the mainspring of her teaching” (p.9). Richardson, however, did not feel that there was anything to inhibit the non-specialist art teacher from successfully teaching in a child-centred way, as long as there was a “respect for the individuality of the child .... and [an] understanding love for children and all that it implies” (p.59). Brittain (1979) held similar views.

Richardson (1954) was anxious that it should be understood that accepting that children were innate artists, did not imply teachers should accept second-rate work:

There is a fatal misconception of the modern method [child-centred art education] which allows the child to think that anything will do. The teacher he needs most, and honours most, is one who both knows and cares how he is working, and will accept no second-best artistic efforts from him .... When a teacher frees the artist’s vision within a child, he inspires him to find a completely truthful expression of it .... The slovenly and slapdash cannot possibly satisfy. (pp.60-61)

Lowenfeld (1982) agreed that “indiscriminate praise is just as harmful as indiscriminate corrections” (p.60).

#### “The art teacher as an educator, guide, observer, or participant”

The issue of the child-centred teacher’s role in mediating between students and their learning experiences in art education remains contentious (Rafferty, 1987). Peers (2002) described this as “a divisive and controversial debate in art educational theory and practice ... This debate relates to the nature of creativity, free expression, and the functions of the art teacher as an educator, guide, observer, or participant in a student’s progress in learning about art. (p.264).

For child-centred art educationalists, certain premises are absolute. Herberholz and Hanson (1990) summarised one as being “the end products ... are unique, each child’s artwork different from that of the other students who participated in the activity” (p.xxiv). Another is that the teacher should provide students with “opportunities to reflect, to consider possibilities, to mix and match ideas and materials ... [so as] to ‘include the child in the work’” (Greenberg, 1996, p.116). Within these parameters, there is a debate over the precise nature of the teacher’s role in ensuring children’s individual self-expression. Herberholz and Hanson (1990) described the debate as falling into two camps, “self-directed” and “thematic” (p. xxiv).

### **3.4.2 Self-directed child-centred art teaching-practice: “When you don’t know what to do, you are more free ... to pull from interior resources”**

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1964) identified the intensity of expression in the child’s work as “the degree to which the child identifies with his experience and expression” (p.57). This became their central criteria of creativity. They argued that, since children’s identification with the art experience would be manifested in their quiet concentration during the art-activity, the teacher should allow children the time and space for this quiet concentration. They advocated that the role of the teacher was to provide the art materials, observe the children’s reactions, provide judicial questioning but not instruct in art techniques unless specifically requested to do so: “The drive for expression must precede the learning of techniques. The more powerful is the drive for expression, the greater the urge for technical perfection” (p.71).

Lowenfeld (1982) recognised that children needed adult intervention when trying to portray objects outside their direct experience. He gave the example of a lion: “The exterior [the picture of a lion] can be presented to the child. But the feeling and the sensation in the relationship to this exterior has to be motivated by the teacher” (p.48). He recommended using dramatic visualisation techniques so that “the picture has become alive ... the experience a total experience” (p.46). Issues of aesthetic organisation also called for some adult intervention. Lowenfeld (1982) would suggest that a child uses all the spaces on his paper by comparing it to skating around a rink, asking, “Did you freely run around all over the paper?” (p.60). The aim of the teachers’ judicial questioning was not to guide the child in any direction, but to provide “the opportunity to see other directions for his actions – which he can accept or reject” (Brittain, 1979, p.162).

Most importantly, any motivational experiences must be tailored to each child’s individual interests. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1964) argued that a teacher who introduced a theme that did not fulfill this criteria, would destroy the creative process: “It may happen that a child has a new doll to play with. Her individual interest and emotions are keyed to the doll. To divert her from it by imposing something to which she has no relationship would be detrimental to her creative expression” (p.58). Kellman’s (1999) exemplary child-centred teacher agreed: “When you don’t know what to do, you are more free to invent what happens – to pull from interior resources” (p.44).

Adherents to the idea of self-directed self-expression were sometimes ridiculed for the extremes to which they would apply their principle of non-intervention. Peers’ (2002)

study of a debate concerning a 1961 Australian Commonwealth Department of the Interior film advocating thematic child-centred art education, included this teacher's disapproving observation: "One outstandingly sensitive advocate of the doctrine [self-directed self-expression] went so far as to say that he, himself, would never tell a child to touch a gum tree or smell its leaves before drawing gum trees or including them in an imaginary picture" (p.269). Along with this commentator, many child-centred art educationalists believed that stimulating children's interest and imagination, and the teaching of techniques, can enhance rather than diminish self-expression. These ideas of thematic self-expression were supported by some of the early pioneers of child-centred education.

### **3.4.3 Thematic child-centred art teaching-practice: "the welling up must be clarified and ordered"**

Montessori agreed with Froebel, that children were innately good. However, she envisaged a more direct role for teachers than Froebel's concept of unfolding; one firmly guided by her own teaching directives. She argued, along with Rousseau, that children went through "critical periods" and that teachers must ensure particular capacities were developed or they would be lost forever.

Dewey (1966) also criticised Froebel's idea of unfolding, and argued that teachers should take an active role in creating a learning and social environment that would maximise each child's potential for what he termed "growth". Growth was a kind of intelligence, a receptiveness to knowledge which Dewey perceived to be an aim in itself. While accepting that a student's personal experience was at the core of expression, Dewey (1971) argued that it needed to be paired with process: "While there is no expression, unless there is urge from within outwards, the welling up must be clarified and ordered by taking into itself the values of prior experiences before it can be thought of as expression" (p.75).

Piaget's (1930, 1951, 1962) interactional model of children's intellectual development also encouraged child-centred educationalists, such as Isaac (1955), to envisage education as an active, individual process involving problem-solving situations and hands-on experiences. This cognitive position, that knowledge is constructed rather than passively received, has sometimes been referred to as *constructivism* (Noddings, 1995).

Child-centred art educationalists in agreement with Dewey, Montessori and Isaac, argued for a more active role for the teacher than that envisaged by Lowenfeld and

Read. Their view was that the teacher should act not just as a facilitator, but should also provide a stimulating, general theme within which all the children in the class could achieve the goal of creating personal visual images. Wilson and Wilson (1982) believed “that adult assistance is actually necessary to the actuating of the child’s spontaneity and creativity” (p.48). Spidell et al. (1992) described this approach as one which “focuses on children’s ability to carry out an activity as they see fit, but within the framework provided by the teacher. The teacher arranges the learning environment, but the children are unconstrained by the teacher’s demands for the ‘right’ composition or the ‘correct’ use of materials” (p.279). This approach was supported by Adams (2002), and also James (2000), who concluded that for maximum creativity, students needed “flexible but focused constraints [and] personal, social and artistic relevance” (p.15)

Richardson: “both child-centred and unabashedly an interventionist”

Richardson (1954) taught art in a progressive secondary school for middle class girls, in the very unprepossessing surroundings of Dudley in the industrial Black Country of England. Swift, (1989, 1990) and Efland (1990b) classified Richardson as a child-centred teacher, and Michel (1999) argued that her work was currently used as a reference point for child-centred art education practice. Because of Richardson’s view that the teacher should have a strong role in the direction of the art lesson, Smith (1996) described her as “obviously both child-centred and unabashedly an interventionist” (p.180). For this reason, and because of her detailed description of her teaching methods in *Art and the Child*, and her contemporary influence, she presents a useful example of a thematic child-centred art educator.

Instead of relying on each child’s individual imaginative experience, as advocated by Lowenfeld, Richardson provided a thematic focus for the whole class. She encouraged her students to create *mind pictures*, for example. Smith (1996) described these as “visual reports of ‘inner’ imagery, what the students saw in dreams or when their eyes were closed. These were sometimes totally abstract” (p.179). Richardson also took excursions outside the school, or *beauty hunts*, to find “pictures everywhere, in poor, plain places, as well as lovely ones” (p.15). She used direct-observational drawing to provide a “fresh and stimulating experience .... [as long as the] “artistic eye had not been blinded by dreary and premature lessons in observation” (p.63). She created *word pictures*:

One day I decided to give the children a word picture. I asked them to shut their eyes while they listened to a description of a little local street, lit by the



moon, as I had myself seen and painted it a short while before. I was surprised and delighted with the results. No doubt the fact that I had seen the subject as a picture gave colour and point to my words and reduced them to what was artistically significant. From this moment the work had a new quality .... In a vague, dark way I began to see that this thing we had stumbled upon, as it were almost by chance, was art, not drawing; something as distinct and special and precious as love itself, and as natural. I could free it, but I could not teach it; and my whole purpose was now directed to this end, as I set out to learn with and from the children. (Richardson, 1954, pp.12-13)

Richardson also argued that “while it is impossible for any adult to teach a technique that matches childlike vision, children nevertheless need teaching if they are to feel their powers of expression keeping pace with the growth of their ideas.” (p.60). If she saw weaknesses in her students’ work, she would create word pictures to specifically address this problem: “Was the children’s work pale and weak in colour, then I must show the mind’s eye something deep and strong” (p.20).

Richardson acknowledged that she was: her teaching methods had a direct impact upon her students’ images:

I was indeed charged with exercising too strong a personal influence and with imposing something of my own which produced a family likeness in the children’s work. But for my part I found each child’s work so individually characteristic that when I looked at the painting, I saw the child herself. And yet, while this was so, I too saw the family likeness .... To me it [my influence] was both natural and kindling .... for it provided that framework or form which is one of the necessities of art .... We were, then, interdependent, and although I was as self-effacing as could be, I knew that the children relied on me rather as an orchestra relies upon its conductor. They would say that I opened doors for them. This means that they preferred to be given a subject rather than find one of their own. (pp.40-41)

Richardson, however, was adamant that the child should remain true to what she termed “the internal eye”:

It must not be thought that all the children worked from my description. If it failed to give them an image, they never pretended to have one or attempted to work from something contrived or made up. There were always a few who

said, "I cannot see what you have given us, but I see another picture."

Whatever this picture was, I accepted it gratefully. (pp.18-19)

#### Cole: "limiting the child to free the child"

Cole was another influential child-centred teacher, a contemporary of Richardson's but working in America. She published an account of her teaching methods in *The Arts in the Classroom* (1940). Smith (1996) found her work had strong similarities of principle to the approach espoused by Lowenfeld, and describes her as child-centred because "her emphasis throughout is on the individuality of the child" (p.167). Her book however, describes methods that are at variance with Lowenfeld's self-directed approach. She provided class themes because she believed that "children cannot create in a vacuum .... The child must have his mind and emotions aroused about something and want to paint before he will paint well" (pp.3-4).

Although Cole stressed that: "the teacher does not propound directly but teaches through praise" (p.7), illustrations of her students' work show paintings, individual in content, but constructed in like-manner, with strong black outlines in-filled with colour. The images reflected her principles of composition, which were that the paper "should be big, ... [images should] bump the sides, ... [children should start with a] "beginning outline, [as] holding off the rest of the colors acts as an incentive towards pushing him through the most difficult organisational end of the picture .... This is a case of limiting the child to free the child" (p.13). Like Richardson, she encouraged children to pass judgement on each other's work, and would go around the classroom "lifting one picture after another" (p.7), making positive comments about it to the class, but not worried if not all the children are looking, because "what the teacher says goes in their mind's ear, and they will strive to do as much or better" (p.7).

#### **3.4.4 Summary**

While self-directed and thematic child-centred art education have been presented as opposing sides in a debate within child-centred art education, there are frequent overlaps between the two positions. Barbosa (2001) described the influence of Cizek's famous stipulation "to let the children grow, develop and mature":

This sentence, a symbol of absolute freedom, became a banner of modernist pedagogy of art, but we have since learned that Cizek's pupils were exercised in the elements of drawing, resulting in works by children that were well-structured, organized ... some of them revealing influences not only of the

master's expressionism but even of a certain art deco spirit, which aroused Vienna at that time. (p.290)

Cuncliffe (1999) commented that Lowenfeld, similarly, “thought that he was developing a culture-free, universal child art, but it turns out that he was really making a norm out of his native German Expressionist art and aesthetics” (p.117). Smith (1996) argued that similarities in style in students’ work from any particular teacher are because “art is derived from art, or whatever imagery a child sees about in her or his environment, not untutored observation or pure inner-generated expressiveness” (p.69). He further argued that “it is questionable how noninterventionist any of the better-known child-centred art educators were in practice, as studies of Cole ... and Lowenfeld ... reveal” (p.180).

Although Richardson and Cole might advocate a more thematic approach to stimulating children’s imaginations, they would agree with Lowenfeld on the basic premises of child-centred art education: that children were natural artists who should be allowed to express their ideas freely, that children should be allowed to progress naturally through their stages of development, unconstrained by any guidance towards predetermined images, and that the teacher should remain responsive to the individual needs of each child.

### **3.5 Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE)**

In contrast to child-centred art education’s focus on self-expression, DBAE’s aim has been to promote a greater understanding of the skills and approaches needed to create a lasting work of art (Duke, 1999). Instead of relying on the inner resources of self-expression, children’s expression should be informed by the study of visual artworks. Greer (1986), a founder of DBAE, explained that “DBAE marks the move away from creative self-expression as the *raison d’être* for art” (p.62).

Abbs (1996) summarised the radical shift in thinking needed, in order to take art educators from child-centred art education to DBAE:

Whereas the old arts paradigm elevated the autonomous self, the new insists on the value of culture; where the old invited spontaneity, the new is committed to the complementary recognition of techniques, control, evolving mastery; where the old paradigm cherished a general transferable kind of human learning, the new is concerned with a fitting initiation into a specific set of practices ... for which there can be no substitute and which may possess

no obvious transferability. The commitment is ... not to an education through self-expression, but an education *in* the arts which are envisaged as intrinsically valuable. (p.71)

DBAE corresponds with Efland's (1990b) *Formalist-Cognitive Model*, where visual art works play a central role in teaching a "knowledge of the underlying structure of art forms" (p.15). Smith (2000c) has offered *Aesthetic Art Education* as an alternative term for DBAE, but as the term DBAE is well-established and still in current use (Stinespring, 2001; Villeneuve, 2002; Duncum 2002c; Dorn, 2005), it has been adopted for this study. The teaching approach advocated by exponents of DBAE will be called *tutored images*.

### **3.5.1 The context for the development of DBAE**

DBAE developed as a response to firstly misgivings about the dominance of ideas of self-expression in art education, and secondly to the growth of the general curriculum reform movement, which sought to establish structured curricula based on disciplines of knowledge.

#### Criticisms of child-centred art education

As early as 1963, Manzella lamented that "this concern for the individual and his uniqueness and rights, expressive and otherwise, is a mania of our day and our culture" (p.22). Complaints about the negative effects of the promotion of self-expression in art education has remained at the core of DBAE philosophy:

As art educators we have a tendency to read far too much into the 'expressive' meaning and content of children's untutored artwork. Expression itself is only taken seriously by children when they perceive that they have reasonable command over the medium and/or communication system they are employing. The majority are aware that this command does not equate with their level of maturity or capacity .... We are only too aware of the quality of our own expression when encouraged to communicate in a language or via a medium in which we have no, or limited, mastery. Not even the most persuasive teacher could persuade us to enthuse about our expressive abilities in Russian. (Hiller, 1993, p.31)

Chapman (1982) expressed her distaste for what she felt were mindless art-activities masquerading as self-expression in many primary schools:

Place chips of wax crayon between pieces of wax paper, iron the paper flat, and display the result in a window as a 'stained glass design'. Pour plaster into a plastic sandwich bag, hold the two hands until it hardens, remove the bag, and paint a design on the plastic bag [sic]. These and other manipulative activities may be justified by saying that they encourage experimentation and develop open-mindedness towards art. But what we are really teaching children through such activities is that art is easy, fun, undemanding, and instantly possible if you call it an 'experiment' or a 'design'. (p.57)

Other DBAE exponents, such as Cowan and Clover (1991) discussed how "providing constant praise and encouragement whether it is earned or not, and avoiding criticism to protect the child's 'fragile self-esteem' has made children of the 1980's neither happier nor more competent students" (p.42). They objected to what they felt to be the child-centred mystification of the art experience: "One wonders whether 'art' ... is a teachable course of study, or whether it is by definition so broad and mysterious an event that it can only be intuited and never understood" (p.39).

Instead, Eisner (1976) wanted "to empower our children to have access to the main sources of our culture" (p.9). He was concerned about:

an overly loose curriculum, largely out of touch with the newest and most exciting intellectual achievements in the major disciplines ... We argued that artistic learning included far more than being able to use art materials, and we conceptualised a role for teachers that was far more active and demanding than simply being a provider of art materials and emotional support. (1988b, p.185)

Art education was seen to be drifting away from mainstream education, where subjects were being increasingly given detailed and clearly defined goals. This is a criticism which continues to excite debate ("Editorial", 2005; Perry, 2005). Smith (1996) warned that child-centred art educationalists "rarely convinced the population as a whole that emotional venting was needed enough to establish curricula in the schools and pay for the specialist teachers" (p.40). Manzella's (1963) caustically commented that "art education, with its present emphasis on undisciplined self-expression ... has no place in general education .... apart from institutions for the psychotic and maladjusted" (p.20). As Eisner (1966) observed, "If anything has changed in the conceptualization of objectives for art education, it has been in the move away from, not toward, creativity as a unique goal for which the field has a particular responsibility" (p.7). The movement

away from creativity as a unique goal, was strongly influenced by the curriculum reform movement.

#### The general curriculum reform movement

In the late 1950s and 1960s, criticisms of child-centered methods in art education were part of a wider unease about progressive or child-centered methods of education in the general curriculum. Critics of Dewey, such as G.H. Bantock, argued that “little of value can emerge from spontaneous, unreflective, undisciplined, free expression” (Entwhistle, 1970).

Marché (2002) described how doubts about pedagogical methods in American schools were further fuelled by “the launch of Sputnik [which] initiated the space age with its ensuing technological advances, while reputedly heralding the success of the Soviet educational system and the failure of America's schools to provide leadership in science and technology” (p.26). Because of these concerns, attention was drawn away from the psychology of the child, and became increasingly focused on the quality of content within the curriculum. Eisner (1998b) described Bruner’s influence in this area:

Discipline-based art education was an offshoot of the ideas that were developed largely by Bruner (1960) in the later '50s and early '60s. His book, *The Process of Education*, adumbrated what he called the structure of the discipline. Psychologically oriented as he was, Bruner made the case that the best way for students to come to understand a field is to engage in that field in a way that approximates the ways scholars in the discipline practiced it. He also argued that each discipline had a structure and that a structure was a set of ideas about how phenomena within that discipline were related. Understanding structure not only advanced and deepened understanding itself, it facilitated the storage and retrieval of the ideas that were learned. (p.5)

Eisner (1992b) outlined the influence of Adler’s argument, that a liberal education should be the basis of every child’s schooling: “Since not all humans were “created equal” and since time in school is limited, students should study the very best rather than the mediocre. Hence, decisions of content inclusion and exclusion were of paramount importance” (p.310). Pressure arose to establish agreed national curricula of valued knowledge. Eisner and Vallance (1974) called this movement, *the development of cognitive processes*. Schickedanz et al. (1983) called it *the cognitive-developmental or interactionist view*.

### Antecedents of DBAE

Manzella (1963) was in the vanguard of art educationalists sympathetic to Bruner and Adler's theories to art education. His term "aesthetic education" was adopted by Barkan in 1971 (Smith, 1996), and, as Geahigan (1996) explained, "It was Barkan who first identified the "disciplines" of art criticism, art history, aesthetics, and studio art as relevant to the art curriculum" (p.5).

Marché (2002) described the landmark 1965 Penn State Seminar in which:

citing Bruner, Barkan outlined a curriculum structure that would be both problem-centered and discipline-centered .... The key to successful reform lay in quality curriculum materials created by a task force of "highly competent and knowledgeable specialists, joined by administrators and teachers" (249).  
(p.27)

Greer (1984), while generally acknowledged to be the first to use the term DBAE, was anxious to also recognise "the work of Broudy (1972, 1983) and Smith (1971, 1983) ... [which] have set in place much of the aesthetic focus on art education" (p.213).

While the influence of aesthetic education grew in the United States, similar developments were taking place in other countries. Taylor (1992), described how Allison in the UK, for example, argued throughout the 1970s that children should be made aware of their cultural heritage, through an understanding of artists' work. However, as DiBlasio (1987) stated, "The formalization of the DBAE program began in earnest with the inauguration in 1983 of the Getty Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts" (p.221).

### The formalisation of the DBAE programme through the Getty Center

The Getty Center played a central role in disseminating DBAE ideas:

The Getty came on the scene in 1983. During the course of its existence it provided the most continuous and programmatically diverse support that the arts had ever received by any agency, public or private. Unlike federal and state initiatives, which come and go with the political breeze, the Getty was a constant source of support for arts education advocacy, for teacher in-service education, for compilations of research, for occasional papers and scholarly monographs, for biennial national conferences, and an array of other forms of programmatic support. (Eisner, 2000b, p.6)

This powerful force was applied in one direction: “To its credit the Getty Center, instead of attempting an entirely novel departure, took its lead from a number of writers in the field who shared the recognition that creative activities should be supplemented with critical and historical studies” (Smith, 2002, p.12).

### **3.5.2 The tenets of DBAE**

In 1989, Clark, Day and Greer clearly defined the four pillars of DBAE thinking:

1. This approach integrates content from four main art disciplines, namely, aesthetics, art criticism, art history and art production, through a focus on works of art. Disciplines are fields of study marked by recognized communities of scholars and practitioners.
2. Art can be taught as having a body of knowledge as other academic subjects. Although the goals are specific to art, they are compatible with the aims of general education.
3. There should be a written, graded curriculum with art works as the central focus, which is applied throughout the district.
4. Student progress is evaluated. (p.132)

#### “The four domains of inquiry”

Linderstrom (1994) described the “four domains of inquiry and discourse that constitute the ‘art world’”:

*art production* [studio art] – processes and techniques for creating art; *art criticism* – bases for perceiving art and responding to its qualities; *art history* – contexts for understanding the place of art in history; and *aesthetics* – bases for defining art and understanding the grounds upon which value judgements can be made. (p.196)

DiBlasio (1987) compared the bringing together of previous disparate elements of art education, to putting Humpty Dumpty together again: “DBAE seeks to reunite what has been fragmented, thereby reclaiming a lost vitality” (p.224).

Efland (1990a) was less enthusiastic. He called DBAE’s distinctions between these disciplines “a curricular fiction .... What is unclear ... is whether the understanding of a work of art is the means or the end” (p.77). Greer (1993) responded by stating that it was both and neither. What DBAE advocated was the integration of the four disciplines, with the study of visual artworks as the uniting element (Clark, Day and



Greer, 1989). The aim was for children to acquire a lens through which they could see the world. Through this method, they would become adults knowledgeable about art and its production, and responsive to its aesthetic properties (Greer, 1984). Broudy (2000) outlined the central issues: “Can we respond to the sensory, formal, expressive properties of these objects? Can we sense the feelings, concepts and values of which these works of art are the image? Or is our response limited to the descriptions in a catalogue or program note” (p.26).

#### Art education has a “cognitive rationale”

Art education was seen to have serious academic content, and Chapman (1982) felt frustrated that this was not recognised in most elementary school art lessons:

Instead of working on skills that produce competence and authentically bolster the child’s self-confidence, we typically offer children in the upper elementary grades a steady flow of art projects that guarantee artlike effects with a minimum of skill and effort .... This fundamental miseducation of children is not simply permitted in schools, it is often taken as good and sufficient art education. (p.57)

DiBlasio (1997) warned that describing art education as “fun” had negative repercussions: “In today’s marketplace of schooling ... [it] would of itself not carry much weight as a rationale in securing for the arts a respected place within the curriculum, and would tend to reinforce their relegation to the ornamental periphery” (p.109). Duke (2000) argued that “unless arts education programs become better understood by parents, teachers, and school administrators as ‘mind-builders’ they are destined to remain a marginal subject in the curriculum, relegated to the sidelines of schooling” (p.16).

Bresner (1992) linked DBAE’s “cognitive rationale” (p.398) of mind-building, with Howard Gardener’s theory of multiple intelligences. Fichter (2000) described how Gardner’s theory created an awareness: “that there are many ways of knowing, and therefore also of learning, that there are diverse and multiple intelligences, and that there are many domains in which the mind develops and functions” (p.13).

Boston (2000) argued that the study of the four disciplines “offer special opportunities for intelligences to work together i.e. the kind of cognitive capacities required for cross-disciplinary work” (p.246). This produced the “higher order thinking” attributed to DBAE teaching by Kowalchuk (1999, p.14), thus putting it on a par with other learning

areas. In addition to acknowledging the mind-building attributes of art education, DBAE was also anxious to promote art education as a legitimate part of mainstream education in its own right, with fields of study recognised by a community of scholars, so that “no longer can arts education be easily discounted by school principals and teachers as rainy day activities” (Duke, 1999, p.4).

“Art shall be studied for its own intrinsic value”

Eisner (1988) described the “classic tension” (p.187) between those who wish to begin with the child’s developmental needs, and those who wish to begin with what is to be learned in the subject. DBAE proponents generally took on an “Art for art’s sake”, or essentialist position (Anderson and McRorie, 1997; Duke, 1999). There was agreement with Hughes’ (1996) view that:

One of the ways you measure the character – indeed the greatness – of a country is by its commitment to the arts. Not as a luxury; not as a diplomatic device; not as a social placebo. But as a commitment arising from the belief that the desire to make and experience art is an organic part of human nature.  
(p.7)

“One of the cardinal premises of DBAE theory is that art shall be studied for its own intrinsic value; the instrumental uses of art-activity as a means to personal development or social consciousness are regarded as secondary, a desirable by-product of art learning” (DiBlasio, 1987, p.225). Otherwise teachers, as Wolf (1992) explained, “face the danger of turning arts education experiences into exercises in higher order thinking skills that ‘happen’ to use the content of the arts as chief illustrations” (p.946).

Eisner (1998, p.15) similarly warned of the dangers of art becoming a “handmaiden” of concept development in other subjects. To avoid this, Dom (2000) proposed that teachers should steer away from “focusing on how art can be used to reach other school objectives, to why art study is necessary for the life of the mind” (p.18). As Herberholz and Hanson (1990) stated, “The assumption that arts are not fully valuable as distinct disciplines denigrates art education” (p. xxv).

### **3.5.3 DBAE and expression**

DBAE’s emphasis on the equal importance of the four art disciplines has created a fear that the expressive aspect of art education, previously manifested in studio art, was in danger of being buried under the weight of aesthetics, art criticism and art history.

“DBAE ... has drained the joy out of looking and risking ideas and making”

Unsworth (1992) argued that “DBAE proponents have turned ‘awareness’ into a taught value system of aesthetics, and, imposing adult standards on production, it has drained the joy out of looking and risking ideas and making” (p.65). Greenberg (1996) also criticised DBAE’s rigidity when setting assignments to which the children must conform, equating it with the lack of expressive content in predetermined art: “construction [of] paper pumpkins pasted on schoolroom windows at Hallowe’en” (p.115). DBAE art-activities were seen as “third hand” (p.116), because they lacked opportunities for children to include themselves in the work. Fitcher (1996) similarly admonished DBAE for the marginalisation of first-hand art experiences: “In valid arts education, authentic experience, felt life – that is, the art act – is not achieved second hand. Sooner or later, the child in elementary school art class is touched by this diminution of the art spirit” (p.6).

Dunnahoo (1993) responded by stating that “Unsworth and other detractors of DBAE” had misrepresented DBAE’s position on expression: “The desire to encourage creative thinking, a cause celebrated by Lowenfeld and numerous followers, is admirable. On the other hand, so is the desire, advocated by proponents of DBAE, to foster reflective thinking. The two positions are not mutually exclusive” (p.53). Hill (1993) agreed: “Ideally it is possible to follow a structured developmental approach without jeopardizing the expressive and creative nature of the subject” (p.31).

“Making an expressive response through the use of materials”

Early in the development of DBAE, Eisner (1972) discussed the importance of maintaining a balance between expression and aesthetic understanding in art education:

Having children immerse themselves in the task of giving aesthetic expression to their inner visions is clearly one of the goals that a large percentage of art educators would wholeheartedly endorse .... Making art is important, to be sure, but there are also other aspects of art education that are also important .... an individual’s ability to *aesthetically* encounter and experience visual form.  
(p.26)

Twenty years later, Eisner (1992) continued to acknowledge the importance of expression in DBAE: “Art is a kind of ‘language’ in which children and adults can express feelings and opinions, and there needs to be give-and-take between children and teachers” (p.598).

Another DBAE advocate, Holt (1995), recognised that:

art is concerned with individual response to personal experience .... Above all it would seem important that, whenever possible, art work should be based upon direct experience that has in some way moved the children .... It will therefore include considerations such as interest, excitement, curiosity, affection, wonder, and so on. In other words, experience that ‘moves’ children is anything that makes a significant impact upon them and provides an opportunity for them to make an expressive response through the use of materials. In this way it becomes possible for children to begin working like artists, and thus come to a deeper understanding of the nature of the activity. (p.254)

Richmond (2000), gave children’s expression even more emphasis: “Always the point is to work towards the student’s own emotional grasp and interpretation of medium, subject, and image-making possibilities” (p.138). Cowan and Clover (1991) even adopted the terminology of child-centred education in order to stress the importance of expression within DBAE. They believed in “the unique opportunity for expression of feeling or emotion and the therapeutic value that comes from tactile experience” .... [which helps to] focus the attention, and calm the energies” (pp.40-41). For most DBAE exponents, however, the purpose of visual-expression was to enable students to come to a deeper understanding of what it is to work as an artist. To do this, students needed to work within the framework of the techniques and concepts that informed and structured artists’ work.

DBAE can “provide a framework within which they can discover new ways of expressing their own ideas and feelings”

The structured learning envisaged by DBAE influenced the development of the visual arts component of the UK National Curriculum where expression is developed in the context of learned skills and concepts. Hiller (1993) described one strand of the curriculum as the study of visual artworks, and the other as “perceiving, recording and responding to the visual and tactile environment” (p.36). The emphasis in the latter has been on direct-observational drawing, with the view that expression can be interpretive as well as emotional (Paine, 1997). “There is strong evidence that perception of reality is ... forearmed by imagination. This suggests that perception is a kind of representational dialogue conducted between sensory information and imagination” (Brown, 2001, p.100). Sparshott (1970) described the interpretation an artist would give

to a landscape: “The artist will scrutinise the landscape he means to draw; but he will do so not in order to find just what is in it, but to see just what he can make of it” (p.100).

Hiller (1993) argued that middle primary children in particular needed to be taught skills, if they were to be able to express their ideas freely:

Pedagogical practices found suitable for young children are not automatically transferable to more mature students. The ‘free’ work of infants is much more appealing than the work of older children grappling with conventions and notions of right and wrong .... In a sense one can be free and uninhibited if one is ignorant of, or too immature to understand certain rules and conventions. Freedom resulting from a degree of knowledge and understanding should not be confused with the notion of freedom frequently used in the art class with young children to foster free activities. (p.32)

Best (1979) argued that “if certain techniques are not acquired ... children are not allowed, but *deprived* of certain possibilities for freedom of expression and individuality” (p.212); and, Edwards (1979), a popular authority on teaching drawing, agreed that “the sources of creativity have never been blocked by gaining skills in drawing, the most basic skill of all art” (p.199). Instead, “what stifles a learner is lack of clear expectations, or expectations that are beneath the learner’s dignity” (Cowan and Clover, 1991, p.39). By giving students the opportunities to learn art techniques and to understand aesthetic concepts through the study of visual artworks, “the structure of DBAE, and the strategies used in its instruction, far from being boring, pedantic, and stifling of children’s creativity, provide a framework within which they can discover new ways of expressing their own ideas and feelings” (Cowan and Clover, 1991, p.45).

#### “Balance is essential”

There has been extensive debate within DBAE as to the way in which studio art should relate to the other three disciplines. DiBlasio (1987) was anxious that:

art history, art criticism and aesthetics are not regarded as convenient resources by means of which a studio-dominated curriculum might be enriched .... One variant of DBAE reduced to a bright idea amounts to enrichment after the fact: it is imagined that the casual injection of historical, critical or aesthetic segments within the pre-existing curriculum structure will

somehow transform a program that is primarily child-centered and studio-dominated into one that is discipline based. (p.225)

Smith (1986) initially stated that “creative activities .... are not absolutely necessary” (p.53), and justified their use purely in relation to an understanding of visual artworks: “We will be better able to admire the sensory qualities of artworks if we ourselves have tried to discover the inherent expressiveness of artistic materials” (p.53). By 2002, Smith was more open to an appreciation of the intrinsic value of expression in studio work. He summarised the Getty Centre work as advocating that “creative activities should be supplemented with critical and historical studies” (p.12), and suggested leaving the study of art history until secondary school. Smith further argued that “nothing that I have said should be interpreted as diminishing the importance of creative activities” (p.16).

While Sylva (1993) welcomed the academic respectability bestowed by DBAE’s study of the four disciplines, he was anxious to assert that studio art should not act merely as a support for the other three disciplines. He argued that DBAE exponents, in their anxiety to promote art education *about* art, were in danger of sacrificing art education *in* art:

Designing an art program that avoids a genuine engagement in the creation of art is a serious mistake .... Studio activities are a handy vehicle for teaching and learning concepts in art history, aesthetics, or criticism. But studio activities are not the same as creating art. Teaching the creation of art must transcend studio processes; those are means, not ends. We would not simply teach students to type (even on a variety of keyboards) and call that creative writing. (pp.9-10)

Fichter (2000), another DBAE supporter, agreed that “art is act, and although we need to learn about the arts (in their historical, cultural, and theoretical contexts) to be cultivated human beings, such learning does not substitute for the art act itself” (pp.13-14). Furthermore, “if students do not have a personal investment in artmaking, it is difficult for them to realize why artmaking is about expression and not merely a technical exercise” (Walker, 1996, p.17).

In letters to the editor of *Art Education*, two teachers who supported DBAE ideas, protested against the accusation that teachers following DBAE ideas would necessarily neglect expression:

Particularly offensive was the assumption that perceptual, emotional, social, physical, and aesthetic concerns are ignored in the average classroom simply because schools are required to meet standards .... I am challenged daily to continue to allow as much time as possible for free expression and appropriate developmental growth, while also providing opportunities for my students to experience and discuss works by other artists, those from other cultures, etc. (Fitzpatrick, 2003, p.3)

Good teachers know how to allow for the inclusion of standardized curriculum concepts without hampering a child's artistic, expressive potential in the process. Balance is essential. (Pippin, 2002, p.5).

Teaching methods used to ensure this essential balance, were described by Rush (1987) as "tutored images" (p.212).

#### **3.5.4 DBAE teaching practice: "the tutored image"**

Delacruz and Dunn (1995) suggested that teachers should "move 'beyond creating', that we approach the study of art as a more scholarly intellectual pursuit, and that we ... change our pedagogical ways" (p.48). An integral part of this was to use what Brody (1987) named *aesthetic scanning*, in which students can examine visual artworks in terms of their sensory, formal, technical and expressive qualities.

#### Discussion of visual artworks

Mims and Lankford's (1995) survey of elementary school practice found that most teachers spent the highest proportion of their time in studio art. Greenberg (1996) linked this finding to a criticism of DBAE practice:

For one who has worried about DBAE taking over in every nook and cranny of North America, it is a relief to see that most elementary school teachers continue to devote the major portion of their art time to the making of art, rather than embrace the original DBAE attitude that 25% of art time be allowed for each of the four (p.115)

Greenberg was mistaken in saying that DBAE advocated allocating only 25% of the lesson to studio art. The DBAE position was that studio work should have the largest proportion of time in any art lesson. However, an examination of DBAE models for the discussion of visual artworks in schools, makes it easy to understand why Greenberg arrived at this misconception.

Models for discussions of visual artworks tend to be lengthy (Sowell, 1993; Henry, 1993; Erikson, 1995; Jones, 1995); demand a high degree of knowledge of aesthetics, art criticism and art history on the part of the teacher (Koroscik, Short, & Stavropoulos, 1992; Stinespring and Steele, 1993), and sometimes require written responses on the part of the children (Johnson & Cooper, 1994). Discussion of visual artworks using any of these models would take up most of the time generally allotted to primary school art lessons. Henry's 1993 teaching model, for example, proposed 30 to 55 minutes of discussion, and only 10 to 15 minutes of studio work. Duncum (1994b) complained that the issue of how to integrate teaching about art works with studio art is generally ignored and needs to be urgently addressed.

#### “Balancing studio production with art history, criticism, and aesthetics”

Sowell (1993) suggested that discussions of visual artworks should be integrated with social studies, and kept as a separate lesson from studio work. Kowalchuk (1999), on the other hand, envisaged grade 4 students having an exhaustive research period for art history, criticism and aesthetics within the scope of the art lessons. She emphasised this point by contrasting two art specialist teachers: Ms. Murray, who aligned with DBAE, and Ms. Andrew, who obviously did not:

Ms. Andrews's students will study facial proportions and have the opportunity to draw their own self-portraits. They will not be asked to make judgments or form interpretations about art. They will learn that anyone can make a portrait if the correct steps are followed. In contrast, Ms. Murray's students will be intrigued by a mystery surrounding a stolen portrait from a famous museum. They will need to search through records to figure out who the person was and why their portrait was painted. The students will uncover who painted it and what people thought of it when it was completed. They will speculate on why the work was stolen and who could have done it. While Ms. Murray's students will learn about facial proportions and create their own portraits, they will also learn that artworks can tell stories and reveal information about people, times, and places .... Notice that Ms. Andrews's unit relied primarily on studio activities while Ms. Murray took a more integrated approach, balancing studio production with art history, criticism, and aesthetics. (pp.13-14)

#### “Tutored images”

Chapman's series of textbooks for primary school grades, *Discover Art* (1985), contained both visual artworks and guidelines for each lesson in sequential programmes



of learning. This suggested a model of DBAE teaching that was, perhaps, more in sympathy with primary teachers' preference for the predominance of studio work during art lessons. Teachers were expected to introduce specific art concepts in the introduction to the lesson, such as warm and cool colours, through the discussion of visual artworks. Students would then produce artworks that incorporated an understanding of what had been taught in the introduction. Although the clean-up times are difficult to relate to reality (4 minutes of clear-up time for grade 2s after printing), the structure of the lessons has proved useful for teachers who wish to implement DBAE ideas (Brown, 1997b).

Rush (1987) endorsed a similar approach and stated, "If the objective of the discipline-based teacher is children's acquisition of specific visual concepts, and if those designated concepts subsequently appear in children's artwork, those artworks may be called *tutored images*" (p.212). Walker (1996) described the technique as using visual artworks as "strategic examples that engender new usages, not as mimetic templates" (p.17).

Similar teaching approaches were advocated by Hobbs (1995), Cowan and Clover (1991), and Herberholz and Herberholz (2002). In Cowan and Clover's model, for example, teachers used aesthetic scanning to analyse a visual artwork and "then focus on certain properties which become a part of the criteria for the related production activity" (p.42). In the conclusion to the lesson, there was a return to the realm of criticism when "the children look at the pieces and tell whether or not the criteria was met by the (student) artists", using the vocabulary developed in the introduction. Williams (2000) stated that a DBAE art lesson "should begin with the study of a great work of art" (p.2). Her sample lesson (2001) was based on Chapman's tutored images.

#### Using aesthetics as a support for studio work: "The gist of teaching lies in the practical work"

Parry (1995) advocated integrating aesthetics into studio work because "aesthetic judgment cannot be lined up strongly with cognitive teaching", but suggested a looser connection between the teacher's aesthetic judgment and that of the child (p.95):

The gist of teaching lies in the practical work. This is the occasion of the rising of aesthetic judgments, in the simple form of "that's lovely", or "I can't stand that" as we note in children and pupils of every kind, examining from time to time and trying to make progress in their own practical work. This practical

activity opens the way for a trained liking or not liking. But let us note that from the point of view of education, the pupils must discern for themselves what is aesthetic and what is not .... Pupils must arrive at their own, and not be guided by the teacher's judgment .... Tactful contribution by the teacher, when pupils seem to want it, is the best time for forming judgment, since the work is then open and not concluded. But that assistance by the teacher should always be a presentation of a problem, not a suggested way of solving it. It does not help, in aesthetic judgment, to supply a solution. That must be reached by the pupil. (p.94)

In all the DBAE teaching approaches described, the proponents have argued that individuality and creativity have not been stultified because variations in image making, within the framework of the learned concepts, were at the discretion of the child: "In creating a piece of art according to clear criteria rather than step-by-step criteria, each child's production is a unique expression of his or her individuality" (Cowan and Clover, 1991, p.41). As Eisner (1992) summarised, he and other exponents of DBAE remained "in favour of teachers who derive stimulation from the ideas of their art students, so that teachers can improve their own environment ... we must pay more attention to the opinions of children and take their insights seriously" (p.598).

### **3.5.5 Summary**

"As the result of a change in leadership and reorganization in the late 1990s at the Getty, the Center for Education in the Arts was renamed the Getty Institute for Education in the Arts, and shortly thereafter was discontinued" (Smith, 2002, p.11). Duke (1999) expressed her deep disappointment: "It is painful and perplexing to me to see the Getty, an institution devoted to the visual arts, squander the leadership position it had worked so hard to earn in the arts and education communities. Like the old cry of disappointed baseball fans, I want to shout, "Say it ain't so." (p.7).

Smith (2002), however, was more sanguine about the long-term prospects for DBAE without the Getty Centre: "The terminology of DBAE has become less evident in the writings of art educators, but not the acceptance of the basic idea. Indeed, the influence of DBAE has been spread far and wide, in part because its basic assumptions have been current in the field of art education for some time" (p.15). This shift of focus had occurred in many areas of central importance to expression in art education.

DBAE exponents had argued that child-centred approaches to teaching art encouraged teachers to take on the role of a mere provider of materials, resulting in the development of soft, undifferentiated visual arts curricula. DBAE therefore countermands:

the traditional classroom agenda, and the deepest belief system, of the art education profession: that children are innate artists and should make creative, self-expression, therapeutic art at any age, at any level of technical proficiency, every time they use art media. (Rush, 1987, p.212)

DBAE set out to establish the visual arts as a curriculum subject with its own unique and valued body of knowledge. Students should learn art concepts and skills through a systematic programme of art lessons, and the work should be evaluated. While the study of visual artworks remained central to the exploration of art concepts and skills, some advocates of DBAE approaches showed how teachers could successfully incorporate studio work into the lesson, through the use of tutored images. In these approaches, students' expressive images are developed through the application of art concepts and the acquisition of skills discussed in the introduction to the lesson. The expressive use of the designated concepts and skills was the criteria of success when evaluating the students' work: "Certainly we should allow students to be creative in their art expression, even if their creative ideas are new only to them. I would hope students might be led to discover their own personal styles and unique ways of addressing the criteria in a teacher's assignment" (Stinespring, 2001, p.16).

### **3.6 Contextualism**

Eisner's (1973) classic work on the art curriculum argued that two contrasting positions provide the major justifications for teaching art in schools. These two positions are essentialism and contextualism. Essentialism involves the promotion of art education as a field of study with its own unique and valuable body of knowledge; it "emphasizes what is indigenous and unique to art" (Eisner, p.2). It has already been described how this justification is a central tenet of DBAE.

Contextualism, on the other hand, has a contrasting emphasis. Here the "the importance of ... examining the structures in society" (Efland, 1990b, p.15) takes precedence. It has been described by Anderson and McRorie (1997) as "curriculum for life's sake rather than for art's sake" (p.13):

the meaning and worth of art can only be determined in the context in which it's made and used. .... Contextualists ... think that art is never for its own sake, but that the aesthetic response we have to an art-work does and should serve extrinsic purposes; that is it should lead to some concrete thought, action, or activity beyond itself. (p.10)

Anderson and McRorie, however, suggested that we should differentiate between two types of contextualists: *reconstructionists* and *pragmatists*. The first type, reconstructionists, use art education for the “reconstruction of existing social systems and [see] that the value of art lies in its potential to change society” (p.10).

The second type, pragmatists, use art education for more conservative purposes, such as supporting the dominant religion, legitimising authority figures, or promoting patriotism, or for the simple purpose of supporting work and play. Here they compare and contrast the two types:

Pragmatist themes might be as global and subtle as human beings' sense of community or as simple as play or work, while reconstructionist themes tend to focus on multicultural and ecological issues. Ultimately, the final defining characteristic of the contextualist curriculum is that it in some way helps us to understand people through their art rather than art for its own sake. (Anderson and McRorie, p.10)

For the purposes of this study, art educators who use art education to achieve outcomes other than those intrinsic to the visual arts will be called *contextualists*. Those contextualists who seek to radically alter societal values through the study of the visual arts will be referred to as *reconstructionists*. Those art educators who use art to sustain the existing social system, will be referred to as *pragmatic contextualists*. What follows is a brief discussion of (i) the tenets shared by pragmatic contextualists and reconstructionists, and (ii) the implications of these beliefs for expression and teaching practice in primary art education.

Any perusal of recent art education journals, such as *Journal of Art and Design Education*, *Studies in Art Education* and *Australian Art Education* will reveal the overwhelming dominance of articles by reconstructionists. In the contemporary art education literature, reconstructionists prevail not only over all other art education philosophies, but also over pragmatic contextualists. Thus the art education literature on reconstructionist contextualism is richer than that on pragmatic contextualism.

Nevertheless, the purpose here is to indicate the core element in both contextualist positions, and the main differences in the rationales and approaches of the two variants. The teaching approach favoured by both types of contextualism, will be called *instrumental art*.

### **3.6.1 Art educational outcomes are subordinated to those in other subject areas: “clearly defined extrinsic purposes for art”**

Both reconstructionists and pragmatic contextualists seek to employ art education in order to promote the teaching of wider social values and issues. They do so however in very different ways.

#### Pragmatic contextualists: “reinforcing and transmitting core cultural values and beliefs”

Anderson and McRorie (1997) described the deep cultural roots of pragmatic contextualism, which has been:

the dominant aesthetic drive throughout the world and throughout time .... Most people in most cultures have had very specific and clearly defined extrinsic purposes for art, from the very basic function such as holding liquid, from reinforcement of collective beliefs, to propaganda. By far the most common function had been in the service of religion .... Pragmatist art has sent messages from people to themselves about who they are and what they believe, thus reinforcing the social fabric of society. (p.10)

Anderson (2003) explained how “it follows that the art of traditional/indigenous societies is conservative rather than creative, having a primary purpose of reinforcing and transmitting core cultural values and beliefs” (p.60).

In this study, it will be argued that western societies also use art education in primary schools in order to reinforce and transmit core cultural values and beliefs, using symbols such as Easter bunnies, Mothers’ Day flowers and Christmas candles. Western pragmatic contextualists also use art education to reinforce cultural knowledge regarded of more value and relevance to society than the visual arts, such as social studies or language development.

#### Reconstructionists: “Hitting them over the head with the social realities”

Reconstructionists, such as Freedman (2000), believed “that art education can make a difference in student understanding of and action in the world and that, that difference can enrich and improve social life” (p.314). Anderson (2003) similarly argued that:

students should be encouraged to immerse themselves in real issues, to solve real problems that have significance beyond the classroom .... The artwork is the medium, the tool, for exploring these themes. It is not the end in itself .... If the world is not to be saved through art, then through what?" (p.64-65)

This call to save the world through art, supports Stinespring's (2001) analysis that "the implication of these calls for social inquiry is that social science is not doing its job and art needs to step into the breach to protect society" (p.13).

Feminist art educationalists (Hilson, 1988; Hagaman, 1990a, 1990b; Smith-Shank & Koos, 1999; Freeman, 2000; Norling, 2004) have argued that the domain of art education should be expanded to include female art areas that have previously been given low status in patriarchal societies, such as embroidery and book illustrations. Particular attention should also be paid to neglected female artists (Greer, 1979; Ashton, 2001b).

Multiculturalist art educationalists such as Congdon (1989), Mason and Rawding (1993), Anderson (1996), Crouch (2000), Bolt (2001), and Gall (2002) stressed the need to combat racist values and assumptions in western societies, by teaching students to value cultures outside the Western tradition. "Children should learn to participate in various cultures and accept that the visual arts can be approached from various viewpoints" (Uhrmacher, 1993, p.11).

Art educationalists influenced by neo-Marxist ideas such as Duncum (1987, 2000, 2001b), King (1987), Pearson (1995), Tavin and Anderson (2003), Delacruz (2003), and Ulbricht (2003) argued for a more inclusive view of culture from a class perspective, so as to expose the exploitative nature of contemporary capitalism. As Efland (1996) explained: "What is sometimes referred to as popular culture is a product made by industry often for no redeeming social purpose other than profit. It is what Peter McClaren (1995) calls 'predatory culture'" (p.55). Under the influence of reconstructionists, led by Duncum (2002), the term *visual culture* "has become a hot, new, transdisciplinary term" (p.15). Neil and Weate (2002) described the aim of visual culture as enabling "children to confront the forces of domination that colonises their innermost beliefs" (p.48).

Freeman (2000) compared reconstructionists' desire to galvanise students into supporting radical reform, with the concerns of child-centred art educationalists such as Rugg, who also "had the radical perspective that education was a route to political,

social, and economic change” (p.320). Duncum (2002) made a similar comparison between his desire to empower children to examine critically the means by which they were oppressed, with Lowenfeld’s opposition to fascism. However, the personal transformation through self-realisation envisaged by Rugg and Lowenfeld, contrasts with the interventionist nature of reconstructionists such as Freedman (2000), who wanted “to jolt people into understanding” political issues (p.319). For Ashton (2001), art has “little do with ... entertainment or catharsis, but everything to do with ... social liberation” (p.2). Hicks (2001), similarly, was anxious to convince “the masses” by “hitting them over the head with the social realities they face every day. The survival of people in today’s world is based on art and visual imagery, but people are unaware of it” (p.10). Rather than a gradual and gentle evolution through self-realisation, reconstructionist contextualism promotes revolution through radical advocacy.

### **3.6.2 Art has limited value as an independent subject: “Instead of emphasizing the importance of art ... integrate the arts with other subjects”**

Contextualists advocate a wider exploration of social context in art education than exponents of DBAE. Art education without a serious consideration of this context is regarded as narrow and misguided.

#### Reconstructionist contextualism: “a crisis of cultural authority”

Reconstructionists set out to challenge DBAE’s view that there was intrinsic value in the four disciplines of art education. Smith (1996) contrasted the reconstructionists’ concern “with art as a tool for social change, even as a weapon in the struggle for social change” with “the sterile canonization of the elite sanctuaries – the museums” (p.42). The aim was to use “fundamental human concerns (themes) ... as a framework to organise instruction, as opposed to the common formalist practice of organizing curricula around elements and principles of design and/or media techniques” (Anderson & McRorie, 1997, p.13).

Some of the impetus for reconstructionist contextualism came from the impact of post-modernism on art education. Post-modernists such as Derrida (1994) sought to deconstruct the empirical theories of knowledge, and to reveal that attempts at objectivity were merely subjective ideas constructed by social conditioning. Disciplines of knowledge were not only deemed to be subjective and transitory, they were also perceived to be part of Foucault’s *disciplined society* in which the state used education as a means of domination (Weate, 1996). Smart (1985) described Foucault’s views on education as demonstrating “the increasing connection between the exercise of power

and the formation of knowledge which followed from the disciplinary transformation of institutions into apparatuses within which methods for the formation and accumulation of knowledge began to be employed as instruments of domination” (p.91). Owens (1982) outlined the profound impact postmodernist theories have had on the idea of an authorised body of cultural knowledge: “Postmodernism is usually treated, by its protagonists and antagonists alike, as a crisis of cultural authority, specifically of the authority invested in Western European culture and its institutions” (p.62). Eisner and Vallance (1974) described educational approaches influenced by postmodernism as *social-reconstruction relevance*.

Art educationalists who supported a post-modernist position, such as Brown (1989), Hamblen (1990 and 1990b), Fehr (1994), Gallucci, (1998), and Anderson (2003), strongly refuted the concept of art as a body of received knowledge. They considered the four disciplines of DBAE, which had been based on bodies of knowledge gathered by experts, as redundant. “Bourgeois ideology likes to believe that semiological systems are not an arbitrary product of selective historical forces, but are simply the codification of truth. In bourgeois ideology, exclusiveness in the choices provided by the system, are disguised as facts” (Brown, p.31).

DBAE was thus relegated to the past, along with child-centred art education. Fehr (1994b) equated Broudy’s and Feldman’s DBAE models as “under the ambit of a Lowenfeldian paradigm, and [they] have thus earned their place in the history of art education, but these models do not speak for today. All art is political.” Anderson (2003), similarly condemned DBAE’s modernist preoccupations with “the glorification of the individual” (p.61).

The means by which reconstructionists guided their students away from formalistic concerns, towards the importance of a new understanding of social conditions, was through a critique of visual artworks (Freedman, 2000). In this there was agreement with DBAE that visual art works rather than self-expression should provide the focal-point of art education. Reconstructionists, however, such as Duncum (2001b, 2002c), selected visual artworks primarily on the basis of their utility in promoting a political position, rather than for their intrinsic aesthetic value. DBAE’s initial emphasis on artworks by dead European white males, was regarded as narrow and elitist.

Smith (1996) described how the push to broaden the domain of art education provided “a strong tweak-the-nose-of-the-middle-class strand in Eurocentric art” (p.2), and



DBAE was seen to be the target. In response, DBAE advocates expanded the base of visual artworks to include popular art (Hobbs, 1995; Prater, 2002; Bolin and Blandy, 2003), more women artists (Greer, 1993), and visual artworks from a broader cultural base (Risatti, 1987; Delacruz and Dunn, 1995; Chalmers, 2000; Andrus, 2001). However, they saw this as expanding the area of art understanding, and not as indicating any shift towards a contextualist rationale.

Reconstructionists such as Hamblen (1993), welcomed the acceptance of a broader cultural base within DBAE and named it, *neo-DBAE*, but remained suspicious of “research agendas being set by powerful institutions” (p.42). Duncum (2002c) agreed that DBAE’s adoption of a wider source of visual artworks did not disguise the fundamental differences which divided DBAE and reconstructionist contextualism:

Visual representations are sites of ideological struggle that can be as deplorable as they can be praiseworthy. The starting point is not the prescribed, inclusive canon of the institutionalized art world, but students' own cultural experience. A major goal is empowerment in relation to the pressures and processes of contemporary imagemakers, mostly those who work on behalf of corporate capitalism, not the cherishing of artistic traditions and the valuing of artistic experimentation. The basic orientation is to understand, not to celebrate. (p.8)

Bracey (1993), for example, discussed embroidery in order to explore the oppression of women, and eliminate the negative images associated with this predominantly female art form. Garber (1990) urged art teachers to “focus on political and ethical structures instead of technical and factual knowledge” (p.19), and Fehr’s (1994) model of art criticism emphasised social and political context over aesthetics. Uhrmacher (1993) explained that this focus was because “a just society maximises the advantage of the least advantaged .... Teaching should entail critical thinking about the larger community” (p.11).

Pragmatic contextualism: “the artmaking ... [is] secondary to the mentoring relationships”

While pragmatic contextualists have very different social agendas than those of reconstructionists, both concur in seeing art education valued because of its instrumental utility in promoting social awareness and as a support for other learning areas, rather than because of its own intrinsic worth in the education curriculum. A recent colleague,

lecturing in social studies education, for example, argued that “art is not really a subject – you’re just teaching skills [useful to other learning areas]” [personal communication: 16 August, 1999].

Pragmatic contextualists’ low regard for the intrinsic value of art is often reflected in the way in which art education is integrated with other subjects. As part of a school strategy to improve reading, for example, a WA visual arts specialist teacher was asked by her principal to use her art lessons for written comprehension exercises. The concession to art education was that the passages to be read should have an art theme (personal communication: October 2, 2001). Other uses of art as an auxiliary activity are more subtle. Kelehear and Heid (2002) described, with approval, the occasion when they combined “a high school art class and a first grade class to create a tile mosaic mural for an elementary school wall .... [where] the artmaking became secondary to the mentoring relationships that formed between the high school students and the first grade students” (p.67). In this case, art outcomes are clearly present, but they are subordinate in importance to social and pastoral outcomes.

### **3.6.3 Criticisms of contextualism: “arts education is close to being denatured”**

Writing from a DBAE perspective, Eisner (1994) was troubled both by the use of art education primarily for the reinforcement of cultural values, and by the placing of art education predominantly within other curriculum areas: “One wonders whether in the end art education will become little more than the handmaiden to the social studies” (p.190). The handmaiden role assigned to the visual arts by contextualists also caused consternation among many other art educationalists (Smith, 1989; Payne, 1993; Delacruz & Dunn, 1995).

These critics of the contextualist position have argued that while the visual arts might be profitably linked to other subjects, the expressive content must relate directly to the students’ artistic experience and not be subjugated to criteria from other learning areas. Smith, for example, (1995) eloquently warned of the potential dangers of cross-curriculum integration:

When the arts are channelled into the mainstream and made part and parcel of everything, arts education becomes dangerously defused; and when schools think they can discharge their obligations to arts education by having dancers contort themselves into mathematical figures or by encouraging students to

paint posters for social studies lessons, arts education is close to being denatured. (p.4)

Lehman (2000), argued that, far from marginalising art education, contextualism made it socially relevant, and thus overcame “the perception that it is a frill .... a recreational activity – enjoyable but not essential” (p.21). Hicks (2001) agreed that “we, as art educators, must bust through the veneer that keeps us from the mainstream of understanding” (p.10); and Ulbricht (2003) argued that “if teachers devoted more time to art’s social concerns, then art instruction might be seen as useful and have a more secure place in the school curriculum” (p.8).

Critics of contextualism, such as Smith (1995), Hatfield (2000), Dorn (2000), Stinespring (2001), and Brewer (2002) have not been convinced. Eisner’s (1998) response was similarly sceptical:

The core problem with such rationales for arts education is that they leave the arts vulnerable to any other field or educational practice that claims that it can achieve the same aims faster and better. If one wants to help students understand the lifestyles of other cultures, it strikes me that anthropological studies would be a more direct route and, even when we imagine for a moment that they are not the most direct route, to use the arts *primarily* to teach what is not truly distinctive about the arts is to undermine, in the long run, the justifying conditions for the arts in our schools.” (p.12)

Because of the problem outlined by Eisner, Richmond (2000) argued that reconstructionists such as Duncum, rather than enhancing the status of art in schools had, “in his single-minded emphasis on analysis and the social sciences ... made art, in any material sense or aesthetic sense, virtually disappear from the landscape” (p.139). Efland (2004) and Aguirre (2005), although in sympathy with the contextualist position, found this “denial of artistic value ... [to be] a blindspot” (Efland, p.234). This acknowledgment of the neglect of aesthetics within contextualism, has been welcomed by Smith (2005).

#### **3.6.4 Expression and contextualism: “the experience was private [but] the message was social”**

Perhaps the most significant criticism of contextualism, from the perspective of this thesis, is that it has the effect of reducing the expressive element in art education. Thompson (1995) focused on expression as the key indicator of whether art education

had been appropriately integrated with another subject, or whether it had become instrumental art. She was happy, for example, to ask her students to create imaginary paper mache islands to complement a social studies project on islands. This she termed a *correlated* art lesson. She refused, however, a request from the social studies teacher to do an exact replica of an island the students were going to visit. This was because she deemed such an art lesson to be a geography lesson, using art materials.

The issue of a reduction in expression, has not only been noted in relation to pragmatic contextualism, it has also been part of the critical response to reconstructionist contextualism. The response to this criticism, has much more clearly articulated by the reconstructionists, however, than by the pragmatists.

Many reconstructionists not only rejected the DBAE preoccupation with what Smith (2002) has called the “aesthetic character” (p.13) of art education, they also rejected the child-centred emphasis on self-expression (Hawkins, 2002). Emery (2002) stated that to the postmodernist, “modernist notions of individualism, personal creativity and self-expression can be considered selfish, insular and irresponsible” (p.26). As Amburgy (1990) explained, “Psychologizing art rendered it harmless, making it irrelevant to both the social realities of the modern workplace and the social ideals of a democracy” (p.113).

The promotion of self-expression was regarded, from this perspective, as not only socially irresponsible, but also as a limiting influence on expression, a point previously made by theorists such as the neo-Freudian Fromm and the sociologist Bronfenbrenner. Emery (2002) explained that “postmodern theory would attest that rather than looking within the person to define the self, it is more appropriate to look at the social world through which individuals are subjected (p.23). She continued, “The postmodern self is not conceived as separate from society. The postmodernist is aware that self is only defined in relation to the ‘other’” (p.26). Freedman (2000) gave the example of how a very personal experience could be transformed through art into a political statement:

Students make art not merely for its formal, technical, or even private value, but to communicate about social issues in social ways. This was illustrated in a sculpture I recently saw made by a student in middle school after she was raped. This sculpture was one of the most powerful works of art I have ever seen. Although the student’s experience was private, her method of responding to it was public and her message was social. Students have concerns, they ask

questions, interpret imagery, and make judgments. They make works of art that illustrate social injustice, community change, and concern for the environment. (p.323)

Rather than emulating “Lowenfeld’s legendary fear of the cultural-contextual contamination of children’s art” (p.33), Burton (2000) advocated guiding children “from an inner world of private meaning to an outer socio-cultural world within which the private expressive voice is elaborated” (p.337). Bucknam (2001) regarded this outer world to be “characterized by environmental exploitation, economic elitism, irresponsible consumption, ego- and ethnocentrism, nationalism, and human violence” (p.38). As Emery (2002) commented: “The classroom can no longer be a retreat from the tough issues of life” (p.23).

The term “expression” is still used by some reconstructionists to refer to a child-centred self-expression which they regard as “selfish, insular and irresponsible”. But they do this in order to reconceptualise visual-expression as the development of an empowering understanding of the social context. Duncum (2002c) stated that:

Critical understanding and empowerment – not artistic expression – are the primary goals ... but critical understanding and empowerment are best developed through an emphasis on image-making where students have some freedom to explore meaning for themselves. (p.6)

There is a limit, however to the legitimacy of students’ personal responses. Freedman (2000) found, for example, that students could come to conclusions about visual artworks that were mistaken and even abhorrent, if the contextual framework were not carefully controlled and presented:

When students do not have contextual information, they construct their own contexts, thereby forming their own knowledge ....Students discussed, for example, a painting of two Eastern Indian gods as if it represented an interracial couple .... the students interpreted the piece in relation to their own (unfortunately, racist) context. (p.318)

Chanda and Vesta (2000) have been similarly concerned that, during a critique of a visual artwork, a student “in discussing the official language for the state of California, decides that we need not concern ourselves with the Spanish language because California is an American state” (p.6). The student was accused by Chanda and Vesta

of not giving sufficient weight to the fact that “historically California was originally and still is inhabited by Spanish speaking peoples”, and was deemed by them to have a “myopic view” (p.6).

The subtext of Duncum’s (2002c) statement that the “major goal is empowerment” (p.8), appears to be that this applies only if students take an appropriate stance on social, political, and equity issues. Critics of contextualism such as Richmond (2000) and Dorn (2005) outlined the dilemma of “who decides the selection of causes and who determines the appropriateness of student response” (Richmond, p.141). Chanda and Vesta, for example, decided that it was their role to defend the cultural integrity of Mexican-Americans and regard as “myopic” the student’s opinion on social and political integration. In relation to this issue, Eisner (1994) questioned what was “the role of the art teacher in reconstructing the society when the community in which the teacher functions does not want its schools or its society reconstructed?” (p.189). Richmond (2000) warned of the resentment reconstructionists could generate amongst students who felt they were being limited to a particular view of the world. This brings to mind Mr. Ruser’s reaction to art in H. G. Wells’ *Mr. Polly* (1926), when he dismissed it as “pedagogy in fancy dress” (p.172).

### **3.6.5 The implications of contextualism for teaching practice: “The replication of paradigm signs and symbols”**

If the aim of a contextualist art lesson is to transmit and reinforce cultural knowledge, then it can be assumed that teachers need some degree of control over the structure and direction of the lesson. Anderson and McRorie (1997) summarised the implications of contextualism for teaching practice:

What you won’t find in a pure contextualist curriculum, then, are technical and design solutions engaged in for their own sake. Pure aesthetic enjoyment is not a justified rationale for making art. Therefore contextual art de-emphasizes manual and technical skills in favour of those skills connected to constructing and interpreting meaning (signs, symbols, and codes within a mutually understandable social matrix) ... The important studio skills to be learned are those that assist the student with accuracy in the replication of paradigm signs and symbols. Studio projects are oriented towards narrative and other socially contextual matters. The contextual curriculum also generally selects against a strong creative self-expression orientation, since signs and systems must be

mutually understood, while creativity often results in individualistic works that are idiosyncratic and difficult to access. (pp.12-13)

Pragmatic contextualism: “the unique, exploratory aspects of art are given up in favor of the disciplined aspects of school”

Anderson and McRorie’s assumptions as to instrumental art’s marginalisation of self-expression and the teaching of art skills and concepts, are supported by an examination of the content of a primary teachers’ resource book based on pragmatic contextualist principles. Russell-Bowie, Madsen and Norman’s *The Essential Arts Handbook – A creative resource book for the primary school teacher* (1993) provides examples of art activities that reinforce both cultural symbols and knowledge from other subjects. Their book is dedicated to the idea of the successful integration of the arts on the basis of social studies, mathematics and music themes: “Use the accompanying cassettes to learn and teach the songs, then move back the desks and chairs to follow through with dance and drama activities. Now it’s time to bring out the paint, paper, glue and bits ‘n’ pieces to let the children create their individual masterpieces of art” (p.i).

In the book, there is an eclectic mix of teaching approaches. In some suggested art lessons, students’ ideas are encouraged. When illustrating the song *I’ve got a secret*, for example, “children paint portraits of themselves with a big wide smile, with teeth showing” (p.141). This leaves room for visual-expression, although only one mood is allowed. Despite the introductory rhetoric of children creating “their own individual masterpieces of art”, most of the lesson plans advocate strong teacher direction: “Children or teacher draws and cuts out simple nativity figures” (p.85); “Children follow teacher’s directions to complete outline of a sheep” (p.11) [templates provided].

Thompson’s (1995) complaint that “often, educators from other fields assume any lesson that uses art media is an art lesson” (p.39) is reflected in this book. An art lesson aimed at teaching oral hygiene, for example, asks children to draw around a template of a toothbrush, and to cut it out so that they can pretend to brush the teeth in a picture of a mouth. There are many other examples of arts outcomes being subsumed in similar ways. In the counting theme, drama is reduced to children lining up “according to the month they were born in, the date of their birthday or the letter of their first name” (p.260). The art-activity for this theme is to “draw and paint [identical] symbols of objects; cut them out and display them with numerals or ordinals on a chart.” (p.260).

Bresler (1992) argued that the didactic nature of most lessons attempting to integrate art education with another learning areas, is caused by the clash between two very different ways of learning. Because pragmatic contextualists subordinate art outcomes to those of the other subject “we observe time and time again, the unique, exploratory aspects of art are given up in favor of the disciplined aspects of school” (p.411).

Reconstructionist contextualism: studio artworks “extend and enhance the [art] lessons”

Writing by reconstructionists tends to concentrate on the details of theory rather than any delineation of practice, particularly as it applies to primary schools. However, what is constantly reiterated is that teachers must use visual artworks in their lessons, and, moreover, be informed in detail of the social and cultural context of the ones they use (Barrat, 2003, Darts, 2004). As Fehr (1994b) explained, “Preparing for it demands a teacher’s time” (p.58). This would be particularly true for Fehr’s model of analysis, as it demands an in-depth political and social analysis of each visual artwork. Anything less would be “bad teaching” (p.54).

The place of studio work appears to be more tenuous. Milbrant and Bonds (2000), for example, described a series of reconstructionist art lessons on the subject of the Bayeux Tapestry. Extensive discussions were based on historical, political and cultural issues, with only a passing mention of aesthetics. There was no studio work, although it was suggested that it could be added later “to extend and enhance the lessons” (p.26). Galbraith (1995) has even talked of studio art as a distraction from the main point. She criticised teachers who “found themselves still reliant on hands-on studio art-activities and in-depth demonstrations, rather than transformative units that allow students to discuss and question art from a variety of cultural and aesthetic viewpoints” (p.190).

Critics of contextualism, such as Eisner (2001), argued that this “concept of visual culture transforms the student from a productive young artist into an analytic spectator” (p.8). Stinespring (2001) complained that contextualism meant that “we should stop considering the production of artifacts as a primary art-activity in elementary and secondary schools” (p.14). Duncum (2002b, 2002c), a reconstructionist, recognised that this lack of studio work was a problem: “Stressing critique at the expense of making images in an exploratory way can have serious detrimental effects .... making is often subservient to teacher-determined ideas; making activities merely illustrate pre-existing critical positions” (2002b, p.7). He sought to resolve the situation by developing his Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE) approach that “sees making and critique as



symbiotic. The critique and making of images need to go hand-in-hand, with the one supporting the other in a symbiotic relationship” (p.6).

Taylor (2003) has given a detailed account of a reconstructionist art lesson that attempted to achieve this symbiotic relationship. It was based on Joseph Norman’s series of images: “Target Practice – Take this Take that!”

Norman challenges the viewers of his art to reflect upon their view of and participation in racism, sexism, and discrimination in their human relationships .... Norman employs images of twisted nails and menacing hammers to reflect the vulnerability of our human hearts when bearing or dispensing hurtful tirades and explications .... [The work] extends and connects interpretive and autobiographical criticism processes to meaningful art-making activities for early childhood and elementary art education classes. (p.25)

Taylor went on to describe how a second-grade class could respond to this visual artwork in their art-activity:

During the discussion of the work of art in a second-grade class, teachers write varied comments and thoughts shared by the students on the board. Some examples may include “Think before you speak,” “Take time to think,” “I wonder why” ... Following the discussion, students fill their drawing paper with these words. Remind students that they are practicing their writing skills. Following this writing exercise, teachers will ask the students to look again at Norman's artwork and reveal that the hammers and nails are actually in a garden by pointing out the leaves and the fence. Teachers then discuss the purpose of gardens and compare the thoughtful ways that gardeners tend their gardens with the ways that they and their students must care for the relationships they have with others. The students then make leaves and other plant-like forms over their words either by drawing directly on the paper emphasizing contour lines, creating leaf prints by painting a leaf and pressing it on the paper, or using watercolor. (p.30)

In this art lesson, there appears to be a genuine symbiotic relationship between the promotion of oral skills, social harmony, writing practice, cultural knowledge, and the drawing of leaves. However, the cursory nature of the studio work causes it to appear subordinate to the other learning outcomes. In reconstruction contextualism practice,

studio work is sometimes incorporated as a useful support for promoting cultural knowledge. At other times it is not. In either case, studio art is seen as primarily instrumental for learning in areas extrinsic to art education.

