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The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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AN EXAMINATION OF PEER INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY IN THE ART CLASSROOM

by

NOVA MEAD

Under the Direction of Dr. Kevin Hsieh

ABSTRACT

In this study, I examined the impacts of peer interactions on tween-aged students' representations of themselves through self-portraits. Using social interaction theory (Turner, 1988), I implemented an action research study in the Fall of 2021. Two classes of fifth-grade students worked over four weeks to create self-portraits. I observed students' interactions with peers, collected audio recordings, and completed self-portraits. For two additional weeks, I conducted interviews with students. My findings concerning the impacts of peer interaction on students' self-portraits show that students prefer to represent themselves in a way that is positively received by peers rather than focusing on accurately depicting themselves. In addition, factors including the influence of consumerism/ social media and students' conceptions of beauty, particularly perceptions of ideal skin color, influenced students' self-portraits. The findings of this study offer insight into the necessity of a multicultural curriculum within the art classroom and reaffirmation of students' cultural and familial backgrounds.

INDEX WORDS: Identity, Self-Portrait, Self-Identity, Peer Influence, Peer Interaction, Social Interactionism

AN EXAMINATION OF PEER INFLUENCES ON IDENTITY IN THE ART CLASSROOM

by

NOVA MEAD

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Curriculum and Instruction

in

Middle and Secondary Education

in

the College of Education & Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA

2023

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Nova Rose. Nova Rose, you are the greatest thing that I have in my life and I am looking forward to putting this chapter behind me and moving on to new adventures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee for guiding me through this process. First, my committee chair, Dr. Hsieh for his consistent and thorough feedback and support. To Dr. Davenport, special thanks for her suggestions and support as I developed my study. And finally, to Dr. Sullivan for her support in both my study and in guiding me through the entire Ed.D. program.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Research shows that self-portraits involve different identity representations, including cultural (Gernhardt et al., 2014; Grushka, 2008), gender (Nyman et al., 2011; Srouf & Ali, 2013), and racial (Lafont, 2017; Paragg, 2015). Consumerism and peer influence are other factors impacting identity representation (Eccles, 1999; Kenway & Bullen, 2001; Rojas, 2012). This study sought to examine the self-portraits created by tween-aged students. *Tweens*, defined as children between ages ten and twelve (Eccles, 1999; Kenway & Bullen, 2001), were the focus of this study and are elucidated as forming their identities and taking influence from familial influences, including cultural and racial backgrounds. Additionally, peer influences shape identity during the tween stage (Erikson, 1978).

Gorichanez (2019) describes self-portraits as conceptualizations of self. On the other hand, Freeland (2010) explicates characteristics of self-portraits as involving images that distinctly identify an individual who has different emotional states, and the subject is aware they are posing for a portrait. Maes (2015) broadens the definition of self-portraits to representing individuals' looks, inner thoughts, and social standing.

According to Freeman (2010), portraits must display more than just a person's outward appearance. They must also represent a person's inner self. Lastly, self-portraits have meaning, and one's self is being constructed as the portrait is created. This study positions itself within the traits of self-portraits, which serve as representations of individuals' identities.

Crozier and Greenlough (1998) demonstrated the importance of recognizing that self-portraits should be understood as more than just outward appearances in one of their empirical studies. Crozier and Greenlough described the motivations behind creating a self-portrait. Using self-awareness and self-presentation theories, Crozier and Greenlough had

students identify different artworks of portraits by the same artists within the same time period. Participants were tasked with differentiating between portraits and self-portraits in the artworks. One underlying assumption made by the participants was that self-portraits would depict individuals who seemed to be introspective or possess self-awareness. Participants detailed that they were able to determine this by the features of the face in the portraits. It was also noted that participants responded differently to artworks from different time periods.

Research Background of Pilot Study

My initial motivation to explore the concept of identity through self-portraits stemmed from my years of teaching elementary-level art units focused on self-portraiture. During this time, I noticed that some of my non-White students would alter their skin color, eye color, hair color, and hair texture in their self-portraits. I also observed instances where students would feel embarrassed by negative comments from their peers, leading them to edit or change aspects of their artwork, and sometimes even hide or abandon their projects. This phenomenon occurred repeatedly over the span of six years in various settings, including my student teaching placements and field experiences. These experiences reminded me of my own struggles as a newly immigrated student to the United States, where I also recall making similar edits to my self-portraits. Instead of drawing what I saw in the mirror, I was more concerned with portraying myself in the way I wanted to be perceived, without necessarily reflecting my true reflection. I cannot recall if I engaged in similar practices during my time attending schools in Bangladesh.

Growing up in Bangladesh, it seemed that skin color was significant in society. Advertisements in stores and on television were heavily invested in skin-lightening and hair-straightening products. The message conveyed was that using skin-lightening products will make your skin lighter, and as a result you will be more desirable in society. In Bangladesh,

I did not feel concerned with my skin color, but I remember commentary from adults such as, “it looks like you have been playing outside too much” or “your skin is too dark.” I did not see myself as unattractive, but I was self-aware of my skin tone and noticed differences between myself, my peers, and my family members. Advertisements are also something I vividly remember, particularly for Fair and Lovely Cream. Fair and Lovely advertisements were based on the premise that you will be able to lighten your skin by ten shades and imagery included the changes over time in women’s skin tones. At this time all my older female cousins and aunts had this product and used it. When viewing television and advertisements, I recall that my skin color, which was the norm, was not seen in females. All the female television actors, news anchors, etc. had very light skin tones. Looking back on it, before hearing this commentary about my skin color I had not consciously thought about the idea of lighter skin being better.

Once I moved to the United States I began to experience this within art and realized that self-portraiture was a way for me to present myself however I wanted. During this time, I do not recall any instances of discussing identity and differences in skin color happening in either Bangladeshi or American schools. I do think this would have been beneficial in my journey toward realizing that skin color does not define beauty.

Both my personal and professional experiences shaped my preliminary research topics and ideas. My initial thoughts were to examine how students represent their racial identities through self-portraits. I began researching identity development to help determine exactly what I would be looking for during my research. I started with an initial pilot study in the fall of 2019 to develop specific research questions regarding identities and self-portraits.

The pilot study was conducted by having students create self-portraits within an eight-and-a-half by eleven-inch paper. Students were able to draw a self-portrait however

they wished. During the process, I gave students mirrors, pencils, erasers, and skin color and primary color paint sets. I observed students working through the art-making process throughout three classes. I took notes on student choices when making artworks and listened to student discussions about the assignment.

At the beginning of the pilot study, I focused on students' physical features, the ways they chose to represent themselves, and the changes they made to physical characteristics such as facial features, skin color, eye color, hair texture, background, and accessories. During my observations, I noticed that there was discussion amongst students concerning those physical features. Throughout my observations, I was able to listen to students interact with peers and these peer interactions seemed to be an essential part of students' decision-making. I focused on observing behavior like changes to physical features in the portraits. I noted the fact that students discussed these characteristics. Once I looked back on my notes, I saw that there were also characteristics discussed that went beyond the physical characteristics of the portrait. I realized that student interactions were an essential part of the portrait-making process.

I was intrigued by the discovery that peers appeared to influence each other's choices of identity representation, and I wanted to delve deeper into this phenomenon through my research. While I initially approached my study from a different perspective, Freeman (2010) posits that portraits encompass more than just outward appearances. Building on the observations from my pilot study, the study I am reporting on investigated how peer interactions influenced students' self-representation of their identities through self-portraits.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

Motivated by the pilot study, this study was designed to investigate students' representations of their identities through self-portraits and answer the following research questions:

The main question of this study:

What is the influence of peer influence interaction during the making of self-portraits?

There are three sub-questions under the main research question:

First, how do student interactions influence the portrait-making process?

Secondly, why might students choose to modify their self-portrait?

Thirdly, how do students interact during self-portrait making?

The main objective of this study was to investigate how peers influenced students' decision-making when it came to depicting themselves through portraits. Specifically, the study aimed to explore the effects of peer interactions on students' choices regarding the representation of their physical features and inner selves in their portraits.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I described the theoretical framework that guided this research study and design. I provided an overview of social interaction theory and its' essential elements. I also reviewed the development of social identity and then described the rationale for using social interaction theory as the theoretical framework for this study.

Social Interaction

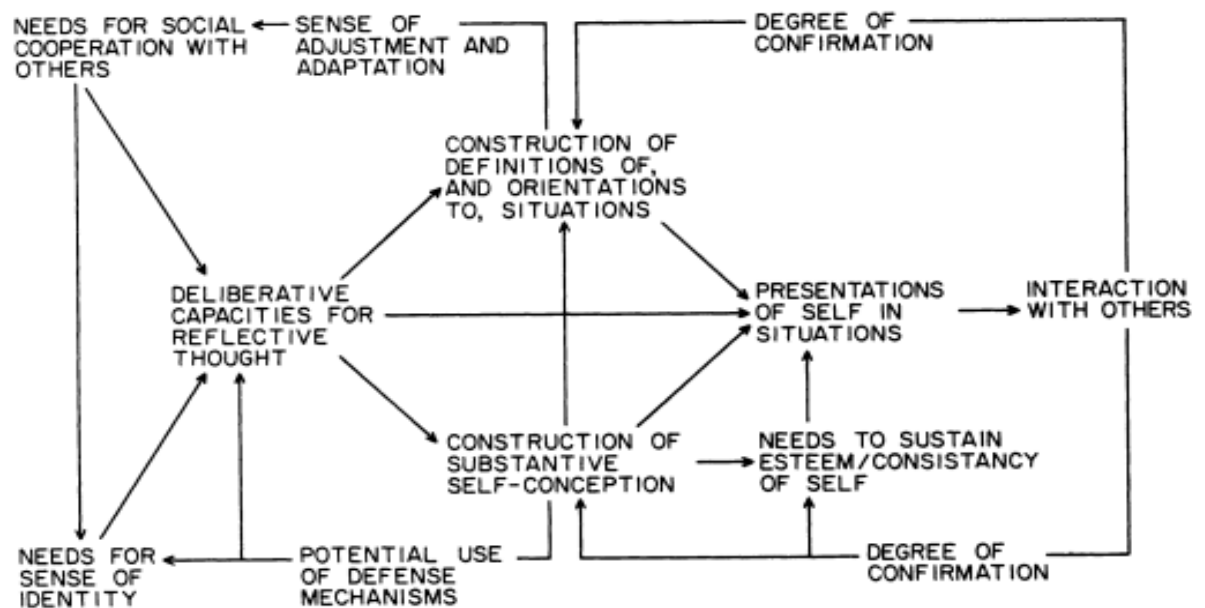
Turner (1988) defined social interaction as instances where people's behaviors are intentionally changed or influenced by another's behavior and, in turn, how others respond to these behaviors.

Social interaction theory is intended to explain how people interact with one another. Turner breaks down social interaction into three interrelated elements: motivational, interactional, and structural (see Figure 1). Motivational processes are described as the energy and input that people put into their interactions with others. Interactional processes describe what people do when they impact one another's behavior. In this study, the interactional processes of peers during the artmaking processes and the resulting response

behaviors were examined to see their impact. Overall, interactional processes examine how individuals interpret both their behavior and others. The third element of social interaction theory is structural processes, which Turner implies are of impact because social interactions frequently occur within structured settings such as schools.

Figure 1

Interactionists Model of Motivation



Note. From “Toward a Sociological Theory of Motivation,” by J. Turner, 1987, *American Sociological Review* (52)1, p. 18. Copyright 1987 by the American Sociological Review.

Figure 1 provides a flow chart of how individuals’ needs for a sense of identity lead them to take specific actions and present themselves to others. In this study, I looked for presentations of self in situational settings as students created self-portraits in the art classroom.

Social Identity

Personal identity and social identity comprise peoples’ identities. (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; Turner et al., 1994). Social identity is developed through the social categorizations that relate individuals in terms of similarities to others in society (Turner et

al., 1994). In contrast, personal identities develop through individual categories that differentiate individuals from others in society. The interactionist model of motivation describes how individuals have a personal identity but choose to present themselves based off interactions with others. They do so to seek affirmation (Turner et al., 1994).

According to interactionist motivation theory, when individuals do not feel that their identity is confirmed or validated in a situation, they are motivated to take action to address this (Turner et al., 1994). This is particularly relevant in the context of adolescents who interact within peer groups. If they feel that their identity is not being affirmed by their peers, they may be motivated to modify their interactions to seek acceptance and confirmation (refer to Figure 2). However, if the situation is unchangeable, individuals may resort to defense mechanisms, such as limiting others' perceptions of them or concealing undesirable aspects of their identity. These motivations and understandings of social interactions spring from the concept of stocks of knowledge or everyday knowledge that people have about how social life works (Schutz, 1953; Turner, 1988). When presenting oneself, Collins and Sandhill (1996) note that individuals consider what is occurring within group situations and then determine how to model themselves after the group through interaction.

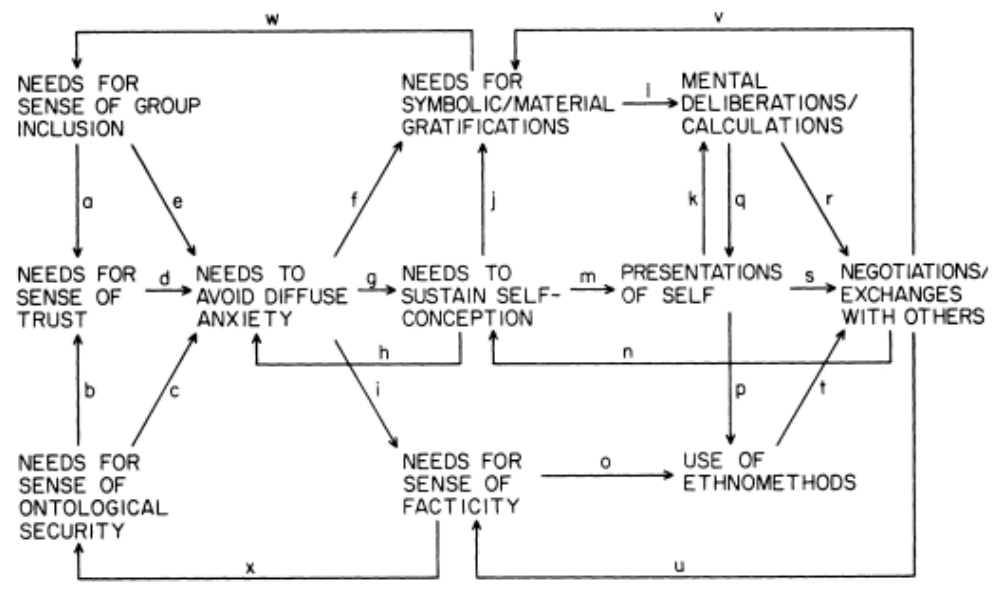
The interactional processes involve how people interpret the actions of others and how they contextualize them using their pre-existing knowledge. Individuals rely on their understanding of the social world to make sense of others' signals and shape their responses. Turner (1988) identifies various categories of knowledge that inform interactions, such as physical, demographic, sociocultural, and personal. These knowledge stocks help individuals categorize and interpret situations. Our interactions are shaped by the way we frame our knowledge and situate situations within these frames, which in turn influences how we interpret others' behaviors and communicate with them. Structural processes focus

on reinforcing patterns and are situated through common understandings. The role, or social identity, that one portrays is influenced by the situation in which one finds themselves. The concept of categorization is prevalent in how one chooses to represent themselves and interact with situations.

A crucial part of social interaction theory that guided this study was the concept of interactionist motivation theory. In particular the idea is that when students do not have their identities confirmed, they will do something about it (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Elements of Motivation



Note. From "Toward a Sociological Theory of Motivation," by J. Turner, 1987, *American Sociological Review* (52)1, p. 24. Copyright 1987 by the American Sociological Review.

As part of my study's procedures, I introduced the concept of self-portraits and how they can represent one's self-identity. My main objective was to examine how peers influenced students' representations of their identities in self-portraits. I was also interested in investigating whether students modeled their identity representations after their peer group. To explore these issues, I conducted interviews with students after they had

completed their self-portraits. Overall, my goal was to gain a better understanding of how students interacted with peers during the process of creating self-portraits and how these interactions impacted the final representations of their identities in the portraits.

Rationale for Social Interaction Theory

To examine the influence of peer interaction on students' decisions when creating self-portraits, social interaction theory is a lens that believes that individuals situate and categorize information. They do so through different motivational, interactional, and structuring processes. Through conducting the pilot study, I discovered that students tended to respond to and make changes to their self-portraits in response to peer interaction. This finding aligns with the principles of social interaction theory, which highlights how individuals interpret and understand others, and how they respond and communicate through signals. In this study, I focused on investigating how students received signals from their peers, how they responded to these signals, and what impact this had on their self-portraits.

Overview of the Study

Through a social interactionist lens, this study was implemented as an action research study in the Fall of 2021 to investigate the impact of peer interaction on self-identity. My pilot study and personal positionality led me to the significance of this study. They contributed to its' design and the research questions, including one main question and three sub-questions: What is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits? Sub questions include: How do student interactions influence the portrait-making process? Why might students choose to modify their self-portrait? And how do students interact during self-portrait making?

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I reviewed the literature on several topics to examine the many themes that emerged from both my initial pilot study and this study. I discussed identity issues, specifically tween identity, and how peers and consumerism influence tween identity development. When it comes to identity, many factors make up a person's identity. I reviewed the literature on factors contributing to self-identity, such as society and race, racial identity, skin color, and gender identity.

Identity

In simple terms, identity refers to that which makes something what it is (Ferguson, 2009). Within humans, there are both objective and subjective identities. Objective identities are outward and include observable features such as age, nationality, and gender, whereas subjective identities are synonymous with people's beliefs and opinions about self (Ferguson, 2009; MacKinnon & Heise, 2010).

Ferguson (2009) asserts that all identities are social identities. Social identities are socially constructed groups and categories and one's position within them (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). Frequently humans classify themselves along the lines of sex, age, kin, culture, race, and more. Important concepts when examining social identities include sameness and difference. Ferguson (2009) describes sameness as how one fits into a group and how members of a group are identical. The difference is described as what makes individuals unique and different from one another. How we classify and identify ourselves is a part of society (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010).

MacKinnon and Heise (2010) posit that individuals have personal and social identities. Personal identities are unique experiences and beliefs that shape a person, while social identities embrace a group mindset. Social identities are constructed by adopting shared and accepted categories of the group one wants to be a part of. Further, individuals

develop identity sets that adapt to different situations and portray different personas.

Essentially, many people act situationally (Turner et al., 1994).

Tween Self-Identity

As children develop and construct their social worlds, they are influenced by adults and their peers (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010). As youth enter the ‘twens’ age, defined by literature as between ages ten and twelve (Eccles, 1999; Kenway & Bullen, 2001), they are in a stage of consolidating their social roles (Erikson, 1978). The reason why I focused on the tween age group in my study was because I wanted to investigate how peers influence the process of identity consolidation. This stage of development is characterized by cognitive changes, peer influences, and social comparison experiences in classroom settings. It is during this time that tweens are trying to establish their social roles in society and develop a clear understanding of their personality within a social context, which contributes to the development of their ego identity according to Erikson's theory (1978). When ego identity begins to emerge, it creates a bridge between familial/childhood stages with the impacts of social roles. At this point, many tweens become lost or experience identity diffusion and the struggle between their social and personal identities. During this time, they may attempt to identify and lose their individual identity to a crowd mentality and, simultaneously, become cliquish and wary of those from backgrounds different than their own (Bosacki, 2015; Ellithorpe & Bleakley, 2016; Erikson, 1978). During this stage of development, stereotypes tend to become more reinforced, but internally, tweens start to question and feel uncertain about certain aspects of their identity, such as gender or sexual orientation. They begin to spend more time with their peers, particularly in school settings, and peer influence and choices play a significant role in shaping group dynamics (Eccles, 1999).

