NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Assessment PAPERS for ART EDUCATION

SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

Assessing Children's Artistic Development Through Creative Response Journaling

Debrah C. Sickler-Voigt

"Journals offer tactile platforms for preservice art educators to exhibit their understanding of children's artistic development from their personal perspectives."

Preservice teachers are curious to know the methods practicing art educators employ to teach and assess students. When first studying children's artistic development, many feel amazed as they learn students' artistic capabilities and see how students can thrive under the guidance of effective art educators. Teaching a standards-based art curriculum skillfully and with care requires art educators to be familiar with developmentally appropriate media, processes, subject matter, and assessments. Art educators must also consider children's individual capabilities and personal interests, as all students are unique. To begin their journey in planning developmentally appropriate curricular tasks and assessments, I introduced preservice teachers to international children's artworks that span early childhood through adolescence and had them study diverse development theories (Duncum, 1997; Fineberg, 2006; Kindler, 2004, 2010; Kindler & Darras, 1997; Lowenfeld, 1947; Sickler-Voigt, 2020; B. Wilson, 2004; M. Wilson & B. Wilson, 2010). By examining children's artworks in conjunction with development theories, they could identify what developmentally appropriate children's artwork is and how learning outcomes can be influenced by students' cognitive, physical, and social/emotional development (College Board, 2012).

Background and Methods

The College Board's (2012) report on children's artistic development articulated the need for scholarship that addresses the correlation between contemporary arts education practice and the implementation of the National Visual Arts Standards. The report stated: "There appear to be fewer resources available that explain

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the ways in which the latest research in cognitive, social, and emotional development in children and young adults may inform the instructional practices of arts educators" (p. 4). Given this call to action, I applied for and received a full-semester sabbatical to conduct a case study for which I developed learning modules for teaching children's artistic development inspired by the National Visual Arts Standards and contemporary theories and practices in art education. I analyzed a database of over 10,000 children's artworks from more than 70 countries and designed modules that teach about artistic development in early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and adolescence. Each module includes inspirational children's artworks, development milestones informed by current and established theories, and standards-based lesson plans and assessments. To share my scholarship with the greater public, I also created a multimedia website titled "Big Ideas in Children's Artistic Development" (https://arted.us/development.html).

"My study's primary question was: How do preservice art educators present and assess their understandings of children's artistic development through the development of creative response journals? I provided a member check to ensure that I represented their ideas correctly."

This White Paper provides examples of how preservice art educators utilized journals to assess children's artistic development. Working with journals encouraged the preservice art educators to process the online resources on children's artistic development and make personal connections to educational theories, seek data from diverse sources, and retain and apply what they have learned (Sickler-Voigt, 2007). Such practices offer art educators the necessary skills to implement curricular possibilities that foster student creative productions based on their full artistic, cognitive, physical, and social/emotional abilities.

The preservice teachers compared how I organized my research and learning modules as advocated by the College Board (2012) with Lowenfeld's (1947) model of children's artistic development. Comparing and contrasting contemporary approaches in children's artistic development with Lowenfeld's model assisted preservice teachers in understanding how artistic development theories have evolved. I selected three journals from the class to study in further detail, based on their descriptive contents and varied styles, and conducted interviews with their makers, Becky, Bobby, and Emily, during the spring 2018 semester to learn the preservice teachers' insights and reflections after completing the project. My study's primary question was: How do preservice art educators present and assess their understandings of children's artistic development through the development of creative response journals? I provided a member check to ensure that I represented their ideas correctly.

Assessing Children's Art With Enlightened Eyes

Elliot Eisner (1998) cogently articulated how art educators should develop enlightened eyes to study our discipline: "In the visual arts, to know depends upon the ability to see, not merely to look" (p. 6). Preservice art educators must learn how to see and assess children's art with enlightened eyes. Seeing plays an important role in developing visual literacy skills. The Association of College and Research Libraries (2011) explained: "Scholarly work with images requires research, interpretation, analysis, and evaluation skills specific to visual materials. These abilities cannot be taken for granted and need to be taught, supported, and integrated into the curriculum" (para. 4).