It is clear that contextualism might advocate that art education be given high priority in the curriculum because of its capacity to use visual stimuli for the promotion of social awareness. However, as Eisner (1998) has noted, the very fact that art is to be employed for purposes primarily related to other curriculum areas, carries with it the danger that, were a teacher to be faced by pressures to narrow the curriculum, the impact of contextualist ideas might well be to accept the marginalisation of art, and the employment of other, more direct, avenues to social awareness.

### **3.6.6 Summary**

The playwright George Bernard Shaw is said to have remarked, “There are only two great teachers, art and torture, and since one is illegal, we have to depend on the other.” (Wolf, 1992, p.960). At the core of contextualism is the agreement that art education acts as a potent teacher for social awareness. This gives the subject an instrumental utility rather than focusing on its intrinsic worth as a distinct curriculum subject. Contextualism has thus given rise to various debates as to its implications for the content and character of art teaching.

It has been argued here, that within contextualism, there are two main approaches. One is pragmatic contextualism, in which art educators seek to reinforce established values through a study of the visual arts. The second approach is reconstructionist contextualism, in which art educators challenge the domination of established values through the study of the visual arts.

The aim of students’ visual-expression is to reinforce an awareness of contextual issues through studio work. Thus, visual-expression, when employed by pragmatic contextualists, is used as a support for the established social context, expressed in the form of social and cultural awareness, and the promotion of knowledge in other subject areas. For reconstructionists, expression is present primarily in the form of students’ individual visual responses to a theme that illuminates their understanding of the social and political context within which they live, thus generating an understanding of social, gender or cultural equity issues.

### 3.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to explain a theoretical framework within which primary teachers' implicit theories on expression can be located. It has been argued that expression is generally regarded as a central component of art education. It provides "opportunities to reflect, to consider possibilities, to mix and match ideas and materials ... to 'include the child in the work' (Greenberg, 1996, p.116). Within the parameters of the term expression, however, there exists a wide variety of interpretations and emphases. In order to explore these variations, four distinct approaches to expression in primary art education have been identified: mimetic behaviourism, child-centred art education, DBAE, and contextualism. These will form the four nodal points around which teachers' responses in this study will be mapped.

In the art education philosophy of mimetic behaviourism, expression is seen to be particularly appropriate for a few artistically talented adults. The main aim for primary students is to develop physical dexterity and social acquiescence in preparation for adult employment. Influenced by the environmental-behavioural view of child development, mimetic behaviourism requires children to closely imitate the art techniques demonstrated by the teacher. Predetermined art lessons progress through teacher demonstration and carefully controlled stages, towards a clearly defined end-product. Expression is mostly limited to small, student-initiated variations within this predetermined image.

In contrast to mimetic-behaviourism, child-centred art education regards children as natural artists. It is thought that children should be given the freedom to progress naturally through their stages of artistic development, and express their personal ideas free from the influence of adult-imposed images. Self-expression is of prime importance. There is debate as to the precise role of the teacher in influencing the direction of the art lesson, but the central tenet remains that the image generated should be from the internal and personal world of the child.

DBAE's contrasting emphasis is that art education is a subject with an important and unique body of knowledge. It is believed that, by studying the disciplines of aesthetics, art criticism, art history and studio art, students will not only gain an understanding of the purpose and nature of the visual arts, but also enhance their own skills of expression through tutored images. The expressive use of the concepts taught in the introduction of the art lesson is the main criteria of assessment.

Contextualism focuses on the utilisation of art education to raise students' awareness of the social context. Some contextualists – the reconstructionists – wish to use art education to radically alter society; others – the pragmatic contextualists – have the more conservative goal of using art education to reinforce cultural symbols and support knowledge in other subject areas. Whether for radical or conservative purposes, the main purpose of art education is to provide students with access to an examination of the context within which they live. The aim of visual expression within students' studio work is thus to reinforce an awareness of contextual issues.

The identification of these four philosophies is not the only way of interpreting and mapping the theoretical terrain regarding expression in art education. The four philosophies that have been described cannot be described as fully discrete or internally homogeneous. The utility and purpose of this particular theoretical mapping, is that it offers particularly clear criteria for disentwining the ideas that comprise the implicit theories of practicing teachers.

There will now be a review of studies that have investigated both teaching practice regarding expression in primary art education, and the issues that influence such teaching.

## CHAPTER 4

### “The not too uncommon rift between theory and practice”

#### 4.1 Introduction

Goodlad’s (1979) classic study of schooling delineated five levels of the curriculum:

1. *The Ideological Curriculum*: what government, scholars and special interest groups claim to be critical.
2. *The Formal Curriculum*: what the state or its political sub-units mandate in their formal, published documents.
3. *The Perceived Curriculum*: what teachers perceive to be the curriculum; what they interpret as the formal curriculum.
4. *The Operational Curriculum*: what actually goes on in the classroom; what an observer notes to be the curriculum.
5. *The Experiential Curriculum*: what the students derive from, and think about, their curriculum experiences.

Eisner (1979) argued that there were, in addition, two other domains of the curriculum:

1. *The implicit curriculum*: what is unintentionally taught.
2. *The null curriculum*: what is not taught.

The ideological curriculum regarding expression in art education and its implications for the formal curriculum have already been discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter it will be argued that, regarding visual-expression, there is a gulf between beliefs espoused in the ideological and formal curricula, and the perceived, operational and implicit curricula. Bresler (1992) called this the “not too uncommon rift between theory and practice” (p.399).

Similar observations of the gap between rhetoric and reality in art education in the United States, were made by Manzella (1963), Wilson (1987) and Dorn (2000). Wilson (1987) noted that:

Our theorizing and our research is brilliant, but when our colleagues from other countries come over here after reading us and quoting us for years, and they go to our schools, they ask, “What is wrong?” Well, what is wrong is that

there is no connection between our theory, our research and our practice in a broad and general way. (p.68)

Art education is a subject teachers generally enjoy teaching (Richards & Gipe, 2000; McKean, 2001). Studies (Slavin & Crespino, 2000; Langford, 2000; Metcalf & Smith-Shank, 2001) have shown, however, that many teachers feel overwhelmed by the teaching constraints associated with this subject. While teachers may perceive that teaching constraints are the dominant factor in influencing their teaching approaches, it is important to note that similar teaching constraints do not appear to automatically result in similar practice. Studies, such as those by Ernest (1989), Sparks (1990), Isenberg (1990), and Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Mosley and Fleege (1993) found that teachers faced with similar constraints and a common curriculum, nevertheless exhibited differing responses in their teaching-practice. This indicates that there may be other prevailing factors, influencing such variations in art education practice.

In this chapter, there will be an examination of the literature on (i) expression in the formal curriculum; (ii) dominant types of teaching-practice regarding expression in art education; (iii) the constraints teachers face when teaching expression in art education; and (iv) teachers' beliefs regarding expression in art education. This will be done with reference to the four art education philosophies that provide the theoretical framework for this study, and will develop the argument that implicit theories can have such a powerful impact on teaching-practice, they are often able to override personal and ecological constraints.

#### **4.2 The formal curriculum**

Goodson (1994) argued that “the written [formal] curriculum both promulgates and underpins certain intentions of schooling as they are operationalized in structures and institutions” (p.19). The purpose of this discussion on the formal curriculum, is to understand the role given to expression in art education in the WA curriculum. In order to do this, there will be an analysis of the literature, including curriculum documents, and of data from an interview with the WA Senior Curriculum Officer for the Arts (SCO), regarding expression in the formal curriculum of WA. It will be argued that the underpinnings of the WA formal curriculum reflect the influence of DBAE, a trend common in most western countries, and that, within those DBAE structures, expression is given considerable emphasis.

#### **4.2.1 DBAE ideas in western curricula documents: “The paradigm shift”**

Alexander, Taggart and Thorpe (1997) argued that coherence within a teaching programme is central in aiding its translation from theory into practice. In Australia (Ashton, 1999), New Zealand (Chalmers, 1990b), North and South America (Adejuma, 2002; Bay, 1999), Britain (Allison & Hausman, 1998; Prentice, 2002) and many other parts of Europe (Limstrom, 1994), DBAE ideas have provided the structure on which most curriculum documents are based. Duke (1999) was “most proud of the Getty’s role in contributing to the paradigm shift that has occurred in arts education with the adoption of a comprehensive approach to learning that draws its content from the art disciplines” (p.4).

In the USA, Erickson (2002) described how the National Visual Arts Standards outlined objectives “drawn from established domains of specialist achievement in art, including artmaking, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics” (p.13). Duke (1999) stated that “probably the most important aspect of the standards is the consensus they forged among arts educators. That consensus inspired the development of state curriculum frameworks, standards, and assessments; a new national arts assessment” (p.5).

Whittaker (1996) described how, in Australia, the Hobart Declaration by the Australian Education Council (1988-1989) agreed on common national goals for eight Key Learning Areas, including one for The Arts: “At last the arts were recognised nationally, by all education systems, as an important and necessary part of school curricula” (p.97). The Arts Statements were completed by the end of 1993, using three conceptual organisers: creating, making and presenting; past and present contexts; arts criticism and aesthetics. In 1993 there was a change in the political climate, and a reassertion of state autonomy. WA responded by creating a Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council), the final version of which, was published in 1998. Abbs (1996) argued that this had created a fundamental shift of emphasis towards a central tenet of DBAE: “In the new paradigm the arts are not seen primarily as acts of self-expression and psychological adaptation, but as the fine vehicles of human understanding. At their best and most typical they are cognitive at the very core” (p.70). Haynes (2004b) similarly described DBAE as “the dominant paradigm” (p.33) in the WA Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998).

Expression, however, was not ignored. Within the framework of DBAE ideas, it was given an important and specific emphasis. In the UK, for example, Jarvis and Lewis (2002) observed:

It is interesting that previously undervalued qualities of creativity and expression have become fashionable again .... The government commissioned National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education report of 1999 argued that ... creativity is “essential for education to provide opportunities for young people to express their own ideas, values, and feelings” (p.128).

#### **4.2.2 The approach to visual-expression recommended in WA curriculum documents: “communication and expression”**

A similar emphasis on expression to that of the UK curriculum documents, can be found in the Arts Learning Areas of the WA Curriculum Framework.

##### The Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998)

In the WA Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998), the visual arts, dance, drama, media and music were grouped together to form The Arts Learning Area. The rationale for this grouping was that “the arts form a major form of human communication and expression. Individuals and groups use them to explore, express and communicate ideas, feelings and experiences” (p.51). Despite the common focus on expression, the diversity within the Arts Learning Area has meant that the outcomes are couched in more general terms than for other subject areas (Bracey, 2001). However, this grouping of the arts has been welcomed by such art educationalists as Abbs (1992) and Boyd (1993) because “it makes the arts one of the eight key learning areas and so is not optional” (Boyd, p.51).

The Arts Learning Area was divided into four outcomes areas: (1) Arts Ideas with the outcome “students generate arts works that communicate ideas” in order to “make personal meaning and express their own ideas”; (2) Arts Skills and Processes with the outcome “students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of the arts”; (3) Arts Responses with the outcome “students use their aesthetic judgment to respond to, reflect on and evaluate the arts”; and (4) Arts in Society with the outcome “students understand the role of the arts in society” (p.52-53). Standards Framework Work Samples for the Arts (Curriculum Council, 1998b), and Getting Started: the Arts (Curriculum Council, 1999), published after the Curriculum



Framework and SOS, also emphasised expression within the DBAE framework of aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and studio art.

Although the Curriculum Framework was published in 1998, the broad goals of art education embodied in the document had been previously promoted through earlier publications: *The Draft Curriculum Document* (Curriculum Council, 1997), *The Student Outcome Statements* (Curriculum Council, 1996), *the Consultative Draft for the Student Outcome Statements* (Curriculum Council, 1992), and the *K-7 Syllabus for Art and Craft* (Ministry of Education of Western Australia, c1987).

#### The K-7 Syllabus for Art and Craft (c1987)

The K-7 Syllabus for Art and Craft is a large, attractively illustrated book demonstrating exemplary art teaching strategies and is still in current use. Although written in the 1980's, it is meant to dovetail with the principles that structure the Curriculum Framework (personal communication, consultant for the visual arts, October 15, 1996). Boyd (1993) noted that "some states such as Queensland needed their 21 year old syllabus reviewed. This is not as much the case in WA" (p.51).

The syllabus shares the same emphasis on expression as the Curriculum Framework. It states, for example, that "creative outcomes ... are: spirit of exploration and experimentation, sensitivity to inner feelings and emotions, creative thinking, self-reliance and personal commitment" (p.16). Lummis (1986), a participant in the creation of the K-7 Syllabus, described the document as a "discipline-based visual arts curriculum" (p.vi), because it "includes a focus on the cultural, historical, critical and analytical context of visual education which accommodates the views of Eisner (1972), Allison (1978), Chapman (1978) and Rush (1986)" (p.87).

In response to DBAE ideas, art curriculum objectives in the K-7 Syllabus were divided into Making Art (art techniques, skills and modes of expression), Art Learning (study of the art elements of line, colour, texture, shape and form and space), and Understanding Art (teaching children about their cultural heritage and art criticism). It showed how skills and concepts could be developed using Carrier Projects (sequential planning), and how children's development in art education could be evaluated. Boughton (1989) and de Bruin (1990) agreed that the K-7 Syllabus thus represented "a significant break with the established tradition in Australia ... in that greater emphasis is placed on 'reflection and response to visual arts', while the differentiation between

art history and art criticism echoes some of the same concerns which characterize the American DBAE debate” (Boughton, p.203).

Analysis of the K-7 Syllabus (Brown, 1997b), however, have shown that it contains inherent ambiguities. The general objectives on the 800 workcards illustrating different art techniques, vary little from card to card, and fail to reflect the wide range of objectives given in the main text. For example, although the art objectives reflect an emphasis on the importance of “combining understanding art and making art-activities”, there are no indications of how to do this in the work cards. Thirty three percent of Carrier Projects contain no reference to Understanding Art; and of those that do, over half omit any reference to visual artworks. As teachers appear to refer most frequently to the work cards and Carrier Projects, these may project the message to teachers that the study of visual artworks is not as important in practice as it is in theory. Expression, however, has consistently been promoted as important both in theory and in practice. The phrase “the students will be able to express themselves” was constantly repeated, indicating a strong theoretical adherence to the importance of expression.

#### Monitoring Standards in Education Tests (MSE)

A central tenet of DBAE is that students’ progress in art education should be monitored. Ellicot (1997) and Pascoe (1997) described how, in 1996, WA became the first state in Australia to test the arts on a systems level, using a viable random sample method of open-ended questions and hands-on strategies. The tests were completed in Grade 3 (40 schools), Grade 7 (200 schools) and Grade 10 (100 schools). The MSE used Student Outcome Statements (Educational Department of Western Australia, 1996, draft version), and the Western Australian version of the National Profiles (Curriculum Corporation, 1994) as a framework for reporting on student progress and achievement.

#### The Student Outcome Statements (1996)

One of the strengths of the WA Curriculum was that the principles in the Framework were reiterated in the Student Outcome Statements (SOS) (Perry, 1995). Pascoe (1997) described how the SOS were not intended to be a syllabus document, but rather a means of placing students on outcomes levels of learning.

The SOS for the Arts were divided into two sections: (i) Expressing, which included “creating, exploring and developing ideas” and “using skills, techniques, technologies

and processes; and (ii) Responding and Reflecting, which included “using art criticism” and “understanding the role of the arts in society”. Whittaker (1996) commented that “These organisers ... are similar to those used in Discipline-based art education material” (p.99).

While the tests did not identify schools or individual students, they did set a benchmark against which schools could compare their performance in “the process form” and “the analysis form” within the visual arts. In the first aspect of the test, students were assessed on “the creative ways of expressing themselves”, and in the second, on “the range of responses” to visual art works (Pascoe, 1997, p.3).

#### Creative Connections (2005)

A recent WA Education Department document about the arts is *Creative Connections*. It describes a comprehensive programme for promoting the arts in WA schools, and begins with the statement, “The Western Australian Government recognises that creativity is now a key driver and the decisive source of competitive advantage in the modern economy. Consequently promoting creativity is becoming a collective goal of governments, businesses and communities” (p.1). It describes how “the arts are important in that they provide the most effective and in some cases, the only exercise of many tools of thinking – both expressive and imaginative. The arts, however, are not merely for self-expression or entertainment, they are also intellectual disciplines as rigorous as mathematics or medicine” (p.6). Its description of the Visual Arts Random Sample trials of 2003, underscores the influence of DBAE: “The students started by answering some questions related to a Leon Pericles stimulus. They completed a mind map and an observational drawing of a still life before embarking on a visual diary that led to their art work based around the theme” (p.30).

#### **4.2.3 Approaches to expression recommended in art educational textbooks: “Tear up all patterned art responses”**

In concert with most formal curricula, art educational textbooks and support documents for primary pre-service teachers overwhelmingly promote the importance of expression. The rhetoric of expression is so strong, that even those teachers’ handbooks that use templates, photocopied images and step-by-step instructions, use such justificatory language as “responding to the world in an individual way; selecting and arranging images and materials to express ideas; experimenting with materials to discover ways to make artworks” (Bowie, Madsen & Norman, 1993, p.ix). Marché (2002) noted that the influence of Lowenfeld’s concept of self-expression has

“remained powerful; his *Creative and Mental Growth* (1947) was reissued through numerous editions (1952, 1957, 1964, 1970, 1975) and remained a popular teacher-preparation text for several decades” (p.29).

Duke (1999) described “the cornucopia of new textbooks and instructional materials” (p.5) outlining teaching strategies based on DBAE principles. While DBAE’s promotion of expression generated through children’s personal engagement with visual art works, contrasts with the child-centred focus on self-expression (Dorn, 2000), both positions agree on an unequivocal condemnation of predetermined art because it suppresses expression. Pre-service teachers texts based on DBAE premises, such as Herberholz and Hanson (1990), state that “originality and independence in art, rather than copying and imitative activities should be praised” (p.123). Linderman (1997) likewise proclaims, “Should students be given patterns, art workbooks, or mimeographed sheets? No! No! No!” .... Tear up all patterned art responses. These are not the goal” (p.253). In WA, comparable instructional material is provided by the WA occasional publication *Arts Still Alive*, which is aimed at both primary visual arts specialist teachers and class teachers.

#### Arts Still Alive, Volume 7 (1999)

In 1999, the Art Education Association of WA [AEA] published *Arts Still Alive, Volume 7* (1999). This contained twenty-eight exemplary carrier-projects, demonstrating practical ideas on how teachers could achieve outcomes in the four learning areas. The editors acknowledged the assistance of the Curriculum Council of WA in providing “focus questions to guide our thinking as with the Curriculum Framework through their planning .... providing a focus we developed the proforma .... [which] will assist teachers to engage for outcomes-based educational practice in the visual arts” (pp.i-ii).

A major change from previous years was the introduction into the carrier-project format, of outcomes in the four arts learning areas. Teachers were provided with suggestions for content and phrasing while planning each carrier project. For *Arts Ideas* this included “increasing perceptual development; increasing originality and freedom from stereotypes; willingness to experiment and work independently; developing confidence in own ability and ideas” (p.iii).

Carrier Projects outlined in the K-7 Syllabus, continued to be used in *Arts Still Alive* because “the format of the carrier-project enables the sequencing of related activities. It

provides an opportunity to focus on specific art learning concepts and skills” (p.ii). As with previous editions of *Arts Still Alive*, the choice of subject matter for the carrier-projects was predominantly related to other learning areas. At the same time the learning content was clearly and specifically related to art education skills and concepts.

Within every carrier-project, students were encouraged to express their own ideas within each specified theme. For example: “Brainstorm notion of distortion in faces .... Explore cutting and re-arranging as a way of distorting” (p.58). Photographs of students’ work, however, indicated that art materials were usually restricted, and particular styles of work often encouraged. The ubiquitous black outline-drawing and colour infill, for example, appeared to be a uniform response in many art lessons.

The editors wrote of how they had been influenced by the DBAE exponent, Laura Chapman: “[She] is instrumental in shaping views on the practice of Art Education throughout the world. Her ideas and methodology were the stimulation for the Art Curriculum in Western Australia” (p.61). While the content of the carrier-projects echoed Chapman’s emphasis on expression through tutored images, they did not follow her example in placing visual artworks at the centre of the lesson. While 82% of the carrier-projects had references to visual artworks in the learning outcomes section, only 42% referred to artists’ work in the lesson plans, and then, very briefly. Like the K-7 Syllabus, the implied message appeared to be that the study of visual artworks was more important in theory than in practice.

#### **4.2.4 Summary**

Eisner (1992b) described how the most explicit “set of beliefs about what should be taught, for what ends, and for what reasons .... [are] in manifestos about what should be taught” (p.304). An examination of WA’s recent curriculum documents demonstrates that expression has remained at the core of WA’s formal curriculum for art education. While the emphasis is on children’s freedom to communicate their own ideas, it envisages the role of the teacher as one who encourages expression within the context of aesthetics, art criticism, art history and studio art. This set of beliefs, firmly rooted in DBAE, is also reflected in texts recommended to pre-service and practicing teachers.

An examination of teaching practice regarding expression in art education will indicate whether the theory represented in formal curricula is generally reflected in schools, or

whether Kimpson's (1985) assertion, that "relatively few ideas make it 'behind the classroom door'" (p.185), applies here.

### 4.3 Teaching practice

The Curriculum Council (1999b) stated that if implementation was "done effectively, this five year period [from 1999] will see enormous changes in classroom teaching and learning practices to the benefit of all students in Western Australia" (p.iii). This implied that teaching-practice in many areas was distant from that advocated by the Curriculum Framework, perhaps caused by what Collins and Sandell (2000) described as "low-profile, idiosyncratic approaches to teaching art behind the closed classroom door" (p.367).

In other states of Australia, Whittaker (1996) and Boyd (1993) similarly argued that the new Australian curriculum documents were intended to structurally alter dominant modes of teaching art education in the primary school:

For generalist primary teachers there will be a realisation that teaching the visual arts is not ad hoc – 'find an idea for the craft stall and teach it for Mothers' Day art products'. The structure or framework has altered substantially what has become entrenched teaching in many primary schools. (Boyd, p.51)

In this section of the chapter, there will be a brief survey of studies that have examined teaching-practice relating to expression in art education. These will be examined within the framework of practice advocated by the four art education philosophies described in Chapter 3: (1) *Predetermined art* advocated by supporters of mimetic behaviourism; (2) *child-centred art* advocated by supporters of child-centred art education; (3) *tutored images* advocated by supporters of DBAE; and (4) *contextualist art* advocated by supporters of pragmatic contextualism. The aim is to examine the extent to which these teaching approaches are prevalent in primary school teaching practice.

#### **4.3.1 Predetermined art (mimetic behaviourism): "Assignments ... based on the imitation of a product, where criteria are clear and easy to judge"**

Henley (1991), Wright (1995) and Brown (1994) commented on the prevalence of predetermined art in Asian primary schools, resulting in high technical skills, but low expressive content. There are indications that predetermined art is also a favoured teaching approach in western primary schools.

In Goodlad's (1984) study of American teaching-practice, he observed that primary art lessons "did not convey the impression of individual expression and artistic creativity toward which one is led by the rhetoric of forward-looking practice in the field" (p.220). Later American and Canadian studies by Rafferty (1987), Hitz and Wright (1988), Gray and MacGregor (1991), and Charlesworth et al. (1993) confirmed the prevalence of predetermined art in primary schools. Burton (2000) argued that "young people are too often bored in schools because ... we do not invite them to bring their own experiences into learning" (p.330).

In her study of early childhood teachers, Bresler (1992) observed that "the very features for which art is prescribed – fostering self-expression and creativity, developing imagination and problem-solving skills – are absent in art programs" (p.398). She complained that "art education is in danger of being subordinated to quick production and visibility .... Teachers' views of art exclude the cognitive aspects from it .... [they prefer to give] unchallenged assignments in which everybody (i.e. everybody who tries) can succeed" (pp.410-411).

Metcalf and Shank (2001) found that:

Most of our [pre-service teacher] students described their experiences with art as, "cut and paste", a method of teaching art with little or no attention to creativity, cognitive skills, art history, aesthetics, or focus on the interrelationships between the arts and other subjects .... They had never before been exposed to art that was not a prescribed step-by-step formula for producing exact replicas. (pp.46-47)

Although little research has been done in Australia on teachers' practice in art education, Duncum's (1995) impression has been that Australian primary teachers show a similar propensity to teach art in a predetermined way. Certainly, resource books popular with practicing teachers frequently promote the use of templates and photocopied images; an example of which would be *Christmas* by Godfrey (1990), part of the popular Scholastic series *Bright Ideas for Early Years*. In Bresler's (1992) study of early childhood art education, teachers' resource books were primarily didactic, focusing on the production of either seasonal objects (Easter baskets, Christmas Santas) to take home, or attractive pictures to decorate the classroom walls. In addition: "In spite of the fact that many educators have been against the use of coloring books, they are widely used throughout the school curriculum" (King, 1991, p.40).

### **4.3.2 Child-centred art: “Progressivist, non-interventionist pedagogy”**

If studies indicate that there is a prevalence of predetermined art in primary schools, it would follow that child-centred art might be correspondingly sporadic. In 1980, having studied the British Plowden Report (1966), which advocated child-centred teaching, Eisner went in search of progressive primary schools in Britain. He estimated that “at the most only 10 per cent of the primary schools ... could be said to reflect the spirit of the Plowden Report” (1992b, p.314). In Herne’s more recent (1994) study of primary schools in London, 64% were below average in terms of good art teaching-practice, one criteria of which included giving students “scope for self-direction and personal response” (p.5).

In Australia, child-centred approaches to art education were first introduced in the 1930s in Western Australia, and then Tasmania (Mandelson, 1984). The rest of Australia followed. While Hammond’s (1978) study found that “the concepts of ‘creativity’ and ‘self-expression’ gradually pervaded all aspects of primary school art and handwork” (p.503), teaching-practice did not always follow. Boughton (1989), for example, argued that teachers generally mixed child-centred teaching-practices with predetermined art. Ashton (2002) similarly found in her study of Australian primary class-teachers, that “progressivist, non-interventionist pedagogy has thrived. So too has the procedural craft-based ‘let’s make twenty-five identical paper plate lions’ pedagogy thrived, perhaps as a reaction to logistical nightmares which can accompany non-interventionist art experiences” (p.2).

### **4.3.3 Tutored images: “a mutation of US Discipline-based art education”**

Dorn (2000) argued that both child-centred and DBAE ideas have had very little influence on teaching-practice: “In reality, none of those so-called movements may have had any significant effect on what has really happened. All, including the Getty reform, may have ended up as failures ... In the end, to quote Harlan Hoffa’s review of the federal movement of the sixties, ‘There was silence’” (pp.17-18). Apple (1993) and Marché (2002) also concluded that “the 1965 Penn State seminar resulted in a series of curriculum development projects that did not effect significant changes in classroom practice” (Marché, p.25).

In Australia, Brown’s (1997b) study of WA primary art specialist teachers, indicated that DBAE’s focus on visual artworks has had no discernible influence on primary teachers’ art teaching programmes. Darby (1986) stated that “despite acknowledgement by most teachers that art appreciation should be an essential component of the art



education of all students, very few address the issues in the courses they plan” (p.8). Duck’s (1987) study of the response of primary teachers to the draft proposals for curriculum change in Queensland, also revealed a profound reluctance on the part of primary teachers to use art works in their visual arts teaching programmes.

In the UK, Boyd (1993) found that:

when the parameters and structures of the draft National Arts Statement and Profile were outlined to include transforming, presenting, aesthetics and arts criticism and past and present contexts, it became obvious that teachers, especially in primary school settings, had not addressed the scope of the contents involved. (p.48)

Anglin’s (1991) study of middle-school visual art specialist teachers, found that they similarly rejected any role for visual art works in children’s expression. Instead they concentrated on art production, with the emphasis on introducing a wide variety of media and some elements of expression. Green and Mitchell (1998) described how primary mentor-teachers “were mostly unable to assist [pre-service teachers] in developing ... [an] understanding of art teaching and learning” (p.245).

Some studies, however, contradict the idea that DBAE has had very little influence on teaching-practice. In the USA, Bullock and Galbraith (1992) argued that art specialist teachers “have embraced neither wholly child-centered nor wholly discipline-centered approaches, preferring instead to interpret and synthesize aspects of both”. Leshnoff’s (1999) study similarly found that 90% of art specialists included an art history component in their lessons.

In Britain, where the aims of the National Curriculum are very similar to those of the WA Curriculum Framework, inspectors in 1993 were able to report that 68% of art lessons in junior primary and 58% of art lessons in middle and senior primary schools were satisfactory or better in promoting creative expression and art analysis (Holt, 1995). This was a marked improvement on a previous National Primary Survey, which found that art was less effectively taught than any other subject in the primary school except science (Jeffery, 1982).

An explanation of the differences between the two sets of studies, might relate to the way they define DBAE teaching. The studies that found DBAE had little influence on practice, tended to concentrate on the analysis of visual artworks as the touchstone of

DBAE practice. The studies that found DBAE had influenced practice tended to have a broader interpretation of DBAE teaching-practice: instead of focusing on an analysis of visual artworks, the more general terms of “art history component” or “art analysis” were used, and expression was often given equal emphasis. Using this wider view of DBAE practice, Ashton (2002) found that some Australian primary class-teachers in her study favoured tutored images more than the combined laissez-faire/predetermined art practices she had previously described. Convinced that art education had valuable content, but lacking the specialist knowledge to teach art analysis well, these teachers concentrated on promoting a knowledge of art concepts and techniques. Perry (2005) described this development in Australian pre-primary and primary schools as “a quiet revolution” (p.7). Despite, the lack of art analysis in their practice, Ashton acknowledged their connection to DBAE ideas by describing their approach as a “mutation of US Discipline-based art education” (p.2).

#### **4.3.4 Pragmatic-contextualist art: “Halloween witches ... Easter eggs, bunnies and Mother’s Day roses in the spring”**

Studies indicate that it is common in school practice to use art education for instrumental purposes, but that it is in accordance with pragmatic rather than reconstructionist contextualist principles. In pragmatic-contextualist art, there is the more conservative purpose of using art education as a handmaiden to other curriculum areas that are central to society and of more importance than art education.

Rafferty’s study (1987) found that primary teachers’ art programmes were centred almost exclusively on supporting and reinforcing “cultural events on the calendar” (p.95). Bresler’s study (1992) also found that:

Themes, procedures, and activities are strikingly similar across classes. The art scene ... reflects the progression of seasons and holidays: Halloween witches, pumpkins, and turkeys in fall; penguins, Christmas trees and Valentine hearts in winter; Easter eggs, bunnies and Mother’s Day roses in the spring. (pp.402-403)

There is also evidence that art activities are frequently used primarily to sustain structures that constitute the subject matter of other curriculum areas. While “genuine interdisciplinary learning preserves the integrity of the disciplines and leads to well-defined skills and knowledge .... Much that passes for interdisciplinary education

involving the arts today is superficial, misguided, and unproductive” (Lehman, 2000, p.22).

Herberholz and Hanson (1990), Smith (1995), Thompson (1995) and Eisner (1998) encouraged links between art education and other learning areas, but were also wary of the aims of art education being subsumed to those of other subjects. Drawing to illustrate a social studies theme, for example, might be classified by teachers as an art-activity without engaging the students in meaningful visual arts learning (personal communication, consultant for the visual arts, October 15, 1996). Goodlad (1983) in his six-year *Study of Schooling* found that much of art education “goes on in classes such as social studies as a kind of auxiliary activity rather than art in its own right” (p.220).

When art outcomes are subsumed to achieving outcomes in other subjects, art education can cease to have a clear and distinctive place in the curriculum (Bresler, 1992). Wolf (1992) argued that “the presence of the arts in public schooling is marginal – not only in hours and resources but in depth” (p.955). Eisner (1979) suggested that the null curriculum could manifest itself not only in the absence of a teaching programme, but also in the absence of intellectual processes.

In Moroz, Baker, and McDonald’s (1995) WA study, primary students were asked to list all subjects taught in their schools. Art was never nominated as a subject. It is unlikely that art-activities were totally absent in these schools, but it is possible that art had become so much a handmaiden of other areas of the curriculum that it was no longer recognised as an autonomous subject. As Pascoe (1997) regretfully observed, this can lead to a total extinguishing of the subject by Year 10 in some schools: “In 1996 [in WA], 58 high schools out 171 (a third) did not offer any arts subjects at this level” (p.5). Hicks (2001) stated that “the nitty-gritty reality is that art education is not accepted as a basic subject in the schools” (p.8).

Best (1995), Schrag (1995), Pascoe (1997), Brown (2002), and Booth (2002), argued that, because art education is often believed by teachers to have value only as a support for other subjects, “music and the fine arts ... occupy a marginal and often vulnerable place in the curriculum” (Schrag, p.41). In agreement with this, Smith (1996) observed that “art in schools, [is] pushed into the margins of the curriculum, [and is] the last subject to find a home in schools and the first to be cast out in times of adversity” (p.1).

### **4.3.5 Summary**

Studies differ in their findings about teaching-practice related to expression in primary art education. However, predetermined art is generally seen to be common, with child-centred art being much less so. There is more debate as to the extent to which tutored images are used as a teaching method. If the formal analysis of visual artworks is used as the main criteria of practice, then DBAE appears to have had little influence. However, if a more general awareness of art appreciation and art concepts is taken as the benchmark, then more teachers appear to be using this approach. It is generally agreed that primary teachers do not relate to the ideological positions of reconstructionism, but, instead, frequently use pragmatic-contextualist art to reinforce cultural knowledge and achieve learning outcomes in other learning areas.

This initial evidence that there is a wide variation in the implementation of the visual arts curriculum regarding expression, leads to the question of why some teachers are responding to the formal curriculum while others are ignoring it. While this study has as its focus the influence of implicit theories on teaching approaches, it has been argued by others that teaching constraints have an overwhelming power to dissuade teachers from the implementation of curriculum policy on expression.

### **4.4 Teaching constraints**

Jenkins and Calhorne (1989), Apple (1993), Clement (1994), and Pavlou (2004), have argued that teaching constraints, rather than theoretical issues, dominate teachers' rationales for their art teaching programmes. This is particularly pertinent in relation to their response to art curricula that follow DBAE principles, as additional time, equipment and a working knowledge of aesthetics, art history and art criticism, are needed. Burton (2001) for example, wanted to know whether the low implementation of DBAE ideas was because "art history remains outside the respondents' instructional 'comfort zone', ... they are starved for visual resources, or ... the students simply have little interest in the art of other eras and cultures" (p.137).

The umbrella term of teaching constraints can be broken down into those constraints that are internal to the teacher (personal constraints), and those that are external (ecological constraints).

#### 4.4.1 Personal constraints

Teachers contemplating the role of expression in art education, may face two significant personal constraints: (i) a lack of knowledge of how to teach art education, and (ii) a low sense of self-efficacy.

##### Lack of knowledge: “unrealistic expectations about teacher capabilities”

Even if teachers are willing to implement the formal curriculum, they may lack knowledge on how to implement it. As Slavin and Crespino (2000) commented, “unrealistic expectations about teacher capabilities have often led to inadequate implementation at the classroom level” (p.24). Bresler (1992) found a direct link between teachers’ knowledge of the visual arts and the extent of expression in their art-activities. The only teachers who included expression in their art programmes were those who “manifested extensive arts involvement and artistic backgrounds in their private lives” (p.405).

Studies have shown that both teachers and pre-service teachers generally lack background knowledge in art education (Efland, 1990b; Short, 1995). In WA, Wright and Pascoe (2004) described how “43% [of their pre-service teachers] had ‘nil’ experience in the arts, and 45% had ‘limited’ experience”, giving rise to an “anxiety about modeling artistic attributes” (p.106). In the USA, Galbraith (1991) found that “the majority of the student-teachers had very limited art backgrounds. Their understanding of art was vaguely grounded in their primary experience” (p.333). Certain aspects held a particular terror:

Their apprehension grew as we started to discuss the areas of art history, aesthetics and art criticism. Since they had virtually no background in these areas, their fears were perhaps apt. These art areas do require a great deal of background knowledge, and introducing them into the curriculum is difficult even for teachers who specialise in art. (p.336)

British education inspectors’ reports on primary schools in 1993 revealed that “the majority of teachers involved were characterised as ‘working hard’, but their limited experience with materials and lack of knowledge of the subject [art education] are identified as being problematic” (Holt, 1995, p.256).

Sevigny (1989) described how studies had shown that “few classroom teachers had sufficient ability to clarify art concepts and aesthetic principles. Most had insufficient mastery of the language of aesthetics and criticism to be able to expand upon students’

initial responses and ideas” (p.112). Primary teachers lacked a basic knowledge of art concepts (Green & Mitchell, 1998), aesthetics being particularly problematic (Langford, 2000). Eisner (1994), Galbraith (1995) and Smoke (1996) argued that the inclusion of visual artworks from other cultures presented additional obstacles for teachers, for it was not enough to simply make masks in order to inculcate “a sympathetic understanding of another culture” (Smoke, p.117).

Teachers appear to be both conscious of, and troubled by, their lack of knowledge of how to teach art according to the formal curriculum. Jeffers (1996) found that teachers rated their abilities to teach art criticism, art history and aesthetics as low. In Jeffers and Fong’s (2000) study, a lack of knowledge on how to teach art education was of far greater concern to elementary teachers than a lack of funding. Cox, Cooke and Griffen (1995) reported that “sixty per cent of teachers felt the need for further in-service training if they are going to teach the new art curriculum” (p.154).

To help teachers teach outside their areas of expertise and understanding, an abundance of DBAE-inspired teachers’ books have been published (Chapman, 1985; Stephens, 1994), as well as special computer software (Coutts & Hart, 2000). Best (1995), however, found that books published to help teachers with art appreciation, not only reduced the mystery of art to absurd commonalities, they also failed to explain adequately what to do in the classroom, being “long on eulogy and short on pedagogy” (p.165). Best admitted, however, that he, too, had no answers to offer. Faced with a lack of knowledge on how to incorporate expression into their visual arts programmes, primary teachers may agree that they are indeed doomed to ineffectuality in this area of the curriculum.

#### Low self-efficacy: “I can’t teach what I can’t do”

Boyd (1993) used the term “self-efficacy” (p.44) to describe teachers’ feelings of competence in any particular area. A reduction in teachers’ sense of self-efficacy has been singled out as having a devastating effect on teachers’ ability to implement any curriculum effectively (Giacquinta, 1973; Fullan, 1982; Rutherford, 1986; Sevigny, 1989; Welch, 1996; Herne, 2000).

There are indications that class-teachers suffer from particular low self-efficacy when teaching art education. Ashton (1999) recorded how pre-service and primary teachers were dogged by internal negative dialogues, such as “I’m not creative at all”, thus

undermining their ability to teach art effectively. Some have been scarred by their own art-learning experiences with negative and didactic teachers (Metcalf & Shank, 2001).

McKean (2001) discovered that teachers perceived the arts as requiring unique, and particularly creative talents. Churcher (2004) explained the strength of this feeling from a personal perspective: “I really seriously believe that you have to be a painter to teach painting convincingly ... if you go into an Art School, as I did ... I thought, ‘I’m a fraud because I’m not actually making art myself’” (p.15). She qualified this statement, however, by saying, “It’s different in schools, for schoolchildren, because they’re not trying to be painters” (p.15).

Churcher’s distinction between the qualifications needed to teach aspiring professional artists and those needed to teach primary children, however, has not been recognised by many teachers. McKean (2001) described how this has led to feelings of inadequacy in normally self-confident primary teachers:

For the teachers in this study, recurrent statements such as “I can’t draw” or “I can’t sing” reflected this sense of inadequacy and lack of talent that impeded their own experimentation within the art forms, and their confidence in teaching the arts to their students. As one teacher said, “I can’t teach what I can’t do. If I had the talent to do it, I would” .... It was clear that these are experienced and inventive elementary school teachers .... However, this demonstrated ability and confidence in other subject areas did not transfer to the arts. (pp.31-32)

In addition to feelings of inadequacy regarding their artistic abilities, Nettle (1998), and Richards and Gipe (2000) noted that the issue of control was a major concern for pre-service primary teachers in New South Wales (NSW) and America. Teachers who have low feelings of efficacy regarding control, are likely to have even more doubts regarding the unpredictable elements of expression in art education. As Bresler (1992) summarised, “The combination of teachers’ lack of art background with the lack of resources for art, shapes arts practice: Teachers chose projects that were mainly easy to teach, easy to manage, and attractive to youngsters” (p.411).

In WA, the Senior Curriculum Officer for the Arts recognised the uncertainty felt by teachers and discussed its causes:

It's the language, the words, the terminology and the concepts that aren't there yet. And that's just the starting point. Because that's not about how you teach about those concepts, that's just naming the parts .... The other bit is actually about confidence to actually do something, to have a go, or to let it go .... We're moving from a time of insecurity [with the introduction of the Curriculum Framework] to a time of hopefully greater security. But this is not even a five year plan here, it is more like a ten year plan, or a twenty year plan. [Interview]

#### **4.4.2 Ecological constraints**

In addition to problems derived from personal constraints, teachers face constraints imposed upon them by the environment in which they work. Rafferty's (1987) study of six Canadian elementary teachers, led her to conclude that it was these ecological constraints that dictated a uniformly non-expressive way of teaching art in elementary schools. Other studies have also indicated that teachers are particularly concerned about a lack of teaching support for practicing and pre-service teachers, a shortage of time, a lack of resources, and a perceived resistance to self-expression on the part of their students, the principal, the rest of the school community, and the broader community.

Lack of teaching support for practicing teachers: "a refusal to give instruction or guidance"

Hargreaves (1984), Smith (1985), and Irwin (1992) argued that what was needed to implement change was coherence in the teaching programme and support from key agencies. Strikwerda-Brown and Taggart (2002) showed how a well-structured practical programme could support teachers unsure of their ability to teach physical education. When Clark, Day and Greer (1987) proposed introducing DBAE ideas into schools, they similarly acknowledged that elementary teachers would need a detailed curriculum, plus in-service help and advice. Jeffers (2000) found that teachers welcomed this detailed guidance. The outcomes approach, used in the WA formal curriculum, and common in many western countries is not structured, however, to provide this type of assistance (Willis & Kissane, 1995; Hughes, 1997).

Perry (1995) described the rigidities associated with a curriculum that is knowledge-based and limited to cognitive training. The outcomes approach avoids these problems by allowing each school to achieve the stated outcomes in the most appropriate way for their students: "The teacher must be seen as the one who utilizes a given curriculum as



a basis for decision making – real decisions, not shallow choices about whether to use suggested activity A or suggested activity B” (Schoonmaker, 2000, p.316).

This flexibility lends itself to the incorporation of a wide variety of teaching approaches. Schools in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, for example, have requested copies of the WA Curriculum Framework, specifically because of its ability to embrace different teaching approaches. Ashworth (1998), reported that “the framework is considered revolutionary because it adopts a flexible, rather than prescriptive, approach to the curriculum .... Mr. Albert (Head of the Curriculum Council) said its flexibility meant that it could be applied to any culture and any education system in the world” (p.26). As the WA Senior Curriculum Officer summarised in his interview, “It’s a shift [for the teacher] from being an applier of recipes, to a designer of menus”.

In the USA, Eisner (2000b) agreed that:

The current standards that have been formulated for arts education are nowhere near as specific as those formulated in the 1960s. In fact, the so-called standards are not standards at all in the sense of constituting a unit through which something can be measured; at best, they are standards in the way a flag is a standard: as symbols of what a field values. (p.4)

Eisner concluded that: “teachers must create their own [art education] curriculum, whether they are prepared to do so or not” (p.6). Teachers, however, may respond to this compulsion with resentment (Eisnehart, Shrum, Harding & Cuthbert, 1988; Chalmers, 1990b; Herne, 2000) or confusion:

The writers of the [Australian] National Arts Curriculum clearly communicated their intentions to the teachers. Teachers knew what the draft document was designed to do. Yet, once again generalist teachers were unsure of how to use the profile and with what frequency. For many generalist teachers the document proved foreign in structure and strand organisation. (Boyd, 1993, p.47)

Lee (1997) was highly critical of the lack of specificity in the NSW arts curriculum: “What appears at first to be a freedom of wide-ranging choices proves in practice to be an authoritarian refusal to give instruction or guidance. It is an evasion of responsibility of a kind that is all too common in art education” (p.31).

In WA, the Senior Curriculum Officer for the Arts responded to teachers' need for guidance by organising workshops. In the interview, he described how, although these were "aimed at people who have been identified as having leadership qualities who may or not be specialists .... We are still a long way from getting to actual classroom teachers. It's a start". In addition, the focus of the workshops was on the underlying principles of the Curriculum: "it helps them understand the dimensions". He was adamant that "what we are *not* doing, is we're *not* doing recipes. We are *not* doing specific stuff". A time when teachers might expect to get specific guidance on appropriate teaching-practice, however, might be in their pre-service tertiary art education units.

Lack of teaching advice for pre-service teachers: "the way teachers were trained also needed to be revised"

Duke (1999) observed that "as the content of art education broadened it quickly became evident that the way teachers were trained also needed to be revised. Not only did art and general classroom teachers need to learn more content from the art disciplines, they also needed to learn how to present it in the classroom" (p.6). Linderstrom (1994) found that "DBAE represents the domineering trend in art education and is supported by two-thirds of faculty in art education programmes in higher education" (p.196). Anderson, Eisner, and McRorie (1998) agreed that "although there is wide variety in emphases in teacher education programs, the artist-teacher and the DBAE orientations are the two dominant paradigms" (p.24).

Duke (1999), Lehman (2000), and Watts (2005) argued that, despite this alignment with DBAE, pre-service art education failed to give teachers sufficient information about teaching art education in accordance with the new curricula. Stone (1996), for example, observed how "college preparation does not appear to influence effectively an elementary art teacher's use of [art] museums" (p.84).

A WA pre-service teacher-educator described why he felt there could be no meaningful, long-term learning in a first year unit of twelve three-hour workshops:

Even the most optimistic people would have to realise that it's a waste of time ... we are saving pennies. One core unit of art education equals zip as far as I'm concerned .... An 18 year old kid coming in now, with no prior knowledge, nothing really substantial to build up an appreciation of the visual

arts and why it's important. They turn up to get through, and then it's gone ....

So what we are doing is mission impossible. [Brown, 1997b, Participant B]

Because of this failure at tertiary level, Eisner (1992) was "troubled by teachers who have only a four-year degree in education, for they do not have the breadth or the depth to teach [art] effectively" (p.597). As a consequence, he believed that art education should be left to art specialists rather than class teachers. Similarly in Australia, Ashton (2002) argued that it was the lack of art specialist teachers meant "the decision to transplant it [the DBAE system] into the Australian primary education system was doomed from the outset" (p.2).

Others, however, have focused on the problem of the content of university art education programmes rather than the time available. Kindler (1992) and Patchen (1998) pointed out that art education programmes were generally too studio based: "The resistance that some art teachers display towards DBAE may well be related to the fact that their teacher training has not prepared them adequately to assume initiatives in developing art curricula of such broad boundaries" (Kindler, p.350). In recognition of this problem, Wright and Pascoe (2004) have formulated a programme that enables students to map their teaching from this wider arts perspective.

Anderson et al. (1996), Patchen (1998), and Stankiewicz (1998) complained about the dearth of practical teaching experience amongst art education lecturers of both generalist and art-specialist pre-service teachers: "If K-12 teaching experience is not valued by those responsible for teaching our next generation of art teachers, how can we expect the field to have credibility in the world of K-12 art education?" (Patchen, p.30). Schoonmaker (2000) advised that such tertiary educators should "carefully study school context, in order to develop thoughtful strategies for instruction" (p.318).

Lack of time: "who has a whole morning to devote to the arts?"

The problem of an overcrowded syllabus has proved to be a continuing concern for primary teachers over the last two decades (Hatch and Freeman, 1988; Chapman, 1982 and 1990; Mims and Lankford, 1995). Hitz and Wright (1988) reported that "the most striking response was the agreement ... that the emphasis on academic skill development has increased" (p.29). Jenkins and Calhoun's (1989) study also found that 71% of teachers identified task overload as a major source of stress. Teachers in Rutherford's (1986) study singled out lack of time as the ecological constraint preventing them from teaching all aspects of the curriculum. Surveys of primary

schools in Australia (Schools, 1999; Armitage, 1999), America (Apple, 1993; Chapman, 2005, 2005b), and the UK (Hernes, 2000; Watts, 2005) have similarly shown that increases in teaching of literacy and numeracy has resulted in less time for the arts: “in some cases the [art] curriculum available has been cut in half” (Hernes, p.222). McKean (2001) reported these consequences for arts education:

When presented with ideas for in-depth study in the arts, a common query was “Who has a whole morning to devote to the arts?” In addition, the teachers all expressed a feeling of being pulled in too many directions. The addition of new state standards and assessments in areas of reading, writing, and mathematics and the public pressure for performance created a real and deeply felt need for more professional preparation and for additional time spent on curriculum and instructional development in those areas. (p.29)

It is significant that the teacher thought that “a whole morning devoted to the arts” was needed to accommodate the inclusion of aesthetics, art criticism and art history in an art lesson. Kindler (1992) also warned that “any expansion of those within the framework of this course would result in a dramatic decrease in time devoted to studio practice” (p.346). Her solution was to teach these aspects of the visual arts curriculum separate from the studio lesson. Other teachers, however, such as Brigstock (1996), have successfully incorporated discussions of visual artworks into the introduction to studio work, without significantly expanding the time of the lesson.

Boyd (1993) and Best (1995) argued that time-constraints on the visual arts have been compounded by the grouping of The Arts into one learning area:

Historically, art and music held two of the timetabling and syllabus content slots within primary and secondary schools. Within the new implied curriculum structure, the ‘arts’ share only one-eighth of the offerings between them .... A rivalry is developing between the arts disciplines, instead of unity. (Boyd, p.46)

While Wright and Pascoe (2004) have welcomed the fact that “the silos of isolation ... are breaking down” (p.115), there are concerns that teachers may infer that, as long as some areas of the arts are being taught, the others can be neglected (Smith, 1995).

In WA, the Senior Curriculum Officer stated, “The kind of phrase we use [to teachers] is ‘some of the arts all of the time and all of the arts some of the time’”. To support this

approach, the WA Arts Accord Affiliation published a teacher's guide for integrating the arts into primary school programmes (Fantasia, 1997). This outlined programmes of work that ensured "that children experience at least three art forms" (p.25). While the programmes succeeded admirably in demonstrating the creativity of this inclusive approach to teaching the arts, art educationalist could regard some of the results as problematic. The four week programme on "Family and Friends" for Y1 students, for example, included drama, dance and music, but not the visual arts. An early childhood learning programme based on the WA Curriculum Framework, which excludes art for four weeks, offers a marked contrasts with the weekly 90 minutes recommended by the K-7 Syllabus.

#### Lack of resources

Even if time is found for an expanded visual arts curriculum based on DBAE principles, teachers require additional resources such as reproductions of artists' work and reference books, as well as studio equipment (Kindler, 1992). While Duck's (1987) study found that primary class-teachers were not generally dissatisfied with the art resources in their schools, this has not been the finding in later studies. Boyd (1993), for example, found that teachers in Queensland were reluctant to implement change when it was perceived that materials and equipment were not adequate for the task. Emery (1994), McKean (2001), and Downing (2005) have both argued that funding cut-backs in education have meant that lack of resources remains a significant problem for teachers in Australia, the USA, and Britain. Anecdotal evidence suggests that WA teachers have suffered similar problems. In this study, Southfield, for example, recently had its art allocation cut in half [teacher interview].

#### Students' views on art education: "feelings of isolation, vulnerability and inadequacy"

Teachers who wish to emphasise expression in the art education programmes may sense that students are reluctant to make revealing, personal visual statement. Holt (1995) found that, while junior primary children enjoyed art education, middle and senior primary students were afraid to expose themselves to ridicule by expressing their ideas visually.

Moreover, Hurwitz and Madeja, (1989) and McKeon (1994) were concerned that children would particularly not want to express their ideas through tutored images. Adopting the roles of artist, critic, historian and aesthician were neither realistic goals, nor relevant to children's interests. Teachers' concerns with students' lack of

interest in visual artworks was reflected in Galbraith (1991) and Brown (1997)'s studies of pre-service class teachers and practicing visual arts specialist teachers.

DBAE advocates have argued, however, that primary children are both interested in, and capable of engaging in, discussions of visual artworks in order to inform and inspire visual-expression (Batchel-Nash, 1985; Day 1987; Bowker & Sawyer, 1988; Linderstrom, 1994). Furthermore, discussions based on DBAE principles have been found to increase the qualities of individuality and expression in students' work (Brown, 2000). Philips, Sanders and Barlow (1996) noted, however, that evidence in Hawaii indicated that "multi-ethnic children with strong cultural ties might be more sensitive and responsive to a DBAE approach than their peers in more homogeneous schools" (p.3).

The ethos of the school: "positive perceptions about art education decline"

The ethos of the school has been recognised as an important factor in influencing the successful adoption and implementation of curriculum policy (Giacquinta, 1973; Vandenberghe, 1981; Greer, 1984; March, 1986; Ernest, 1989; Charlesworth et al., 1993; Perry, 1995; Taggart, Browne & Alexander, 1995; McKean, 2001). Welch's (1996) study of pre-service teachers described the frequent conflict between the culture of a school and university visual arts programmes. When this conflict occurred, it was the influence of the school that appeared paramount: "As in-service experience increases and teachers become inducted into the ethos of the school, positive perceptions about art education decline" (p.81).

Bresler (1992) noted the powerful influence of other aspects of the school context:

the open-endedness, self-expression, and creativity, which teachers highlight in their views of art, are incompatible with school's omnipresent practice of evaluation and the production of accountable results. Equally unacceptable in school is the expression of individual feelings and emotions (especially when noisy). The school aim is to shape and mold these feelings (at least the outward manifestations) rather than nurture and promote them. (p.411)

Bresler further described the clash when art was integrated with subjects which are seen to require more structured learning patterns: "As we observe time and time again, the unique, exploratory aspects of art are given up in favor of the disciplined aspects of school" (p.411).

#### The principal's support: "he failed to notice"

The principal's support has also been seen to be crucial in the direction of teachers' programmes (Vandenberghe, 1981; Fullan, 1982; Ellett, 1986; Hatch & Freeman, 1988; Evans, 1997; Slavin & Crespin, 2000). Teachers and principals, however, do not always agree on the aims and practice of their teaching programmes. Check (2002) described how, during a colour-mixing art lesson, his principal had praised one of his (Check's) primary students for neatness while denigrating the messy nature of another student's work: "He failed to notice that the messy student understood color mixing and the neat student's sheet was incorrect" (p.52).

When there is conflict with the principal concerning the aims of education, a teacher can be under considerable stress. Hitz and Wright, (1988) found that "kindergarten teachers ... agreed that major blocks of time should be devoted to free play, but a majority of principals demurred" (p.30). Because of the pressure from their principals and supervisors to be more academic in their teaching, Hatch and Freeman's (1988) study found that more than half the teachers they interviewed argued that "the reality of what they were doing day to day was in direct conflict with their professed beliefs about what young children need in school contexts" (p.159).

#### The broader school community: "proof that they in fact did something"

As well as teaching within the school, teachers work within the context of the school's neighbourhood (Walberg, 1987). Sevigny (1989) singled out community support as a major factor in the successful implementation of DBAE ideas. While Zimmerman's (1994) study in the USA showed evidence of an increase in the status of the visual arts in primary schools in the last three decades, Duck (1987) found that most Queensland teachers and principals did not receive sufficient community support to enable them to teach art effectively. Barnes (1987) described how parents' expectation of an artistic end-product to take home began when their children started playgroup. Parents wanted "proof that they in fact did something with their play" (p.33).

#### **4.4.3 Summary**

The large body of research in relation to teachers' ecological and personal constraints indicates the importance attached to these constraints in influencing teaching-practice. Two major studies in primary art education, Rafferty, (1987) and Bresler (1992) argued that teachers were so overwhelmed by the context within which they worked, that they taught art in a uniformly prescriptive way. Eisner (200b) summarised it in this way:

We have teacher education programs that require no preparation in arts education on the part of prospective elementary school teachers; there are no arts consultants in school districts to assist these teachers; few curricula are available; and there is little time to teach the arts. If one wanted to concoct a recipe for educational disaster in the arts, it would be difficult to imagine more deleterious conditions. (p.6)

Although in Australia teachers education programmes offer preparation in art education and teachers have support through arts consultants and curriculum documents, this study does not dispute that teachers perceive themselves as acting under considerable constraints, and that the pressures from these constraints are real and immediate. However, it is argued here, that teachers respond to such constraints in different ways, and that these differences cannot be explained in terms of the constraints themselves.

Fransila's (1989) found that, despite a supportive environment, only a third of her staff in a Canadian elementary school implemented a new state art programme based on DBAE principles; a third did not implement it; and a third implemented it partially. Although all teachers identified the same practical factors as important for influencing their decisions regarding implementation of the new programme, Fransila was puzzled to discover that:

... the same identified requisites for implementation in this school context were not acted upon by the teachers in the same way. For example, the teachers all wanted practical art implementation workshops, but in fact the non-implementers did not attend them, and although all teachers wanted a supportive principal, the non-implementers did not solicit her help or rejected help when it was offered. (p.138)

Although she did not explore the issue, Fransila surmised that it might have been her teachers' beliefs rather than their teaching constraints, which had most influenced their willingness to implement the new art curriculum programme.

#### **4.5 Teachers' beliefs**

The literature on teachers' beliefs offers a potential insight into the question as to why teachers, faced with the same constraints and curriculum advice, differ in their teaching programmes regarding expression in art education. As Charlesworth et al. (1993) argued, "To understand the guiding theory that determine teachers' decisions in



planning, teaching, and assessing, we need to understand what teachers believe to be important and what they believe to not be important” (p.256).

Beliefs can be held at many levels of coherence and consciousness. It will be argued here, however, that many studies conflate avowed beliefs with implicit theories, and fail to take account of the effect of one on the other. In order to clarify these important distinctions between beliefs, four different terms will be adopted in this study: *philosophies*, *ideologies*, *implicit beliefs* and *implicit theories*.

#### **4.5.1 The relationship of teachers’ beliefs to philosophies of art education**

In the previous chapter there was a discussion of the conscious and coherent belief systems that dominate the debate in the literature on expression in art education. These beliefs were termed *philosophies*. Studies such as those by Elbaz (1981), Chapman (1990) and Mims and Lankford (1995), have shown that teachers tend to regard such philosophies as both remote and inconsequential. Smith (1996) discussed how, as an art specialist teacher, “the ‘aesthetic movement’ never actually reached me in my predoctoral art classroom, and there seemed no incentive to uncover what on earth a few vague articles about it in *Art Education* might mean in practice” (p.211). Hargreaves (1984) found that primary class-teachers, when discussing new curriculum directions at staff-meetings, reacted with hostility to the ideas of educational theorists. The teachers preferred to portray themselves as pragmatic and down-to-earth, and were anxious to anchor discussions to their own personal classroom experiences rather than theoretical principles.

Teachers, however, do hold opinions, consciously or unconsciously, on the value or otherwise of art education. The conscious legitimations for their practice, form what will be termed the teacher’s *ideology*. The term ‘ideology’, however, is contested. There is disagreement as to whether ideology is rooted in reality or irrationality (Rozycki, 1999; McLeish, 1993). In this study, that variable will be investigated. In some cases, teachers’ ideologies might be purely rhetorical, but in others they may relate closely to practice. Because of this, the Marxist use of ideology solely as a derogatory term for camouflaging reality (Bullock, Stallybrass and Trombley, 1988) will not be employed.

As well as ideologies, teachers may have unconscious *implicit beliefs*, which may be in accordance with, or in contradiction to their ideologies. Implicit beliefs may be unarticulated because they are perceived as commonsense, or remain so deeply

embedded that they are unrecognised by the teacher. It will be argued that, because of this, implicit beliefs have a powerful impact on practice. Thus they are implicit both in the sense of “implied but not fully expressed” and also as “absolute and unquestioning” (Allen, 1990, p.592).

#### **4.5.2 Ideologies**

Ernest (1989) argued that strongly held conscious beliefs or ideologies are likely to lead to congruence in theory and practice. He believed that teachers who hold strong conscious beliefs in the child-centred concept of self-expression, for example, tend to embrace child-centred art educational practice. It would, indeed, seem likely that teacher’s ideologies on the nature of child development, the relative importance of teaching visual arts skills and concepts, and the extent to which the visual arts should service other subject areas, would all influence their interpretation of the form and position of expression in their art education programmes.

##### Teachers’ ideologies

As has already been discussed, there is little evidence that child-centred art has found its way into many primary school classrooms. Yet teachers’ ideologies are strongly supportive of child-centred ideas of self-expression. Tignor (1985), Stokrocki (1991), Kindler (1992) and Jeffers (1996) found, in their studies of American elementary visual art specialist teachers, that fostering creativity and problem-solving ranked very highly as a purpose in art education. Studies of primary teachers in Britain, America and Australia (Clements, 1994; McKean, 2001; Ashton, 2002; Downing, 2005) showed that most teachers’ ideologies similarly focused on child-centred ideas of self-expression: “Perceptions of creativity, special ability, and talent pervade teachers’ beliefs concerning what is required for participation in the arts” (McKean, p.30). McArdle and Piscitelli (2002) argued that in early childhood art education “the old slogan ‘the process is more important than the product’ dominates teachers’ philosophies” (p.12). Boyd (1993) and Duncum (1999) argued that teachers had similar ideologies in Australia.

##### The “chasm between teachers’ advocacies on the one hand, and classroom practices on the other”

Evidence from studies, such as Bushan (1986), Spindell-Rusher et al. (1992), Jeffers (1994), and Bick and Kember (2004), however, suggest that teachers’ ideologies about art education, may have little effect on teaching-practice. Bresler’s (1992) study of K-3 teachers’ values and visions for art education found that there was “a chasm between

teachers' advocacies on the one hand, and classroom practices on the other" (Bresler, p.397). Rafferty (1987) similarly found that the six teachers in her study (grades 1-6), while advocating the importance of experimental art-activities, overwhelmingly favoured structured activities in practice.

Apple's (1993) US survey of elementary teachers investigated whether teachers regarded art as unimportant – merely a frill. She found that “based solely on teachers' attitudes as reported in the surveys, art cannot be regarded as a frill. However, when the amount of time, in general, art receives, and the clear lack of activities dealing with the study of art, are considered, it can be concluded that art is *treated* as a frill” (p.32). Puzzled by this paradox, Apple concluded that overwhelming constraints prevented teachers from giving art the priority they believed it deserved. Another explanation, however, may be that their statements of ideology were mainly rhetorical and thus disconnected from practice.

#### Reasons for the disparity between ideologies and practice

DiBlasio (1987) argued that ideologies easily became weakened in their impact on teaching-practice because “theories in general are subject to delusion, obfuscation and misinterpretation, losing much of their explanatory or directive function as they are applied more widely or as they expand into popular consciousness” (p.221). Coherent theories thus might become vaguely defined slogans, easily jettisoned to accommodate other criteria “in accordance with personal preferences, the pursuit of other school activities or the perceived receptivity of students”, thus leading to “conceptual drift” (p.226). In Hargreaves' (1984) study, for example, the teachers in the staffroom discussions never referred to the theoretical positions they had previously revealed as important during interviews. Like DiBlasio, Bresler and Rafferty noted that it was the vague nature of the teachers' advocacies, usually couched in very general terms of creativity and self-expression, that appeared to provide a weak shield to the encroachment of pressures from more valued learning areas.

It is, perhaps, relevant that Bresler's and Rafferty's studies focused on creativity and self-expression within art education. At school level, creativity and self-expression are concepts deeply entrenched in the rhetoric of art education. While Bresler observed that teachers in her study taught predominantly in a prescriptive way, “when I probed ... about their goals, and their motives behind the arts activities, they typically spoke of a change of pace, promoting creativity and the uniqueness of the child, and the expression of self and imagination” (p.403).

Bresler concluded that external pressures forced teachers “to give up an important part, perhaps their most cherished perception of art: expressivity and creativity .... Teachers and principals alike sense the loss and lament the imbalance” (p.412). However, as Efland (1976) explained, any study focusing on expression in art education, has to be particularly careful to study “the conflicts that arise between a rhetoric articulating the manifest functions and the latent functions which go unstated” (p.38). Bresler’s probe consisted of asking for each teacher’s general aim for art education. This may not have been a fine enough instrument to separate rhetoric from beliefs that influence action:

It is an arguable case that the most influential ideologies are not those formally acknowledged and publicly articulated, but rather those that are subliminally ingested as a part of general or professional socialization. We may be very much more ideological, given this broadened view, than we realize .... The ideologies that make a difference to those in schools – teachers and students – are those that permeate their activities on a daily basis. (Eisner, 1992b, pp.303-306)

Erikson (1995) agreed that “for every adopted classroom practice there are implicit philosophical assumptions” (p.502).

Rafferty’s study looked in detail at art education practice, but did not excavate the reasons behind the subtle distinctions in the non-child-centred approaches. DiBlasio also did not consider whether the conceptual drift she condemned, was not arbitrary, but instead, might have emanated from an attempt to reconcile implicit theories with teaching-practice. Studies of teachers’ beliefs regarding art education need to be examined in the light of this critical distinction between ideologies and implicit theories.

#### **4.5.3 Implicit theories**

Implicit beliefs are influenced by both personal and cultural perspectives and have a genesis in early experiences (Nevo & Bin Khader, 1995; Chan & Chan, 1999; Grauer, 1999). Despite being often unconscious, implicit beliefs provide important frames of reference through which we interpret the context within which we live and work (Rowe, 2005). “As individuals we interpret and reinterpret our own experiences, reconstructing our past in accordance with present ideas of importance” (Schoonmaker, 2000, pp.310-311).

In some cases, implicit theories may be in accord with, and fully merged with ideologies. Combined, ideologies and implicit theories could be expected to act as a

powerful force for action. It will be argued here, however, that they are often distinct and separate, and that, unlike ideologies, implicit theories have a strong influence on practice.

### Teachers' implicit theories

Kagan (1992) argued that teachers in particular need to construct implicit theories because “the most significant characteristic of classroom teaching is its many uncertainties .... In a landscape without bearings, teachers create and internalize their own maps” (p.80). Teachers' implicit theories, therefore, have been defined by Charlesworth et al. (1993) as “ideas about instruction that teachers develop from their personal experience and practical knowledge” (p.256); and by Collins and Sandell (2000), as “the intuitive methods by which ... [teaching] content has been determined” (p.367). Because of this dynamic relationship between beliefs, practical knowledge and teaching content, Plucker and Runco (1998) described the study of teachers' implicit theories as “perhaps the most exciting development in recent years, both in creativity measurement and the social sciences in general” (p.36).

### The strength of teachers' implicit theories

Thomas and Pedersen (2003) argued that teachers' implicit theories regarding teaching begin to form during their childhood experiences in schools. They appear to be stable and resistant to change, even before teachers begin their pre-service studies (Buchman & Schewille, 1983; Kagan, 1992; Pankratius & Young, 1995; Wilson, 1996; Joram & Gabrielle, 1998; Nettle, 1998). As Galbraith (1991) explained, pre-service teachers:

felt they already possessed understanding of what art teaching comprised ...[even though] the demographic data collected overall suggested that the majority of the student-teachers had very limited art backgrounds. Their understanding of art was vaguely grounded in their primary experience. (p.333)

Thomas and Pedersen (2003), described how pre-service teachers' implicit theories acted as a filter for new information: “Content and experiences confirming their pre-existing schemata are embraced, while those that do not are ignored, or perhaps more accurately, politely suffered through and then discounted” (p.319). Thomas and Pedersen concluded that “if, metaphorically speaking, students come to our classes to build a house, and they enter the classroom having already framed, roofed, and finished

their house, we can influence the color scheme and the floor coverings – but can do little to change their prebuilt house. So it is with teaching” (p.329).

Eisnehart, Shrum, Harding and Cuthbert (1988) found that “some teachers’ beliefs tend to remain stable through time, regardless of teaching experience, location or level” (p.67). The reason for this was that “belief systems limit dissonance, contradiction, and chaos. These systems thereby take on an appealing, compelling, or emotionally-laden dimensions, and individuals are reluctant to give up their beliefs because of the cognitive disorder that would seem to follow from the disbelief” (p.54). Furthermore, as Eisner (1992b) pointed out, “The less visible an ideology is, the more insidious it can be, for in that form, it often eludes scrutiny” (pp.304-305).

#### The relationship between teachers’ implicit theories and teaching-practice

Early studies on implicit theories in education found a strong relationship between teachers’ implicit theories and teaching-practice (Bussis et al., 1976; King, 1978; Elbaz, 1981; Bunting, 1984; Kimpston, 1985; and Yonemura, 1986). Isenberg (1990) concluded that “understanding theories and teachers’ belief systems helps to explain the variations in practice that appear across individual teachers” (p.324).

Later studies have also supported Spidell, Rusher, McGrevin, and Lambiotte’s (1992) finding “that what teachers believe seems to become reality in the classroom” (p.279). These include: Gray & MacGregor (1991), Pajares (1992), Doolittle, Dodds and Placek (1993), Anderson and McRorie (1997), McMahon, Richmond and Reeves-Kazelskis (1998), Patrick, Anderson, Ryan, Edelin and Midgley (2001). As Charlesworth et al. (1993) stated, “Although all of us developed or adopted different measures, we have come up with similar supportive findings” (p.256). In the study by Stipek, Daniels, Galluzzo, and Milburn (1992), teachers’ beliefs were found to be not only strongly influential, but more influential than other factors: “Teachers’ beliefs about appropriate education for young children were associated with the kind of program they taught in, but teachers’ levels of education and experience, and school policies regarding formal evaluation, retention, and testing were not” (p.1).