According to Erikson (1978), negative commentary observed between individuals can be an indication of inner contempt toward the aggressor. Erikson further explains that the process of identity formation becomes crucial when it is no longer socially acceptable to have multiple identities, and individuals are required to make choices about where they stand within society's expectations. Erikson suggests that "identity formation thus can be said to have a self-aspect, and an ego aspect" (p. 161). Essentially, individuals have an inside or self-identity, but they also have social impacts that influence their choices and can change their inner self. Around the age of ten, self-confidence begins to drop for many children, and a correlation appears between self-concepts and actual performance (Eccles, 1999; Edgecomb, 2010; Srour & Ali, 2013).

Tween Gender Identity

Gender identity is described as how an individual identifies with the experiences of others of their gender (Steensma et al., 2016). This experience expands to include socially constructed roles, behaviors, and traits expected from specific genders. Children begin to identify gender through a socially constructed lens that generally manifests through two choices, male and female (Robins & McGowan, 2016).

The gender intensification hypothesis, described by Hill and Lynch (1983), emphasizes that during tween age development, tweens face mounting pressure to conform to socially normalized perceptions of their gender. According to Priess et al. (2009) this pressure stems from myriad sources, including family, peers, social media, and schools. Research shows that during the tween years, children are more gender stereotyped into societal roles through assigned chores and duties that have been socially classified as feminine or masculine. Priess et al.'s (2009) study examined whether tweens' gender identities became more stereotyped and whether family factors, including socioeconomics and siblings, impacted identity development. Similarly, to previous research they did find

that during the tween years females shifted to a more stereotyped gender role. However, they did not find family socioeconomics to be a driving factor. Instead, this study highlighted the impacts of other factors, including consumerism, peer interactions, and social institutions such as schools.

Kornienko et al. (2016) proposed that peer relationships play a significant role in the development of identity, which is different from the focus of many previous studies that concentrate on the development of gender stereotypes. Kornienko et al. (2016) aimed to explore how peer relationships influence the construction of self-identity. Drawing from Egan and Perry's (2001) model of gender identity, their research investigated whether individuals choose friends who align with their own identities or if they shape their identities to match those of their friends. Egan and Perry's (2001) model of gender identity comprises five components. The components include a) self-identification, where individuals typically identify as male or female, b) gender typicality, which describes how well individuals feel they fit in comparison with others in their peer group, c) gender contentedness, where individuals examine how satisfied they are with their chosen gender identity, d) pressure towards conformity or the pressure individuals feel to conform to social norms of gender roles, and e) intergroup bias where one feels that their chosen gender identification is better than others. Kornienko et al. (2016) indicated a positive correlation between peer socialization and its impact on gender identity development. Expanding further on the impacts of peer socialization and gender identity development, Steensma et al. (2016) contend that an essential factor in gender identity development is the context in which it is developed. Within this study, the social structure that contextualizes gender development is school. Within tween-aged students, gender identity is impacted by both familial and social pressures, and I will seek to explore its impact through peer interactions during art making.

This study notes that gender norms also affect how students depict themselves. Both

Nyman et al. (2011) and Srour and Ali (2013), albeit in different settings, observed that gender differences were shown in self-portraits. The impact of cultural and societal practices on what are gender norms is an important factor that makes these studies relevant. Norms differ for boys and girls, and the changes vary across cultures.

differ for boys and girls, and the changes vary across cultures.

Peer Influence

Identity development occurs during a stage where individuals face a convergence of familial and social pressures. At this age, the influence of peers becomes more pronounced and influential compared to parents and family figures (Blair et al., 2016; Brown, 2004; Eccles, 1999; Lease et al., 2020; Maxon & Malone, 1977). Their identity development occurs along multiple fronts, including gender and race, and the context within which these are developed plays a critical role. Prugh and Hart (1999) assert that peer influence plays a prominent role in youth's identity development. Youths compare themselves to peers as they interact in their social environments and adapt themselves based on feedback (Lease et al., 2020). Prugh and Hart (1999) referred to Piaget (1939) and his observation that peer influence plays a role in identity development because of the need to provide a comparison. Interacting within peer groups offers continuous time for comparison and self-examination. Many youths tend to associate with others of similar characteristics. However, this is not always by choice, given that many are associated with those with similar characteristics (Lease et al., 2020). During the tween years, many children begin to give precedence to their peer's wishes versus those of families (Eccles, 1999). Peer conformity becomes a factor in tweens' choices, and often tweens self-stereotype to conform to social norms (Priess et al., 2009). For instance, peer popularity, acceptance, and victimization directly influence gender identity (Kornienko et al., 2016). Children accepted by peers tend to demonstrate more pro-

social behaviors, while children who are not accepted tend to display more negative social behaviors regarding sharing, cooperation, and empathy (Blair et al., 2016).

Lease et al.'s (2020) study examined the influence of upper elementary students who are classified as popular and well-liked. Students were classified as popular, well-liked, average, disliked, or low-status through a questionnaire administered to study participants. In the study conducted by Lease et al. (2020), students were asked to anonymously rate their peers, and the research team used these ratings to determine popularity. The concept of influential behavior was defined by Lease et al. (2020) as behavior that affected the actions of others. Additionally, participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire that focused on instances where they made changes or engaged in behaviors based on observing other children. The research team hypothesized that students who were classified as popular would have the ability to influence others and set trends. In addition to supporting this hypothesis, their initial findings showed that popular children frequently engaged in behavior-setting trends, specifically regarding boys' sports. In contrast, students who were considered well-liked yet not regarded as popular were more likely to engage in pro-social behavior. This pro-social behavior was referred to by Lease et al. (2020) as a positive assertion and modeling of academic motivation. Additionally, their study shows that students regarded as disliked or of low status frequently used ridicule when interacting with peers. Gender differences that Lease et al. (2020) identified included that boys of any standing used ridicule and teasing more regularly than girls, and girls more frequently displayed pro-social behavior and positive assertions toward peers.

Farrell et al.'s (2016) study examined the influence of peers and delinquent behavior in middle school settings. Student participants completed rating scale surveys concerning friends' behaviors and friends' reactions to behaviors. From their results, Farrell et al. (2016) claim that peer behavior is a more significant influence than peer reactions. In turn, this

implies that adolescents are more likely to copy or imitate a peer's action than to make a change based on peer reactions. Instead, they are more likely not to share or wait; they will simply adjust their behavior to match peer behavior. Farrell et al. (2016) also noted that boys were less likely to report their peers engaging in pro-social behavior than girls.

In their study, Blair et al. (2016) explored the correlation between students' social behaviors and their social status. The focus was on investigating the impacts of peer acceptance, as well as the effects of acceptance or unacceptance on children. Both the children and their mothers were involved in a longitudinal study, which included questionnaires for the mothers and observations of classroom behaviors for the children. Children's social behavior was analyzed using the sociometric nomination procedure, where children rated their peers on different behaviors. Children assessed peers as liked and unliked to determine which participants were accepted by their peers and which weren't. Blair et al. (2016) found that children's emotional regulation or how consistently they presented themselves contributed to peer acceptance. Children who engaged in strong instances of both negative and positive behaviors had a more challenging time gaining peer acceptance. In turn, students who adjusted to their peers more easily and accepted peer group norms had an easier time gaining acceptance (Blair et al., 2016).

Peers also influence how tweens view consumer products and place value upon products and brands (Childers & Rao, 1992). In their multinational study, Childers and Rao (1992) examined peer reference groups' impacts on product and brand choice. In the U.S., it was shown that the idea of owning the wrong brand was of significance when concerning peer influence. It was important to have the correct brand or product, whereas, in other nations, it was more acceptable to base decisions upon family preference.

Consumerism

Kenway and Bullen (2001) described children as social constructs. As social constructs, children are also impacted by consumer media. Consumer media targets and advertises to specific groups; advertising is described as the “art of social and cultural influence” (Kenway & Bullen, 2001, p. 31). Understanding that consumer-media culture plays a large role in social and consumer change can inform us about the development of youth identities. Kenway and Bullen (2001) presented two views on the creation and impact of consumer media on youth identity development. First, they presented Kline's work, emphasizing how consumer culture has influenced and shaped history, society, and individual identities. Essentially through consumption, consumer goods socialize children. Second, Kenway and Bullen (2001) discussed the concept that the consumer makes meaning. Sleiter emphasized that children have greater agency than Kline, but consumer media still influences them. It is important to note that both Kline and Sleiter described the impacts of consumer media through a Western lens that idealizes a first-world experience. Kenway and Bullen (2001) argued this point by pointing out the difference in the consumerism of Western children in contrast to children working labor and producing consumer goods. With the diversity represented in the US, this study could be expanded to examine children's experiences from different backgrounds.

Kenway and Bullen (2001) reviewed changing views of childhood development over time children working labor in the 19th century to a 20th-century emphasis on play and development. Learning theories also evolved rapidly in the 20th century, including the rise of behaviorism. During this time of change, trends that further demonstrated the impact of media culture included reshaping home labor as a symbol of a woman's love for family or the emphasis on infants and cleanliness. Mass production and TV program production also

influenced the increase of mass marketing targeted toward youth and the commodification of family life.

During this increase in consumer marketing, changes in family marketing, and the commodification of family life, consumer marketing began focusing on consumers of specific ages. Kenway and Bullen (2001) describe nine to eleven-year olds as being attracted to humor, celebrity, popular music, and plot twists. Gender differentiation is highly present between the ages of ten and twelve, with peer pressure impacting youth's identity development. Identity is a big issue in this age group, emphasizing constructing individual identities that distinguish themselves from their families.

Ivashkevich's (2009) ethnographic study examined the impacts of consumerism on young girls' depictions of themselves, following two girls through self-initiated self-portraits and drawings. The majority of topics drawn by the participants included beauty, fashion, and body image perpetuated through American consumerism. Conversations recorded as a form of data focus on subjects involving peers at school and whether parts of the portraits were accurate such as the types of boots, brands of clothes, and activities depicted in the portraits. An essential finding within this study was the impact of peer interaction, the importance placed upon consumer ideas, and the fact that they shaped the participant's drawings.

Racial Identity

Historically, racial identities and constructions have been shaped by several primary factors in the United States. These factors include the European colonization of the continent and Native Americans, the slave trade of Africans, and the oppression of many immigrant groups, including Latinos and Asians (Fries-Britt et al., 2014). These actions have led to a social hierarchy in the United States and, consequently, the continuation of White/Europeans being at the top of the social order (Jones, 2018). This hierarchy bears significance in the scope of this study, with some students of color making alterations to their skin color and

features to appear whiter in some instances. Skin color plays a significant role in the experiences of people of color. Society has created a deeper hierarchy based on the skin color of people of color (Campos & Medina, 2019). For example, Garcia et al. (2015) stated that among African-Americans, those with darker skin make less money than those with lighter skin. This has been shown as a societal factor impacting students' self-perception. This hierarchy of skin color is demonstrated in social structures such as schools. For example, the art curriculum emphasizes European artworks (Fries-Britt et al., 2014).

Racial Identity Development

Racial identity is given its significance and meanings by those who identify as or wish to be a part of the group (Seaton et al., 2006). The formation of identity models is central to how individuals develop their racial identities (Helms, 1995; Seaton et al., 2006). Phinney et al.'s (1992) racial identity model shows that identity development progresses linearly from an unexamined identity through exploration and finally to confirmation of identity stages. Within Phinney's (1992) identity model, individuals focus on their stereotypes of the minority racial group they belong to and move towards a greater understanding of the group overall. By working through the stages of identity development, the goal is for individuals to have a more balanced sense of their racial identity (Seaton et al., 2006).

I reviewed two relevant studies to my work because they examine the social factors that impact tween-aged students' racial identity development. The first study, conducted by Yip et al. (2010), introduced the concept of intergroup contact theory. The intergroup theory proposes that the more people interact with others of different groups, the less prejudice they feel, and a more common sense of identity is formed. In their study to measure the stages of identity development, Yip et al. referred to Phinney's (1992) explanation of identity formation. Phinney's explanation of racial identity formation, as described by Yip et al.,

helps explain how minority students' concepts of racial identity may evolve with age. This begins with the diffused state of racial identity, where an individual is yet to explore their racial identity or is committed to their racial identity. The next stage is foreclosed, when one accepts their identity without examining what their identity means. The third stage is the moratorium, where students have explored their identity but have not yet committed. It is only when one has committed to their racial identity that the final step is achieved.

Yip et al.'s (2010) goals were to identify social factors influencing students' racial identities while keeping in mind that intragroup interactions and facing discrimination have also impelled individuals to move toward committing to their racial identity (Seaton et al., 2009). Yip et al. (2010) argued about the importance of the setting of interracial interactions because schools were the focus of many research studies at the time. Schools may offer a setting of diversity where students interact with students of different races, or schools may be sites where students only interact with students similar to themselves. They noted that students commonly self-segregate in schools. In particular, they examined how the frequency of interactions of Black students with White students informed their stages of racial identity development. They examined social interactions between students of different racial groups with one another. Over a span of three years, students in grades seven through ten participated in this study, and their results showed that Blacks in schools with a majority of White students reported that their identity was more likely to change, while Black students in schools with more heterogeneous populations reported their identities as less likely to change. Similar to gender identity development, Yip et al. discussed that the demographics or context of a school setting is of importance to students' stages of identity development.

Seaton et al. (2009) argued that students of color face racial discrimination as they reach upper elementary and early middle school years and begin developing their racial

identities. In their study, one of their hypotheses was that students who have experienced racial discrimination might be more likely to strengthen their identity to their race. The result demonstrated that their hypothesis was incorrect after a two-year time period of collecting data. In contrast, the main findings demonstrated that over time with secondary-aged African-American students, the experience of discrimination harms how they perceive society's views of African-Americans. They postulated that the heterogeneous environment of the neighborhood and school participants were selected from may have impacted perceived discrimination and responsive racial identity formation. In Seaton et al.'s study, perceptions of negative racial identity toward being African-American increased with age. They were more positive at a younger age, which will be the case in my study with elementary-aged students. The persisting concept demonstrated through this study is that the perception of being racially discriminated against impacts racial identity development.

Societal Impacts on Racial Identity

Paragg (2015) studied mixed-race individuals, their self-identification, and their sense of Canadian belonging. For this study, participants were college-aged and identified as mixed race, meaning their biological parents were of different races. Within Canada, a recurring question asked to mixed-race people is What are you? This question reinforces the binaries of White or non-White that exists in Canada. An interesting finding when interviewing the participants in the study was that they themselves supported the binary of White or non-White and connected being White as Canadian.

When discussing their parents, eighteen out of nineteen participants only identified the White parent as Canadian. When talking about their parents who were not White, they tended to point out the country of origin. When asked what you are, many participants responded that they are Canadian. However, upon being asked this question, they felt the common implication was that they did not look Canadian, which meant White. Overall, the

importance of the study is to highlight the identity difficulties many people of mixed-race experience and how people of color respond to being a minority.

In the context of my research, minority students worked on self-portraits, and I examined how student interactions influenced the self-portrait-making process. Factors that influence these peer interactions may have included cultural and societal factors. Dewey (1929) argues that students bring experiences from home into school. Cultural and societal factors from homes are then reshaped by acculturation and cultural socialization. When students enter school, they may encounter different social experiences than they are accustomed to. As a result, the process of selective acculturation may occur. Lee (2005) defines selective acculturation as conforming to certain aspects of the dominant group in society and making adaptations to certain behaviors to ensure the group's survival.

Similar to Paragg (2015), Costigan and Dokis (2006) discussed immigrant and second-generation children and the impact of acculturation on identity. Lee (2005) describes acculturation as a process where in order to meet the norms of a new culture and adopt new behaviors, immigrants begin to adapt to their home culture. Acculturation can be challenging to overcome when children are socialized in schools and are trying to balance their home and school identities because it can lead to a disconnect between generations.

Quintana et al. (2006) further investigated the complications of racial and ethnic identity as well as the entanglement it experiences with culture. They touched upon the concepts of cultural socialization and racial socialization as separate entities, specifically when discussing African-Americans. Cultural socialization is described as Afrocentric childhood items such as books or clothes. Conversely, racial socialization is described as preparing children for racial bias and other incidences they may face (Quintana et al., 2006). In my study, this distinction between racial and cultural socialization is essential because

they may manifest themselves through peer interactions. They noted that cultural and racial socialization separation also applies to other races.

Further cultural and social development implications on identity development were demonstrated through a case study on two groups of people in Nepal (Quintana et al., 2006). One focus group was from the majority of the population and the dominant group, with another being from the minority. Specifically, the majority population was in a higher social position within the caste system. The findings from examining children's identity development showed that students of the dominant group were encouraged to achieve academically, while students of the minority group were taught to be shamed. Social interaction theory posits that individuals analyze situations before deciding how to present themselves. The way individuals are taught may shape their output and how they identify as they grow older.

Skin Color and Identity

The doll test experiment conducted by Clark and Clark (1947) is a starting point for examining how minorities in the United States perceive skin color. Clark and Clark (1947) presented four dolls to African American children ages three through seven. Two dolls had brown skin and black hair, and two had white skin and yellow hair. Participants were presented with the dolls in different orders and asked to choose a doll based upon the following directions a) give me the doll you like to play with best; b) give me the doll that looks nice; c) give me the doll that looks bad; d) give me the doll that is a nice color; e) give me the doll that looks like a white child; f) give me the doll that looks like a colored child, and g) give me the doll that looks like a negro child. The questions were designed to reveal the participants' preferences, demonstrate that the participant was aware of racial differences and determine which doll the participants' self-identified with. Within the two hundred and fifty-three participants, there were two subgroups.

The Southern group of participants comprised African American children in Arkansas who attended segregated schools and had no experience with mixed-racial school groups. The Northern group of participants consisted of African American children who attended racially mixed schools in Massachusetts. Within the subgroups, the researchers categorized participants as light, medium, or dark skin toned. Clark and Clark's (1947) data first showed that participants were aware of racial differences based upon responses to the request of giving me the doll that looks like a White child, give me the doll that looks like a colored child, and give me the doll that looks like a negro child. In terms of self-identification, Clark and Clark's (1947) study found that students classified as dark were more likely to identify with a doll with brown skin and black hair. Participants categorized as medium-skinned were more likely to select the brown doll than participants with light skin. The participants in both subgroups preferred the white doll as the doll they liked best and the doll that looked nice when asked to give me the doll you like to play with best; give me the doll that looks nice; give me the doll that looks bad; and give me the doll that is a nice color. This preference was strongest in participants categorized as light-skinned. A comparison between the two subgroups revealed that students from the Northern subgroup expressed a greater preference for the white doll and were more likely to describe the colored doll as bad. Overall, the findings presented by Clark and Clark emphasize the selection of lighter skin that is ingrained in children from a young age.

A more recent study examining views of colorism is seen in the context of Latin America. In their study, Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina (2018) argue that skin color impacts people's social mobility. Breen and Muller (200) define social mobility as people's movement in socioeconomic occupation. Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina (2018) discussed that studies in Mexico show that people express preferences for lighter skin and

European features. The investigation Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina conducted questioned if skin color impacts intergenerational mobility. They defined intergenerational mobility as social and economic progress, meaning that mobility is measured from where an individual's social class and economic standings begin to where they currently stand. The results from Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina's study reinforced Garcia et al.'s (2015) study done in the U.S. showed that people with darker skin earn less money, and in Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina's (2018) study, people with darker skin were more likely to have a higher chance of moving down socially. In 2015, social mobility was measured through the Survey of Social Mobility in Mexico. As a part of the survey, participants' skin color was recorded using the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) scale because Mexico does not keep census records of race.