The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (2014) writing team examined standards and arts practices from diverse countries to identify best practices in the visual arts. Similarly, the preservice art educators began their studies by assessing the qualities of international children's artworks from the virtual gallery I created so they could establish a baseline understanding of what children's art looks like at various ages and notice similarities and differences in their aesthetic choices, materials, and perceptions. The preservice art educators learned that quality art examples are not synonymous with being "flawless." All children should have creative choices, feel challenged, and be motivated to put forth their best efforts to make art. For their journals, the preservice teachers integrated examples of children's artworks from school observations, ones they created in their own childhood, artworks created by children they know, and ones from online children's galleries. Their collections represented what children at particular ages typically achieve. They remained cognizant that some students have advanced skills and others have not yet reached proficiencies that same-age peers have attained. Searching for visual representations of what children can achieve in early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and adolescence became an informal assessment practice because the preservice art educators had to see and trust their intuitions as they selected representational examples of children's artworks. They began to recognize the distinct qualities they share with other children's artworks from the same or different ages. As they moved beyond their initial perceptions and informal assessments, the preservice art educators contemplated artworks' meanings, formal characteristics, and the guiding principles and/or big ideas that inspired their productions.

Self-Reflections Through Creative Response Journaling

A response journal describes learning tasks for which students (preservice teachers) respond to an instructor's prompts in a journal in written and artistic forms (Chappuis et al., 2012). Journals offer tactile platforms for preservice art educators to exhibit their understanding of children's artistic development from their personal perspectives. As Eisner (1998) explained: "Human knowledge is a constructed form of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature: Knowledge is made, not simply discovered" (p. 7). The response journal pages became spaces for preservice teachers

to transform their initial perceptions and decipher meanings from visual evidence, theories, and practices into new sources of information in artistic and written forms. The journal assignment offered sufficient structure to guide their self-reflective studies with a holistic scoring rubric and a checklist, while it provided open-ended choices for communicating their findings independently. The preservice art educators identified developmentally appropriate learning tasks that included art production activities and art inquiry methods. By having the freedom to choose their media, each page became a creative and self-reflective space to showcase their selection of children's artworks and present their personally driven understandings of children's artistic development.

"This sharing of information transformed the private act of journaling into social learning tasks. Seeing content in peers' journals sparked further idea development."

The preservice teachers actively shared their knowledge as a class through ongoing formative assessments. They reviewed classmates' in-progress journals and provided each other with feedback through scheduled "gallery walks" around the classroom before the journals were due for summative grades. I also communicated with them during these activities to provide informal feedback. This sharing of information transformed the private act of journaling into social learning tasks. Seeing content in peers' journals sparked further idea development. They asked each other questions and offered suggestions to emulate successful qualities and make improvements as needed. They interacted as a supportive community that learned and grew from each other's advice and creations. As articulated by Chappuis et al. (2012): "Long-term retention and motivation increase when students track, reflect on, and communicate about their learning" (p. 248).

Becky drew realistic children's portraits at various ages and illustrated theories as tangible evidence of children's capabilities (Figure 1). On her early childhood pages she drew a portrait of a young child and wrote: "Look at me! I can create scribbles & lines & shapes complete! Look at me! This is fun. Come draw and play 'til it's complete!" She explained how assessing children's artistic development through her journal helped her retain what she had learned better because she could transform abstract ideas into concrete products for long-term retention, a method that suits her learning style. Becky described how the project first came to life for her during a school observation when she readily identified characteristics of an early childhood artwork on display. The journaling process made her aware of artistic development criteria that she could use as a baseline when assessing artworks by same-aged children.

Figure 1. Rebecca "Becky" Fraser explored abstract ideas about children's artistic development theories through realistic drawing exercises.