There have, nevertheless, been very few studies of the relationship between teachers’ implicit theories about art education and teaching-practice, and most of these have focused on art specialist teachers. Findings, however, have been similar to those in general education. Gray and MacGregor (1991), for example, concluding that “to hire a teacher is to hire a curriculum” (p.286).

### Implicit theories antagonistic to child-centred art education

Art educationalists have sought to explain why teachers' predominantly child-centred ideologies appear to be matched with predetermined art. It might be that, separate and distinct from their ideologies, teachers' implicit theories are more in sympathy with the structured approaches of predetermined art than with the "open community of enquiry" (Haynes, 2001, p.13) required for child-centred teaching.

Haynes (2002) considered that teachers' "fear of losing control" has contributed to a reduction in creativity in arts education programmes in WA. This has been supported by other studies. In the USA, Galbraith (1991), and Metcalf & Smith-Shank (2001) found that a fear of loss of control dominated pre-service teachers: "Ambiguity disturbs them. Multiple right answers and multiple points-of-view create anxiety. But ambiguity and multiple right answers are directly related to the process of creating art and creating meanings about art" (Metcalf and Smith-Shank, p.48). Check (2002) described similar fears amongst practicing primary class-teachers: "Many of the teachers were afraid of art ... They were afraid to do anything where they could not control the outcome" (p.53).

The concerns expressed by pre-service and practicing teachers over control of their students, link closely to the assumption underlying mimetic behaviourism: that there are inherent dangers in encouraging individuality. If primary children are seen to need careful control and supervision in order to avoid chaos, it is possible that this implicit belief will have more power to influence practice than an ideology promoting self-expression and creativity.

### Implicit theories antagonistic to visual-expression through tutored images

DBAE emphasises the centrality of the study of visual artworks in art education. It has already been discussed how studies have shown that many primary teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach aesthetics, art criticism and art history. Teachers, principals and parents in studies in both America (Anglin, 1990; Galbraith, 1991; Zimmerman, 1994; Short, 1995; Jeffers, 1996), and Australia (Darby, 1986; Boyd, 1993), however, generally do not perceive this lack of knowledge about aesthetics, art criticism and art history to be a problem, presumably because they do not feel it to be an essential part of the art curriculum.

Similarly, while teachers may recognise their lack of knowledge of artists' work, they also appear uninterested in rectifying the situation (Brown, 1997; Clarke, 1997; Slavin

& Crespin, 2000). Occasionally they appear antagonistic. Zimmerman (1994) described an American mentor-teacher's comment on a pre-service teacher's discussion of visual artworks: "Enough talking, let's get on with making something" (p.63).

Allen (1994) complained that, even on the rare occasions when visual artworks were used as a stimulus for expression, teachers' choices of image indicated an adherence to child-centred beliefs about the nature of art: "French Impressionists and Post-Impressionist painting .... The use of these images is equally dominated by a tendency to link the expressiveness of the individual artist with the accessibly innovative formal innovations – hence the attraction of Van Gogh: madness and mark-making" (p.136).

Collins and Sandell (2000), McArdle and Piscitelli (2002), and Ashton (2002) argued that it was precisely this adherence to child-centred ideas of art education which underlay teachers' reluctance to implement DBAE methods of teaching. Clement (1994) regarded the resistance as "understandable, given the history of the teaching of art in primary schools and the almost solitary emphasis upon its enjoyable and therapeutic elements" (p.12). Marché (2002) agreed that opposition to DBAE modes of teaching was influenced by "entrenched creativity models viewed by practitioners as more fitting for subjects like art and music [than a discipline-centred curriculum]" (p.32).

As Spindell et al. (1992) commented, there is a great divide between:

those who are close to the problem of managing children (teachers and principals) and those who are distant from them (district or state administrators). This line of research suggests that principals maintain a belief system about teaching similar to classroom teachers and that it differs from policymakers who are not directly associated with students. (p.280)

Although the study of visual artworks appears to be very rare in primary schools, there has been evidence that teachers' implicit theories sometimes align with DBAE through a study of aesthetics, although without the use of visual artworks. In her study of primary teachers' views on drawing, Ashton (1999) found that teachers' implicit theories were revealed through teachers informal discussions amongst themselves. She described the dominant philosophy as "the (re)iterative power of aesthetic discourses, which surfaced in mutant form in talk in my participants" (p.51). This "mutant form" of DBAE differed from those child-centred ideologies espoused during more formal questioning: "The most noticeable pre-research philosophical alignments were with creativity-oriented non-interventionist pedagogy. Ironically the participants' collective



repertoire of art teaching strategies more closely resembled mutant forms of ‘disciplined’ (DBAE) activity” p.49.

### Implicit theories related to contextualism

There are indications that reconstructionist contextualism does not resonate with primary teachers’ implicit theories. One teacher’s letter to *Art Education*, for example, complained that recent reconstructionist articles were “turning towards multicultural concerns and socio-political issues, and away from aesthetic concerns” (Michael, 2000, p.5). Another requested that future writers should “leave contextual concern about clay objects to cultural anthropologists and let’s all get back to the sandbox” (Lloyd, 2000, p.5). Smith (1985) similarly found that teachers in Queensland were “hardly an activist body awaiting the right conditions to ... emancipate themselves and working class kids” (p.147). A general lack of teachers’ interest in reconstructionism caused Hicks (2001) to complain, “Has the consciousness and attitude of the public changed regarding the importance of art and visual imagery? No! .... School boards and administrations are on the same level” (p.6).

Smith (2002c) sought to explain teachers’ antipathy to reconstructionist contextualism by arguing that most teachers simply do not see their role as social reformers:

Postmodern theory casts the teacher in the role of social reformer. But in asking teachers to assume this role, theorists may be asking them to perform a task they are unable or unwilling to undertake ... Nor ... is it obvious that the function of the school is primarily social reform and reconstruction. (p.35)

While most primary teachers may feel out of sympathy with reconstructionist contextualism, it has already been described how teachers often use art education in a pragmatic contextualist way. Lehman (2000) argued that this was because of certain deep-seated assumptions: “Because of the prominence of the arts in popular culture, together with a pervasive confusion between art and entertainment, arts education often is considered not as one of the core disciplines of the curriculum, but rather as a recreational activity – enjoyable but not essential” (p.21). In Apple’s (1993) study, teachers’ ideologies stated that art was not a frill, but their actions implied that it was. It might be that their ideologies were mainly rhetoric, and their implicit beliefs were in sympathy with those of the teachers described by Bamford (1999). These teachers relegated art “to the late afternoon session when sedation and time filling become the teacher’s main motive for engaging the children in art” (p.27). In WA, the Senior

Curriculum Officer for the Arts explained that “there are lots of decision makers in schools, parents groups, principals and other teachers who don’t actually believe what we believe, that the arts are part of the essential world of all kids and therefore part of the essential curriculum”.

#### **4.5.4 Classifying teachers’ belief systems**

There has been some debate as to the way in which teachers’ beliefs can be grouped and classified, both in art education and general education. Dewey argued that teachers’ beliefs consisted of two inversely related components: traditional and progressive beliefs. Spidell et al.’s (1992) study of American elementary teachers’ general aims and beliefs also found “two contrasting belief systems about the nature of learning: the behaviorist and the phenomenological views of mankind” (p.279), the latter, in art education, being representative of child-centred art education.

Similar clear and limited categories have been found in art education. In their critique of studies on “what constitutes the outlooks and activities of art teachers” (p.281), Gray and MacGregor (1991) described how Princic (1968) was surprised that, in her study of three secondary art teachers’ instructional approaches, each teacher’s conception of the curriculum and teaching style fitted neatly into three of the categories ascribed by Eisner and Vallance (1974). These categories were: curriculum as technology (centred on predetermined art); curriculum as self-actualization (centred on self-expression); and curriculum as cognitive process (centred on tutored images).

Other educational theorists, such as Bunting (1984), have argued that there has been a gradual recognition that teachers’ beliefs are multidimensional: “While teachers may generally be classified as either progressive or traditional, there is sufficient belief sharing among individuals from the two groups to prohibit the extreme bipolar patterning, producing instead multiple dimensions of belief” (p.195).

At the start of this study, it was regarded as unlikely that the non-specialist primary teachers would have developed such a marked and consistent art education beliefs as Princic’s three experienced secondary art specialist teachers. Even an educationalist with extensive knowledge such as Villeneuve (2002), admitted to being confused, when, at a conference dinner:

... my new acquaintance asked, “But what is it you believe in?” My mind raced, and for a moment I wished to be back in graduate school. I was so certain of the answer back then – and the answer was so short. DBAE. I

pushed aside my umbrella drink and tried to explain the growing uncertainty that I have experienced since becoming editor of Art Education.

It is also unclear as to how teachers respond to different philosophical positions. As Dorn (2000) argued:

Anyone claiming to know what art education has been all about in American schools over this past century is probably faking it. Even though I have seen nearly three-fourths of it as student, teacher, and art administrator, I have serious doubts that what we find chronicled in the literature is a true indication of what every art teacher across this land was about over the past one hundred years. (p.17)

Anderson and McRorie (1997), Jeffers (1999) and Stankiewicz (2000) argued that “all elements are necessary for art education” (Stankiewicz, p.301). Uhrmacher (1993) also encouraged an eclectic approach: “One does not need to be ideologically pure in order to do good curriculum work” (p.5). Nevertheless, Uhrmacher found it useful to employ categories when analysing teachers’ art education philosophies, with this proviso:

I remind the reader that few people actually wear the labels I describe. These conceptualisations are useful in helping one better articulate a set of assumptions and core values. They help us to see the implications of a particular viewpoint. They also help us to understand issues and concerns that may otherwise be neglected. Sometimes ideologies are specified in mission statements or some other kind of manifesto; at other times, ideologies are embedded in educational practice but are not made explicit. (p.5)

This study takes a similar approach to that of Uhrmacher. The four art educational philosophies (mimetic-behaviourist, child-centred, DBAE, and contextualist) outlined in the theoretical framework, act as Weberian ideal-type models (McLeish, 1993), and are useful in analysing and broadly locating teachers’ philosophies of art education.

#### **4.5.5 Summary**

Teachers’ beliefs regarding expression in art education can be manifested in three ways: through a teaching philosophy, through an ideology or through implicit theories. The same ideas regarding expression in art education may be found at any of these sites, but at each site, the ideas will perform a different function. Ideas at the level of art education philosophies are systematic and coherent articulations of opinions and are

closely related to the teaching approaches they advocate. Ideas at the level of ideologies are less coherent and inter-connected, and may or may not be a basis for practice. Ideas as implicit theories are the values and goals, which, while guiding practice, are frequently taken for granted as if they were only pragmatic responses to teaching circumstances.

A review of the literature on teachers' beliefs indicates that most primary teachers' ideologies about visual-expression are strongly aligned with child-centred ideas of self-expression. These ideologies, however, do not correspond with what is happening in teaching-practice, which is predominantly didactic. There have been several explanations offered for this disparity between theory and practice at school level. Rafferty (1987) and Bresler (1992), for example, claimed that the dominant school approach of prescribed teaching overwhelmed teachers' resolve to nurture self-expression. It has been argued here, however, that these two studies did not examine the subtle distinctions and implied structures underlying teachers' descriptions of teaching-practice and preferences – their implicit theories. Studies have shown that implicit theories are formed early, are strong, are resistant to change, and have a direct influence on the way teachers select and discard aspects of the curriculum. When teachers' implicit theories are at variance with their ideologies, it is likely that it causes ideology to become rhetorical rather than rooted in practice, thus helping to explain the disparity between teachers' ideologies and their teaching-practice.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to compare the dominant theories of expression in art education with teaching-practice in primary schools, and to search for reasons for any discrepancies between the two. Three points have arisen which are of particular relevance to this study.

First, there are indications that the importance given to expression in theory may not be reflected in practice. Studies have shown that this disparity is manifested in the lack of expressive content in many primary teachers' visual arts teaching programmes, and in the marginalisation of the visual arts as it becomes a handmaiden of other subject areas. Secondly, while teachers' personal and ecological constraints may inhibit the use of expression in the operational curriculum, these factors do not explain why there are variations in teaching-practice within similar teaching constraints. Thirdly, studies have indicated that teachers' implicit beliefs may be a key factor in explaining this

phenomenon. While teachers' ideologies about education seem to have little relationship with teaching practice, teachers' implicit theories appear to relate much more closely.

In the next four chapters data from the teachers interviewed in this study will be presented concerning their beliefs about visual-expression. The focus will be on the implicit theories that, while "implied but not fully expressed" (Allen, 1990, p.592), appear to strongly influence their teaching practice regarding expression in art education. At the beginning of the study, it was anticipated that teachers would have an eclectic range of implicit beliefs about expression in art education. It was found, however, that there was a surprising consistency and coherence in these beliefs, so that teachers could be grouped according to the art education philosophy with which they most closely aligned. The extent to which teachers aligned with any of the major art education philosophies was partly manifested in the way they characterised their teaching practice. More directly, it was reflected in the expression of their teaching aims given in response to repeated but supportive questioning about their teaching practice.

There were, nevertheless, significant distinctions between teachers' views and those found in the theoretical debate. This is reflected in the different terms used to differentiate teachers' implicit theories and teaching approaches from art education philosophies (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4 *Terminology used in this study for teachers' implicit theories*

Art Education philosophy	Teachers' implicit theory
Mimetic behaviourism	Predetermined art education [PAE]
Child-centred Art Education	Individualistic-expressive art education [IEAE]
Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE)	Art as Expertise [AAE] (Wolf, 1992, p.953)
Contextualism	Instrumental art education [IAE]

Table 5 *Teachers grouped according to their implicit theories*

*Predetermined art education (PAE)*

Grade	Name	School
PP	Mary	Northfield
PP	Wendy	Southfield
Pre-Y1	Mavis	Southfield
1	Jane	Northfield
2	Ann	Northfield
3/4	Belinda	Northfield
7	Dorothy	Southfield

*Individual-expressive art education (IEAE)*

Grade	Name	School
2	Alan	Northfield
3	Fiona	Northfield
5	Sally	Southfield
5/6	Phil	Southfield
6	Daniel	Southfield

*Art as expertise (AAE)*

Grade	Name	School
4	Andrea	Northfield
5	Linda	Northfield
7	Ken	Southfield

*Instrumental art education (IAE)*

Grade	Name	School
1	Mavis	Southfield
2/3	Moira	Southfield
4	Laura	Southfield
5	Janice	Northfield

The aim of grouping teachers into like philosophies was (i) to explore common themes which emerged from their thoughts and views on expression in art education; (ii) to use the insights provided by an understanding of art education philosophies in the analysis of those themes, and (iii) to reflect on the implications for expression of the preferred art teaching approaches within each category. The purpose, here, was not only to see how teachers' beliefs related to the four philosophies, but also to see what practices it

created. As Haynes (2004b) stated, “To inhabit one of these paradigms as a way of seeing the world will have implications for one’s teaching practices, for what one punishes or ignores, for what one notices and praises and corrects” (p.32). A further purpose was to see how teachers’ beliefs differed from those envisaged by theorists. Plucker and Runco (1998) found in their studies of general creativity that “thoughts and actions are guided by personal definitions of creativity and beliefs about how to foster and evaluate creativity that may be very different from the theories developed by creativity experts” (p.36).

In the Predetermined Art Education and Individualistic-expressive Art Education chapters that follow, there are two teacher-profiles in each chapter. This is because in these groups, there were marked variations in teaching approaches, and two teacher-profiles were needed to explore these differences. In the Art as Expertise, and the Instrumental Art Education chapters, the teaching variations seemed to be clustered much more closely around one core approach, and so a single teacher-profile was used. Although all the teachers in this study aligned to some extent with a category within the theoretical framework, they each had significant variations within their aims and teaching approaches. Variations are not only discussed fully in the teacher-profiles, but also in the themes arising from the data, at the end of each chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Predetermined Art Education: Findings on teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

The aim of this chapter is to examine the teaching practices and understand the implicit beliefs of the Predetermined Art Education (PAE) teachers in this study, so as to show how they relate to, and deviate from, the core ideas of mimetic behaviourism. Although it will be shown that there are strong links between the ideas of these teachers and mimetic behaviourism, there are also significant differences. These differences will be recognised by the use of a separate term for their implicit theories: “predetermined art education” (PAE), and a separate term for their teaching approach: “predetermined art”. The important and significant differences within this group of teachers will also be explored.

First there will be an examination of the influence of the PAE teachers' beliefs on their planning and teaching, and secondly, the implications this had for expression in their art programmes. As teachers from both schools are included in all four data chapters, this chapter will begin with a general description of the teaching circumstances under which they all worked, before focusing on the PAE teachers.

#### **5.1 The teachers' working environment in Northfield and Southfield**

Northfield is an independent, non-denominational school, and Southfield is a government school. Northfield, the smaller of the two schools, had eight classes at the time of the interviews, compared with eleven at Southfield. Apart from these differences, the teaching conditions within the schools were very similar.

##### **5.1.1 “Low-income”**

The schools were geographically close, and their students shared similar lower socio-economic backgrounds. Laura (4S), a Southfield teacher, made this typical comment about the socio-economic profile of her students: “There'd be about four, I would say, on the poverty line [in my class], but the rest of them seem quite alright”. The principal of Northfield, Michael, stated that “fees are kept low because the parents simply cannot afford to pay higher fees”, and a former principal of the school, Dorothy (7N) confirmed this: “I'd fill in the paperwork. It was low income”.



### **5.1.2 School ethos**

Northfield students were encouraged to form friendships outside their own grades. The deputy-principal, Janice (5N) proudly stated, “That’s one thing about this school – there is much more interaction between age groups and generally caring”. There also appeared to be a lively and harmonious relationship between staff and students, with friendly banter during recess. The principal was proud to say that his was a very “touchy-feely school”. There was more formality in the relationships between students and teachers at Southfield, but there was a similar warm and welcoming atmosphere within the school. When I came on initial visits, students answered questions with polite friendliness. The atmosphere in both staffrooms was initially a little wary, but soon became more open and inclusive.

### **5.1.3 The schools’ attitude to art education was that it was “fun”**

“Other than the teacher who teaches visual art, the principal is the most important figure for the delivery of art instruction in the school” (Luehrman, 2002, p.197). The principal of Northfield, Michael, arranged access to the school for this study, and discussed the school’s policy towards the visual arts. At Southfield, it was the deputy-principal, Mavis (1S), who took on this role, with the approval and support of her principal. Both Michael and Mavis emphasised their commitment to promoting high standards in art education. Their confidence in the high standard of art in their schools had influenced their decision to be included in this study. While Mavis emphasised that “not everybody’s strength is art”, both singled out teachers who were particularly gifted in teaching art. They also proudly pointed out attractive displays of exemplary students’ artwork in the schools’ reception areas, offices and corridors. Michael discussed a recent visit to a prestigious independent school, where he had been surprised that so little of the students’ artwork was on display: “I think that reflects poorly on the school”.

In both schools, pre-primary teachers provided some form of art-activity for their students on a daily basis. Other grades were timetabled for art once a week, occasionally more often. The time schedule for art was between 30 and 60 minutes, a range apparently typical in elementary schools in North America (Bresler, 1992; Leshnoff, 1999). While art was regarded as an integral part of each school’s curriculum, it was deemed to be of less importance than most other subjects. Art in-services, for example, were referred to by both Michael and Mavis as “fun in-services”, and were seen as a reward for the staff’s previous hard work.

McKean (2001) described how, in the USA, the arts were last on most schools' agendas for curriculum change. This was reflected in this study. When addressing the need for an outcomes approach following the introduction of the WA Curriculum Framework, both schools decided to leave the Arts until last. The teachers had been informed of the broad outcomes required in the Arts, but it had not been looked at in any detail because, as Moira (2/3S) commented, "we're so busy trying to put the maths ones into practice". When the schools radically changed the student report forms in line with the new outcomes approach, art was the only subject to retain what Jane (1N) called "the old tick-box system". Belinda (3/4S) described how this covered "creativity, imagination, skills .... and then an attitude box". The SCO recognised that: "Arts in many schools is lower priority, compared with other learning areas, and the reality is that there is not an equal take-up [of ideas from the Curriculum Framework]".

Parents in both schools were reported as sharing the view of art as a low priority subject. Linda, (6N) explained that at parents' evenings, "They never really ask much about the art"; and Belinda (3/4S) didn't "expect any of them to ask, only if they're maybe artists themselves".

#### **5.1.4 General teaching conditions**

Both school buildings were well-maintained, with large, well-stocked libraries. The pre-primary and Y1 classrooms were spacious, with easy access to water and sinks. The other grades' classrooms were more crowded, and could access sinks only outside the classroom. At Northfield, classrooms were small in size, so space was particularly cramped even though the classes tended to be smaller, having an average of 24 students compared with Southfield's 27.

Because of budget restrictions, art-materials were carefully monitored by the deputy-principals in both schools. The storerooms had a variety of paints, papers and drawing materials, but things regarded as less mainstream, such as clay and fabrics, were bought only on request. At Northfield the lack of resources was accepted with resignation, as part of the school's perennial budgetary problems. At Southfield, however, things had recently changed: "Our art budget has been cut in half. I think it went from \$5,000 to \$2,500, two years ago" (3/4S). Previously, teachers had easy access to the storeroom. Now, the deputy-principal distributed equipment to each class as required, and there was some resistance to this: "I prefer a central arts store which is being stocked and being fixed up all the time .... I don't like this [the present system]" (7S).

## 5.2 Introducing the PAE teachers

In this study, seven teachers strongly aligned with mimetic behaviourist beliefs about expression in art education, and predominantly used predetermined art approaches in their art programmes. They saw the main purpose of their art lessons as training their students in hand-eye co-ordination, while achieving a uniformly pleasing product.

In this chapter, a detailed teacher-profile of Dorothy (7N) and a detailed description of Mary's (PPN) teaching approach will be presented. This will be followed by an analysis of the themes that arose from these descriptions. In this analysis, data will also be used from the observed lesson and interviews with the other five PAE teachers: Wendy (PPS), Kirsty (PP/1S), Jane (1N), Ann (2S), and Belinda (3/4S). These five teachers' teaching approaches are summarised below.

### 5.2.1 Wendy (PPS): “a lot of crafty things”

Wendy's prime consideration in her teaching was “endless patience and love for the children .... I've seen lots of teachers that you think, ‘Oh, you don't really sense a real love for the kids’”. Wendy graduated as an early-childhood teacher (pre-primary to Y3) in 1975. After taking time off teaching for raising her children, she worked part-time at Southfield for three years, and was currently sharing the teaching of a class of 24 pre-primary students with another part-time teacher, Amy: “On Friday, we're both here and prepare for the next week, because the children don't come on Fridays”. The class had a full-time teaching assistant who was “quite happy to fit in with the routine”.

Wendy was rather self-effacing, and felt overwhelmed by the amount to be covered in the Curriculum Framework: “I feel ‘Oh God’ when I think about it”. She considered herself to be “not a particularly artistic person”, and was in awe of her more experienced colleague Amy, suggesting that it would have been more fruitful if the interview had taken place when Amy had been in school.

Despite feelings of low self-efficacy, Wendy recognised that conditions for making art in her spacious classroom were “fantastic”. None of the constraints outlined in the questionnaire applied to her. Her colleague, Amy, was resentful about the relinquishing of control over art supplies to the deputy-head, but Wendy was more sanguine: “I don't find it so hard”.

In pre-primary she didn't “really get into the academic side” of any subject: “In the upper-school ... I'd [lack] the background knowledge [for art] .... At the level we're at,

I'm happy to do it .... It's more, making things. I suppose it's more of a fun approach". Wendy's art lessons were planned around class-themes. Within these, she preferred to do "a lot of crafty things", using templates, teacher-samples and step-by-step procedures to ensure a uniform and pleasing end-product. She believed her students agreed with this preference. Wendy was not familiar with any of the WA art curriculum documents, and her art portfolio from her teacher-training had "long gone ... probably been eaten by silverfish". Her preference in reference art books was for those with lots of "crafty ideas" in them.

### **5.2.2 Kirsty (PP/1S): "freedom ... I don't think is a good thing really"**

Kirsty was an early childhood teacher who had been teaching for eleven years, nine of which had been at Southfield. Like Wendy, she had a spacious classroom with excellent facilities, and a full-time teaching-aide. She enjoyed the "freedom to programme" her teaching as she liked.

Although self-confident about her general teaching, Kirsty appeared worried about her lack of knowledge of the formal art curriculum. She flushed and appeared uncomfortable when asked whether she was familiar with the Arts Learning Area in the WA curriculum. When discussing her art teaching, however, she was much more relaxed and open.

Art was seen as integral to Kirsty's teaching programme: "In pre-primary, it's in every activity you do .... I do love art and I think the kids love the art too". In free-activities, "so long as they write their name on, they can paint freely". Students should not mix colours, however. This was frowned on as a bad habit learned at Kindergarten or day-care. Kirsty argued that pre-primary teachers needed to teach children self-discipline through structured, step-by-step lessons towards a common goal. This applied to art lessons as well as other learning areas.

When Kirsty taught small-group art-activities, she followed her class-theme. She liked familiar ideas: "If we are trying something new – a new theme – and we do things a different way, that's when we get caught out". None of the WA curriculum documents were used as a source of ideas. She used a book called "A World of Display", which had photographs of primary students' finished artworks to guide her. She was nonplussed, however, when her students did not react as she had predicted to the things she had chosen for them to make. "With some activities you think they'll love, they just

don't take to. Other ones that you can't see any rhyme or reason for them liking, they will".

Kirsty was aware that the teaching methods she used in her art-activities restricted her students' ability to express their own ideas, saying, rather wistfully, "You want them to produce individual work don't you, that shows a bit of their personality?" Her teaching practice, however, was strongly didactic, featuring teacher-samples, templates, and photocopied outlines for children to colour-in.

### **5.2.3 Jane (1N): "show them the finished article, and then show them stage by stage how to get there"**

Jane had been teaching for "fifteen years, with a big gap in the middle for children". She was in her eighth year at Northfield: "I started in Y5, and then Y2 ... and the last three years have been in Y1". She had a part-time teaching-aide, and used parental help for many of her art-activities.

Jane's classroom was spacious and contained a large sink. Students' artworks were displayed prominently: coloured-in photocopied images of tortoises, fishes drawn from a template, drawings of houses displayed with Jane's model-image in the centre, and a wide variety of self-portraits in chalk on coloured paper.

"I do like art .... and art goes through most of the activities". In addition, there was an hour's art lesson at the end of Wednesday afternoons. Free-choice activities were rare: "I don't get much opportunity for that". Her practice in art lessons was to "show them the finished article, and then show them stage by stage how to get there". Despite the fact that her students liked art, Jane worried that "it's either five minutes or an hour with Y1, and you just never know which way it's going to go". She regretted that Y1 students "don't have the same sense of wonder that they used to have", and looked back with nostalgia to less cynical times.

Jane was one of the least confident teachers in this study. She was the only teacher to refer to a previous in-service on the arts component of the WA Curriculum Framework, and was apologetic that she was not following any of the suggestions given. Instead of the observed art lesson being a normal class-lesson, she joined forces with Janice, the Y5 teacher. When Jane was asked at the start of the lesson, about the aim behind amalgamating the grades, the teaching-assistant standing nearby quickly volunteered that "you get a better finished product". Jane replied, more hesitatingly, that "there are limits to Y1's [abilities], so it's good to have a change". It seemed, however, that she

was more anxious to avoid being observed teaching in a normal setting. The joint lesson achieved this, as well as reducing the time being observed.

In the observed lesson, Y5 students were paired with Y1 students and were constantly admonished to look after their younger 'special friends'. Jane had taken several days to prepare the templates and material for making peg-dolls (Y1's task) and dressed card-dolls (Y5's task). At the start of the lesson, she discussed the theme of the early pioneers' clothes. Next, she patiently and skillfully gave a long, detailed, step-by-step explanation of the procedures, during which children were repeatedly reminded not to ask questions. Finally Jane declared, "It's up to you, you can do what you want". There was a general murmur of disbelief from the students, and one called out in surprise: "You can do what you want?"

It was intended that the Y1 students should make the peg-dolls, but the Y5 students made both dolls, giving the younger students small roles in gluing or in the choice of fabrics. Socially, it was a great success, as there was excellent rapport between the grades.

#### **5.2.4 Ann (2S): "If you're going to make tissue-balls, then it has to be done just so"**

Ann had been teaching for twenty-three years, fifteen of which had been at Southfield. She had taught all the primary grades, and currently had a Y2 class of 28 students. Ann appeared to deliberately arrive 15 minutes late for the interview, and it was difficult to achieve much rapport with her. Although she was generally very cautious in her replies to questions, on particular issues, she spoke with great passion.

One of the issues that deeply concerned Ann was that Y2 students should "learn to cope with the boundaries" of school life. She regarded students "doing as they liked", as something that needed to be curtailed in preparation for their work in the more senior grades of primary school. Ann was similarly emphatic in her rejection of self-expression in art. In response to the idea of allowing her students to deviate from the prescribed image she exclaimed, "No, that is pointless! It is what we are trying to get away from – they have had enough of that [in previous grades]".

Ann was not familiar with any of the WA visual arts curriculum documents, but she enjoyed teaching art. It was timetabled for one hour a week, although she would frequently "put it on one side if they haven't completed their work". She preferred "to have art as the last thing on Fridays, but there are timetable clashes with assemblies then, so I do it last thing on Thursday afternoon".

Ann was proud of the results her students achieved, and felt it was because she insisted on a high standard of work: “If you’re going to make tissue-balls [to fill in a template shape] then it has to be done just so [rolling the imagined paper in her hand carefully], and not just screwed up [distastefully expression]”. She generally showed her students a finished example, and modelled the step-by-step procedures. If students had difficulties drawing, she would help by drawing parts of their image “to encourage them”.

### **5.2.5 Belinda (3/4S): “they have success ... it does look nice”**

Belinda was a quiet-spoken teacher of a Y3/Y4 class of 29 students at Southfield. She was in her early thirties, and had been teaching for ten years, six of which had been at Southfield. She had taught “every grade but two and seven”.

Belinda recognised her students’ enthusiasm for art, and was proud of the emphasis she gave to the subject: “I love art myself and if you go into my room, you’ll see it’s just full of art. I cut back on some lessons, and do extra art”. Her art lessons were “one hour on Monday [art] and one hour on Friday [craft]”. Extensive parental-assistance meant that quite elaborate projects could be initiated, such as sewing soft-toys. She thought students preferred the craft-activities. For herself, craft lessons involved “a lot more preparation”, getting all the parts ready for the children to assemble.

Belinda had a strong sense of self-efficacy in art education. She was familiar with the ideas in the K-7 Art and Craft Syllabus, but rejected them because “they were asking those [carrier projects] to be carried on, over like a four-week time period, and that just didn’t suit me and who I was”. She also took the initiative in buying her own art-supplies:

I find I’m buying a lot of resources out of my own money, because the school has very few resources. So a lot of that is coming out of my pocket. [Q: Is that non-reusable equipment?] Yes. But I guess I get a lot of rewards out of it. Like I bought the buttons for the teddy bears and I’ve bought the googly eyes .... I want to teach art the way I want to teach art and I don’t want to be restricted to just coloured card, paper and crayons.

Belinda commented that “my biggest fault ... is, I ask them to make what I have made .... There’s not a lot of diversity. I justify that by saying that they have success ... it does look nice”. She ensured success by providing examples of finished products, and using templates, photocopied images, and step-by-step instructions.

### **5.3 Dorothy: a profile of a teacher who “knew her students inside-out”**

Dorothy was reluctant to reveal the exact length of time she had been teaching: “Hundreds, I can’t remember the date. About twenty-odd years, something like that”. She began teaching in the UK, initially in the middle primary grades, and then three years with grade 6. Her headmaster had insisted on this change: “I fought like anything not to take the top class, but I had been asked to, and he stuck to his guns”. She had been at Northfield for 12 years, and taught Y2 and Y4, before being appointed Principal. She resigned from that position after five years, going on to teach Y4 and Y7.

Several of her colleagues suggested that there had been problems with Dorothy’s period as Principal. She was seen as being slightly old-fashioned in her approach. Dorothy, however, gave other reasons for her resignation: “My Mum had been diagnosed as having Alzheimer’s – early stages, which she has. But in-between time, after I did resign as principal and the board said I could stay on as a classroom teacher, I noticed my father had cancer. The school is very, very supportive, and parents”. Because of this support, she was able to continue at the school as a Y4 teacher. When her father died and her mother was taken into care, she moved into what she considered to be the more demanding Y7.

#### **5.3.1. Getting to know Dorothy: “they happily follow my lead”**

During initial discussions about this study, the Principal, Michael, had proudly pointed out a display of “Faces in the Crowd” in his study. This was work from Dorothy’s students, and each picture showed a repeated outline drawing of a face, washed over with brightly coloured Edicol dyes. The outline drawings of the faces were individual to each child, but the patterns created, and the materials and colours used, were the same. It was here that Michael discussed the importance of having an attractive display of work for parents to see.

At a later meeting, when Michael had read in more detail about the focus of this study, he was more negative about Dorothy’s approach to teaching art. He described her directed methods of teaching, and appeared concerned about the impression her observed lesson would create of the school’s approach to teaching art. He said the “Faces in the Crowd” were typical of her style of art teaching, and contrasted it with the freer expression promoted by Alan (2N), “an exceptionally talented teacher”. After observing Dorothy’s lesson, I was stopped by Michael and asked for my impressions of her approach, something that was not done with any other teacher.



Despite concerns about her art teaching, Michael felt that Y7 generally benefited from Dorothy's more formal approach to teaching, adding that she "knew her students inside out", and was noted for the warm and caring atmosphere she created in her classroom. Other teachers agreed that Y7 was in safe hands because of Dorothy's intimate knowledge of her students' characters and her skill in handling potentially difficult situations.

Dorothy saw her role as a teacher as primarily that of a leader. She described how, despite her students being headstrong:

they happily follow my lead in most subjects. In all subjects they do, except when we come to art .... Well, I don't actually allow much variation in other subjects: in the fact that I expect a certain way of setting things out in other subjects. Like all the way through the school we have a certain way of ruling up and underlining and heading, so that we're all doing the same thing. So if anyone deviates, no, I don't usually let them.

Students' attempts at deviations came about in layout of work rather than content. After further thought, Dorothy realised that she did in fact allow some variations in handwriting and, although she concluded that it was a good thing, she was rather bemused about how she had allowed this flexibility to creep in: "It's funny to do things like that".

### **5.3.2 Workplace conditions: children need to "finish on time"**

In Dorothy's classroom, the students' flat-topped desks in the classroom were grouped into fours, so that pairs of students faced each other. At one side of the classroom was an entrance into a storeroom, which had a sink and a painting area for about six students. A half-metre gap at the top of the wall between this storeroom and the school office, allowed students' conversations to be overheard in the office. The school secretary came in during the observed lesson to complain about the bad language, and Dorothy obviously felt under pressure to supervise this area adequately: "This [swearing] reflects really badly on the school when we have parents in the office".

In the questionnaire, Dorothy selected a lack of art equipment as the main constraint on her art teaching. She argued that if the range of art materials could be increased, it would widen the range of activities she could do. The art-activities she chose, however, did not use the range of equipment already in the school. The paintings completed by

the students that year, for example, had all used Edicol dye, even though watercolours, gouache and acrylics were also available.

Limited time was ranked as Dorothy's third most pressing problem for her art teaching. Although the school did not impose a particular time for art, she felt that other subject areas had precedence on the timetable. Art was taught "almost every week", but if there were pressures from other subjects, art would be jettisoned.

Time within the span of the lesson was also felt to be a problem:

I do really think that children should finish on time because, if we have the lesson right through to recess time, that's a big amount of time. There are children that I do keep saying, "Now look at the clock, you need to be nearly finished". Because those children would never have a complete piece of work, or they'd have to pick it up some other time.

### **5.3.3 Dorothy's students: "they get upset so quickly"**

#### "Beautiful classes": Dorothy's attitude towards her students

Apart from the problem of students sometimes swearing, Dorothy enjoyed the complex effects which puberty had on the "three beautiful classes" she had taught in Y7:

I like the humour. I just like the fact that they are like young adults; just the differences from day to day. They're like children one day. They expect to be treated like adults another day. Sometimes they can come in and they're so happy and chatty, and other times they come in and they're murderous and bad-tempered ...The one thing I've learned with Y7 is to have a sense of humour and try to turn things around to be funny, otherwise they argue and bicker with each other and they get upset so quickly about things.

If these negative moods translated into images in art she "would not be altogether happy. I presume that maybe it's a form of expression for some of them, but maybe also they needed a redirection somewhere and someone to say, 'Look, let's try this'. Sometimes I think, at that age group, they can get quite low".

Dorothy was very confident that her students liked art: "I know they do. If something happens that the timetable is changed, they're very disappointed if they're not doing art." When asked which subject would be most popular with her students, Dorothy suggested that it would be art and then sport, or possibly the other way round. She

predicted that her students would say they were “fairly self-confident” in art. Their enthusiasm and self-confidence acted as a spur to her teaching: “This class is really on-task and enthusiastic to do what I ask. They are brilliant to work with”.

“I love art”: The students’ attitude towards art

Dorothy was correct in guessing that her students would rank art first in popularity (44%) and sport second (33%). When asked about a worst art lesson, 28% of students wrote that there was no such thing as a worst art lesson, a typical reply being: “I don’t think I had a worst art lesson, because I loved them all, because I love art”.

The students’ responses to the question “What kind of artist are you?”, did not reflect the self-confidence Dorothy had predicted. Of all the classes surveyed in this study, Dorothy’s students showed least confidence in their artistic skills. No-one said that they were excellent, and most (44%) said that they were average (Table 6). The proportions were not dissimilar to the ones for the Y7 class in Southfield, however, and could be related to a general decline in self-confidence at this age.

Table 6 *Y7N students’ responses to “What kind of artist are you?”*

What kind of artist are you?	Y7N
Excellent	0%
Good	39%
Average	44%
Poor	6%
Hopeless	11%

“We could stretch our imagination as big as we could”: The students’ views on expression

The issue of expression in art education was a central concern for Dorothy’s students. When discussing the art lesson they most disliked, 54% gave a lack of individual choice as a reason for their aversion to that lesson: “We had to use shapes and I would rather draw it”; “Because we didn’t have our own ideas, we had to stick to one thing” (Table 7).

Table 7 *Y7N students' reasons for disliking their worst art lesson*

Reasons for disliking the worst art lesson	Y7N
Lack of freedom of expression	54%
Dissatisfaction with the standard of work achieved	23%
Difficulty of the task	15%
The lesson was too short	7%

Reasons for selecting the best art lesson similarly focused on expression as the dominant issue (50%): “We got to design our own fish stencil”; “We could use our imagination and stretch our imagination as big as we could” (Table 8).

Table 8 *Y7N students' reasons for preferring their best art lesson (in order of preference)*

Reasons for liking their best lesson	Y7N
Freedom to express ideas	50%
It was fun	22%
Satisfaction with the work produced	17%
It was easy to do	6%
No response	6%

When asked for their preferred way of making art, 83% chose “thinking up my own ideas”. No-one chose photocopies, templates or using art to illustrate writing from another subject (Table 9).

Table 9 *Y7N students' preferred ways of making art*

Preferred way of making art	Y7N
Think up my own ideas	83%
Looking at artists' work for ideas	17%
Template/photocopy	0%
Illustrating writing	0%

When the students were asked to select the way they would like to get ideas for their drawing at the end of the survey, there was again a strong preference for freedom of

expression. Eighty three per cent of the students chose methods aligned with child-centred art education (Table 10).

Table 10 *Y7N students' preferred means of getting ideas for their drawings:*

How do you want to get ideas for your drawing?	Y7N
Child-centred art	83%
Predetermined art	11%
Tutored images	6%
Instrumental art	0%

#### **5.3.4 Dorothy's sense of self-efficacy: "I thought it went well"**

Dorothy was proud of having once led the school as its principal, and still offering advice to the current principal, Michael, on how to organise the school. In a previous year, for example, Alan (2N), a teacher committed to child-centred educational approaches, was given Y7 to teach and began to have discipline problems. Dorothy commented on this:

We had *some* problems with the Y7 class and I kept going to [the Principal] and offering these sort of [suggestions]: "Why don't we do this, that and the other". So I actually talked myself into a hole I couldn't get out of [delighted]. He said "So why don't *you* take them?" I wasn't happy at first because I was apprehensive. I *was* happy, but I was apprehensive.

Dorothy was proud that she had succeeded where the previous teacher had failed: "Either I have had three beautiful classes – which they have been, I've been very lucky – or I've just gelled with the age group".

#### "I'm a very definite person"

During the interview, Dorothy made several self-deprecating comments about getting off the point and rambling, such as: "I have rattled on in this interview". However, when someone came looking for her in the library where she was being interviewed, Dorothy called out in a proud, mock-important voice, "I'm being interviewed!". She was deeply pleased at being canvassed for her opinions, and was confident that she could make a valuable contribution to the study: "I'm a very definite person and have definite views on how things should be done".

At the end of the interview, when Dorothy started filling in the questionnaire, she discussed at length the issues the questions raised, and asked if she could take the questionnaire home to give it more thought. When she returned it the next day, she said that she had taken a long time to think about her replies, and had found it a very interesting and thought-provoking process. Both her approach to the questionnaire and her demeanor during the interview, indicated that she had strong and decided opinions about the teaching of art. She wanted to take care that these opinions were recorded accurately.

Dorothy discussed how her teaching approaches were sometimes met with disapproval:

I'm very, very conscious – I don't know if it's with me being initially trained for younger children – that I do a lot of visual things with Y7. Like, we make our cards for Mothers' Day, do our Christmas activities. Whereas I have known that in Y7, you don't do quite as many activities as you did lower down the school. Like my notices. I have big notices in my room, as I would have done in my Y4 classroom or my Y2. Because they're still young, and they still need all that nice bright stuff. So yes, we do Easter bunny things and we do Mothers' Day things.

While aware that there may be criticisms for her use of what may be considered junior primary methods with senior primary students, Dorothy insisted on teaching the way she perceived was most appropriate.

Dorothy was also conscious that her normal teaching practice might not be seen as appropriate for this study. Although we had agreed on a time for the start of the observed lesson, Dorothy preferring not to be observed during her introduction, and started the lesson 25 minutes early. Before the start of the lesson, she had set up a still-life display and colour wheel "because you were coming", something she had never attempted before. As the lesson progressed, however, Dorothy quickly relaxed and began to freely discuss her ideas about art education and the progress of the lesson. In the interview she said, "I was nervous before you came, [but] I thought it went well".

"It's well organised ... that's just me"

Dorothy felt self-confident about her organisational skills:

We have monitors for different things. We have a job list in the classroom. So, if I say, "It's art", the art people put all the paper out and they help me put all

the equipment out. It's well-organised .... And brushes are all organised [laughs]. You know, that's just me. Big brushes are put in this container and they have to be that way up so the bristles are on the top. So it's me.

The repeated phrase "So it's me" indicates how much Dorothy identified with skilled organisation.

### **5.3.5 Dorothy's beliefs about art education: "it's a subject near to my heart"**

#### "I like that lesson!": Dorothy's commitment to art education

Dorothy talked with enthusiasm when discussing art teaching, "Oh yes, I like that lesson! I've liked doing arty things all my life. When I was young, visiting art galleries and things like that .... I like doing art because, basically, it's a subject near to my heart.

When asked to place the five Arts subjects in order of priority, Dorothy ranked the visual arts first. She gave art a significant length of time on the timetable: 90 minutes on Friday mornings. Nor did she consider students' artwork in other subject areas to be a substitute for an art lesson: "We do lots of artwork in our creative writing books. [Q: Is that seen as an art lesson?] No [decidedly]".

Dorothy regarded art as an integral part of the school curriculum, but more as a reward for hard work in other curriculum subjects rather than as serious work in its own right: "Friday really works well. They've worked hard all week and it doesn't matter if they miss maths for one day. They do a lot of maths anyway". However, if not enough maths had been done, then art would be sacrificed. There was evidence for this having happened from the amount of work her students had produced. I was taken into the storeroom to look at the students' portfolios, but was not allowed to look inside them. They looked empty, and Dorothy explained that all their work for six months was on the walls, apart from those in the Principal's office. These totalled to five, and as the majority were completed in one lesson, this indicated that some art lessons had been missed.

When asked whether she was familiar with any of the WA curriculum documents for art education, she replied, "No [laughing]. I will have to be at some stage". A PD day held the previous year, which focused on art outcomes within the Curriculum Framework, was remembered solely for the practical art-activities, and not for the approaches they were intended to illustrate.

### Looking for a product that is “aesthetically pleasing to me”

When Dorothy looked at her resource books for ideas for her art lessons, she was most concerned with the attractiveness of the finished product, rather than whether it fitted into a programme of art skills or art concepts: “I’ve got a lot of things in my art books that I have never attempted. Just don’t like the look of them. Isn’t it funny? *That* doesn’t look aesthetically pleasing to me, or I don’t like the colours, or something like that”. Many of the pictures she was attracted to involved wax crayons washed over with Edicol dyes – a technique which appeared regularly that year. The lessons on multiple faces, sunflowers, geometric monsters, the Rainbow Fish, landscapes with orange sky, and gum tree blossom all used this technique.

Dorothy’s favourite resource book described an art lesson over each double page. On one side were the written instructions for the lesson, and on the other a coloured reproduction of the author’s artwork, in a deliberately child-like style, to use as a guide for the students’ artwork. Dorothy also had a portfolio of artworks, which provided her greatest source of ideas for art-activities. She handled the artworks in the portfolio with sensual pleasure, and they obviously provided happy memories from past successful art lessons. At first I thought the artworks were children’s work, but they were demonstration samples she had made before each art lesson. Taking the trouble to make the artwork before the lesson was seen as evidence of conscientious teaching and thoughtful preparation: “Children like the idea of following an idea and knowing what it will be at the end”. When students who were passing stopped to admire them, she took the compliments very personally and flushed with pleasure.

### “Can we try this?”: flexibility in planning

Although Dorothy occasionally followed themes, she preferred flexibility in her planning:

If I’m doing a certain theme in the classroom there are times when I’d like to bring that theme into artwork. Term one, we were looking at the ancient Greeks. Remember? I showed you the plates and things [in her portfolio of artworks]. So there I needed to stick to my theme ... But within all that I’d be quite flexible. Because this age group come in with things and say, ‘Can we try this?’

An example of this flexibility came about during the observed lesson while we were examining her portfolio of artworks. A passing student noticed an artwork using a



pointillism technique, and recalled doing it with Dorothy in Y4. The student asked if they could do it again. Dorothy had no problems with this. Indeed she liked the idea of “on-going work”, and something like pointillism, which took a long time to complete, kept the students occupied when they had finished other work.

Dorothy came across an artwork she had particularly enjoyed making. It was a schematic outline of a flower using string glued to paper. Foil had been placed over the top and pressed down and the spaces coloured in with permanent markers. Two more students commented on how attractive it looked and asked if they could try the technique. She was able to reply without hesitation, “Yes, we can do that next week”.

While there were no sequential programmes of skills, techniques or art concepts being followed, there was an anxiety to ensure that the motor co-ordination skills needed were not beyond the students:

Now they want to do that silver foil thing. I have done that towards the end of the year and I’ve done it at the beginning of the year. And it is always more successful at the end of the year, when their skills are slightly more honed. Now, if I let them do it now, I know they’re not going to have the same good results as they will get at the end of the year.

It was in response to similar students’ requests that she did the seasonal art-activities such as Mothers’ Day cards. These more open-ended requests were seen, however, as an opportunity for her to direct students towards particular craft-activities rather than provide them with scope for initiating their own ideas. “With having taught for so long I’ve got lots of resources available. And we very often do things for Mothers’ Day. I approach it that, if they want to do it, then we’ll do it and I’ll find the resources to help them do it”. Resources, in this case, meant craft ideas in her resource books.

“It’s not turned out how they imagined it in their minds”: Dorothy and expression

When asked which art lesson her students would choose as their preferred lesson, Dorothy correctly assessed that the most important issue for her students would be the amount of freedom they had been given to make their own images. Dorothy described how her students “happily follow my lead ... in all subjects ... except when we come to art”. This had proved problematic in previous years: “Last year’s class were very noisy and disorganised. So some of my [art] lessons didn’t end up how I wanted them, and they wasted a lot of time as well. They were very boisterous, noisy children”. She was more positive about her present class’ ability to express their own images without a

great deal of guidance from the teacher. “I don’t know, they’re really quite imaginative and creative, most of them, themselves”. The phrase “I don’t know”, however, signalled the doubts she had about the desirability of allowing her students much expression, however much they may favour it.

In the teacher-questionnaire, Dorothy strongly disagreed with the statement: “Little of educational value can emerge from spontaneous, undisciplined, free-expression”. In the interview, however, Dorothy argued that free-expression resulted in students being “not happy with the results. They’ve got lots of ideas and start off the lesson, and then, very often, it’s not turned out how they imagined it in their minds. So some are disappointed. Others are quite happy with what they’re doing, but then they’re usually the ones that are quite artistic”. Because of this, most of her art lessons were very directed.

One art lesson she discussed in full was when students drew pictures of gumtree blossom. She had asked them to use wax-crayons to make rubbings of gumtree leaves, then demonstrated how to draw the blossom using dots for the edges, and paint the leaves with yellow Edicol dye. When the leaves had dried, blue paint was swept over the entire picture, which turned the leaves green and left the background blue. Dorothy described the students’ surprise and pleasure at this procedure. All the artworks looked identical except for the placement of the leaves. This was enough variation, however, to satisfy Dorothy: “You have to be careful that you don’t get a straight copy of what you’re showing. So you’ve really got to word it [carefully] that this is. I don’t know. You don’t want them to directly copy what *you’ve* done. But I’ve not had a problem with that”.

Because of her distrust of her students’ abilities to succeed with their own ideas, Dorothy felt uncertain about the extent to which she would allow any deviation from the prescribed image:

I always have two or three who interpret what we’re doing differently. I nearly always have someone who doesn’t want to do it that way. Now occasionally I say, “No, this is the aim of this lesson and this is how it has to be”. But then you look at it another way, and they’re being creative in another direction. Other times I let them go and do what they want to do. [Q: How would you know which way to react?] I don’t know. It’s mainly instinct and knowing the children. Some, I would know that they were being pig-headed and awkward, but they’re generally not. They’re generally quite happy to follow a thing and

it's really only their artistic or their creative instincts that take them in another direction. I don't think it's awkwardness.

#### “Working in the style of an artist”: Dorothy and visual artworks

Although Dorothy was interested in artists' work, particularly Monet, she did not make it a policy to introduce visual artworks into all her art lessons. She estimated that she used them in about 50% of her lessons. It became clear, however, that she placed her own artworks and previous students' work in the same category as visual artworks, so the actual use of professional artists' work was much smaller. In the students-survey, her students similarly equated the purposely child-like samples in Dorothy's favourite resource book, as an artist's work.

The purpose of the visual artwork was seen to have the same function as her demonstration artwork: to give an example of what the children should aspire to, rather than to enable them to relate their art-activity to arts in society. She called the children's artwork “working in the style of an artist”, and used the example of Seurat and pointillism, which she had done in Y4.

She enjoyed using *Visual Artworks Based on Themes* by Lynn Tennutt, (1997), which described art-activities related to famous artists' work. This book had been used during an art lesson on sunflowers. The shapes of the leaves and flowers had been taken from an instruction sheet photocopied from the book, and the colours were limited to green, yellow and orange. All the students used the same drawing technique of yellow wax crayoned sunflowers based on a circle with very triangular petals. The colours were also identical for the Edicol dye wash so that yellow flowers appeared on an orange background. The restricted colour range made the images very attractive, but the images were almost identical.

#### Summary

While Dorothy occasionally used visual artworks as a stimulus for her art lessons, the aim was for students to closely copy the image without reference to art elements or art principles. This was not the tutored image advocated by DBAE exponents. Dorothy's choice of activities was influenced more by the attractiveness of the product and the ability of the students to reproduce it accurately. Although she was responsive to her students wishes to follow particular activities, her emphasis on her students closely reproducing the prepared example, means that she was in sympathy with a central tenet of mimetic behaviourism.

### **5.3.6 Dorothy's teaching strategies: "I like to be involved in what they're doing"**

In order to understand Dorothy's teaching strategies and the implicit theories that supported them, there will be an analysis of (i) how Dorothy set a direction for her art lessons, (ii) how her students were started on their work, (iii) how Dorothy assisted them with any problems, and (iv) how she evaluated her art lessons.

#### "I do it myself": Setting a direction for the art lesson

Dorothy set firm parameters for her students in the introductions to the art lesson. She said she would typically show an example of what her students should be aiming for. During the observed lesson, for example, she showed the students a book with an illustration of what should be produced. This consisted of a rubbed crayon background washed over with colour. Superimposed was a paper collage monster made up of cut-out geometric shapes. Very often "I have done the piece of work myself, because I have so often fallen into the trap of introducing something and then it's been too difficult. Usually I do it myself, and then if it's hard I adapt it in a way that they will find it suitable to do".

Within the boundaries indicated by the picture, Dorothy offered some choices to the students. In the sunflower picture it was a choice of photocopied images; in the gum-blossom lesson, a choice of leaf placement. In the observed lesson there was much more choice. Students could choose their own textures and colours for the background; they could also decide on the size and shape of the monster. During this lesson, she commented, "They're quite adventuresome. Sometimes I sort of romp along behind them. Because they start with an idea and it takes them all over the place. Yes, they'll mix colours. They'll try lots of things". This heady dose of freedom in the geometric monster lesson was not, however, offered in all art lessons, and the difference between the relative freedom of the geometric monster lesson and the restriction of the sunflower lesson, was noted by many students in the survey.

When discussing the sunflowers lesson, Dorothy was intrigued that one child, whose work she rated the best had, in fact, not liked her painting. Other students were similarly dissatisfied with the lesson and ranked it as the second most disliked lesson. Dorothy attributed students' aversion to that fact that "they kept asking to use different colours for the background. They didn't want to use orange because that was the colour of the flowers". She, however, had insisted on the use of orange, as had been shown in the book. The fact that the images were admired by every adult who saw them, confirmed both her students' lack of aesthetic judgement and the validity of her

persistence. They would not have produced such brilliant work without her firm direction.

“It has to be a geometric beast”: getting the students started on their artworks

The observed lesson was well-organised and proceedings went smoothly. Dorothy had anticipated problems arising from having a small painting area in the storeroom, and asked some students to make the monster before the wash background to avoid crowding. All the students followed the design showed in the book, but they showed initiative in finding interesting textures both inside and outside the classroom for their rubbings. They appeared self-motivated and worked independently during the lesson, and later, were active and purposeful during the clearing-up. Art monitors who had set up the classroom for art, helped to check equipment was put away correctly.

In the storeroom, the children started with a limited choice of two Edicol dyes, but after requests for more colours, the range was gradually increased to six. Dorothy seemed prepared to mix whatever colour was requested, but most students didn't digress from the two colours originally given. In the interview, Dorothy said she would have allowed colour-mixing by the students, but during the lesson no-one mixed colours, there were no facilities to do so, and she never suggested it.

Some students asked about their choice of colours for the monster. At the first enquiry, Dorothy showed the students the colour wheel, but did not discuss how to use it for understanding harmonious and complementary colours. Some students took up her suggestion and looked at the colour wheel, but most did not. With subsequent requests for guidance on colour, she directed their attention back to their personal preferences and told them, “I'm a green and blue person myself, but you might not be”.

The students found the limits set by the use of geometric shapes for the monster rather difficult, especially as the shapes they had to cut around were from a mathematical-shapes set, and were small and difficult to handle. There were some larger shapes available, but not enough. Grumbles about the obligation to use geometric shapes were frequent, and, although the students seemed very conscious of what could and could not be done, the parameters provided by the teacher were regularly checked. A typical exchange between student and teacher was: “Does it have to be a rubbed background?” “Yes”. The students were quite persistent with their challenges to instructions already clearly stated. This perhaps implies that Dorothy sometimes allowed deviations, or they

would not have bothered asking. The students seemed to push for minor concessions in art such as choice of colour, however, rather than radical variations in image-making.

Later, when everyone seemed settled, one child asked a more radical question that involved stretching the parameters of the main image. The student asked rather complainingly, “Does it have to be a monster?” The response was rather sharp: “*Yes! It has* to be a geometric beast. You have to do your geometric outline and then fill in the details with geometric shapes”. After this child had gone away, Dorothy commented, with some exasperation, “There’s always someone who wants to do something different” [Q: Is it always the same children?] “Yes, always the same child. Sometimes I get out the materials and say ‘You can do what you want’. They will *still* not know what to do”.

While ambivalent about allowing changes to the parameters of the structure of the activity, Dorothy prided herself on her generosity with materials. If children were not happy with the quality of their work, she was prepared to let them try again, even though this meant using extra art materials. She showed empathy with their frustration, linking it with the views she had on the difficulties they were having with puberty:

And that [emotional turmoil] in art has been quite interesting, because I am at great pains to say to them that we are using expensive materials, expensive papers, they’ve not got to be wasted. But on the other hand, if you go wrong, and you don’t like what you’re doing, then start again. And they’ve often said to me, “But I’ve used all this paper!” And I say to them, “Do you like what you’re doing?” “No, it isn’t what I wanted”. “Well then throw it away and start again”

#### “It gave it some life”: assisting students with problems

If a student complained that they could not draw something, Dorothy might suggest they trace an image: “I have introduced some children that are like that to the art of tracing. And I have said that there are times when tracing is its own art form and you can have a go, use it”. The idea of tracing as an artform had been introduced by an in-service teacher several years earlier and had resonated with many of the teachers at Northfield, but in remarkably different ways.

Dorothy felt the teacher could fruitfully contribute to a student’s image. She “wouldn’t draw it for them because I don’t think I’m a very brilliant drawer”; but she was willing to intercede to improve a child’s image as long as it was done sensitively:

If I can see something in child's picture and explain it to them and they're not sure, I am very reluctant to do it on their piece of work. And if I do, I always ask them is it alright for me to. Because I can remember years ago, at school, a teacher taking stuff off me, and saying, "It should be like this". And by the time she'd finished, I hated the piece of work because she'd drawn all over my work.

Dorothy gave an example of her successful intervention when she was unhappy with her students' silhouette skyscapes:

You know the pieces of artwork up on the wall that are the orange and black, well I actually took those home because a lot of them had got all their stuff down here [pointing at the bottom of the paper] and this huge piece of orange. [At home] I cut out some shapes [of clouds, balloons or aeroplanes]. Then [at school] we put them [the students' artworks] all on the floor. We looked at them and I said that they were nice and they were pleased with them. Then I went around, because I'd put them [the cut-outs] in envelopes, and I gave someone three clouds that I'd cut out. He looked at me and said, "Oh, yes [doubtfully]". So I said, "See how you could improve what you're doing" It's very hard to take children back to a piece of work they've done. [Q: How did they take that? Did they want to do it?] They took that very well. I think that if I had just given them the piece of paper and said, "You need to do some more on this, perhaps put some clouds in," I don't think that would have gone down. That might have been a chore. [Q: Did they actually want to stick them on then?] Yes, most of them did. A couple of them actually re-cut their own, which is fine [slightly doubtful here] .... It just brought it out and gave it some life. Yes, I think you can do that.

During the observed lesson, Dorothy was able to spare a considerable amount of time away from the students once they had settled to their work. She commented, "I don't always know what to do when they get going. You don't want to interrupt. It's a relief in some ways to have you here to talk to, so I've got something to do". This issue was followed up in the interview:

I haven't got anything to do because the lesson's started. I can go over to these groups and start talking to them or seeing what they're doing, and sometimes

it bothers me that, not that they don't want me there, but I'm interrupting what they're doing. I like to be involved in what they're doing.

Dorothy recognised and respected her students' desire for quiet concentration, but felt vaguely displaced because her leadership role had been usurped. Although she wanted to be involved, it was on the level of casual conversation rather than a discussion of the artworks. Similar feelings were expressed later in the interview: "Occasionally I think I'd be better on the other side of the door, so they could get going." She did not see her role as discussing aspects of the children's work in order to achieve art outcomes.

Students who finished early were seen as problematic: "One of my biggest difficulties with Y7 is that they finish at different times. They always seem to do that. Like that sketch [in the observed lesson]; I need to have a minor activity. Because who wants to pack up and get their reading book out or their maths book?". The sketch she referred to was of an elaborate still-life of fruit, set up for the observed lesson. Although this was the first direct-observational drawing activity for the students, there was no discussion of the procedures. Instead they were referred to photocopied pages from a *How to Draw* book, brought in by a student, Greg "my star artist", which discussed techniques for drawing fruit. Only one student attempted the drawing in a desultory way. Other early-finishers quietly found work to do from other areas of the curriculum.

#### "It really did look wonderful": evaluation of the art lessons

When all the equipment had been cleared away, there was no general discussion of what had been learned and achieved during the lesson. During the clearing away, however, individual children were given praise for making an effort or for achieving a creditable result: "That looks really good. Are you pleased with it?"; "You worked really hard this lesson, well done."

In the interview Dorothy elaborated on her approach to assessment:

I've said to them, "Look, it's a bit how you look at something. None of it is wrong and however you draw, it's your style of drawing. If it's a simple style, then that's lovely. If it's Greg, we know it's going to be absolutely brilliant. Better than me or anyone else in the class could do. But that's his style and he's gifted in that area. But they're all nice in their own way". Because children are like that, they look over someone's shoulder and then they think, "Well, mine's awful".



These were conflicting inclinations. On the one hand, Dorothy liked to indicate to the students that all their work had equal value, while on the other, acknowledging the consistent superiority of Greg's work over that of the other students.

When asked to discuss the most successful lesson she had taught with her present class, Dorothy went back to their time in Y4 when they had made a Monet tribute-painting and produced exceptionally good artworks. The idea, taken from a favourite resource book (Tennutt, 1997), was to cover the paper with oil pastel greens for flower stalks and grasses, then sponge on red paint very lightly, to represent poppies. She pointed out a child whose parents had been so pleased with the picture that they had had it framed: "With the backing and the surround it really did look wonderful". In the interview, she added, "It's given them a technique and ideas to go and work on .... I've heard them talking about what they're doing and talking about the artists. So that was pleasing".

When asked about a successful lesson in Y7, she discussed a paper-mache lesson in which the students made animal shapes. She felt it was good to let the students use messy materials but did not mention the quality of the finished product, something which was generally of prime consideration. Her body language indicated that she thought that she ought to have liked this lesson, but that it was not in reality such a favourite. None of the students mentioned this lesson in their answers in the questionnaire, so perhaps it had happened with a previous Y7 class.

Dorothy anticipated correctly that her students would base their ideas on the success of an art lesson predominantly on the amount of freedom of expression allowed, but it was not something that she considered when evaluating her art lessons. Much more to the forefront was the production of excellent products, and this was reflected in her final, rather complacent comment about the disputed sunflower lesson: "It's a pity they don't like it, but I do".

### **5.3.7 Summary**

Dorothy enjoyed teaching art and yet at the same time marginalised it. She mistrusted disorder and her students' impulse towards freedom of expression, but allowed some degree of choice within well-defined boundaries set by predetermined images. Her students were appreciative of these choices, perhaps because, however limited, it represented more freedom than could be found in most other curriculum areas.

Dorothy saw herself as a sensitive leader, helping her students achieve very specific and tangible skills and images, rather than a facilitator of visual-expression. While she

used visual artworks occasionally in her introduction to her art lessons, they did not form an integral part of her lessons as advocated by a DBAE approach to art education. Her teaching methods in the classroom and her responses in the interview and observed lesson, indicated that she had a clear predisposition towards Predetermined Art Education. This she adhered to with great tenacity. Despite some personal doubts and uncertainties, and despite the pressure from her students for a more child-centred approach, her practice remained consistently that of predetermined art.

#### **5.4 Mary: “you never leave school behind”**

There will now be a description of an early childhood PAE teacher’s approach to teaching art in the setting of a pre-primary classroom.

##### **5.4.1 Getting to know Mary: “a talented teacher”**

Mary was an early childhood teacher, and had been teaching for nine years, including five at Northfield. She had always taught pre-primary, except for one occasion at her previous school, when she had taught Y1. Her pleasant, gentle manner and quiet sense of humour made her a popular member of staff. The principal made a point of saying how fortunate the school was to have such “a talented teacher in the key grade of pre-primary”. In contrast to his unease about my observing Dorothy, he felt sure Mary would give an exemplary art lesson.

Mary enjoyed a high degree of autonomy in deciding her general teaching programme, and never consulted any WA curriculum documents: “Just don’t tell the boss [laughing]”. She also felt unrestrained by time-pressures. Her classroom was spacious for her 26 students, and had large tables, double sinks and an outdoor wet-area. She also had the help of an efficient, full-time teaching-aide, Helen, who “reads my mind and I read hers”. The teaching constraints listed in the teachers-questionnaire “never present a problem”.

During the interview, Mary expressed anxiety about how the observed lesson had been perceived: “It wasn’t flowing on the day you came. I thought ‘Oh my goodness! But, never mind’. Because sometimes you feel uncomfortable when someone’s there. Not that you made me feel uncomfortable”. Despite misgivings about the observed lesson and interview, which she had in common with all the teachers in the study, Mary displayed a quiet confidence in the way she taught. In the observed lesson, she presented her students with an unusually large and potentially confusing choice of art-activities. She was sanguine, however, about their response: “It was all in the training at

the beginning of the year”, and the students, did indeed, respond with calm purposefulness.

Mary felt that she was an effective teacher, popular with both parents and students, and that this arose because she was dedicated to her work: “You never leave school behind. You wake up in the middle of the night and think of something”. She was proud that she used her own money for books for ideas: “I spend a fortune on them, but I don’t care. It’s only money”.

“They came and placed it where they wanted to”: Mary’s views on expression

Mary carefully differentiated between free-activities, art-activities, and craft-activities, and her views on expression varied accordingly. Free-activities included “collage, [which] I consider to be quite creative and artistic, so we have a collage-table .... The painting easel ... that’s up all the time. They’re quite creative with that”. It was seen to be a time when “there shouldn’t be pressure. We shouldn’t be saying, ‘Come on! Come on!’” She was very relaxed about the artworks produced in free-activities: “It’s so funny because when you cut cardboard plates into quarters [to use for ears on the collage-table] they actually get the sellotape and make a whole plate out of it [roaring with laughter]. I just love it when they do that. I think it’s hilarious”. Mary was the only teacher in this study to initiate a discussion on how students “can use art to sort of release their feelings”, but this view of art related exclusively to free-activities.

Artworks from free-activities were referred to in the third person plural as “*their things*”, reflecting the autonomy given to the students. The language used to describe teacher-initiated art-activities, however, used the second person plural: “We’ve made hobby-horses. We’ve used a box and a long cylinder, and we glued it altogether”. In these art-activities, students were expected to closely follow Mary’s lead.

In addition to art lessons and free-activities, “we do a lot of *craft* things as well, because that improves their fine-motor skills”. The more complex artworks made in craft lessons often took several sessions to complete and assemble. The Humpty Dumpty puppets, for example, started with egg-shaped bodies cut from templates. A space was provided at the top of the egg to allow students to draw in a face. The arms and legs were cut from photocopied outline drawings. The clothes were pre-cut by Mary, because she had judged that the students had done enough cutting with the body and limbs. The parts were then assembled and glued by the students in a very specific order:

So you actually do it in stages .... I actually have a finished product. So I say, “Well this is something like we’re going to make. Yours will be like you want it, but this is the Humpty puppet we’re going to make”. [Q: Are they free to do whatever shape they want or have they got a guide?] No, they’ve got a guide on it [a photocopied outline]. It’s just specific ... It’s more of a craft thing than an art thing.

Mary contrasted the Humpty Dumpty puppets craft-activity with the Twinkle Twinkle Little Star activity of the observed lesson. She classified the latter as an art lesson because it included individual choice: “When I picked up the star, I saw their name [on the back]. *They* came and placed it where they wanted to”.

#### **5.4.2 Mary’s teaching strategies: “I have one right here”**

##### “How are we going to do it?”: setting a direction for the art lesson

In the observed lesson, Mary introduced the art-theme by singing “Twinkle, twinkle, little star”. She then reacquainted the students with a picture-book, which described interesting things seen at night. The picture of a space-rocket was particularly popular. Next, Mary introduced the idea of making a large picture or mural to go on the wall near the door, which would show the stars twinkling in the night. She had found a picture of the finished mural in an art-teaching book, and although it was not shown to the students, the picture remained dominant in Mary’s and her teaching-aide’s minds.

##### *“Something blue above our heads”*

After a discussion of the differences between three tones of blue cellophane, Mary announced, “We are going to paint with these colours, but we are *not* going to use paintbrushes. We are going to use newspaper! How are we going to do it?”. There were several suggestions from the children, such as twisting the newspaper into a large screw, or folding it into a long tube. She greeted these suggestions with a warm “Yes?”, but the rising intonation at the end of the word, and the lack of discussion of each idea as an option, made it clear that she had another solution in mind. As ideas stalled, one of the children sitting directly in front of Mary, noticed a newspaper ball hidden under the teacher’s chair, and said, “You can roll it into a ball!” Mary’s response was immediate and very enthusiastic:

*Yes!* And do you know, I have one right here! You can dip the newspaper ball into the paint and press it on the paper. We’re going to start with dark blue and

then the middle blue and then the light blue. So we'll have a picture with dark blue at the top, and light blue at the bottom. What does that remind you of?

By this time the students had forgotten about the Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star theme, and suggested water, a river, and the sea. Again Mary did not reject these suggestions outright, but greeted them with the same warm “Yes?” with its rising intonation. The options suggested by the students were, again, not discussed, and there was the clear expectation that the correct answer would come along soon if Mary persevered. Eventually, she had to provide a clue: it was “something blue above our heads”. Then she got the answer she was seeking – “the sky”.

The next question for the students was: “What time of day is it?” Many students suggested morning, then afternoon. Mary persisted until a student suggested night. From the puzzled expressions on the students' faces, night-time was not generally associated with bright blue colours. Even so, the students appeared happy to have participated in the game of find-out-what-the-teacher-has-in-mind, and to have arrived safely at the solution.