Jackson et al. (2006) emphasized the importance of context in racial identity. Families are impactful on students' racial identities, but peers within schools also have a considerable influence on students' identity development. Furthermore, context assumes significance regarding the demographics of school settings and community socioeconomics. Children who attend schools less populated with racial minority students are more likely to have negative experiences shaping their racial identities, as are children living in high-risk areas (Jackson et al., 2006). Essentially, race may denote that certain students do not fit in with the majority population. African American children in these situations are often exposed to the constructs of racial socialization and the concept of racial bias early on versus cultural socialization and pride in Afrocentric culture. An interesting point in Jackson et al.'s study was that with a comparison group of White students, White students were less likely to feel negative feelings towards identity when they represented a minority in a school.

At a young age, students are interested in the ideas of skin color, hair texture, and facial features (Kemple et al., 2015). Kemple et al.'s study encouraged the recognition and

awareness of diversity in contrast to the idea of being “color-blind.” They compared comments from children who may discuss the difference in colors of flowers versus the difference in skin colors and how adults react so differently to the two observations. Adults reactions to children when discussing skin color impact their thoughts about their identity and others (Kemple et al., 2015). At a young age, the most common feature children notice that is different is skin. According to Ramsay (as cited in Kemple et al., 2015), children begin to develop their racial identities as early as preschool. Later in the tween years, students begin to affirm their identities (Phinney, 1992).

Common threads seen throughout the literature concerning racial identity are the importance of context and youth's experiences concerning race. The demographic context and exposure to diversity and positive versus negative experiences impact racial identity development.

Identity and Art

As previously stated, individuals have personal identities and social identities (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; Turner et al., 1994). Personal identities are formed within and shaped by individual experiences. Social identities are often assigned based on physical characteristics, with race being an important factor.

Throughout art history, skin color has been a primary descriptor of race (Lafont, 2017). Early paintings from the 1600s in France and Britain, including the Portrait of Louise de K roualle, and Duchess of Portsmouth, emphasize the colonial nature of Whites over Blacks. The early European artworks that depict Blacks underscore the disparity in resources between races and demonstrate the racial hierarchy through their depictions of race. Soon after, Francois Bernier developed the first recorded classification of race descriptors based on skin colors, including Whites, Blacks, Asian-Whites, Lapps, and Olive-Greenishes. This terminology later evolved in the 1800s to Whites, Blacks, Reds, and Yellows (Lafont, 2017).

The term “race” was also becoming more widely used to categorize people according to skin color strictly. In the 1700s, depictions were common in Europe displaying Blacks as servants or in a lower societal position, including in Jean-Marc Nattier’s *Mademoiselle de Clermont en Sultane*. Blacks were frequently portrayed to show love and adoration for White in artworks (Lafont, 2017). This is thought to be a means to minimize the truth behind the violence of subjugating Blacks into servitude. Lafont (2017) argued that this demonstrates that aesthetic values at the time believed White was beautiful and that this inequity is still perpetuated today with the emphasis placed upon European school artworks.

Charland’s (2010) study tied together racial identity and art with their study concerning African-Americans’ attitudes towards visual art and their identity formation. The participants in this study included tween-aged students. Charland built upon Marcia’s (1966) four stages of racial identity; identity diffusion, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity achievement. Identity formation involves the commitment of one to their cultural and aspirational associations and how one places themselves within that hierarchy (Charland, 2010). Ethnic and racial identity are essential factors in the construction of identity formation (Charland, 2010; Phinney, 1992; Yip et al., 2010). According to Phinney (1992), the characteristics of being historically marginalized significantly impact African Americans’ identity formation. Charland (2010) discussed what occurs when minority students are challenged by being in environments of the dominant culture, and the result of this situation can result in an identity crisis. This could arise in the context of this study through peer interactions concerning students’ racial identity in their self-portraits.

Concerning personal identities, Rojas (2012) conducted a research study as an art educator that used autoethnography and the creation of self-portraits as a method of reflecting personal identities and professional identities. Rojas discussed how self-portraits could become a form of literary autobiography where parts of self are displayed, and other

parts of self are hidden. She used self-portraits as a critical way to teach about identity and develop artists' perceptions of a community (Rojas, 2012). Building upon identity theory and social identity theory, Rojas grounded her study on the idea that artists represent themselves in constructed ways, influenced by being categorized and labeled or peer pressured. When planning to make her self-portraits, Rojas pointed out that cultural identity impacted the views she portrayed. As she began to work to create her portraits, her initial goal of creating a realistic representation began to fade, and she began to represent her identity rather than just her appearance. Her use of art allowed her to portray herself in a way that she described as not literal (Rojas, 2012). This is supported by Armon et al.'s (2009) study's focus on bringing voice to Latino American elementary-aged students and college students. In Armon et al.'s initial sessions, college students, who worked to construct autobiographies and self-portraits, were paired with an elementary-aged student to serve as a mentor. The project's overarching goal was to create artworks and a display representing students' families and cultural identities. The use of portraiture was an outlet for both college-aged and elementary-aged students to display their identities. Like Rojas (2012), they found that self-portraits may include more than just a physical representation of a person and also display inner characteristics.

Case Studies of Self-Portraits

This section will detail several studies that focus specifically on self-portraits and self-perceptions and examine different identity factors that influence self-portraits, including gender, race, and culture.

Armon et al. (2009) conducted a study that examined how artists create art and establish connections with social problems. Within Armon et al.'s (2009) study, college graduate students worked on the *Letres Y Arte* project with minority students, many of whom are Hispanic. The three main goals of the study were for students to learn art terms

and vocabulary, to use art to express their individual selves and cultures, and to analyze mass media images. During the art-making process, mirrors were a tool used for students to explore their features, and students worked with each other as well as graduate students to highlight details in their portraits. In their study, Armon et al. (2009) tried to convey that educators cannot ignore minority students and continue to marginalize them in education. Educators need to embrace their cultures and identities and display them and study art from different cultures.

Similar to Paragg (2015), Grushka's (2008) study researched questions concerning who am I? The study investigated the ideas of who I am and self-portraits using the concept of tangential visibility. Tangential visibility refers to critically reflecting upon how social events impact the manner in which individuals depict themselves and how to provide alternatives to represent self (Grushka, 2008). Deleuze and Guattaru (1987) led up to the concept of tangential visibility by emphasizing that the making of art is tied to making new identities. These new identities are tied together by ideas of self-perception that are influenced by the individual, things in their lives, and the social interactions of people around them. Essentially, the social aspects with which students interact merge between home and cultural influences to create identity. This identity is expressed through the creative process of art making. "Identity as visibility sees the individual able to identify how social beliefs and values are embedded within the world of images" (Grushka, 2008, p. 298). Tangential visibility acknowledges the social, historical, and cultural contexts in students' portraits and other artistic representations.

During Grushka's (2008) study, artworks produced fell into two different themes, identity as expressive of cultural and social constructs and abstract concepts. The self-portraits created in this study were described as reflective of how others would view them and critically reflect upon the cultural and social constructs imposed upon their portraits.

The study followed a case study of one student as she created various artworks exploring her cultural heritage and the impacts of society on her representations of self and choices in abstract pieces. Australian cultural aspects and identities such as religion, gambling, and drinking are represented through her abstract pieces. This study demonstrated the impacts of sociocultural factors on students' choices for representing their identities and the meaning, they display through artwork. Through understanding the historical, social, and cultural factors behind an artwork, meaning and a story of a person's identity can be woven. The use of tangential visibility allowed for a more critical examination of individuals' places in society and the connections between their culture and identities. The participant artists recognized the impact and shape of historical, social, and cultural factors and could critically reflect upon how and why they identify themselves as they do. This reflection component is something to build upon when interviewing students and analyzing self-portraits in my study.

Gernhardt et al. (2013) conducted a study that examined self-portraits drawn by students and examined the impact of culture and family connections and experiences within a new society. The participants in this study were three to six-year-old students from five different backgrounds. The groups were divided as follows: Turkish migrant children, urban Turkish youth, rural Turkish youth, urban German youth, and the rural German youth. The purpose of the study was to use the urban Turkish youth and rural Turkish youth portraits as a baseline for characteristics Turkish students included in their artworks. The urban German youth and rural German youth portraits were also used to determine a baseline of common features German students had within their portraits. Within this study, the focus group was the migrant Turkish youth. The students in this group were identified as immigrants to Germany from Turkey. This group's students, families and home culture were Turkish, and their experiences and social environments were immersed in German culture. The

researchers were looking to see what influences may be included from Turkish and German youth art for the migrant Turkish students.

During the analysis of the drawings, the researchers focused on the size of the figures, the torso characteristics, and gender-specific characteristics. It was noticed that there were differences between each of the groups, but common themes could be identified. The critical finding of the study was the analysis of the migrant Turkish students' portraits. It was shown that their portraits contained features found separately in the urban and rural Turkish and in the urban and rural German youth. The new German culture influenced the portraits, and gender-specific characteristics were similar to the Turkish portraits. The conclusion was that the migrant Turkish students' portraits were influenced by their family's home cultures and their new social experiences in German schools. Both family culture and the culture of the dominant population were influences on children's portraits. With three to six-year-old participants, the theme of family and culture are shown to be essential factors in shaping students' identities and depictions through self-portraits, along with social constructs from interactions in school environments. As previously noted, as children age and reach the tween stage, the influence of these familial ties begins to lessen, and greater influence comes from peers.

Like Gernhardt et al. (2013), Aronsson and Andersson (1996) conducted a study that demonstrated the impact of schools and school environments on children's portraits. The participants in this study were students in schools from three different locations, including Tanzania, a refugee settlement, and Sweden. The schools' instructional methods and cultural backgrounds were considered when examining the portraits. Students were instructed to draw themselves within their classrooms. From the analysis, something that stood out was the proportions of the way the students drew themselves in comparison to the room and the teacher. Instruction-wise, it was shown that the Tanzanian school and refugee settlement

school used a more teacher-centered approach to education, and the Swedish school emphasized teacher choice. This method of instruction was shown in the proportions of the students to teacher, with the students drawing their teacher much larger in the Tanzanian school and refugee school versus the Swedish school where the children were drawn in similar size to the teacher. The important finding from this study is the impact that schools and cultural norms can have on how students illustrate and see themselves.

Courtinat et al. (2001) examined personal and social identity concepts. Children's self-concept is described as ideas that one has about themselves. This idea of self-concept can be influenced by attempts at assimilation within and conforming to social groups (Swiatek, 2001). As Turner (1987) discussed, students adjusted their output to others when they were not receiving the feedback they wanted. Within this study, the researchers sought to explore how self-identity was constructed within gifted students in France. The resulting self-perception written pieces showed different ways students classified themselves and the emphasis on being identified as gifted played on their self-perception. This was important because it demonstrated the social impacts of labeling and parts of identities in children. Society had taught these students that being gifted was an achievement and something to be proud of. Therefore, it became a central point of their self-identity when asked to depict it.

Before Courtinat et al.'s study, Henry and Verica (2015) asked the question, "how can art function as a medium through which to re(view) the self and others" (p. 153)? Their study reviewed the idea of self-perception through drawings and summarized the emotions brought upon by students analyzing portraits themselves. It was noted that these self-portraits "create space for the exploration of stereotypes and 'flash judgments' as well as lead to an intense awareness of risk-taking and vulnerability" (p. 153). Through self-examination, many emotions were present in the participants and they were able to think about how they would want to be perceived and how they should portray themselves. A

focus of the self-reflection was on the participants' realization of the stereotypes they included within their depiction of themselves and how stereotypes play a role in our judgment of others. The role of stereotypes on one's identity can have a significant role in how someone depicts themselves. Thinking about the intended audience could change someone's decisions regarding how they represent themselves (Henry & Verica, 2015).

Critical Multicultural Art Education

Literature shows that tween-aged students' identities are influenced by peers and minority students' identity development and self-appreciation can be influenced by the demographics of their environment. In response to these findings, taking a multicultural approach to art education is a step toward promoting culturally responsive teaching practices (Gay, 2000). A further necessary step is incorporating critical reflection within multicultural education. Critical multicultural education moves further from the ideas of simply expecting equality and critically examining the power structures that create educational disparities (May & Sleeter, 2010). The goals of multiculturalism in itself are appropriate for providing exposure to different cultures, but these actions are described by some researchers as 'liberal multiculturalism' (Acuff, 2010; May & Sleeter, 2010). Liberal Multiculturalism is described by May and Sleeter (2010) as a way of raising awareness about diversity, but not providing steps to make changes to the inequities faced by racial linguistic, and religious minorities. What follows is an overview of multicultural education and newer research concerning critical multicultural education.

The main goals of multicultural education are to transform educational practices and institutions so that students from different cultural, racial, and socioeconomic groups and of different genders are equally treated within schools (Banks, 1993). Multicultural education is defined as having five dimensions (Banks, 1993; Chin, 2013). The first dimension of multicultural education is content integration. Content integration focuses on the perspective

through which content is viewed (Chin, 2013), and the ways in which teachers bring information from other cultures into their content area (Banks, 2013). This can be done through firsthand experiences with gaining new knowledge and bringing a guest to the classrooms to provide firsthand knowledge of experiences and concepts (Chin, 2013). The second dimension of multicultural education is knowledge construction. This dimension evaluates how we gain knowledge and the social and cultural factors influencing this knowledge (Banks, 1993).

Prejudice reduction is the third dimension of multicultural education. Its' impact involves the shifting of how students accept cultures different from themselves and strategies used to approach this tolerance. An important part of prejudice reduction is the fourth dimension and the concept of equity pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 1995). Equity pedagogy is described as "teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within, and help create and perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society" (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 7). The fifth dimension involves the empowerment of minority students and changes within the school including the grouping and labeling of students and overall changes to the school environment.

As a part of multicultural education, Banks (2013) discusses the concept of cultural difference theory. Cultural difference theory does not believe that students of color have cultural deficits. Instead, it believes that different cultures have languages, perspectives, and behaviors that enrich children's experiences (Banks, 2013). However, many schools ignore these ideas and instead view students of color as having a cultural deficit and lacking knowledge. Cultural difference theorists call for schools to make changes, instead of students making changes, in order for lessons and classes to reach the needs of all students.

Critical multiculturalists point out that the concept of promoting equity pedagogy by itself is an issue because of its insistence upon all citizens being treated equally and does not consider the impacts of cultural background and material inequities faced by those of different groups (May & Sleeter, 2010). Further, as Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts, multiculturalism's ideas embrace that people are different but offers no solutions to structural processes that promote disparities for people of color. In short, critical multiculturalism is a necessary step forward because "rather than prioritizing culture, critical multiculturalism gives priority to the structural analysis of unequal power relationships, analyzing the role of institutionalized inequities including, but not limited to racism," (May & Sleeter, 2010, p. 10). The purpose of analyzing these structures is to bring about change. A critical multicultural approach understands that culture and identity are multi-layered and fluid. Simply examining culture brings about a temporary idea but analyzing the structures that contribute to inequities may bring about change. Additionally, as May (2009) states critical multicultural education looks deeper than the national level and brings in an international element when examining perspectives and educational and societal contexts. The introduction of multiculturalism should be a focus within art education, but this alone is not enough (Ballengee-Morris, Daniel, & Stuhr, 2010; May & Sleeter, 2010; Varvus, 2010). Ballengee-Morris, Daniel, and Stuhr (2010) advocate that the art curriculum needs to move past the standards and pre-made materials. Using a critical multicultural lens, art educators and students should reflect on the standards and the visual culture in which they work. By examining what cultural and societal norms have been assumed and learned, we can then move to unlearning and accepting other cultures and differences (Ballengee-Morris et. al, 2010).

Different steps must be taken to incorporate critical multiculturalism into art education (Banks, 2013; Chin, 2013; May & Sleeter, 2010; Sleeter, 2017). Content from

different cultures can be connected to the curriculum and standards, and teachers can introduce resources and challenges to the lesson. By applying equity pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 1995), where the teacher meets the needs of all students and not just a majority, both the teacher and students can build new knowledge. Equity pedagogy does not simply suggest that all students be given the same thing. Students who have been historically marginalized may have different needs from other students and may need an unequal amount of attention from others. This knowledge comes together, and the classroom builds a community of knowledge. With this new knowledge, students and teachers can critically reflect on the inequalities and oppression within the school. Banks and Banks (1995) believe this application of equity pedagogy can lead to the reduction of stereotypes and acceptance of cultural differences.

Chin (2016) examines how multiculturalism is incorporated into classrooms and a frequently ineffective approach is the human relations approach. Chin (2016) discusses how the contributive approach and additive approach make up the human relations approach. Within, the contributive approach teachers incorporate things such as food, holidays, folklore, etc. into lessons through a Western lens that perpetuates stereotypes. This does not allow an approach that makes connections with students and provides an understanding of differences. In contrast to a contributive approach, a more appropriate approach is the additive approach.

The additive approach brings different cultures to small pieces of the curriculum where it fits in. Often, this approach generalizes and oversimplifies un-American cultures (Chin, 2016). In contrast to the human relations approach, art educators need to create authentic and multicultural lessons that draw upon the key dimensions of multicultural education.

For instance, Chin (2016) conducted an ethnographic study that highlighted how one teacher implemented a multicultural curriculum in her school to teach about various traditional art techniques. In her lesson, she provided historical context to her students about Native American artists and their techniques in different art media. She also invited Native American artists to visit the class and collaborate with the students during the knowledge-building phase. This firsthand experience with traditional techniques from Native American artists allowed the students to gain insights beyond the Western lens often used to examine Native American art. Reflecting critically on how we view topics and the lens through which we teach, particularly in the context of American art education, is a crucial step towards adopting a social justice perspective. By implementing a multicultural curriculum that incorporates equity pedagogy (Banks, 1995), we can begin to address inequalities in art education and transform our approach accordingly.

Trends in the Literature

I conducted a literature review that examined various aspects of identity and identity development, with a particular focus on gender, racial, and cultural identity. Among tweens, who are in the stage of developing their gender, racial, and cultural identities, family, social structures, and social contexts are influential factors. Notably, peers have a strong impact on how tweens represent themselves socially during this developmental stage, and their actions are often based on anticipated peer reactions, which can shape their gender, racial, and social identities.

While discussions about people's identities through art are common in art analysis, there is a gap in the literature when it comes to understanding the impact of peer interaction on how students portray their identities in self-portraits. This study sought to address this gap.

3 METHODOLOGY

Social interaction theory posits that humans react to interactions, and these interactions influence both the signals we output and our understanding of the signals we receive (Turner et al., 1979). Additionally, these interactions motivate individual actions, such as how individuals seek input from others and then base their output accordingly. I conducted an action research study to examine the influence of social interaction between tween-aged students and how students interact during the self-portrait-making process. I discuss the methodologies I used for this action research study, including the rationale, research design, data collection, and data analysis process. I also provide the study's context, the participants, and the procedures and discuss my researcher's subjective statement.

Methods

I used a qualitative approach to investigating peer influences on student choice during self-portraits. Qualitative inquiry takes an approach that looks to create a deeper understanding of a phenomenon, and the data collected is frequently in the form of text or an artifact (Egbert & Sanden, 2014). Eisner (1991) states that the purpose of qualitative research is to immerse oneself within the field, utilizing the researcher as the instrument, and to be interpretive, expressive, detailed, and persuasive. Common methods employed in qualitative inquiry include ethnographic research, case studies, phenomenological research, and action research, as outlined by Mertens (2015). In contrast, quantitative inquiry is characterized by statistical analysis and may be employed to address specific research questions using random samples and participants, as highlighted by Egbert and Sanden (2014).