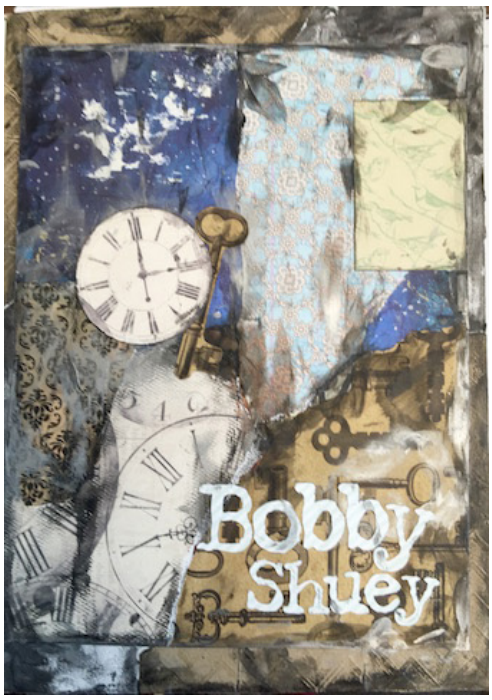

Figure 2. Bobby Shuey collaged symbols (clocks, keys, and birds) that referenced childhood memories she shared with her grandmother beginning on the introductory page of her journal.

Bobby developed collaged journal pages with symbols and artifacts that represented childhood memories she shared with her grandmother (Figure 2). The collage process assisted her in organizing her ideas about development theories. She included numerous artworks that she created from early childhood through adolescence in diverse art media. She made connections through written reflections about the children she babysat and described how they "loved to get messy!" when painting. When teaching her first art lesson to 5- to 10-year-olds, she explained: "I could see all the different skill levels from the kids." Bobby noticed their various abilities as one student could string beads with greater ease than a classmate who was 3 years older. Her observation reaffirmed how each child has different abilities. She stated that incorporating her own art and that of children she knew "made it [the assessment experience] more personable."