*“Stars have five points”*

Having dealt with the background to the mural, Mary went on to show the students how to make the stars. She produced a star template and asked the students what how would they get the lines right. The students were obviously very familiar with using templates, as there was an instant loud chorus of “Keep it very still”. When Mary advised them to “cut it from the outside”, the students automatically repeated, “Cut it from the outside”.

The next question was “How many points on a star?” The star template was used to count the points several times. Although this successfully integrated maths into the discussion, it did imply that all stars had five points, and limited any idea of variation. At the end of the counting, Mary moderated this impression by saying, “Yes, stars have five points. Well, [looking at me and smiling] this star has”.

Next Mary demonstrated how they were going to paint the star with glue, and then sprinkle sparkles on. A child complimented Mary on her star, and she was pleased. “Thank you”, she said, smiling broadly, “I'm sure you will do one just as nice. You people can decide what part of the night-sky you will put it on”. Claire suggested that they could make a moon and Mary's reply was: “Excellent idea, but I haven't got a moon just at this moment”. A suggestion of a rocket was similarly rejected. The message was clear that, unless Mary had a template for the image, it would not be

considered. When asked later why she had restricted the children's choice to stars, Mary replied that they could not have coped with too many choices.

Damion, who had suggested a rocket, used his free-activity time to cut one out of card. When asked about students like Damion, who might want to deviate from her suggested image, Mary explained, "Well *that's* when they do it: in their free time. There's usually about three organised activities, and then the rest of the time they have to freely do what they like on the collage, or the drawing table". Claire, unnoticed, used her time at the star-table to quietly cut out two sausage-shaped moons from the yellow star paper.

#### *"Something we live in"*

Mary asked for suggestions of what we might see on the ground at night. Students suggested a road, a train, a car, or a cloud. The latter was gently ridiculed, to much laughter, and other ideas were ignored after the initial, gentle, inflected "yes". Again the students were in a game of second-guessing what the teacher had envisaged, and finding out that their own ideas were not appropriate. In the end, Mary had to give a strong hint: "Something we live in". Only then did she get the response she had wanted: "a house".

Having revealed the subject as being a house, Mary went on to describe the process of creating the images from torn newspaper: "We're going to tear out house shapes [demonstrating a square] using little tears. And then we'll tear a shape like a roof [demonstrates folding a square into triangles and then tearing along the fold]". No other choice of paper was given, and there was a tangible sinking of enthusiasm amongst the students. One child asked if he could include a person, but Mary replied, "Well, actually, everyone is fast asleep". Mary did allow the suggestion that windows could be drawn, and the children cheered up at that. There was some discussion of what they would draw in the window, whereas previously there had been very few signs of interest.

#### *Selecting the activity*

After outlining the choices available, Mary asked the students to put up their hands if they would like to paint the sky background. She had judged this to be the most popular activity. Helen had a check-list ready in order to exclude students who had had a first choice on previous days, and went outside with four chosen students. Students were next selected to make the stars, then the houses, and lastly finish self-portraits begun the previous week. There was some expression of disappointment from students

allocated to the house-making table, but the students went very eagerly to the star and self-portraits tables. The remaining students headed purposefully to the free-activity tables: a shop, a jigsaw table, a collage-table, painting easels and a play-dough table.

#### *Assisting students with problems*

On a normal day, art-activities would be interspersed with other activities: “They’re not *only* doing art, they’re doing language and they’re doing maths as well, and things like that. And then they’ve got free play in the constant-positive areas”. Mary said that it was normally Helen who supervised the art-activity, but “because you were coming, we did it differently”. Mary began by sitting with the students cutting out the stars, and then moved to the paper-house table. While at the tables, Mary constantly looked around the classroom to monitor the rest of the students, and was generous with her praise for students’ efforts. The focus was on how well they were cutting and tearing, and any behavioural problems.

#### *Cutting the stars*

Mary had previously cut yellow paper squares for use with the star-templates, to avoid waste. Unfortunately, the size of the paper was often too small for the templates. The students, however, remained unfazed by this, and simply found a larger size. Many had problems holding the template still while they traced around it with a pencil, resulting in a confusion of multiple-outlines.

Only a few students, who were particularly skilled with scissors, cut what they felt to be satisfactory star-shapes. Most students found it very difficult to negotiate the corners of the star outline. When Mary reminded them of her instructions to cut from the edge, they doggedly continued to cut around as if this was their only way of getting to the end of the task. By continuing to track round the edge, most students cut off the points of their star. A few students had acute difficulty and cut right into the centre of the star. They faced many adverse comments from their peers, such as: “Look, he’s messing up”. After this particular comment, the student in question tried to look nonchalant, as though he had meant to cut across the star all along, and proceeded to do more bad cuts to prove it.

When later discussing the difficulties the students had faced when cutting the stars, Mary focused on the fact that some of the paper she had prepared had been too small for the template. In fact, students successfully overcame this difficulty by looking

around for larger pieces. It was the cutting exercise itself which was problematic, but that did not claim her attention.

#### *Tearing the paper houses*

Students chosen to make the houses for the mural remained unenthusiastic. They found the newspaper, with its dull colours and distracting print, uninspiring as a medium for creating houses, despite Mary having a ready-made example to show them. They also found it impossible to accurately tear the rectangular and triangular geometric shapes needed for the walls and roofs. Many gave up at this point, and waited for Mary to come and help them to tear the shape. She coaxed them along, but frequently had to complete the tearing for the students. Details added to the houses in wax crayon tended to disappear into the print, and a general feeling of gloom descended on the students. Mary however remained cheerful, and reassured them that the houses would look lovely when they appeared on the mural.

#### *Painting the background sky*

Helen supervised a group of four students in the outside area, who painted the night-sky. She had previously taped together sheets of A3 paper for the background, and, despite attempts to anchor it with stones, there were problems with the wind.

Helen instructed the students to screw up sheets of newspaper into a ball, dip the ball into the pre-mixed blue paints and dab it across the paper. They had to work in a horizontal line across the paper, with the dark blue at the top and the lightest blue at the bottom. This left a gap in the middle for another group to fill in later on. Helen insisted that all the background white should be filled in, which precluded experimentation with a potentially interesting printing technique.

The students had great difficulties with the paper-ball painting technique. Individual newspaper pages, weighted down by the very heavy pre-mixed paint, separated out from the ball and dragged along the painting. They were told to persist however, and the rather arduous task continued. One student wanted to bring the light-blue paint up the side as well as along the bottom of the paper, and asked permission to do this from Helen. When permission was refused, the student persisted in trying out the idea and was quickly reprimanded.



### “It looks lovely”: evaluation of the art lesson

At the conclusion of most mornings, Mary would gather the students on the mat to discuss the activities undertaken so far. In the observed lesson Mary began by focusing on the problems and successes of the art-techniques used. She asked about the painting. One student complained that another student had dragged the paper along instead of dabbing, because the paper kept flapping around. Mary accepted that there had been a problem with dragging paper, and that it was alright to drag it back and forth.

Previous art lessons were similarly judged as successful or otherwise on the basis of whether the students had managed the techniques successfully, rather than on any other criteria such as aesthetic understanding or expression. The tones of blue, for example, were never referred to during or after the lesson. Clay was seen as valuable because it was “very good for the muscle development in their fingers”.

The importance Mary placed on techniques in her evaluation of her art lessons was echoed in her emphasis on technical skills when describing the good artists and the bad artists in her class. This was always done in terms of their levels of ability in such skills as cutting and gluing and drawing, rather than in the imaginative content of their work.

Mary usually discussed particular students’ artworks at the end of the lesson: “If somebody has done something special, then you show the class”. It was during this mat-time that she accepted the moon Claire had prepared, by saying, “I didn’t prepare a moon, so Claire has made one for us”. This was done in a warm and welcoming way to the students, but in the interview she expressed doubts about the “funny-shaped moon”. When she and the students were assembling the mural, Mary had been concerned that “one child had said, ‘Oh do we hang that up? That’s not really a round moon. It’s an oval moon, isn’t it?’ So I said, ‘Yes, that’s true. But Claire has chosen the best moon, because she made two’”. Claire had wanted to put both her moons on the mural, but Mary had persuaded her to take one home. When asked what would have happened if Claire had insisted, Mary said that she would have allowed two moons on the mural. This seems doubtful, however, as the project was seen as an important display item. Moreover Mary had already expressed her concern that one imperfect moon had met with objections from other students; two imperfect moons would have proved very contentious.

The importance of getting the mural to look right was a continuous theme in discussions with Mary and Helen. When I asked Helen whether I could look at the finished mural at a future time, she was rather evasive and said it would take several days to finish. When I pressed her for an estimate of the time, she looked uncomfortable and I understood that she was thinking that it may be discarded. She had not been very pleased with the result. As it was, everything was eventually assembled and displayed and, in the interview, Mary proudly described how well the mural looked: “You must come and have a look. It looks lovely”. She was particularly pleased with the many positive comments from parents.

Mary argued that the Twinkle, Twinkle lesson provided a greater opportunity for student expression than the Humpty Dumpty, because they were allowed to place their cut stars and newspaper houses where they chose on the mural, She was also responsive to other suggestions:

It looks lovely. Nice if you stand from a distance, just because it glitters. *They* decided that. They put the stars on and then somebody dropped a bit of glitter, because, you know, they thought that would be nice and I said, “Well how are we going to make the glitter stick?” So they put glue on. And the buildings look sweet at the bottom too.

These limited concessions to student choice, however, were within a framework of very directed art teaching.

#### “You have to ask”: students’ comments about their art lessons

Mary’s students were very pleased with their mural. They came up to admire it, and were able to identify their contributions. In a later student-interview, Mary’s three students were very enthusiastic about their work on the mural. Two choose it as their favourite art lesson, giving as their reason that they liked the sparkles.

When discussing other art lessons, the students initially agreed that they could mostly use their own ideas in their art lessons. Later, Sam and Becky stated that the teacher usually initiated the ideas: “You can do the things that the teacher says”; “You have to ask, you can get to copy or you can do the same thing that the teacher did”. This reflects the type of direction that was clear and firm, and yet with some input from the children if they checked with the teacher first. When asked whether they preferred to use their own ideas or the teacher’s ideas in their art lessons, all agreed that they liked to do both.

Sam commented that “sometimes the whole class gets ideas”, suggesting that Mary’s inclusive language, while shepherding the students towards a predetermined image, encouraged students to feel that they had a significant part in the decision-making process.

### **5.4.3 Summary**

Mary used child-centred methods of teaching in some aspects of her art programme. Self-expression was the main reason for her continuous provision of collage as a free-activity area. She did, however, differentiate between the artworks produced in teacher-initiated lessons, and those produced at the free-activity tables. The lack of checklists for the free-activities, and the fact that children were selected for the teacher-supervised activities first, would give the impression to the students that the more child-centred and expressive free-activities were not as valued as the teacher-initiated work. Mary was more relaxed about the standard of work produced at the free-activity tables. She distanced herself from these artworks by calling them “their work,” as opposed to her use of the phrase “we’ve made” for the teacher-initiated activities. She also paid less attention to what was produced. While the deviant image of the moon, produced at the teacher-directed art table, was eventually incorporated into the mural, the deviant image of the rocket from the free-activity collage-table was not.

Mary saw visual-expression as less important than cutting and gluing skills. She felt that the free-activities gave her students ample scope for exploration of their own ideas, and that her role as a teacher was to firstly, introduce new techniques that would develop fine-motor skills, and secondly, produce a product that both she and her students would be proud of. In order to achieve this, she needed to maintain a high degree of control over both the image and its production.

Mary’s warm persona and skilful use of inclusive language meant that her students felt involved in the process of art-making, despite having very little real input into the major decisions concerning the progress of the work. There were small windows of opportunity for individual contributions in the art-activities, such as suggesting the glitter on the background to the mural, drawing a sad expression on the photocopied Humpty Dumpty’s face, and deciding the placement of houses and stars on the mural. These were meaningful to the students and helped to achieve a sense of involvement. They were carried out, however, within the framework of a predetermined approach to teaching art.

Mary showed rigidity in the imposition of an image on her students through the use of photocopied outlined drawings, templates and teacher examples. She rejected, however kindly, her students' valid and feasible suggestions for art images. She subordinated expressive arts outcomes because of her primary concern with her students' acquisition of technical skills. All these factors indicated that Mary aligned with central premises of mimetic behaviourism.

## **5.5 Themes arising from the analysis of data**

This section of the chapter will bring together the themes that have arisen from the findings on PAE teachers. There will be a discussion of first, the conditions under which the PAE teachers worked, second the PAE teachers' implicit theories, and third, the PAE teachers' teaching practice.

### **5.5.1 The impact of teaching conditions on PAE teachers**

In this study, teaching conditions did not appear to have any significant impact on PAE teachers' reasons for adopting didactic teaching methods in their art lessons.

#### “I love the freedom”: ecological constraints

Some PAE teachers had problems with time-pressures and supply-shortages, but these did not appear to be connected to the teachers' decisions to limit expression in their art education programmes. Indeed, the pre-primary teachers, who were all PAE, agreed they had optimal teaching conditions and a high degree of autonomy. Kirsty (PP/1S) loved “the freedom to programme ... it's a lot more structured in the higher grades”. She felt to be “in my own little world over here”.

#### “I want to teach art the way I want to teach art”: personal constraints

Levels of self-efficacy also did not appear to be a major factor in whether teachers employed predetermined art-teaching strategies. Jane (1N) and Wendy (PPS) had a low sense of self-efficacy, while the others expressed confidence in their teaching effectiveness. Belinda (3/4S) had decided “to teach art the way I want to teach art”.

All teachers had access to WA curriculum documents for art education, but they were never used. Belinda found they “just didn't suit me and who I was”. When Dorothy (7N) discussed a recent in-service about the Curriculum Framework for the Arts, she only recalled the practical art-activities. All teachers found didactic, how-to-teach books far more useful: “I spend a fortune on them” (Mary:PPN).

“It was fun because you got to make anything”: students wanted self-expression

All the PAE teachers acknowledged their students' enthusiasm for art. For example, when asked which would be their favourite subject, Belinda (3/4S) replied, “Without a doubt they'll say art .... The children, each term, have to write goals and one of them is: 'I have loved doing this subject this term'. About 85% of them have said, 'I have really enjoyed doing art'”. In the student-survey most of her students (58%) selected art as their favourite subject.

The teachers also acknowledged their students' strong desire for self-expression, an enthusiasm confirmed in the student-survey. Despite teachers acknowledgment of this predisposition, they confined their students' expression to very narrow areas, such as choice of colour, or placement of predetermined-images. The exception was in the pre-primary classes, where free-activities provided students with a wide choice of media and image. The activities and the results, however, were not valued in the same way as those initiated by the teachers.

It is generally acknowledged that early childhood is a time of natural spontaneity and creativity in art (Herberholz and Hanson, 1995; Linderman, 1997; Curriculum Council, 1998). It is particularly significant therefore, that, apart from Alan (2N) and Fiona (3N), all the early childhood teachers in this study were PAE teachers. Given their students' developmental and personal predisposition to expression, why did these teachers direct their students so strongly towards predetermined art?

It was not a question of the teachers being lazy. Making assembly-kit art for children is a lot of hard work Barnes (1987). Jane (1N), for example, spent several evenings preparing for the peg and card dolls. Why do busy teachers do this? It will be argued that teachers' implicit theories played a major role in this decision.

### **5.5.2 PAE teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

The PAE teachers in this study had similar beliefs and attitudes regarding six central issues: the value of the end-product, art education's cognitive value, expression, the main function of art education, students' innate abilities, and the control of students' images.

“They're very eye-catching”: the importance of the finished-product

PAE teachers were immensely proud of the artwork they and their students produced. An art-activity was frequently referred to in the second person plural to denote a feeling of team-effort: “We've made hobby-horses” (Mary.PPN). Kirsty (PP/1S) was

personally affronted when parents “just walk past [displays], and you think: ‘Oh, all that time your child, and we, have spent on that!’”.

Planning usually began with an idea from a teacher’s art-book, or a look through a portfolio of teacher-samples. Choice of subject was based primarily on what Dorothy (7N) described as something “aesthetically pleasing to me”. Belinda (3/4S), for example, had an overriding pleasure in colour: “We use so much colour in our room. If you walk into our room, you sort of stand back and you’re in awe of all the colour that’s in the room. I think that cheers up the classroom. It gives a cheery atmosphere – all those bright colours”.

It was also important that colleagues and parents were impressed by the artworks. Belinda described an art-activity where “they put macaroni on picture frames and then they sprayed them gold and silver. They’re in the back of my room and everyone says they’re very eye-catching because they’re metallic-looking”. The phrase “it caught my eye” occurred frequently when discussing the selection of a subject for an art lesson. The issues of continuity of learning, expression, or the learning of art elements were never raised.

#### “A fun approach”: art has limited cognitive value

While most PAE teachers enjoyed teaching art, and many gave it a generous allocation of time, art education was deemed to have limited cognitive value: “It’s more a fun approach” (Mary.PPN); “If I just feel like having some fun and I feel that I can spend the time [on art], we do” (Belinda.3/4S). There was a clear differentiation between Belinda’s mainstream curriculum content and art:

People have said to me, “Do you do any work in this room? There’s so much art here, do you really work?” [Q: Do you feel that is a criticism at all?] No, I don’t. Because ... they do see that the children work very hard to get their art lesson at the end of the day .... They’re lovely afternoon-lessons, because they are so quiet.

Art elements or art principles were never the focus for an art lesson: “I have to admit, I haven’t tried it” (Kirsty.PP/1S). Sequential lessons were also never considered: “[I use] what’s right there where you’re sitting at lunchtime ... you can go and grab something and photocopy it, or get the idea, get the template” (Kirsty.PP/1S). Dorothy (7N), similarly selected ideas from her portfolio, as the mood took her.

“My biggest fault is we all make the same thing”: the rhetoric surrounding self-expression

Mary (PPA), Belinda (3/4S), and Dorothy (7A) had reputations as creative teachers, and the artworks their students produced were widely admired. However, as Brittain (1979) commented, “The creative thinking was done by the teacher; the children being told how wonderful and creative they were, when they had merely followed directions” (p.158).

Apart from Ann (2S), who was adamant that self-expression was “pointless”, the PAE teachers wanted to be seen to be providing some opportunities for expression. This caused most to have misgivings about the uniform look of their students’ artworks: “Sometimes I look at things, and I think, ‘Well, why did I do it that way?’ because I’ve really restricted them” (Kirsty.PP/1S); “My biggest fault about my art is I ask them to make what I have made. We all make the same thing” (Belinda.3/4S). These opinions appeared to be rhetorical, however as none of the teachers followed through on this concern. Dorothy (7A) and Mary (PPN) maintained that the small variations they allowed, provided ample opportunities for expression. The slight variations in facial expressions on the photocopied Humpty-Dumpty puppets, for example, were thought to make them all look sufficiently individual.

PAE teachers tended to be somewhat ambivalent about parent-helpers who intervened heavily in students’ artwork. Although aware it was not considered good teaching practice, Wendy (PP/1S) sympathised with parents urge to intervene: “You see them struggling and you think: ‘Oh, give it to me!’”. Belinda (3/4S) also described how “it’s difficult to say, “Can you not do it for your child, can you just guide them?””. Mary (PPN) agreed, “because they’re only here for one day or maybe two mornings a term ... I don’t want to break that bond, or make them feel that they’re not comfortable in my room. I don’t like to be too bossy. So I give them a bit of free rein”.

Students, anxious to maintain personal differences in their images, resented teachers using their artworks as examples to copy. Belinda (3/4S), however, had little empathy with such feelings: ““These look fantastic, have a look at these!’ I do that mid-way through the lesson. So the kids say, ‘Oh, I might do that’. But then the others get peeved. They say, ‘There’s a few copying me.’ ‘Oh, but that’s flattering, that they copy you’”.

Teachers pointed to other outlets for expression other than art and craft lessons. Mary (PPA) stipulated that free-activities “shouldn’t be pressured”. Belinda (3/4S) described how illustrative drawings for other subjects gave abundant opportunities for expression: “Lets say we’re doing a health-lesson about community work, if they draw community workers, they get their [free] drawing within the core subjects”. In their art lessons, PAE teachers wanted to maintain much more control over the proceedings in order to focus on the development of technical and fine-motor skills.

“Developing their fine-motor skills”: the main teaching-aim

When asked to discuss the aims of their art lessons, all the PAE teachers focused on the teaching of technical and fine-motor skills. Expressive and aesthetic skills were rarely mentioned. Belinda’s (3/4S) reply was typical: “I think it’s refining their skills .... Just developing their skills that bit more”. She echoing Ann’s (2S) concerns about screwing tissue skilfully into balls: “If we roll up crepe-paper in a ball, they have to do it well. They can’t just scrunch it up and glue it on .... They’re developing their fine-motor skills”. While preparation for the work-place was never directly mentioned, the PAE teachers’ emphasis on fine-motor skills resonates with Tarr’s (2001) description of contemporary mimetic behaviourist “notions of preparation for the future world of work” (p.39).

“You have to sit near and keep an eye on them”: children are defective

PAE teachers recognising their students’ desire for self-expression, but believed students lacked the technical skills required to draw what they imagined. (Belinda.3/4S) described how “They dislike the work that they do. If they draw a picture, they don’t like it”. Dorothy, too, found that her students “were not happy with the results [because] .... it’s not turned out how they imagined it in their minds” (Dorothy:7N). She believed that only “the ones that are quite artistic” would benefit from self-expression. Kirsty (PP/1S) agreed that “it depends on the child’s ability”, ability here being defined in terms of technical proficiency. For most children, proper technical and motor skills needed to be mastered before they could express themselves effectively.

Primary students, with their developing physiology, were seen as generally lacking in technical-skills, particularly in the junior-primary grades. Kirsty (PP/1S) commented, “They didn’t do too badly. But still, you had in your mind what you expect, and it’s obviously different from the end-result”. Belinda (3/4S) also complained that she had “a very weak class, very weak children”. To minimise disappointment, PAE teachers focused on ensuring students had sufficient skills for the task in hand.



Dorothy (7N) pondered whether the foil-flowers in her portfolio would be better left to the end of the year, “when skills are slightly more honed”. Jane (1A) saw her main problem in terms of her students’ inadequate skills: “If there are children that have got fine-motor problems, cutting or whatever, [you need to] watch out. The way the class is structured, you do have ability-groups. So you would know basically the ones. There’s one table that you have to sit near and keep an eye on them”.

While Dorothy’s students’ desire for expression remained high, younger children showed less enthusiasm. Their teachers thought this was because the students were unhappy with their lack of realism. A different explanation would be that didactic activities are pernicious in sapping young children’s self-confidence. In Mary’s (PPN) class, for example, most students (81%) initially chose to draw their own image in the student-survey art lesson. It was only when the students saw the templates and photocopied sheets, that many changed their minds. After this, 54% students opted to make their own images and 46% chose a template or photocopy. This reaction was repeated in other early childhood classes. Exposure to adult versions of an image appeared to undermine students’ self-confidence in creating their own image.

“Learning to cope with the boundaries”: control of student behaviour is a central issue

Given the preoccupation with the teaching of technical and fine-motor skills in art activities, it is understandable that PAE teachers favoured a very controlled teaching situation. If everyone is cutting, then everyone is learning cutting-skills. It is possible, however, for technical skills to be developed using images initiated by the students. Presumably Claire, who drew and cut out the “funny-shaped moons” in Mary’s class, practiced the same important drawing and cutting skills, as those who used templates to make the stars. Duncum (1995) argued this point in his article about teachers who insist on children colouring-in photocopied images, rather than using their own outline drawings.

It will be argued that the PAE teachers’ inclination to control their students’ images related more to two other factors, both of which are associated with the issue of control. The first, recognised in the literature on mimetic behaviourism, is a fear of the potential chaotic nature of students’ individual expression in art. The second, which has been given very little prominence in the literature but which featured strongly in this study, is a desire by teachers to protect students from failure.

“You should have seen the mess”: control as a bulwark against chaos

Despite many PAE teachers describing art as a fun lesson, there was a surprisingly strong undercurrent of fear in teachers’ responses to the idea of easing direct control over the teaching situation. It was as if student-choice would introduce chaos into the classroom. Dorothy (7N) used the analogy of students “stampeding off like wild horses”, as she sought to follow and control their urge for self-expression. Ann (2S) also saw her role as subduing her students’ chaotic impulses. She recalled a time when her students had wanted to initiate their own ways of paper-weaving:

Yes, I once let them have their own way. They said that they knew how to paper-weave. They said they knew all about it. Oh yes, that’s what they *said!* So I thought, “Well, we’ll see”. So I gave out all the paper, the glue, the shapes and the scissors and let them get on with it. You should have seen the mess [triumphantly]. They thought they knew best, but you should have seen them at the end – the desks were covered with glue and bits of screwed up paper. It was a real mess. You need to do things step-by-step.

Although not as extreme in their language, Kirsty (PP/1S) and Jane (1N) would agree with Ann’s statement that young children needed to “learn to cope with the boundaries”. Kirsty (PP/1S) equated freedom of choice with the unstructured teaching-programmes of the day-care centre, and was anxious to disassociate herself from this approach: “That’s what *their* belief is, that they should be allowed to do whatever they like to do, within safety restraints. I think they have a lot more freedom, which *I* don’t think is a good thing really”. Jane felt Y1 students were less amenable to persuasion and needed a firmer hand than in past years:

The younger ones are changing ... they don’t have the same sense of wonder that they used to have... When the teacher said, “Now we’re going to have a story,” they all used to go, “Ohhh” ... I think with computers and television we’re up against it. It’s very difficult. A lot of Y1 classes are difficult. I’ve heard quite a lot of teachers saying, “God I’ve got a terrible Y1 class this year.” [Q: Why do you think that has happened?] I think parenting’s maybe gone a bit too much the other way, in the respect that probably [there are] a lot of younger parents, that maybe haven’t got the same skills or... “No” doesn’t mean no, it means “Maybe” .... They are more worldly.

When Mary (PPN) was asked why choice had been limited to stars and houses on the mural, she replied, “They would get confused with too much choice”. She had been confident, however, that her students could efficiently manage the complex structure of the demonstration art lesson. It is more likely that choices for her students would have threatened her own sense of control, rather than her students’ equanimity. Mary had a strong idea of what the finished product should look like, and had provided all the materials to enable the students to achieve that precise end-result. Increasing the choices would have made the outcome unpredictable, and might have necessitated a last-minute scramble for different materials. Efficient organisation was seen as a means of maintaining control over the students’ environment, and was a central issue for all PAE teachers. Most, like Belinda (3/4S) stated that “to be organized” was the major factor in ensuring the success of an art lesson, thus precluding last-minute adaptations for students’ individual requirements.

Dorothy (7N), Jane (1N) and Belinda (3/4S) had an additional fear of students finishing at different times. In order to combat this problem, Belinda purposely made her art lessons technically easy, but with complex stages: “It’s a nice quiet time. Our art lessons are very quiet. They’re so detailed, the art lessons, that the children are busy putting all the pieces together, putting the template pieces together. It takes a full hour for them to complete the art .... They can’t finish it quickly”.

“More self-esteem comes out of it”: control as a means of protecting students from failure

In his article on feminism, Buckle (2001) stated that “men have a right to restrict in so far as that is necessary for protection” (p.17). This view of restriction and protection resonates with the views of PAE teachers in this study. Ann (2S) stated, “They need to learn to do as they are told .... Then they will start to get feelings of competence and success”. The other PAE teachers would have found Ann’s statement rather stark, but they too, emphasised control in order to protect their students from the distress of disappointing results.

All the junior primary teachers justified their control over the image-making process because children in the lower grades did not have the skills to draw representationally and would be disappointed with their independent attempts. Wendy (PPS) hated:

to see them struggling .... [So] we usually just put templates out, because they go, ‘I don’t know how to do a bunny.’ ‘Just do the best you can and have a

look at that picture, see if it looks a bit like that.’ But they go ‘Ooh er [doubtfully]’, because they want to do it so it really looks like a bunny, not just [any old thing]’.

Dorothy (7A) also found her students were strongly self-critical, because they lacked the representational skills to achieve the naturalistic images they envisaged. It was argued that controlling the art-making process made it more likely that they would succeed, and Dorothy went to great lengths to make sure her students produced a good result. She rescued disappointing artworks by cutting individual paper silhouettes for each student to place on their sunset-painting.

Belinda (3/4S) agreed: “They do compare [with the teacher’s work], and they compare with other children as well ... When I was a child the teacher would draw something and say, “Away you go and draw a hot-air balloon”. I’d be: “Well I can’t draw a hot-air balloon”. I felt bad, because I couldn’t do what the teacher could do”. The resulting sinking in self-esteem was avoided by making sure every child’s work was uniformly good:

There’s not a lot of diversity. I justify that by saying they have success. They end up making an angel that does look like mine, and it does look nice ... They’re often very critical of themselves, whereas if they’ve made what the teacher’s made, they get a higher self-esteem. More self-esteem comes out of it .... You’ll find self-esteem very high in my room, because they’ve had so many successes.

### Summary

The implicit beliefs of PAE teachers were strongly related to those espoused in mimetic behaviourism. Art education was seen to have little cognitive content, and expression was not of any real concern. The main aim was to increase students’ fine-motor control and achieve a pleasing end-product. Primary students were seen to be unable to produce artworks of an acceptable standard because of their innate lack of physical maturation. There needed to be a significant input from the teacher if children were to learn the necessary technical skills. Control was not only necessary to teach the necessary skills, but also to control their natural chaotic natures.

PAE teachers differed from mimetic behaviourism, however, in their response to the issue of expression. Although their response was mainly limited to rhetoric, and formed a minor part of their concerns, their work was sometimes justified in relation to

expression. PAE teachers were also found to differ in another important respect. They gave prominence to the belief that control increased their students' self-esteem, by ensuring the production of attractive artworks. The ways in which PAE teachers in this study controlled their students' production of artworks will now be discussed.

### **5.5.3 Teaching strategies of PAE teachers**

Teachers employed many different methods to ensure that they controlled the images made by their students. They used completed examples of the prescribed image, templates, photocopied images and step-by-step directions. Major deviations from the prescribed image were strongly discouraged. Jane's (1N) description of the way she taught art, encapsulates the main teaching-strategies of predetermined art: "I show them the finished article, and then show them stage by stage how to get there".

#### "I show them the finished article"

All the PAE teachers agreed with Belinda (3/4S) that it's good to "have one that's already made, because quite often they [the students] are saying, 'What are you asking for?'" A ready-made image was seen as the simplest and clearest way of showing exactly what the teacher required. Wendy (PPS) explained how "we ... just do a model of that [the end-product] with the first group, and then the next group coming along we'd sort of show what we've done". Illustrations from how-to-teach-art books were also used to show the end-product. Mary (PPN) did not directly show her students the image from her reference book, but it had a powerful influence on the outcome because she internalised the image, accepting and rejecting suggestions accordingly.

#### "Show them stage by stage"

"Stage by stage" and "step by step" were phrases used by all the PAE teachers when discussing their teaching approaches. Ann (2S) described a typical lesson: "First we all draw round the template, then, all together, we cut out the shape. Then we cut out the eyes and glue them on. Then the ears, and so on. We do it all together from start to finish [proudly]".

The teachers made an effort to select an attractive end-product in order to motivate their students to follow the step-by-step procedures. Art books were favoured that offered a large, clear, coloured illustration of what the students should be aiming for. As well as showing students the final image, PAE teachers directed students towards their prescribed image through the use of templates and photocopied outlines.

“I use templates a lot”

When Kirsty (PP/1S) wanted her students’ work to look “a little bit reasonable” for, say, a Mother’s Day card, “we use templates”. Templates were not restricted to festive occasions however, they were used in almost all the art-activities in the three pre-primary classes.

In junior primary classes, templates were used primarily for shapes that the teacher gauged as being too difficult for the students to draw, as Ann (2S) explained:

Yes, I use them [templates] a lot. After all, it is difficult to draw things like animals. For example, when we were learning about Australian animals, I found templates very useful. They all got so used to drawing kangaroos with these templates that they learned to draw the same shape without the template. [Q: Was it exactly the same pose?]. Oh yes, but it did mean that they had learned how to draw a kangaroo [triumphantly].

Belinda (3/4S) described how templates could provide outlines that could be filled in with patches of leather or balls of tissue. The latter proving to be a very popular technique.

Colouring-in outlines from templates or photocopies, was also prevalent. Kirsty (PP/1S) saw the neat filling-in of spaces with crayons as an important landmark in the maturation of fine-motor skills:

A lot of them are loving colouring-in at the moment. It depends on their stage and their interest as well. [Q: Do you think they grow out of colouring-in?] I think they’re growing *into* it at the moment. Probably up through the middle grades they might be growing out of it. [Q: Do you give outlines for them to colour-in as an art-activity?] Definitely in Year 1 and towards the end of pre-primary .... They aren’t so interested in colouring-in earlier in the year, especially those boys who want to go off and play. Like if they do a little squiggle, then that’s it. It shouldn’t be, but it is more a girl-thing than a boy-thing, I seem to find.

Ann (2S) also favoured colouring-in the outlines from templates to hone the students’ skills: “Some children would be happy with just scribble. But I say, ‘You have to colour that in until it is all filled in – every bit of white must be covered.’”. Once she had asked her students to overlap the animal images and would not allow any

colouring-in: “They *had* to use just outlines, no colouring-in for *that* one”. The decision appeared arbitrary and completely at the teacher’s discretion, perhaps unconsciously replicating many workplace conditions.

Jane (1N) felt uncomfortable using templates, but admitted to providing photocopied images when she needed particular control over the end-product:

I don’t actually have templates. I know we do have them, but I don’t personally use templates in the class. So what I sometimes do, which is a cheat really, is, it depends what the activity is, I might photocopy something like the pegs [for the peg dolls]. If I know that they’re not going to get the shape or the proportion, I’ll photocopy it. And then all they have to do is cut out.

#### Free-activities were not as valued

Not all the PAE teachers’ art lessons were prescribed. In pre-primary classes, there were free-activities that allowed students to express their ideas through their artwork. These free-activities were, however, restricted to pre-primary, and generally regarded as a reward for work accomplished. Wendy [PPS], for example, used “free activities so that other children who have got behind in their work can catch up”. Artworks from the free-activities were seen as an adjunct to, and intrinsically subordinate to, the predetermined art of the teacher-directed activities. Mary (PPN) allowed the deviant moon from the teacher-directed activity to be incorporated into the Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star frieze. The rockets from the free-activity collage-table were not.

All teachers agreed that children should be allowed freedom of expression with self-portraits. Mary’s (PPN) was proud to be able to discuss her knowledge of the stages of child-art and showed pleasure in their highly individual approach to figure drawing. Knowledge of students stages of development allowed PAE teachers to see their students’ drawing of people as always acceptable, educationally sound and even cute, whereas their versions of stars, houses or moons were not.

#### “They really like that”: the popularity of craft lessons

It is significant that while the term “craft-lesson” was frequently used by PAE teachers, it was never used by any of the teachers aligned with child-centred art education or DBAE. This was because “craft-lesson” denoted the most prescribed art-activities. Art lessons and craft-lessons were seen as different: “You don’t always know what you will get with art” (Ann:2S); whereas with craft-lessons: “they end up with something they can either wear or play with, and they really like that” (Wendy:PPS). Belinda (3/4S)

agreed that, with craft, “they’ve made something useful to take home – a letterbox holder”. Because of the intense supervision needed, Belinda had “more parents on the craft session than the art session”.

Craft-lessons were frequently referred to as a priority and a particular pleasure for both PAE teachers and their students. Ann (2S) and Belinda (3/4S) agreed with Wendy (PPS) that they preferred to do “a lot of crafty things”, and were sure that their students preferred craft-lessons over art lessons. Ann had “three lessons for craft to every art lesson”.

#### “Can you come and help me?”: sorting out students’ problems

Perhaps because of Dorothy’s (7A) emphasis on an accurate reproduction of a prescribed image, her students required a lot of support in their art lessons: “There’s a lot of patience [needed], because they quite often say, ‘I can’t.’ And they constantly call your name: ‘Can you come and help me?’ It does require you to be in 29 places at once”. This problem was common to many PAE teacher. Belinda (3/4S) found that “they’re always asking me, ‘What can I do to make this look better?’”. In response to this tendency, she tended “to set quite – not difficult art lessons – but time-consuming art lessons”.

PAE teachers generally resisted students’ attempts to deviate from the prescribed image. Kirsty (PP/1S), for example, regarded it as a problem to overcome: “Well usually, especially this time of the year, we don’t [get those attempts at deviations]... We’ve sorted out all those problems earlier in the year”. Wendy (PPS) accepted that she was still in the middle of that process: “They were going to do some sort of a house with this printing but a lot just went mad with the printing .... Certain ones rush through it quickly, because they desperately want to get back to the block corner .... You hope that they’ll do what you hope that they’ll do, but if they don’t, it doesn’t really matter”.

Kirsty (PP/1S) explained how the phrasing of requests for students to come and make a prescribed image was important: “If you say to them, ‘Now it’s your turn’, they don’t feel like they’re under any pressure. They think ‘Hey! if I don’t go now, then I won’t get a turn’... [I don’t say] ‘Come on Johnny, come and do this now’. If you say that, they tend to think, ‘No, I won’t do it!’ So it’s the way you ask”.

The early-childhood teachers’ inclusive language, and often gentle and persuasive manner, encouraged students to accept what might be initially perceived as strange ideas, such as a bright-blue sky at night-time. The teachers’ rhetoric of expression also



remained largely unchallenged by the students. The interviews with pre-primary and Y1 students, showed that they were mostly in agreement with their teachers' view that they could use their own ideas as well as their teachers.

Students in senior grades were much more conscious of disparities between the expression they sought, and the prescribed images they were asked to make. One student, in 7N, for example, said the sunflower painting was the worst art lesson "because we couldn't have our own ideas, we had to stick to one thing". The best was the geometric monster "because we could use our imagination and stretch our imagination as big as we could".

Considering many PAE teachers' preoccupation with students' chaotic impulses, it is ironic that the very act of constraining students' choices in order to gain control of the art-making process, created discipline problems, particularly in the more senior grades. In Jane's (1N) joint-lesson, for example, it was significant that it was a Y5 student, and not a Y1 student, who challenged the statement: "It's up to you, you can do what you want". In Dorothy's (7A) observed lesson, students were persistent in attempted to push the boundaries of their prescribed image, and she felt under constant pressure: "they happily follow my lead ... except when we come to art".

#### "They're very eye-catching": assessing the students' work

Many teachers, like Wendy (PPS), collected a record of students' work in portfolios: "This half year we've got a portfolio compiled and that's got the work examples in there. They get to take it home ... to show parents in the holidays, and they bring it back again for next term, so it's an on-going thing". Others made "a mental record. I know who can't cut, because we cut every day. I know who can't hold their pencil correctly" (Belinda.3/4S). Success was generally "judged by neatness and precision rather than by insight or imagination" (Wolf, 1992, p.948).

The look of the end-products was very important in evaluating the success of an art lesson. Dorothy (7N) spent a long time contemplating students' artworks that had gained accolades from colleagues and parents. Belinda (3/4S) was also strongly influenced by the delight of the students:

The minute they made it, they said: "Can we take these home? And I said, "No, no! You can't take them home. They've got to stay in the room for two weeks, and then you can take them home. There was a big parent-evening on, and I just wanted to finish off my room with decorative art. But they were

desperate to take them home. A lot of people came in and said, “Oh, wow, aren’t they fantastic?”

If things didn’t look good, they were usually sent home, as Belinda (3/4S) explained, “So many things [didn’t work out]. ‘Just take that home, kids’”.

## 5.6 Conclusion

In predetermined art, teachers controlled their students’ artworks through the use of prescribed images, templates, photocopies and step-by-step instructions. The teachers’ implicit theories strongly influenced their teaching approaches. These beliefs can be directly related to the philosophical underpinnings of mimetic behaviourism: the prioritising of the teaching of good work habits and manipulative skills; the emphasis on a neat and pleasing end-product; the belief that children needed the teacher to carefully structure their experiences because they lacked the internal structures to comprehend complex ideas. Control was needed, therefore, for three main reasons: first, to maximise the teaching of skills, second, to ensure a good end-product, and third, to contain students’ inherently chaotic impulses.

It has been argued that PAE teachers’ implicit theories differed from those underlying mimetic behaviourism, as generally presented in the literature, in two ways. First, in their application of some of the child-centered rhetoric regarding expression. While Ann (2S), was unequivocal about her close direction of her students’ work, the other teachers were more ambivalent. Jane’s (1N) use of the word “cheat” to describe her use of photocopied images, for example, revealed some discomfort; Belinda (3/4S) felt that the sameness of the students’ images was a weakness in her art teaching approach. Whilst occasionally employing the rhetoric of child-centred notions of self-expression, the teachers, however, continued to use predetermined art teaching strategies.

The second distinguishing feature of PAE teachers was found to be the way in which they used control to protect their students from failure. The teachers recognised their students’ strong urge for expression, but felt that their immature skills led to failed images and, thus, low self-esteem. Only through the teachers’ control of procedures could students be guided towards the successful creation of worthwhile artworks, and an increase in their self-esteem.

## CHAPTER 6

### **Individualistic-expressive art education: Findings on teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

In this study, five teachers agreed with the child-centred premise that self-expression forms the basis of primary art education. The aim of this chapter is to examine how these five teachers' implicit theories of expression influenced their planning and teaching. It will be shown that there are significant links between their beliefs and the philosophical underpinnings of child-centred art education. At the same time, there are some significant differences, and for this reason, a separate term, "individualistic-expressive art education" (IEAE) will be employed to describe these teachers' beliefs and implicit theories. The important differences within this group of teachers will also be explored.

#### **6.1 Introducing the IEAE teachers**

The teachers who showed an allegiance with child-centred ideas of expression in art education were Alan (2N), Fiona (3N), Sally (5S), Phil (5/6S), and Daniel (6S). Related findings about Alan will be presented in a teacher-profile. Following this, there will be an analysis of the issues arising both from Alan's teacher-profile, and from the interviews and observed lessons of the four other teachers, whose teaching approaches are summarised below:

##### **6.1.1 Fiona (3N): "they really love expressing themselves"**

Fiona was a Y3 teacher in her early forties. She became a primary teacher, after her own children had started school, and was currently in her ninth year of teaching, eight of which had been at Northfield: "Y1 for five years, and then Y3 for three years". She had started at the school in the same year as Alan. There seemed to be an affinity between them because they were the most recent graduates, and also because they were the most recently recruited members of staff.

Fiona successfully integrated art into many aspects of her language programme, and was the only teacher in the study to describe art as a means of communication comparable with writing: "There's a lot of children, I find, that are quite good in art, and really love expressing themselves through pictures, because they have difficulty with the writing".

Art lessons with her 24 students were on Friday: “An hour and a half, it usually works out to be”. During the observed lesson, Fiona introduced the students to the techniques of layering wax-crayon over chalk and then taking a transfer-print. She encouraged student participation, incorporating each student’s suggestion into the introduction and encouraging debate about the effects created. All this was done in a gentle and inclusive manner. When making their prints, the students had free choice of both the colours they used and the images they made.

Fiona believed that, generally, “children come up with the ideas .... The previous class I had, were excellent with that. I’d sort of think, ‘Well we could think about doing this’, and they’d come up with all these ideas. They [the ideas] would be totally different to what I had [laughing], but they just had so many ideas, which was wonderful”. With her present class, however, “I need to sort of make lots of suggestions, and then they can do it .... Not a lot [of ideas] in this class”. They were also more quarrelsome in their attitude to each other. Because of these factors, Fiona tended to structure the art lessons more formally than she would have liked, and enlisted parental-help. Parents could prove a problem, however, intervening because they thought the students’ work has “got to look like a picture”.

### **6.1.2 Sally (5S): “They really enjoy doing what they want to do”**

Sally was in her mid-twenties, and had only been teaching for two years. During her first year, she had taught a different class every term, three of which (Y1/2, Y4, and Y6) had been at Southfield. She had been given a one-year contract for the current year with Y5, and, “if no-one transfers me, then I can stay”.

During her graduate diploma, there had been only six hours art education, and Sally was not very confident in this subject. She had, however, decided that her priority was for students to create “their own way of doing things .... They really enjoy doing what they want to do, instead of us always saying, ‘This is what we are going to do’”.

Sally had found that the more informal atmosphere in junior primary suited her approach to art teaching much more than the clearer structures required in Y5: “They’re not a good class. The first term was really difficult, but they’re a lot better now”. Anxiety about discipline made her very conscious of the importance of the organisational aspects art lessons: “There is a sink in the library just around the corner, where they can go to change their water, but not to wash anything .... I can watch, but you can’t really do anything .... They’re screaming out there”.

Despite worries about her students' level of self-discipline, Sally had a very positive attitude towards her students as art-creators: "They seem to have a lot of confidence". Once their interest were harnessed, they were a rich resource of original ideas: "some of them have that many ideas, they'll just block everything out. They'll do just what they want to do [smiling proudly]". Her students also appreciated others' achievements: "If someone makes something really great, they'll all say that they really like it".

### **6.1.3 Phil (5/6S): "you don't feel as though you had to stress yourself"**

Phil was in his early thirties, and had previously taught as a primary physical education specialist and a junior high school manual-arts teacher. At Southfield, he taught Physical Education in the mornings, Monday to Thursday. In the afternoons and all day Friday he taught "social studies and drama and art and those subjects", to free the Y6 class-teacher for administrative duties.

Phil was a relaxed and self-confident teacher:

I don't have any discipline problems at all. So it makes teaching so much easier. Mental exhaustion – it doesn't really happen. You know, when you finish for the day and you think, "Oh, I've just had a day's work and didn't even feel as though I did anything". Not that I don't do anything. But you don't feel as though you had to stress yourself or push yourself in any way, which is good.

Art was generally for "a couple of hours on a Friday", and was a subject he enjoyed: "I like it, it's good". Phil's central aim was to encourage self-expression in his students' work, and this was reflected in his choice of ideal in-service: "encouraging children to express their emotions through their art work". He wanted an atmosphere in which students could develop their ideas without pressure: "The more relaxed you become, I think the kids respond to that. If you're on their back ... [it's not good]".

Phil regarded his students as a valuable resource in the art-making process, capable of creative, individual interpretations of his art-themes. He showed a great deal of interest in the results from the student-survey, feeling that the more he knew about his students, the better he would be able to respond to their needs. Data from the student-survey indicated they were enthusiastic about art, keen on expressing their own ideas and appreciative of the choices Phil offered.

#### **6.1.4 Daniel (6S): “they get free rein”**

Daniel was a young, dynamic, recent graduate. He worked as a relief-teacher, and regularly taught Y6, to release the class-teacher for administrative work. This happened on the day of the interview.

Graduating as an early-childhood teacher, Daniel’s first position had been as “a coordinator at a child-care centre for about three months. But it wasn’t very sustaining as far as being a teacher goes .... So I left that, and I did relief-teaching for the last two years .... I love it ... because it really teaches you to adapt to a different situation very quickly”.

Daniel found work through an agency. “To get me in the school, they have to pay the agency out of their own budget ... [At other schools] you can be the most whiz-bang teacher, but they would rather ... not pay that fee”. It was clear that he felt he was worth the fee, and spoke with energy and conviction about his teaching. The only time he had faced a problem was with an exceptionally difficult class – “not even the principals would come down there”.

In art teaching, Daniel’s emphasis was strongly on expression. He differentiated art from other subjects because the students were “actually into expression”. His priority in the arts was: “definitely visual arts as number one, because that’s expression. As to the use of templates, he emphatically declared, “No I strongly disagree with that”.

His favourite art lesson was when students designed a front cover for a magazine:

It’s up to them. They get free reign of the genre of art that they want to use, be it collage, be it drawing, be it colouring-in, whatever they want to do .... I’ll get a *Smash Hits* magazine or a *Women’s Weekly* and I’ll say, “Why would you look at this? What can you see on the cover?” Then they can relate it back to real-life and real-life experience.

Daniel told his students “that art carries on into later life when you look at different occupations that use art. For example, architecture, graphic design, advertising, everything” However, he rarely discussed visual artworks: “I think kids would get bored with that”.

#### **6.2 Alan: a profile of “an exceptionally gifted teacher”**

Alan was in his early thirties, and had been teaching for seven years, two in the country

town of Middleton, and the last five at Northfield. He had recently taken a year's leave to travel in Europe and America. On his return to Northfield, he took the Y7 class for a year, and then his present Y2 class. Previously he had taught in Y4, and Y2/3: "I've got quite a big range there".

### **6.2.1 Getting to know Alan: "the *children* love him"**

In order to improve his chances of promotion, Alan had completed a unit towards his honours' year at a local university: "I did quite well, actually. I think it was the first high distinction I ever got ... Because I've been teaching, it all makes sense". Alan then made the decision to leave Northfield: "Just for a little while. Just for something new. Because I don't have any children or anything of my own, so I just want to go out and have a bit of an adventure". Towards the end of the interview, he revealed another aspect behind the move:

To be really honest, I'm really quite exhausted .... Yes, I'm tired. I have never had a better job. I don't think I'd ever find a better job, but I need time to recharge. A couple of years at least I think, to recharge, and maybe do my fourth year [honours-year] in-between, so I can get some more money and go up the ladder.

While recognised the all-consuming nature of his teaching-approach, Alan never blamed his workplace-conditions for his exhaustion. Instead, he always spoke with enthusiasm about his teaching, the school, his colleagues and his students.

Alan prided himself on his love of change and quirky individualism. At the beginning of the year he had asked to move to another classroom: "I wanted to go into that one before I [left] .... I wanted to go into that classroom and have a feel of it ... because it's brick, and it just looks different to the rest of the school. And it's warmer, and it's winter". The principal and other members of staff described how they would miss this type of idiosyncrasy, and also his lively sense of humour. He was the member of staff who initiated events, such as bets on the Melbourne Cup. When he entered the staffroom, the conversation increased in animation and good-humoured banter.

#### "All the things hanging down, the mess"

When I first visited Northfield, two years prior to this study, Alan was on leave. The principal referred to him then as "an exceptionally gifted teacher", and congratulated himself on persuading Alan to return when his leave finished. When this study began, the principal was less effusive. There may have been some resentment that Alan had

decided to resign again.

The principal regarded Alan and Dorothy (7N) as having two extremes in teaching styles: “Oh, the *children* love him, but he drove *Dorothy* up the wall: all the things hanging down, the mess. She is so precise; but, of course, very concerned for the children”. He complained particularly about the difficulties of getting into Alan’s classroom, because of the low displays dangling from the ceiling. When asked about this issue, Alan responded:

The original boss [Dorothy] didn’t like it because it looked too messy. And even Michael [the principal], when he first came, said, “Why? Why do I have to duck everywhere?” And I said, “Well that’s because they [the students] can read it. They can look at it and compare it. Well there’s no point is there [in having it higher]?” ... But as soon as I told him, then it was fine. As soon as I told the original boss [Dorothy], it was fine with her too.

While Alan argued that the low displays were for sound educational reasons, he also enjoyed the fact that “it’s fun watching people knock their heads”.

“They have success and enjoy themselves”

For Alan, good socialisation was the foundation for learning effectively during the first term: “I do lots and lots of different things to socialise; things they don’t even realise .... I don’t record, I don’t evaluate, I just observe. Like sitting next to each other, putting raincoats next to each other, kids that don’t like each other or don’t get on”.

Although Alan was regarded as the most liberal and unstructured teacher in the school, he was not a *laissez-faire* teacher:

My main vision or statement, or whatever you want to call it, is that they have success and enjoy themselves. They have to, because I hated it, I hated primary school. I was made to feel dumb and stupid. Not because they were terrible teachers – they didn’t know. And it was the seventies too. All that open-plan classroom stuff, just didn’t suit me. I was the kid who needed to be focused and structured. It was all too airy-fairy.

Alan used the students as an important resource. He studied their individual and social needs, and responded to their ideas and suggestions during the observed lesson. Nevertheless, he regarded himself as having an important leadership-role. He had never,



for example, considered the question of which subjects were popular with the students: “I don’t know, I couldn’t tell you. I’ve never done that [ask them]. I’ve never even thought to do that”. He regarded it as his task to decide important outcomes, and to guide his students towards those goals, even when, as in maths, there was some resistance from the students.

### **6.2.2 Workplace conditions: “lucky to work here”**

Alan felt “lucky to work here. Really, really lucky .... The best thing I’ve ever done is come to work here”. He saw his teaching colleagues as a particularly valuable resource:

I was really raw when I started, and still am learning, as you always do. But when I first started at the school in Middleton [a country town in the south-west of WA], I was left to my own devices, and I was just out of college. I was just learning. It takes a while. But when I came here, it was different. Everyone was so experienced. I think there were only two of us [new] – Fiona [3N] and myself.

Although he was aware of the limited budget for art supplies, Alan did not feel that this restricted his art-teaching programme in any significant way. He had autonomy in deciding how to allocate time within his teaching programme. There was no pressure to finish within a specific time; he could “carry on as long as it’s valid”.

Alan and his twenty-six Y2 students worked in a small, cramped classroom. The desks had lids and were arranged in fours “to increase social interaction”. A carpet softened noise and provided warmth in winter, but was difficult to keep clean during art-activities. Storage was a problem, with cupboards full to bursting point. Because of the cramped conditions, it was difficult to physically negotiate around the furniture. Adults had the additional problem of constantly colliding with hanging displays. A small veranda at the back had wooden trestles for the students to work on, which allowed students to paint when it rained. Access to a sink was via the veranda, and down some steps.

Commercially produced or teacher-made visual aids were not on display. Instead the walls and hanging displays were covered in students’ work. All the artworks, including chalk drawings and large paintings on the theme of autumn, showed individuality in their imagery. They were often accompanied by written comments from the students. Other display-areas also highlighted students’ writing achievements. Although Alan ranked a lack of space as the most restricting aspect of his teaching circumstances, the

variety and quality of the students' artworks supported Alan's statement: "Yes, it's hard .... Yes, it's pretty crowded. But you get around that".

### **6.2.3 Alan's students: "they get excited"**

Because students had problems pronouncing his surname, he liked to be known as Mr. C. This informality, plus the fact that he was the only male teacher in the school, added to the sense of Alan having a special and close relationship with the students. Most of the other teachers adopted the nickname of Mr. C with good humour, because, as Andrea (4N) explained, "the students think it's really cool". Dorothy (7N), however, thought it was too informal. When students asked for Mr. C in the staff room, she made the point of pronouncing his name in full when she replied.

#### "You can teach them anything. It's just the way you do it": Alan's attitude to his students

Alan shared a friendly and jocular relationship with students from both his own class and other grades. Older students gave him snippets of news or the latest joke because "they like my sense of humour". Junior-primary students would spontaneously hug him, and he responded with warm affection. "You can do anything and they think you're fantastic .... I just love that. They just go up and hug you. It's great. Yes, lots of hugs".

Alan felt a particular rapport with "the junior-school [younger grades] because they're so excited. If you do it well enough ... you can say "We're going to learn how to tie our shoe laces today!" and they get excited .... The little ones are just eager and they love you, they think you're wonderful". He was adamant that people constantly underestimated what junior-primary children could do: "The motto in our classroom is: 'I don't care if you get it wrong', this is me speaking, "As long as you're trying. If you're not trying, *then* I'll get disappointed'. I just try and foster that .... Give them anything and they can do it, and they're quite happy to do it".

This belief had led him into conflict with a recent student-teacher's supervisor:

I had a student-teacher last year, and his supervisor came out and told me, "You cannot teach little children about verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, or conjunctions". I was just shocked. Because that's rubbish. That's absolute nonsense. You can teach them anything. It's just the way you do it, that's all. And the way you say it, and what you make a big deal of.

“It was good to get all messy”: The students’ attitude to art

A large proportion (54%) of Alan’s students ranked art as their favourite subject. Computers (32%) ranked second, Sport (9%) third, and Science (5%) fourth, with the other subjects not ranked at all. In the interview, Alan correctly anticipated that maths would be low on the list (0%).

Three of Alan’s students were interviewed about their views on art education. Tim and Susan had decided views on the issues raised, and gave considered reasons for their answers. Valerie tended to agree with everything that Susan said. In an attempt to circumvent this problem, Valerie was asked her opinion first, but she still replied, “What does Susan think? I think that too”.

All three students agreed that they were good at art. This self-confidence would have been strongly applauded by Alan: “I hope they would say, “Yes” [they are good at art]. I don’t know if they will. I hope they would. If they said ‘Yes’, I would be ecstatic”.

The three students said they preferred to talk over their ideas with their friends before deciding what to create in their art lessons. They agreed that this was the usual way that Mr C allowed them to develop ideas in art. Talking about specific art lessons, led Tim to say that he “sometimes” used his own ideas. Alan correctly predicted their favourite lessons: “I think they probably enjoyed the pastels. The other colours, the brighter colours and the smudging. The smudging was really successful. They were amazed with what they could achieve with it”. Tim confirmed “it was fun to smudge. It was good to get all messy on your hands”.

Alan was asked to anticipate what choices his class would make in the student-survey art lesson. “I’d say they’d probably pick anything *but* their own drawing, because we do that most of the time”. While most students initially chose to use their own images, 38% of these changed their minds when they saw the templates and the photocopied drawings being distributed. This resulted in a lower proportion of students preferring child-centred art (Table 11) than had been initially generated, and was a trend common to all the junior-primary classes in this study.

Table 11 *Y2N students' preferred means of getting ideas for their drawings:*

The preferred means of getting ideas for their drawings	Y2N
Predetermined art	32%
Child-centred art	36%
Tutored images	23%
Instrumental art	9%

#### **6.2.4 Alan's sense of self-efficacy: "they'll jump through hoops for me"**

Alan recognised that some aspects of his teaching irritated the principal: "I'm really bad at administration things. The boss is always on my case about administration. I'd never make a good principal or anything like that, because I couldn't keep up with the paperwork. And nor would I want to". "Nor would I want to" recognised and validated the differences between them.

There had also been some conflict with the principal and other teachers about the mess he made during art lessons:

I'm known for making messes. I used to get into trouble for it in the early days but ... they realised I'm always going to make a mess. I'd forget to put newspaper down on the carpet. Sometimes I get so caught up in the lesson that I'd forget about it [the mess] but I don't care now. If it makes a mess, it's a mess. I mean I usually have paint all over the street and stuff [laughs].

Again, Alan kept to his own style of teaching, and the others learned to live with it.

Although self-confident about his own teaching methods, Alan respected others' viewpoints. He had been grateful for feedback on his teaching from more experienced members of staff. Even Dorothy's persistent criticism of his teaching-style in Y7 had been accepted with understanding and good humour. Alan agreed with her that his teaching-approach was not suited to senior primary students: "Y7s are a bit harder .... I'm not quite as good, as confident with Y7s".

At the same time, Alan was sure that his teaching-approach was appropriate to his particular personality, and that it was extremely effective with junior and middle primary students. His present class, reported as badly behaved by their previous teacher, Jane (1A), would "jump through hoops for me. I don't think they're anything special,

that I know of anyway ... I think it's just being eager. They know that I'm eager too".

"I do it quite capably": Alan's self-efficacy when teaching art

Alan enjoyed teaching art, but admitted that "I don't know if I cover all the art objectives ... With the new Curriculum Framework, I'd have to really follow that. I think I would. I pretty much would. With the children we just have fun, just doing things and trying new things and getting dirty". While the school had decided to leave the Arts until the end of their curriculum programme, "I'd rather deal with that first, I think". Any pressure from the Curriculum Framework to include a study of visual artworks was, however, regarded as impractical: "I could probably get the resources, I just don't do it. We don't know enough about them [artists] or feel confident enough about talking about them. But no, I never do .... I can see the importance of it, for sure. The curriculum framework's giving all of us, all of a sudden, everyone, a headache".

For all these reasons, Alan thought that his students would benefit from having a visual arts specialist-teacher:

because then I would know they were getting someone who knows the documents and the specifics of it ... I often get concerned that I'm not passing them on with a continuation of the skills that they must learn each year. So by the time they get to high school or an adult they've had the right exposure. I know that I do a lot, and I know that I do it quite capably, but if we had a specialist that would be good.

Despite his concerns about a lack of knowledge, Alan was sanguine about his art teaching: "I do it quite capably", and did not relish art in-services. His truculence in a previous PD day focused on the Curriculum Framework for the Arts, was referred to in the interview:

I don't really dread anything (in art). Only when I do it with my peers. With the kids, no. I like it when I'm modelling their lesson. I like doing that. But if I'm doing that with my peers, it is horrible .... That day here [the in-service], I didn't like it – being exposed. [Q: Is that why you did your introduction before I could watch it?] Probably [laughs]. Yes, it was actually.

Alan's sensitivity to being exposed was an interesting counterpoint to his normally strong sense of self-confidence.

### **6.2.6 Alan's beliefs and implicit theories about expression in art education: "know the kids"**

When answering the questionnaire, Alan agreed with apparently contradictory statements such as: "The main role of art is therapeutic as it allows children to express their individuality and emotions", and "Art is mostly about learning fine motor skills and the skilled manipulation of a variety of art materials". In the section of the questionnaire where teachers were invited to write about "an issue you feel is important and has been omitted", Alan wrote: "Art is a way to get to know the child. Listening, watching. It is one of the best ways to aid self-esteem etc.". This came much closer to the motivating belief that surfaced throughout the interview.

#### "Know the kids"

Alan's priority in art was to "know what you want to achieve and know the kids .... The rest sort of falls into place". At the beginning of each year, Alan used visual-expression to study the general social and emotional needs of his students, and their reaction to art itself:

It's not as structured, so that they can start to feel comfortable in the classrooms, start to feel comfortable with me, start to feel comfortable with just being in Y2. So usually ... I'll give them some materials, whether it be straws or tinsel or whatever, and just say, "Go on, off you go". I've found that I can just sit back; it gives me time to get to know the kids ... watch them and see who's fighting and who's not, and who's good at art, naturally good at art, and who might feel uncomfortable with art and stuff like that. [I do this] possibly for the first half of the term, but try to get them different materials to use, not just painting and not just drawing. It works beautifully because it frees them up, and then I can listen to them talk and see what their home-life is like, and what television they watch.

Following up on this beginning, there would be at least one art lesson in each term when the students had total freedom to make their own images.

#### "They did what they did and stuck with it"

In the observed lesson, Alan took pride in the individuality of each student's image, and was pleased with the freedom of their responses to the abstract images: "The children are quite free to say 'Oh that looks like - !' whatever they say. They don't feel nervous about finding an answer. They're just quite happy to give it to you; even if it looks like a

chicken's leg".

Alan's students made a card for Mother's Day:

It was connected with maths symmetry. They fold the piece of paper up and cut the lines out, any shape they want, and open it up. So that was the maths, talking about symmetry. Then we stuck it on to coloured card. They filled the holes in with glitter or paint or crayons or bits of leaves. They stuck on leaves from outside. It looked terrible. It wasn't an attractive Mothers' Day card, not what you'd call a great Mother's Day card .... I watched them give it to their mums ... and they [the students] were really excited. But I saw the mum's faces. They sort of went, "Oh, that's lovely [unenthusiastically]". But it was really important to the kids, and they'd spent a lot of time at it. [Q: Do you feel a pressure to do more conventional things?] Yes. I feel pressure to do pretty-beautiful. Especially being the only full-time male teacher. All the other teachers do beautiful, very pretty, lovely stuff. When it was finished, even I said to myself, "This looks crappy". But it didn't matter. I feel pressured, but I still do what I want to do [laughs] .... All of them had the opportunity to make other stuff too. But they didn't. No, not one kid [proudly]. They did what they did, and stuck with it.

Alan resisted pressures to conform and make predetermined image because he felt it was more important that students expressed their own ideas, and his students appeared to be in agreement. Predetermined art was not what he wanted to do: "No, I haven't used templates at all".

#### "Just have fun and getting dirty"

Ideas for art lessons usually came "standing in the shower and saying, 'That didn't work' or, 'What can I do?' I usually get my best ideas there, or walking to school". This lack of forward planning gave Alan flexibility when responding to his students' needs. In the demonstration lesson, for example, groups of four students drew on one large piece of paper folded into four. This idea had developed from knowing that his students needed to experience sharing co-operatively with their friends: "That was just direct from knowing the kids".

Alan did not adhere to any idea of sequential art lessons. In the observed lesson, he had continued a theme of colour-mixing with chalk pastels from a previous art lesson. His own perception, however, was that "that art lesson was just a one-off. It wasn't really

connected to anything. It was just continuing on from the colour and the smudging”. Only if the art lesson fitted into a society and environment, maths or language theme did he regard it as a noticeable theme. Rather than having a sequential art programme, the aim was to “just have fun, just doing things and trying new things and getting dirty”.

Alan felt that art could be used to suffuse other subjects with feelings of fun and hands-on activities. The large paintings on display were from “a language activity. I try and get art into everything. Maths, the whole lot, because the little kids just love it. So it helps them connect quicker. They say, ‘O.K., I can do maths’”. This type of integration, however, saw visual-expressive outcomes given equal prominence to outcomes in other subject areas.

### Summary

Although Alan generally used his own ideas as the basis for art activities, his choice was dictated by what he felt were the interests of his students. The child was placed at the centre of the art-learning experience. He sought to know his students as fully as possible, so that he could respond effectively to their needs and interests and increase their growth. Self-expression was seen to be at the core of art, and was thus central to the success of these endeavours. Through integration, Alan sought to permeate other learning areas with the pleasures he associated with art: spontaneity, individuality, fun and mess.

### **6.2.7 Alan’s teaching strategies: “that’s *all* I did”**

In art, Alan’s core aim was to provide a teaching environment that would encourage children to successfully create individual images. He constructed teaching strategies in order to promote this central aim.

### “It depends on what I’m thinking about”: flexibility in planning

Alan liked to be flexible when structuring his art lessons: “It depends. Not just depends on what I’m thinking about, but the mixture. Sometimes we might all be painting, sometimes we might have different [art-activities]. Sometimes some will be painting and some will be doing maths with me ... I can keep an ear on both, and see what’s happening”.

Flexibility applied to his themes as well. He described how a free art-activity was transformed into a themed lesson:

Our assembly’s got Old Man Emu as the song. So they draw a picture of an



emu. And that purely came out because someone said, “Can I do an emu?” And I said, “You can do whatever you like.” And then I said, “Why don’t we all draw an emu? Does everyone want to draw an emu?” And they all said, “Yes!” That was just purely for fun.

“I like to do it”: setting a direction for the art lesson

Alan generally started a themed art-class by modelling the art-technique. “Hopefully they’d see that I can’t draw or paint, but I like to do it. So I don’t really care what it looks like, as long as I’m trying .... I never used to draw in school because I didn’t have the confidence. But in front of the kids I can do anything. They make you feel confident”.

When I first arrived in the classroom for the observed lesson, the students had come in from recess. Alan was reminding them that he had talked about hot and cool colours, smudging lines and just waiting to see how it develops, rather than having a set idea of a picture. He hadn’t been sure what he had been making and they should try that too. In the interview, he described his introduction:

I just started off. I didn’t really tell them what we were doing. I just said that they were to watch Mr C. I started to do anything and then just asked them questions – What can you see? I told them I wasn’t really going to draw anything. It was going to be abstract. Because we’d been talking about the word abstract ... and that’s about all I said. Then they started to give me feedback, because they’re really quite good at that. If they’re not hanging off my leg or something, it’s quite easy to talk. And that’s all we did. Once the first person said, “I can see this”, it sort of snowballed. Then we talked about colours and I reminded them about hot and cool colours, and that was it. That’s *all* I did.

“That’s *all* I did” was said without false modesty. Alan felt that the direction of the lesson had flowed quite naturally and easily from the interests of his students. His discussion of the potentially difficult concept of abstract art and his faith in his students’ ability to come up with interesting ideas, illustrates a view of the child as a valuable and adaptable teaching resource.

“They’re capable of anything”: getting the students started on their work

Large pieces of white cartridge paper had already been folded into quarters so that four students could work on an A3 sized rectangle at each corner. They were to choose their

own buddies to work with. “Some of them who are friends, are having trouble socialising. So I knew that if I let them choose, they’d choose the people I wanted them to, [the ones they needed] to try and get on with. Just to increase their skills of sharing”.

Alan announced firmly that there was to be no whingeing if someone went over the line into the next person’s place. He mimicked the whining voice of a complaining child, to general laughter, a technique that proved very effective in defusing potential problems. During the lesson, several children made comments such as: “You’ve gone over my side – but I’m not whinging!” and “Look, I’ve gone over the line, but we’re not going to whinge about something like that”. When I discussed this success with him, he stated proudly, “I’m a firm believer in that they’re capable of anything”.

#### “You’ve got to get in there”: assisting students with problems

There were very few problems during the lesson. Although Alan left his own artwork up on the board and some students went to have a closer look before they began, no one copied his shapes and colours. All were soon absorbed in their own application of colours and smudging. Some students enjoyed the smudging so much, that they initially blended all their colours into one. When this happened, they worked again over the top with darker lines and shapes. All the students produced artworks with interesting areas of soft smudges, and harder blocks of colour and lines. They worked well together, generously sharing resources, and discussing their work avidly. Their concentration lasted for the full forty minutes allocated for the activity.

Alan maintained an active role while the students worked: “I get in there. I just *don’t* tell them it’s wrong or not quite correct, at all. Never say anything like that. I just say, ‘Oh gee, I’d use a bit more colour there’, or ‘Wow, imagine what you could do with orange there,’ or something. And then they do it. But, no, you’ve got to get in there”. Even when students were settled and not obviously in need of assistance, he would still take an active part in the activity: “Ninety-nine percent, I’d always be talking”.

If students asked for assistance because they could not draw something: “At the beginning I might draw it for them. Maybe ... I’d even do it now at the end of the year. I’d do it anytime, depending on if the child has had trouble at home or something. But throughout the year you just try and encourage them to do it themselves”. Intervention was seen as legitimate to prevent a sense of failure: “Art is one of the best ways to aid self-esteem”.

If a child had wanted to deviate from Alan’s theme and, for example, make a line

drawing rather than a smudge drawing, Alan took this attitude:

I'd let them do it [make a line drawing]. Because if you let them do it, I'll eventually get a smudge drawing out of them somewhere along the line ... With this class I *could* say "No, no, I don't want you to do that, I want you to do this". But it's supposed to be fun, it's supposed to be *their* work. In that instance that would be fine, I'd let them do whatever they wanted. That wouldn't happen though. But if they did that, yes, I'd let them do it.