Using a qualitative action research approach lent itself to this study because of its' purpose to investigate the influence of social interaction among tween-aged students during the creation of self-portraits. Specifically, an action research study was the approach I used.

Action research is field-based, and the primary focus is for the researcher to understand better their experiences and the phenomena examined (May, 1997). I used this methodology to investigate the study's main research question: What is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits? And sub-questions include: How do student interactions influence the portrait-making process? Why might students choose to modify their self-portrait? And how do students interact during self-portrait making?

Action Research

Action research is described by Egbert and Sanden (2014) as the implementation of problem-solving strategies to address a situation. Action research is frequently conducted by practicing professionals rather than research professionals (Costello, 2003; Jerry & Edwards, 2014). School-based action research is research that is teacher-initiated and school-based (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Pine, 2009). Action research can be undertaken for various reasons in educational settings, including examining teaching practices, learning strategies, attitudes and values, professional development of teachers, and administration (Cohen et al., 2018; Somekh, 2006). Most school-based action research is derived from the teacher's interests and experiences, and the study is designed to examine something within their practice (Gay & Airasian, 2000; Jerry & Edwards, 2014; Pine, 2009). The guiding theoretical framework of this study was social interaction theory, and an emphasis was placed on attitudes and values examination, which is described by Cohen et al. (2018) as action towards modifying students' value systems in some regard to students' lives (Costello, 2003; Somekh, 2006). I examined student valuations of peer input and dialogue and their impact on students' self-portraits in this study.

Specifically, participatory action research was implemented within this study. Participatory action research frequently occurs within educational research, often with a teacher being the researcher and students being the participants (Cohen et al., 2018; Mertens,

2015). There are two approaches to participatory action research; cooperative participatory research and transformative participatory action research. Cooperative participatory action research is commonly seen in education, where teachers examine their practices and seek ways to improve them. Within cooperative participatory action research, participants act as co-researchers, research is implemented within regular everyday activities, and data is examined for changes in practice. In contrast, transformative participatory action research emphasizes methods that promote participants' voices. In this study, a transformative participatory approach was taken to allow students to express their identities through self-portraits and examine the influences of social interaction on their choices in self-representation. To provide participant voice my study also used participant interviews as one data source.

When using action research, an issue that arises is the validity of the research because much of it is centered on the researchers' practice. Common problems during action research are there not being a distinction between description and explanation and failure to distinguish between data and evidence (Gay & Airasian, 2000). Benefits of using action research include: researchers can work on problems that they have identified themselves, researchers assess their own work, and act as a form of participatory research (Cohen et al., 2018).

This action research study was initiated by my professional experiences and designed to be implemented within the art classroom. The theoretical lens through which I examined this research study was social interaction theory. Social interaction theory describes the impact interactions have on student input and output and their motivations. To investigate the impact of these peer interactions, this study examined students in the art classroom during the self-portrait-making process. The art classroom is a part of the school

environment where students interact with peers. The classroom is a facilitation for social interaction and a place for students to receive input and output and shape themselves based on feedback.

Subjectivities

In qualitative research, it is essential to be mindful of the researcher's subjectivities (Peshkin, 1998). Subjectivities embody the researcher's lens or experiences that inform their view or interpretation of events (Brown, 2019). In the context of school-based action research, I was the researcher and the teacher initiating the study. My position of authority over students was an essential aspect of this project because I designed the project and implemented it with students attending my class. This is common in school-based action research, with teachers often noticing a phenomenon and developing research around it (Gay & Airasian, 2000). As an insider to this study, my experiences led to its design and identification of the phenomena worthy of investigation. **Research Design**

I implemented this study in the Fall of 2021 after receiving institutional and school district approval through their Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Next, I describe the context, participants, data collection methods, data analysis, and considerations for this study. **Context**

This study took place in a suburban, Southeastern public-school district with many students receiving English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. The site is a medium-sized elementary school with 604 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth. Most students at the school are Hispanic, with a sizeable number of students classified as Asian (see Table 1). Most Asian students are Bangladeshi.

Table 1

2021, 2016, 2011 School Demographics

School Year	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Multiracial
2021	79/13%	*	515/85%	*	*
2016	103/14%	72/10%	531/74%	*	*
2011	94/14%	93/14%	454/69%	*	*

Note. * Indicates less than 15 students within the category per GADOE reporting.

School Demographic Data

Enrollments remained consistent between 2011 and 2016. There is a noticeable drop in enrollment of Black students from 2016 to 2021. Additionally, the total number of students enrolled in 2021 decreased from the previous year partly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study took place in September and October of 2021. Students attended school in person, with procedures in place regarding Covid-19 protocols. Students also could attend school virtually, although virtual students do not attend classes such as art, music, and physical education. Due to this and the study's procedures being implemented in the art classroom, no virtual students were included in this study. Covid-19 protocols that were implemented during this study include mask mandates, social distancing, and contact tracing. Students wore masks to art class, but per guidance, by the school district, they could remove them for short breaks if they chose to do so.

Study Participants

In this study, participants were selected purposively (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). I purposefully selected students who attended the school I work at and who attended art class as a practical matter so that I may examine student peer interactions during self-portrait-making while continuing to teach. Purposeful sampling is used when a group is needed that fits your specific study or will be a part of the group participating in the action research (Vogt et al., 2012).

Advantages of purposeful selection of participants include investigating participants amongst whom the phenomena being examined are present and allowing for the researcher to generalize from the study. Disadvantages of purposeful selection include researcher bias and difficulty in reliability regarding whether the results would be different if different participants were used (Sharma, 2017). To counteract these disadvantages, I invited every fifth-grade student to participate in the study.

The criterion for selection was fifth-grade students. Two fifth-grade homerooms in the study setting and students with signed consent forms participated in the study. It is in this tween stage that children begin to define their social roles and are beginning to struggle with their personal identity and social identity, so therefore I chose to work with fifth-grade students. At this time, peer influence is also prevalent and informs students' social motivation and output. Using both fifth-grade homerooms allowed participants and students from various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds to participate (see Table 2). Overall, thirty-three students participated in this study. Students who did not wish to participate or did not return parent consent forms were seated together and did not participate in audio recordings or interviews.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Class	Partici- pants	Fe- male	Male	Asian	Black	His- panic	White	Multi- racial	Free or re- duced lunch
Class 1	15	33%	67%	60%	6%	34%	0	0	100%
Class 2	18	39%	61%	22%	0%	78%	0	0	100%

Data Collection

In qualitative research common methods of data collection include participant observation, interviews, and document/records review (Mertens, 2015). To examine the influences of peer interaction on students' self-portraits, data collection included the collection of artifacts, observations, and interviews. This section reviews the procedures and methods of data collection.

Procedures

Within this study, two fifth-grade classes participated in a self-portrait unit. This study took place over six weeks. Over four weeks, each class worked to create a self-portrait, with the final two weeks used for interviewing. For the art-making portion of this study, the materials students were given included mirrors, 8.5"x11" watercolor paper, erasers, pencils, skin and primary color paint sets (see Figure 3), and brushes. At the beginning of each class period, students were given instructions with expectations for the day.

Figure 3 *Skin and Primary Color Paint Sets*



During the first class, I gave the initial assignment to the students and discussed what a self-portrait is. The definition of a self-portrait given was a painting, drawing, or photograph of yourself that usually focuses on the head, face, and shoulders. I used a mirror and demonstrated how to position features including eyes, nose, ears, and mouth on a face by doing an example of my portrait. After the demonstration, students were given approximately five minutes to ask questions about anything they did not understand or needed clarification. Participants were expected to complete the sketch of their self-portraits.

On the second day, the objective was for students to work towards finishing the sketch of their self-portraits and drawing background. On the third day, paint and brushes were at the tables for the students. The students objective was to focus on painting the person in the portrait. Students had to finish painting their self-portraits on the fourth and last day. I then used the fifth and sixth weeks to conduct interviews with select students. Overall, students spent four weeks working to create their self-portraits, and I spent two weeks conducting interviews.

Artifact Collection. In conjunction with social interaction theory, Rolling (2007) discusses representative image-making and the presentation of self-image in his research on visual cultural archaeology. Visual cultural archaeology suggests social identities are socially constructed (Rolling, 2007). It is socially constructed what is expected to be displayed in public and what is not.

In this study, student self-portraits are the artworks being socially constructed and displayed. Artwork depicts symbols and expressions and can be used to interpret how people make meaning of the world and their experiences (Arnheim, 1954). Langer (1957) discusses the principles of what determines what art is and what is not: a work of art is expressive through perceptions of human feeling and symbolism. Within art, the symbol signifies the meaning of the artwork (Langer, 1957). A simple definition of expressiveness is also defined by Arnheim (1954) as features of a person's appearance or behavior that show what the person is thinking or feeling. However, with this definition, there is no opportunity for the viewer to perceive the intentions behind the artists' decisions. Rader (1960) further explained that art does not simply imitate things. It hints at ideas through the use of symbols. In this study, the symbolism was expressed by some students through their choice of background imagery and the details they added to their portraits.

Artwork and other forms of visual data, including film, video, photographs, paintings, drawings, illustrations, and advertisements, are not intended to be neutral and portray messages that viewers interpret (Cohen et al., 2018). Again, this may be seen through background imagery and details, i.e., accessories, expressions, and color choice that students add to their self-portraits. Further, Cohen et al. (2018) posit that visual media are socially constructed and influenced by social interactions. Flick (2011) refers to images as visual data that is a presentation of reality. This is what students created in this study, a representation of themselves and how they wish for someone to see them. As people produce artwork and work to express themselves through symbols, they are mindful of the aesthetic perception that will be used to view their artwork. What students thought as they created their artwork and viewed peers' artworks was something I sought to explore through interviews. This viewing of artwork and its perception is discussed by Dewey (1934), who says that to perceive, the viewer must create their own experience. The viewer perceives, and the symbols portray a meaning for them; in turn, their social motivations are influenced by the reactions of others (Turner, 1987). This is relevant to this study because it examines how students react to one another's artworks and provide feedback.

The pros of using visual data are that they may allow for data collection that is difficult to obtain through other methods, such as observation or interviews. Visual data in conjunction with other data sources can provide a broader example of the studied phenomena (Flick, 2011). After collecting visual data, the cons of the method include how the interpretation of meaning can be different for different viewers and result in biased understandings (Reavey & Johnson, 2007). Additionally, the artist's chances of being accidentally identified when using visual data are high.

Field Observations and Audio Recordings. Morrison (2009) describes observations as allowing the researcher to observe the physical setting of a study, the human

setting, the interactional setting, and the program setting. Specifically, in this study, I examined the interactional setting of students as they created self-portraits. Observations of the interactional setting included examining formal, informal, verbal, and nonverbal interactions.

Different observation formats include highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured, according to Cohen et al. (2018). Highly structured observations involve the researcher pre-determining the specific information or categories they are seeking to observe before commencing the observation. These predetermined areas of focus become the central aspects of the observation process. Semi-structured observations occur when the researcher has an idea of what they are looking for but is open to emergent ideas during observation. Unstructured observation occurs when there is no plan on what is to be examined and what may be important. In this study, as the observer, I acted in a semi-structured role by entering the observation planning to examine the art-making process and peer interactions during the lesson period. Categories that may be of significance from the pilot study were looked for. Nevertheless, I remained receptive to emergent patterns or categories. As described by Stockrocki (1997), my purpose in observing was to be an observing participant and learn from the students. Since I played the dual role of researcher and teacher in this school-based action research, I closely observed how students made choices while creating their artwork and how peer interactions influenced their self-portrait creations.

During observations, I collected field notes documenting student behavior and interactions. Audio recordings were used to record student dialogue to be replayed and used for analysis. Field notes focused on examining the predetermined categories of students' changes in artworks and student reactions to peer discussion, such as erasure, coloring over, covering, starting over, and adding text or expressions. I also observed students reacting to

peer commentary, such as the next steps they took in their portraits after receiving feedback from peers.

Observations as a method of data collection include both pros and cons. A pro for using observations is that the potential of authentic data collection is available and can provide rich descriptions, including verbal and non-verbal information. Observation frequently works with other data collection methods to provide different stances on the same phenomena (Stockrocki, 1997). Therefore, I used observation as one of my three data collection methods so that I could provide multiple perspectives of students creating self-portraits. Cons of using observation as a method of data collection include selective attention of the observer, where the observer may focus on one aspect of the situation and miss others. Another may be selective memory, where the observer may choose to include certain elements of the observation in the analysis while excluding others (Cohen et al., 2018). Audio recordings were also used during observation to counteract these cons.

Interviews. Twelve students were selected to participate in interviews to learn more about students' portraits and what I observed. Students who were chosen to interview were selected based on my observations and field notes. I believe peer interactions may have influenced students who engaged in certain behaviors to alter or make changes to their self-portraits. Interviews (see Appendix A) took place in person, individually, and after class in the art classroom for approximately thirty minutes.

Interviews can take on different formats, as identified by DeWalt and DeWalt (2011), which include structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. In structured or formal interviews, the interviewer maintains control and strictly follows a predetermined set of questions without deviation. Each participant in the interview is asked the same set of questions. Semi-structured interviews also have pre-set questions, but the interviewer may ask follow-up or probing questions based on the interviewee's responses. On the other hand,

unstructured interviews resemble more casual conversations with less guidance from the interviewer, allowing for more open-ended discussions.

In this study, I used a semi-structured approach to understand student choices in the self-portrait and the impact of peers. This allowed me to ask questions concerning the student's artwork and interactions with peers and individualize questions based on participant responses. During the interview, I had the student's artwork available to view with the student. Questions concerning the portrait, as well as time for students to share their pieces, were recorded. I referred to my field notes from the observation to ask further questions regarding the portrait.

Interviews benefited this study because the studied phenomena can be examined in depth and expand upon observation data. Interviews allowed participants to have the opportunity to explain their ideas, choices, and understandings of situations and share opinions and behaviors. The cons of using interviews are that they may be subject to researcher bias, and anonymity may be difficult to keep (Hochschild, 2009). I used multiple data sources to corroborate what was said in the interviews. Students were assigned a code number that went with their interview and self-portrait to ensure anonymity.

Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection, I started to analyze the collected data. I reviewed how I qualitatively analyzed and coded data. The purpose of this analysis was to answer this study's main research question and three sub-questions: What is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits? Sub questions to investigate include: How do student interactions influence the portrait-making process? Why might students choose to modify their self-portrait? And how do students interact during self-portrait making?

The first step toward completing my document analysis was transcribing interviews and organizing field notes from observations. This study contained two data sets, with one set from each class. The data collected from each group, including artifacts, interviews, audio recordings, and field notes of observations were analyzed to answer what is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits. My initial round of analysis was content analysis, which can be used for discovering concepts and themes (Stockrocki, 1997). I applied content analysis in my initial analysis as I opened coding and began looking for recurring instances and themes.

Using emergent coding, I coded and examined my field notes, audio recording notes, interview transcriptions, and student artworks using emergent coding. The purpose of coding is to assign a symbolic attribute to a data source (Saldana, 2016). When examining field notes and audio recordings, I focused on peer interaction and noted instances that were recurring into emergent codes. The lens through which I analyzed classroom interactions and wrote field notes was a descriptive framework that included participants' functional analysis, cognitive processing, and social processing (Kumpulainen & Wray, 2002). Functional analysis refers to how peers communicate, including what they say and their body language toward one another during the work period. The functional analysis examines the students' motivations for the signals they output and the reactions or ways they are received. Cognitive processing refers to how students situate themselves and approach learning. Participants' social processing includes the input they receive from peers and how this informs their output.

The codes I identified in my research were related to seeking validation, receiving peer commentary on work quality and accuracy, making self-deprecating comments, responding to peer commentary, referencing pop culture, and noting similarities. The category of similarities included instances where students in the same table groups made

similar choices in terms of clothing, expression, or color choice in their self-portraits. These interactions with peers had a direct impact on how students completed their self-portraits, highlighting the significance of peer influence, as discussed in previous studies by Priess et al. (2009) and Lease et al. (2020). When examining student portraits, I looked at students' features, expressions, color choices, and background imagery, text, or themes. Emergent codes that came from analyzing student artworks were skin color, facial mask, and similarities. This analysis of artworks worked to triangulate and show the relationship between student comments, their artworks, and interview reflections.

After conducting my initial data review, I proceeded to conduct a second round of data analysis focused on student self-portraits. In this second round, I adopted a different approach by sorting the portraits into new arrangements, distinct from my initial analysis which was based on seating charts for each class. Upon further examination, I noticed similarities among some of the portraits and cross-checked with my field notes to confirm that students with similar portraits were indeed seated together. Apart from the seating chart analysis, I had not sorted the portraits based on any other characteristics during my initial analysis. To categorize the self-portraits in this second round of analysis, I utilized the emergent codes from my initial analysis. I sorted the portraits into various categories including skin color, eyes, hair, clothing, masks, physique, accessories, and background. During this sorting process, I allowed for portraits to fit into multiple categories, recognizing that some self-portraits could possess multiple characteristics.

Once my data was coded, and I had identified my emergent codes, I began to analyze for recurring themes concerning peer interaction and its impact on students' self-portraits. I used content analysis to show different data sets' viewpoints and provide descriptions of key actions. As I examined my data and worked with my emergent codes, I looked for recurring themes that I noted. It was from these recurring themes that I generated this study's findings.

Chapter 4 introduces and details these findings.

Research Credibility and Reliability

To limit bias in my study's findings, I asked the same interview questions to each child and collected multiple data sources. During interviews, my questions were open-ended so as not to lead the interviewee in any way. During the observation period of this study, I used a field note template as a guide, and I used audio recordings as a second data source during the observation period to reduce the limitations of field notes. I followed up with students during the interviews to confirm what I noted during observations. I have also clearly stated my role as the teacher-researcher in this study and explained my positionality and subjectivities concerning this study.

To establish the credibility of my research, I conducted data collection over a period of six weeks, which included four forty-five-minute classes and two weeks for interviews. Before the data collection process, I had already been working with the participating students and continued to work with them even after the data collection had ended. This extended timeframe allowed the participants to become familiar with both the research and the setting in which it was conducted. In fact, I had been interacting with the students for a total of two months before the study commenced, to build trust and rapport with them. By building trust, I aimed to create a more authentic experience during data collection, which in turn can lead to more reliable and valid data. (Hauer et al., 2015).

Three types of data were collected: student artifacts, audio recordings, field notes, and interviews. Triangulating data during analysis offered multiple perspectives on the same questions (Vogt et al., 2012). Categories of examination included student habits during the work period (erasure, etc.), interviews that establish what students thought about when making their picture, and observations/audio recordings of peer commentary and the reaction to social interactions. Inviting every student in the fifth grade to participate in the

study included a participant pool from various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. During interviews, students were afforded the time to explain and discuss their self-portraits so that the only explanation of artworks was not just my interpretation.

Additionally, the context including the school setting, school demographics, and geographic location was provided to situate the study's findings and encourage transferability. The study procedures were made transparent, including the observation protocol and my own theoretical lens, preconceptions, and assumptions to show how they may have impacted my research decisions.

4 FINDINGS

Overview

This study aimed to examine the impact of peer influence on student decision-making during the process of creating self-portraits in a fifth-grade art classroom. The following research questions were developed to examine peer influence on students' self-portraits: The central question of this study was what is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits? Sub questions included how do student interactions influence the portrait-making process? Why might students choose to modify their self-portrait? And how do students interact during self-portrait making?