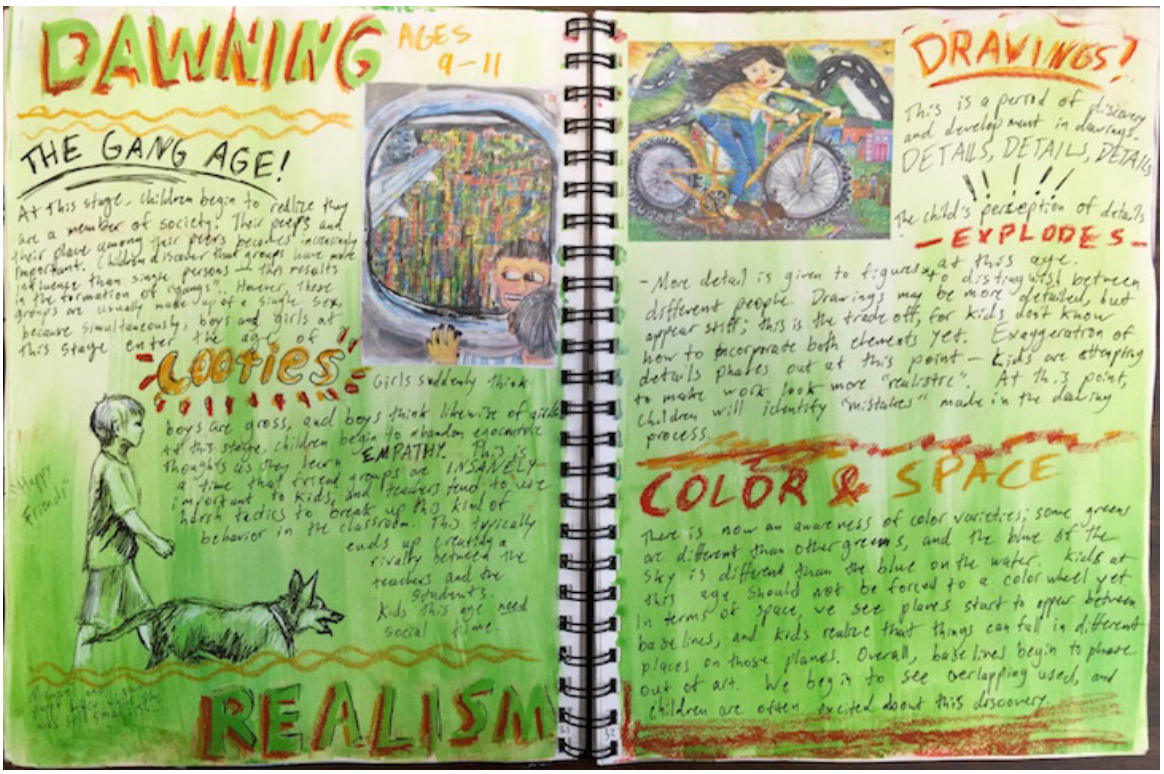

Figure 3. Emily James combined a sketch of her younger brother with ICEFA Lidice artworks and written reflections to study children's artistic development.

Emily included original sketches, art reproductions, and iconography to represent children's distinct ages. For example, she created a scribbled font to indicate early childhood and an elegant controlled one to represent adolescence. She regularly drew her younger siblings and described their characteristics (Figure 3). Growing up, her mother stressed the importance of family, and Emily decided to study her siblings for the project. "If I can see it in my siblings, I can understand it more," she explained. Reflecting on her brother's development, she noticed how movement was an integral part of his learning process and her own as well. Given this information, as a future art educator, she plans to incorporate learning centers throughout her classroom and encourage kinesthetic activities so that students will be able to move their bodies and remain on task as they learn.

Implications for Art Education

Having created response journal entries about children's artistic development with enlightened eyes and self-reflective mindsets, the preservice art educators produced concrete artifacts that they can continue to utilize to prepare developmentally appropriate art curricula and assessments that align with visual arts performance standards (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014). They discovered how producing visual representations in a single space was a viable means to study topics in art education in depth. Their creative investigations offered practical strategies to examine and interpret visual evidence, theories, and learning practices to understand what preK-12 students can achieve. The study demonstrated how exploring assessment possibilities through creative journaling is particularly useful for art educators who retain information best by transforming abstract ideas into concrete symbols and making personal connections that help them remember and apply what they have learned. The journaling tasks encouraged self-reflection, a skill that can be applied to daily classroom practices, as well as teacher performance assessments and professional teacher evaluations. When asked to reflect on assessment in art education, the preservice art educators identified areas in which they would like to continue to grow. This included learning more about how to encourage preK-12 students to self-assess their own progress to feel personally connected to learning tasks and produce better quality outcomes. They also wanted to augment their fluency in aligning different types of assessments with diverse learning goals. The preservice teachers' quests to know more about assessment can serve as stimuli to develop further studies that link assessment theories and practices with creative response journals. ■

"Exploring assessment possibilities through creative journaling is particularly useful for art educators who retain information best by transforming abstract ideas into concrete symbols and making personal connections that help them remember and apply what they have learned."

Author Note

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SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

Poetry as Embodied Self-Assessment for Visual Art Learning

Jun Hu

"Poetry can provide the visual arts with an embodied aesthetics that combines artistic qualities with depth of critical thinking for students."

Proposing that poetry can make complex thinking sensible and holistic, I use six Chinese couplets for assessment purposes and indicate six steps for art learning that was developed during an annual field trip course that is part of our art teacher training program with around 40 undergraduate students at Hangzhou Normal University (HNU), China, every spring term since 2015. The course is approximately 3 weeks long and we travel 5,500 kilometers along a route rich in cultural heritage and natural wonder known as the historic Silk Road. Working within the framework of the field trip's tight schedule, each student studied an individual aesthetic experience that linked their creative artmaking strategies with practical pedagogical applications (Hu, 2018).

Student poetry played a significant role in our summer course. All six couplets that the students applied to create their poems take water-and-moon as their metaphor and are written in a symmetrical pattern. This is a unique feature of classic Chinese poetry that is attributed to the square shape of Chinese characters and their single syllable pronunciation (without exception). Visually and acoustically structured through symmetrical formalization, a Chinese couplet is called Duilian (对联). It literally means *contrast linking*, and when differences are intuitively discerned out of the sameness, it provides immediate meaning-making, which extends beyond language and linguistics. Thus, during the visual art learning process, its poetic effect offers students a form of embodied aesthetics (White, 2011, p. 145) that can be a tool for intuitive self-assessment.