Students who were very unhappy about their artwork were allowed to start again. "If they're really adamant, they really think that they've mucked it up, they can start again. I might give them a limit, depending on what sort of materials I'm using. I might say, 'Look we don't have a lot of these so ... this is the only one we're doing'. He also did not insist on children finishing work if they had lost enthusiasm. He used the example of the wax scraffito pictures that involved a long, laborious procedure on A3 paper: "I think three of them didn't finish because it was all too much for them. They put a hole in it or something and they didn't want to do it after that. So that's fine. Off they went and built something with the Lego or Duplo, or played on the computer".

#### "Success is what I hope they get": evaluation of the art lesson

When asked about the main aim of the observed art lesson, Alan immediately discussed the importance of sharing and cooperating between friends. He thought that this had successfully been achieved in the observed lesson.

When asked about any particular art objectives for the lesson, he was initially a little hesitant as though uncertain of this aspect of the art lesson.

Mmmm. Yes. Smudging. The art-theme was smudging and [long pause] colour. To see if they could see whatever they said it was, if the colours were appropriate. If they said it was a fire, was it a hot colour? And abstractness. And the incidental ones were splitting it into four and going over the lines to try and – the socialization of it all.

While Alan had a very strong art component to the lesson, he seems to have achieved it in an intuitive way. His focus was on the socialising aspect of the technique. His skilful use of the abstract pictures as a means of personal communication to others was not presented as an art concept but as a language skill.

At the end of the lesson, Alan took up a student's suggestion that they should sign their names to emulate the way artists sign their work and to establish authorship of each piece. In many cases this was done with such a flourish, the large black charcoal signature dominated the work. Alan, however, was happy to sacrifice the look of the artwork, for the obvious pleasure and pride with which the students signed their work. He was not at all concerned about the neatness of the product.

Student communication through the drawings was later reinforced with written comments. Alan asked the students to say what they saw in each other's drawings and to write sentences about three of them. These were then displayed alongside the artist's interpretation.

They're quite good responses .... Fire, sea, sandstorms, I think there were a few bugs, so it's quite good. They had to write three [comments], a couple of sentences each. They've all gone around and written about three other people's. They're being typed up. When they're finished and glued on, they'll write about their own, to say what it is. The others are being typed. *Theirs* will be handwritten, because then it becomes more theirs than the others, if you see what I mean ... because it's got their own writing on it – not typed.

It is significant that Alan gave a high priority to the personal identification of the artist's ideas through handwriting, rather than a neat, typed script. He again emphasised the importance of the students' identification with and pride in their individual achievements.

While the observed lesson skilfully demonstrated the different responses that viewers can have of abstract art, a goal that would have been of central interest to exponents of DBAE, Alan never initiated any discussion about artists, and did not view it as intrinsic to the lesson.

At the end of art lessons he would sometimes select particular children's work to discuss. This was done primarily with the aim of building up the self-confidence of individual children, rather than with the specific aim of reinforcing learned art-concepts. It was part of his pattern of selecting one piece of work for discussion from each child from any subject area: "We usually try and get around one piece of every child's work once a week. No matter if it's from art or from maths or from language or from whatever, so that they can get up and show it, or I'd say it out loud".

Alan equated a feeling of success with a formal recognition of the achievement of individual work from both himself and from the other students: “So success is what I hope they get. They feel like they’ve actually made something they can be proud of. That’s why we do framing and putting it into other children’s work and so on”.

### **6.2.8 Summary**

Alan’s ideal in-service was learning “how to encourage children to express their emotions through their art work”. His choice reflected his concern to place his students at the centre of the learning process. This child-centred emphasis permeated all aspects of his art teaching. His strong sense of efficacy allowed him to remain focused and consistent in this approach.

Alan gave priority to getting to know his students so that he could cultivate their individuality and respond to their strengths and weaknesses. He laid great emphasis on the social needs of his students within the classroom and used an holistic approach in his teaching. His emphasis was on success, but it was not the success of the PAE teacher, guaranteeing an attractive product through the control of the art-making process. Success for Alan depended on whether his students understood the value of creating an image that reflected their personal views and emotions. He hoped that this increase in self-confidence through art would permeate other learning areas and facilitate the social cohesion of the class.

Some of Alan’s teaching methods did not conform to generally accepted child-centred practice: he drew on the students’ work, and he modelled images. His aim in doing these things, however, was not an attempt to make the students conform to a prescribed image. Instead, he intervened in an attempt to show his students the potential choices they could make. Managerial issues involving controlling behaviour rarely arose in his interactions with the students. The students’ enthusiasm motivated their work and Alan’s interventions focused on art elements that might expand the students’ creativity. He maintained that children were capable of great things. For him, a successful teacher of art was one who knew the students intimately, and who could thus harness their innate enthusiasm and open-mindedness.

## **6.3 Themes arising from the analysis of data**

This section will analyse the themes arising from the teacher-profile of Alan, and from the observed lessons and interviews with Fiona, Sally, Phil and Daniel.

### **6.3.1 The teachers faced similar workplace conditions: “painting and things like that can be tricky”**

The IEAE teachers had cramped classrooms, limited supplies of art materials, problems with storage, and no direct access to water. Fiona (3N) had no “flat surface in my classroom at all. So painting and things like that can be tricky, because they’re still young and so accidents happen quite easily on the carpet. I find that restricting”. Outside, gusts of wind made the paper blow about. Parents who came to assist Fiona in the observed lesson, joked about their dread of being told it was going to be a painting lesson.

It has already been noted that Rafferty (1987) argued that adverse workplace-conditions militate against the use of child-centred approaches in art education. Data in this study, however, does not support this view. Teachers with the most advantageous workplace-conditions (in pre-primary and Y1), tended towards predetermined art rather than child-centred methods of teaching. Teachers most in sympathy with child-centred ideas had difficult conditions in which to teach art, yet it did not inhibit their use of child-centred methods in their art education programmes. As Alan (2N) stated, “Yes, it’s hard ... but you get around that”.

#### “A lot of what we learn[ed went] out the window”: knowledge of how to teach art

It is striking that all the recent graduates in this study were IEAE teachers, and therefore had recent contact with child-centred ideas of expression. Daniel (6S) described how “one of my lecturers at uni. would have screamed if I’d used templates”. All of the IEAE teachers, however, argued that their tertiary education had no significant impact on their teaching-practice. Sally (5S) “only had six hours of training in art, and that’s it ... that was useless”. Moreover, supervising-teachers on school-practices, told them to ignore what they had learned at university. Sally remembered that “they said ‘Don’t pay attention to them. Do what I tell you to do.’ That’s what they all told me”. Daniel (6S) agreed: “I remember teachers saying to me, that once we get into the workforce, a lot of what we learn will go out the window. And yes, it’s pretty much true”.

As recent graduates, the IEAE teachers might have been expected to retain some information about the art curriculum, but they did not. Along with the PAE teachers, they lacked any working knowledge of the WA Curriculum for the Arts. Daniel said, “To be honest with you, I can’t remember half of it now”, and Sally knew nothing of the subject, which she admitted was “scary”.

### **6.3.2 Self-efficacy affected the extent to which the teachers implemented their ideas: “I do dread ... painting”**

The five IEAE teachers had different perceptions of the effectiveness of their teaching styles. Both Alan (2N) and Sally (5S) recognised that their teaching approaches worked best with junior primary students, and were not as successful with older students. Sally discussed her problems:

Some of them don't have very good behaviour. If we do paint or anything ... they start to paint their hands, or they'll do something really silly .... I do dread it if we're doing painting, because I know that something's going to happen, but apart from that I don't really mind. The only thing that worries me is that we tend to make a lot of noise, which is hard for the class next door. So we try and keep it ... so they [the other class] don't have reading or maths ... at that time. But I wouldn't say it worries me.

Despite saying “I don't really mind” and “I wouldn't say it worries me”, it was obvious Sally had serious concerns about her students' unruly behaviour. It was likely this worry was about any potential adverse effects it could have on her application for permanency. Concerns over discipline, however, did not persuade either Alan or Sally to use didactic teaching methods with senior primary students. Both continued to use child-centred methods.

In contrast with Sally and Alan, Phil (5/6S) and Daniel (6S) had no problems teaching senior primary students, and were confident they could positively affect the teaching outcomes of their art lessons. Daniel had once had problems with a particularly disruptive class, but he did not blame himself or his teaching-approach.

Fiona (3N) had the weakest sense of efficacy of the four teachers. She did not feel to have had much success in encouraging her present students to make self-generated images, and, more than the others, wavered in her commitment to child-centred methods. When she wanted her students to make paper cut-out clothes, for example, she provided templates for the students to cut round, because she did not feel they were adequate to the task. She felt uncomfortable with the decision, however:

If I had said to them “Cut out a piece of clothing”, even though they had a big piece of paper, a lot of them would have cut out these tiny, tiny little pieces of clothing. So that was to help them. Once they had that, they had to make the body fit the clothes .... They had to think then of proportion so that ... I mean

some of them came out with a big fat arm on one side and all that. But that also related to their ability .... It was interesting just the way some of them had necks and some of them didn't. I mean some of them had belly-button rings. Some of the girls said, "Can I have a space between my top and my trousers?" "It's up to you".

Despite Fiona's desire to have individual figures, the uniform shapes of the clothes caused the final artworks to appear very similar to each other. She emphasised, however, that she had not used templates for any of her other art lessons.

### Summary

Alan (2N) and Daniel (6S) had the highest sense of efficacy and, were the most consistent in their use of child-centred techniques. The teacher with the lowest sense of efficacy, Fiona (3N), was the least consistent in her use of child-centred teaching strategies. It is likely that a high sense of efficacy strengthened the teachers' resolve to use the methods of teaching that they felt philosophically in sympathy with. This would help to explain the variations of consistency within this group of IEAE teachers. It does not, however, explain teachers' initial sympathy with either mimetic behaviourist or child-centred teaching approaches. Both groups contained teachers with high degrees of efficacy.

Despite the difficulties of their teaching environment, their lack of knowledge of the underlying structure of the Curriculum Framework, and variations in their self-efficacy, five teachers used a thematic child-centred approach towards expression in their art lessons. It is the purpose here to examine the implicit theories of these IEAE teachers in order to examine their influence on expression in the teachers' art education programmes.

### **6.3.3 The IEAE teachers' beliefs and implicit theories: "back to personal experience"**

All the IEAE teachers had a very positive attitude towards teaching art. Phil (5/6B), for example, wanted to add the subject to his current specialisation in physical education. A positive attitude towards teaching art, however, does not necessarily imply a positive attitude towards expression. Many of the mimetic behaviourist teachers who severely limited visual-expression, also showed a strong preference for teaching art.

IEAE teachers' implicit theories differed very strongly, however, in two main areas: their attitude to visual-expression and their attitude to their students. An analysis of the



way in which the IEAE teachers responded to their students' desire for expression is valuable in two ways. Firstly, it explores the differences between the IEAE teachers and the other teachers in this study. Secondly, it illuminates the differences within the IEAE group of teachers: between Fiona, who sometimes used aspects of predetermined art, and the more consistently IEAE teachers, Alan, Sally, Phil and Daniel.

“I believe that art is expression”

Expression was a central focus of the IEAE teachers. Alan's emphasis on his student's expression was evident throughout the observed lesson. Daniel (6S) stated, “I believe that art is expression”, and, whenever possible, would try to relate his theme “back to personal experience”. Sally (5S) chose art ideas on the basis of whether students “can change things for themselves. I don't want to have to say, ‘You have to do this exactly’”, and Fiona (3N) preferred to teach art because: “children can come up with their own ideas”. Phil (5/6S) also thought that the main thing his students got from art was “to experiment”, so that they could develop ideas that were “totally off the wall”.

The IEAE teachers' students who took part in the full student-survey, agreed that they could mostly use their own ideas in art lessons (Table 12).

Table 12 *Students' views on how often their IEAE teachers allowed them to use their own ideas in art lessons:*

How often do you get to use your own ideas in art?	Y5S	Y5/6S	Y6B
	Sally	Phil	Daniel
Most art lessons	40%	74%	50%
Sometimes	32%	4%	27%
Not very often	20%	11%	13%
Hardly ever	8%	11%	10%

“Know the kids”: the child as a valued resource

All five teachers expressed a strong interest in finding out their students' responses in the student-survey. The more they knew their students the better they could respond to their needs: “Know the kids ..... The rest sort of falls into place” (Alan:2N). Phil (5/6S) similarly welcomed the chance to bring down barriers: “The more relaxed you become, I think the kids respond to that. If you're on their back ... [it's not good]”.

When discussing the students' reactions in the drawing section of the student-survey, all the teachers, apart from Fiona (3N) showed confidence in their students' desire for autonomy. Sally's (5S) response was typical: "It will be interesting to find out the way they react to it. I think they'll take the chance to talk. I think some of them though, have so many ideas of their own, that they'll just block everything out. They'll just do what they want to do". Daniel (6S) was sure that his students would "try and do it on their own. That's the sort of kids they are. They are creative, they do like to draw, and they like to get stuck into stuff like that. I don't think the template would be too popular". Alan (2N) was similarly proud that, when making the Mothers' Day cards, his students "did what they did, and stuck with it", although he thought the novelty of templates might prove attractive to some in the student survey.

Student choice in the drawing activity of the student-survey confirmed the IEAE teachers' confidence in their students' urge to use their own ideas. The highest proportion in each class chose to make self-generated images: 36% of Alan's (2N) students, 56% of Sally's (5S) students, 78% of Phil's (5/6S) students, and 77% of Daniel's (6S) students.

Because the IEAE teachers were confident that their students' ideas would be valid and free-flowing, they placed their students at the centre of the art-making process. Phil was relaxed and open to his students' ideas, valuing their contributions to the discussions at the beginning of his art lessons. Sally, despite her fears of loss of control, centred her art lessons on her students' interests, adapting her ideas to their suggestions. She was proud that her students "seem to really enjoy being able to do what they want to do, instead of us always saying, 'This is what we're doing'". Alan (2N) was "a firm believer that they're capable of anything".

Fiona was much more circumspect about her students' creative abilities. Like the other IEAE teachers, she selected her most successful art lesson (patterns within footprints) on the basis of the individuality of her students' responses. Generally, however, she had more feelings of doubt and hesitation, and used less effusive language than the other IEAE teachers: "That was quite good because they could do any pattern that they liked on it. It was interesting to see the ones that could do different ones. Some just went with the others. Some were actually quite involved and some were [pause]. So it was giving you a sort of a range and seeing where they are".

Although Fiona (3N) valued and sought her students' individual responses, she was not totally convinced of her current students' capacity for independent, creative thinking: "It's: 'Can I turn the page this way?' 'You can turn the page any way. You can cut the corners off it. You can turn it into a triangle if you want to'. But some children find that really scary. They like to have a structure, but I like them to actually sort of make that decision". The belief that her current students were less creative than previously, and thus not as valuable a resource, led Fiona to adopt more predetermined art methods than the other child-centred teachers.

#### **6.3.4 The teaching strategies of IEAE teachers: "let them go"**

Although there were variations in emphasis on organisation in art lessons, all five IEAE teachers structured their art lessons in essentially the same way. The teacher would select a theme and discuss with the students the variety of responses that could be made within this broad theme. It was rare, for organisational reasons, for teachers to offer a wide range of media for the students to use. The students in this study, however, never expressed any desire to have a choice of art materials. It might be that this option had never occurred to them, or it could be that the extent to which they could produce their own image was of far more importance.

#### From "getting dirty" to "everything's right there": the emphasis on organisation varied

In her explanation of why teachers reject child-centred methods of art education, Rafferty (1987) equated child-centred art lessons with mess and lack of organisation. This association appeared, at first, to be supported by Alan's (2N) constant use of the phrase: "getting dirty", and Daniel's (6S) desire to "get down and dirty". Their art lessons, however, were far from chaotic. In Alan's observed lesson, for example, the students worked quietly, independently and purposefully, and demonstrated a high degree of autonomy and cooperation. They were involved and self-motivated, and did not require constant supervision.

The IEAE teachers differed, however, in their attitude to mess within an art lesson. Phil, Fiona and Sally were much less enamoured of mess and dirt than Alan and Daniel. They spent more thought on the efficient organisation of the distribution of art materials. For Sally (5S), planning ahead could mean the difference between an orderly and disorderly lesson: "The times when I have left it until, you know: 'We're doing this. O.K. Let's all get things ready'; that's when things just go downhill .... And then you've got to calm them down again. It's much easier if everything's right there, ready to go".

“Something that’s got ... things ... they can change for themselves”: choosing an art-theme

The child-centred advocate Cole (1940) stated that “children cannot create in a vacuum .... The child must have his mind and emotions aroused about something and want to paint before he will paint well” (pp.3-4). Both she and Richardson (1954), used themes to kindle their students’ imaginations, and this approach was used by all the IEAE teachers. As Sally (5S) said: “I work in themes”.

Several criteria were used in the selection of art-themes. Alan (2N) worked from what he perceived to be the needs of the students, getting his ideas on the spur of the moment “usually in the shower ... I usually get my best ideas there, or walking to school”. Although Phil (5/6S) liked more advance planning, he, too, liked to teach art in response to current needs, and was exasperated when the new school-rules restricted this process: “Sometimes a list will come around and say ‘What do you want for art?’ And I sort of look at it and go, ‘I don’t know what I want. [impatiently]. I don’t really know what I want for art’”. He also needed to be personally involved and enthusiastic about the lesson’s theme: “I’d find it quite boring doing a card [for Mothers’ Day]. So I never get them to do a card”.

Daniel (6S) chose themes that students could “relate back to personal experience and that they can do something they really like doing”. His most recent art lesson, for example, began with “I’m going to get you today to design your own magazine cover. It can be anything, anything you like”. Sally (5S) looked for “something that you can actually enjoy doing, that’s got a lot things that they can change for themselves”.

Fiona (3N) focused on subjects that would integrate with other learning areas: “We’ve actually been having a theme on weather. They could choose which season to do ... Only one chose autumn, because you don’t have autumn here [in WA]. Over in Victoria, you have autumn all the time [laughing]”. Here Fiona faced a dilemma. She wanted a display which would reflect the four seasons, but wished to allow her students free choice of image. As her students did not relate to autumn, they did not produce that image. Similarly, she forgot that students in WA would rarely have experienced snow, and was disappointed with their snowy winter-scenes.

A teaching approach that centres on self-expression through a theme selected by the teacher, has to make sure that the students are sufficiently motivated by the theme. The IEAE teachers set about this central task of motivation in several ways.

“Model my ideas and let them go”

In her model of child-centred art education, Richardson (1954) demonstrated how teachers could use themes to stimulate students’ interest and imagination. Although she created word pictures, Richardson never drew an image in front of the students. Child-centred art practitioners argue that students would be overpowered by the teacher’s image, and fail to initiate or fully develop their own ideas.

Four of the IEAE teachers in this study used the technique of modelling. Only Daniel (6S) did not. Sally (5S) usually made a sample before the lesson began in order to show the basic idea of the lesson:

You can show them something that you’ve already made and say, “This is what it will end up ... or might end up looking like” .... I sometimes do it at home. But I like doing it, it’s fun, trying the fun things you can do. [Q: Do you find there’s a problem with the students copying what you do?] No, they don’t actually. No, they usually go off on their own.

Although Sally maintained that the aim was not to impose an idea on her students, it is significant that she said, “This is what it will end up” before adding “or might end up looking like”. Directing students towards a prescribed image is mimetic behaviourist rather than child-centred. She insisted, however, that her students were still able to develop their own ideas and, unlike a mimetic behaviourist teacher, this remained her main goal.

Alan, Fiona and Phil differed from the method of modelling used by Sally. Instead of preparing an image in advance, they made a spontaneous image during the introduction to the lesson, largely in response to students’ suggestions. In Fiona’s (3N) observed lesson, her example relied totally on ideas initiated by students. All the suggestions students made, were included. She discussed how some colours changed when they overlapped: blue crayon goes to green when it overlaps yellow chalk. She tried yellow on the suggestion of a child, and students observed without prompting that it did not cover well. Even white was tried when it might seem obvious that it would not cover the underlying chalk. Fiona explained in the interview:

The thing is that I’ve been proven wrong before. [laughs] They say, “Well I don’t think that would work”. [laughs] But it’s also getting them to think about it .... I could have said, “We’re just going to use black crayons” and it would have been wonderful [ironically], and they all would have looked uniform, but

that's not necessarily the best thing. It was interesting for them to see that they could use whatever colour they liked.

Fiona's aim was to stimulate and then welcome students' ideas, and she accepted that students' ideas might be better than her own. This contrasts with the PAE teacher, Mary's (PPN), careful filtering of ideas from her students for the Twinkle Twinkle Little Star class-mural.

It can also be argued that modeling a technique and not an image, fits within the boundaries of child-centred art education. This is especially the case if ideas for the technique come from the students, and the image was left totally under the students' control, as was the case in Fiona's class. Phil and Alan, however, did not simply model techniques. They also created fully realised images that their students might be inclined to copy.

Alan (2N) drew an abstract chalk design in the observed lesson. As he drew, he asked for students' interpretations of the colours and shapes and incorporated their ideas into the design. In contrast with the PAE teachers, he wanted to demonstrate the infinite variety of what could be done, and his own personal involvement in the process of creating an artwork. In this he appeared to have been successful. All his students' artworks were created with great enthusiasm and commitment, and were individual to each child.

Phil (5/6S) would also: "just go through very quickly with the kids [what to do]. I just show them – model my ideas and let them go. So it gives them the basic format". When students discussed the introduction to an art activity about a futuristic vehicle, they described how Phil had asked them about "all different types of transport". They suggested things and he drew them on the board: "Whatever we suggested he put it up". The students regarded this as an image to plunder: "We could copy that". They were also very emphatic that they had been encouraged to use their own ideas. They said that, in the end, "we made up our own minds without the help of the teacher".

The IEAE teachers saw their drawings as a way of demonstrating a multitude of choices available – a playful suggestion rather than a definitive image. Sally (6S) found that, after she had modeled an image, her students would "usually go off on their own. They'll do the basics, but they'll try to make it their own". Phil, however, was annoyed to discover that some students chose to copy his ideas:

It's funny. When I drew on the board, just to get a bit of a laugh, just to show something stupid, a lot of them copied, I found. Copied mine. I discourage them. I say "Come on, that's mine, do your own". But yes, a lot of them were quite similar in the way they did it. But there were some that were just totally off the wall, which was great.

There remains the question as to why Phil, finding that modeling an image reduced some of his students' creativity, could not just discuss ideas and leave the students to develop their own images. When discussing why he persisted in modeling an image when it induced copying, Phil asked, "What can you do if you don't model?" Anecdotal evidence suggests that the majority of WA primary teachers regard modeling as intrinsic to art teaching practice. It is seen as the principal way of introducing art ideas to students. It appears that the four teachers sympathetic to child-centred ideas adapted what initially seems to be a contradictory strategy: the use of the predetermined art teaching strategy of modeling an image, in order to promote the child-centred aim of self-expression. They did this most successfully when they incorporated their students' ideas into a free-flowing, spontaneous drawing, uninfluenced by images in recipe art books. Alan in particular, and Fiona, Sally and Phil to a lesser extent, successfully and independently constructed a child-centred teaching strategy from modeling an image. While it is not a teaching strategy generally recommended by child-centred art educationalists, these teachers found that it did, in varying degrees, promote their aim of encouraging self-expression.

"You start it by looking at the picture": using an art recipe book

Phil was the only IEAE teacher to rely heavily on teachers' art books. These were: *A step by step guide to visual arts for teachers* and *Another step by step guide to visual arts for teachers*, both by Veronica Stoikovitch (1998). The format was very similar to Dorothy's (7N) favourite resource book – a clear description of equipment and procedure on the left hand page and a full colour reproduction of the resultant artwork on the other. In this case, however, instead of the author imitating a child's style, the artworks were genuinely created by primary students.

The SCO had misgivings about such art books, describing them as "art recipe-books". Phil, however, used the term as an enthusiastic endorsement:

They're brilliant, because they've got an outcome, a picture of what the finished product will look like, just to give you an indication. I sort of liken it

to a recipe really. You start it by looking at the picture there, an A4 picture. And you open the page and there are the steps to get to that picture. What you need. It's good, it's good. Makes it easier .... We've done some good art this year, from those books I've used.

Although Phil qualified the phrase “what the finished product will look like” with “just to give you an indication”, the approach appears very didactic; particularly as the outcome was seen in terms of the product rather than the educational value of the process. Phil, however, viewed it very differently, seeing the illustration as a point of discussion rather than a guide to imitate. For the toxic monster, for example, “we went through colours and contrasts and all that sort of stuff. I let them use crayon and I set a few guidelines – ‘Use crayon for the monster and then to finish off and to make it stand out. You can use paint wherever you like to try and make it stand out more’”.

Phil's use of the book's image was to inspire the students rather than to produce an exact copy, and his students endorsed this view of the proceedings. During discussions about how they got their ideas for a futuristic vehicle (the techno-transport lesson), his students enthused about the picture they had been shown. One student had bought a copy of the art book for himself, and brought it from his desk to show the relief-teacher during the student-survey. The students were impressed by the standard achieved by a student of similar age to themselves. They explained that the picture was “a kid's work”; “A student has done it and it's the best in the whole world”, and that “They choose the best to go in the book”. When the relief-teacher asked the students, “That inspired you, did it?”, there was a resounding and emphatic “Yes” from the class. Students were still working on these drawings with great enthusiasm at the time of the survey, and they had produced a wide variety of images.

“I could probably get the resources, I just don't do it”: visual artworks are not used

Phil (5/6S) was the only IEAE teacher to have, at one time, incorporated the study of visual artworks into his art programme. However, that was in the previous year, when he had worked in cooperation with Ken (7S), a teacher who was in sympathy with DBAE approaches to art education. In Y7, Phil had used the study of artists' work to:

expose them to different types of art. They see that not all art is drawing – it's a combination of different things ... Some artists – it doesn't look like they can draw. It's just the way they use certain rules, I suppose. If they know that, then



they can realise that just because you can't draw, doesn't mean you can't do art.

Phil, however, saw the study of artists' work in terms of its instrumental value in increasing students' self-confidence in drawing, rather than as an integral part of the visual arts curriculum. As Phil's current Y5/6 students were already self-confident in this area, he did not pursue the practice.

Phil also perceived his students to be uninterested in artists' work: "I think maybe I was more interested in it than they were". In the student-survey, however, learning "how artists and craftspeople make art" was ranked first as a purpose for making art (44%). Daniel (6S) echoed Phil's perception: "I think kids would get bored with that". Although the third most popular choice, a sizable number of Daniel's students (23%) also ranked learning how artists make art, as the most important purpose of art. Alan, similarly, did not feel a discussion of abstract paintings would have fired his students' imagination in the observed lesson: "I could probably get the resources, I just don't do it".

"It's not that important": attitudes to students deviating from the theme

As the main aim of all the IEAE teachers was for students to develop their individual ideas, they were unfazed at the prospect of students wanting to deviate from the theme they had suggested. Alan's (2N) comment was typical "No, let them do it. It's not that important .... it's supposed to be *their* work". Sally (6S) stated: "It wouldn't matter. We don't know what they're going to do".

Phil (5/6B) recalled "a boy last year who couldn't use paint; hated to use paint. I've never experienced somebody who doesn't like paint ... He said it was too messy. [Q: What did you do?] I just let him use pastels". He was similarly sanguine about the prospect of a student deviating from the given theme: "I wouldn't mind. If they said, 'I'd rather draw that'. I'd go: 'O.K.' But no-one has. I haven't had that experience".

Like Phil, the other IEAE teachers could not recall a time when students had wanted to radically move away from the theme they suggested. This contrasts with the constant pushing of the boundaries by the students of the PAE teachers, who felt threatened and slightly under siege from their students' constant queries. Because the IEAE teachers made it clear that students should make individual choices, the students did not need to constantly test the boundaries of the theme: "totally off the wall" was good (Phil, 5/6S). Students of PAE teachers, on the other hand, knew there were specific rules to which they must conform. Because of this, many felt they had to explore and establish the

limits before they settled into their tasks. In contrast to Rafferty's view that child-centred methods endanger the smooth running of the classroom, in this study, teachers who allowed children to freely participate in their choice of image frequently had a calmer working environment than those teachers who limiting their students' choice to minor adaptations of a prescribed image.

"Give them hints": the teacher's role while the students are working

Most of the IEAE teachers took an active and interventionist role while the students worked: "you've got to get in there" (Alan, 2N). In contrast to the PAE teachers, however, who intervened to ensure that students replicated as closely as possible the prescribed image, the IEAE teachers intervened in order to jump-start children whose creativity had stalled.

Lowenfeld (1954) supported teachers who worked at students getting personally involved in their work, but it is unlikely that he would have approved of Alan's (2N) modelling of an image, his unsolicited suggestions of alternatives to his students' images, and his drawings on the students' work. The students in the observed lesson, however, seemed delighted that their teacher was so enthusiastically involved in what they were doing. Some followed through with his suggestions, others did not. It appeared to be regarded by the students as optional.

Generally the other four IEAE teachers intervened less frequently than Alan, and in a quieter and less overt manner. Fiona (3N) preferred to respond by asking questions in an attempt to get the students to resolve the problem themselves. She would "go around and check, and if somebody's doing something a bit different, I'll say 'That's a good use of colour', or 'Look how well you've done that'". Sally (6S) described how she would "usually just walk around, and if anyone has any problems and asks, I'll help them a bit. I try not to tell them what to do". Phil (5/6B) also would "just walk around and have a look. If I see anything that's really standing out that they could ... I sort of stop them and give them hints". Daniel (6S) considered himself to be "a facilitator, because you have to let them go, let them use their expression. But at the same time, every now and then, push them in the right direction". These approaches resonate with Brittain's (1979) view that child-centred teachers can provide a child with "the opportunity to see other directions for his actions – which he can accept or reject" (p.162).

Because the IEAE teachers had the central premise that the students should develop their own images as much as possible, they seemed confident about the form and extent

of their intervention. Dorothy, a PAE teacher, felt more nervous about her role. She offered her students a very small area for the development of individual ideas, but within this, seemed to regard the students' creativity as a frail flame, easily extinguished if she intervened too directly. The IEAE teachers had confidence in their students' ability to generate ideas, regarding their students' creativity as a robust flame, able to withstand any potentially adverse effect of their input.

#### "No art a kid does, is bad": assessing students' work and evaluating art lessons

All the IEAE teachers felt awkward with the needs of a formal assessment in art. Sally (5S) stated that "I could never say that a kid can't do art, because it is *their* interpretation". Phil, similarly, did not like to impose outside standards: "No art a kid does, is bad. It's not. So whatever they do, is going to be O.K". He felt very uncomfortable having to grade students on their reports for creativity: "I find it hard to assess it. It's very difficult .... You give a mark for the use of media or skills, [one for] creativity – a mark out of five. It's frightening isn't it?".

When asked to select their least successful and most successful art lessons, the look of the product was rarely mentioned. Indeed, it was typical that Sally (5S) told her students that "it doesn't have to be beautiful". Instead, all the IEAE teachers used the criteria of the individuality of their students' ideas and their involvement in the creative process. Fiona (3N) described how the snow scene "actually didn't go very well" .... I just didn't feel they were actually putting a lot into it". Her best art lesson was when "they had to trace around each other's feet. That was a good start because you got texta all around your feet and it tickled .... They could do any patterns that they liked on it, and it was interesting to see the ones that could do different ones". When asked about his most successful art lesson, Phil (5/6S) replied, "I think, creatively, the toxic monsters, because they actually draw something, they made something up". Daniel's (6S) touchstone was whether "the kids are able to use expression, and they're able to put their own little pieces into it". For Sally (5S), her best art lesson was when she was able to say, "Go for it, whatever you want to do. They loved that. It was great".

## **6.4 Conclusion**

Greenberg (1996) described self-expression as being at the core of child-centred art education: "Working from within themselves to create with art materials ... allows children to produce first hand rather than ... 'third hand'" (p.116). The IEAE teachers in

this study, similarly regarded student self-expression as the core aim in their art education programmes.

Although Fiona had some doubts about her current class, the IEAE teachers generally expressed great confidence in their students' abilities to generate individual and creative ideas. Children were seen as inherently competent and autonomous artists. The IEAE teachers, particularly Alan (2N), spent time getting to know their students' strengths and needs, and adapted their teaching programme accordingly. During the art lesson, they took an active role in generating and encouraging expression. These teaching strategies correspond with those advocated by the child-centred art educationalists Richardson (1946) and Cole (1940).

There are, however, significant differences between the teaching strategies employed by Richardson and Cole, and those employed by the IEAE teachers in this study. The most significant is that, in common with PAE teachers, IEAE teachers used the process of modeling an image for their students. Unlike the PAE teachers, however, who used modeling in order to control their students' images, the IEAE teachers used it to kick-start the students' creativity. The images made were strongly influenced by suggestions from the students, and the mood was humorous and light-hearted rather than didactic and prescriptive. Modeling was not an attempt to impose conformity. It was an attempt to suggest the different pathways that might be taken by the students through the creation of a shared image. The focus was on the infinite variety of images that could be generated from the modeled base point, rather than a guide towards conformity. The extent to which this succeeded, varied between teachers, but the aim remained the same.

The IEAE teachers in this study faced a variety of difficulties in their physical teaching conditions. Despite this, they persisted in using teaching strategies aimed at maximising visual-expression. Rafferty's (1987) assumption that only predetermined art education teaching strategies will avoid a collapse of classroom organisation, is not supported by data from this study. Indeed, the problems which PAE teachers endured, of students constantly testing permitted boundaries, was absent when students were absorbed in transforming their own ideas into images. Alan's students showed the "intense concentration in every case" described in Fawcett and Hay's (2004) child-centred art lessons. It is significant that Fiona (3A), who had the most problems with motivation, was the teacher who was least successful at tapping into ideas central to her students' concerns and interests. When students were allowed the expression they so obviously

craved, the impulse was not towards disorder but towards self-motivated, focused and cooperative work.

## CHAPTER 7

### **Art as Expertise: Findings on teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

In this study, three teachers, Andrea (4N), Ken (7S) and Linda (6N), had implicit theories in sympathy with the beliefs and values underlying DBAE, and correspondingly with those underlying the WA Curriculum Framework. This was despite the fact that these teachers had neither heard of DBAE, nor had any working knowledge of the Arts Learning Outcomes in the Curriculum Framework.

Although these three teachers' implicit theories were closely aligned with many aspects of DBAE, there were enough significant differences to warrant the allocation of a different term. One option was to use Ashton's (1999) "mutant form of DBAE" (p.51), but this might have implied both a condemnation and a prior knowledge of DBAE. Instead, Wolf's (1992) descriptive phrase for art taught under similar premises to those of DBAE has been employed: "Art as Expertise" (p.953). This will be abbreviated to AAE.

### **7.1 Introduction**

As well as comparing the AAE teachers' beliefs and teaching approaches with those of advocates of DBAE, there will be a comparison of their teaching approaches with those of a visual arts specialist teacher, who had been commended by the SCO as an exemplary art teacher. The chapter will begin with a brief description of how this visual arts specialist teacher taught art within the Curriculum Framework. Next there will be an introduction to the AAE teachers, using summaries for two, and a teacher-profile for the third, Andrea (4A). Andrea provided a rich source of data for an examination of the way an AAE teacher resolved the tensions between her art teaching approach, her workplace conditions and her students' needs. The last section of the chapter will analyse the themes that arose from the teacher-profile of Andrea, using additional data from an observed lesson and interview with Linda (6N), and an interview with Ken (7S).

#### **7.1.1 Jackie – the exemplary WA primary visual arts specialist teacher**

When discussing recommended teaching practice in WA primary schools, the SCO suggested that a particular visual arts specialist teacher, Jackie Morgan, would provide a good source of information. Her school, in a prosperous coastal suburb of Perth, was "making a pretty good fist of it. What is also interesting is that she has taken on a very

strong leadership role ... providing very positive and proactive leadership. She's often very subtle, which is very successful". Jackie agreed to be interviewed, and also provided a tour of the school to view facilities, students' artworks and the artroom.

"Providing very positive and proactive leadership"

Jackie provided leadership not only for her own school, but also throughout the district, and the larger metropolitan area: "We have a very strong network in this district, and we have one meeting a term that I coordinate. We sometimes have 30 people. I also do PD days for other schools ". At state level, she was convenor of the Primary Subcommittee of the Art Education Association of WA. "Because of my role in the Art Education Association, I've often had people contact me when they've had difficulty in their schools".

Under the auspices of the Art Education Association of WA, Jackie helped produce *Arts Still Alive*, "a magazine ... for primary teachers – generalists or specialists". She was the convenor for the committee for Volume 7 (1999), which she described as carrying "the scope of all that learning [from the Curriculum Framework for the Arts]".

"My most important role ... is PR"

Jackie was an art teacher similar to one envisaged by Emery (1998): "a political animal ... fuelled with purposeful vision and collaborating with others to make that vision known" (p.274). Jackie's stated that "my most important role as a visual arts specialist teacher is PR. It's no use locking yourself in the artroom and getting on with it. You have to constantly think about PR". It was essential to "include the teacher in what you do .... Being excited about what the children are doing ... 'Come and see what they've done! We're doing this about texture". She was constantly alert for the opportunity to promote art:

There was a guy sitting in the staff room at lunchtime, and he sort of stretched and he said, "Oh, I've got an hour's D.O.T. [duties other than teaching] this afternoon". I had his class, and I said, "No. What you mean is your class has got an hour of really meaningful art experience this afternoon". He said, "Oh, yes, and that". So you just say little things like that.

Because of Jackie's influence, Westfield was one of the few schools in WA to have begun the implementation of the Arts aspect of the Curriculum Framework: "I've talked to them a lot about the process, particularly with the implementation this year. That's been the big buzz".

### “Art concepts are pivotal”

Jackie’s choice of subject matter for her art classes was strongly influenced by classroom themes from other learning areas.

We’re supporting that society and environment learning area. But when they’re in art, the art stands on its own. The fact that we’ve linked, is just a link for motivation, because you’ve got to do *something*. But when they’re doing the art, you really see it through the lens of the arts, and the arts outcomes .... I’ve got to highlight all the elements and principals – the line, shape, colour, form .... Those concepts are pivotal. I would let the theme go and keep that, because that is pivotal to my art education.

Jackie pointed out a poster in her art room, which both outlined the four arts learning areas and described the art elements. She noted with pride that a visitor from the Education Department had commented on her students’ awareness of the four learning areas because:

we use that language [of line, shape, colour, form]. Those words are around the art room. When they write their reflections they write them. I use them. They’re supposed to verbalise them to me as well .... “Let’s reflect on what happened. Let’s reflect on your process either orally or in writing”. We’re into the written reflections because of the responses aspect of the outcomes.

### “An opportunity to focus on specific art learning concept”: sequential art lessons

Jackie saw “that whole notion of sequential learning” as important in providing the depth and continuity needed for art learning: “Sometimes a project will go on for eight weeks. Not the same piece of work but a connected [one] ... Like you’ve done a drawing and a painting, now you’re into some 3D”. She gave the example of Y7s’ monocoloured pictures, where the colours matched each student’s school team’s colours. They were all in the same style – overlapping, black outlines painted in different shades of the same colour. Students had first taken photographs of themselves in different athletic poses. Then each used a drawing from the photo as a template, to plan an overlapping pattern “with regard to balance, focal-point, and repetition”.

### “At the end of the project”: evaluation and assessment

Student reflections were done “at the end of the project. So it might be at the end of four weeks or six weeks”. These were recorded in visual diaries, and kept from year to



year. They were also used for storing exploratory drawings, small samples of work and for filling in time when work was completed. A brief look at a Y4 visual diary, however, showed that it contained no drawings, but only photocopied self-evaluation forms for carrier projects. These had very brief, vaguely worded comments, such as “I liked doing this”, so perhaps this student had problems with writing. As Jackie did not want to discuss the visual diaries further, this could not be explored.

Jackie made an assessment of students’ work after every carrier project. The four outcome areas were divided into subsections with marks from 1-5 in the boxes. Because of the large number of students she taught, there were few written details, beyond a sentence on the back as a summary of attitude.

“They usually toe the line”: tutored images

When asked what she would do if a student wanted to deviate from her theme, Jackie showed uncharacteristic signs of hesitation, as if it were an issue she had not considered before. She then replied firmly:

Because this is an educational setting ... there has to be some sort of purpose to the learning. And if the exercise is monochromatic, I would say, “Well the exercise is monochromatic. But what we have to do is get through that, and then you can move on to doing some multi-coloured afterwards. But I’d like you to finish this exercise so I know that you understand that”. [Q: What do you do about students who are still not enthusiastic?] They usually toe the line.

“You’re working as an artist”

Jackie taught her students how artists conceive and develop ideas:

I say to the children, “You are artists, you operate like artists. You’re not just coming in here and I’m saying, ‘You’re doing a drawing of this, and next week you’re doing a painting’. Okay, I’m guiding you through that, but you’re working as an artist, as an artist might be commissioned. Somebody might say, ‘I want you to paint me a picture of Rottnest’. What do they do? They go over there, they experience it and they take photographs of it. They do sketches of it, and then they let that formulate in their minds .... Then they play around with the line, and the shape, and the colour, and the texture of it – whichever is appropriate. And then they display it, they exhibit it”.

While these references to artists were vivid and inspiring, they remained at a general level, and specific artists were rarely mentioned. Although Jackie said this was “because of a lack of time”, there was an elastic time-span for each Carrier Project.

Furthermore, Jackie did not record outcomes in Arts in Society because “I have no way of measuring how much of that has gone in, and that’s why we haven’t used it as a measuring tool. We can measure responses, we can measure the skills, we can measure arts ideas, but it’s very difficult to measure that unless you’re giving them a factual [questionnaire]”.

Sitting in the car immediately after the interview, I wrote this impressionistic summary: “Her teaching seems like DBAE, but without the visual artworks”, and this proved to be a rather perfunctory description of what would later be termed AAE.

## **7.2 Introducing the Art as Expertise teachers**

Apart from Andrea (4N), who is the subject of the teacher-profile for this chapter, one teacher from Northfield, Linda (6A), and one from Southfield, Ken (7S) also aligned with central tenets of DBAE, and thus could be described as Art as Expertise (AAE) teachers.

### **7.2.1 Linda (5N): “I’ve been doing picture-analysis for a long time”**

At the time of the interview, Linda was teaching a Y6 class, but over her twenty-two year teaching career, she had taught all the primary grades. She had been at Northfield for eight years, where she had taught grades three, four, seven and then six.

Linda did not have a strong sense of self-efficacy. I later found out from Alan (2N) that, like him, she had started her honours year, but she never mentioned this in the interview. She was particularly unsure of her effectiveness when teaching art, stating several times that “I’m not an artist”. She was extremely nervous about being observed and interviewed. Before her interview, she wailed to her colleagues in the staff room, “I don’t know what I’m going to talk about for sixty minutes. I don’t know anything about art!” Despite these feelings of inadequacy, Linda regretted that in other classrooms, art “tends to get shunted because ... something else crops up. It’s never the Maths or the English”. For her, art was always for an hour on Monday afternoons: “I always do art”.

The prime aim in Linda’s general teaching was to give students “a grounding in as many different skills as possible”. When asked whether she felt she could be critical of

her students' work in art, she replied, "Yes, I think so. As long as you're not being hurtful saying, 'That's a lot of rubbish' [laughs] ... As long as it's constructive criticism". She saw herself as a facilitator, helping her students develop concepts and techniques that would allow them "to get the best results that they're looking for". At the same time as helping her students to realise their own images, she saw her role as guiding her students towards increasing the quality of their work. In order to do this, Linda planned her art lessons carefully, taking the initiative in researching ideas and getting resources: "I use an awful lot of books. I buy art works".

Linda was surprised and pleased that her students were "very supportive of one another in art, funnily enough, because they aren't in lots of other areas .... They're always saying, 'That's really good, how did you do that?'". An atmosphere of support and cooperation was very evident in the observed art lesson. Linda, however, worried about losing control over her students, and efficient organisation was seen as an essential bulwark against potential chaos in her art lessons.

Despite fears about discipline in the classroom, Linda did not use didactic approaches in order to control and structure her art lessons. Instead she adopted many of the teaching strategies advocated by DBAE. Compared to other teachers in this study, visual artworks featured strongly in Linda's art programme. In the observed lesson, for example, her students examined the art elements in a reproduction of a Lowry painting, and discussed the differences between stick figures, Lowry figures and the detailed figures they had drawn in a previous art lesson after studying work by Hogarth. The fluidity and ease of these discussions supported Linda's statement that "I've been doing this [picture analysis] for a long time". Her favourite art resource book was *A work of art: creative activities inspired by famous artists* by Chambers, Hood and Peak (1995). The two art lessons prior to the interview, on Hogarth and Lowry, were based on ideas from this book.

Although she felt handicapped by her inability to draw, Linda was convinced of the value of the skills and concepts which art could offer to her students. Because of this conviction, she overcame her apprehension about the potential chaos that art lessons could create in her classroom. Using her own art books as a resource, Linda successfully implemented a sequential art programme where visual artworks featured prominently.

### **7.2.2 Ken (7S): “We don’t spend enough money on art”**

Ken began teaching in 1970. He taught “everything from Y1 to Y7 in those years”. The latter ten years had been at Southfield, where he had taught mainly in the senior primary grades. In previous years, Phil (5/6S) had taken his class in the afternoons to release Ken for school administrative duties. The year of the interview, however, Ken had resumed his role as a full-time class teacher, and Phil had been moved to Year 5/6, where the class teacher had taken over Ken’s administrative role. Ken was currently applying for a transfer to another school, although it was never made clear whether this related to his change of role.

Ken found that conditions at Southfield made teaching art difficult. “I think we’re very poorly resourced here. We don’t spend enough money on art”. He considered that primary art education had been valued much more in the past, both in terms of resources and in the allocation of time. Pressures from other aspects of the curriculum prevented him from giving art the important position he thought it was due.

Despite feeling that he was working against the current educational climate, Ken was determined to teach art so as to maintain the integrity of the subject. He believed art contained important skills and concepts that needed to be built up over several art lessons, and he based his evaluation of students’ work on these concepts. He argued that the current emphasis on integration of subjects tended to erode the integrity of the subject areas involved. Art “is good expression .... it’s not the same [if you integrate]”.

Ken strongly opposed the use of didactic methods of art teaching. “I’ve got a wife who’s a junior primary teacher. She never does that, and she produces magnificent art. Well, that’s where *I* think we are at, in this school. I don’t think our art’s particularly good at this school because of that, too much photocopying”.

Ken was one of only two teachers at Southfield to introduce his students to artists’ work. The other teacher, Phil (5/6S), had clearly been influenced by Ken’s ideas when they worked together in the previous year. Ken’s desire to introduce his students to artists’ work was inhibited by a difficulty in getting visual artworks: “What bugs me is all the resources are sitting in Silver City [the Education Department], all good artworks hanging on the walls. It’s not in schools, and this school has got virtually nothing”. Ken looked back with nostalgia to past halcyon days when art resources were plentiful. “The best times [for visual artworks] were back in the seventies. There was a real push [to use them]”. Now he had to use his own limited resources, and collected,

for example, reproductions of Picasso's work to demonstrate that art images need not be photographic. He was also the only teacher in the study to take his students to an art gallery.

### **7.3 Andrea: a profile of an artist in the classroom**

Andrea considered that art education had serious and important content. She wanted her students to become aware of their areas of weakness in art so that they could fully utilise the skills and concepts she taught. To do this, she implemented four main teaching strategies. She (i) planned a sequential art programme; (ii) made evaluation an integral part of her work; (iii) focused her objectives on art concepts and skills rather than on the end product; and (iv) demonstrated the artistic process through discussions of her own work and those of other artists.

#### **7.3.1 Getting to know Andrea: "the arty one"**

Andrea became a primary teacher after her own children started school. At the time of the interview, she had been teaching for sixteen years, ten of which had been at Northfield. Her first class had been with Y1, then Y6, Y5, and finally, the grade she was currently teaching, Y4.

Andrea had a calm, self-confident manner, and spoke with a soft Scottish accent. She was slightly cautious at the beginning of the interview, but soon warmed to the discussion, expressing her opinions thoughtfully, and with clarity and conviction. At the end of the interview she stated: "It's been very nice. We fumble along and it's nice to get a chance to think things through".

Three of her teaching colleagues, Mary (PPN), Janice (5N) and Linda (6N) described Andrea as "the arty one" in the school. Linda commented: "Andrea has always got these beautiful pictures on her blackboard that she has produced, and they're lovely. I mean I just wouldn't attempt it .... I'll do the water cycle or something like that ... but she'll do animals and things, all over her blackboard".

#### "I found them bursting into tears"

After teaching Y5, Andrea found it difficult adjusting to the different needs of her Y4 students: "I'm just getting to know it, taking it slow .... There is a huge leap. I thought the huge leap was in Y5, but I can see that there is a bigger leap in Y4. I'm very much learning as I go, so I'm just feeling my way just now".

Andrea's students had previously been taught by Fiona (3N), who described them as having been exceptionally creative because they "came up with all these ideas ... which was wonderful". Perhaps because of Fiona's previous enthusiastic endorsements, the students sometimes reacted negatively to Andrea's less effusive teaching style. Andrea did not discuss the problem with Fiona, however, but with Linda (6N), who shared a similar approach to teaching art, and who had previously taught this grade:

I've found them to be very much younger than Y5s. So the first time, I found them bursting into tears all over the place, I went "Oh no!" [mock anguish] [Q: What were they crying about?] This, that and the other. I think they are just unsure, things like that. I really don't know. Linda said "It's something that Y4s do". So I just said "OK, OK" [resignedly]. But there are some *very* bright cookies in there, so I try and extend them.

Although, in this quotation, Andrea was initially mystified by her students' reactions, she ended by linking the problem with her aim to extend the students' learning. This connection between her desire to optimise the students' development, and their adverse reaction to her critical comments was reiterated and developed later in the interview:

I *certainly* want to stretch them [very emphatically]. It's very sad because I still say things that upset children. I know because they tell me, or their parents tell me, and I think, "But hang on a minute, I didn't mean to say that, or for it to come out that way!" So I do try to be aware what I'm saying. I do try, but I'm human. I'll say the wrong thing at the wrong time. I'm Scottish. I do it.

While genuinely concerned about her students' misinterpretation of her comments on their work, Andrea did not agonise over the issue. The slight note of complacency about her Scottish frankness, indicated that she perceived it as a problem which her students would learn to deal with, as they became accustomed to her ways. Her students were already responding positively to her teaching methods: "They can work long spells at given tasks. I do a language session that is peer-tutored and they do all sorts of things during it. It can start at 10.45 and finish at 12.30, and you look at it and you go around it and they're still focused, they're still working, and keeping on".

### **7.3.2 Workplace conditions: "let's just go for it"**

Andrea's classroom had limited space, and accommodated the twenty-six students with difficulty. The desks were in groups of six: two by three. The small storage area at the

back of the classroom had open shelves with neatly arranged, labelled materials that students could easily reach.

As Linda had described, the margins of Andrea's blackboard were covered with her chalk-drawings of Australian animals for her Society and Environment (SAE) theme of the Australian outback. Large posters of Australian native flora and fauna were also taped to the wall, alongside students' written work.

Andrea took great care to present her students' work attractively. In her classroom, there were displays showing a variety of paper-mache tiger masks, direct-observational drawings of shells presented alongside the shells, and colour-mixing patterns.

#### "I take all of that time": time constraints

Andrea felt under "enormous pressure. You can't, you don't seem to be able to fit everything in". She taught her art lessons on Friday morning, between recess and lunch, when there was a generous spread of time: "It gives me an hour and three quarters, basically, and I take all of that time. Sometimes even more, because some of the tasks don't get finished".

#### "I buy it": resources

When discussing the problems she faced when teaching art, Andrea consistently focused on the inadequacy of the resources in the school. She placed "a lack of equipment and art supplies" first; second came "difficulties in getting reproductions of art works to show the class"; and third, "inadequate storage space and cleaning-up facilities".

Problems with resources had created difficulties in her direct-observational drawing lessons. Andrea had wanted her students to experience the difference between hard and soft grade pencils. When asked whether the school provided these different grades of pencils, she laughed and explained: "I buy it. I try and build up on that, so I have lots of different kinds of pencils. We just used it for doing different pencil techniques: making different marks, making strong ones and wavy one, things like that". When she could not buy equipment, she organised her art lessons so that students shared scarce equipment. In the observed lesson, for example, each student could only have a single large paintbrush. Small brushes were in short supply, and were placed in the centre of the classroom for use when needed.

Andrea was one of the few teachers in this study to perceive the school's lack of visual artworks as a significant problem: "We (the school) don't have huge resources. I *have* got a book on different artists, but the pictures are that size [about 12x10cms], so for class work, it's not appropriate". Reproductions were from her own collection: "Just those I've been able to get my hands on [laughs]. It's not been a heap, and they've mostly been from old calendars and stuff, so it's not been great. Degas with lots of horses and stuff .... [and] Rousseau. I didn't manage to get hold of Turner or anybody else".

#### "You lay down those parameters": classroom management

When she taught art, Andrea faced the same problems in her classroom as most of her colleagues: students had to exit via a back door and down some steps to get to a sink, and the floor of the classroom was carpeted. An additional problem was that the desks in her classroom had lids with steeply inclined surfaces. This was a particular problem in art, when equipment had to be balanced on the narrow strip of wood at the top of the desk. Any spillage from paint or water-pots was a matter of serious concern because of the books inside the desk:

I've taught the children generally to work fairly carefully, and if you lay down those parameters in the first place you don't get many accidents. So that works. It makes the children work more carefully. If the newspaper is there, then they're quite happy to splosh all over the place. If you spill a jar of water, you spill a jar of water, and the newspaper is not going to stop that. It just goes straight down between those sides. It's one of those things ... I've had spills with water. I've had paint spilt, and I've had ink spilt all over the place, but it's one of those things [Q: Do you find, when you're planning your art lessons, that you think, 'I'd better not do that because of the risks']? No, I don't [very definitely]. [I say] 'Lets just go for it!' [laughs]".

#### **7.3.3 Andrea's sense of self-efficacy: "I'm not rubbish"**

Although Andrea was known at Northfield for the quality of her drawings, her artistic ability had not always been in evidence:

I remember being at school when I was about seven or eight. We had something on the desk that we had to draw, and the teacher came along and she said "You're rubbish, I don't know why you bother". I remember it as distinctly as that. So after that I didn't [bother], until I got to college and was



studying to be a primary teacher. Now I knew that as a teacher, I'd have to teach art, and I went "Bloody hell!". So I took an art course. At the first session, when I had to paint, I was absolutely traumatised. The paintbrush was shaking. But I thoroughly enjoyed it. I've found that I've got some flair in some areas .... So since then, I have gone to drawing lessons and pastel lessons, and just enjoyed it. I am not as unconfident now as I used to be.

Andrea succeeded in turning art from an area of weakness into one of strength: "I am quite happy now to draw and to demonstrate, and I recognise some art concepts. I mean, I'm not an art teacher by any means, but I know that there are some skills that I can pass on to the kids, to make them better in the skills that they are not good at".

Although modest in her claims of competence in art, Andrea was proud of her own artistic abilities and her ability to teach art. She had a strong sense of achievement in overcoming a scarring incident in her own primary years, and in developing skills which now placed her as the "arty one" of the school.

#### **7.3.4 Andrea's students: "I've found them to be very much younger than Y5s"**

The principal declared that Andrea's class was "the nicest in the school", and Andrea agreed her students were "beautiful". She gave the impression, however, that the students would improve with maturity. She laughingly said "I'm going to take them on to Y7, I think", implying that she would like to see the benefits of all her hard work come to fruition in their more senior years.

#### "Getting them to look realistically at their own abilities": Andrea's attitude towards her students

Andrea demonstrated that she had high expectations of her students' behaviour in the management of the paint on the desks: "It is a difficult working environment and the children have to learn to take care". She also encouraged autonomy when deciding on seating arrangements. In the observed art lesson, students were allowed to sit where they wanted: "I do different seating arrangements at different times, so that they don't have to sit where I've sat them".

When asked about her students' self-confidence in art, Andrea anticipated that they would be very self-critical, and she approved of this:

I think they're hard on themselves, but I am trying to get them to look realistically at their own abilities anyway .... They can't say, "I am good at

language” when they’re rubbish. If they realise where their strengths and their weaknesses lie, then they’re much better fitted for doing something about it. So hopefully they’re becoming a little bit more realistic about what they’re able to do.

Despite Andrea’s pain at being labeled “rubbish” by her former primary teacher, she used this word several times in the interview when discussing her own students’ work. Although she would never directly tell a student that they were “rubbish”, her use of the word indicated that it was a private judgment she made about some of their work. Andrea’s guidance of her students towards a realistic awareness of their weaknesses in art may have had some effect on her students’ self-confidence. Sixty-one percent of her students were self-confident about their abilities in art (excellent to good), significantly lower than the equivalent grade at Southfield (78%), although by no means the lowest in the study.

#### “You were free to do whatever you wanted, and it was so nice”: students’ attitude towards art

Andrea correctly anticipated that “art will be up there in the top three or four” favourite subjects. It ranked second (31%), with sport (46%) ranked first. Art lessons were seen as so enjoyable that, when asked to describe their worst art lesson, 31% of Andrea’s students wrote that there was no such thing as a bad art lesson: “NO! NO! None. I love every art lesson”. The direct-observational drawing lesson was the least popular art lesson (38%), contrasting with Andrea’s perception that this lesson had “worked very well”. Although Andrea had allowed the students to choose the shell, she asked them to work in pairs and this caused some disputes over the choice of image: “My partner was bossy and chose the shell that she liked!!!” Others did not like having the technique imposed on them: “I don’t like sketching unless you can colour in”; “You had to do it the same”.

When asked to describe their favourite lesson, “Our favourite place” was ranked first (30%). In this lesson, Andrea had taken her students outside the classroom where she had asked them to close their eyes, listen to the sounds, smell the scents, and then imagine their favourite place. Back inside the classroom, the students wrote a description of the place they had imagined, and then drew the image in coloured pencils on a separate piece of A4 paper. Fifty percent of the students saw the aim of this lesson as “learning how to express individual ideas”.

Andrea's students' emphasised the importance of freedom of expression when describing their favourite art lessons in the student-survey: "You got to put the animals, the trees and rivers and things wherever you wanted"; "You were free to do whatever you wanted and it was so nice"; "I got to draw what I wanted to". Eighty-four percent chose to initiate their own ideas for their drawing activity. This predilection was correctly anticipated by Andrea, "I think a lot will choose to talk about it with a friend and develop the ideas from there".

### **7.3.5 Andrea's beliefs and implicit theories about expression in art education: "motivation is easy"**

When asked whether she enjoyed teaching art, Andrea replied enthusiastically, "Yes, I love it. I do. The kids are motivated to do it, there is *no* problem with motivation ... They come and ask you at the beginning of the day ... 'Are we doing art today?' .... I mean, they don't come and ask, 'Are we doing maths today or language today?' So motivation is easy".

#### Art "is a big positive in a lot of children's lives"

Andrea described the contribution art made to her students' education:

It is a *big* positive in a lot of children's lives who perform badly in school in traditional areas .... As their talents grow, it gives them a feeling of growing confidence in themselves .... I would come at it from the stance of the children who are performing badly in class. They know that I know that they are good at something, and if that's art, then that's fine. They are more willing to tackle the other areas because they have found something that they are positively good at.

While seeing art as instrumental in supporting confidence in other learning areas, Andrea gave art concepts and skills precedence during integrated activities:

I tend to try and integrate the work ... I take my major theme and I take the major [art] skills that I want developed and see where I can link them up, if there are natural links. If there's not, then I just go with whatever it is that I am going to be teaching [in art]. But I try to link them.

Data from the student-survey supported the view that "instrumental art" was not a major component of Andrea's teaching approach. Only 8% of students said that most of their art consisted of drawings for stories or for social studies.

Andrea and expression: “they like to have the freedom to do what they want to do”

In the questionnaire, Andrea showed evidence of having an ambivalent attitude to self-expression. While she strongly disagreed with the statement “Little of educational value can emerge from spontaneous, undisciplined, free-expression”, she also disagreed with: “The main role of art is therapeutic as it allows children to express their individuality and emotions”. Data from the interview allowed an exploration of these contrasting positions.

Andrea undoubtedly recognised the strength of her students’ desire for self-expression:

They like to have the freedom to do what they want to do. I know that there are a lot of boys that are absolutely desperate to do Star Wars figures all the time ... I think there’s a place for that. And the girls – one drew a hill like that [a steep-sided mound] with a flower sticking out [laughing at such an immature image]. They need to explore *their* creativity as well.

The use of the phrase “*their* creativity”, however, implied a careful separation of her students’ creativity through self-expression, from the creativity generated through Andrea’s sequential art learning programme. Self-expression was limited to being a vent for the production of images her students yearned to make, and was not central to her own teaching aims.

In the observed lesson, for example, her clearly articulated aims related to art-techniques and concepts:

I wanted them to practice the wash again, because they have done a wash ... so that was a technique that they have already tried. They’ve tried the colour mixing before, so I wanted to reinforce the colour mixing. The new technique was really just the dabbing with the paintbrush to see what different effects they could get; that and using a sponge. So I only introduced one new technique, the others were tried before. So it was building on what they already knew. I *do* try and do that with most of the art lessons.

“Twenty-six all the same at the end of the day ... would be anathema”

Within the techniques and concepts outlined by Andrea, it was important that students should create their own images: “They are very individual. I know I am doing a technique, but I would hate to have twenty-six all the same at the end of the day. I think

that would be anathema”. The students supported her view that they had a good choice of expression in her art lessons (Table 13).

Table 13 4A *students’ views on how Andrea helped them to get ideas in their art lessons*

How does the teacher usually help you to get ideas?	Y4A
We can talk about ideas with friends and then decide what to do	50%
We get ideas from looking at artists’ paintings and sculptures	34%
We do most of our art as drawings for stories or for social studies	8%
The teacher gives us something to copy	8%

The expression Andrea nurtured, however, was strictly within the context of the skills and concepts she planned to teach in each lesson. This approach coincides with the tutored images described by DBAE advocate Rush (1987), with the important exception of there being a very small role for the study of visual artworks in Andrea’s art lessons.

“I don’t compromise on art”: art has important skills and concepts

Despite the pressure from the rest of the curriculum: “The things that I don’t compromise on are drama and art. Those don’t go”. In Andrea’s list of priorities for teaching the arts, she placed drama first, the visual arts second, media third, music fourth, and dance fifth.

Art was given a significant amount of time in the crowded teaching schedule so that the students could have a sustained period of concentration:

I say to the kids, “I think this particular task will take you an hour and a half” and they go “Huh?” [astonished]. I’m giving a fairly realistic time because I don’t want them to dash it off in twenty seconds flat. So when you put those parameters on, then they sort of tend to go “Oh ok, I’ve got this amount of time”, and they relax into it.

Her advice to new teachers would be to know “what skills they want the children to have at the end of the art class. So just as you’re looking at a language lesson, you want the children to be able to put a capital letter and a full stop, you need to know with an art class what you are actually looking to develop”. Here Andrea is again equating

concepts that are taught in art with those taught in other, generally more valued curriculum areas. She was critical of teachers who “think ‘As long as it’s art, let’s just do this’”.

When analysing the least successful of her art lessons, a collage landscape, Andrea blamed the poor quality of imagery on her failure to give “enough practice in using different qualities of paper”. She did not focus on her students’ lack of imagination as Fiona (3N) had done, nor on her failure to stimulate their imagination in the introduction as Sally (5S) had done. Her focus was on her lack of teaching effectiveness regarding art skills and concepts. This was the basis of success in her art lessons.

Andrea thought primary students should focus on learning art concepts and techniques from an early age. When teaching Y2, for example, she had successfully taught the students to make direct-observational drawings: “You can get them to look carefully”. A current Y4 student’s description of a recent direct-observational drawing confirmed that Andrea emphasised a thorough exploration of techniques: “The teacher gave us some natural objects and then we had to draw them in pencil and then we had to use charcoal, pen and chalk. We had to do all of them. We drew the same object each time”. Most students (46%) recognised that the main aim of this lesson was “learning a new technique or skill”. A significant number (34%), however, were unsure about the purpose of this lesson.

Art was also singled out as the one subject in which Andrea tended to insist on quiet concentration:

I never run silent language or maths or anything else, because I think that they’re getting as much from each other. But in art I really want them to focus on themselves and their skills, and think about what they’re doing. So I’ll quite often run a silent art classroom. This would be totally done the other way, I think, with a lot of other people. The concentration is huge.

Edwards (1979) described how silence allows students to access the right side of the brain, thus increasing their ability to draw accurately and creatively. Andrea’s insistence on a quiet art lesson was based on the recognition of the valuable expressive and cognitive basis of art education, a central tenet of DBAE.

### Looking at artists' work: "how different artists have approached subjects"

Andrea was one of the few teachers in the school to use visual artworks in her art lessons, a fact recognised by the deputy-principal, Janice (Y5). Andrea described how "we've been looking at paintings and things recently. I've looked at how different artists have approached subjects, especially landscapes .... They've actually painted in the style of artists and done little bits of it".

Response to visual artworks featured in only a proportion of Andrea's art lessons, however. For example, her students said that artists were not mentioned in the two lessons they described in detail, "my favourite place" and the direct-observational drawings, and there were no visual artworks in the observed lesson. Despite this, 34% of her students said that they usually used artists' work to get ideas for their art images. An explanation of this could be that the students ranked Andrea as an artist, despite her protestation that "I'm no artist by any means". In the observed lesson, the students' admiration for the painting she worked on was obvious. When asked what was the main purpose of art education, her students ranked "to learn how artists and craftspeople make art", first (46%).

### Summary

While Andrea adhered to the rhetoric of child-centred ideas of expression in some aspects of her ideology, analysis of her implicit theories indicated that self-expression was given a relative low priority in relation to three alternative aims: first, that students should understand that art had important concepts and skills which needed practice and reinforcement; second, that students should express their ideas through an exploration of the learned concepts and skills; and third, that students should learn that visual artworks could provide exemplars of these concepts and skills. In order to promote these aims, Andrea had developed several teaching strategies. These were demonstrated in the observed lesson and discussed in the interview.

### **7.3.6 Andrea's teaching strategies: "there are ways of leading them"**

#### "Look at development": planning a sequential art programme

Andrea got ideas for her art lessons from:

anywhere and everywhere that I can. I'm a magpie. I buy art books on how to develop skills and things like this. Your book's very good, I've been looking at that recently .... There's a book called *About Art*. There's another one that I use on children's art and, instead of just isolated ideas, it tends to look at

development. I personally don't see a lot of point in 'one-offs' ... If you haven't got the skill behind them, then I don't see much point.

Despite the K-7 Syllabus for Art and Craft being based on sequential carrier projects, Andrea did not use this as a resource and did not consult any of the other WA curriculum documents on art.

When planning for her first term in Y4, she decided her approach would start with "a general 'lets get to know', because I didn't know what Y4 was going to be like". Once she had discovered that her students were weak in drawing, she concentrated on drawing skills:

We started on drawing techniques and pencil and charcoal and pastels and things like that, as I wanted to improve the children's drawing skills. Some of them were very immature and were still drawing what I would consider really Y1 type figures. I knew that after the first term .... So once I'd seen what their skills were like, in a sense, then I came back this term and said "This is what I want to do. I want to improve their drawing skills because I think that will improve their self-esteem".

Like the IEAE teachers, Andrea regarded increased self-esteem as an important aspect of art education. In Andrea's case, however, self-esteem was to be gained from a growing mastery of art concepts and skills rather than from self-confidence in realising an innate creativity.

Andrea described her procedures: "The first couple of lessons were looking at things carefully, so looking at shape and texture. We did just general 'how to use a pencil' - which ways you could use it. So making hard lines, making soft lines, cross-hatching, stuff like that. [Q: And how did they respond?] Fine [surprised and proud], they did it well".

Andrea had not developed any concrete plans for the next term's art lessons, but she would "evaluate where I think their drawing skills have gone, and if I can take them further. So I might pick up on that again, I probably will. And I'll take looking at colour, or texture next term, because we've looked at mixing colour, so I might look at actually using it in different ways, like strong ball point pen".



“Oi, get back here”: setting a direction for the lesson

In the observed lesson, which Andrea described as typical, the introduction was carefully planned to cover five techniques and concepts: (i) a revision of the concept of a landscape; (ii) a revision of the technique of making a wash background; (iii) a revision of the concept of colour values; (iv) the introduction of different techniques for painting trees; and (v) the introduction of the idea of a focal-point in a landscape.

At the start of the lesson there was a prolonged discussion of the artworks drawn in the previous lesson: “My favourite place”. These artworks had been pasted into a book, alongside the students’ written work. Andrea’s drawing of her own favourite place was included. A student told me that “hers [Andrea’s] is in the book, at the top”. The pages of the book were lovingly turned by both teacher and students, and each artwork was discussed in turn. Andrea showed a detailed knowledge of what had inspired most students to create their images, and she was eager to know the background to images she knew less about. The students were engrossed by the landscapes and the discussions. After looking at about ten artworks, Andrea started to put the book away. Her students, however, pleaded for her to continue, so that all the drawings could be seen. The students particularly wanted to see their own pictures discussed, however briefly. “Yes” laughed Andrea later, in the interview, “They certainly did insist: ‘You haven’t shown mine yet’ [imitating a child’s voice]; ‘Oh alright’ [her own resigned response]”.

After discussing the concepts of what constituted a landscape, Andrea drew her students’ attention to a previous art lesson when they had applied a paint wash. In the observed lesson, they were to make a light water wash and then paint the shape of a tree. She showed an example of a painted tree on a wash background, which she had already made, amongst murmurs of admiration from the students.

It was raining on the day of the observed lesson, so the students could not go out to sketch a tree as Andrea had planned. Sketching was a frequent preparatory activity for art lessons. Linda (P6N) commented that her students were “very good [at sketching]. They’ve actually done it before, because Andrea does sketching a fair bit ... They’re actually quite skilled by the time they get to Y6”.