This study took place in an elementary setting with two fifth-grade classes. As detailed in Chapter 3, the demographics of the two classrooms comprised primarily of Hispanic and Bangladeshi-American students. Data collection occurred during in-person learning with students following required safety protocols from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

As discussed in Chapter 3, data collected in this study included audio recordings of all art class sessions, field notes of observations, student interviews, and student self-portraits. Recordings and field notes were taken over four weeks and focused on students' peer interactions during the art-making process. Thirty student artworks were collected for this study, and students were interviewed. After collecting data, my first steps were transcribing interviews, reviewing audiotapes, and analyzing my field notes. Using an emergent coding method, I examined student artworks for what I saw in the images, student interview transcriptions, and audio recordings/field notes from the four-week work period.

Overall Finding: Changes in Self-Portraiture

A significant, overall finding of this research study was that students altered their self-portraits due to interactions with students with whom they were near. These changes manifested through both extrinsic motivators and intrinsic motivators. In the context of this

study, I operationalized extrinsic motivators as motivators that originated from the environment in which the self-portraits were created, including interactions with peers.

On the other hand, I defined intrinsic motivators as beliefs that students brought with them to school, likely developed through familial and community experiences. The subsequent discussion focuses on how these extrinsic and intrinsic motivations influenced the way students depicted themselves in their self-portraits, as well as a description of the alterations they made within these self-portraits.

Aspects within the self-portraits that students chose to include fell into the categories of background imagery, clothing, accessories, and masks. The decisions or choices made to include specific images or ideas in their self-portraits stemmed from extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. The interactions between peers played a significant role in establishing the extrinsic motivators participants faced in this study. Recalling Turner et al. (1994), when adolescents work within group settings they will modify their interactions until they feel their identity is being affirmed and they feel accepted.

If students are unable to reach these feelings, then defense mechanisms may come into play. Intrinsic motivators stem from experiences students bring with them to school and their understanding of social situations (Schutz, 1953; Turner, 1988). Even though intrinsic and extrinsic motivators have been defined as two categories in this study, individuals will be influenced by both in their decision-making process and there is an overlap of the two

that is not always clearly distinguishable. **Extrinsic Motivation**

The arrangement of students in the classroom had an impact on their peer interactions, and it provided me with an opportunity to observe which students were influenced by their peers and potentially engaged in copying behaviors. This was evident in row three of Figure 4, where two portraits depicted tears on their faces, and in row two, where all students chose to include a mask in their self-portraits. Further analysis of how

peers influenced students' motivations in creating their portraits will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

Figure 4 *Self-Portraits Ordered by Seating Chart*





Peer Interactions

Specific examples shown include instances of students copying one another's decisions for eye color and adding tears to their expressions. A direct change in three students' portraits because of peer interaction occurred with student nine (see Figure 4, third picture from the left, on row one), student ten (see Figure 4, second picture from the right, on row one), and student twenty (see Figure 4, the first picture on the right, in row one). They chose their eye color after interacting with the students sitting around them. Student nine begins the conversation by saying, "I think I am going to color my eyes blue" (personal communication, October 6, 2021). To which student ten responded, "Man you don't got blue eyes. Why are you gonna do that?" (personal communication, October 6, 2021). Student nine responded, "I know I don't got blue eyes (pause) I just want to. Because I think it looks good" (personal communication, October 6, 2021). He deliberately painted his eyes blue and made it a point to show his eyes to his table mates. The subsequent events unfolded in a manner that echoed Kornieko et al.'s (2016) research, as other students at the same table

group also portrayed their eyes as blue, resembling how friends in the study shaped their identities to align with each other.

Another specific example of this instance occurred with student eleven (see Figure 4, third picture from the left, on row three). Her friend, who created her portrait beside her, added tears to her portrait. Shortly after this, student eleven added tears to her portrait. When asked during her interview, she first hesitated to talk about the reason behind including tears. She said, “Um... I don’t know...I guess I just wanted to” (personal communication, October 7, 2021). When I probed by asking, “What do the tears symbolize to you?” she responded, “I guess I just wanted to add it.” She also pointed out that it was her idea and that she was representing herself. The student who was sitting next to her and was student eleven’s friend was student twelve (see Figure 4, fourth picture from the left, on row three). When first asked about the tears, she described them as representing that sometimes she is depressed. When I probed further and mentioned that the student next to her also drew tears and I believe she drew them first, she responded that “I don’t remember copying her” (personal communication, October 7, 2021).

While listening to the interviews I noticed students nineteen (see Figure 4, the first picture on the left, on row one) and twenty-nine (see Figure 4, the second picture on the left, on row one) both referred to a celerity. Student twenty-nine said she likes Selena and wanted to do makeup like her. Student nineteen said her favorite influencer was Emma Chamberlain and when looking at her portrait and her in-person I noticed that her portrait looked nothing like her. After researching I thought that her portrait looked very similar to Emma Chamberlain, down to the clothing and accessories that were drawn. After organizing the portraits in order of seating chart I noticed that student nineteen and student twenty-nine were seated right next to one another.

Overall, peer interaction was a constant part of the portrait-making process in this study. Some students sought out others' opinions, while others were given unwanted advice. In any case, peer comments were frequently directed at giving advice, and students predominately responded to this advice in one of two ways. First, they either challenged the other student by making fun of their portrait or someone else's portrait. Or they erased and adjusted their portrait based on what was said.

Much of the student conversations centered on the accuracy of their portraits and if they were doing a good job. Students constantly checked with one another on whether their portraits looked like theirs. Some problematic areas for students included the nose, mouth, and ears. It frustrated some students when they could not get a feature correct, and they asked questions such as: "Do we have to draw the ears? Can we draw our masks?" Additional concerns arose over getting hair texture correct and not too curly. Conversations such as this one were frequent "What color is my hair? I think it's brown." "No, it's darker."

One student had a hard time with his portrait. During the final stages of drawing, he began to show the other students at his table his portrait. One of his peers looked and gave the offhand comment, "Bro, it looks like Barack Obama." This piqued other students' interest, and they offered similar comments. The student who was being made fun of appeared to be upset and covered his artwork. He also began to work with an eraser. Students continued to comment on him for a few more minutes before the conversation ended. Near the end of class, he again uncovered his portrait and showed it saying, "I erased it. I fixed it!"

Erasure and change were something that I saw frequently as a response to students' interactions with their peers. When advised that their portrait was inaccurate or that

something could be done better, an alternative to making fun of oneself was to erase and attempt to make corrections based on peer feedback.

Feedback came in various ways for students, with a lot of feedback coming in the form of making fun of one another's portraits. Comparing others' portraits to cartoon and/or movie characters was also popular. Comparisons were made to Shrek, Jimmy Neutron, Mr. Peanut, Squidward, and monkeys. Other ways students made fun of one another came from the male students telling each other their portraits looked like girls. In particular, male comments directed at female students could be characterized as mean. For example, a female student asked a group of males how the hair in her portrait looked, and a male student responded that it looked "like junk ass hair."

Students also compared portraits with one another, commenting on which looked better or more accurate. Positive comments emerged with students recognizing others who were doing what they considered good work. Comments such as "you should be an animator" and "look at _____'s. It's really good."

During interviews, something I asked students was what did they and their peers talk about while working on their portraits? Most students told me that their peers gave a lot of opinions about what they should do in their portraits. These opinions ranged from what they should fix or redraw to what was good and looked like them to even the idea that they should draw a mask instead of having to draw their facial features.

Making Fun of Self

In many instances, students made comments that were self-derogatory. Students made comments about their drawing abilities or how they looked. Students often commented on the difficulty of drawing certain parts of the face, particularly the nose, and ears. The following are comments students made during the art-making process that I categorized as making fun of self: "This looks terrible, and yes, I do have big ears"; "I just broke the

mirror”; “Why am I so ugly”; “I will attempt to draw my very girl looking face”; “I look Chinese, look at the eyes”; and “mine looks like a girl that had plastic surgery”.

The making fun of self-comments was consistently seen throughout the art-making process and seemed in contrast to students seeking validation. Often students made fun of themselves as a response to a comment by a peer about their portrait. I frequently observed that when students were given a negative comment or feedback on the accuracy of their portrait, a typical response was to make fun of their portrait.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivators that influenced students’ self-depictions arose in the way students wished to be viewed by others, and in students’ backgrounds, including familial and cultural. I characterized how students responded to these motivators as seeking validation.

Familial and Cultural Influences

In this study, the majority of the students came from Bangladeshi and Hispanic American households. Throughout the interviews, one of the questions I asked was, who is an influence in your life? In response to this, all students discussed their families to varying degrees. As a part of the discussion concerning families, many students addressed the fact that their parents immigrated to the U.S. and that they were proud of how hard their parents worked.

Seeking Validation

Throughout the four weeks, I consistently observed students engaging in behavior that I characterized as seeking validation. Primarily this stemmed from students asking other students their opinions about their self-portraits. They often asked me if they were doing a good job and if their drawing looked nice. I recorded that students asked me if their portrait “looked good” a total of sixty-seven times over four weeks.

One class engaged in an interesting conversation in which one boy student started the 'ugly meter.' The student started off the conversation with his table mates by posing the question, "What's my ugly meter? Out of 10." He held up his portrait to display to the rest of the table, which immediately sparked a conversation with students throughout the class, picking up on the 'ugly meter.' The boy student who started the conversation wanted the approval of one girl student. He asked her, "Hey, _____, what do you rate me? A six?" She replied a 1/10, to which several students claimed that he got "roasted." A second female student chimed in, "And you voted mine a two? Have you seen yours?"

During the second week of the project, in which students were completing the drawing portion, many students sought reassurance as they worked through different facial features. In fact, students consistently wanted reassurance as they drew facial features such as noses, eyes, and hair that they were doing a good job. Comments such as, "do I look better now?" and "is this hair good" were heard from multiple students and accompanied by students holding their artworks up for peers to see. Depending on their peer's responses to these questions, students reacted differently. Positive commentary caused students to continue with their work. Conversely, negative commentary led to hesitation and questioning. For example, when one student was working on drawing their ears he said "should I erase it, my ears?" During the project's first two weeks, when students were working on the drawing portion of their self-portraits, I noted several instances in which students erased parts of their work based on peer comments.

Alterations to Physical Features

Due to extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, student participants in this study altered their physical appearances in self-portraits. Skin color, eyes, hair, and physique were the alterations that emerged during data analysis. Further aspects of the self-portraits that spoke to students' self-identity include the background imagery, clothing and accessories, inclusion

and/or exclusion of facial masks, and where the students were seated in relation to peers.

Skin Color

My examination of students' artworks showed a trend that most students were depicting themselves in skin tones that were lighter than they actually were (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Self-Portraits with Skin Color Alterations





Out of 30 participants, 23 students, or 76.6% altered their skin color to a lighter tone. One participant altered their skin tone to a darker tone. As observed in Chapter 3, students were provided with multiple paint colors, and I demonstrated mixing colors when introducing the unit.

When conducting interviews, I first asked students if there were things in their portraits that were inaccurate or did not look like them. Seven participants mentioned that their skin color was not correct, and it was something they pointed out to me. I did not ask about skin color in particular; however, when asking follow-up questions, students were hesitant to engage in the discussion. Despite being given ample time and rephrasing the

question, students were reluctant to provide detailed information about their skin color. I observed an overall unwillingness among most students to engage in a discussion on this topic. However, there was one exception, student two (refer to Figure 5, first picture, row one), who expressed a preference for lighter skin tones, considering them more attractive. Additionally, I observed changes in hair color among many students, despite most of them having black hair. In their completed self-portraits, I noticed that several students depicted themselves with brown or light brown hair, indicating a desire for hair color change as well. In the sense of changing skin and hair color, the most striking is student nineteen because her changes to her portrait are reflected by the influencer, Emma Chamberlain. In contrast to viewing a portrait of student nineteen, if one was not informed, they may think they are viewing a portrait of Emma Chamberlain. Yet, when asked about this, student nineteen affirmed that she knew what she looked like and confirmed the accuracy of her self-portrait. During the introductory week of the self-portrait unit I modeled how to begin a self-portrait and a class discussion took place about what a self-portrait is. Within that discussion the students and I defined a self-portrait as a drawing or painting of one's self and what they look like.

Student six (see Figure 5, first portrait from the left on row 3) was a ten-year-old female student. Her parents emigrated from Bangladesh, while she and her four siblings were born in California. I noticed when observing her during the work period that she spent a long-time mixing colors. When mixing colors, I noticed that she referenced her palm to check the color. Changes to her physical appearance that I noticed included that she both drew and colored her hair straight, while it is curly in reality. Her skin tone is lighter in her portrait than it actually is, and she also added lipstick to the portrait. Throughout her interview, I asked her what she felt her portrait represented her. While answering the question, she elucidated the physical attributes and noted that she really liked her hair

texture and that it flowed nicely, although she also noted that the color was not quite right. Almost offhand, student six said, “but the skin color is about right, I suppose” (personal communication, October 12, 2021). I followed up by asking her to further explain, to which she said the color is a bit light and not quite right.

Student twenty-five (figure 5, row 4, picture 4) is a ten-year-old female student. When asked about her self-portrait, she said it did not look like her. She did not like the face. In particular, she said that other students told her that her head was too big. She said she kept working on it to make it smaller and smaller. She was happy with her skin color and eyes but felt that her lips were too pink. To create her skin color, she explained that she took orange, in addition to the skin color paint set provided, and a little bit of brown to make the color. She did not use the mirror as a reference when mixing her skin color paint but instead looked at the palm of her hand as a guide. I noticed that her skin color was lighter than it was in her self-portrait.

Student thirteen (figure 5, row 5, first picture) altered her skin color in her portrait to be lighter. Although I did not closely observe her throughout the entire process, I remember that she initially painted only her cheeks with a fleshy, pink tone, leaving the rest of her face the color of the paper. On the second day of painting, I noticed that she decided to use the same cheek color on the rest of her face, although there was a lighter patch on her forehead. It appeared that she had either painted it pink and added a white highlight or attempted to attempt to modify her hairline by covering up some of the hair with white paint.

Eyes Color and Features

Seven participants in this study made physical alterations to their eyes. All of them chose to make their eyes a lighter color than their actual eye color, and one student even added tears to their expression. When asked about the reasons for these changes, responses

varied from liking the lighter color to being influenced by friends who had similar eye color in their self-portraits, to making mistakes with color choices while painting.

Figure 6 *Self-Portraits with Alterations to Eyes*



When specifically asked to discuss different features of the portrait that they may have made changes to, student two (see Figure 6, the second picture on the left from row one) focused on the eyes. Student two said that their eyes did not represent her because “I have like a little bit darker color” (personal communication, October 5, 2021). Student two explained that she likes the lighter color “because I think it’s pretty.” Further, student two also mentioned that she “put a bit of brown in her hair when speaking about her hair.” Student two expounded upon the fact that her mom has brown hair and some of her friends have brown hair, and she likes it.

A student who made alterations to his eyes, because he preferred the color, was student nine (see Figure 6, third picture from the left on row one). He is an eleven-year-old

male student from the United States, and his parents are from Mexico. When discussing whether his portrait was realistic or not, student nine had this to say about his eye color, “Well, I put my eyes as blue because I always wanted blue eyes” (personal communication, October 12, 2021). He followed this up by saying that he felt it would look good on himself and that the idea was his own. Within my field notes, I also documented an instance when he showed others his blue eyes. Upon observing my students, I witnessed a direct change in three students’ portraits because of peer interaction. Student nine (see Figure 6, third picture from the left, row one), student ten (see Figure 6, fourth picture from the left, on row one), and student twenty (see Figure 6, fifth picture from the left on row one) chose their eye color after having an interaction with the students sitting around them. Student nine begins the conversation by saying, “I think I am going to color my eyes blue.” To which student ten responds, “Man you don’t got blue eyes. Why are you gonna do that?” Student nine says, “I know I don’t got blue eyes (pause) I just want to. Because I think it looks good” (personal communication, October 6, 2021). When collecting the artworks, the following week, I observed that other students in the same table group as the student mentioned earlier had also added blue color to their eyes. This was a clear example of students modifying their physical appearance based on the actions of their peers.

Student twenty (see Figure 6, fifth picture from the left on row one) was seated at the same table as student nine. When I asked about the blue eyes in her self-portrait, she pointed out that she was not happy with the eyes in her self-portrait. She intended to use black paint but inadvertently used blue paint and could not fix it. She also stated that her neck was too long. Peers pointed that out to her as well during the art-making process. When I inquired further about whether she intentionally made her eyes blue, she reiterated that it was a mistake and not because other students were doing it. However, while observing her table during this interaction that focused on eye color, I noted in my field notes that she did not

actively participate in the conversation about eye color, but she kept looking up at the other students' portraits and deliberately applied blue paint to her own self-portrait. This behavior was inconsistent with her earlier statement during the interview process where she claimed that painting her eyes blue was unintentional. It was a mistake; what I observed was that she intentionally painted her eyes blue.

Another student whose eyes were an alteration in his portrait was student thirty-one (see Figure 6, fourth picture from the left on row one). He explained his eye's depiction as a mess up with coloring. He pointed out that he messed up the coloring, particularly near the eyebrows. His eyebrows were too thick, and his friends told him that he had messed up. Student thirty-one said about his friends, "they were telling me their opinions, and they were telling me what I should do to make it look better." Student thirty-one reported that his friends said, "wait for next week to paint over it, and that's what I did. They also gave me the idea for the mask"(personal communication, October 6, 2021). Student thirty-one took his peer's advice on trying to correct his eyebrows, which resulted in the black mixing with the peach paint color.

Student thirty (see Figure 6, first picture from the left, on row one), student eleven (see Figure 6 first picture from the left, on row two), and student fifteen (see Figure 6, second picture from the left, on row two) all chose to show their eye color as lighter brown than they are but when asked in the interview they said that they were satisfied with the eye color in their portraits and they said it was accurately depicted. During observations, I did not record any instances of students fifteen and thirty discussing eye color during the work period. However, I did observe that student eleven frequently looked at her friend, student twelve's artwork (see Figure 4, third picture from the left, on the fourth row). Whenever student twelve completed a step in her self-portrait, student eleven would then work on the

same step. Specifically, I noticed that student eleven copied the tears from student twelve's artwork.

Overall, out of the seven students who made changes to their eyes, three students chose blue eyes, and four had light brown eyes. All seven students had dark brown eyes and utilized a mirror during this aspect of the portraits.

Hair Style and Color

Hair alterations fell into a similar pattern as eyes and skin color, with twelve students altering their hair, primarily by lightening the color. A difference, though, was that some students also changed their hair texture and style. Seven of the students changed their hair color to a lighter shade, and five students changed either the style or texture of their hair.

Figure 7

Self-Portraits with Alterations to Hair





Student nineteen (see Figure 7, the first picture on row one) discussed her hair in terms of both color and texture. When interviewing her, one question I asked her was what parts of her portrait she was happy with and what parts would she change. In response, she said, “Well, I think my hair, my hair doesn’t look like that. It’s kinda different.” (personal communication, October 6, 2021). To which I probed “How is it different than yours? She responded, “My hair is curly and a little bit darker but sometimes I straighten it. Not now. And my hair color is lighter. I like that better when it’s lighter.”

When asked how she felt about how her hair turned out in her portrait, Student twenty (see Figure 7, row one picture, second picture from the left) commented, “I like it. It looks like my hair” (personal communication, October 13, 2021). I noticed that her hair is curly and was tied in the back for each day of the study, and much longer than how she depicted it. When I tried to probe she did not offer much feedback, but I noticed how different her hair looks in her portrait from in person.