Because of the rain, Andrea suggested that the students should go to the window and look at a real tree before painting their own. A student offered the further suggestion that they could look at the large poster of a tree on the classroom wall. Although this

visual artwork was readily available, Andrea did not use it in the discussion. When asked about this, she said she would not consider it to be an artist's artwork, because it was a photograph rather than a painting.

Andrea next referred to a previous colour-mixing lesson, and there was a discussion of how to use different brushes, and how to mix brown. There was no discussion of the different shades of green for the ground or the foliage of the trees – just colour-mixing for the tree trunk, assumed to be a strong brown. Andrea talked about dabbing with a brush to get the stippled effect on the trunk. If they wanted different shades, she advised them to add more blue. For the foliage she wanted them to use a sponge.

At this point, some students digressed from the subject of painting the tree, by describing what they would put in the landscape. When this happened, I was startled to find that Andrea totally ignored their remarks, continuing as though they had not spoken. Only later, when she introduced the idea of focal-points for the landscapes, were these students' ideas acknowledged and discussed. When this issue was raised in the interview, she explained that “you don't ignore them, you just came back to the ideas later. They wanted to discuss in detail what animals they were going to put in the picture instead of concentrating [on the painting technique]”.

Andrea had been flexible in allowing her students to extend their discussion of the “my favourite place” artworks, but she wanted to remain firmly in control of the direction of the introduction to the main body of the lesson. “There are ways of leading them, basically. Discussions are very hard. They can go off at tangents and sometimes you run with where they're going, and sometimes you bring them back to where you actually want them to be. There are times to go like that, and there are times to go ‘Oi, get back here’”.

Andrea shifted direction towards the focal-point of the students' paintings, by exclaiming with great excitement in her voice, “Now, I'm going to think about what is in my environment!” The students sat up with great interest. Andrea had some Australian Geographic Magazines with an abundance of animal photographs for them to observe. The magazines were her personal copies and she requested that care should be taken when using them.

Despite the students being told that they could choose whatever creature they wanted to go in their landscape, there was instantly a volume of enquiries about what animals would be permitted. Andrea was very liberal in giving her permission, but permission

was still anxiously sought. The students seemed aware of some unstated restriction, and they were eager to know the boundaries. There was an expectation, for example, that they would use creatures found in Western Australia – a possum from the east was seen to be debatable, but was allowed. This section of the discussion was the most animated, but Andrea cut it short. Time was running out and she needed to discuss further details of the activity.

She asked for suggestions on how the animals should be placed on the landscape. Suggestion included: painting the animals directly on the landscape; drawing, cutting and then gluing them on; printing them on; dabbing on paint; making them camouflaged and surrounded with different textures; suggestions for 3-D effects. Some children wanted to digress from Andrea's focus on animals: "Can I do a river?" "Can I do a lake?" Again, Andrea totally ignored these last questions. While a river or lake could act as focal-points in a painting, Andrea had decided that the focal-point should be an animal, and did not want to be diverted.

Throughout this long discussion, Andrea kept a tight focus on the skills and concepts that she wished the students to understand and learn. Knowledge gained from previous art lessons was skillfully used as a basis from which to explore the idea of focal-points in landscapes. Within this structure of skills and concepts, Andrea was prepared to accept variations in the choice of images the students wished to make. She saw this as a sign of a successful lesson. The variations, however, were strictly within the parameters set by Andrea. In the student questionnaire 50% of her students thought she allowed them to use their own ideas sometimes, and 27% most times.

#### "I sit and draw or paint": the teacher as artist

In some art lessons such as the observed lesson, Andrea brought an artwork she had already made. In others, such as "my favourite place" and the direct-observational drawing lesson, she started an artwork in the introduction and completed it alongside the students as they worked. From a DBAE stance, it was significant that Andrea thought it was important to demonstrate to the students that she too enjoyed participating in making art:

I tend to relax then, and let them get on with it. If I've done my job well in the beginning, then they're not going to need too much help during the rest of it ... So I actually tend to sit down during the art lessons and do exactly the same things they're doing. They come and see what I'm doing, and I go and see

what they're doing, and the others go and see what everyone else is doing. So that's the way it usually tends to run. And I would sit at one of the desks with them.

When asked about her students' response to her working alongside them, Andrea said that they were pleased to have her there. When asked whether she found that students copied her image rather than generating their own ideas, she said:

I haven't found it [to be a problem] to a huge extent. I think it's good to have some modelling so that the children realise the end result that you would like achieved. If you give them nothing, I think they're left in a vacuum, and that's very hard to work towards as well. So you give some sort of [idea], but don't expect them to produce what you've produced.

It is significant that Andrea used the phrase "the end result that you would like achieved", even though it was qualified later with the statement that she did not want them to copy her image. Modeling was a means by which to give a general direction, to demonstrate the exploration of the skills and concepts that were the focus of the lesson. Andrea aimed for individuality of expression rather than for uniformity of image, but only within the parameters she had set. Results from the student-survey support Andrea's view that copying was not an issue when she modeled an artwork. When asked about how the teacher gave them ideas for their art lesson, only 8% said that she gave them something to copy.

Andrea was "very aware that they could turn around and say 'Oh but you do it too well, we can't do it as well', there's that aspect to it". Despite this, she felt that modeling was a valuable teaching strategy and did not inhibit the students' creativity: "When *you* show what *you* can do, *they* will go and show what *they* can do. I'm no artist by any means. There's always lots of variation".

#### "Don't! You should use a sponge for the leaves": assisting students with problems

At the end of the introduction to the lesson Andrea made a very popular announcement: "You can choose who to sit next to for art", and the students quickly settled to their work. Using large brushes, water and palettes of paint tablets, they started the wash background. Many students found the thick brushes difficult to handle when working-up colour from the small tablets of paint. Some painted a blue sky and one painted a blue lake, but most simply used the green available in the pallet – a green similar to that in Andrea's painting.

As the students progressed steadily through the different stages outlined in the introduction, Andrea went around the classroom, stopping the class at intervals to talk about the stages of the proceedings. She encouraged individuality when it was within the given guidelines, but suppressed it when it was not. One student, for example, tried stippling the foreground of his painting to create texture on the green wash background. Although this could have been seen as legitimate experimentation in creating textures on a wash support, Andrea told him firmly to stop because “that is not a wash”. She demonstrated the back and forth movement of the wash on his paper, removing all traces of the stippling.

Similarly, when the students were painting a tree on their landscape, a student stippled the leaves rather than using a sponge. Stippling had been recommended for painting the bark, but this student found that stippling also worked very effectively for the foliage. Andrea, however, had structured the lesson to give her students experience in both stippling and sponging when painting trees. She approached the student and said very strongly, “Don’t! You should use a sponge for the leaves”. She then turned to the class and said, “Do not use a brush for the leaves. I have cut up a sponge for this, and it will give you the chance to learn something different”. Despite this advice, towards the end of the lesson, some students were seen to be using brushes rather than a sponge for foliage. At this stage of the lesson, Andrea let it go without comment.

Andrea reminded students to go to the window and look at the trees outside, before they began to paint their tree on the landscape. She praised a student who had painted a tree with such accurate observation that it was possible to identify the exact tree outside. Despite Andrea’s encouragement to look at growing trees, some children did schematic trees rather than closely observed images, and in these cases, Andrea asked the students to go and look again.

There was much animated discussion about mixing brown, and Andrea left it to the students to experiment and share their discoveries. In the interview, she confirmed that this was her general approach. If a student asked her how to mix a colour she would say, “Well, what have you tried? Does anybody else know how to get that?” I don’t tend to give them the answers. I try and get them to work it out”. There were no other attempts at colour-mixing, except by accident when a blue lake mixed with the green wash background to create turquoise.

Throughout the art lesson there was a general atmosphere of helpfulness and co-operation between the students. Ideas were quietly exchanged and discussed. For example, when one student asked another student how he had achieved a particular effect on his tree-trunk, they had a full and detailed discussion of the process. The brush used was offered to the enquirer, so he could try the same stippling technique.

If students were having difficulties with an image and asked Andrea to draw it for them, “I just say ‘No, have a go at it yourself’. I don’t go and draw something for them. ‘Have you tried doing it this way? Have you tried looking at it that way? Have you tried making your line go this way?’ I’ll do it on a separate piece of paper, not on their piece of paper”. In the observed lesson, however, she painted over the stippled foreground on one of the washes, so she did not have a rigid rule about not interfering with students’ images.

Students who had problems producing a particular image, were often encouraged to search for images in books and journals. In the observed lesson, some students traced the animals in the magazines, and this was allowed:

I didn’t ever like tracing, and then somebody said [at an art PD workshop] “There’s a place for tracing in drawing, in learning how to draw”. So I sort of took a step back and went, “Oh is there?” Because I am not an artist, I don’t know .... I sort of reassessed. I thought “Well maybe there is a place for tracing because it gives you some idea of some form. I don’t usually allow it, but if they want to do a particular thing then I might.

Andrea’s thoughts on the usefulness of tracing did not centre on the enhancement of her students’ abilities to produce more attractive images. It centred on whether tracing would enhance her students understanding of art concepts. In this case she thought tracing could possibly help in the understanding of form.

Several students coloured the traced-image with pencil, cut it out and glued it to the painting. None of the other suggested methods of providing the focus point of the painting were used, perhaps because Andrea did not follow up with the provision of the necessary extra equipment. Some children had enjoyed the activity so much that they wanted to paint another landscape, and this was allowed. One student was much happier with her second attempt, which included a turquoise lake, because it looked markedly different from the other students’ work.

### **7.3.7 Assessment and evaluation: “we do reviews of what I think they’ve learned, and what they think they’ve learned”**

Andrea discussed a student who she described as particularly good at art: “Garry has good basic skills in art. He’s good with a pencil so he can draw well. He has a good eye for detail, so he observes things carefully. He can construct things very well. He can take a piece of wood and he can see the possibilities within that piece of wood: ‘Ah, I can do this’”.

Although Garry’s expressive skills are mentioned, Andrea focused primarily on his aesthetic, technical and observational skills. There was a similar emphasis in her comments of students who were weak in art:

They are particularly immature in their way of doing art. They’re more or less drawing sticks. You know, Y1, where you draw the heads and the big eyes and the arms coming out of the head. There’s some of those. There’s one in particular that I’m thinking of ... He’s useless with colour or anything else. So I’m trying to get him to develop some skills before he goes through. [Q: How did he cope with the observed drawing?] Not too badly. I mean it was a creditable effort, but, put him back to free drawing again, and it’s just shocking.

Andrea liked to make her students “aware of my goals for them. I mean, we quite often do assessments and we do reviews of what I think they’ve learned, and what they think they’ve learned, and what they still need to learn. [Q: And are they conscious of that in art?] I hope so, because I have tried to make them conscious in all areas”.

The difficulties Andrea had with this approach to assessment were made clear in the observed lesson. A rather morose student showed Andrea her very watery landscape. The image of the tree was particularly faint, because it had become absorbed into the wash, and the student was obviously unhappy with the result. After a silent consideration of the painting, Andrea asked, in a slightly dismissive tone, “Are you happy with that?” When the student replied with a desultory “Yes”, Andrea said briskly, “Then go and add your leaves”. Andrea appeared to judge the artwork as “rubbish”. Although this was not verbally communicated to the student, the judgment seemed clear from her expression. No advice, however, was offered to help the student improve the work, and the student remained dispirited as she went away to paint the foliage.

When questioned in the interview about this incident, it became clear that Andrea had not intended to be negative, indeed, quite the opposite. This was because she interpreted the incident very differently: “If they’re happy with the result then I don’t put my expectations onto it. I mean I would have stuck a thing here and this thing there and all the rest of it, but she was obviously happy with what she’d done so I had to accept that”. It might be that Andrea had problems reading the body language of students who approached her for comments. This would explain her bewilderment at unknowingly upsetting students, when she did not give them the assurance they sought or the advice necessary for making improvements. She described her dilemma:

I find it very hard to find the right thing to say, because it’s a very fine line between trying to develop what the child is capable of, and saying, “You’re rubbish”. So I think if you went in and made comments like that [how to make improvements] about a child’s work, they might take it that you didn’t like what they were doing, that they were not doing the right thing. That has very negative effect, so I would tend to leave that piece of work, and the next time say, “Well, have you thought about doing this?”

Andrea’s echoing of the words that had so wounded her as a child, show that she was very conscious of the need to avoid undermining her students’ self-confidence in art. But her solution of making no comment, may not appear neutral. Andrea’s silence about the student’s watery artwork, for example, appeared to give the impression that she did not approve of the work, which indeed she did not. Her main motive for her silence, however, was not condemnation. It was instead, an attempt to avoid the implication of criticism that would ensue from making suggestions for change. The student involved, however, appeared to go away with the impression that the teacher had not liked her work – a result that Andrea was attempting to avoid.

### **7.3.8 Summary**

Andrea took very seriously the idea that art had a valid and important place in primary education. She gave a generous amount of time to her art lesson, and would not jettison it under pressure from other areas of the curriculum. She was convinced of the value of art concepts and techniques, placing them alongside literacy and numeracy skills. Her sequential art programme built on previous knowledge and extended into new areas with the same thought and care that she gave to English and Mathematics. Difficult working conditions did not deflect her from this programme, and she galvanised her



students into a careful and cooperative attitude when dealing with crowded conditions, a carpeted floor, sloping desks, limited equipment and a problematic access to water.

Although Andrea did not discuss artists' work in every lesson, visual artworks formed an important element in her teaching, and this was acknowledged by her peers. She herself was seen as an active participant in the art-making process through her drawings on the board, her demonstration art-works, and working alongside the students.

Within the boundaries of the skills and concepts that she had set for each lesson, Andrea expected and promoted a wide variation of images. A consistency in the images produced would have been anathema to her. These could be described as tutored images.

Andrea was aware of her students' preference for self-expression, but her teaching focused on the learning of art concepts and art skills rather than on visual-expression. She considered that it was a lack of art concepts and art skills that led to problems in image-making, rather than a lack of expressive skills. Because of this, her emphasis was on students having a realistic evaluation of their progress in art. In this way, they would become receptive to the skills and concepts she was promoting in her lessons. Only then could they improve the quality of their work. In order to promote this receptivity, Andrea was prepared to make critical comments despite her students' occasional distress. Her students were not seen as wonderful artists. They still had a lot to learn.

#### **7.4 Themes arising from the analysis of the data**

There will now be an analysis of the themes arising from the teacher-profile of Andrea, with additional data from the observed lesson and interviews with the other AAE teachers, Linda (6N) and Ken (7S). First there will be a comparison of the circumstances under which they worked: their workplace conditions, their levels of efficacy, and their students' views on art education. Next there will be an examination of their attitudes towards expression in art education within the context of their broader aims. Finally there will be an analysis of the teaching strategies they used in order to further these aims.

#### **7.4.1 The teachers faced difficult but similar workplace conditions: “It’s terrible in primary schools”**

All the AAE teachers faced similar difficulties in their workplace conditions. They were unhappy about the pressures from an ever-increasing curriculum load, and they lacked sufficient equipment and resources. Linda (6N) had a more generous allocation of space in her classroom, but, like Andrea (4N) and Ken (7S), she had no direct access to a sink. The classroom floors were carpeted, creating problems when paint was spilled.

Andrea had the additional problem of desks with steeply inclined surfaces. Ken found the cramped conditions and the lack of storage facilities particularly trying: “It’s terrible in primary schools ...There’s hardly any room .... Storage is a problem in this school. We’ve got a wardrobe in the classroom corner – it’s not a cupboard – it’s a wardrobe to hang my coat up .... It’s just too ... messy”.

The students had a strong desire for visual-expression: “think of our own ideas”

When asked which way they preferred to get ideas for art, Ken and Andrea’s students ranked “thinking up my own ideas” first, while Linda’s students ranked it second. (Linda’s students’ first choice was to use photocopies, a method used in their previous two art lessons). Student preference for self-expression was even more pronounced during the student-survey’s drawing activity: 85% of Y4N students, 81% of Y6N students, and 76% of Y7S students chose to think of their own ideas.

The ability to make independent choices was a dominant factor in the students’ allocation of best and worse art lessons. Linda’s students, for example, strongly disliked the Hogarth lesson. Fifty-seven percent singled out this lesson as the worst lesson. Typical comments were: “because it was so limited to what I could do,” and “because of the way we had to draw the people”. The most popular lesson (52%) was Animals and their Homes, when they “got to think of our own ideas”. These choices were correctly predicted by Linda, who recognised that her students’ love of art was because “it’s a freer thing. It’s a more individual thing”.

Although Andrea, Ken and Linda faced similar problems and similar attitudes to expression from their students, they responded differently to these pressures according to their individual sense of efficacy.

#### **7.4.2 The AAE teachers' sense of self-efficacy varied from "Let's go for it!" to "It's been forced on me from above"**

Andrea (4N) had a very strong sense of self-efficacy. She loved teaching art and was confident of the validity of her teaching approach. Although she was conscious that her teaching style met with some opposition from her students, she was convinced that they would learn to adapt in time. In order to overcome the problems created by her workplace conditions, Andrea taught her students to deal with difficult working surfaces and bought her own equipment. Despite pressures from a crowded timetable, Andrea never compromised on the length of time she gave to art. When she faced difficulties, her attitude was "Let's just go for it!"

Ken (7S) was also convinced of the value of art education, but, unlike Andrea, he felt somewhat overwhelmed by the problems he faced: "I used to do half a day on art a week. Now I'm down to half that. And it's been forced on me from above. It's not my choice". Ken's last two sentences, along with others from the interview: "Well, that's my theory", and "That's what I think, for what it's worth", reflected the sense of world-weariness which pervaded many of Ken's responses: "The fun's gone out of teaching; and it's with things like art, that the fun's gone, lost". Within these restrictions however, Ken still found purpose and enjoyment in teaching art: "Oh I love doing art .... I've got no problems [with drawing]. I'm not bad. I've done quite a bit of art". He described an art-activity where his input had made "a *marked* difference" to the standard of his students' drawings, and was relaxed when describing an art lesson which did not go quite so well: "It worked OK. If I do it again, it'll be better [laughing]".

Linda (6N) had problems dealing with "the control, the discipline" in Y6. She ranked "difficulties in keeping the classroom in order because of the messy nature of art", as a second concern when teaching art. The lack of a sink in the classroom was particularly problematic: "It can get out of hand if you've got children outside getting water and washing brushes, and all that kind of stuff". Her fear of a deterioration in discipline was raised several times: "Organisation, I think, is the key thing in art .... Because if you lose control, then that's it".

When asked whether she was comfortable teaching art, Linda thought it should be obvious that she was not: "No, not really [surprised at the question]. No [very definitely], because I'm not an artist. I mean, I can't draw or paint or do anything myself". She raised the issue of being a poor artist several times in the interview, but

when asked whether she felt this was a significant handicap to her teaching she was more ambivalent, “What? Not being an artist? No, not really. I don’t think it is. Andrea has always got these beautiful pictures on her blackboard that she has produced and they’re lovely .... And I say to the children, ‘Look I just wouldn’t even attempt that’, but I’ll put pictures up. So it serves the same purpose I think”.

All the AAE teachers related their levels of efficacy in art teaching to their artistic abilities. Being a good art teacher was very closely equated with being a good drawer. There was however, an acknowledgment that their abilities in transmitting art skills and concepts also made a significant contribution. When Linda considered this aspect of her art teaching, she became less diffident. Her teaching methods might be different from those of gifted art teachers, but they could “serve the same purpose”.

### Summary

All three teachers had differing levels of self-efficacy. Andrea’s strong sense of self-efficacy regarding her teaching and workplace conditions, coincided with clear and coherent teaching aims. Ken felt less able to influence the circumstances under which he taught art, and that this compromised the art teaching programme he could offer his students. Within these restrictions, however, he retained a clear sense of his teaching aims and a strong sense of efficacy about his teaching abilities. For Linda, the issues of student control and her inability to draw, rather than a lack of time and resources, impinged on her sense of efficacy. Linda’s fear of loss of control, however, did not predispose her to the didactic teaching methods Rafferty (1987) predicted. Tutored images allowed her to provide the firm parameters she sought, whilst accommodating to a greater or lesser extent, the individuality her students desired.

### **7.4.3 AAE teachers’ beliefs and implicit theories**

The AAE teachers’ implicit theories had a profound effect on the way in which they responded to their students’ desire for expression in art education. Like their students, Andrea, Linda and Ken saw expression as being at the heart of art education.

#### “Art’s very important for kids to express themselves”

When discussing her students’ work in the observed lesson, Andrea (4N) said proudly: “They are very individual. I know I am doing a technique but I would hate to have twenty-six all the same at the end of the day. I think that would be anathema”.

Ken (7S) used expression to differentiate art from the rest of the curriculum: “Art’s very important for kids to express themselves .... I think it just feels good inside

...You're on a big scale, you're not on something small and narrow. Like writing is small and narrow. It [art] lets your mind wander". His choice of favourite grade was based on expression: "Best-aged kids, I reckon, was Y4. They're very creative at that age and they don't really consider what adult expectations are put on them". He had very negative views on the use of templates and photocopies in primary art education: "My theory is we have too many templates in primary school ... A lot of art in junior schools is in the photocopy-colour-and-cut lesson. That's my theory".

For Linda, "expression – being expressive, using their imagination" was central to art education. Like Ken, Linda differentiated art from other subjects on the basis of its expressive nature: "I do allow tracing in some things. If they're doing things to do with social studies ... for instance, ... I don't see any reason not to do that. But I think when they're doing an art lesson as such, I mean it's supposed to be *their* work, not a tracing". For the same reasons, if a student did not wish to take part in an art-activity, Linda would not insist.

Linda placed great emphasis on students feeling happy with their own work: "I think if somebody's not happy with something, why persevere with it? Throw it away and get another piece". Ken and Andrea did not agree. As Ken explained, "Sometimes kids will be half way through something and they'll say, 'I don't like this', and they won't finish it. Well, I'll make them finish it. I say 'When you've finished it you can make that choice then, but you don't know until you've finished it'". Perhaps because of her more liberal attitude towards students' expression, Linda's students gave fewer negative responses to the question of whether they could use their own ideas in art, than Andrea and Ken's (Table 14).

Table 14 *Students views on how often AAE teachers allowed them to use their own ideas*

How often do you get to use your own ideas in art?	4N (Andrea)	6N (Linda)	7S (Ken)
Most art lessons	27%	9%	28%
Sometimes	50%	81%	34.5%
Not very often	11.5%	5%	34.5%
Hardly ever	11.5%	5%	3%

“The *kids* like it”: self-expression was seen by teachers as unproductive

While Ken, Andrea and Linda enthusiastically endorsed the importance of students generating their own images in art lessons, they did not demonstrate a child-centred teachers’ preoccupation with children’s fundamental emotional needs. Indeed, Andrea provided occasional opportunities for self-expression in order to purge her students of images she would prefer not to see in her art programme. Her role was of a transmitter of knowledge, rather than that of a “psychic mid-wife” (Reid, 1956, p.237).

While Ken described art as “therapeutic”, it was only in relation to “using your hands; it’s just relaxing”. Linda was persuaded that art could be therapeutic in regard to emotions, but she had to search back five years for an example of when a child had used art to express strong feelings. This aspect of expression was seen to play a minor role rather than being a central characteristic of art education.

The AAE teachers only occasionally gave their students opportunities for self-expression. Ken explained, “I’ve never been that open to it. Once a term I try to have a happening where we can spend half a day where they come up with ideas. They’ve got to have something planned, because it’s basically to allow me to get organised [with equipment] .... The *kids* like it”.

Linda found that her students “don’t actually like it [self-expression] very much. They don’t. They like to have some direction. They like to know what they’re expected to do. You say to them, ‘You can do what you like, it’s a free choice’. ‘Mm, I don’t know what to do’. So they like a bit of direction”.

Like Linda, Ken found that his senior primary students lacked initiative when faced with a free choice of image-making: “In Y5, Y6 they start to think ... ‘What does this person want me to do?’ Kids at Y4 have ... got enough skills to be able to produce something they want ... but they are not too worried about what an adult wants. Well, that’s my theory. A change takes place in Y5, I reckon”.

“They like to know what they’re expected to do”: art concepts provide the structure students need

The response of Ken’s student to the question “What kind of artist are you” appears to support his view that there was some decline in self-confidence in senior primary students. His class’ self-confidence was next to the lowest in the study (41%, excellent to good), the lowest being the Y7 class in Northfield (37%). The class with the most self-confidence in art, however, was Linda’s senior primary class of Y6 students, where

76% thought they were excellent/good artists. Linda, however, was adamant that her students “like to know what they’re expected to do”.

All three teachers limited their students’ opportunities for self-expression for slightly different reasons. Ken focused on his students’ lack of self-confidence in image-making, Linda, on her students’ lack of ideas for their image-making. Andrea was more concerned about the poor quality of the images her students produced when totally free to choose their own images. She argued that her students’ self-esteem would only rise with an improvement in their art skills.

While not agreeing on the precise reasons why they did not allow self-expression, Linda and Ken were in agreement with Andrea on the form of guidance which they should give to their students during their art lessons: “In a very simple way, I try to take an area, take a starting point which is usually where the kids are at, and build upon that so that they are maybe a bit better at the end of the time”. They were united in the view that primary art education contained an important body of knowledge. This body of knowledge needed to be transmitted to their students through a carefully planned sequence of lessons. The skills and concepts inherent in each art lesson provided not only a clear direction for the students, but also the parameters within which they developed their individual images. Their aim is summarised by Cowan and Clover (1991): “In creating a piece of art according to clear criteria rather than step-by-step criteria, each child’s production is a unique expression of his or her individuality” (p.41).

#### “Oh yes, I always do art”: art education is important

The AAE teachers saw the arts as an essential part of the primary curriculum. Within the arts, the visual arts were ranked first in importance for Ken and Linda, and second for Andrea (after drama). All provided a regular slot of over an hour or more for their weekly art lessons, and this time for art was seen as sacrosanct. Linda said, “Oh, yes, I always do art”, and Andrea stated firmly, “I don’t compromise on ... art”.

The current demands from the WA Curriculum Framework prevented Ken from doing “as much art as I used to because art’s the first thing that they kick out the door when they bring something else into a primary school”. He regretted the decline in support for teachers in art education: “I used to always be going to in-services on art. Art [in-services] was one of the main ones to help you, when you were looking for ideas. Art’s one thing that, if you don’t feel comfortable, you need to do it yourself; more than most

other subjects. And that's gone out of schools". If circumstances permitted "I sometimes sneak it in on a Wednesday ... They have assembly, so every second Wednesday they get an extra half an hour".

"Art's not a soft option": there is a cognitive base to art education

The AAE teachers believed that art education had specific and valuable content. Ken said, "It [art] is viewed by people as a soft option, but art's not a soft option". He argued that primary teachers did not get the in-service support they needed if they were to teach art concepts and skills effectively: "Because we're doing outcomes, and school-development plans and all that other rubbish. We're not concentrating on the skills, and equipping teachers with the skills to teach. That's my theory".

Ken gave priority to teaching drawing skills because his students had particular problems in this area: "If you do drawing with them, they want it to look exactly like it is. It's very hard I find, to get them to really weigh that up and look at it carefully". In an attempt to influence his students' preoccupation with realism, he used visual artworks to demonstrate the validity of expression through non-representational images.

Andrea emphasised the importance of knowing "with an art class, what you are actually looking to develop". This was on a par with learning language and mathematical concepts and skills, and had special requirements: "I don't run a silent classroom but quite often I run a silent art classroom; because I want them to concentrate on the task at hand". Her first object when she began the school year was to discover the skills and concepts her students lacked in order to tailor her programme to these needs. Like Ken, she focused on her students' weaknesses in drawing skills. In contrast to Ken's provision of two lessons on this subject, however, Andrea devoted a whole term to developing this aspect of the visual arts curriculum, and contemplated continuing with the theme in the following term: "I'll evaluate where I think their drawing skills have gone, and if I can take them further. So I might pick up on that again, I probably will .... I try and extend them". Andrea argued that the cognitive content and expressive nature of art meant students needed quietness to reach their full potential: "In art I really want them to focus on themselves and their skills .... The concentration is huge".

Linda also focused on giving her students "a grounding in as many different skills as possible". She was aware of the skills and concepts she was promoting in each of the art lessons she discussed during the interview and observed lesson. Unlike Ken and Andrea, however, Linda did not search for an understanding of her students'



weaknesses in art before deciding on her visual arts programme: “I choose things that I like; things that fit in with the topic. Sometimes there’s no particular reason, I just happen to like that thing and I’ll do it, because I think the children might enjoy doing it”.

“Themes don’t control what I do”: art is not a handmaiden to other subjects

Linda’s theme was the landing of the First Fleet in Australia, and her art lessons had centred on this. The Lowry street scene in the observed lesson and the Hogarth print helped students to understand the urban and industrial conditions from which the immigrants had been coming. The harbour scene, the landscapes, dioramas and camouflaged animals were to show “what the first fleet would have seen when they arrived”. This approach was also typical of Ken and Andrea’s planning. Ken, for example, described the origins of his students’ favourite art lesson, when they made fish-mobiles: “We went on a camp and the kids went fishing, so they come back rapt about fish. So we did water and fish. And then in science we were also doing balance and mobiles and it all fitted in. Sort of three or four topics, all into that one activity”.

At the same time there was an awareness of the danger of using art as a handmaiden for other subjects. “Themes don’t control what I do in art”, Ken stated; and Andrea adopted themes only “if there are natural links. If there’s not, then I just go with whatever it is that I am going to be teaching [in art]”. Linda did not “always follow a theme. It depends what my subject is for the term. If I can find art work that fits in with it then I’ll use it. If I can’t, then I just do something simpler”.

Ken had very strong views on the need to keep subject disciplines separate and distinct:

The whole push of outcomes is integration. You’re doing maths and you’re not supposed to be doing maths, you’re doing maths and social studies, or environment or whatever they’re calling it now .... Each area has got disparate, definite skills you should put kids on. They don’t discover them, [but] the theory is they just discover them .... All this thing about discovery – it’s full of good ideas, but they need to be helped to learn things.

Ken was particularly wary of teachers using integration as a way of fudging the fact that there was no real art content in their teaching programmes:

Art becomes an adjunct to it. I’d rather do art as an art thing, not as part of something. I think we have lost so much in the primary school trying to

integrate things. Well that's my feeling, and it's very frustrating .... Now they say, "I just integrate it, just integrate it." So we end up with this mass of integration where the kids don't have a clear direction of where they're going.

Ken's views on the importance of the distinctive nature of visual arts education echoes DiBlasio (1987) position that "one of the cardinal premises of DBAE theory is that art shall be studied for its own intrinsic value; the instrumental uses of art-activity as a means to personal development or social consciousness are regarded as secondary, a desirable by-product of art learning" (p.225). The AAE teachers' view that themes should not be forced onto art, reflects Eisner's (1994) concern that integration can lead to art becoming a "handmaiden" of other subject areas.

### Summary

The AAE teachers believed that while expression was central to art education, unrestricted self-expression had very limited value. This was because art was seen to have valuable content that students needed to learn, and it was this that should form the context for expression. As Ken (7S) stated "art is not a soft option", but an essential part of the school curriculum, not to be jettisoned because of other curriculum pressures, nor used as a handmaiden to other subjects. The teaching strategies employed by the AAE teachers to encourage expression within the context of learned skills and concepts, will now be analysed.

#### **7.4.4 AAE teaching strategies: "they hone their skills"**

The AAE teachers developed certain teaching strategies, which had clear links with their beliefs about the intrinsic cognitive value of art education.

#### "I personally don't see a lot of point in 'one-offs'": sequential art lessons

Each of the teachers preferred to develop the same art concepts and skills over several art lessons, to avoid what DiBlasio (1987) called "conceptual drift". Andrea (4N) stated, "I personally don't see a lot of point in 'one-offs' ... if you haven't got the skill behind them, then I don't see much point". She favoured an art book that "instead of just isolated ideas, tends to look at development". In the introduction to the observed lesson, she was careful to remind her students of the continuity of skills and concepts that had been covered that term.

Linda also promoted continuity in her art-activities: "We've done mostly shading. Because we've done sketching and we've done lots of pencil work, where they've just

been able to use a pencil and see all the different lines you can get using a pencil .... We've actually done sketching outside as well. So we've done quite a bit".

Ken would similarly:

do the same sort of activity or similar at least twice. The first time the kids are playing with the skills and playing with the ideas ... [and] often don't do as good a job. You give the kids a second time to do something and they hone their skills a bit, and they end up with something of better quality, something they're happier with.

The AAE teachers supported the idea of sequential learning, a tenet of DBAE thinking, and sought out resource books with art concepts and artists' work specifically in mind. No-one, however, used the documents published by the WA Education Department, even though the K-7 Art and Craft Syllabus (1986) demonstrated how to plan sequential learning through carrier projects. Andrea and Linda had not looked at it, and Ken thought "there are better things around. I don't think it was very well put together, even though there are good ideas in it. .... The cards in the box and all that. I haven't got room in my classroom".

"We talk about the Art Gallery": visual artworks were important but not central

The study of artists' work through aesthetic scanning is at the centre of DBAE teaching. Although the AAE teachers incorporated the study of visual artworks into their teaching programmes, aesthetic scanning was not a central factor. Moreover, while DBAE expanded its definition of visual artworks, from fine-art artefacts such as sculptures and paintings, to cartoons, photographs, fabrics and other more accessible objects, the AAE teachers perceived visual artworks purely in terms of reproductions of paintings. The AAE teachers all had difficulties accessing these through their schools. Ken (7S) explained that, although he could borrow books from libraries:

it is very hard to sit down and show a picture that big. I mean these things are a page .... Prints cost so much, and it's no use going for something that's not quality. You need to hang a Picasso up that's a real size. Any artist that does something that's large and you reduce it, it doesn't have the impact and it doesn't have the texture .... I don't think the ones we've got are much cop ... That's what I think, for what it's worth.

Andrea (4A) used her own private but limited resources for visual artworks. She taught her students to paint in the style of artists by copying reproductions of paintings, and she used visual artworks as discussion points to enrich her students' understanding of landscapes. Although visual artworks were not regularly used in her art lessons, it was recognised by other teachers at Northfield that her students would gain some knowledge of artists' work while in her class. In addition to using established artists' work, Andrea also provided an example of an artist at work, through demonstrating the artistic process herself.

Linda (6A) also included the study of artists' work in her art programme. In the observed lesson, the students discussed reproductions of Lowry paintings and drew a street scene using similar figures. In a previous lesson she had taught her students cross-hatching through the observation of Hogarth's shading techniques in his figure drawings. Most of her students (66%) chose "looking at artists' work" as the way that their teacher mostly helped them to get ideas for art. When asked to choose her ideal in-service for art, she selected one that would increase her knowledge of how to discuss artists' work.

In the introduction to the observed lesson, Linda did not use aesthetic scanning in a formal way, but she was aware of the importance of discussing the art elements. When the colours in Lowry's reproduction were being analysed, Linda asked her students, "There are a few yellows and reds, where were they?" They replied, "Where there is light" and "Nothing is really very bright". When discussing the colours to use in their own work, students suggested "murky green" and "dull red". The students were absorbed while examining the reproduction, and made spontaneous observations such as "All that pollution!".

One student realised she was familiar with Lowry's style because of a Lowry reproduction she had at home, and compared the two paintings eagerly. Unlike Andrea, Linda took up all her students' comments. The discussion was not allowed to drift, however, as Linda astutely incorporated spontaneous comments into the themes she had planned. The comment on pollution, for example, was used to direct the students' attention to the possible occupations of the figures in the painting. The student with a Lowry reproduction at home was asked to compare how Lowry had portrayed figures in both paintings. During the discussion and during the lesson, students quietly came out of their seats to have a closer look at the reproduction. They were very involved in both the discussion and the drawing activity that followed.

Linda explained that she liked “using artists because I think it encourages them to go and look at paintings elsewhere. Some of them have prints hanging at home”. She was delighted when this occurred with the student who had a Lowry reproduction at home, and discussed it in the interview: “She said she’d taken home one of the photocopies I had done, and put it up beside it and said, ‘Oh, I think it’s a continuation!’. As if he had sat and drawn that bit, and then he’d moved up the street [laughs delightedly]. So I don’t know if he did”. Linda also wanted her students to look beyond their home environment: “We talk about the art gallery and what’s on in the art gallery, and things like that. So if some of them pick up on it and want to go and see, then that’s good”.

While Linda encouraged her students to go with their parents to the WA Art Gallery, Ken made a point of actually taking them during school time. Although this was always done at the end of the school year, Ken was the only teacher in the study to use the free guided-tours at the WA Art Gallery specially tailored for primary students:

I always try and take my sevens to the art gallery .... Most of them haven’t been to the art gallery. It’s the most under-used resource we’ve got in our community. They’re a bit friendlier, more user-friendly now than they used to be. They never used to like me particularly going there. What all the kids like there, is the abstract stuff .... I try and get them there every year.

Ken also showed a strong interest in introducing his students to artists’ work during his art lessons, particularly in relation to illuminating a current art concept or skill he was introducing. His students, for example “get a picture of art as trying to reproduce something like a photograph”, and he found this inhibited their freedom of expression. To emphasise that non-representational art was a valid mode of expression, Ken introduced his students to abstract artists, using his own reproductions: “I’ve got quite a lot of stuff that’s produced by that – who’s that way-out abstract artist? – Picasso. I try and do lots of drawing like Picasso, and colouring things in the wrong colour. More what you feel, and more of bright colours, impressionist sort of colours, that sort of thing”. It could be that his students’ receptiveness to abstract art in the art gallery was fuelled by Ken’s discussions on Picasso.

Ken found that “Some of them like it, some of them hate it. They don’t want to do *that!* Well, kids vary”. The study of visual artworks was important enough to over-ride any

resistance from his students, but, in order to address this problem, Ken chose “how to discuss artists’ work with primary students” as his ideal in-service.

Of the nineteen class teachers in this study, only five (Andrea, Ken, Linda, Phil and Dorothy) introduced their students to artists’ work. None of these five teachers discussed visual artworks in the precise manner advocated by DBAE. The AAE teachers, however, came the closest in four ways. First, by being knowledgeable and enthusiastic about artists’ work; second, by regarding the study of visual artworks as inherently valuable; third, by encouraging their students to visit art galleries; and fourth, by occasionally using aesthetic scanning – Linda in her observed lesson and Ken in his student evaluations. Visual artworks did not, however, represent the “central focus” advocated by Clark, Day and Greer (1989, p.132). Its main function was in facilitating the learning of particular art concepts and skills. Ken demonstrated the concept of non-representational image-making by looking at abstract artists’ work; Andrea and Linda used landscape reproductions to show how artists had used the painting and drawing skills and concepts they were promoting.

“They know what you’re looking for”: students should work within the concepts and skills being taught

The AAE teachers’ central focus was the teaching of specific art concepts and skills. Andrea (4A) was the most consistent in carefully structuring each art lesson according to the concepts she was teaching. Her observed lesson had well-defined stages. Within these stages she maintained a tight focus on the art concepts and skills to be learned. In the introductory stage, for example, students’ contributions were ignored unless they fitted within the parameters she had decided. The lesson proceeded stage by stage, but, unlike the stages formulated by mimetic behaviourist teachers, these stages were not way-stations on the route towards specific, predetermined images.

Ken also wanted his students to stay within the parameters of art concepts and skills that he had set for each art lesson. He insisted on his students completing their work on this basis, even if they had doubts about its progress: “I think kids see things as a failure, but some of the best art work I’ve come up with, are ‘failures’ that end up really mint. But the kids see it as ‘This is not quite what I wanted to achieve’”. Ken’s use of the phrase “I’ve come up with” underlines his active role in defining the direction of his students’ work. Images that disappointed students, could still be “the best”, because expression is viewed as a less central criteria than the successful exploration of the art concepts being taught.

Sometimes Ken's boundaries were quite broad:

One kid, John, did not want to do his fish. So I said, "Righto John, go into the library and find something else to do, but on that theme. You come back and we'll negotiate whether that will suffice as a substitute". Well, he ended up doing the fish, but I'll always give kids that sort of option.

At other times Ken set quite complex requirements within which his students could experiment with ideas: "One activity I do with them is when they have to do three panels. In each panel they've got to use the same elements, but they've got to slide them. So they slide the shapes and slide the colours as well".

In the observed lesson, Linda set clear boundaries within which her students should work in order to explore Lowry's figure-drawing techniques. Commenting on the introductory discussion of the Lowry reproduction, Linda said, "I think they're quite responsive. They seem to know really what you want to hear, and they know what you're looking for. So they're quite good, they're quite astute". For Linda, a successful discussion was when students kept to the focus she had envisaged, rather than exploring avenues she had not anticipated. During the lesson, she made the parameters clear: her students were to use pencil and watercolour pencils to create "a hustling and bustling scene. Concentrate on the lines of the buildings and the hustle and bustle of the people".

The parameters within which Linda's students should work could be stretched. "If the children suggest something that I hadn't thought of and I think that fits into my guidelines, then yes, I would accept that suggestion. For instance, if someone had said to me [in the observed lesson], 'Can we use pastels?' then I would have said, 'Yes, that's fine'". The words "if ... that fits my guidelines", indicate the importance of maintaining the key structures of the lesson. As it happened, a student had asked Linda if she could use another medium in the observed lesson, but Linda had refused: "They always ask for textas, but I hate them. They're so bright and brash". Pastels would have allowed students to recreate a sombre industrial landscape, whereas textas would not.

When asked what made her decide an art lesson had been successful, Linda said, "The ones that I enjoy and feel happy with, are the ones that the children enjoy, and the ones that they produce the best work. When they've done what I expected them to do". Although she placed more emphasis than Andrea and Ken on her students' enjoyment of the lesson, she still wanted her students to produce "what I expected them to do".

“I’ll try and talk them round”: deviations from the main concepts are not welcomed

Linda’s observed lesson provided interesting examples of her response to students who wanted to deviate from the main themes. One student asked, “Can I do another scene – I don’t like industrial scenes”. Linda refused and said, as an aside to me, “She’s romantic”. Some students had problems differentiating between stick-figures and Lowry figures. Linda constantly reiterated to this group that they should draw in the style of Lowry’s painting and that there should be “no faces”. Other students did not want to include many people in their drawing, because they did not enjoy drawing people. Linda responded by saying firmly, “No, that won’t do – it’s a busy, busy picture”.

Linda did not view these requests as a demonstration of her students’ desire to express their individuality: “Some of them grumble and groan. They like to stretch the boundaries. [Q: So what are children actually saying when they ask ‘Can I do three figures instead of a lot?'] I think they’re just pushing the boundaries to see if you’ll give in and say, ‘O.K. you can be lazy and not do it’”. When she was asked: “Do you ever get children who are just not enthused with the idea?” she replied:

Oh yes! [Q: What do you do about those?] Sometimes I’ll ask them if they prefer to do something else [laughs]. [Q: Another subject such as English?] Mm, yes. I’ll try and talk them round. You know, convince them that this is the best thing to be doing at that particular time. But if they’re not really keen, then I’ll offer them something else to do, but they usually opt for the art. [Q: That’s an interesting idea. Say in maths, you wouldn’t give that option would you?] No [laughs]. [Q: So why do you think they should have that choice for art?] I don’t know. I think probably because you can’t really force someone to do an art thing, can you? I mean if they really feel that they can’t do it. Because I’ve never come across this situation where they’ve refused point blank to do something. But I suppose you can’t really force them to draw. You *could* just make them sit forever to do the maths if you really wanted to [laughs].

Linda had different strategies for dealing with recalcitrant students in an art lesson than she would have in a maths lesson. The reason was not because one subject was more important than the other, but because art had expression at its centre in a way that maths did not. Because of this, Linda felt that she could not insist on a student producing art in the way that she could insist on a student resolving a maths problem.



While expression was seen as a central component of art, it is significant that the option of the student continuing to do art outside the parameters of the set skill or concept was not presented as an option. The tutored image was to be adhered to within each art lesson, or no art would be done.

For the AAE teachers, expression was important, but it was placed carefully and solely within the boundaries of the art concepts to be explored. While these boundaries were not optional, the images within the concepts were. This conforms very closely to the tutored images advocated by Rush (1987).

“If that fits my guidelines, then yes”: the extent of expression is related to the number of taught concepts and skills

When a single art concept or technique was used as the basis of the art lesson, there was more scope for expression than when there were numerous requirements to fulfill. For example, in Andrea’s (4A) lesson about My Favourite Place, the broad theme of a landscape allowed her students to express their own ideas freely. The freedom of expression in this lesson was further fostered by Andrea’s skillful, multisensory approach in her introduction. In contrast, Andrea’s observed lesson contained a plethora of art-techniques. These imposed a much more complicated network of boundaries within which students could develop ideas. Andrea’s students’ persistent questioning of what images were permitted, showed that they understood the importance of maintaining these boundaries.

“It gives them that, oomph, and away they go”: modelling an image helps the students realise the potential of a taught concept or skill

The AAE teachers often guided their students towards the desired tutored images by showing an artwork that incorporated the concepts and skills at the core of the art lessons they were teaching. This artwork could take the form of a visual artwork, an exemplar from a book, a students’ work from a previous year, or an artwork they had prepared before or during the lesson. The teachers did not want their students to copy the image of the artwork. It was intended that the artwork should merely model the processes involved in the art lesson.

Ken (7S) used this teaching strategy in a variety of ways. He liked to use a resource book that showed a full-page reproduction of a primary student’s artwork with each lesson-plan. It was the same book he had recommended to Phil (5/6S) in the previous year. Like Phil, he found it useful to kick-start his students’ creativity:

If I get a kid struggling with an idea, if I'm not putting it over well, I'll look at it [the illustration] with them. I won't leave it out, or they might copy it. But your kid's got some place to start. Some kids, they can go straight, but others can't .... A lot of kids have no [idea]. It gives them that, oomph, and away they go.

Ken argued that "kids do that anyway [look at examples]. I've got a couple of kids I would say are reasonable with doing art in the class, and the other kids will go and have a look at what they're doing and use them as a bit of a stimulus, you know. 'They always have the good ideas, we'll go and look at theirs'".

Other strategies Ken used were: modelling an image on the blackboard, and showing previous students' work. In one art lesson, his students had to choose an image from a magazine, cut it in half and then reproduce the other half as accurately as possible. He demonstrated this idea briefly on the blackboard and then showed an example of a students' work from a previous year. When asked whether they had been able to use their own ideas in this particular lesson, the students responded with a resounding "Yes!"

Linda (6N) felt it was a handicap that she could not model images for her students: "I can't draw or paint or do anything myself. I try to avoid giving examples of my own work by using other peoples, [laughs] because I can't do it. What I produce I'm not happy with. So I feel it's not good enough to show the children". Instead, she used visual artworks to illustrate the concepts and skills she was teaching.

Andrea (4N) agreed that "it's good to have some modelling ... If you give them nothing I think they're left in a vacuum ... but don't expect them to produce what you've produced". Unlike Linda, Andrea was very confident of her drawing and painting skills and was happy to model a technique or process for her students by creating an image. In the observed lesson she had prepared a landscape at home, but often she would create an artwork by working alongside her students.

For Andrea, the aim of modelling in this way was not to encourage conformity, but to use her work as an example of how the concepts and skills being taught might be incorporated into an image. In modelling, as with other teaching strategies such as allowing tracing or drawing on the students' work, the touchstone for Andrea was whether it enhanced the concept or skill. The issue of whether it helped create a better end-product was never raised and, indeed, she was anxious to avoid any conformity to

her image: “There’s always lots of variation”. What concerned her, was whether her students would feel intimidated by the comparison between her own work and theirs. She used this issue to reinforce her students’ awareness of their need to study and apply the concepts she was teaching. Only in this way would they increase their abilities enough to match her own.

“I’ll start them, I won’t do it for them”: the teacher has an active role during the lesson

Andrea (4N) encouraged her students to work in silence during art lessons, to enable them to fully concentrate on their work. She enjoyed working alongside them, exchanging comments on her own and her students’ work. These comments were predominantly about the concepts and skills she was focussing on for that lesson. Andrea’s knowledge of her students’ ideas in the My Favourite Place landscapes, demonstrated that she had discussed this aspect of their work thoroughly during that lesson.

When the structure of Andrea’s art lesson was more complex, as during the observed lesson, there was less relaxed discussion, and a much closer supervision of the skills and concepts being used. These interventions were generally verbal advice or questions. Although Andrea had intervened to eradicate some stippling on a student’s wash in the observed lesson, she would not help students by drawing on their work. This was not because she could not draw, but because she believed that students should work through problems for themselves: “I don’t tend to give them the answers. I try and get them to work it out”.

Ken (7S) also felt he should have an active role during an art lesson:

My role is to go round and just suggest ways they could enhance their work. I never say to them, “You must”. If somebody is doing some work that’s not particularly neat, I might suggest how they neaten it up. I might even give them a hand sometimes, dabble a bit with what they bring, and show them. Or maybe even, like if they’re mixing a colour, take them aside and show them how to mix that particular colour they want. Also, my job is to encourage them. If a kid’s doing something different, a little bit different, to point that out to the other kids as an example. Maybe even hold their work up, if they’re happy about that. So, as well as that, making sure they don’t make a mess and stuff like that along the way. I don’t sit down in art and do my marking. I think if the

teacher does that [is active], you get better quality work. Yes, it definitely shows  
.... I'll start them, I won't do it for them. I'll give them a hand.

Ken's first emphasis was that he wanted to avoid imposing his ideas on his students. It was important to the quality of the students' work that he was active, but it was to encourage them and to help them resolve problems rather than impose a standardised image. He was willing, on occasions, to work on the students' artwork, but he was aware of the dangers of taking over the student's work. He hoped for and encouraged variations in the students' images. His change of words from "different" to "a little bit different", however, perhaps implies that he welcomed differences only within specific parameters.

Linda (6N) saw her role as very similar to that of Ken's:

Just to wander around and give encouragement; some guidance, maybe if they're not sure how to use the pencil or whatever they're using properly, to get the best result that they're looking for. Because sometimes, for instance, they've found that to get the clouds and the smokiness from the Lowry, they could sharpen their pencil and rub the lead. So that's worked quite well. Things like that. Just to give them other ideas. I mean they don't have to use them if they don't want to.

"I think you *can* assess a kid's creativity": evaluation and assessment

When evaluating her art lessons, Andrea (4N) was not particularly interested in the look of the end-product. Instead, she focused on what her students were learning. When she discussed her students' strengths in art, she based her comments primarily on their abilities in using art skills and concepts. Her least successful lesson was discussed in terms of her students' careless application of shape and space, rather than their failure to produce an attractive image.

Linda (6N) and Ken (7S) were similarly unpreoccupied with the look of the end-product. Linda did not insist on her students finishing their artwork if their enthusiasm had waned: "If they're not keen to go back to finish it, you think, 'O.K. Well, we'll let the ones who want to finish'. Those who don't, then I don't force them to .... And there are actually one or two who never finish, who never finish anything".

Despite a desire to emphasise the process rather than the product, it obviously remained a concern for Linda that some students never finished their work. Ken insisted on his

students finishing their work, but mainly so that they could see the results of following through on the concepts and skills they had learned. His use of the first person singular in “some of the best art work I’ve come up with” indicates some adherence to the attraction of the end-product however.

All three teachers had to grade their students in art for their school reports. Ken was slightly uncomfortable with this procedure, because art provided a valuable antidote to the constant assessment in other subjects: “The teacher’s not always giving you a mark out of ten or anything like that, that’s very important. Art’s an area where kids have success. Most kids will show you a piece of art that they reckon is OK”. Despite this, Ken felt it was possible to grade some aspects of art: “I try to look at how well the kid takes the skill. I have to give them a number, one to five. I’m very generous because I’m not very happy about it. I think you *can* assess a kid’s creativity. How creative a kid is on a sliding scale and also how well they use that specific skill”. To do this he used the idea of an art exhibition, in which students received comments from their peers as well as a written report from their teacher:

They go round and show everybody what they’ve done. From those three pieces or whatever – some kids have got two, some have got three – I make a bit of an evaluation. [Q: Do they know what grade you record?] Yes, and no. I will tell them what I think is a good piece, and why I think it’s a good piece. I also discuss with them when they’ve finished doing something, “Who likes something about that one, that one or that one?” and we look at that. [Q: Do they enjoy that, or do they dread it?] No, I think they’re quite happy really. Kids will look around and say, “Gee I like that”, “So and so’s got a good one”. There’s no threat, no pass or failure with that .... “Why do you like it?” They’ll talk about colour and shapes, and “It really looks like it” or whatever.

By focusing on the concepts and skills learned, Ken felt that he converted a potentially arbitrary procedure, into a positive learning experience for his students.

Linda had more problems with assessment for art than Ken, especially the formal requirements of the school report: “I think art’s a very difficult subject to judge. I don’t know how TEE teachers ever judge what’s a pass and what isn’t, because it’s to do with taste isn’t it really?”

While Linda and Ken showed varying degrees of discomfort with the idea of assessing their students’ work, Andrea felt that assessment was an important and intrinsic part of

her art education programme: “They are aware of my goals for them. I mean, we quite often do assessments and we do reviews of what I think they’ve learned, and what they think they’ve learned, and what they still need to learn”.

When students adversely compared their own work to Andrea’s, she used it as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of having goals: “One or two have said, ‘Oh, but yours is the best’, and that’s very hard to tackle. I just turn around and say ‘Well look, I’ve had lots of experience and it’s taken a long time to get to this stage. This is where you’re at, and this is where you’re coming from’”. Andrea believed in the importance of students realising the complexity of the concepts and skills needed for successful art-making. She wanted to encourage her students, but she also wished to avoid any false complacency about their abilities in art.

Of the three AAE teachers, Andrea was most conscious of the importance of her role in evaluating her students’ work. During the lesson she would offer frequent comments about the progress of the students’ work in relation to the skills and concepts she was teaching. Andrea saw making negative and positive comments on students’ work, as an important element in her teaching approach. Despite being concerned about her student’s emotional reaction to some of her comments about their work, she did not intend to radically alter her teaching approach because “I *certainly* want to stretch them”. She hoped that most of her students would not think that they were good or excellent at art: “If they realise where their strengths and their weaknesses lie, then they’re much better fitted for doing something about it”.

#### Summary of AAE teaching strategies

The AAE teachers used sequential art lessons and visual artworks to support and extend their students knowledge of key art skills and concepts. Expression, while central, was only allowed within the stipulated guidelines to ensure the acquisition of the taught concepts and skills. To further guide their students, the teachers modelled images and took an active role in classroom procedures. Andrea saw evaluation and assessment as essential aspects of her teaching strategies, while Ken and Linda were more ambivalent. All three agreed, however, that the focus of any evaluation should be on the art concepts and skill learned rather than the attractiveness of the end-product.

While many of these teaching strategies reflect DBAE strategies for producing tutored images, certain aspects do not: visual artworks were not as central to the teaching programme, modelling was used in a more directing way.

## 7.5 Conclusion

The WA Curriculum Framework (Curriculum Council, 1998) has four outcome areas: (i) Arts Ideas in which “students generate arts works that communicate ideas”, (ii) Arts Skills and Processes in which “students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of the arts”; (iii) Arts Responses on which “students use their aesthetic understanding to respond to, reflect on and evaluate the arts; and (iv) Arts in Society in which “students understand the role of the arts in society” (p.52). It has previously been shown how the philosophical underpinnings of the WA Curriculum Framework closely relate to DBAE ideas. According to DBAE theorists, visual arts education should be based on four main premises: (i) an understanding of specific art concepts, (ii) a discussion of visual artworks, (iii) a sequential art programme, and (iv) an evaluation of students’ progress.

Andrea, Ken and Linda ideas on teaching art were formed essentially independent of both current curriculum documents, and of the theoretical debates that influenced the writing of these documents. Given these circumstances, it is remarkable that these three teachers chose to teach art so closely in sympathy both with the aims of the WA Curriculum Framework, and with the teaching strategies exemplified in Jackie’s teaching programme. Beset by difficult teaching circumstances, under pressure from their students’ desire for self-expression, and in Linda’s case, enduring a low sense of efficacy, they went in a direction mandated by their beliefs about art education. In contrast to the predetermined art prevalent in their schools, they focused on the cognitive aspects of art education.

The study of visual artworks was incorporated into Andrea, Ken and Linda’s visual arts programmes, but did not form the central focus of their approach as advocated by DBAE. Rather than visual artworks acting as the initiator of ideas, they were used as occasional exemplars of the art concepts and skills being taught. The teachers’ priority was for their students to learn art concepts and skills, and visual artworks were used to further this end.

Although expression had an important role to play in their art programmes, the AAE teachers emphasised the cognitive basis for art education, rather than its purely expressive or therapeutic value. They did not believe in nurturing their students’ self-esteem through constant positive reinforcement. They wanted to challenge their students, and to increase their maturity and self-reliance. Most importantly, they

wanted their students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and to increase their knowledge of art-techniques, art elements, and expression, including how these concepts and skills related to artists' work.



## CHAPTER 8

### **Instrumental Art Education: Findings on teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

At the core of the Contextualist approach to art education is the concern that students should use art education in order to develop and express social, rather than merely aesthetic values. In the philosophy of contextualism, these social values are primarily determined by the radical or conservative views of the theorist towards the society s/he inhabits.

In this study four teachers, Mavis (1S), Moira (2/3S), Laura (4S), and Janice (5N), aligned most closely with the conservative goals of pragmatic contextualists, rather than with the radical goals of reconstructionists. It will be argued here, that the social values to be taught to the child, through art education, were those most closely related to the educational structures that the teachers inhabited. The teachers identified with the values, ethos, and core curricula of the schools, and it was these that the teachers sought to inculcate into their students through their art education programmes.

The teachers' instrumental view of art education led them to adopt an eclectic approach to the place of expression in their art lessons. This was in contrast to the more consistent approaches of the other teachers in the study. Because there were found to be some significant differences between pragmatic contextualism described in chapter 3, and the beliefs and approaches of the teachers in this study, the term Instrumental Art Education (IAE) has been adopted. The important and significant differences within this group of teachers will also be explored.

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The art education philosophy of contextualism supports the integration of art education with other subjects. The WA Curriculum Framework also supports the integration of art education with other subjects. However, while the Curriculum Framework promotes integration to facilitate learning outcomes in equally valued learning areas (Fantasia, 1997), contextualism uses integration to give priority to outcomes over and above those narrowly associated with art education. Reconstructionist contextualists, from Marxist, feminist, multicultural and post-modernist perspectives, argue that "those models which

do not examine political issues in art simply bow to the presiding ideology” (Fehr, 1994, p.53).

While primary teachers may not generally be in sympathy with Fehr’s highly political standpoint, they may also subordinate art outcomes in order to promote other, more important outcomes. It has already been argued in the theoretical framework (chapter 3), that the use of art-activities primarily to illustrate and enhance lessons in other learning areas should also be regarded as a type of contextualism. It was found in this study, that in addition to using art activities to promote teaching in other learning areas, teachers used art lessons to enhance the social and creative reputations of their schools.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how IAE teachers subscribed to a contextualist justification for teaching art, how this influenced their planning and teaching, and what were the implications of this for expression in their art education programme. First there will be a summary of the teaching approaches of Mavis (1S), Moira (2/3S), and Laura (4S); second, there will be a teacher-profile of Janice (5N); and third, there will be an analysis of the issues arising from the teacher-profile, incorporating additional data from the interviews with the other three IAE teachers.

## **8.2 Introducing the IAE teachers**

The deputy-principals from both schools aligned with central tenets of pragmatic contextualism – Janice from Northfield and Mavis from Southfield. In addition there were two class teachers, Moira and Laura, both from Southfield, who were also IAE teachers.

### **8.2.1 Laura (4S): “I tend to work to a higher level”**

Laura graduated from college in 1973. After a few years teaching “when the kids were little ... I went back part-time – about 10 years, just doing relief” at a nearby, small, country school. “Then they closed it down. I wasn’t going to go back teaching, but Steven [the principal of Northfield] rang up and asked me to come here”.

Although a little wary and withdrawn during the interview, Laura was quietly confident that she had a reputation as a talented and creative teacher, and was not surprised to have been head-hunted by the principal. She had a very positive attitude towards teaching art: “I *love* it”. It was also the most popular subject for her students, who were self-confident artists – 78% thought that they were good or excellent artists.

Laura was proud of her innovative art ideas, such as making a cartoon video of her students' drawings: "I tend to work to a higher level, and the young ones [of her students] have to catch up". Kirsty (PP/1S) and the deputy-principal, Mavis (1S), both described Laura as "the most creative art teacher in the school".

For her art lessons, Laura "set aside Thursday afternoons. It goes for the one hour". She was accustomed to overcoming difficult workplace conditions: "You have to get the paint into the little tubes, the containers, and you've got to go and get the water, and you have to get the water for their brushes. If you send them [the students] all over there, they'll muck about". She ordered her clay in advance, and borrowed easels from the pre-primary class so that her students could experience working with thick finger paint.

Laura saw art education as "most successful in terms of integration". Her innovative ideas were not generated as part of a coherent plan for learning art concepts: "All their art-activity is based on themes [from the core curriculum] .... I develop ideas as I go along .... As I get into the [Society and Environment] subject, things just flash towards me and then I do that".

Because Laura used her art lessons to support learning in other subjects, she kept a very strong control over the images that were produced. She strongly disliked self-expression because it produced "revolting bits of art". Instead she directed the students towards an image, by demonstrating the process and showing a finished example. When considering the way that Laura helped to give them ideas for their art lessons, 42% of her students thought that she used prescriptive methods, and 39% thought that their art lesson was used to illustrate work in other subjects.

### **8.2.2 Moira (2/3S): "lots of energy – long ago"**

Moira had been teaching since 1963 with two years off recently, because of ill-health. She had taught "all the years up to grade 10", and was currently class teacher for 27 students in Y2/3. Moira was frail in appearance and walked with the aid of a stick. During the interview she sat low in her chair, and whispered her answers with averted eyes and timid smiles.

While Moira got "a lot of satisfaction out of art myself", and her students ranked it as their second favourite subject, she rarely taught the subject because she did not see it as having any significant intrinsic value. She was worried that her effectiveness as a

teacher would be compromised if she indulged in teaching what she regarded as a peripheral subject:

I used to spend more time [on art] ... when I was a young teacher, because I enjoyed it so much. But then, what happened was, I'd get back the following year, and the class I'd had the year before, [whispering in horror] they didn't know anything! I thought I had done it [the teaching], but, you know what it's like when you're just out of college. You don't realise how you need to go over things, over and over again. I felt that I had all the time in the world to do art.

Moira returned to this issue several times in the interview, and her tendency to dwell on past negative experiences may have fed her feelings of being thwarted and overwhelmed. Feelings of resentment had erupted dramatically and unexpectedly on the day of the interview. During a violent argument in the staff room, Moira had screeched with rage at a colleague and raised her stick threateningly. Mavis (1S) expressed astonishment at this uncharacteristic outburst: "The last person you would expect to react like that".

Moira's low sense of self-efficacy was also shown through expressions of helplessness in the face of other difficulties. While Laura (4S) had successfully negotiated her way around the school's lack of resources to provide a varied art programme for her students, Moira felt severely restricted by her workplace conditions. She felt unable to use paints in her over-crowded classroom, for example, but had not explored the alternatives on offer: "We've got aqua pencils in the school, but I've never used them. I'm not even sure how to use them .... I've often meant to take some home in the school holidays to try".

Moira talked enthusiastically and in detail about art lessons from the halcyon days "when we didn't have all these pressures. Young and lots of energy – long ago". Although she dwelt on the expressive aspects of these past lessons, the three art lessons that had occurred in the six months prior to the interview, were very didactic. "Their free-expressive drawings" were used exclusively for "illustrations of their [written] work".

### **8.2.3 Mavis (1S): "I think there is a place for all these different methods"**

Mavis was in her mid-forties and exuded energy, enthusiasm and self-confidence. She had started teaching in 1986, and had been at Southfield for eleven years: "It's a nice

little school”. Although she was not trained as an early childhood teacher, she’d taught “Y1 and 2, and that’s all”.

At the time of the interview, Mavis was acting deputy-principal. She shared her duties with another deputy-principal, and had a point five teaching load in order to accommodate her administrative tasks. Proud of being selected for this position, Mavis was anxious to make her mark as an efficient and enthusiastic leader. She had been upset that I had observed her shouting at a child, and mentioned this four times in the interview: “I mean if you’ve got a messy kid like I’ve got”; “The boy I was just losing my temper with today is extremely messy”.

When asked whether any art lesson had gone badly that year, Mavis replied, “Not that I can think of .... I just do the things that work”. She was much happier when describing her successes. Her control of the school’s art supplies, for example, had been “a lot more successful this year”. The resistance to the change discussed by many of her colleagues, was not mentioned.

Mavis was aware that expression could have an important role in art education. Nevertheless, she saw her art lessons primarily in terms of supporting learning in other subjects. In order to ensure that the students’ images would relate directly to another learning area, Mavis found it useful to “use a lot of templates in my classroom, where I’ve cut the template out and they have to trace around it, cut it out and then do a particular type of colouring-in or sticking things on”.

As well as supporting learning in other learning areas, Mavis used art to promote the reputation of the school for creative work: “They’re all bringing their mums in to have a look at our underwater world at the moment”; “I’ve been keeping them [the I-Spy books], because we’re having a parent night next Wednesday night, so I’m putting them out”. There was thus an eclectic mix of what she regarded as expressive and controlled image-making in her art-activities: “I think there is a place for all these different methods”.

### **8.3 Janice (5N): a profile of a teacher who was “a great asset to the school”**

Janice used an interwoven mixture of teaching approaches in her art programme, although “programme” was not a term she would use in connection with art. Sometimes her art lessons were strongly prescriptive, at other times she encouraged a high degree

of expression. An understanding of the reasons behind her eclectic teaching methods can be gained through an analysis of her implicit theories.

The outcomes Janice desired from her art lessons were not centred on art elements or concerns for expression. She felt that there was little of inherent value in art education: “I tend to do it as an adjunct to whatever else happens to be going on”. Instead, she saw three main potentials for her art lessons: (i) to reinforce learning in other subjects, (ii) to enhance the school’s and her own reputation, and (iii) to foster social integration. In order to effectively promote these three different outcomes, Janice adopted an eclectic approach to teaching art. When using an art lesson as a handmaiden to other subject areas or for social integration, she tended to use very prescribed teaching methods, so as to control the direction and outcome of the lesson. When seeking to support the school’s reputation for creativity, she used teaching methods that were far more expressive.

### **8.3.1 Getting to know Janice: “no spare time at all”**

Janice was in her early fifties, and had taught all the primary grades during her twenty-five year teaching career. She had been teaching at Northfield for ten years, and was currently teaching a Y5 class, a grade she had not taught since 1971. Three and a half years prior to the interview she had been promoted to the position of deputy-principal.

As deputy-principal, Janice was expected to facilitate the practical aspects of school projects initiated by the principal. She organised, for example, the materials and the venues for all the school’s PD days, and for whole-school teaching initiatives such as a School Art-Focus Day. Janice was also responsible for ordering art materials for the entire school. During the interview, she explained that she was given “no spare time at all” for her duties as deputy-principal. Janice put on a comic expression of martyrdom while saying this, which was typical of Janice’s upbeat approach to her work. She did not dwell on this issue nor show any signs of having a grievance about it. Instead, she consistently presented the positive aspects of her teaching circumstances.

“That’s one of the things about this school, that there is much more interaction between age groups, and just generally caring”. She used phrases such as: “In this school we ...”; “we train them up to ...”, as a means of linking her sound teaching methods with the rest of the school. Art Focus Day was proudly described: “Every class teacher [was involved]. We rotated the pre-primary, 1, 2, and 3 folk and then the 4, 5, 6, 7 [grades]

and we taught [art] for the whole day. Did they [the teachers] tell you about this?”. Janice was both surprised and disappointed when the answer was “No”.

When asked about her general teaching priorities Janice said, without any hesitation, “I want to achieve a neat writing style”. It was an issue very close to her heart; one she discussed at great length and was reluctant to relinquish. Janice’s selection of handwriting as her teaching priority reflected her preoccupation with a visible and observable teaching outcome. However, while she saw neat handwriting as an important goal, she was not prescriptive in her methods of achieving it. Partly this was a pragmatic response to her students’ inability to change their handwriting styles during Y5: “you’re batting your head against a brick wall anyway”, but it also reflected her desire to be flexible.

Further information for the context within which Janice taught art, was provided by a discussion on writing. Here she continued her focus on form and structure rather than content: “In English, you’re looking at using correct grammar conventions, spelling all of the usual words correctly.... By the end of the year I expect them to be able to write a page of writing which has got very little editing, as far as conventions are concerned”. When asked about students expressing their own ideas, she replied, “No, this term we have concentrated on reports and accounts. Stories have not featured. No, we haven’t done a lot of creative writing”. These methods of teaching English were discussed in the context of the whole school’s approach, thus promoting the image of the school as a thoughtful and responsive teaching institution.

Janice was keen to elaborate on her own role in promoting excellence in teaching within the school. She discussed how, after the art in-service, she had incorporated key techniques from the workshop into her art programme, and encouraged the rest of the staff to do likewise. Students’ artworks were seen to present a positive image for the school, and Janice described with pride the enthusiastic comments made by visitors on seeing her students’ plaster of Paris figures.

The confidence she showed in her teaching abilities was supported by other sources. The principal spoke of Janice’s energy and efficiency as deputy-principal, and her enthusiasm and skills as a teacher: “a great asset to the school”. The relief-teacher employed in this study felt that the exceptionally responsive nature of the Y5 students reflected well on Janice’s teaching skill: “This was a really great class, – they were obviously used to discussion and choice”.

Janice's manner was warm and good-humoured, but it was also brisk and business-like. She saw herself as a no-nonsense pragmatist, responding skillfully to the circumstances under which she worked. She had little time for elevated talk about the higher aims of education. Her personal aim was "to get from one end of the year to the other in one piece [laughs]. Yeah. My aim for each day is to survive from nine to three".

### **8.3.2 Workplace conditions: "we are restricted"**

The students' desks in Janice's classroom were arranged in groups of six, and had very little space between them. The floor was carpeted, and access to a sink was outside the classroom, via some steps. There were several storage cupboards along the walls, one of which jutted towards the centre of the classroom and made access to students' desks difficult. Inadequate storage space and cleaning-up facilities were Janice's first concern when teaching art: "Yes, I think we are restricted in our classrooms. Very much so. I would be very wary of paper-mache, for example. I'd steer clear of that. And then again ... a lot of storage problems. Blowing up balloons and sticking things on them [slight shudder of disgust]. There's too much hard work there".

Janice, however, had circumvented similar organisational problems in a tie-dyeing art lesson, when her students had made curtains for miniature model-bedrooms:

I thought, "How am I going to manage this?" So what I did, I've got a couple of really good mums here. So I ended up having one on the sewing machine, and another lady [for the tie-dyeing] ... I had a table outside and she just worked with the kids. I just pushed them through group by group, and they did the Edicol dye.

Although her work conditions were cramped and difficult, when she was eager for her students to try a particular technique, such as tie-dye, Janice was able to circumvent the problems. When she had an aversion to the technique, as in the case of paper-mache, she did not apply herself in the same way to the question of "How am I going to manage this?"

#### "We are overwhelmed": time constraints

Lack of time was a major problem for Janice:

We are overwhelmed as it is. We just got a computer lab two years ago, and most teachers have found that they have to go in for at least an hour. That takes almost a whole session that we all had to suddenly find. From where? So



what went? I'd like to know what went. And I suspect that it was music and art.

Despite her view that teachers tended to cut art lessons because of pressures from the rest of the curriculum, Janice gave her own class a weekly time-slot on "Thursday afternoon, usually for a good hour. It's most weeks. It's not often we miss it".

She was less sanguine about the future however, because "we are overwhelmed by all these Arts subjects". Five Arts subjects now competed for time previously allocated to two (art and music), and teachers would adapt in response to the assessment procedures for the Arts: "They are talking about the levels, and that, really, you should only be looking at the levels every second year. So you could almost see developing a two-year pattern, where in one year we might put the balance on this part, and the next year we might put the balance on that. Which is sad for art". "Which is sad for art" was said with only mild regret. Janice recognised that times had changed, and teachers needed to respond pragmatically to what was perceived as the declining status of art within the Curriculum Framework.

### **8.3.3 Janice's sense of self-efficacy: "We have a system .... So that's good"**

Janice appeared to have a very strong sense of self-efficacy. When asked about any negatives to teaching art, she looked slightly mystified, as if not accustomed to thinking within a framework of negativity. She gave a very emphatic "No, no, no", when asked whether there were any negatives to teaching Y5. She could not recall any art lesson that had gone badly: "Do I have a worst art lesson? Like all teachers, if it hasn't worked I don't do it again. You push them from your mind".

Even though Janice had few abilities in drawing, she maintained a "can do" attitude when tackling the problem of students who wanted to draw a particular image, but were not sure how to go about it. Asked what she did when students asked her to draw something for them, she replied:

I say, "I can't do it (laughing). I bet you could do it a *lot* better than *I* can". I do have a couple of books which break down drawings, starting off with an oval and add the little bits there. I'll direct them to use those, "Look, I can't draw, but if you follow these, you'll actually get something that looks quite reasonable".

In the teacher-survey Janice listed inadequate storage space and cleaning-up facilities as her major concern when teaching art. In the interview, however, when asked to discuss any organisational problems in her art lessons, Janice responded minimised the problem:

Yes. Well – no. I organise so that I have a bunch of kids in the room who will set things up for me. So that when I come in, we usually have silent reading, and during that time I get the art-kids and I say, “Right. We’re doing this, this and this, and we need that and that and that”. We have a system where we set it all up on the floor, so it’s all there ready for them. And at the end of the lesson, the same kids clear up – Ba bum! So that’s good. And the Y3s or the Y7s or 6s, we train them up in just the same way.

While the initial “Yes”, acknowledged the restrictions placed on her by her workplace conditions, the “Well – no”, quickly led into a discussion of her efficiency in organising her way around any problems. Her sense of self-efficacy in organising her art lessons was also extended to include the rest of the school.

While Janice appeared to have a strong sense of self-efficacy, she was not completely at ease with teaching art. She was slightly reluctant to discuss in detail her art lessons, and, whenever possible would talk at length about her opinions on other subjects, in order, it seemed, to avoid the discussion. She also arranged matters so that she would avoid being seen teaching in the observed lesson.

Janice’s observed lesson was a joint Y5/Y1 art lesson based on a SAE theme, Australian Pioneers. The Y5 students helped the Y1 students make a card doll, while also completing a pegdoll for themselves. Janice had discussed the ideas for the art-activities with the Y1 teacher, Jane, but it was Jane who initiated and adapted the ideas, organised the equipment, and explained the procedures to the students. After Jane’s lengthy introduction, Janice took half of the paired students into her own classroom. When I began to follow, she said, “Oh, I think you would do *much* better staying here (laughing)”. Despite the jovial manner, Janice was noticeably disconcerted when I accompanied into her classroom.

Although Janice had a high sense of self-efficacy and strong self-confidence in her teaching abilities, she had not felt motivated to create an exemplary art lesson for the observed lesson herself. From my observations, I concluded that it was not simply that she did not feel the subject was worth the effort. Her sense of self-efficacy arose out of

her highly developed management skills, and was dependent on validation by her peers, parents and students. Like all the other teachers in the study, Janice had knowledge of this study's focus on expression and the researcher's specialisation in art education, both areas of primary education that she did not value and to which she had not given priority. As an ambitious teacher, used to accolades from her peers, she would not welcome being judged on criteria in which she did not excel. Although Janice presented a supremely self-confident persona, her acute desire to escape being observed teaching indicated a real sense of self-doubt when not in control of the grounds for evaluation. It could be that her strong sense of self-efficacy depended on the extent to which she could control the legitimising factors.

#### **8.3.4 Janice's students: "a nice age group"**

Janice had a generally positive attitude towards her twenty-six students:

Y5s are a nice age group, and Y4s. They're both in the middle of the school, and they're not too smart with their comments, and can still know how to work. [Q: Are there any negatives?] No, no, no [very emphatically]. They're starting to get a bit independent as far as they are beginning to state their opinions and back it up, so you can have some good conversations about things. But on the other hand, they will get on with things quietly and there is not that issue of control.

Janice showed empathy towards her students' problems. When asked about whether she allowed students to begin an art-activity again if they got discouraged, she replied:

I'd let it go, let it go. I remember how it's so disheartening. [pulling a face and talking in a child's exaggerated whine] "I've rubbed it out 20 times and there's a hole in the paper." A lot of kids find that if they have made this yucky mess on it, it just destroys the whole thing for them. I might [help them get round it], if a kid's done a beautiful piece of work .... It can be soul-destroying [messing up]. So yes, my kids tend to learn a thousand shortcuts ... And I make mistakes too.

The "Right, let's fix it" attitude helped Janice's students towards a resolution of their problems. At the same time, her use of the phrase "my kids" and her empathetic "I make mistakes too", indicated that she was a teacher in sympathy with her students' vulnerabilities.

Although Janice related her students' problems to her own difficulties as a primary student, this was consistently done in a self-mocking manner; as if she did not like to reveal areas of personal sensitivity: "I also find it very hard not to put all the kids work on the wall for any particular lesson. I just can't select one or two and chuck them up. I think because when I was a child, mine were never up [sniffles with mock weeping]".

Her empathy with her students' problems was never laced with sentimentality. Comic mimicry of her students' voices was a feature throughout the interview. A typically mixture of empathy and sardonic sub-text, was when she described children whose artwork was constantly copied by less talented students: "I mean if someone copies them, one in particular says, 'Oh! Oh! Oh!' [child-like whine]. You try to do the usual thing: 'That's really very flattering', but it doesn't solve the problem. They think its stolen: 'It's spoiled it, [in melodramatic voice, and with a toss of the head] I'll just have to start again'".

When Janice was asked which would be the most popular subject for her students, she replied:

Sport's going to be pretty high up there, I would reckon. I think art would depend entirely on the kids' previous experiences. If they have had a teacher who has given them some pretty terrific experiences, then I think they'll have a very positive response. But if they ... haven't had some pretty good experiences, then it wouldn't be high. But the kids here have had pretty good experiences. I think they should put it fairly high. Certainly if you miss out art, and they know that they have art on Thursdays, and if I miss it out, they'll say 'when are we doing art?'.

Janice assumed that, unlike sport, there was nothing intrinsically attractive about the art. While sport was by its very nature popular with students, students' opinions of art would depend on the way it had been taught. She again was quick to take the chance to promote the school by saying that, because the school provided "pretty good experiences" in art, art would be placed fairly high.

#### "I love it": the students' attitude towards art

The results from the student-survey indicated that Janice underestimated art's appeal for her students. They ranked art [54%] first, which was far ahead of sport [27%]. When asked to select a bad art lesson, 57% asserted that there was no such thing as a bad art lesson: "I can't think of any. I love it. It is my favourite subject out of

everything”; “I haven’t had a bad art lesson”. Janice’s students also showed a strong self-confidence in their abilities in art. Seventy-three percent thought that they were good or excellent. None ranked themselves below average.

When ranking ways they preferred to get ideas in their art lessons, 88% of the students preferred to think up their own ideas. Self-expression was also far ahead of other issues when students were deciding on their favourite art lesson (Table 15).

Table 15 *Y5N students’ reasons for preferring their best art lesson*

Reasons for preferring the best lesson (in order of preference)	Y5N
Freedom to express own ideas	54%
Learning an interesting and useful technique	19%
Personal likes and dislikes	7.5%
An appropriate level of difficulty	7.5%
Appreciation of the art elements involved	4%
Proud of the finished product	4%
Non response	4%

Typical comments from the students who ranked visual-expression high were: “I liked it because we got to be creative, use our imagination and have lots and lots of fun”; “We could use our imagination and I am good at it”; “We got to choose out of three”.

When asked how her students would get ideas for their drawings in the student-survey, Janice thought “a few of them would choose to draw their own picture, probably the majority of the children, really. There’s definitely a few who would prefer the photocopied picture”. There was a much stronger student commitment to self-expression than she had anticipated: 100% chose child-centred methods.

### **8.3.5 Janice’s beliefs and implicit theories about expression in art education: “a nice time for all”**

Janice did not share her students’ enthusiasm for art education. She enjoyed it “sometimes, it depends”. In her role as deputy-principal, she had gone “to an in-service course run by [the SCO]. We have a course outline and a video tape that I haven’t even looked at yet”.

Art “occupies an afternoon quite pleasantly”: art has limited cognitive value

The SCO’s in-service had made Janice aware of some of the concepts underlying art education, and she applied this knowledge when discussing art in general. When asked what made her think an art lesson had been successful, she gave an answer which related to the art outcomes rather than to the look of the students’ artworks or to the students’ behaviour: “I would look at a good use of colour. I would look for balance, whether it’s striking. No it’s balance, how it’s laid out. That’s what would appeal to me”. When discussing specific art lessons she had taught, however, such art concepts were never mentioned.

Janice understood that the Curriculum Framework required students to become aware of the role of artists’ work, but said, “I can’t be bothered with all that”. When it was pointed out that she had been discussing artists’ work when she looked at curtain designs in her box-bedroom art lessons, her response was unenthusiastic: “Because it was someone else’s design? Yeah. Oh, ok”. It did not seem relevant to her teaching priorities, and, in any case, “I look at the fact that Dorothy, Linda and Andrea *do* use artists’ work and I think, ‘Well the kids are going to go through there at some stage and they’ll get it somewhere down the line, but they won’t get it from me!’ [laughs]”.

Andrea (Y4), in her later interview, described how Janice had utilised her (Andrea’s) expertise earlier in the year, when she and Janice had “worked the 4s and 5s together, and that worked very well. I just give them a collection of things and let them choose something [to draw]”. As in the observed lesson, Janice left the introduction and organisation to another teacher, although here the students were all crowded into Andrea’s classroom for the entire lesson. In her discussions of her art lessons, Janice did not mention this second occasion when she had taken the back-seat in the organisation and teaching of an art lesson.

Janice’s use of other teacher’s art expertise and the complacency with which she accepted her lack of knowledge of artists’ work, contrasts with her general ‘can-do’ attitude within other learning areas. Janice considered that art’s main contribution to primary education was “as in a nice time for all. I mean it occupies an afternoon quite pleasantly and the kids enjoy it. There’s a certain amount of enjoyment in that kind of thing”. Along with damning art with faint praise, Janice’s tone implied that the focus of my doctoral thesis on such a marginal subject as art education was somewhat misguided.

When asked what she was hoping to achieve in art, Janice replied, “I’ve got no idea [laughs]. I’m not really an art specialist at all, and, as far as doing art [is concerned], I tend to do it as an adjunct to whatever else happens to be going on”. Her laughter when saying “I’ve got no idea”, did not stem from embarrassment at not having an answer to the question. She found the question amusing because, for her, it was slightly pretentious. Art education was not something class teachers were expected to think seriously about. Nor did parents: “They are *much* more interested in the core subjects. Parents never ask about art. I would mention it if the child was not achieving in other areas, ‘Well, I know he’s not very good at reading and writing, but he is *very* good at art” [laughs]. And they say ‘Yeah’ [disappointed tone]”. She shared the view of parents, that it was a pretty dire situation if positive comments could only be made about art.

One of the main advantages of an art lesson was that it “provides you with a fun lesson that the kids enjoy. And you don’t have to mark it! [laughs]”. Because Janice did not see art as a subject with important content, it was part of its charm that she did not have to think seriously about assessment. If an art lesson had not gone well, she did not need to concern herself with understanding the reasons: “You push them from your mind”.

#### Art as “an adjunct to whatever else happens to be going on”

Although Janice did not think that art had cognitive content, she saw it as a useful adjunct to other subjects:

I haven’t done much art which is directed to social studies. I have done more art that is directed to the story that they’ve read – *Seashells and Shadows*. It’s a good story to read. And they’ve been drawing practical maps – so that has a social studies [theme]. They’ve done a couple of posters about safety issues. Also story-boards [illustrations for written stories].

Some of Janice’s examples of art lessons, such as making maps, posters, illustrations for stories, parallel the examples used by Smith (1995) of posters painted for social studies lessons when discussing the dangers of integrating the arts with other learning areas.

#### “Are you helping your friend?”: art as a handmaiden to social integration

In the observed lesson, art outcomes were given a very low priority. The dominant aim was that of social interaction between the two grades. This was Janice’s first and main consideration when discussing the success of the art lesson:

They did really well didn't they? You should have watched them right at the beginning in Friendship Week. That was when they first met them. And one of the little girls was a real hyper, [going] everywhere. I put two girls with her and they said, "How do we make her sit down?". I said, [laughing] "That's your problem not mine". But they worked out a strategy between themselves. That was like an art-activity. So that they did it again [in the observed lesson], was nice.

During the observed lesson, Janice very rarely discussed any aspects of the art-making activities. Her mind was focused on the social requirements of the lesson. There were no criticisms of Y5 students who took over the art-making process entirely from the younger students, as long as dialogue was being maintained between the two. Because of the time taken to make the card dolls, the Y5 students had little time to dedicate to their own project of the peg doll. If any tried to concentrate on their own artwork, Janice would cry out, "Are you helping your special friend?". This approach resonates strongly with Kelehear and Heid's (2002) contextualist art-activity, described in Chapter 3, where "the artmaking became secondary to the mentoring relationships between the high school students and the first grade students" (p.67).

For Janice, art outcomes were of no importance compared with the promotion of social cohesion within the school. The main focus of the observed lesson was the relationship between the two sets of students, and in this she was successful. Although the Y1 students tended to sit passively while the Y5 students completed the art-activities, the Y5 students showed a caring and considerate attitude to their younger charges, asking for their views on the dolls, and allowing them to choose the fabric and text colours. The Y1 students basked in this attention from their older mentors.

#### "We got it all done in the hour": art helped to increase the reputation of the school

Janice used art lessons not only to facilitate learning in other subjects and the social cohesion of the school, but also to demonstrate the creativity of the school programme and raise her teaching profile. In this way, she used art as instrumental to the advancement of both the school and her career. Janice took her leadership role as deputy-principal very seriously. Her consistent emphasis on the positive aspects of her teaching, her avoidance of being observed teaching when she was not sure she would be judged to excel, and her pride in the praise given to her students' artworks, indicated her preoccupation with others' perceptions of her as a dynamic and competent teacher. Attractive artworks provided a visible means by which she could reinforce this



position. The results could not only command attention, look impressive, and enhance the school's reputation, they could also demonstrate her skills in teaching. This was apparent in her account of her art lessons on Art-Focus Day.

On Art-Focus Day, each teacher provided an art-activity suitable for either senior or junior primary students, and then taught the same activity to three classes. Janice was extremely proud that the artworks produced in her lessons, were given pride of place in the library where many visitors would see them:

That's what I worked on [pointing to a fabric wall-hanging]. That's just working with the fabric crayons. But once again, before they got to that stage, they had done a practice piece. So they'd done a book-mark .... Then they had an idea of how the crayons would work. So there was this dirty great piece of material, and I just asked them, I said to them, "This is what we're going to make, we're going to make a wall-hanging, you have to put a black border round because it's going to look like a patchwork and you can draw any picture you like". So they did .... As they finished, they brought it to me and I just ironed it on in sequence. We got it all done in the hour [proudly] ... Those who were the quick-finishers were given another small piece of material to work with.

Janice's main concern was on the efficient progress of the students towards the goal she had set: the production of an attractive fabric wall-hanging. Her anticipation of the students' needs, and her clear instructions, allowed the lesson to flow smoothly towards completion of the artworks within the designated hour. As the purpose of the practice book-marks was to eliminate technical mistakes in the final wall-hanging, there was no discussion of art elements or details of the images to be made.

Janice also wanted to be seen to be in firm control of the direction of the art lesson: "That's what I worked on". When describing her instructions to the students, she began by saying, "I just asked them". She then changed it to the more directive "I said to them 'This is what we're going to make'". Within the clear boundaries she set, the students were allowed to "draw any picture you like". The success of the end-product was important. What was equally important was that it should be expressive and well-organised. To achieve these ends, she emphasised her clarity of aim, the students' choices, and her efficiency of organisation: "We got it all done in the hour".

Another exemplary art lesson Janice discussed with great pride and great length, were the box-bedrooms. These had tie-die curtains, miniature furniture, patterned wallpaper and carpets, and “took all term. For the final bit, one of the dads came in and attached a torch bulb to a battery and that got put in there with a little switch, he made little switches for all of them, so that they could switch the light on”. Janice selected this as her most successful art-project. Her students had used a comprehensive range of skills and achieved excellent results. She had utilised parental skills, integrated art into other learning areas, and enhanced the reputation of the school. She had also astonished her colleagues with her ability to transform an unpromising subject into a rich area of study: “Everyone said ‘Huh?! How can you make a whole term’s work out of curtains?’”

The enthusiasm with which her students had carried out the project also underlined its success: “The kids were pleased. They took them home and they said that they had really enjoyed it. It was highly enjoyable but I never thought it was going to end. ‘Can we do the boxes, can we do the boxes? [mimicking a child’s nagging voice]’. And I thought ‘Oh God, yes’ [exasperated resignation]”. In the student-survey, however, only one student selected this as their favourite art-activity. As this was Janice’s “show-case” art lesson, and had taken an entire term to complete, it was important that the students were represented as being as equally enthusiastic as the teacher. It could be that she transposed her own views of the lesson onto her students in order to legitimise the length of time she spent on it.

#### “That’s just what I wanted!”: Janice’s views on visual-expression

In the questionnaire, Janice had strongly agreed with the statement: “The main role of art is therapeutic as it allows children to express their individuality and emotions”. In the interview, however, self-expression was not discussed as a major concern in any art-activity. Janice acknowledged, for example, that parents who assisted in art lessons might impose their ideas on students, but this did not particularly worry her. She was much more concerned that the parents facilitated the flow of the lesson: “I just pushed them through group by group, and they (the parents) did the Edicol dye”.

When Janice was asked what made a child particularly gifted in art, she replied:

They usually have very good fine-motor skills. They have no trouble with the scissors at cutting out beautifully, and the way they use the pencil, their lines when they rule off a page are usually just spot on. They just seem to have that

good perception. They just have good control. [Here she hesitated because, I think, she felt that this sounded rather controlling] But then there is a line between a kid who does something very precisely, beautifully, as opposed to the kid who can actually throw colour on a piece of paper in such a way that it creates a nice balanced feel – and that’s not someone who is being very precise. I certainly had a kid like that in Y3, especially with paint, not so much with crayon and pencil, but with watercolour, he used to do some beautiful things.

Although, here, Janice paid attention to the expressive aspect of art, her first focus was on neatness of presentation. Creativity in visual-expression was so rare, in her view, she had to search back for an example to her time as a teacher of Y3. Perhaps the reason that Janice found it difficult to find a current example of a student who had showed creative individuality, was because she tended to follow a teaching approach that did not always facilitate a free flow of expressive images.

### **8.3.6 Janice’s art teaching strategies: “So off you go and do that”**

Because art was not seen as an important part of the primary curriculum, Janice did not spend time planning her art programme. When asked whether she looked forward to her art lessons she replied:

It depends. If I’ve got an on-going thing, I look forward to it, yes, because I know that most of the planning has been done. There’s quite often times when someone will come into the staff room and say, “I’m going to do such and such for art”, and everyone will say, “That’s a good idea. How do you do that?” So you have this impromptu lesson where you just say, “Oh, I might do *that* this afternoon”. And so off you go and do that.

Planning for art was seen as a troublesome but minor issue, which could be resolved without much thinking. Consideration of sequential learning or what was appropriate for her particular grade was of less concern.

Janice recognised the non-sequential nature of her art programme, and used a free-art-activity to compensate for that: “I often do that [a free-art-activity] towards the end of a term, because you ... do various different things, but you never get a chance to do them again. It’s quite nice to go back and do them again”. Her emphasis, however, was on the pleasurable repetition of a favoured activity, rather than on the further development of concepts or skills.

Janice reserved her serious planning for what she regarded as the core curriculum subjects: “In this school we still look at the Education Department social studies curriculum, and a lot of us do various topics out of that. Certainly, because I’m in Y5 and I haven’t been here long, that’s where I’ve gone for my programme”. When asked whether she used the same approach for art, she replied:

Not really. I used the K-7 syllabus once – I looked through and I did the unit on kites. It was a Y7. That was excellent. It showed you how the children could design it and try it out. I don’t know, I didn’t feel like going back to it. It’s one of those things, when you’ve planned every other lesson, and then you turn around and you say “Art” [shrug]. It tends to be the end of the line. It’s an also-ran.

Although Janice was aware that the WA curriculum documents on art contained excellent ideas, she did not use them. After planning her teaching programme for the core curriculum subjects, she felt overburdened with advice from curriculum documents, and was unwilling to undertake any additional reading for such an “also-ran” subject as art.

“A demonstration will show you everything you need to know”

Janice said Jane’s (1S) introduction to the observed lesson was typical of her own approach: “A demonstration will show you everything you need to know”. She also liked to use verbal imagery:

I have found a few kids who interpret my dithering instructions brilliantly. They come up with something, and I think, “That’s just what I wanted! How on earth did they get that out from my instructions?” And yet I’m a visual person .... I like to draw pictures in my mind, and draw them hopefully in other people’s minds. So some of those kids get the same picture that I’ve got up here, and others get it somewhat different [wry smile]. [Hesitation] But then that’s fine too [a little doubtfully].

Here Janice indicated that she was most pleased when students were able to create the images she had drawn in her mind: “That’s just what I wanted!” She was critical of students who “get it somewhat different”, although after a moment’s thought she decided that perhaps it was not so bad.

When asked whether she had found templates or photocopied images useful in her art lessons, Janice was evasive, giving a non-committal “Mmmmm”, and changing the subject. The photocopied fishes displayed in her classroom had been introduced by the Japanese language teacher, but Janice had asked her students to finish them, and, in the student-survey, the students classified this as an art lesson. Janice had a very decided image in mind, which she hoped her students would reproduce, but data from the student-survey and her own reply indicated that she did not often rely on templates or photocopied images.

“I want them to do their own thing”: visual-expression is encouraged

Although Janice wanted her students to produce “the same picture that I’ve got up here”, she did not want total uniformity:

I’m not one to do a very directed art lesson. I would find it very hard to have twenty-six pictures which all look the same .... I suppose if you are learning a particular technique, then that’s the way to go. But I would much rather see kids doing their own thing, taking what I’ve said, and then if they go off at a tangent, fine.

“Going off at a tangent”, however, was within fairly prescribed parameters:

I have used a modeling situation, but I tend not to finish it ... because there are too many kids who will take the easy way out and copy what you’ve done, and I don’t want them to do that. I want them to do their own thing. So I’ll say, “Right I want the sky done like this”, and I’ll do a little bit, and “I want you to put in a silhouette like this”, and I’ll do a little bit of it, but I won’t do the whole thing. So the model will only be very partially there, but each technique would have been demonstrated.

Janice used teaching strategies to encourage variations of image within the boundaries of what she required, and her students were appreciative of the freedom this allowed. Fifty percent thought that in most art lessons, they could use their own ideas.

Janice’s students described an additional technique not mentioned by Janice. In a perspective lesson: “the teacher showed us a picture in a book of one done”, and then “showed us how to make one by nearly making one”. Janice did not ask for this image to be duplicated by everyone, however, “she explained how to do each of the three choices: balloons, boats, animals or tropical fish. We got the choice of crayons, pastels

or texas”. Choice was again allowed within clear parameters. One of the students commented that they “could use our own ideas a little”. Most students thought that the main aim of the lesson was to learn an art element or art-technique (76%) rather than to express individual ideas (4%).

“You are going to do this”: students are firmly reminded of the set criteria

Janice found that her students were generally happy to follow the direction she had set for the lesson. The main problem was with particular students who liked to repeat favourite images. Comments in the student-survey confirmed that this was a major preoccupation for several students in her class. Reasons for choosing the favourite lesson were often based on the students’ freedom to portray a particular image: “Because I could draw my favourite thing, a pony”; “I thought it was great because I got to draw my favourite animal HORSES”; “I love doing animals and I got to do a cat. And I adore cats”.

Occasionally Janice accommodated this urge to reproduce favourite images, but mostly her requirements for an art lesson precluded a horse or cat image. On these occasions Janice was insistent that her requirements were met: “You have a fairly good idea about who is fixed on a particular thing. And I would actually go in and hone in on them, if I have set up a certain thing that I wanted done. And I’d say, ‘No, sorry, it doesn’t matter, it *really* doesn’t matter *how* much you want to do that, you are going to do this [firmly]”.

With children who merely lacked enthusiasm for the suggested theme:

I’d go round and try and encourage them. “Have you thought about this? Have you thought about that? Maybe you could do such and such? Why don’t you go round the room and see what other children are doing?” [Q: Do you find that works?] Yes. Yes. If they do pick up on someone else’s idea then that’s fine. At least they have a starting point.

The latter strategy was adopted despite the protests of the students whose work was being copied: “There are also a few kids in this class who don’t like other people copying them. *Very, very* protective about their own, what they’ve done”. She had not much sympathy for their viewpoint. Her priority was to get the students started on their work rather than guard the originality of an individual’s work.

“Oh, not a flipping pony again!”: self-expression has limited value

Occasionally, Janice allowed her students to have an art lesson that allowed:

playing and mucking around by themselves, and coming up with ideas .... I’ve done that. I enjoy doing that. I often do that towards the end of a term .... So I’ll say to them, “Right, this term we’ve done this, we’ve done that, we’ve used this and we’ve tried that, we’ve used this that and the other. Well, it’s your choice today. It’s all here. I’ve laid it all out and it’s your choice”. And the kids say “Oh great”, and away they go, and they pick up something.

Although Janice enjoyed responding to the enthusiasm of her students for self-expression, she found the images they produced to be generally disappointing and predictable:

You still get the girls who draw their pretty little horse, and they’ll still do the same picture they’ve been doing all year [disappointed sigh]. [Q: What do you feel about that?] I feel sad. You sort of think “Mmmm” [wistfully]. You don’t want to walk past and say, “Oh not a flipping pony again!”, although you’d love to. “Why don’t you try something else, something different?” One of the things that kids often do, when I have given them that freedom, is to do the blob symmetry-picture, especially ... when you do it on black, especially if you put some fluorescent paint there, you’ve got something that looks good no matter what you do. Two blobs, fold together, brilliant.

The “brilliant” was not said sarcastically. Janice recognised the limited nature of the blob-image, but she was predominantly relieved that here was a technique that was both undemanding and satisfying. Only one student listed the free-activity lesson as their favourite art lesson, perhaps reflecting Janice’s opinion, that only the very exceptionally creative student did not require some direction from the teacher.

“I’ve no idea” about evaluation and assessment

When asked what she was trying to achieve in her art lessons, Janice laughed and said, “I’ve no idea”. She never thought of art as a serious subject, and obviously thought the question was rather pretentious. Because of this, she found “assessing art quite hard. If you have to do a report comment it says ‘manipulates media excellently/ usually’ – you know, that kind of thing. Most kids will handle media whatever you give them, usually. There’s only going to be a few stars who are confident all the time”. Although

she was not sure of her criteria when assessing art, she did appreciate that “you see a different side of the children other than the ‘sit down do this’ lesson”.

### **8.3.7 Summary**

Because Janice regarded art as a marginal and unimportant subject, she had not formulated any over-riding principles to guide and structure her teaching. This meant that she saw no dissonance between her identification with the very directed teaching approach of the observed lesson, and her statement “I’m not one to do a very directed art lesson”. It also helps to explain the eclectic nature of her teaching approaches.

Sometimes Janice used very directed teaching methods in her art lessons. She would give her students a strong, clear image of what they were expected to produce, by either showing them a completed picture, partially modelling an image or by skilfully describing an image. At other times she encouraged visual-expression, but usually within firm boundaries as in the box-bedroom and perspective lessons. Occasionally she allowed her students to have a free-activity art lesson, but only as a concession to her students’ desire for self-expression at the end of term, as she was disappointed with the images they produced.

The choice of teaching approach for any specific lesson was directly related to whether it was to service other learning areas, encourage social interaction, or enhance the school’s and her own reputation for creativity. Janice pragmatically used whatever teaching strategy was most appropriate for a particular outcome. When using art for social-interactive purposes for example, as in the observed lesson, she used didactic methods. When seeking to impress parents with the school’s creative teaching programme, she used methods that encouraged individuality of expression, as in the fabric wall-hanging lesson.

While Janice had an eclectic approach to teaching art, two general factors characterised her teaching approach. Firstly, art outcomes were subsumed either to outcomes from other learning areas, or to the promotion of the school’s reputation in art. Secondly, art lessons were directed in a managerial way, so that Janice maintained a firm control of the procedures. This was important for three reasons: (i) it ensured that progress of the lesson could be directed towards outcomes other than those intrinsic to art; (ii) it facilitated the production of high-quality artworks that would impress her peers, parents and visitors; and (iii) it allowed her flexibility and control over the amount of visual-



expression allowed to the students: enough to sustain her reputation as a creative teacher while not undermining her reputation as a well-organised and efficient teacher.

#### **8.4 Themes arising from the analysis of data**

In this study, PAE, IEAE, and AAE teachers developed teaching strategies strongly connected to their beliefs and implicit theories. The PAE teachers provided firm boundaries within which to guide their students towards predetermined images. The IEAE teachers structured their lessons to maximise their students' self-expression. The AAE teachers introduced art concepts so that their students could express their ideas through tutored images. In contrast to the consistency of approach shown by these groups of teachers, IAE teachers were eclectic in their choice of teaching strategies.

##### **8.4.1 Introduction**

The expressive aspect of art lessons varied from IAE teacher to IAE teacher, and from lesson to lesson. Because this was at variance with the more uniform teaching strategies of other teachers in this study, it looked initially as though the IAE teachers had few guiding beliefs to help structure their art teaching. On closer examination, however, it became clear that the eclectic nature of their teaching approaches stemmed just as directly from their beliefs about art education, as did the other teachers' more homogeneous approaches. While the IAE teaching approaches might vary considerably between teachers and over time, it was their implicit theories that directly influenced the structure of their teaching.

This section of the chapter will look more closely at the relationships between the IAE teachers' need to achieve outcomes extrinsic to art education in their art lesson and (i) their workplace conditions, (ii) their sense of self-efficacy, (iii) their students' views on art education, (iv) their eclectic teaching strategies, (v) their approach to evaluation and assessment, and (vi) their general circumspection regarding the theme of this study. Themes arising from Janice's teacher-profile will be discussed in the light of data gathered from the other IAE teachers: Mavis, Moira and Laura.

##### **8.4.2 Workplace conditions**

All the IAE teachers, apart from Mavis (1S), had difficult teaching circumstances. These included shortages of equipment, time constraints, and difficult access to water and storage space. Only Moira felt that these constraints significantly affected her ability to teach art in the way that she saw as appropriate, however, and this could be linked more to her low self-efficacy than to the actual teaching circumstances.

Although Mavis had optimum physical conditions, she argued that Y1 presented unique problems because of her students' lack of skills in art. She recognised the need for expression in art activities, but the lack of realism in her students' images meant that she thought it was necessary to frequently employ very prescriptive methods of teaching art: "I think there is a place for all these different methods".

#### **8.4.3 IAE teachers' sense of self-efficacy**

The deputy-principals of both schools, Mavis and Janice (5N), were IAE teachers. They both were direct, affable, articulate, ambitious, and shared a high sense of self-efficacy. They did not like lingering over the negativity embedded in this question: "Have any art lesson gone badly this year?". To this, Mavis replied, "Not that I can think of .... I just do the things that work"; and Janice said, "If it hasn't worked I don't do it again. You push them from your mind". Their approaches were consistently and energetically positive. They considered themselves to be shrewd and efficient deputy-principals, facilitating whole-school events with skill and aplomb. For this study, they both successfully persuading their peers to be interviewed, and efficiently reorganising the school timetable to accommodate the study's requirements. Mavis had the additional problem of working against the background of a threatened state-wide, teachers' work to rule. Both teachers were used to persevering and succeeding under difficult circumstances.

While Laura (4S) shared Mavis' and Janice's high sense of self-efficacy, and was proud that she "worked to a higher level" in her art lessons, Moira (2/3S) did not. She felt thwarted by her teaching circumstances, and dwelt upon the insurmountable problems she faced in a nervous and self-deprecating manner,

#### **8.4.4 The IAE teachers' students' views on visual-expression**

The results from the student-survey showed that the IAE teachers' students differed markedly in their attitudes towards expression in art education. Janice's (5N) students ranked "thinking up your own ideas in art lessons" first (85%), for example, while Laura's (4S) students ranked "using templates and photocopies" first (49%). Drawing for the student-survey was an activity all the students took part in, and the results were similarly disparate (Table 16).

Table 16 *IAE teachers' students' preferred means of getting ideas for their drawings:*

Students' choice of teaching approach	Y1S (Mavis)	Y2/3S (Maira)	Y4S (Laura)	Y5N (Janice)
Mimetic-behaviourist approach	41%	85%	39%	0%
Child-centered approach	27%	15%	58%	100%
DBAE approach	32%	0%	3%	0%
Contextualist approach	Not offered as a choice	0%	0%	0%

Mavis and Maira's students reflected a general tendency for early childhood students in this study to prefer didactic methods. Laura's students appeared to like templates and photocopies in theory, but less in practice. Janice's students were consistently and strongly in favour of self-expression.

#### **8.4.5 IAE teachers' beliefs and implicit theories**

Unlike their students, the IAE teachers were united in their view of the role of expression in art in primary education. It was subordinate to other outcomes. Art was primarily regarded as useful in promoting outcomes not directly related to art education. These outcomes resided in three areas: (i) the promotion of social integration within the school, (ii) the promotion of their students' learning in other subjects, and (iii) the promotion of the school's and their own reputation for creativity.

#### “We make Easter baskets; we make Easter bunnies”: art education for social integration

Anderson and McRorie (1997) described how pragmatic contextualist teachers used art lessons to reinforce established customs. A highlight of Mavis' (1S) art programme was the time when she both encouraged social integration, and reinforced the cultural symbols associated with Easter, Christmas and West Australia:

We have activity-days - like sometimes Easter or Christmas activities. I do a morning, and we have activities and the kids rotate around those groups. And sometimes one for West Australia Week .... About once a term, for a special thing. The kids absolutely love it, and so do the parents. I need lots of parents help for that .... [Q: What were you doing at Easter?] We make Easter baskets; we make Easter bunnies; we make cards; we dye eggs; make chocolates, make hot cross buns – but they're just scones with a cross on the top.

Laura (4S) was more ambivalent about promoting traditional cultural symbols in her art lessons. She described making a traditional, prescribed image for an Easter card: “They really loved that. But I mean, that was not art for me .... Unless it’s tying-in with what I’m doing, I find it’s a waste of time – to turn around and make a Mother’s Day card or something like that”. Traditional cultural symbols were not of much interest to Moira (2/3S) or Janice (5N) either. They preferred to use art to encourage social integration through desirable social traits.

Several years prior to the interview, Moira (2/3S) had once used art-activities to increase racial harmony in the school: “The Aboriginal drawings ... that you see around the school are ones that I did a few years back ... I had a group of very racist Y6 boys, and I did a programme where they got to meet some Aboriginal people and got some insight into Aboriginal culture”. Janice’s (5N) preoccupation in the observed lesson was, similarly, to make students have more empathy for a group different from themselves. This time it was to increase social contact between older and younger students. In Moira’s lesson, art outcomes, even though subordinate to racial harmony, were strongly present. In Janice’s lesson, art outcomes were almost totally subsumed to the promotion of social cohesion between her Y5 students and their “special friends” in Y1. Laura (4S) also thought that art allowed her students to develop such social skills as “self-confidence and leadership”.

“Any art lesson I do is incorporated”: art education is integrated

Janice (5N) used her art lessons “as an adjunct to whatever else is going on”. Her students made maps and posters for SAE themes, and drew illustrations for stories. In the teacher-survey, Mavis (1S) gave her strongest support to the statement “I integrate art into other learning areas”. She fitted art-activities mostly around her SAE theme, and, for these, used primarily didactic teaching approaches:

We do ‘Myself’ in the first term for Y1. Mainly we do the body and themselves. They draw a picture and make a model of themselves, and that’s mainly a lot of learning the skills. We did an I-Spy book, and that incorporated their reading, number and, each week, we did a different technique in art.

Laura (4S) described art education as “most successful in terms of integration”. Any art lesson she did “is incorporated into my literature. So if it’s all social studies [for my theme], I just do it all over [the curriculum]. This term I’ve done China, so then I do Mulan [a Disney animated film] for my literature .... All their art-activity is based on

that”. While her students described the box-craft Chinese dragon-heads lesson as an art lesson, when asked to describe what they were learning, 90% related the outcomes to SAE. “To make pictures for written work” was ranked first as the main purpose of all their art lessons.

Laura argued that integrating art into other subjects added a valuable, practical dimension: “it gives you a sense of doing it”. The WA Curriculum Framework (1998, p.74) agreed that links across the curriculum provided an important and meaningful way of achieving learning outcomes in all the areas concerned. The IAE teachers, however, did not give an equal place to art outcomes. Instead they subordinated art outcomes to those from other subject areas.

“I’ve got to do my science programme”: art outcomes are subordinated

Mavis (1S) asked her students to fill in photocopied images connected to her SAE theme, because it was important to reinforce knowledge in SAE. An expressive approach would have achieved more art outcomes, but it would have produced a variety of images and thus risked undermining the SAE focus of the lesson.

The subordination of art outcomes could also be more subtle. Laura described how she successfully integrated science and art, with colour mixing:

[Q: Did they do any colour mixing in their previous grades?] I presume they do. I just don’t know. But I’ve got to do my science programme, so I incorporate those two together. So we do the hot and cold colours, then we do the colour mixing and usually we end up doing a rainbow wheel – a spinning wheel. So they see the colours mixed together for that one. I always do that in first term as my science.

The lessons were not in response to her students’ requirements in art. Laura did not know whether they needed practice in colour mixing, but she “had to do her science programme, so I incorporated the two”. The lessons were also limited to the production of colours needed for her science theme. There was no exploration of the emotional impact of colour, for example. Nor were the learned concepts referred to in subsequent art lessons, as part of a planned programme of learning.

Similarly, most of Moira’s (2/3S) art lessons were used as an adjunct to English. They took the form of illustrations for writing, and she described these as “story pictures”.

She saw art as a preparation for writing: “Everything [in art is] for their coordination – their development of eye coordination”.

“They’re not going to fall behind and not get an apprenticeship if they haven’t done it”:  
art does not have much cognitive value

Three out of the four IAE teachers gave art a significant place in their timetables. This decision, however, was not based on a belief in the cognitive value of art education. For Janice (5N), art simply offered “a nice time for all. I mean it occupies an afternoon quite pleasantly”. Mavis (1S) thought her students regarded art as “just fun, it’s not really a subject”. When asked “What do you think they’re learning?” she replied, “They’re very proud of what they do in art. They’re all bringing their Mums in to have a look at our underwater-world at the moment. So there’s a lot of satisfaction they get from it”. Like her students, Mavis did not see art as a real subject. She could not specify what benefit the students gained from their art lessons, beyond making an artwork they could be proud of.

Laura (4S) showed the most interest in the cognitive side of art. Unlike Janice and Mavis, she gave consideration as to why certain art activities had not gone well. She also intended to incorporate artists’ work into her art lessons, because she had been inspired by an impressive display of students’ work in a friend’s classroom: “They do a section of it (the painting) and then you put it altogether. I’m going to try that this term”. Because of this new interest, she chose “learning how to discuss artists’ work with students using art language” as her preferred in-service. She responded negatively, however, to statements in the teacher-survey that emphasised the cognitive basis of art education. It seems likely that the inclusion of visual artworks was just one more addition to her arsenal of creative approaches, rather than an acceptance of its academic value. None of the IAE teachers consulted any of the WA curriculum documents for the arts in order to learn about the underlying cognitive structure. This included Janice, who had been given literature on the Arts aspect of the Curriculum Framework, but never used it.

When asked what was the value of art education, Moira (2/3S) could not, at first, think of an answer. She then stated, “If I just feel like having some fun, and I feel that I can spend the time, we do [art]”. Art was the first subject she jettisoned under pressure from a crowded curriculum:

I do sacrifice [art], I have to .... It's not like maths – sequential. You have to teach maths because what comes next depends on what you do this year. If you hand them on without having done it, they're very much disadvantaged. They can't sacrifice that. But in art, they're not going to suffer. They're not going to fall behind and not get an apprenticeship if they haven't done it.

She viewed the arts generally as “extras, they're not essential to their academic achievement”.

Moira felt that she could not justify giving art time that could be more profitably spent, on other, more valuable subjects. Mavis, Janice and Laura, also did not value the cognitive aspects of art education, but, unlike Moira, they did not curtail their art teaching.

From “it's not often we miss it” to “the older I get, the less I do”: the place of art in the timetable varied

Three IAE teachers chose to include art regularly in their teaching programmes. Janice (5N) and Laura (4S) had a weekly art lesson on Thursday afternoons for an hour: “It's not often we miss it” [Janice.5N]. Because of the different structure of early childhood education, Mavis (1S) was able to include some kind of art-activity on most days.

Moira (2/3S) was the exception in that she had very few art lessons. She liked art: “I did art actually, as a special in Y12, and I still occasionally do a bit of sketching or whatever, and sometimes I take a life class”, but almost everything appeared to have priority over art. She didn't “do art very often because of the constraints of the timetable .... I do have a time slot, but sometimes I sacrifice it to social studies, or to maths that's not finished. Or to dance, if they haven't been outside for a while if it's a longer day, or if I haven't got round to something else”. Even so, “we've only had about four dances this year. The older I get the less I do”. There appeared to have been a similar paucity of art lessons in the seven months prior to the interview. Only three lessons described in the interview were attributed to the current year. Moira always used the present tense to describe these past lessons, giving them an immediacy they, in fact, did not have: “I do contour drawing, I do drawing from life”.

“They absolutely love it, and so do the parents”: using art lessons to support the reputation of the school

All the IAE teachers were anxious to enhance and support their school's reputation. Moira (2/3S) considered that the schools where she had worked had all emphasised the

importance of academic excellence. She remembered with horror when, as a young teacher, she had found her students “didn’t know anything” because of numerous art lessons. Her low sense of self-efficacy meant that she saw it as inevitable that she should abandoned her art programme, in order to support the school’s priorities. In contrast, Janice, Mavis and Laura saw the potential of harnessing their art lessons to promote their school’s reputation for excellence. Instead of retreating from teaching art, they felt empowered to use it.

Janice (5N), for example, used her joint Y5/Y1 art lesson to increase social integration within the school, and organised an Art Day to show-case the school’s creative approach to learning. Mavis (1S) was proud of the impact of her Activity Days: “They [the students] absolutely love it, and so do the parents .... I’ve actually had one parent come in for the Easter activities even though her kids are no longer in Y1 – for about three years. She still comes in to help with that, because she enjoys the day”. Whilst acknowledging her own achievements in art, Mavis recognised Laura (4S) as the most artistically gifted teacher in the school, and as such, a great asset to the school: “She’s very creative, that teacher. We had a *big* talk with her about what we should do for the art in-service”. Laura’s students’ artworks were prominently displayed in the school corridors.

“A wonderful teacher”: using art lessons to reinforce their reputations as creative teachers

Innovative art lessons not only increased the school’s reputation for providing a creative learning environment, they also increased the status of the teachers involved. Janice sought out art-projects that would interest her students and impress her peers. She was delighted with the admiration and astonishment from her colleagues when “everyone said ‘Huh?! How can you make a whole term’s work out of curtains?’ At the same time, she wished to maintain her reputation for good organisation and control: “We got it all done in the hour”.

Mavis’ students’ I-Spy books were used to reinforce her reputation as a teacher of excellence: “I was so pleased with them. I’ve been keeping them, because we’re having a parent night next Wednesday night, so I’m putting them out. So I’ll drop one off at recess time [for you to look at]”.

Laura (4S) decided that her students should make tributes to artists, not because of the intrinsic value of the information they would gain, but because she would be in the



vanguard of teachers exploring this generally neglected aspect of the art curriculum. Using other, similarly innovative methods, she was firmly established as a leading teacher of art within the school. Kirsty (PPS) remarked on this: “I’ve got a daughter in Y4. She’s got a wonderful teacher [who] does wonderful things with them. But how she does it, I don’t know”.

### Summary

IAE teachers in this study believed that art had little cognitive value. Instead, it was regarded as useful in providing support for both social integration, and the acquiring of knowledge in other learning areas. Those with high self-efficacy also used their art lessons to augment both their schools’ reputations and their personal professional profiles. In order to accommodate the varying requirements of these different areas, the teachers needed to use an eclectic mixture of teaching approaches.

#### **8.4.6 The teaching strategies of IAE teachers**

The IAE teachers did not plan their art programmes. Laura’s (4S) statement on this issue was typical: “I develop ideas as I go along .... As I get into the subject, things just flash towards me, and then I do that”. It will be argued here, however, that the way in which these ideas “flashed towards” them, was very much influenced by their implicit theories.

#### “Draw it on the board .... If I don’t do that, you get just revolting bits of art”

If an art lesson is to successfully serve as a handmaiden, a degree of control is needed to ensure that the images remain relevant to the desired outcomes. Mavis (1S) described how she employed photocopied images to control her students’ images. This was in order to ensure, firstly, that they would fit into her theme and thus support another learning area; and secondly, that they would look attractive and enhance the school’s and her own reputation: “They coloured them in, cut them out – cutting out a sea-horse is rather a skill in itself – and then they’ve glued strips of wool on the sea-horses fins just to give them a bit of texture. We’ve done starfish and two different types of fish. I also use a lot of templates in my classroom”.

While Mavis frequently used photocopies and templates, the other IAE teachers preferred to direct their students towards an image in different ways. Laura (4S) explained: “Show an example if you can .... Or just draw it on the board. I found that if I don’t do that, you get just revolting bits of art. I can’t stand that. So I’d rather spend that extra time”. Like most teachers in this study, Laura saw modelling as an attribute

of a caring and careful teacher. Unlike the IEAE and AAE teachers, however, her aim was to avoid the production of “revolting bits of art” which would undermine the school’s and her own reputations. Janice (5S) also endorsed very prescriptive art approaches, if it facilitated a worthy goal such as social integration in the observed lesson.

“I make them finish it because they have to complete it”

The issue of students finishing their work on time was important in maintaining the IAE teachers’ reputations as efficient teachers, and contrasts with the lack of concern of the IEAE teachers. Mavis (1S) and Laura (4S) were particularly preoccupied with this issue. Mavis would get students who finished early “to go around and find somebody else to help. Because sometimes kids – they’re too busy talking and they just don’t actually get on with their work” Slowness was seen as a problem of application rather than inspiration. Parent-helpers were used in a similar manner: “Sometimes they take over doing everything for the child .... I can understand they have to do it because the child’s getting behind – and I’ve got some very slow ones in my class this year”.

Even though Laura got “bored waiting for them to finish .... I make them finish it because they have to complete it, otherwise they’ll just keep leaving things unfinished. I say ‘That’s really good’ even if it’s bad [to encourage them to finish]”. When discussing her basis for assessment, Laura said, “‘Do they finish it?’ is really important”. This was seen as more important than giving genuine feed-back on the work.

“They were the colours that he liked”: show-case visual-expression

All the IAE teachers realised the potential of expression in art in augmenting the school’s and their own reputations for creativity. While Moira had to resort to past lessons to demonstrate this, Mavis (1S) was proud to discuss the importance she gave to expression in her current art lessons:

This little boy had done purple, black and dark green. I looked at it, and said, “Do you think that’s nice? [disapprovingly] – in that tone – and he said, “Yes”. I’ll never, ever, forget that day [dramatically]. And I have never, ever, said that to a kid since. Because *he* thought it was absolutely beautiful. *They* were the colours that he liked.

Janice (5N) and Laura (4S) described in most detail, art lessons that gave students a significant degree of freedom to develop their own ideas. Janice had her fabric wall-

hanging lesson and her box-bedroom lesson; Laura, her cartoon video: “Like I do animation. They’ve done their backdrop and then in science I’m teaching them about how to do the animation. And then we’ll go back and next week bring in a video camera and I’ll do the animation”. She was very conscious of the impact this innovative approach would have on her peers and parents. The clichéd work of such things as Easter cards did not fit into the same innovative mould: “That was not art for me”.

“A few ideas from the kids, but not too many”: the amount of visual-expression varied Mavis (1S) felt that the eclectic approach she used, sometimes with an emphasis on visual-expression, and sometimes highly prescribed, was particularly suited to the grade she taught. Self-expression, however, was generally limited to occasional painting lessons. Janice (5A) regarded self-expression as something to be indulged at the end of term, but was disappointed in the resulting artworks. Laura (4S) never allowed self-expression in any of her art lessons: “Oh I direct them, because I find that if you give them that [freedom], they don’t produce very nice pieces of work. They just slap it on. You’ve got to give them direction”.

More often, the IAE teachers’ used an approach described by Laura: “Get maybe a few ideas from the kids, but not too many”. She saw students’ expression, although valued to some extent, as a potentially dangerous diversion from the theme of the lesson:

They have to do what they’re told. Otherwise you’d have them ... follow like sheep. One would say it, then the next one would say it, and the next one would say it. So [I say] “You will do it, or you don’t do it” [but] .... if I make a suggestion on their work and they say, “I don’t want to do it that way”, I don’t make them.

Laura regarded with antagonism, students who persisted in creating images independent of her theme: “I’ve had one boy – he’s a little bit strong-willed – he’d deliberately do it his way. But that’s just the way he works. I think he’s been left ‘free-range’ at home .... He’s allowed to do things at home, like, whatever he wants to on the computer”.

Laura’s and Janice’s (5N) approaches to expression in their art lessons were very similar. They usually provided strong direction towards an attractive product, but provided sufficient leeway for students to produce some degree of individual interpretation. By having control over the image, they ensured a satisfactory product. By allowing some individuality of interpretation, they enhanced the creative look of

their art programmes. Janice, however, appeared to have much more tolerance of “free-range” children, and this is reflected in her students’ views (Table 17).

Table 17 *Students’ views on how IAE teachers helped them to get ideas in art lessons*

How does your teacher usually help you to get ideas for art?	Y4S (Laura)	Y5N (Janice)
Predetermined art	42%	0%
Child-centred art	16%	58%
Tutored images	3%	38%
Contextualist art	39%	4%

*Note:* Mavis’ (1S) and Moira’s (2/3S) students did not take part in this aspect of the student-survey because their grades were below Y3.

The differences between these two teachers may have stemmed from their differing teaching strengths. Janice did not claim to have any particular skills in teaching art. She saw herself as having innovative ideas and a general creative approach to teaching. Because of this, she may have emphasised the expressive aspect of art lessons more. Laura had a position to maintain as an exemplary art teacher, whose students’ artworks were regarded as a benchmark of excellence for the school. This may have caused her to concentrate more on the attractiveness of the product than the expressive elements in the work with her students.

#### Summary of IAE teaching strategies

Because the major outcomes the IAE teachers wanted to achieve in their art lessons were not primarily intrinsic to art, they felt free to pick and choose a teaching strategy most appropriate to the outcome they had in mind. Some art lessons were strongly controlled so as to ensure an attractive end-product that everyone finished. Other art lessons had an emphasis on visual-expression so as to enhance the schools’ and the teachers’ reputations for creativity. This eclecticism was reflected in the fairly even spread of answers regarding preferred teaching strategies, in the teacher-survey (Table 18).

Table 18 *The number of preferences, expressed in the survey, for each type of teaching strategy:*

	Pre-determined art	Child-centred art	Tutored images	Instrumental art
Mavis (1S)	4	3	4	5
Moira (2/3S)	1	3	3	3
Laura (4S)	5	2	5	5
Janice (5N)	4	3	1	5

#### **8.4.7 Evaluation and assessment: “some are a bit plain”**

Visual-expression did not feature as an aspect of evaluation when Mavis (1S) discussed her report-forms for art:

It’s “Satisfactory”, “Needs time to develop”, “Highly satisfactory” and “Excellent”. I find that kids are doing the best they can at this stage .... I’ve got a couple of kids who are just so good at drawing, that I’ve given them a “Highly satisfactory”, because they are just very keen on art. Their fish look like fish. The majority of the kids I just give “Satisfactory”, because they’re just learning and they’re just enjoying it at the moment.

Unlike a child-centred teacher, Mavis assessed her students’ drawings by comparison with adult realism. Students who were working to their maximum potential were only rated a “Satisfactory”, because their images were not sufficiently realistic. Even the most talented of her students, whose “fish look like fish” could not reach the highest grade, because they still had so much more to learn. Visual-expression was not presented as an issue for assessment.

In contrast to Mavis, Laura (4S), although not sure how she would assess her students’ artwork, raised creativity as an important issue: “I don’t know [long pause]. I think maybe enjoyment and creativity are the only two I’d use, and whether they finish it. Like, ‘Do they finish it?’ is really important”. When describing her students’ abilities in art, she said, “I’ve got some quite [good ones]. I think one’s actually academically gifted. His drawings are adult-like. But the other ones are creative. Some are a bit plain”. Although creativity was important, it was linked with completion (“whether they finish it”), and their “adult-like” qualities, all factors deemed to produce an attractive product.

Like Laura, Janice (5N) felt certain issues should be connected with evaluation and assessment, and used terminologies of art elements and art principals when discussing general assessment criteria. These issues were never raised, however, in connection with specific art lessons that she had taught. She laughingly said, “I’ve no idea”, when asked what she was hoping to achieve.

#### **8.4.8 The IAE teachers tended to be wary of the researcher**

All the teachers in this study were apprehensive about being observed teaching and about being interviewed. The apprehension was particularly strong, however, within this group of IAE teachers.

Moira (2/3S) was by far the most evasive teacher in the study. When asked about her current teaching approaches, she almost always described her teaching from many decades ago. She was overwhelmed by her teaching circumstances, and felt unable to teach art in what she thought was the approved way. This made her very reluctant to discuss her present approach to teaching art.

Laura (4S) Janice (5N) and Mavis (1S) had far more self-confidence than Moira, but only Mavis (1S) demonstrated a relaxed and open attitude when discussing her art teaching. Janice (5N), despite having a high sense of self-efficacy, went to considerable lengths to avoid being observed teaching art. Her long digressions into other curriculum areas seemed to be diversionary tactics to avoid discussions of her art lessons. Laura (4S) showed her reserve through being rather cool and distant, rather than evasive. Although her answers were fully developed, she was cautious in her approach, and never relaxed into responding freely and spontaneously.

All the teachers were aware that visual-expression was the focus of interest of this study. Laura, Janice and Mavis saw art education primarily in terms of sustaining and increasing the school’s reputations for creative and innovative teaching. They were accustomed to their peers’ admiration for this aspect of their teaching. While Mavis felt confident that the free-activities provided in Y1 sufficiently covered this aspect of the art curriculum, Laura (4S) and Janice (5N) may have been conscious that visual-expression was not one of their main priorities, and were naturally apprehensive that they might be judged on criteria which they did not value and over which they had little control.

An additional reason for apprehension might have been the eclectic nature of their teaching. The more consistent teaching strategies characterising the teaching strategies

of the PAE, IEAE, and AAAE teachers, could have encouraged a feeling of internal coherence that was missing from this group of teachers. While the eclectic approach of the IAE teachers was an appropriate response to their beliefs and implicit theories, explaining the heterogeneous nature of their teaching methods might have led to a vague feeling of unease. Mavis (1S), who felt that the grade she taught had particular requirements for an eclectic mix of expressive and predetermined art, was far less guarded in her responses.

## 8.5 Conclusion

The IAE teachers regarded art education as having little cognitive value. However, they realised that students' enjoyment of the subject and the easy visibility of their artworks could be utilised in three important ways: (i) to increase learning in other, more important subjects; (ii) to develop social cohesion through the repetition of cultural symbols and through social intercourse; and (iii) to promote the school's and their own teaching reputations. The different requirements for each of these outcomes, dictated the amount of expression within each separate art lesson. This led to an eclectic approach to teaching art.

The IAE teachers did not have the radical goal of transforming society through the new modes of thinking advocated by reconstructionist contextualists. They tended much more towards pragmatic contextualism, in that they primarily had the conservative goal of subordinating art outcomes in order to promote cultural norms, and enhance learning in other subjects. In order to do this, they needed to keep a firm, guiding hand on procedures. Any major deviation from the theme of the lesson would necessarily lead to a dilution of the desired outcomes.

The IAE teachers in this study also used art education in a way not predicted by Anderson and McRorie. Some art lessons were used to enhance their school's and their own reputations, as providers of creative and innovative teaching programmes. In these art lessons, more expression was desirable, but it was carefully placed within sometimes wide, but always clearly defined boundaries. This ensured the students made an individual, but attractive response to the teacher's creative theme.

By responding flexibly and pragmatically to the various outcomes required from their art lessons, IAE teachers instrumentally used their art programmes to support learning in other subjects, increase social coherence within the school, and promote the school's reputation for providing a creative and interesting learning environment.

## CHAPTER 9

### Conclusions and implications

The purpose of this study has been to examine primary class-teachers' implicit theories of expression in art education. The teachers' implicit beliefs, elicited through in-depth interviews, formed surprisingly consistent and coherent theories, and comprised the intellectual filters through which the teachers interpreted the various teaching constraints they faced. They thus had a significant impact on the structuring of their teaching-practice

Because of the strong influence of teachers' implicit theories, similar teaching constraints did not cause the teaching-practice of the various teachers to converge. Instead, the implicit theories had a transformative function, in which teachers adjusted practice to fit both their own teaching values and their teaching circumstances, often in ways not envisaged by exponents of the four art education philosophies. Thus, different teachers faced with similar constraints, diverged significantly and consistently in their teaching practice, in ways that can only be explained by an understanding of their implicit theories.

This concluding chapter will present (i) a summary of the study, (ii) a summary of the findings and how they relate to the research questions, (iii) an examination of the significance and implications of the study.

#### 9.1 Summary of the study

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the aims of the study. These were firstly, to understand teachers' implicit beliefs about visual-expression in WA primary schools; secondly, to discover whether their implicit beliefs about visual-expression provided a structural basis for their teaching practice, and, thirdly, to describe how these teachers' theories and teaching approaches related to the approaches to art education embedded in the WA art curriculum and in the wider theoretical literature.

Chapter 2 described the methods of investigation. The main sources of data were semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 19 primary teachers from two schools with comparable teaching conditions. Observations of art lessons and a teacher-questionnaire helped in triangulating the data from the interviews. In order to understand the context within which the teachers worked, further data was gathered from a survey of students, an interview with the WA Senior Curriculum Officer for the



Arts, and an interview with an art specialist teacher who has been particularly active in promoting the visual arts component of the WA Curriculum Framework.

Chapter 3 examined the role of expression within four art education philosophies that have sought to influence teaching practice. This provided the theoretical framework for the study. First, there was a description of mimetic behaviourism, in which children are regarded as lacking in key motor-skills and art-knowledge. In this philosophy, the role of the teacher is to carefully guide children through step-by-step instructions towards a prescribed image with only small, permitted variations. Second, child-centred art education was described, in which self-expression is central and children are regarded as naturally creative artists. Here it is thought that teachers should be responsive to the individual needs of the child, in order to allow them to progress freely through their natural stages of development. Third, there was a discussion of how DBAE recognised art education as a curriculum subject with a unique and valued body of knowledge, centered on the study of visual artworks. Here, teachers are encouraged to incorporate studio work into the lesson through the use of tutored images, the criteria of success being an expressive use of the designated concepts and skills. Finally, the contextualist position was presented, where art education is seen as having a primarily instrumental utility. Within contextualism, there are two positions: pragmatic and reconstructionist contextualism. Pragmatic contextualists see art teaching as useful in reinforcing established societal values. Here art can be used to reinforce cultural symbols, or knowledge in other, more valued areas of the curriculum. Reconstructionist contextualists argue that, since individual identity is constructed by social forces, the purpose of art education should be to promote expression in the form of the individual's critical awareness of these social forces.

Chapter 4 discussed the debate concerning the apparent gulf between theory and practice as it relates to expression in primary art education. Studies indicated that the importance given to expression in art education literature and curriculum documents is not reflected in teaching practice: "A funny thing happens to the arts on their way to the classroom" (Goodlad, 1984, p.220). It was argued that this perceived disparity between theory and practice could not be fully accounted for by teachers' personal and ecological constraints. It was then suggested that theory does indeed have a strong influence on teaching practice, in the form of the teachers' implicit beliefs.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8: In each of these chapters, the aim was to determine the latent values and goals underlying the teaching approaches that teachers saw as inherent to

their art programmes, with a specific focus on their views on visual-expression. Teachers were grouped, through an inductive process, according to the dominant themes arising from their implicit beliefs. This way of organising the data was employed in order (i) to explore common elements that emerged from the teachers' thoughts and views on expression in art education; (ii) to use the insights provided by the art education philosophies in the analysis of those themes; and (iii) to explore how dominant implicit theories manifested themselves in teaching-practice.

## **9.2 Summary of the findings**

This study set out to answer three questions: (i) What are teachers' implicit beliefs about expression in visual arts teaching in WA primary schools? (ii) Do the teachers' implicit theories on expression provide a structural basis for their teaching practice? and (iii) How do these teachers' implicit theories and teaching approaches relate to those embedded in the wider theoretical debate on expression in visual arts education?

The findings relating to these three questions can now be summarised. To eliminate repetition, the first section will merge questions (i) and (iii) into the question: What are teachers' implicit theories about expression in visual arts teaching in WA primary schools, and how do they relate to the wider theoretical debate on expression in visual arts education and the formal dimension of the WA visual arts curriculum? The second section will answer the question: Do teachers' implicit theories on expression provide a structural basis for their teaching practice? This section will include a summary of the data on how this occurs.

### **9.2.1 What are teachers' implicit theories about expression in visual arts teaching in WA primary schools, and how do they relate to the wider theoretical debate on expression in visual arts education and to the formal dimension of the WA visual arts curriculum?**

None of the class-teachers in this study consulted any WA Curriculum documents regarding their art lessons. None had any explicit knowledge of the theoretical issues surrounding the concept of expression in art education. Teaching practices and the philosophical assumptions that underpin them, therefore, have emerged in these teachers without any significant reference to the theoretical debate or curriculum recommendations. When this was realised by the researcher, it was initially expected that teachers' beliefs would form an eclectic mix of justificatory statements for common-sense views about expression in art education. This, however, was not the case.

When given the opportunity to reflect and explain themselves in a non-threatening environment, the teachers could be seen to each possess differing understandings of what constitutes “common-sense” in art teaching. Furthermore, each teacher’s set of implicit beliefs regarding expression in art education were, to a significant degree, internally consistent. This internal consistency justified the use of the term implicit theories. These implicit theories demonstrated a high degree of coherence, and underlay teaching-practices that teachers had previously employed unreflectingly, and which many observers have previously depicted as merely pragmatic responses to the practical constraints of their teaching situations.

Although it was found that the implicit theories of each teacher aligned with central tenets of one of the art education philosophies, there were, nevertheless, significant differences between the teachers’ implicit theories and the related teaching-practices, and the theories and practice developed and expounded by exponents of the four art education philosophies. In order to examine both these parallels and these differences, the implicit theories were denoted by different terminologies to distinguish them from the art education philosophies with which they had affinities: Predetermined Art Education (PAE) denoted those implicit theories aligned most closely with mimetic behaviourism; Individualistic-Expressive Art Education (IEAE) denoted those aligned most closely with child-centred art education; Art as Expertise (AAE) denoted those aligned most closely with DBAE; and Instrumental Art Education (IAE) denoted those aligned most closely with pragmatic contextualism.

In the WA Curriculum Framework for the Arts (Curriculum Council, 1998) there are four outcome areas: arts ideas, arts skills and processes, arts responses, and arts in society. While the focus of this study on visual-expression implies a concentration on arts ideas, the outcomes are interrelated. Expression of “arts ideas” through “arts skills and processes” in studio work, is meant to be informed by both an understanding of the place of “arts in society” and an understanding of aesthetics in “arts responses”. In Chapter 4 it was argued that these assumptions are closely related to those underlying DBAE. However, each of the four implicit theories, and their linked art education philosophies, can be located in relation to these four outcome areas.

#### Predetermined Art Education (PAE)

PAE teachers believed they needed to exercise strong control over the conduct of art lessons because of their students’ potentially chaotic impulses. Primary students’ lack of art-skills meant that control was also needed to ensure the production of attractive

artworks. Control was achieved by providing carefully structured, step-by-step instructions, and the use of templates, photocopied images or teacher-samples. Some choice was allowed within narrow and specified boundaries, but any major deviation from the prescribed image was seen as threatening, both to good order and to the production of a pleasing end-product. Assessment of students' work was based on effort, precision in fine motor skills, whether instructions were followed carefully and neatly, and the extent to which the predetermined image had been reproduced. Evaluation of the lesson was based on the attractiveness of the end-product, and the pleasure the students took in the artworks. These beliefs and teaching strategies resonated strongly with those within the philosophy of mimetic behaviourism, but there were interesting variations.

A shared view of the child as deficient, might be thought to indicate that PAE teachers had a more negative attitude towards their students than other teachers. This was not the case in this study. One aspect of PAE that distinguished it from mimetic behaviourism, was the solicitude and empathy most PAE teachers showed towards their students' feelings of failure in art. These PAE teachers used control to protect children from failure and to increase their self-esteem. In some cases, contemporary preoccupations with self-esteem were employed to justify traditional beliefs in control. In other cases, there was a nurturing urge to protect, rather than to dominate. This manifested itself in subtle, gentle and inclusive language, skillfully used to elicit the responses desired by the teacher.

Because PAE teachers concentrated on their students' acquisition of fine motor skills, they did not try to achieve significant outcomes in "arts ideas", "arts responses" and "arts in society". It cannot even be said that they achieved many outcomes in "art skills and processes", as in this outcome area, children need to "understand that the arts are more than skills, techniques and processes" (Curriculum Council, 1998, p.55). As Eisner (1979) and Choi (1992) argued, "a null curriculum can [simply] be the absence of intellectual process" (Eisner, 1992, p.104). PAE teachers, therefore, can be seen to be in sympathy with very few of the beliefs underlying the WA Curriculum Framework for the Arts.

#### Individualistic-Expressive Art Education (IEAE)

In contrast to the PAE position, IEAE teachers regarded visual-expression as of paramount importance. They had confidence in their students' abilities as creative artists, and believed students' self-confidence would increase in relation to their

autonomy in the art-making process. Teachers had an active role to play as inspirers and facilitators in developing and encouraging students' self-expression. In this they were very closely aligned with Richardson's (1947) and Cole's (1940) thematic version of child-centred art education, where art lessons were structured around a theme centred on the students' interests. IEAE teachers strove to maximise individuality within their themes, and deviations outside the theme were seen as non-threatening. Individuality of expression was the touchstone on which they judged both the success and failure of their art lessons.

The way that IEAE teachers modelled an image, however, appeared to be a radical departure from the practice advocated by exponents of child-centred art education. Indeed initially, it appeared very similar to the modelling procedures of the PAE teachers. It soon became clear, however, that this IEAE teaching strategy contained subtle differences. This was because it had been adapted to achieve very different ends. IEAE teachers wanted to encourage rather than inhibit self-expression, so they drew spontaneously, in direct response to suggestions from the students, and with their focus on the infinite variety of images that could be generated. While not always successful in its aim of aiding self-expression, this type of modeling procedure produced very different expressive outcomes from those employed by PAE teachers.

As IEAE teachers focused on self-expression in their art education programmes, their priority was to provide opportunities for students to initiate "creative ways of expressing themselves" (Curriculum Council, 1998, p.50). Thus, their art teaching programmes could be said to concentrate on the "arts ideas" outcome, where "students generate arts works that communicate ideas" (p.52), and the "art skills and processes" outcome where they "use their visual ... skills as the basis in manipulating and controlling the arts" (p.54). Although there was some valuable work in "arts responses", for example, when Alan's students discussed each others artworks, this was done more to improve children's self-esteem than to "increase critical reflection" (Curriculum Council, 1998, p.56), and was not a regular part of their lessons. No interest was shown in the Arts in Society aspect of the Curriculum Framework.