Student twenty-eight (see Figure seven, row one, third picture from the left) was another student whose hair color, style, and texture were changed in his portrait. He depicted himself with straight, light brown hair, whereas, his hair is shorter, black, and curly. When asked about his hair in the self-portrait, he only mentioned that the color was not right and admitted to making a mistake. I also observed in my field notes that his chosen hairstyle was

similar to the student sitting next to him, and he initially colored his hair black but later decided to cover it up with brown paint.

Students eighteen (see Figure 7, row one, the first picture on the right) and twenty-two (see Figure 7, row one, second picture from the right) sat next to each other and from their portraits, you can see the resemblance in hairstyles. However, the fact remains that neither one of these students have hairstyles like this in person. Student eighteen and student twenty-two seemed to get ideas and advice from one another during the portrait-making process. I observed them discussing what to include and not include in their portraits such as “I sometimes gel my hair when it is longer. I can’t gel it now because it’s short. If I could, I would gel it right up and I would look super fresh” (personal communication, September 13, 2021). To which the other student responded, “Yeah man, I gel my hair so much in the morning and my mom is like que paso mijo and then she gets mad at me for making a mess” (personal communication, September 13, 2021).

For many male students, adding facial hair to their self-portraits was a common practice in the initial stages, often drawn with a pencil and later either erased or covered up. During discussions, students would sometimes boast to each other about how they were starting to grow a mustache. In one instance, six students drew mustaches on their self-portraits and commented that this is how they would look when they are older. However, in the final stages of the portraits, four out of the six students who had initially drawn mustaches ended up adding a mask to their self-portraits. The remaining two students erased the mustache before painting. It is important to note that the portraits shown in Figure 7 do not include the students who drew mustaches, as the final portraits did not feature mustaches. These students are further discussed in the section titled Masks.

Student thirteen, (see Figure 7, row three, second picture) altered her hair color and style in addition to her skin color. When I observed her during the color mixing stage for her

hair I watched as she started off with brown, added black, and then went back to adding brown for the final color. She spoke in detail about lightening and straightening her hair. She stated in her interview, “My hair is pretty straight and in the picture, I made it even straighter. My hair is a little darker but sometimes it can look a bit brown and I didn’t want it to look too dark in the picture” (personal communication, October 2021). When I asked her why she did not want her hair to look too dark in her picture or how would this impact her picture, she said, “I don’t know, maybe it wouldn’t be as pretty” (personal communication, October 2021). I clarified with her that she felt the dark hair is not pretty and she said, “I don’t know, I just like light hair better” (personal communication, October 2021). My last question for student thirteen was if she would change anything in her portrait if she had to do it again, for example, the hair and skin color. She shared that she liked those parts as they were but maybe a change would be that she would add a more detailed background.

Physique

Regarding physique, the self-portrait assignment was intended to depict students from the shoulders up. All students followed this directive, yet some still altered their size, height, or weight.

Figure 8

Self- portraits with Alterations to Physique



The alterations made to students' physiques revealed trends based on gender. For male students, per student discussion, they wanted to appear strong and tall. This was seen within the male students' self-portraits in Figure 6. Student four (see Figure 8, fourth picture from the left on row two) emphasized his size during his interview. He first mentioned during his interview that he was four feet and seven inches tall. When asked if his height was important to him, student four explained that "because if you're like small when you're in sixth grade, then people are gonna make fun of you" (personal communication, October 5, 2021). I also noticed in addition to changing his uniform polo to a hoodie, brand-name clothing was important to him. When I asked him what type of things he considered cool, he responded, "I like soccer, so soccer players are cool. I like their hair, and I like the clothing they wear like Adidas. Sporty-like things." Furthermore, he also mentioned during the interview that he and his younger brother always prefer to buy well-known brands like Adidas and Nike. Notably, he was the only student from Figure 8 who chose to redraw his self-portrait. In his second attempt, he added a hoodie and made his neck appear thicker. When asked about this he said, "I drew my head too big, so I wanted to redraw it clean."

Student three (see Figure 8, third picture from the left, on row one) also made a similar comment about his height. When asked why he chose to include most of his body in his self-portrait he responded, “you need to be tall to play some sports and be good. I like playing a lot of video games and making myself tall” (personal communication, October 5, 2021). During interviews, I sensed that some of the boy students were hesitant to discuss the physical changes they made to their physiques. When probed not all the boys provided a reason for why they changed their physique. The changes I noticed included students making themselves appear thinner and their heads appearing larger than their bodies in the portraits.

In contrast to male students, female students had less discussion concerning their physiques. During my observations of the work period, I noticed that female students spent a significantly longer time drawing the bodies of their portraits. Three students drew their bodies much smaller compared to their heads in the portraits. However, during interviews when I asked the female students to discuss their portraits, none of them mentioned their body size or head size as something that seemed inaccurate. I did not follow up on this during the interviews as I did not want to make the students feel uncomfortable. Student twenty (see Figure 8, second picture from the left, on row one) did mention that her neck was too long. I followed up with her to see if her peers had pointed out anything else in her portrait and she said, “No, but I think the shoulders are too small too” (personal communication, October 13, 2021).

Clothing

School uniforms are required at the school in which his study was conducted; however, the students in Figure 9 chose to depict themselves in clothes other than uniforms. Overall, no students represented themselves in a school uniform top (collared blue, yellow, or white top), although one student did include a school sweatshirt.

Figure 9*Self-Portraits with Alterations to Clothing*

I observed a trend among male students in depicting themselves in sports gear or jerseys in their portraits. Brands such as Adidas, Nike, and Hollister were commonly described as nice or cool by the participants. Additionally, these brands were discussed by the students as being associated with official soccer teams. Hollister was another brand that was often represented in the portraits of male students. Student three (see Figure 9, the third picture from the left on row one) said that Hollister is a store he frequently shops at with his parents, and he feels it is a nice brand to wear and give as gifts. Student nineteen (see Figure

9, the fifth picture from left on row two) had written the words “no” and “yes” on his shirt. When asked to explain, he said that it was a shirt that he had at home that he really liked to wear. Student twenty-four (see Figure 9, the third picture from the left on row three), who depicted a blue angry bird on his shirt, said the same thing. He said he liked the movie *Blues* with blue angry birds and had the shirt at his house.

Student twenty-seven (see Figure 9, the first picture on row two) included the words “not an artist” on his t-shirt. When asked about these words, student twenty-seven told me that he was unsure what he meant but did not think his artwork was very good.

The female students faced difficulties in expressing their clothing choices, as observed from the seating chart and my observations. In Figure 9, I noted that the two students seated next to each other (first and second pictures from the left on row one) copied the idea of wearing tank tops from each other. On the other hand, student six was able to explicitly express her clothing choice by detailing the Earth she drew on her shirt. She explained that she drew the Earth on her shirt because she cares about the environment and feels that the Earth is deteriorating. She wants to do her part in helping to heal the Earth.

Student thirty is a ten-year-old, male student from the United States and his parents are from Guatemala. His favorite sport is soccer and he plays on a team outside of school. During the art-making process, he used the mirror, except when doing his eyes. When asked about his role models and influences he said, soccer players. His favorite soccer player is Cristiano Ronaldo. I asked him why he chose to go with the outfit he is wearing in his self-portrait. In response, student thirty said, “I mainly wear Nike a lot” (personal communication, October 2021).

During the interview, the student also mentioned that the eyes and skin color in his portrait were not exactly accurate. He mentioned that he did not mix colors but instead chose the closest colors that he felt resembled his eyes and skin tone. He ended up selecting lighter

colors for both the eyes and skin. Upon being asked why he didn't choose a darker color that matched his actual skin tone, he explained that he didn't think it would look good. He also included a mask in his portrait because he wanted to convey that the ongoing pandemic was still a relevant issue.

Masks

The choice to wear a mask in their self-portraits was something that stemmed from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 10

Self-Portraits with Inclusion of Masks





Two different trends emerged concerning the choice of masks in portraits.

Eleven out of thirty students, or thirty-six percent, chose to represent themselves with masks. Out of the eleven students, five specifically stated they wanted to keep their masks on because of Covid-19. They felt it was essential to draw a mask because it was a part of their life, and they felt they should express that they need to wear a mask to be safe and responsible.

The other six students who drew themselves with masks were not wearing masks during the work period but chose to add them to their portraits either because it was easier than drawing noses and lips or because they observed their tablemates doing it. In addition, six students drew mustaches in the drawing portion of their portraits and commented that this is what they would look like when they are older. In the final stages of the portraits, four out of the six students who drew mustaches on themselves ended up adding a mask to their portraits. Students ten (see Figure 10, second picture from the left, on row one), twenty-nine (see Figure 10, the first picture on row one), twenty-eight (see Figure 10, third picture from the left, on row one), and twenty-seven (fourth picture from the left, on row one) covered their mustaches with masks.

Three of the eleven students chose to draw the mask they wore during class. Six of the students were not wearing a mask during class but chose to add them to their

portraits. Many students chose to opt out of drawing lips and noses by adding a mask (see Figure 10, the first picture from left on row three). Student nineteen said, “I ran out of time and drew a mask instead of lips and nose because it’s quicker” (personal communication, October 13, 2021). To this, I posed the question, “What part of drawing the nose and lips was difficult for you?” She responded, “I don’t know. It just didn’t look right.” When the interview ended, I questioned her, “What would you change if you had more time, and why?” Student nineteen responded, “I like how it looks. That’s how I look.”

Student three is a ten-year-old male student. He was born in Georgia, and his parents are from Mexico. When asked about his likes and dislikes, he immediately stated that he did not like Covid-19. When asked why student three replied, “it destroyed my life. It killed my grandmother” (student three, personal communication, October 5, 2021). Student three frequently discussed the Covid-19 pandemic with his peers during class and seemed to constantly have it on his mind.

Student twenty-seven (see Figure 10, the fourth picture from the left in row one) had words written on his mask and images. The words read “sus” and “no one cares!!!” He also included a smiling sun and a smiling robot on his mask. He did not wear a mask with these words or images on them. During his interview, I asked about these words and images on his mask. He told me they were just designs, and he was unsure why he wrote them. During observations, I notice that he inserts the word sus into many of his comments. Additionally, when he disagreed with a peer, he often would end the conversation with the comment “no one cares.”

I also observed that many students faced challenges when drawing their mouths and eyes. Erasing and making corrections were frequent occurrences, and six out of the eight students in Figure eight expressed difficulties in this area. After discussing with their tablemates, they decided that adding a mask to their portraits would be easier than

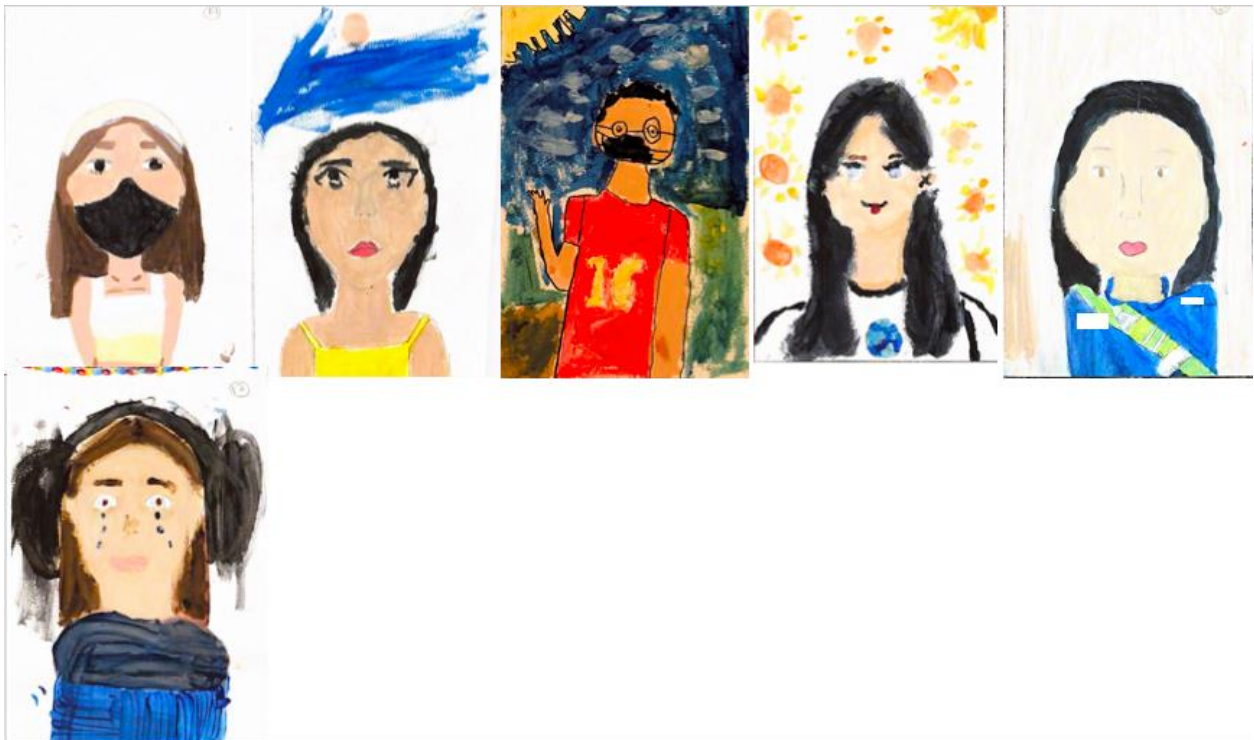
completing the facial features. Student thirty-one specifically mentioned that he struggled with drawing his nose and mouth, he was suggested to draw a mask instead. When more information was sought, he revealed that drawing and painting a mask was easier for him than getting the nose and mouth right. His decision was influenced by feedback from his peers about how his mouth and nose looked in his drawing, and their suggestion to use a mask instead.

Accessories

The students in Figure 11 added accessories to their self-portraits and detailed their reasoning behind their additions.

Figure 11

Self-Portraits with Accessories Added



Student twelve (see Figure 11, second picture from the left on row two) is a ten-year-old female. Within her portrait, she included several features, including tears, headphones,

and LED lights. When asked about the marks on her face, student twelve said that “I am crying because sometimes I feel like depressed. And that’s me, so I wanted it to be on my picture” (student twelve, personal communication, October 6, 2021). For the headphones, she enjoys gaming and wears the headphones while playing video games. The LED lights were an added feature to her portrait because she had LED lights in her room at home. She had a difficult time when drawing the face of her portrait.

When I observed student twelve during the art-making process, I noticed that she was sitting next to another student who drew tears on her portrait. Student twelve then added tears to her own portrait. Student twelve has black hair and darker skin than is shown in her portrait. Her portrait more closely resembles her friend, who she was seated next to, except for the added features of headphones and LED lights.

Student three (see Figure 11, third picture from the left on row one) When discussing who are his role models and influences, he credited Jake from the Kubz Scouts as an influence. Jake from the Kubz Scouts has a YouTube channel, and his channel provides reviews and recordings of himself playing video games. This is also shown in his portrait with the accessories that he has added. When asked about the number on his shirt, student three detailed, “I was playing videogames and I decided, and you had to choose and they let you customize your avatar and I was like Im’a go and put on my hat and my gloves, and my glasses and you can be creative in the game’ (student 3, personal communication, October 5, 2021). When asked if his portrait was realistic, he said, “it’s customized. Like from my avatar.” Student twenty-five, depicted in Figure 11 as the fifth picture from the left on row one, shared that she chose to include her safety patrol belt and school shirt as accessories in her portrait. She expressed pride in being a safety patrol and wanted others to see it in her artwork. In addition to her accessory choices, she also depicted herself with makeup.

Similarly, student six in Figure 9, depicted as the fourth picture from the left on the first row, also included makeup in her portrait. For the lipstick, student six informed me that she was attending a party after school and wanted to begin getting ready early.

Background

Students included various things in the backgrounds of their portraits. General things included in students' backgrounds included favorite colors and sports. The setting of many students' backgrounds was their bedrooms.

Figure 12

Self-Portraits with Backgrounds



While observing, I noticed that many students added a background if they were done earlier than the other students. For some, there seemed to be a lot of thought behind what

they were including and for others, they painted the background with solid colors just to have it painted. Some of the students included a background only to cover mistakes and paint spills. The most detailed explanations of the backgrounds were provided by students who included their bedrooms. To illustrate, student twelve (see Figure 12, the fifth picture from the left on row two) student nine (see Figure 12, third picture from the left on row one), and student seventeen (see Figure 12, fourth picture from the left on row three) included aspects of their bedrooms. Student twelve included the LED lighting that she had used to decorate her bedroom. She said that it was her favorite part of her room and that her dad installed them while we were learning virtually from home because she was spending a lot of time in her bedroom. Students nine and seventeen described the decals and wall décor they had in their bedrooms. They carefully selected these decorations and it made them happy, so they wanted this to be shown in their portraits.

The outdoors and sports were a common background chosen for male students. The backgrounds did not show specific locations, but the intent was to show that they liked being outdoors and playing sports with their friends. Student twenty-two (see Figure 10, the second picture from the left, on row two) drew green scenery as his background because he said that he likes to meet with his friends outside after school and play soccer. Student twenty-six (see Figure 10, the first picture on row three) had similar feedback and he said that he liked to be outside after school with his apartment friends.

Review

Chapter four reviewed the findings of this study, major changes in self-expression in the areas of physical appearance and background details. Overall, students altered their self-portraits due to interactions with students with whom they were nearby. These alterations were shown through physical changes to skin color, hair, eyes, and physique. Additionally, students represented themselves by including background imagery, clothing, accessories,

and face masks in their portraits. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivators were the reasons student participants gave behind the alterations.

5 DISCUSSION

In Chapter 5, I build upon my data from Chapter 4 to discuss this study's theme in relation to this study's research questions and purpose. I also draw parallels to previous research, highlight gaps in the literature, and present considerations for changes in practice and future research.

Summary of the Study

This study was derived from my experiences as an art teacher. Within previous units of self-portraiture, I questioned students' choices when depicting themselves. These original questions started with noticing students changing physical features, most notably alterations to skin color. These experiences were a source of motivation for the design of this study and the development of its research questions. I designed this study to investigate students' representations of their identities through self-portraits and answer the following research questions:

The main questions of this study are as follows:

What is the influence of peer interaction during the making of self-portraits?

There are three sub-questions under the main research question:

First, how do student interactions influence the portrait-making process?

Secondly, why might students choose to modify their self-portrait?

Thirdly, how do students interact during self-portrait making?

Through my study, I was able to collect thirty student self-portraits and examine two classes' work for over a month on the development of self-portraits. I aimed to investigate peer influence on student decision-making while representing themselves through portraits and how students represented their inner selves within their portraits.

Findings Overview

The research question of this study, "What is the influence of peer interaction during the self-portrait-making process?" was addressed through the findings that demonstrated how peer-interaction specifically impacted students' self-portraits. As children interacted with their peers during the art-making process, they observed and learned from the positive feedback received for certain components of their self-portraits, leading them to repeat or duplicate those behaviors. Conversely, when students received negative feedback, they were more likely to erase or avoid repeating certain drawings based on their peers' feedback.

One of the project's goals was for the students to create realistic self-portraits. During the first week I discussed what a self-portrait was with the students and the goal for students was to utilize their mirrors to draw what they saw I noticed that during peer interaction, students altered their image, or some aspects of realistic representation were changed due to peer interactions and intrinsic beliefs, such as whether light skin color is better or prettier. The question then became whether these were realistic self-portraits derived from inner perception or even if they could be categorized as realistic self-portraits because of the change's students made within the social environment of the classroom. Some aspects not seen in a mirror, such as background imagery, accessories, and the current social context of the Covid-19 pandemic, were also represented within the self-portraits.