#### Art as Expertise (AAE)

Teachers in this study who articulated AAE implicit theories thought, like exponents of DBAE, that art education had valuable cognitive content and was an essential part of the primary curriculum. As in DBAE, expression was regarded as central to art education, but self-expression was seen as unproductive. Instead, expressive

capabilities were to be developed within the boundaries provided by the art skills and concepts being taught. AAE teachers avoided conceptual drift through the use of sequential art lessons.

While expression was encouraged within the concepts and techniques being taught, major deviations from these concepts and techniques were not tolerated. Evaluation was based on the application of learned concepts and the expressive nature of the image within these boundaries. The attractiveness of the product was not of great consideration. The type of images these teaching strategies produced were very similar to the tutored images advocated by the DBAE advocate Rush (1989), but with the important difference that they did not derive from the study of visual artworks.

It was this lack of the use of visual artworks that proved to be a major departure from DBAE theory. The AAE teachers regarded the study of visual artworks as valuable, but not central, and aesthetic scanning was not a central component of the majority of their art lessons. The technique of modelling an image was also employed, but for purposes other than those employed by the PAE and IEAE teachers. Here it was used to show students the potentiality of the introduced concept. In Andrea's (4A) case, she also worked alongside the students to demonstrate the seriousness of purpose in the enterprise of being an artist.

In their art programmes, the AAE teachers achieved outcomes in all four outcome areas: (i) (1) Arts Ideas in which "students generate arts works that communicate ideas" in order to "make personal meaning and express their own ideas"; (ii) Arts Skills and Processes in which "students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of the arts"; (iii) Arts Responses on which "students use their aesthetic understanding to respond to, reflect on and evaluate the arts; and (iv) Arts in Society in which "students understand the role of the arts in society" (p.52). Given that they were working independently of the current curriculum documents, it is remarkable that these teachers were so closely in sympathy with the aims of the arts component of the WA Curriculum Framework.

#### Instrumental Art Education (IAE)

In contrast to the AAE position, teachers with IAE implicit theories, believed that art education had limited cognitive value. Instead, its prime function was seen as supporting outcomes extrinsic to art education. These outcomes were not reconstructionist in any way. IAE teachers regarded art education as primarily useful

for promoting much more conservative goals than those of reconstructionist contextualists, such as social integration and learning in other subject areas.

IAE teachings-strategies were thus very similar to those described by Anderson and McRorie (1997) as pragmatic contextualist. Evaluation was based on the achievement of outcomes unrelated to art education. The production of the students' images was generally controlled in order to ensure that the art lesson served effectively as a handmaiden to other subject areas.

As the data was analysed, however, it became clear that IAE teachers used art lessons in a way not anticipated in the literature on pragmatic contextualism. Some instrumental art lessons had an emphasis on expression in order to support the image of the school as a creative environment for students, and the image of the teacher as a resourceful and innovative manager. While a modicum of expression was generally deemed sufficient for this purpose, it nevertheless formed an important and distinctive aspect of their teaching approach.

The IAE teachers were eclectic in their approaches to teaching art, using different teaching strategies for different contextualist outcomes. When the end-product was predetermined, their outcomes were limited in the same way as the PAE teachers. When they allowed more expression, they achieved some outcomes in "arts ideas", but none in "arts responses" and "arts in society". Even then, there remained the problem that students' work might look expressive, when in reality it was often the reflection of the teacher's ideas rather than those of the students.

### Summary

Only the AAE teachers achieved outcomes in all four outcome areas of the WA Curriculum Framework. This is because these teachers' implicit theories and teaching approaches were closely aligned with DBAE, and, as has been discussed in Chapter 4, the WA Curriculum Framework is structured around DBAE assumptions and beliefs.

The frames of reference provided by teachers' implicit theories have been shown to be surprisingly consistent with those underpinning the four philosophies outlined in the theoretical framework. The questions asked in the art education philosophies are fundamental existential questions of art education: why and how do we teach art? These are the same issues faced by classroom teachers, and they face a similar range of possible answers. Thus the teachers respond in comparable ways – the theories being merely at work in different sites. The fact that these teachers were responding to the

questions in the classroom rather than in academe, meant that there were however significant differences in their teaching approaches. The findings about these teaching approaches will now be summarised.

### **9.2.2 Do teachers' implicit theories on visual-expression provide a structural basis for their teaching practice?**

Previous studies of art teaching in primary schools have indicated a fundamental gap between the emphasis on expression in the literature and curriculum documents, and the lack of emphasis on expression in schools. Two influential studies, Rafferty (1987) and Bresler (1992) concluded that elementary teachers' predisposition to favour self-expression was being swamped by the ecological and personal constraints they faced. This study has explored a contrasting supposition that, in relation to visual-expression, implicit theories have more influence upon teaching practice than do such ecological and personal constraints.

#### Ecological constraints were not a significantly factor in inhibiting visual-expression

Most of the class-teachers in this study faced similar ecological constraints, but this did not appear to cause any corresponding similarities in their responses.

#### *Ecological constraints did not inhibit variations in approaches to visual-expression*

Teachers felt an overwhelming pressure to improve the effectiveness of their teaching in the areas of numeracy and literacy. This created time constraints for the rest of the curriculum, including the arts. Art supplies were also severely limited because of shrinking budgets. At Southfield, the art allowance had recently been halved. In both schools in this study, only pre-primary and Y1 classes had a sink. All other classes had to access water at some distance from their classrooms.

Rafferty (1987) argued that difficult ecological constraints such as these, forced teachers to teach in a didactic way. This study did not find this to be the case. Indeed it was interesting to note that teachers in the worst classrooms taught in the most self-expressive ways. Alan (2N) had a severely cramped teaching space, with very little storage space, a carpeted floor and no direct access to water. Fiona's [3A] students had desks with sloping lids, and the classroom also had a carpeted floor and no sink. Yet both these teachers used child-centred approaches in their art lessons. The pre-primary and Y1 teachers in both schools had the most favourable teaching conditions in terms of autonomy, resources, access to water, size of classroom, teaching assistance and storage space: "I'm in my own little world over here" (Kirsty, PP/1S). They all, however, used predominantly didactic teaching methods.



Rafferty also argued that the problematic nature of art materials precluded teachers from using child-centred methods in their art-lessons. Organisational matters were indeed a major concern for all the teachers in this study, but teachers did not feel forced into teaching in a didactic way because of this issue. Strong organisational skills were in evidence in all the groups of teachers. The PAE teacher Dorothy (7N), the IEAE teacher Phil (5/6S), the AAE teacher Andrea (4N), and the IAE teacher Laura (4S) were particularly meticulous in the organisation of their art materials, but they differed markedly from each other in their implicit theories and in their teaching methods.

*Teachers viewed and responded to students' attitudes towards visual-expression very differently*

Awareness of students' attitudes towards art education helps in understanding the context within which art is taught. Hiller (1993) argued that children are not interested in visual-expression until they have sufficient skills to accurately represent their chosen images. Merritt (1967) similarly argued that "freedom [of visual-expression] is not in the range of interest of most elementary children" (p.5). Hurwitz and Madeja's (1989) and McKeon's (1994) further contended that expression in the context of artists' work was not relevant to primary students' interests. These views were not supported by data from this study.

Students of all grades, but particularly those in middle and senior primary grades, attached great importance to expression in art education. Whatever their teacher's implicit theories might be, the students' emphasis on self-expression was generally constant. Many expressed an intense desire for self-expression, and their preferences and aversion to particular art-lessons were predominately based on the amount of self-expression allowed. When asked to select a way of getting ideas for a drawing, most chose to draw from their imagination. Some junior primary children changed their minds when they saw the photocopies and templates, but this did not happen with the middle and senior grades.

This tendency of students to favour self-expression was recognised by most teachers, but it did not exert a strong influence on most of their teaching practices. Indeed it was significant that, in several cases, teachers reinterpreted the children's preferences so that they could appear to coincide with the teachers' implicit theories. Janice (5N), for example, elaborated on her students' devotion to the box-bedroom project, whereas in reality only one student described it as a favourite lesson.

Because art-lessons were associated with some degree of expression, students generally ranked art higher than all other subjects in the curriculum. A recurring comment from students was “there is no such thing as a bad art-lesson”. Most PAE, AAE and IAE teachers agreed with the IEAE teachers that students loved art because of its expressive element, but this did not greatly influence their decisions regarding teaching practice. A surprisingly large number of students also expressed interest in learning about artists’ work, but very few teachers were aware of this interest.

*Students developmental needs were viewed and responded to differently*

All teachers in this study recognised that early-childhood students had special needs and requirements. Early childhood PAE teachers justified their didactic teaching methods with reference to the fact that the requirements of early childhood students are radically different from those of middle and senior primary students. They argued that early childhood students’ obvious lack of fine motor-skills inevitably diminished opportunities for success in visual-expression. Early-childhood IEAE teachers, however, took a radically different perspective. They argued that the spontaneous creativity of early-childhood students made them particularly suited to self-expression. Both sets of teachers perceived this aspect of their teaching circumstances, the students’ attributes, through the lens of their beliefs: the child as deficient in skills, the child with a superabundance of skills.

Low self-efficacy did not seem to affect the type of implicit theory or teaching practice

While most teachers in the study enjoyed teaching art, some felt competent and others incompetent. Being a good art teacher was very much equated with being good at drawing, and many teachers lamented their lack of abilities in this area. Linda (5N), for example, was one of the few teachers in the study to teach in sympathy with the underlying principles of the WA Curriculum, and used many exemplary teaching strategies in her observed lesson. Despite this, she felt incompetent “because I’m not an artist. I mean I can’t draw or paint or do anything myself”.

Initially it had been expected that low efficacy in art might encourage the adoption of a mimetic approach to art teaching in an attempt to control the teaching environment. But this did not turn out to be the case. Each group included teachers with high and low self-efficacy. Low self-efficacy sometimes influenced the extent to which teachers would implement their ideas, as in the case of the IEAE teacher Fiona (3N) and the IAE teacher Moira (2/3S), but more often it did not. Ken 7(S) and Linda (6N) in the AAE group had low self-efficacy, but continued to give priority to art and nurture the aims

they valued.

Low self-efficacy did not of itself influence either the type of implicit theory, the type of teaching practice, or, to any great degree, the amount of art teaching. This is significant since it indicates that the implicit theory adopted by a teacher is often able to override self-efficacy as a factor influencing art teaching.

#### Teachers' ideologies concerning visual-expression had little impact on teaching practice

McArdle & Piscitelli (2002) claimed that early childhood art education is “mainly of the laissez-faire style where the old slogan ‘the process is more important than the product’ dominates teachers’ philosophies and classroom practice” (p.12). It has been argued in this study that claims such as may be based on studies that confuse rhetoric with reality.

Teachers’ ideologies regarding expression in art education often demonstrated an eclectic mix of contradictory statements. When answering the questionnaire, teachers were loath to be seen to reject ideas such as creativity and individual choice. Even the most didactic teacher in this study, Ann (2S), ticked “agree” against the statement “the main role of art is therapeutic as it allows children to express their individuality and emotions”. During the in-depth interview however, her discussion of practice revealed a passionate aversion to self-expression as “pointless ... [it is] what we are trying to get away from”.

The often self-contradictory nature of teachers’ answers in the questionnaire was not reflected in their responses during the in-depth discussions of actual teaching practice, although occasionally they reverted to isolated rhetorical statements about expression when discussing general teaching aims. The PAE teacher Belinda (3/4S), for example, stated that “my biggest fault is we all make the same thing”, but she never followed through with this concern in her teaching, and later explained, “if they’ve made what the teacher’s made, they get a higher self-esteem .... You’ll find self-esteem very high in my room, because they’ve had so many successes”.

It became clear during the course of this research, that the survey questionnaires were eliciting the kind of responses (indicated here by the term ‘ideologies’) which conformed to their desired self-labels, and which were influenced by ideas as to what responses were expected or were appropriate. The status of these initial questionnaire responses only became clear when they were compared to the ideas elicited by the

subsequent in-depth interviews. In some case, as with Alan (2N), most of the ideological statements turned out to accurately reflect the teacher's implicit theories. In most other cases however, they were revealed to be either in contradiction to the implicit theories of the teacher, or to reflect one partial dimension that the teacher sought to highlight.

In contrast to their ideologies, the teachers' implicit beliefs exhibited an unexpectedly high degree of internally consistency, and were seen to have a strong influence on teaching practices. Further, if implicit theories were in direct conflict with ideology, ideology tended to function as rhetoric rather than as a basis for action.

#### Teachers' implicit theories of expression had a profound effect on their teaching practice

The time-span and structure of each teacher's art lessons were remarkably similar across the groups. All teachers had a regular time-slot for art, worked within a specific time frame, took time to lay out art materials efficiently, used an introduction to explain the purpose of the lesson, and aimed for an orderly tidying-up regime. The teaching strategies within these structures, however, were radically different, and these differences can largely be explained in terms of their implicit theories.

#### *Teachers' implicit theories of expression were deep-rooted*

Teachers' implicit theories appeared to be deep-rooted. Teachers applied their implicit beliefs about visual-expression to whatever grade they taught, even when, as in the case of Alan (2N) and Sally (5S), they were faced with pressures to desist. Teachers also made frequent references to incidents in their own childhood which they wanted to avoid replicating with their own students. The PAE teacher Belinda (3/4S), for example, recalled feeling artistically inadequate because the teacher offered too little guidance. The IEAE teacher, Alan (2N), had suffered from teachers who lacked passion and purpose. While this appears to support Grauer's (1999) findings that implicit beliefs have a genesis in early experiences, it could be equally true that they reconstructed their "past in accordance with present ideas of importance" (Schoonmaker, 2000, p.311).

#### *Implicit theories of expression helped teachers to filter information about planning their art programmes*

Most of the teachers in the study stated that they had discarded what they had learned from their pre-service art education programmes. Despite these assertions, there is evidence that their tertiary studies had some limited influence. The schools' most recent

graduates were EIAE teachers, and presumably in most recent contact with ideas of self-expression. While Daniel (6S) said that much of what he had learned had “gone out the window”, he later recalled how “one of my lecturers at uni. would have screamed if I’d used templates”. Moreover, whatever the teachers’ implicit theories, it was generally accepted that early childhood students should be able to draw figures without the imposition of adult standards of reality. Perhaps this was a lasting, if restricted, legacy from lectures on Lowenfeld’s teachings.

No teachers had any working knowledge of WA curriculum documents, and no-one used the curriculum documents for planning their art programmes. Nevertheless the teachers in this study did not regard this as an inhibiting or negative factor when discussing how they planned their art programmes. Although teachers at Northfield had had a Professional Development (PD) day on the four arts outcome areas of the curriculum, they did not use that information in their planning. Even Janice (5N), who had been to an additional art in-service organised by the Senior Curriculum Officer for the Arts, had not used the information given: “I haven’t even looked at it yet”. One PAE teacher Jane (1N) mentioned the aims of the art in-service out of politeness to the researcher, but did not feel it applied to her role as a teacher of early-childhood students. Otherwise references to the in-service were exclusively enthusiastic endorsements of the practicalities of the art-activities, with no references to the planning strategies underlying the art-activities.

It was not that these teachers did not seek assistance and advice for their art teaching. Teachers often spent large amounts of their own money on art resource books, but they always chose books in sympathy with the teaching approaches they favoured, rejecting those that did not. After the in-service, for example, the principal of Northfield gave a resource book based on an outcomes approach (Brown, 1997) to every teacher in the school. Only the teachers whose implicit theories were in sympathy with the philosophy of the book, the two AAE teachers Andrea (4N) and Jane (6N), used it in their planning.

Northfield teachers used their implicit theories to filter information from another arts advisor who had argued that tracing was a legitimate tool for drawing. While the IEAE teachers ignored the advice, the PAE teacher Dorothy (7N) used it because she thought it validated her use of prescribed images. She spoke of “the art of tracing”. The AAE teachers were more sceptical. While Andrea (4N) would allow it only if it supported the concept of form, Linda (6N) rejected it because: “I mean it’s supposed to be *their* work,

not a tracing”. Information that did not align with established implicit theories was either forgotten or discarded. As Belinda (3/4S) stated when rejecting the WA K-7 Syllabus “it just didn’t suit me and who I was”.

*Implicit theories of expression had a strong influence on art teaching*

From the observed lessons, and from the in-depth interviews, it became clear that the pace, atmosphere, structure and outcomes of art lessons varied directly and dramatically. This variation was found to relate directly to the teachers’ implicit theories regarding expression in art education.

The PAE teachers favoured the use of templates, photocopied images, pre-made teacher-examples, and modeling of the image in order to ensure the successful completion of predetermined images. They incorporated these didactic teaching strategies into the lesson because they perceived their students’ spontaneous images to be disappointingly defective. Control was needed either to suppress children’s urge to make independent images, or to guarantee a successful product for children unable to create adequate images without firm adult guidance. During the art lessons, the PAE teachers tended to concentrate on conformity to the desired image. Another concern was the acquisition and practicing of fine motor skills. After firmly setting the boundaries within which students could work, Dorothy (7N) often found herself at a loose end because her senior primary students already had well-developed skills. In contrast, Mary (PPN) was rushed off her feet completing tasks her students found difficult. PAE teachers were also extremely preoccupied over the issue of whether students would complete their work on time.

The IEAE teachers provided a theme based on the interests of the children in order to encourage the maximum amount of self-expression. They regarded their students as natural and creative artists. However, it was thought that these young artists sometimes needed the kick-start of their teacher’s enthusiasm and suggestions. This often took the form of modeling the process in order to demonstrate the rich diversity of options. IEAE teachers used wide-ranging discussions to elicit ideas from the class, and were confident that these ideas would be creative and valuable. Because their priority was on self-expression rather than fine-motor skills, they took an active role in generating and encouraging expression during the art lesson, seeking to increase diversity rather than impose conformity. The length of time students took to finish the work was not seen as significant. Student autonomy was welcomed and praise generously given, in order to

increase both self-confidence and self-esteem. Like the other IEAE teachers, Alan (2N) “would be ecstatic” if his students thought they were excellent at art.

The AAE teachers used the introduction to the lesson to carefully nurture an understanding of key art techniques and concepts. They believed that this would increase both their students’ knowledge of an important learning area and their students’ ability to express themselves visually. The beginning of the art lesson was often also used as an opportunity to introduce students to the functions of the artist and to specific artists’ work. During this time, the boundaries were established within which students could express their ideas in tutored images. A single art concept or technique used as the basis of the art lesson, therefore, tended to allow more scope for expression than numerous requirements.

The AAE teachers did not believe in nurturing their students’ self-esteem through constant positive reinforcement. They wanted to challenge their students, and increase their maturity and self-reliance. In contrast to the IEAE teachers’ aim of increasing students’ self-esteem through self-confidence in their innate creativity, AAE teachers thought self-esteem would grow from a growing mastery of art concepts and skills: “I want to improve their drawing skills because that will improve their self-esteem” (Andrea, 4N). They hoped their students would not be complacent about their abilities as artists, and, during the art lesson, were more critical of the students’ work than the IEAE teachers. Directing their students’ attention to aspects of their work that could be improved through the correct application of the taught concepts and techniques, and the quality of their responses was more important than the time taken to finish.

The IAE teachers’ teaching strategies varied according to the supporting role given to the art activity. If the purpose was to reinforce learning in other areas, then the teaching methods would be primarily didactic and students were constantly reminded to stay on task and keep to the prescribed image. If the purpose was to increase the school’s reputation for creativity, there was much more scope for expression, although children were constantly urged to finish on time.

Thus, rather than the role of the teacher and the structure of the lesson being primarily influenced by external constraints, it was the teachers’ implicit theories that had most impact in determining the role of the teacher and the type of visual-expression encouraged. When teachers with different implicit theories used similar teaching strategies, the precise way in which this was done reflected the diverse influences of their implicit theories.

### *Teachers' implicit theories of expression affected disciplinary issues*

It is ironic that the teachers in this study who were most anxious to assert control over the students' images because of their fear of chaos, were most likely to provoke the problems they sought to eliminate. Students of PAE teachers knew there were strict rules to which they must conform, and the PAE teachers, Dorothy (7N) and Mary (PPN), for example, felt threatened and slightly under siege from their students' constant demands to deviate from the prescribed image. To a lesser extent, the same happened with Andrea's (4N) students in her AAE lesson. They too needed to explore and establish the limits before they settled to their tasks.

As the main aim of the IEAE teachers' art lessons was self-expression, these teachers were unperturbed by the prospect of students wanting to deviate from the suggested theme: "it wouldn't matter. We don't know what they're going to do anyway" (Sally, 5S). Interestingly, none of the IEAE teachers could recall a time when students had wanted to radically move away from the theme that had been suggested. Because the IEAE teachers made it clear that they wanted the students to make as many individual decisions as possible ("totally off the wall" (Phil, 5/6S) was good), their students did not feel the need to constantly stretch the parameters of what they could do. This contrasts with the constant pushing of the boundaries by the students of PAE teachers.

In contrast to the view that child-centred methods endanger the smooth running of the classroom, the teachers in this study who allowed children most freedom of expression generally had a calmer working environment than those teachers who limiting their students' choice to minor adaptations of a prescribed image. It is also worth noting that in the previous year under a PAE regime with Jane (1N), Alan's class had a reputation as an unruly and difficult class. Under his more child-centred regime, they appeared calm and co-operative. Teachers' implicit theories led them to teach in ways that directly affected issues of discipline in the classroom.

### Attitudes to evaluation and assessment were influenced by the teachers' implicit theories

Evaluation of the art lessons and assessment of the students' work were also strongly linked to teachers' implicit theories. PAE teachers emphasised the look of the end-product – "they're very eye-catching" – and whether artworks had been made with neatness and precision – were they "nice"? (Belinda, 3/4S). IEAE teachers rarely mentioned the look of the artworks, and were more concerned with whether "the kids are able to use expression" (Ken, 7S). They were uneasy with assessment: "No art a kid



does, is bad” (Phil, 5/6S). The AAE teachers were similarly unpreoccupied with the look of the end-product, preferring to focus on what the students had learned. Assessment was done on “how creative a kid is [and] ... on how well the kid takes the skill” (Ken, 7S). Ken also introducing some elements of aesthetic scanning when his students’ conducted peer reviews. IAE teachers had a mixture of approaches, from Janice’s glee that “You don’t have to mark it”, to Mavis’ judgment of the students’ work by a comparison with adult realism.

### Summary

While all the teachers’ studied were under similar external pressures to produce attractive artworks to be taken home or displayed on the walls in the school, they did not converge in their teaching practices. This occurred across both schools. Their divergent practices emerged, rather, from the strength and coherence of the different implicit theories to which they subscribed.

## **9.3 The significance of the study**

The findings for this study focus attention on the importance of teachers’ implicit beliefs in influencing the amount and quality of visual-expression in primary schools. It is hoped that this study (i) challenges the assumption that the expressive aspects of primary art teaching programmes are a pragmatic response to teaching constraints; (ii) encourages pre-service educators to use art education programmes that challenge pre-service teachers’ assumptions about visual-expression in primary schools; (iii) makes curriculum leaders aware of the factors that inhibit the implementation of the expressive aspects of curriculum documents; and (iv) invites more awareness of the distinctions between ideologies and implicit theories in research methods of investigation.

### **9.3.1 Implications for the theoretical debate**

The present study contributes to an understanding of the oft-noted dichotomy between the emphasis placed on expression in visual arts literature, and its low priority in primary schools. This is frequently explained by the argument that teachers are hostile to the educational theories favoured by academics, because their teaching responses are influenced predominantly by the practical constraints of their teaching situations. Others argue that teachers, with their rich practical experience and common sense, are eclectically choosing whatever approach is suitable for any particular occasion. Theory is thereby seen as academic in the pejorative sense – as too abstract, unrealistic and removed from practical concerns.

This study supports an alternative proposition: that art education theory does indeed strongly influence the teaching of visual-expression in primary schools, and that the classroom is the site of a deep interplay between theory and practice. But this intersection is not at the level previously emphasised: that of teachers' consciously articulated ideologies. When teachers were asked about their teaching aims, their initial responses were often formulaic statements that the speaker considered encapsulated a professionally expected position. It was only the in-depth interviews that revealed the individual beliefs which lay behind each teacher's distinctive approach to art teaching. In this study, it was teachers' implicit theories rather than their ideologies, which showed a strong alignment with art education theory, and which influenced teaching practices.

All the teachers in this study faced similar, often difficult teaching conditions. Teachers with different implicit theories, however, adopted different strategies to cope with the pressures of an overcrowded curriculum. Moreover, teaching constraints, while stressful and problematic, did not appear to directly influence their approach to visual-expression. The lack of a sink, for example, did not prevent teachers from allowing students to initiate visual-images, if that was a priority.

Despite some inconsistencies, the teachers' implicit theories contained a high degree of internal coherence. They proved to be deep-rooted and a powerful generator of action. It was found that the teaching strategies arising from the different implicit theories were similar in important respects to those advocated in the four art education philosophies, with important differences – differences that have not previously been explored in the literature on expression in primary visual arts education.

While the limited nature of the study precludes firm conclusions about the general population of primary class-teachers in Western Australia, some implications can be specified for pre-service teacher educators, for curriculum leaders, and for academic researchers.

### **9.3.2 Implications for pre-service art educators**

There is a growing tendency for pre-service primary education programmes to increase the role of mentor-teachers, to the extent that, in a current programme in WA, all the supervision and assessment of pre-service students on school-practice is done by mentor-teachers. While this system's strength is that it roots advice firmly in practice and practical realities, there should also be an awareness that mentor-teachers' unexamined implicit theories may not support the theoretical structures advocated by

pre-service arts educators. More awareness of these differences in the partnership between schools and universities would enhance teaching and learning on both sides.

During the interviews it became clear that the very fact of articulating and bringing to consciousness the implicit theories underlying their teaching strategies, enhanced the self-awareness and self-confidence of the teachers. As they became aware of the coherence and elaboration of the implicit theories that they had previously dismissed as mere common sense, their sense of self-efficacy improved, and they began to acquire a vocabulary and a consciousness with which to critically reflect on their own teaching practices. This has important implications for teacher education.

Although implicit beliefs have been shown to be resistant to change, it has already been discussed how Pankratius and Young (1995), Prentice (2002), Gibson (2003) and Wright and Pascoe (2004) have developed programmes to specifically challenge their students' assumptions about arts education. Using similar techniques, Grauer (1999) found that "given the knowledge of the philosophers, teachers can change – they need these structures to be self-aware of their own implicit theories" (p.23). Such programmes need to use data from studies such as this, in order to firmly connect educational theory with the concerns of the teachers and teaching practice. This has already been successfully done on an experimental basis by the researcher, using data from this study as a basis for pre-service teachers' enactment of scenarios through peer-teaching. As Schoonmaker (2000) advised, tertiary educators should "carefully study school context, in order to develop thoughtful strategies for instruction" (p.318).

### **9.3.3 Implications for curriculum leaders**

The extent of teachers' resistance to the curriculum documents on arts education was both surprising and alarming. This study offers a basis for explaining why teachers are not paying attention to the visual arts curriculum in Western Australia, and potentially elsewhere. The fault lies not primarily with the content of the curriculum documents, nor with their mode of delivery to teachers, but with the fact that the philosophy underlying the curriculum differs from the philosophical focus of many teachers' implicit theories. Given that one of the purposes of curriculum documents is to promote a change in teaching strategies, such a gap between curriculum recommendations and existing teaching strategies is not, of itself, surprising. What is surprising however, is the apparent resilience of the teachers' implicit theories and their resistance to external pressures.

The present study does, however, indicate a way forward. If curriculum change is to be effective, it must begin by enabling teachers to articulate their own implicit theories, understand the relationship between those implicit theories and the education philosophies, and thereby engage in the dialogue and debate on teaching strategies. As McKean (2001) stated, “We must pay close attention to classroom teachers and listen to their concerns if we are to ensure that arts education will remain a vital part of the educational life of a classroom” (p.31).

Alexander et al. (1996) argued there is no curriculum development without professional development. A programme of professional development based on the work of Pankratius and Young (1995), Prentice (2002), Gibson (2003) and Wright and Pascoe (2004) would give teachers the opportunity to examine unexplored assumptions, and provide the foundations for constructing an art teaching programme more in sympathy with the theories underlying the Curriculum Framework. The resultant change may be incremental, but this is presumably preferable to the present situation as described by Eisner (1992b), “A written manifesto of educational beliefs that never infuses the day to day operations of this school has no practical import for either teachers or students; such beliefs are window dressing” (p.306).

A further point relates to a government funded artists-in-schools programme in WA (Department of Culture and the Arts; Department of Education and Training, 2005). Haynes (2004b) found that there were significant problems because of “conflicting conceptions of creativity” between artists and teachers (p.28). Furthermore McKean’s (2001) study found that a similar programme in the USA was counter-productive because teachers found the idea of an artist-expert to be intimidating. Findings from this study indicate that teachers do relate the ability to draw very closely with their capabilities to teach art successfully, which could explain why artists-in-schools programmes could undermine their self-confidence. Fawcett and Hay (2004) described how a similar scheme in the UK succeeded because the artist and the school had been carefully matched so each school’s “philosophy was in tune with the personal values of all the artists” (p.241). This study’s findings imply that such a scheme needs to be similarly sensitive to the implicit theories of both artist and teachers.

#### **9.3.4 Implications for research into primary art teaching**

In this study, teachers’ implicit theories of visual-expression and the teaching strategies they generated, were often at variance with those in the curriculum documents and the literature on visual-expression. PAE teachers not only saw control as a means of

restraining students' chaotic tendencies, there was also a desire to protect students from failure. Early childhood PAE teachers were particularly skilled in using gentle and inclusive language in order to engender a feeling of participation amongst their students. IEAE teachers used modeling to increase rather than decrease the expressive elements in their art lessons. AAE teachers understood and taught the cognitive aspects of art education but minimised the use of visual artworks. IAE teachers used art lessons, not only as a means of reinforcing social values and more valued learning areas, but also as a means of raising the creative profile of their schools. In each of these areas, the implicit theories differed significantly from the art education philosophies with which they aligned. These findings would provide significant areas for development in future research. As Marché (1992) stated in another context, "If educational research is to be relevant to classroom practice, disparities between research and practice must be bridged" (p.2).

The current federal House of Representatives committee of inquiry into teacher training has been informed of the lack of research into "classroom reality" (Lane, 2005, p.37): "[Dr Tripp] said "theory, research and intellect were vital to teacher formation, but they had to relate to classroom realities. 'Much of the so-called theory-practice gap is actually a theory-theory gap'.... Dr Tripp said academics recognised that their research agenda bore little relationship to the classroom and were worried about it: 'But a supertanker takes a long time to turn around'". More studies of teachers' implicit theories and their relationship to theory and practice, would both bridge the gap and accelerate this turn around.

As discussed in Chapter 4, many studies of teachers' beliefs fail to clearly distinguish between teachers' consciously articulated ideologies and their implicit theories. Evidence from this study indicates that this differentiation can be only be achieved through interviews, preferably in conjunction with observation of teaching practice. The teacher-survey questionnaire in this study did not prove to be an appropriate tool for understanding teachers' implicit beliefs, since the responses it evoked were at the level of ideology rather than implicit beliefs. Moreover, the ideology regarding visual expression was frequently rhetoric. It was only during the interviews, that the teachers' wide and subtle variations of interpretation of a phrase such as "express their individuality and emotions" became clear. It takes a long, skilled interview to bring out the differences between the common-sense surface views and embedded theory where teachers may not be aware of their underlying priorities and assumptions.

Data was more easily and accurately gathered from the teacher-survey when it concerned teaching constraints and teaching-strategies. Important details and distinctions, however, were only revealed in the interviews. Both PAE and IEAE teachers, for example, indicated they used modeling in most art lessons. It was only during the interviews, that it became clear that modelling was used by different teachers to promote very different outcomes. Similar teaching techniques can derive from very different beliefs, and thus be subtly adapted in order to produce very different results. The implication of this is that researchers should pay particular attention to the exploration and understanding of teachers' perspectives, and not pre-judge what might be correct practice for a particular theoretical position.

### **9.3.5 Summary**

Dorn (2000) argued that:

teachers choose to be teachers in the first place, because personal interpretation and choice are central to their professionalism, because they expect to operate in their classrooms in a self-reliant and independent manner, and because they are able to regulate themselves and set their own standards (p.18).

Or, as Belinda (3/4S) succinctly put it: "I want to teach art, the way *I* want to teach art".

Understanding teachers' implicit theories and their links with practice is one means by which we can both honour teachers' professionalism and provide a fruitful basis for collaborative change. "Smooth and successful curriculum change cannot be accomplished without potential implementers becoming personally involved and accepting the change in their own terms, according to their own constructs of reality" (McBeath, 1997, p.54).

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Letter of approval from the Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research



EDITH COWAN  
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9 February 1999

Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research

Ms Diana Brown  
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms Brown

Code: 98-3  
Title of Project: *Teachers' perceptions of expression in the visual arts curriculum within Western Australian primary schools.*

This project was reviewed by the Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research at its meeting on 5 February 1999.

I am pleased to advise that the project complies with the provisions contained in the University's policy for the conduct of ethical research, and has been cleared for implementation.

Period of approval: From 8 February 1999 To 31 March 2001

With best wishes for success in your work.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

ROD CROTHERS  
Executive Officer

Attachment: Conditions of Approval

cc. Dr A Taggart, Supervisor  
Miss K Tuckwell, Executive Officer, Graduate School  
Ms P Prideaux, Executive Officer, HDC



### Forms of disclosure and informed consent

For a class teacher Y4-Y7.

I have been both a primary class teacher and a primary art specialist teacher and I am now taking a PhD course at Edith Cowan University. I would very much appreciate it if you could spare the time to be interviewed about your work as a primary teacher.

The research is part of my thesis which seeks to explore approaches to art teaching in primary schools. The study is entitled *Teachers' perceptions of expression in the visual arts curriculum within Western Australian primary schools*. The thesis will be made available to the Education Department of Western Australia and other educational systems in Australia.

Eighteen primary class teachers and eight primary visual arts specialist teachers from state and independent schools will be interviewed about their visual arts teaching aims and teaching programmes, focusing on the issue of expression. Expression here refers to the way that children express their ideas through making visual images.

I realise how difficult it is for teachers to find the time to do an interview out of school hours. With your permission, an accredited substitute teacher will take your class so that you will be freed to be interviewed. This substitute teacher will assist the students in filling out a questionnaire about their views on art education and then read them a story and ask them to do a drawing. All the equipment for these activities will be supplied by the researcher. Your interview will take about 45-60 minutes to complete.

I would be very grateful if you would take part in this research. All participants will be sent summaries of the findings on request. Any questions concerning the project can be directed to Diana Brown (Principal Investigator), [REDACTED] (tel: [REDACTED]). If you have any concerns about the project or would like to talk to an independent person, you may contact Dr. Andrew Taggart (tel. 9370 6806) or Dr. Tony Monk (tel. 9370 6202) at the Mount Lawley Campus of Edith Cowan University.

It is important that education leaders should know as accurately as possible the opinions and concerns of primary teachers, and your interview would provide an important contribution towards that goal. Data regarding the identity of individual teachers and their schools will not be published.

I would be grateful if you would sign this agreement to take part in the interview:

I (the participant) have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time. I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Thank you very much for your co-operation,  
Diana Brown  
(Investigator)

Date:

Signed (participant):

For a class teacher pre-primary to Y3.

I have been both a primary class teacher and a primary art specialist teacher and I am now taking a PhD course at Edith Cowan University. I would very much appreciate it if you could spare the time to be interviewed about your work as a primary teacher.

The research is part of my thesis which seeks to explore approaches to art teaching in primary schools. The study is entitled *Teachers' perceptions of expression in the visual arts curriculum within WA primary schools*. The thesis will be made available to the Education Department of Western Australia and other educational systems in Australia.

Eighteen primary class teachers and eight primary visual arts specialist teachers from state and independent schools will be interviewed about their visual arts teaching aims and teaching programmes, focusing on the issue of expression. Expression here refers to the way that children express their ideas through making visual images.

I realise how difficult it is for teachers to find the time to do an interview out of school hours. With your permission, an accredited substitute teacher will take your class so that you will be freed to be interviewed. This relief teacher will read the children a story, ask them to draw a picture and discuss what they enjoy about art. The equipment for these activities will be supplied by the researcher. Your interview will take about 45-60 minutes to complete.

I would be very grateful if you would take part in this research. All participants will be sent summaries of the findings on request. Any questions concerning the project can be directed to Diana Brown (Principal Investigator), [REDACTED] (tel: [REDACTED]). If you have any concerns about the project or would like to talk to an independent person, you may contact Dr. Andrew Taggart (tel. 9370 6806) or Dr. Tony Monk (tel. 9370 6202) at the Mount Lawley Campus of Edith Cowan University.

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Thank you very much for your co-operation,

Diana Brown  
(Investigator)

Date:

Signed (participant):

## Interview Guide

### Interview data

- Date
- Time
- Interview code

### Background and experience

- How many years have you taught, including the current year?
- How long have you taught in this school/ in this school system?
- What grades have you taught?
- How would you describe the socio-economic background of your students?
- What grade are you presently teaching?
- How many children are in your class?
- Do you ordinarily work with an aide?  
Probe: Less than half the time or more than half the time?

### General teaching

- What do you like about teaching this grade?
- Is there anything you dislike about teaching this grade?
- What are your general aims for teaching this grade?  
Probe: What qualities does a good teacher need for this grade?

### General information about art teaching

- To what extent did your college/university programme focus on teaching art?  
Prompt: How much art did you do at college/university?  
Probe: Did you find that useful for when you began teaching?
- What things do you least like about teaching art?
- What things do you most like about teaching art?
- What do you consider to be the main aim of your art lessons/activities?  
Probe: Which do you think is the most important of these goals?
- What factors help you in attaining these goals?  
Prompt: Are the students, parents and the principal supportive?
- What factors hinder you in attaining your goals?  
Prompt: Are there problems getting equipment? Do you feel to know enough about how to teach this subject?
- How often, when, and for how long do you teach art?  
Probe: Is this about right for you? Do you have any pressures to reduce or increase the time given to art?

### The most recent art lesson

- When was your last art lesson?
- Can you describe it?  
Prompt: How did you roughly divide the time? What was happening in each section?  
Probe: Was this a typical art lesson? In what way?
- How did the students react?  
Prompt: Did they enjoy it? Where there any problems?
- How did students get their ideas?  
Prompt: how much could students use their own ideas?

Probe: (If there was a theme) What would have happened if a student hadn't wanted to use that theme?

### **The art lesson prior to the last one**

- Would you give a brief description of the art lesson that took place before the one we have just talked about?
- How did the students react?
- How did students get their ideas?

Prompt: how much could students use their own ideas?

Probe: (If there was a theme) what would have happened if a student hadn't wanted to use that theme?

### **General teaching aims in the visual arts**

- Where do you get your ideas for art lessons/activities?  
Prompt: Colleagues, books (which ones), the K-7 Syllabus, television programmes (which ones), children's art exhibitions?  
Probes: What makes you decide "Ah, that's a good idea. I'll use that"? Can you give an example?
- What advice would you give to a student teacher for them to achieve a successful art lesson?

### **The teacher's role regarding expression**

- What do you do while the children are busy making their artwork?  
Prompt: Once the children have started their activity, do you feel it is important to allow them the space to do as they like or do you supervise what they are doing?  
Probe: (If the teacher leaves them to develop their own ideas) What are you doing while they are working?  
Probe: (If the teacher supervises) What kind of problems do children have that you help with?
- If you have an aide, how involved with the visual arts is s/he? Prompts: Who does the introduction to the art activity? Who supervises the children while they make their artworks?  
Probe: Do you feel that she is in sympathy with your approach?
- Do you feel under any pressure to get children to produce a good product in art?  
Prompts: Do parents, the principal, other teachers, or the children themselves set great store by the art works looking good? What is your approach to making a Mother's Day card?

### **Students and expression**

- Do the children in your class like to use their own ideas for art lessons/activities, or do they generally need some input from you?  
Probes: Can you give me some examples? What do you do when children ask you to draw something for them?
- Have you ever used templates to help children to make an image?  
Probe: (If yes) Can you describe when and why you used them?  
(If no) Why have you not used them?
- How about children who show little apparent interest in anything that you have to offer in art, or who can't settle down and get involved? How do you deal with this situation?
- What if you had a student who wanted to do something completely different from what you had in mind?

Prompt: What if you had a theme of drawing monsters, for example, and one child wanted to draw a fairy princess or a horse?

- Have children ever expressed ideas that you have felt uncomfortable with?  
Prompts: Have children ever made violent images, for example, that you thought were inappropriate?  
Probes: (If yes) How did you deal with that? (If no) Do you think there is a place for such extreme images?

### **Evaluation**

- What do you think has been your most successful art lesson/activity this year?  
Probes: What were you most proud of achieving? Why do you think that things worked out so well?
- Which art lesson/activity has been least successful?  
Probes: What went wrong? Why do you think things didn't work out?
- Do you feel there is a place for critical evaluation of children's work or do you feel it's more important to praise what the children do?  
Probe: can you give examples?
- Do you make comments about art in school reports?  
Probe: What format do you use? How do you feel about this?
- Do parents ever ask about their children's progress in art?  
Probe: (If yes) What kind of comments do you make about the students?  
(If no) Why do you think they don't ask about art?

### **The WA Curriculum**

- Are you familiar with any of the WA curriculum documents?  
Prompt: the K-7 Syllabus, the Student Outcome Statements, the Curriculum Framework.  
Probes: Do you think what they outline is relevant to your art teaching?
- What would be your ideal in-service to help you with your art teaching?

### **The teacher's thoughts about questions in the student survey**

- What do you think your students will choose as their favourite subject?
- Do you think your students will say they are good at art?
- After discussing their last two art lessons, which do you think they will prefer and why?
- What do you think they will choose as their overall favourite art lesson, and why?
- What do you think they will choose as their overall least favourite art lesson, and why?
- What method do you think most of them will choose to get ideas for the drawings, and why?

Sample section from an interview transcript (Alan, 2N)

D: How do you feel about teaching art?

T: I enjoy it. It wasn't one of my strong areas when I started and I don't feel confident. When we had the art day here [art PD day], I don't feel confident when I'm around my peers. [2N:69]

D: Yes, I noticed that.

T: But with the children it's [different]. I don't know if I cover all the art objectives I'd have to [look]. With the new curriculum framework I'd have to really follow that. I think I would. I pretty much would [doubtfully]. With the children we just have fun, just doing things and trying new things and getting dirty. [2N:70]

D: So when you choose an art activity, is that your priority?

T: Yes, yes. It depends on – it's just loosely based – Trying to connect it into whatever theme we're doing. But that art lesson [the observed lesson] was just a one off. It wasn't really connected to anything. It was just continuing on from the colour. [2A:71]

D: Was that a connection?

T: Well, that is connection, yes. [2N:72]

D: What about the landscapes in your classroom? What were you doing there?

T: Yes. That was with – actually a relief teacher did that. I had a day off. She did that and I've never seen that done before. Or I'd seen it but I'd never tried it with my children before. Tried other things. [2N:73]

D: Those big paintings?

T: Oh those big ones were mine, sorry. Those were mine. That was a language activity. I try and get art into everything. Maths, the whole lot, cause the little kids just love it, so it helps them connect quicker. They say, "O.K., I can do maths". [2N:74]

D: Is there anything about art that you dread?

T: Art? [surprised] Not really. I don't really dread anything. Only when I do it with my peers. With the kids, no. I like when I'm modelling their lesson. I like doing that. But if we're doing that with our peers, it is horrible [grimaces]. That's the only thing. That day here [at the in-service], I didn't like it - being exposed. [2N:75]

D: Is that why you did your introduction before I could watch it?

T: Probably. [laughs] Yes it was, actually. [2N:76]

D: You wouldn't normally introduce [a lesson] and then have a break would you?

- T: No, I suppose not. [2N:77]
- D: What did you do with the introduction? Didn't you say that you put a piece of paper on the board?
- T: On the blackboard. [2N:78]
- D: What did you do then?
- T: I just started off. I didn't really tell them what we were doing. I just said that they were to watch Mr C. I started to do anything and then just asked them questions - what can you see? But then the class is really responsive. I knew that if I started drawing [pause] – I think I told them I wasn't really going to draw anything. It was going to be abstract. Because we'd been talking about the word abstract. So I said, "I'm not really going to draw anything", and that's about all I said. Then they started to give me feedback, cause they're really quite good at that. If they're not hanging off my leg or something, it's quite easy to talk. And that's all we did [shrugged]. Then once the first person said, "I can see this", it sort of snowballed. And then we talked about colours and I reminded them about hot colours, and that was it. That's *all* I did. [2N:79]
- D: Did you link it with what they'd done before, with the other chalk drawings?
- T: Yes. That was an autumn drawing that one. Autumn colours. [2N:80]
- D: So when they were doing this, did you have a main theme?
- T: [Pause] Smudging. The art theme was smudging and [long pause] colour. To see if they could see whatever they said it was if the colours were appropriate. If they said it was a fire, was it a hot colour? And abstractness. And the incidental ones were splitting it into four and going over the lines to try and, the socialization of it all. [2N:81]
- D: Have you done that kind of thing before?
- T: Yes. I do lots and lots of different things to socialise and things they don't even realise. Things that are just really. I don't record, I don't evaluate, I just observe. Like sitting next to each other, putting raincoats next to each other, kids that don't like each other or don't get on. [2N:82]
- D: So you try and understand the social dynamics of the whole group?
- T: Yes, yes. [2N:83]
- D: On that day they picked who they wanted to be with, didn't they?
- T: Yes. I did that because some of them who are friends are having trouble socialising. So I knew that if I let them choose they'd choose the people I want them to, to try and get on. Just to increase their skills of sharing. [2N:84]

### Field notes from the observed lesson in Dorothy's (7N) classroom

#### *The principal's attitude towards Dorothy just prior to the lesson*

The principal's attitude has changed, from when I talked to him previously (see principal's file). I met him on the way to Dorothy's classroom, and I think he must have studied the theme of the research more closely. He talked about how formal Dorothy was and seemed quite worried about the impression I would be getting. He said how the display in his room was typical of her style and said how different she was from the exceptionally talented Y2 teacher, who was very free. At the same time he praised Dorothy as a very caring teacher, who really "knew her students inside out" and could therefore anticipate any difficulties. He felt that that age group benefited from a bit of formal teaching, especially having experienced the problems caused by a much more liberal teacher [2A].

After the observed lesson, Michael made a point of asking for my impressions of the lesson, and I praised the students' concentration and the independence they had shown in finding unusual rubbings.

#### *Introduction to the observed art lesson*

- I missed the introduction because Dorothy had started it 25 minutes before the time we had agreed on (9.15). I think she preferred to get this over with without being watched. I just caught the end when she was talking about not wasting materials.
- Dorothy had propped up a book on her desk with an illustration of what was to be expected from the children (made by the author of the book rather than a child). There was a rubbed crayon background washed over with colour. On top was a paper collage monster made up of geometric shapes. The book was one of the recipe books the SCO talked about. It seems a very popular format. A double spread for each lesson – one side the instructions, and the other side the result.
- I asked Dorothy how she had organised it so that they wouldn't all be crowding in the small stockroom together and she said that she had asked some to do the monster before the background, "They can't all fit in at once, so some will do the design while the others do the background."

#### *The lesson*

- The children started with a limited choice of two Edicol dyes but after some requests, they ended up with about 4 or 5. I think she found it preferable to mix it ready for them, and so there was no messy mixing. She was prepared to mix whatever colour they asked for, but after putting out two or three extras, there were no more requests, and the students didn't digress from these. There were no attempts by students to mix colours, and it wasn't suggested to them.
- All the students seemed to be following the landscape-design showed them in the book, of a rubbed background with some drawn detail.
- Two students asked about the colours they should use. Dorothy had a colour wheel and showed them this, but without comment. They just had a look and went away again. She did not show it to any other students. Some students used it, but most did not. A typical comment Dorothy would make was, "You can choose. I'm a green and blue person myself, but you might not be". She seemed to want to help with a suggestion but not impose a choice on them. She didn't use the colour wheel for the green/blue reference.
- The geometric shapes available to draw around were very limiting, as most were very small. There were some larger ones, but not enough.



- The students were very purposeful, looking for places to take rubbings and found interesting textures. They were obviously used to being self-motivated and independent within the structure of the lesson.

#### *Dorothy's role when the children were working*

- Dorothy felt at a loose end while the children were working and felt inadequate about giving advice, "I don't always know what to do when they get going. You don't want to interrupt. It's a relief in some ways to have you here to talk to, so I've got something to do". The children worked very independently and we had the chance for substantial conversations about her art lessons.
- She was concerned about creativity and individuality within the confines of what had been set as the task. She encouraged children to make individual decisions although they were finding the limits of geometric shapes rather difficult – especially as the shapes they had to cut around were rather small and fiddly.
- The students were strongly aware that Dorothy had set very strict parameters of what could be done, and initially these were checked out with a lot of questioning. "Does it have to be a rubbed background?" "Yes". Later in the class, when everyone seemed settled, one child asked complainingly "Does it have to be a monster?" She responded a bit sharply, because she thought the issue had been settled: "Yes! It *has* to be a geometric beast. You have to do your geometric outline and then fill in the details with geometric shapes". After this child had gone away, she said: "There's always someone who wants to do something different" [is it always the same child?] "Yes always the same child. Sometimes I get out the materials and say you can do what you want. They will *still* not know what to do." [exasperated]

#### *The direct observational drawing*

- This was set up for the special occasion of being observed teaching. She said she had set it up that morning "because you were coming".
- A student, Greg, who she described as "my star artist", has brought in a *How to Draw*. Dorothy had photocopied pages from about techniques for drawing fruit.
- Greg's mother had come in and commented on the fruit display. Dorothy has asked her to rearrange it because the mother was "artistic and good at that sort of thing".
- Dorothy had it as an activity to do if the children finished their monster, but there was no talk about the still life or drawing techniques. Only one child had a go, but with little enthusiasm, and the rest showed no interest at all. The drawing was a bit timid in its execution, but quite well observed and when the outline was done, Dorothy referred her to the sheets and she tried a bit of shading to make it look more 3-D. Dorothy said: "I haven't done much of that (direct observational drawing)". Later, she said, "I haven't done anything like this before".

#### *The end of the lesson*

- The students cleared up quickly and efficiently with the monitors ensuring that things were put away correctly.
- While things were being cleared away, Dorothy took the opportunity to praise individual children for their effort or for achieving a good result: "You worked really hard this lesson, well done"; "That looks really good. Are you pleased with it?"

#### *The classroom displays of students' artwork*

- *Gum blossom* (on the wall): all fairly identical. The students had rubbed the leaves with crayons and then drawn the blossom in crayons. Dorothy told me that she had shown them a picture of the blossoms from her art book, and shown how they should dot the ends for the edge of the blossom. They then all washed the leaves with yellow

- Edicol dye. When that was dry they swept over with blue, which turned the leaves green. All looked identical except for the placement of the leaves.
- *Sunflowers* (on the wall): an idea from an art book on how to work from artists' work. This was Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. Again all the students used the same drawing technique (yellow wax crayons, the flowers all based on a circle with very triangular petals) and identical colours for the sunflowers (yellow flowers on an orange background). This was done from copying photocopied images of how to draw the sunflowers, provided by her resource book.
  - Dorothy referred to these artworks as paintings i.e. Edicol washes over drawings were seen as paintings. She never used ordinary paints [this was confirmed by a student]. The whole school seems obsessed with Edicol dye washes rather than using paint – they like the strong, vibrant colours and the ready mixed nature of the material.

#### *Discussion of the sunflowers*

The sunflowers looked particularly striking because of their sophisticated use of a limited pallet and the iconic sunflowers. Dorothy was intrigued about one child's negative reaction, however, even though her work was rated by Dorothy as the best, and many parents had commented, "You could take that away, frame it, and sell it". This child, however, did not like what she had done, and other students were similarly dissatisfied. "They kept asking to use different colours for the background. They didn't want to use orange because that was the colour of the flowers". Dorothy's reaction was strongly put, "It's a pity they don't like it, but I do". The evidence was before you – they did look splendid – and the fact that the children did not agree was reason for bemusement rather than any fundamental rethinking of the approach. It even seemed to confirm to her, that you couldn't really trust the judgment of children, as after all they would not have produced such brilliant work without her direction. And, indeed, they were judged to be exceptional by every adult who saw them.

Dorothy talked about a similarly huge success she had had with a Monet tribute painting with this class when they were in Y4. She got the idea from a book on how to discuss artists' work and how to have a follow-up lesson. She showed me the book: *Visual Artworks Based on Themes* by Lynn Tennutt (1997). The children had to cover the paper with oil pastel greens for flower stalks and grasses etc. then they took a sponge and sponged on red poppies very lightly. She pointed out a child whose parents had been so pleased that they had had it framed and "with the backing and the surround it really did look wonderful".

#### *Discussion of Dorothy's portfolio of artworks from previous art activities*

- Once the students were settled into their work, Dorothy proudly showed her portfolio of artworks. She took a kind of sensual pleasure in handling the artworks. Good memories for her of successful lessons and beautiful results. At first I thought they were children's work, but she had made them as demonstration samples: "because children like the idea of following an idea and knowing what it will be at the end". Students who passed by, stopped and admired the work. She took the compliments very personally, and flushed with pleasure.
- These were ideas that she had tried out to completion, as examples for the children. This was seen as conscientious teaching and evidence of thoughtful preparation. The children "like the idea of following an idea and knowing what the product will be at the end". She said that the ideas could mostly be used in all the grades from Y3-Y7.
- Examples were a scratchboard from wax crayons, silver foil over string picture of a flower, pointillism. One of the children passing by, stopped and recalled doing the pointillism in Y4 (a surprisingly large piece for what can be a time-consuming

technique), and wanted to do one again. Dorothy was more than happy to oblige sometime soon. There was no sense of a plan of sequential art activities.

- Dorothy was very enthusiastic about the idea of having some on-going art work that students could use the odd bit of time to work on [busy work]. She called it ‘on-going’ work. Pointillism was good for this, and she referred to those texta-dot-paintings she did with a previous year (see above).

#### *The classroom setting*

Desks grouped together in fours facing each other.

A decent sized storeroom at the side with a sink and somewhere to paint. Enough for about 6 students maximum. Only a partial wall between this room and the school secretary’s office, so there had been complaints about what could be overheard by the secretary, especially when parents were there. The secretary came into the classroom while I was there, to make a complaint about the bad language students were using in the storeroom while they worked. Dorothy obviously felt embarrassed, and instantly told the students off: “This reflects really badly on the school when we have parents in the office”. I felt she had to show the secretary she was taking it seriously.

#### *The children’s portfolios*

Dorothy had got portfolios for the students in the storeroom and she took me to show them to me, but wouldn’t let me look inside. I suspect there was nothing in them, and she said as much, saying that all their work was on the wall. Either she was reluctant to show me what they did or they have not done much art. Perhaps the artworks took many weeks to complete.

#### *Other observations*

- *Teaching style:* Dorothy comes across as regarding herself as a strong leader. She knows her “troops” intimately and is sympathetic with their problems, but she is the one who knows the best the direction to go in. She has a good rapport with the students – they like and respect her.
- *Expression:* Dorothy thinks that she generally gives her students quite a free range in her art lessons: “They’re quite adventuresome. Sometimes I sort of romp along behind them. Because they start with an idea and it takes them all over the place. Yes they’ll mix colours. They’ll try lots of things”. This didn’t seem to be the case in this lesson. Students were eager to try out different ideas, but soon became aware of Dorothy’s boundaries, and settled down to be inventive within those confines. Some frustration here but not a lot.

## Questionnaire for the teacher-survey

**1. What is your opinion of each of these statements about GENERAL PRIMARY EDUCATION? Please tick ONE box for each statement.**

	strongly agree	agree	un-decided	disagree	strongly disagree
a) If children are to learn effectively, teachers need to provide carefully graded, step-by-step instructions.					
b) The school's most important role is to guide the child into studying the very best our culture has to offer.					
c) The Arts (art/music/drama/dance/media studies) are most usefully taught as adjuncts to the core curriculum subjects.					
d) The role of the teacher is primarily to ensure that children develop the skills necessary for future employment.					
e) Little of value can emerge from spontaneous, undisciplined, free expression.					
f) There should be a greater emphasis on excellence rather than creativity in primary education.					
g) Teachers must be responsive to individual needs & not impose an external programme of learning.					
h) One of the primary teacher's main educational aims is to ensure that students develop a sense of social justice.					

**2. How often do you use these teaching strategies when you teach art?**

**Please tick ONE box for each teaching strategy.**

	almost always	frequently	sometimes	rarely	Never
a) I give the children the freedom to get on with their own ideas when they do art activities.					
b) I use templates as a teaching aid when children need to draw a difficult shape.					
c) I introduce and discuss examples of artists' or craftpeople's work to the children.					
d) I use art lessons as a way to examine social and equity issues.					
e) I try out the art activity first and show the children the finished piece so that they can get a clear idea of what to do.					
f) I suggest ideas for art activities but it is up to the children whether they take up the ideas.					
g) At the end of the lesson we do a critique of the children's work discussing pattern, texture, colour, line, shape or form.					
h) I integrate art into other learning areas e.g.; illustrations for written stories or illustrations for social studies					
Comments:					

**3. What is your opinion of each of these statements about ART EDUCATION?**

Please tick **ONE** box for each statement and add further comment if you wish.

	strongly agree	agree	un-decided	disagree	strongly disagree
a) Art lessons should examine artists' work as a means of learning about past and present cultural attitudes.					
b) Art should be fully integrated into the rest of the curriculum rather than given a separate time slot.					
c) Untutored expression of students' ideas will hinder educational development in art.					
d) As art involves doing rather than thinking, it acts as a welcome relief and relaxing break from the more academic subjects.					
e) The main role of art is therapeutic as it allows children to express their individuality & emotions.					
f) Children uncertain of their art skills are helped by using teaching aids such as templates.					
g) Learning about the purpose and nature of art through studying artists' work is just as important as children's self-expression.					
h) Teachers should ensure students take home artwork they will be proud to show their parents.					
Comments:					

**4. Few teachers work in an ideal situation. If you try to teach art as you would like to, which THREE PROBLEMS would concern you the most? Please tick 3 boxes 1-2-3.**

a) I don't know enough about ideas for art activities.	
b) Art needs a lot of preparation time.	
c) Art can be a particularly messy activity and it's difficult to keep the classroom in order.	
d) Lack of art equipment and art supplies.	
e) Not enough time for art because of pressures from the rest of the curriculum.	
f) Difficulties in getting reproductions of art works to show the class.	
g) Lack of interest in art by the school administration.	
h) Lack of student interest in art as a subject.	
i) Too many children in the class.	
j) Inadequate storage space and cleaning-up facilities.	
Another problem: please specify and make it part of your choice of three.	

**5. Teachers are feeling the pressures from a very crowded curriculum. What order of priority would you give to these arts subjects? 1 gives your first priority.**

Please list 1-5. 1 gives your first priority.

	1-5
Dance	
Drama	
Media	
Music	
Visual arts	

**Questionnaire for the student-survey****Part 1: My favourite school subject**

This was enlarged to A2 size.

Art	
Computers	
Health	
Library	
Mathematics	
Music	
Reading	
Science	
Social studies	
Spelling	
Sport	
Writing stories	

**Part 2: PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION WITH THE CLASS (data recorded by the relief teacher and verified by the students)**

**Lesson one.**

Look at lesson 1. How did you get your ideas for this art activity?

**Written summary of the lesson:**

a. The teacher showed us an example s/he had already made.	
b. We used a template or coloured in a photocopied picture.	
c. We watched while the teacher made a complete picture/model.	
d. The teacher talked about an artist's painting or sculpture and we used ideas from this for our own work.	
e. The teacher got us interested by talking about what we could do, but we used our own ideas in our work.	
f. We made up our own ideas without the teacher's help.	
g. The drawing/model was part of a social studies/English lesson	
h. Other	

- 2. Did your teacher show you an artist's work (eg: a painting) during lesson 1?  
**Tick one box.**

a. Yes	b. No
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**Lesson two.**

Look at lesson 2. How did you get your ideas for this art activity?

**Written summary of the lesson:**

a. The teacher showed us an example s/he had already made.	
b. We used a template or coloured in a photocopied picture.	
c. We watched while the teacher made a sample picture/model.	
d. The teacher talked about an artist's painting or sculpture and we used ideas from this for our own work.	
e. The teacher got us interested by talking about what we could do, but we used our own ideas in our work.	
f. We made up our own ideas without the teacher's help.	
g. The drawing/model was part of a social studies/English lesson	
h. Other	

- 2. Did your teacher show you an artist's work (eg: a painting) during lesson 2?

**Tick one box.**

a. Yes	b. No
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**Part 3**

<b>1. Code:</b>	<b>2. Grade:</b>	<b>3. Date:</b>
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Look at the pictures from the two art lessons.



4. What do you think you were learning about in lesson 1?

5. What do you think you were learning about in lesson 2?

<b>Tick <u>one</u> box.</b>	Lesson 1	Lesson 2
6. Which lesson did you enjoy the most?		
7. Why did you enjoy this lesson the most?		



• 8. How does your teacher usually help you to get ideas for art?  
**Tick one box** (the one your teacher does the most).

a. The teacher gives us something to copy, or we use templates.	
b. We do most of our art as drawings for stories or for social studies.	
c. We can talk about ideas with our friends and then decide what to do.	
d. We get ideas from looking at artists' paintings or sculptures.	



- 9. Which of these ways of doing art do you enjoy the most in school? **Tick one box.**

a. I like to get ideas from looking at and talking about artists' work with the teacher.	
b. I like to talk about ideas with my friends and then choose what to do.	
c. I like to do drawings or paintings for social studies or to illustrate a story I have written.	
d. I like to have something to copy.	
f. I like to use templates or photocopies.	



- 10. How often do you get to use your own ideas in art lessons? **Tick one box.**

a. Most art lessons	
b. Sometimes	
c. Not very often	
d. Hardly ever.	



- 11. What is the most important reason that you do art in school? **Tick one box.**

a. To take things home for festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Mother's Day.	
b. To show what we are thinking and feeling.	
c. To learn how artists and craftspeople make art.	
d. To make pictures for written work in other subjects.	



- 12. What kind of artist are you? **Tick one box.**

a. Excellent	
b. Good	
c. Average	
d. Poor	
e. Hopeless.	



- 13. What is the worst art lesson you have had this year?

- 14. Why do you think it was the worst?  
Try to write as much detail as you can.



- 15. What is the best art lesson you have had this year?

- 16. Why do you think it was the best? Try to write as much detail as you can.

Part 4 for grades 2 to 7

1. Code:	2. Grade:	3. Date:
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17. How do you want to get ideas for your drawing of the monster?

TICK ONE BOX



a. Think up my own ideas.



b. Look at an artist's work for ideas.



c. Use a template to draw round.



d. Talk about my ideas with a friend and then do a drawing



e. Colour in a photocopied drawing.



f. Write a story and then draw the picture.

Images were omitted for grades 5 to 7

Part 4 for Pre-primary and Y1 students

1. Code:	2. Grade:	3. Date:
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How do you want to get ideas for your drawing of the monster?

**TICK ONE BOX**



a. Think up my own ideas.



b. Use a template to draw round.



c. Colour in a photocopied drawing.

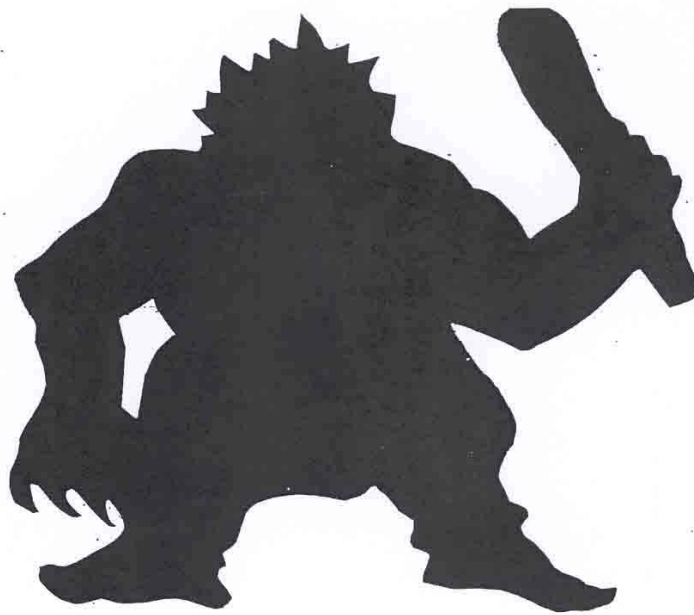


Images offered to students to assist in their drawings (part 4 of the survey)

*Look at an artist's work for ideas: The jabberwocky by Sir J Tenniel from Alice through The Looking Glass in Mythical Beasts – An anthology of verse and prose. (no editor). Smithmark books. Publ: Anness Publishing. 1996. London.*



Use a template to draw round: Card template of a monster based on the monster in *The Inch Boy* Morimoto, J. (1984).



Colour in a photocopied drawing: Photocopied drawing of a monster based on a drawing of the monster in *The Inch Boy* by Morimoto, J. (1984).





**Data from the student survey.****In each table:**

- N indicates Northfield School; S indicates Southfield School.
- Answers in all cases are given as a percentage of the class total.
- “no” means that option was “not offered” for that grade.

**What is your favourite subject at school?**

	2N	2S	2/3 S	3N	3/4 S	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6 S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Art	54	31	33	29	58	31	49	54	40	37	43	30	44	42
Computers	32	-	15	4	15	-	6	11	4	7	5	-	11	-
Health	-	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mathematics	-	11	-	8	-	-	10	-	4	4	14	3	6	-
Music	-	4	7	8	-	-	-	-	4	7	5	14	-	-
Reading	-	8	-	-	-	15	-	-	4	-	9	-	6	-
Science	5	4	-	4	4	-	3	-	-	4	-	3	-	13
Social studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spelling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sport	9	34	45	29	19	46	29	27	44	37	19	50	33	45
Writing stories	-	4	-	17	-	8	3	-	-	4	5	-	-	-

**How does your teacher usually help you to get ideas for art?**

	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Mimetic behaviourist	8	42	-	-	4	24	3	-	-
Child-centred	50	16	58	88	22	5	60	22	38
DBAE	34	3	38	-	59	66	7	78	52
Contextualist	8	39	4	12	-	5	30	-	7
No response	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	3

**Which of these ways do you like to do art?**

	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Think up my own ideas	46	19	85	88	41	24	70	83	77
Use a template/photocopy	8	49	11	-	7	43	10	-	25
Illustrate writing	35	29	4	8	11	9	17	-	21
Look at artists' work for ideas	11	3	-	4	41	24	3	17	29

**In each table:**

- N indicates Northfield School; S indicates Southfield School.
- Answers in all cases are given as a percentage of the class total.

**How often do you get to use your own ideas in art?**

	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Most art lessons	27	26	50	40	74	9	50	61	28
Sometimes	50	55	35	32	4	81	27	39	34.5
Not very often	11.5	3	15	20	11	5	13	-	34.5
Hardly ever	11.5	16	-	8	11	5	10	-	3

**What is the most important reason that you do art in school?**

	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6 S	6N	6S	7N	7S
a. To take things home for festivals such as Easter, Christmas and Mother's Day	155	16	31	48	30	19	7	6	3
b. To show what we are thinking and feeling.	155	10	15	16	7	9.5	37	33	35
c. To learn how artists and craftspeople make art	46	35	42	24	44	62	23	61	52
d. To make pictures for written work in other subjects.	23	39	12	12	19	9.5	33	-	10

**What kind of artist are you?**

	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Excellent	23	33	27	44	30	19	17	-	10
Good	38	45	46	32	22	57	30	39	31
Average	27	13	27	16	41	14	23	44	52
Poor	4	3	-	4	7	5	13	6	-
Hopeless	8	6	-	4	-	5	7	11	3.5
No response	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5

## Data from the drawing section of the student survey.

The tables are divided into data for junior primary students and data for middle and senior primary students

### *Junior primary grades*

#### **In each table:**

- N indicates Northfield School; S indicates Southfield School.
- Answers in all cases are given as a percentage of the class total.

#### **Choice of method for getting ideas for a drawing: junior primary grades**

	PPN	PPS	pre 1S	1N	1S	2N	2S	2/3S	3N
Think up my own ideas	54	36.5	57	36	27	18	35	15	50
Look at an artist's work of ideas	no	no	no	14	32	23	4	-	21
Use a template to draw round	19	36.5	30	36	5	9	15	41	8
Talk about my ideas with a friend and then do a drawing	no	no	no	no	no	18	-	-	-
Colour in a photocopied drawing	27	27	13	14	36	23	46	44	17
Write a story and then draw the picture	no	no	no	no	no	9	-	-	4

#### **Choice of method for getting ideas for a drawing expressed as a philosophical approach: junior primary grades**

	PPN	PPS	pre 1S	1N	1S	2N	2S	2/3S	3N
Mimetic behaviourism	46	63.5	43	50	41	32	61	85	25
Child-centred	54	36.5	57	36	27	36	35	15	50
DBAE	no	no	no	14	32	23	4	-	21
Contextualist	no	no	no	no	no	9	-	-	4

### *Middle and senior primary grades*

#### **In each table:**

- N indicates Northfield School; S indicates Southfield School.
- Answers in all cases are given as a percentage of the class total.

#### **Choice of method for getting ideas for a drawing: middle and senior primary grades**

	3/4S	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Think up my own ideas	30	42	35	81	56	70	67	67	67	59
Look at an artist's work of ideas	-	8	3	-	4	-	5	-	6	3.5
Use a template to draw round	33	-	29	-	40	22	14	23	11	3.5
Talk about my ideas with a friend and then do a drawing	7	42	23	19	-	8	14	10	16	17
Colour in a photocopied drawing	30	8	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	17
Write a story and then draw the picture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

#### **Choice of method for getting ideas for a drawing expressed as a philosophical approach: middle and senior primary grades**

	3/4S	4N	4S	5N	5S	5/6S	6N	6S	7N	7S
Mimetic behaviourism	63	8	39	-	40	22	14	23	11	20.5
Child-centred	37	84	58	100	56	78	81	77	83	76
DBAE	-	8	3	-	4	-	5	-	6	3.5
Contextualist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-