The findings of this study were consistent with the theoretical framework of social interaction theory, which emphasizes how individuals interpret and respond to signals from others. In particular, interactionist motivation theory, which posits that individuals may act to confirm their identity when they are unable to do so, was evident in this study. Students in this study were observed changing their portraits to please their peers, seeking validation and feedback during the art-making process. This behavior was similar to the findings of Collins

and Sandhill (1996), where students took into account the dynamics of the classroom or table group they were working in and made adjustments accordingly.

Adjustments students made to their self-portraits came in the form of changes to physical characteristics such as skin color, hair color, eye color, and physique. Additional aspects of the student self-portraits that were impacted by peer interaction included the choice of background, accessories, and the inclusion of facial masks. Through interviews, student participants revealed some intrinsic reasons for how they chose to depict themselves but there was much hesitation when it came to discussing physical changes to skin, hair, and eyes. Research shows these reasons often came from their familial and cultural experiences (Jackson et al., 2006; Campos Vasquez & Medina-Cortana, 2016).

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, along with other current social events, also influenced how students represented themselves in their self-portraits. This aligns with the concept of tangential visibility, which involves critically reflecting on how social events impact self-representation and considering alternative ways to depict oneself (Grushka, 2008). Moreover, tangential visibility recognizes the importance of social, historical, and cultural contexts in shaping portraits and other artistic representations.

Students made a choice when creating their self-portraits: added a face mask, or Covid mask, as the students referred to it. Student thirty acknowledged the Covid-19 pandemic as a reference for why he chose to draw his mask, while other students pointed out that it was easier to draw a face mask than to draw their facial features. Many students said that friends gave them that idea, spreading it throughout each class. Notably, the social event impacting how the students depicted themselves in this study was the Covid-19 pandemic. Twelve out of thirty students chose to include face masks in their self-portraits. Responses varied, but two trends emerged regarding why students included their face masks. The first started with a few students in each class who commented on how difficult it was to draw the

nose and mouth, accurately. The solution presented was to draw a mask instead because it was easier. I frequently heard students recommend to their peers that their mouth or nose did not look right and that they think a mask should be drawn instead. After several attempts and erasures, some students would give in and draw a mask. The second reason for drawing a face mask was what students saw in the mirror. As they used the mirror for guidance on their self-portrait, they chose to be realistic and draw what they saw in the mirror as closely as they could.

During the interviews conducted for this study, several students provided more in-depth explanations for including face masks in their self-portraits, citing the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their lives. As a case in point, one student revealed that the death of his grandmother due to the pandemic had profoundly affected him, and he constantly thinks about it. Other students expressed similar sentiments, describing the pandemic as a critical and serious situation, which influenced their decision to depict themselves wearing masks in their portraits.

The findings from Chapter 4 of this study revealed that students prioritized creating self-portraits that would be positively perceived by their peers, rather than focusing on accuracy and realism. Furthermore, it was observed that tween-aged students held perceptions of beauty and ideal aesthetics but engaging in conversations about these topics these topics was uncomfortable for them.

Positive Peer Response Over Realism

According to the findings of this study, designing a portrait that would evoke positive peer responses was more crucial than realistically depicting themselves. As the students interacted throughout the art-making process, they learned what received a positive response from peers and were likelier to repeat or duplicate the behavior. When students encountered negative feedback, they were more likely to erase or not repeat the behavior.

The notion that students prioritized creating portraits that would be positively received by their peers, rather than focusing on realism, aligns with the concept of interactional processes during social interaction, as proposed by Turner et al. (1974). The study findings revealed that students interpreted and responded to each other's behaviors, adjusting their own portraits accordingly. Students were in the drawing stages during the first week of portrait making. In one instance, students had difficulty with their portraits and then chose to make fun of another student, commenting that the student looked like Barack Obama. This instance emphasized how, within interactionist motivation theory, defense mechanisms kick in when a situation becomes unalterable (Erikson, 1978; Turner et al., 1988). The student to whom the comment was directed became upset and spent the remainder of the class erasing and redrawing his portrait multiple times. After the lesson, he made a point to emphasize to his peers that he had fixed his portrait and erased the bad parts. His focus had shifted from drawing himself to presenting a portrait that his peers would not make fun of. Research shows that youth compare themselves to peers as they interact in their social environments and adapt themselves based on feedback (Lease et al., 2020). Children who are not accepted tend to have more negative reactions and will adjust and change to receive what they deem an appropriate response, as seen in this example (Blair et al., 2016).

These adverse reactions frequently came as negative commentary towards others and making fun of themselves. Responses to these actions ranged from some students seeking validation of their portrait and others copying or mimicking their peers.

Peer comments were frequently directed at providing advice, with some students actively seeking out opinions while others received unsolicited feedback. Students predominantly responded to this advice in one of two ways. Firstly, some students challenged the feedback by making fun of their own or someone else's portrait, using humor

as a form of response. Alternatively, students engaged in erasing and adjusting their portraits based on the feedback, indicating a willingness to incorporate suggestions into their artwork.

Figure 13

Student Twenty-Three's Self-Portrait



One example of this instance was student twenty- three's discussion of the impact his interactions with peers had on the outcome of his portrait, He shared that his peers kept telling him that his portrait did not look like him and that he was messing it up. Specifically, he was referring to his eyebrows. His eyebrows were too thick, and his friends told him he had messed up. Student twenty- three said about his friends, "they were telling me their opinions, and they were telling me what I should do to make it look better." According to student twenty-three, his friends said, "wait for next week to paint over it, and that is what I did. They also gave me the idea for the mask," (personal communication, October 2021). Student twenty- three took his peer's advice on trying to correct his eyebrows, which, in turn, resulted in the black mixing with the peach paint color. Additionally, the student expressed that he encountered challenges in drawing his nose and mouth, leading to a suggestion from others to depict a mask instead. When prompted for further details, he explained that he found it more manageable to draw and paint a mask compared to accurately depicting his

nose and mouth. In response to peer feedback, he attempted to rectify his self-portrait but eventually abandoned the pursuit of portraying himself in a specific manner, and instead incorporated a mask onto his face to complete the project.

The findings of previous research suggest that individuals tend to analyze group situations and shape their self-representation based on group dynamics (Collins & Sandhill, 2006). The motivation to seek affirmation from peers in group settings can lead individuals to adapt to the group mindset, and this adaptability may vary across different settings (MacKinnon & Heise, 2010; Turner et al., 1994). In the present study, copying was identified as one form of how students displayed themselves differently in the context of peer interactions. Two situations come to mind that reinforce that students would instead portray themselves similarly to their peers than as their realistic depiction. The first instance was when student nine depicted himself with blue eyes. Student twenty was also seated at his table and upon listening to student nine discuss how nice blue eyes were; she then chose to color her own eyes the same (see below).

Figure 14

Students with Blue Eyes



During the interview session with student twenty, I inquired about the eye color in her self-portrait. She mentioned that she was dissatisfied with the eyes because she had

initially intended to use black paint but mistakenly used blue paint and was unable to correct it. She also acknowledged that her neck appeared too long, a comment that had been made by her peers during the art-making process. Interestingly, she did not mention the other student at her table group who had also painted his eyes blue initially. Another instance that emphasized how students based their decisions on peers was student twelve.

Figure 15

Peer Copying Portraits



When I observed student twelve during the art-making process, I noticed that she was sitting next to another student who drew tears on her portrait. Once the student next to her completed her portrait, student twelve then added tears to her portrait. Student twelve also has black hair and darker skin than is shown in her portrait. Her portrait more closely resembles the friend she was seated next to, except for the added features of headphones and LED lights. When asked about the marks on her face, student twelve said, "I am crying because sometimes I feel like depressed. And that's me so I wanted it to be on my picture" (personal communication, October 2021). With respect to the headphones, she enjoys gaming and wears the headphones while playing video games. The LED lights were an added feature to her portrait because she had LED lights in her room at home. She also stated that she had a difficult time when drawing the face of her portrait.

In both the aforementioned instances, the actions taken were different by gender. Research shows that the response to peers is different amongst genders. Gender differences that Lease et al. (2020) identified were that boys of any standing used ridicule and teasing more regularly than girls, and girls more frequently displayed pro-social behavior and positive assertions toward peers. Instead, they are more likely not to share or wait; they will simply adjust their behavior to match peer behavior. Farrell et al. (2016) also noted that boys were less likely to report their peers engaging in pro-social behavior than girls. In the examples mentioned above, the boy student initiated the conversation about his eye color and shared it with others, whereas the girl students in the eye color and tears instances simply took note of the situation and incorporated the features into their portraits without drawing attention to it. The following example also illustrates how a boy student expressed concern about being mocked, particularly regarding his height.

Figure 16

Student Four's Self-Portrait



Student four demonstrated a heightened awareness of his peers' perceptions while creating his self-portrait. During his interview, he mentioned that he was four feet and seven inches tall and wanted to appear taller in his portrait. He was mindful of potential ridicule from other students due to his smaller stature and sought to counteract that by depicting

himself as larger in his artwork. When asked if his height was vital to him, student four explained that “because if you’re like small when you’re in sixth grade then people are gonna make fun of you” (personal communication, October 2021). Student four may not have obtained his goal of appearing tall in his portrait, but he was clear that even though he was not tall in real life it was important to him to represent himself as tall within his portrait.

Figure 17

Student Three’s Self-Portrait



Student three had an interesting view on representing himself and what he chose to include in his portrait. Rather than focusing on himself as he looked in the mirror, he reflected on what he and his friends deemed cool: video games. Specifically, when asked if his portrait was realistic, he said that “it’s customized. Like from my avatar” (personal communication, October 2021). Student three gave himself accessories from his video game avatar and decided to present himself as he is seen in a video game. Besides discussing his preference for showing himself with video game accessories, student three also found it necessary to note that he included a Covid-19 mask. He stated that he did not like Covid-19. When asked why student three replied, “it destroyed my life. It killed my grandmother”

(personal communication, October 2021). Student three frequently discussed the Covid-19 pandemic with his peers during class and seemed to have it on his mind constantly.

Student three's thought process behind how he wanted to be viewed was illuminating because it revealed that he was representing himself as he wished to be seen by others and included aspects of video games that his peers approved of.

Self-Portraits or...

Building on the words of student three, the students in this study customized their self-portraits. As Grushka's (2008) study posits, self-portraits became expressive of social constructs and reflected how others would view them. Although this study's methodology defined self-portraits as an accurate depiction of one's self, student participants found it preferable to create an image they felt their peers would approve of. These changes manifested from intrinsic and extrinsic motivators as students worked to create self-portraits in the social environment of the school classroom. Changes appeared through physical characteristics and the inclusion of background imagery and accessories.

Perceptions of Beauty

The findings of Chapter 4 demonstrated that the tween-aged participants had certain ideals for beauty and what would be desirable in a portrait but talking about the idea of beauty and the personal aesthetics of their portraits was uncomfortable for many students. Specifically, students in this study showed tendencies to lighten both skin tones, eye and hair color.

Perceptions of beauty and what was aesthetically pleasing for students were difficult for students to express. The context of the study is essential to note in how this came to be. The context of this study played an important role in students' perceptions of racial identity and skin color. According to Jackson et al. (2006), the context of racial identity development is very important with families having an impact on perception. Additionally, Kemple

(2015) noted that how parents discuss racial identity impacts their thoughts. Within my study, the demographics were predominately Hispanic and Bangladeshi American students.

The idea that lighter skin is preferable has been ingrained in many children from a young age (Clark & Clark, 1947). From early research that revealed a preference for lighter skin tones among African-American children to more recent studies, such as Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina's (2018) investigation, the consistent finding that many students depicted their skin tones in self-portraits as several shades lighter than their actual complexion suggests a perception of an idealized skin tone.

Considering the demographics of the student participants, with most students being of Hispanic or Bengali backgrounds, research showed that this phenomenon occurs often. Campos-Vazquez and Medina-Cortina (2018) affirm that in parts of Central America, specifically Mexico, skin color is part of the social standing for their study. They contend that skin color impacts people's ability to advance in life. They also conducted surveys to support these claims. According to the results of these surveys, lighter skin and European features are preferable in Mexico because of Spanish colonialism. This was evident in the portraits created by students in this study, but overall engaging students in conversation about this was challenging. Many students alluded to a mistake or messed up when mixing colors, and the ones who did allude to making changes in skin color had difficulty expressing why. The following excerpts reveal student explanations or commentary on the lighting of skin and eye color.

Figure 18

Student Six's Self-Portrait



Student six was a ten-year-old female whose parents are from Bangladesh, while she and her four siblings were born in California. During the work period, I observed that she spent a long-time mixing the color. When mixing colors, I noticed she referenced her palm in order to check the color. Changes to her physical appearance included that she both drew and colored her hair straight. Her skin tone is lighter in her portrait than it actually is, and she also added lipstick to her portrait. Describing her physical attributes, she pointed out that she really liked her hair texture and that it flowed nicely, although she also noted that the color was not quite right. Almost offhand, student six then said, “but the skin color is about right I suppose,” (personal communication, October 2021). It was here that I sensed she had a thought to express. Upon being pressed further, she just stated that the color was a bit light and not quite right. This instance showed that the student had a clear thought process when deciding to paint her skin color but was unwilling to discuss her reasoning in detail. Research shows that familial and cultural perceptions of skin tones may have influenced her decision (Gernhardt et al., 2014). However, the environment of a school where the curriculum does not provide an opportunity for discussion of differences may not have been a comfortable place for her to express her thoughts.

Figure 19*Student Two's Self-Portrait*

Student two was one of the more expressive students concerning her eye and skin color choices. While analyzing her portrait, I noticed that her body was noticeably smaller than in actuality. She also has black hair and a darker skin tone than depicted. When asked to discuss different features of the portrait that she may have made changes to, she focused on the eyes. Student two said that the eyes did not represent her because, “I have like a little bit more darker color” (personal communication, October 2021). Student two clarified that she likes the lighter color, “because I think it’s pretty,” (personal communication, October 2021). Further, when speaking about her hair, student two also mentioned that she “put a little bit of brown in her hair,” (personal communication, October 2021). Student two elaborated that her mom has brown hair and some of her friends have brown hair, which she likes. Her responses did not delve too deeply into why she preferred lighter colors for her hair and eyes, but she was one of the most forthcoming participants in that she said she preferred lighter colors. It seemed that she attributed the lighter features to a positive aspect of individuals in her life such as friends and family members.

Student nine was another outlier in his discussion about eye color specifically.

Figure 20*Student Nine's Self-Portrait*

When discussing whether his portrait was realistic or not, student nine had this to say about his eye color, “Well, I put my eyes as blue because I always wanted blue eyes. I thought it would look good on me,” (personal communication, October 2021). Besides deciding to have blue eyes in his portrait, he also shared his decision with other members of his table group.

In my field notes, I documented the instance when he was showing others his blue eyes; the following week, when collecting artworks, I noticed that other students within his table group had also added blue to their eyes. This was a direct instance of students making a change to their physical appearance based on peers’ actions.

Figure 21*Students with Lighter Skin Color*



Both student twenty-five and student thirty explicitly shared that they felt their skin color looked better than if it had been a darker tone. When asked about other features in his portrait, he also mentioned that his eyes and his skin color were close but not quite right. He did not mix the colors and instead chose the colors he felt were the closest to him. He ended up choosing lighter colors for both the eyes and skin. When asked why he did not choose a darker one that was similar to him, he said that he did not think it would look good. He also included his mask because it showed that the pandemic was still ongoing.

When asked about her self-portrait, student twenty-five said it did not look like her. She did not like the face. She said other students told her that her head was too big. She said she kept working on it to make it smaller and smaller. She was happy with how her skin color and eyes turned out but felt that her lips were too pink. To create her skin color, she explained that she took orange, along with the skin color paint set provided, and a little bit of brown to make the color. She did not use the mirror as a reference to mix her skin color paint, but instead looked at the palm of her hand as a guide. This was something I observed multiple students doing, and as students six and nineteen stated, students used their palms as a reference when mixing colors. Most students in this study's palms were lighter than the rest of the skin on their arms or face. Something else that may have played a role in students' skin colors not being accurate was the percentage of students who did not use the

mirror during the painting portion of the project. A higher number of students used the mirrors while drawing, but many reported that they did not use the mirror for the painting portion.

Figure 22

Student One's Self-Portrait



Student nineteen had a dramatic change in appearance with her resemblance to a YouTube personality. Student nineteen was clear that she admired Emma Chamberlain and described her as an influence in her life. However, she was also pleased with the accuracy of her portrait. She shared that she liked how light her hair turned out, but I noticed that she wanted to avoid the questions about skin color. One of the main things I noted after her interview was her reluctance about wanting to talk about skin color and how she continuously paused. It seemed like she wanted to say something, but she was reluctant to tell me precisely what her thoughts were. I also noted that I was unsure if she was reluctant because she wanted to look like Emma Chamberlain and knew that her picture did not look like hers. Furthermore, she just wasn't comfortable verbalizing that.

This was similar for student thirteen. She had a lot of commentary concerning her hair color and texture and discussed that she preferred her hair lighter.

Figure 23*Student Thirteen's Self-Portrait*

When my questions shifted from speaking about hair color to skin color, she was less responsive to the questions and was unwilling to share her thoughts about the lightening of her skin. When I observed her during the art-making process, I could see the conflict going back and forth in her choices. I noticed that she had at first painted her hair fully brown at first and then added black to it. In the end, she went back with browner again, almost to make highlights. The paint dried dark but the mixture she worked to create was a brunette color.

Overall, students could express that they chose a lighter color, and it was apparent that extrinsic and intrinsic experiences informed these ideals. Nevertheless, almost all students were unwilling to discuss why they thought this.

Changes in Practice

To address the theme that peer interaction during the making of self-portraits contributes to poor identity construction, my recommendations take a critical multicultural approach (May & Sleeter, 2010) including increasing the diversity and cultural relevance of

teaching resources, schools being responsive to identity development, and action steps taken to inform students of the impacts of social media and consumerism.

In the art classroom, it is necessary to use a wide range of resources that showcase diverse cultures and artworks by artists from different backgrounds. This is particularly important when teaching self-portraiture, as it's essential to introduce students to artists who are culturally relevant to them and come from diverse backgrounds. This approach is based on social interaction theory, which suggests that students are more likely to adjust their artistic output and sense of identity to fit in with what they see and experience if they do not see themselves represented and their identities affirmed in the classroom (Turner et al., 1988). Multiple studies, including Clark and Clark (1947), Gernhardt et al. (2014), Lee (2012), and Seaton et al. (2009) emphasize the difficulties students of color face in heterogeneous schools and how they tend to identify with predominant preferences which are white skin and European features (Jones, 2018). Within Paragg (2015), it was even shown that the non-white aspects of an individual's identity were not considered Canadian, meaning they did not consider people of color to be a part of Canadian culture. This is of paramount importance in the art classroom, where if diversity is not represented in teaching, students of color may feel that they are outsiders. This outside feeling can contribute to the alteration of appearances. Specifically, in this study, even the discussion about skin color was something that students were hesitant to engage in. Providing opportunities for discussing diversity and exposure through different teaching materials and sample artists may help students feel more comfortable discussing the concepts of skin color. Once differences are acknowledged, the next step is for students to know that differences are okay and that everyone is a part of the school's environment. Once students feel their identity is affirmed, they may not need to alter how they portray themselves.

I suggest implementing a critical multicultural educational approach (May & Sleeter, 2010) in classroom curricula to expose students to diverse cultures, provide a representation of their own identities, and encourage recognition and discussion of cultural differences. Children are naturally curious about aspects such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features, and incorporating these elements into the curriculum can foster their understanding of diversity and promote inclusivity in the classroom (Kemple et al., 2015). Adult reactions to how students speak about color impact how students develop ideas concerning the identity and physical differences. Research also shows that tween-aged students' identities are influenced by peers, and minority students' identity development and self-appreciation can be influenced by the demographics of their environment (Jackson et al., 2006). A critical multicultural approach (May & Sleeter, 2010) to curricula can be a responsive approach to address the context in which students examine their identities in school settings.

The objectives of a critical multicultural education approach go beyond simply including diverse cultures in lessons and curricula. It seeks to transform educational practices and institutions by addressing the structural impacts that contribute to inequities among racial, linguistic, and religious minorities. While it is crucial to ensure that students from different cultural, racial, socioeconomic, and gender groups are treated equally within schools, a critical approach recognizes the need to address the underlying structures that perpetuate these inequities. This approach differs from a color-blind approach, as described by Kemple et al. (2015).

Utilizing a critical multicultural approach will promote more culturally responsive teaching practices and may tie to stronger identity development for tween-age students. As noted in Chapter 2, a school's demographics play a role in how students develop their racial identity. Many ideas of self-perception are shaped by peer interaction and the surrounding situation. Adding in an additional layer of critical multicultural education where students can

examine identity and have their own identities reinforced through curriculum may impact students' identity development by not having their development shaped as heavily by peers. Critical examination is needed of the structures in place that are influencing students' perceptions of beauty, including social media and consumerism. Change is needed within education to step further than acknowledging that individuals are different and open up space for a critical discussion of structures in place that promote inequities. Specifically, in my study the structural influences that promote the concept of lighter skin, hair, and eyes as being better need to be critically examined and acknowledged for change to begin. The first step is an acknowledgment that this occurs, and critical reflection is needed on making changes for the future. Research shows the impacts of consumerism on body image and Ivashkevich's (2009) study reinforces the impact on young girls' depictions of themselves. Her ethnographic study followed two girls through self-initiated self-portraits and drawings. The majority of topics drawn by the participants included beauty, fashion, and body image perpetuated through American consumerism. Relevant examples of the impacts of consumerism are shown below from students twenty-three and twenty-four.

Figure 24

Student Thirty's Self-Portrait



Within my study, brand names concerning sports gear were important for the boy students. Student thirty discussed his love of soccer and shared this is why he wears clothes with a Nike logo on them frequently. Most of the other boys in the fifth grade also wear Nike and other brand-names sporting gear along with their school uniforms. It was important for student thirty to have what was considered ‘cool’ clothing. This in turn was something that he wanted to be reflected in his self-portrait.

Clothing in general was an interesting choice for students during this project because of the school uniform requirement. Many students chose to portray themselves wearing something other than their school uniform. YouTube and certain influencers such as Emma Chamberlain impacted some of the students' choices of clothing. For example, student twenty-nine discussed in her interview how she enjoys YouTube and that influencers are role models for her. She modeled her clothes from her table mate, student one, who based her portrait off the YouTube influencer Emma Chamberlain.

Figure 25

Student Twenty-Nine's Self-Portrait



Apart from clothing, several female students incorporated makeup into their self-portraits and openly discussed it. Although the makeup was not easily visible in the portraits, interviews revealed that the students had indeed included elements such as lipstick, eyeliner,

mascara, and blush. Interestingly, some students spontaneously mentioned their addition of makeup without any prompting. For instance, when asked further about adding makeup student twenty-nine said that she likes to wear makeup at home and have fun trying out different things.

The importance placed upon consumer ideas, and the fact that they shaped the participant's drawings in this study are significant and should be taken into consideration when planning for classroom instruction of tween-aged students. Consumerism awareness is something that should be recognized at the elementary level and can be addressed through lessons or units in collaboration with school counseling. In addition to reviewing these topics with students, it is also important for teachers to be prepared for addressing these topics. Content and curriculum should not be taught in isolation and teachers should have the training to prepare them to meet the social and emotional needs of their students in addition to academics.

Future Research

When reflecting upon my study, I have several ideas for further research on this topic and the amendments I would make to my specific study. My study could be built upon in several ways. My recommendations for future research are threefold. First, I would recommend a similar study be conducted within schools of varying demographics. The student population at this study's site was predominately Hispanic, with a sizeable subgroup of Asian students. To expand this research, it would be beneficial to continue this study in more heterogeneous settings and to see the findings. A question for future studies, are students of color more likely to change their skin tone if they are in a minority setting? Another question is if this study was conducted with different procedures, such as limiting or eliminating peer interaction during the art-making process. I wonder how students would

describe their process for making choices on how to portray themselves and if the choices would be similar or different?

A second recommendation is to conduct a study focusing on how students view different aspects of social/media/consumerism and report how they feel and what it makes them think about themselves. My literature review discussed the impacts of consumerism, but a gap in the literature existed concerning student voices on the topic. Much of the research focuses on the psychological impact of consumerism but adding a student voice to the conversation would be enlightening.

A final recommendation for future research is to design a study focusing on tween-aged students and their concepts of beauty. It would be beneficial to design a study in different environments, where students may be in a homogeneous setting for some data collection and heterogeneous for others, and to engage students in discussion on beauty. Concerning beauty, a specific focus should be given to discussing colorism.

Specific amendments I would make to my study to gain further knowledge would be to make the self-portrait making a part of a larger unit. The unit would include lessons in addition to self-portrait making. Lessons would include a focus on identity and introduce artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds and self-portraits created in different genres including realistic and abstract. To enhance the self-portrait unit, I would suggest incorporating an anonymous survey before and after the unit to assess students' perceptions of beauty, specifically focusing on preferences related to skin color, eye shape, hair type, and body shape. Additionally, students could be encouraged to create multiple artworks as part of the unit, such as at least two portraits - one with a realistic approach and another with an expressive or abstract approach. In future studies, the self-portrait creation could be integrated into a larger unit that includes introductory lessons on artists from diverse backgrounds and self-portraits created in various media.

Considerations

When using artwork as part of the data collection, consideration for the participant's artistic ability should be allowed because they may unintentionally alter their depiction due to skill level, and the researcher may interpret the change as intentional. Student attendance could also have been an issue in this study, with students only coming to class once per week. Absences hindered the pacing of the artmaking process, observations, and collection of the self-portrait as an artifact for a few students.

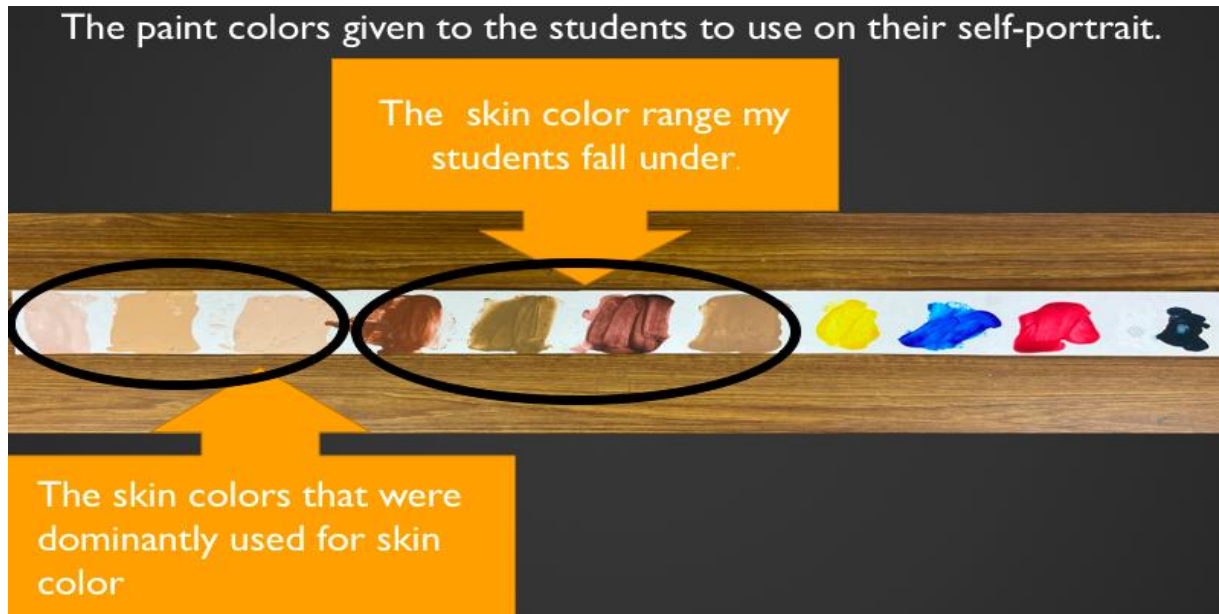
During this study, I was a complete observer, presenting a unique set of problems and benefits. At times it was hard to observe student participants during the teaching portion, yet audio recordings negated this. The setting was a natural classroom containing unexpected factors such as student reactions and responses. I actively participated, which made my identity known to the student participants. The Hawthorne Effect may have played a role in student behavior. The Hawthorne Effect implies that participants will change their behavior when they know they are being observed (Sedgewick & Greenwood, 2015). In this case, parents were contacted for permission, students gave either verbal or oral consent, and students were aware of the presence of audio recording devices. All these instances may have impacted student behavior.

Something notable about my study was that it focused on realistic self-portraits. Self-portraits can also be abstract. A question that might arise from my study is why the changes students might make in their portrait be considered realistic. I would argue that the color choices provided were skin tone and the students were choosing realistic-looking portraits and not abstract or expressionistic ones. For example, I chose blue because I was feeling sad that day. Their self-portraits looked like realistic people and the portraits made looked like realistic portraits with modifications to skin color. One statistic that I found very telling was that out of twenty-four students who changed their skin color, only one student made their

skin darker. This is 77% of students participating in the study lightening their skin tone. A visualization for the colors provided for painting (see Figure 25 below).

Figure 26

Visualization of Paint Colors Provided for Painting



Concluding Remarks

I originally started this research based on my experiences as an Art teacher. Throughout my career, I have taught in two elementary schools and conducted field experience during pre-service in multiple schools at different educational levels. The advantages of being a teacher of color and an immigrant are my relationship with the students and my understanding of their backgrounds/home lives. In particular, my Bangladeshi students had an easier time speaking with me about skin color in their portraits versus the Hispanic students. A con that may have arisen from myself being a teacher of color may be that I have some assumptions about students' experiences and home lives. During the course of this study, I had the opportunity of working in a school demographic that is almost all brown students. The largest demographic of students in my school is Hispanic students, followed by Bangladeshi students. This is a unique situation to have so

many Bangladeshi students and the Bangladeshi students are open to me and are excited to discuss Bangladesh and ask me questions such as where specifically in Bangladesh I am from, and what movies I like. This is a different experience for me when compared to my previous school with mostly White students. In my previous school, the students were less interested in my background and less interested in communicating with me about subjects outside of school.

I had already seen that students were changing colors during student teaching, and I already had this experience. It wasn't that I was expecting to see the exact results but what did surprise me was the impact of the interaction with peers. It was not just children changing eye color, skin color, and hair on their own. The interaction part was a big part of it. A lot of the changes were made as a reaction to peers whether it was commentary or interpreted reactions for their peers. I learned that it seemed most important to students that they please their peers with what they do. Something else I noticed is that my original experiences with these instances happened in schools that were primarily White, while in this study's setting, almost all my students were from families of color. I had originally thought that racial minority students were influenced by White culture in school, but in my study skin, hair, and eye lightening was still heavily prevalent. This reinforced the idea that the ideas of skin, hair, and eye lightening are ideas that students are exposed in multiple ways including media and consumerism. This made me reflect on my personal experience as child in Bangladesh where Fair and Lovely skin lightening cream was sold and advertised.

Something that I did not think about going into this research study was how much of an impact the Covid-19 pandemic would have on students' self-portraits. Even though it is a significant event and impacted daily life and school procedures, I did not think that it would become a part of how students view/express themselves. I wish had accounted for the idea of facial masks as a way to avoid drawing facial features. If I could, I would like to have gone

into greater depth about the choice of representing themselves with face masks, versus not wanting to draw certain features.

This research took me through the Covid-19 pandemic and over the course of two years to complete became very clear to me that certain aspects of appearance like skin color are uncomfortable for students and teachers to discuss. The choices made by participants in this study were informed by their personal experiences and the social environment of the classroom and several moments in the study left a lasting impression on me including student nine's steadfastness in depicting himself with blue eyes, the distress caused to a student when his portrait was made fun of, and the difficulty and hesitation from students when it came to discussing the lightening of the skin. In the end, I came to understand that for tween-age students, gaining peer approval of their representation was the driving motivation behind choices in their self-portraits. In addition, students of color are being taught that ideals of beauty portrayed through media are correct and they are being shown these concepts without them being addressed. From a social justice standpoint, it must be acknowledged that the ideas of beauty portrayed through social media and consumerism are filtered through a White lens. With this in mind, bringing conversations concerning colorism, consumerism, social media, and concepts of critical multicultural education are my priorities in the classroom and beyond.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The following questions will be asked for selected participants. Additional questions will be asked concerning each participant specific artwork.

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. Who are your biggest influences and why?
3. Were you able to complete your self-portrait? If not can you tell me what you would have liked to add?
4. Tell me what are the important things you want to show people through your self-portrait?
5. Can you point out and describe things you have included within your self-portrait that are important to you?
6. Why did you choose to include what you have in the background of your portrait versus something else?
7. What did you talk about with other students in the class during the time you were making your self-portrait?
8. Please share why you chose to change this part of your portrait? (Interviewer will refer to instances of erasure, crossing out or starting over)
9. Is there anything you would wish to add to your portrait?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share about your self-portrait?

Appendix B

Observation Protocol

Purpose: The purpose of this observation is to examine what the influence of peer interaction is during the making of self-portraits. The following situations will be looked for and recorded within the observation protocol:

Observation Protocol				
Observation Category	Observed Action	Frequency (number of times occurred)	Description of event	Notes/Comments
Student Actions	Erasure			
	Coloring Over			
	Covering/Hiding Artwork			
	Starting Over			
	Adding text			
	Adding background imagery			
	Adding expressions			
	Nonverbal Gestures			
	Student Dialogue	Positive Commentary		
Negative Commentary				
Students Sharing				
Accuracy				
Gender				
Race				
Stereotypes				

	Recommendations			
	Comparison			
	Concerning background imagery/accessories			
Student Response to Dialogue	No action taken			
	Verbal response			
	Nonverbal response			
	Alteration to self-portrait			

Appendix C

Lesson Plan

Subject	Visual and Performing ARTS	Grade	5 th
Date(s)		Supporting Unit and #	1
Standard(s) <i>(Content, WIDA, SIOP, etc.)</i>	<p>VA5.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of approaches to engage in verbal and/or written art criticism</p> <p>VA5.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.</p> <p>c. Create representational works of art from direct observation (e.g. landscape, still life, portrait).</p>		
Essential Question(s)	<p>What is a self-portrait?</p> <p>How can I represent myself through self-portraits?</p> <p>How can I represent my identity visually?</p>		
Content	Self-portrait	Skills	Drawing, coloring
Vocabulary	Self-portrait, proportions		
Engagement or Pre-Instructional Activity	Class discussion using essential questions.		

Opening	<p>Explanation of project</p> <p>Introduction to identity. The teacher will pose the question of what is a self-portrait to students?</p> <p>Teaching point- A self-portrait is a painting, drawing, or photograph of yourself that usually focuses on the head, face, and shoulders. It is also a representation of yourself, not just on the outside but a reflection of who you are on the inside.</p> <p>Your goal of this project is to create a self-portrait that represents you.</p> <p>The teacher will demonstrate how to draw a self-portrait using a mirror and how to draw the correct proportions of a face.</p> <p>During this project you will have a mirror as a reference.</p>
Work Period	<p>Day 1</p> <p>The students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-using mirrors draw a light sketch of their face; making sure to include all the parts of a face (eyes, nose, lips, eyebrows, eye lashes, and ears)-add neck, shoulders, and outline of the hair <p>Day 2</p>

	<p>The students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -finalize the drawing portion of the portraits -using mirrors begin the painting of the portraits (a variety of paint colors, including skin colors will be made available to students). <p>Day 3</p> <p>The students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -start painting their portraits <p>Day 4</p> <p>The students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -finish painting their portraits
Closing	Students' will discuss with table members their reflection of the art making process.
Extended Learning Activity	Research self-portraits in variety of media
Assessment	The purpose of the assignment was to create a self-portrait including the head, face, and shoulders. Students were also to include a

<input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative	background to their portraits. Students will be assessed for including those aspects in their portrait.
Materials	Paper Eraser Mirror Paint sets Pencils
Resources	Posters of a variety of self-portraits on display

Appendix D

Amended Lesson Plans

Subject	Visual and Performing ARTS	Grade	5 th
Date(s)		Supporting Unit and #	1
Standard(s) <i>(Content, WIDA, SIOP, etc.)</i>	<p>VA5.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of approaches to engage in verbal and/or written art criticism</p> <p>VA5.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.</p> <p>c. Create representational works of art from direct observation (e.g. landscape, still life, portrait).</p>		

Essential Question(s)	<p>What is a self-portrait?</p> <p>How can I represent myself through self-portraits?</p> <p>How can I represent my identity visually?</p>		
Content	Self-portrait	Skills	Drawing, coloring
Vocabulary	Self-portrait, proportions		
Engagement or Pre-Instructional Activity	Class discussion using essential questions.		
Opening	<p>A presentation on identity and introduce artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds and self-portraits created in different genres including realistic and abstract.</p>		
Work Period	<p>The students will discuss as a class the different self-portraits shown in the beginning presentation and the symbolic nature of certain choices that the artist choose to include.</p> <p>Discuss as a class why it is important to see self-portraits of artists from variety of cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Split up the class in groups of 4-5</p> <p>Each group will receive printouts of social media posts and popular advertisements with people's images.</p>		

Closing	The groups will come up with a list of similarities and differences and share their finding with the class.
Extended Learning Activity	Research self-portraits in variety of media
Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative	The purpose of the assignment was to help students look critically and advertisements and social media posts. The students will take what they learn about symbolism and use it to express themselves in portraits.
Materials	Paper Eraser Mirror Paint sets Pencils
Resources	Posters of a variety of self-portraits on display

Amended Lesson Plan 2

Subject	Visual and Performing ARTS	Grade	5 th
Date(s)		Supporting Unit and #	1
Standard(s) <i>(Content, WIDA, SIOP, etc.)</i>	<p>VA5.RE.1 Use a variety of approaches for art criticism and to critique personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy.</p> <p>c. Use a variety of approaches to engage in verbal and/or written art criticism</p> <p>VA5.CR.2 Create works of art based on selected themes.</p> <p>c. Create representational works of art from direct observation (e.g. landscape, still life, portrait).</p>		
Essential Question(s)	<p>What is a self-portrait?</p> <p>How can I represent myself through self-portraits?</p> <p>How can I represent my identity visually?</p>		
Content	Self-portrait	Skills	Drawing, coloring
Vocabulary	Self-portrait, proportions		
Engagement or Pre-Instructional Activity	Class discussion using essential questions.		

Opening	Discussion on symbolism in abstract self-portraits
Work Period	<p>Day 1</p> <p>Start doing a rough sketch of self-portrait while focusing on symbolism and how to visually express feelings</p> <p>Day 2</p> <p>Use class time to finish drawing self-portrait</p> <p>Day 3</p> <p>Paint self-portrait and background</p> <p>Use colors that has symbolism</p>
Closing	A short reflection on abstract self-portrait
Extended Learning Activity	Research self-portraits in variety of genres
Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Formative <input type="checkbox"/> Summative	The purpose of the assignment was to create an abstract self-portrait that includes symbolism and emotion
Materials	Paper

	Eraser Mirror Paint sets Pencils
Resources	Posters of a variety of self-portraits on display