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Poetry as Assessment With Historical Connotations

Self-assessment is crucial to visual art learning. Firstly, because the art experience is personalized, any external assessment is insufficient and deficient; secondly, because an individual's creativity is inexhaustible, any acquired criteria of assessment are too static for an open-ended process that is multidirectional and with infinite possibilities. During a recent curriculum reform I applied poetry as a means of self-assessment and realized that it activates embodied aesthetics through metaphors. I think this is possible because it is conceptually pliable within its poetic ambiguity.

For a thousand years of rich cultural history, Chinese artists have taken "poetry as hidden painting, and painting as visual poetry" (Guo Si, 11th century; trans. Lin, 1969, pp. 81–92[1]). This tradition has culminated in Literati Painting, the highest genre of traditional Chinese art, by cherishing Poem-Calligraphy-Painting in one piece of work, which very often understood poetry to indicate depth of learning, intellectual maturity, and creativity of the artist. In line with this tradition, poetry served as assessment for visual art learning. For example, as recorded in Ching Hao's "A Conversation on Method" (10th century; trans. Lin, 1969, p. 92[2]), when the old master decided to test the learner's maturity in painting, the master assigned him the task of improvising a poem. Therefore, my question is: Can this tradition be revived in a contemporary context?

I propose that poetry can provide the visual arts with an embodied aesthetics that combines artistic qualities with depth of critical thinking for students as they learn to use this form of self-assessment throughout the learning process.

For the field trip course experiment, I designed a curriculum that included six steps of learning that comprise three rounds of turn and re-turn, or, said another way, three rounds of divergence and then convergence: Each lead to students' critical thinking. For students' self-assessment of each step, I either wrote a classic couplet or borrowed one from a great ancient poet with the metaphors of the moon and water that denote an experience (Dewey, 1934) through poetic effect.

The curriculum encourages a student's desire to make sense of an extraordinary aesthetic experience during the trip. Often these were happened while viewing an ancient artwork, a natural wonder, a craftwork made by local artisans, or even a local food, as long as it aroused in them enough curiosity to inquire, to make art, and to develop an art teaching strategy (Hu, 2018, p. 22).

Step 1. Introspection:

止流为鉴，不劳拂拭

Still running water for reflection,

doing away with the trouble of wiping a mirror.

The student reviews the process of how an extraordinary aesthetic experience comes into being. To get there, the student needs to reach beyond the capacity of language or linguistics that affords a flow of concepts, and instead has to open up to memory by reactivating their embodied experience both in the past and at the present.

Step 2. Enduring understanding:

沧海独渡，唯见明月

Sailing alone on boundless sea,

you see the moon brighter than ever.

Once it is remembered how the conditions of that aesthetic experience came into being, the student needs to remember the experience through their bodily memories and write about these memories. These are typically represented through a line of a sentence with minimum words (a poem is encouraged).

Step 3. Connecting to the art world:

三潭印一月，非一亦非异

Three reflections of the moon in three pools,

they are neither the same nor different.

The assignment here is to search art history and visual culture artworks that activate the same or similar aesthetic experience under certain kinds of conditions, but in a heterogeneous context.

Step 4. Artmaking experiment:

一月映三江，"千里共婵娟"（宋 · 苏轼）

Reflected in different bodies of water,

the same moon is looked up at by people thousands of miles apart.

(The latter part by Shu Shi, Song Dynasty)[3]

Instead of searching for historical artworks as in the previous assignment, the student activates the same aesthetic experience by their own lived act of personalized artmaking.

Step 5. Elegant problem:

"举杯邀明月，对影成三人"（唐 · 李白）

"I raise my cup to the Moon for her to join me.

With the Moon, my Shadow, and I: We're people three."[4]

(Li Bai, Tang Dynasty)

The assignment is to distinguish and synthesize the conditions of the previous artmaking process into a workable prompt for art teaching, such as "Use__ to __ so that__," including the measures (what tools and material to use), the strategies (how to process), and the goal (what aesthetic experience to activate).

Step 6. Workshop experiment:

"此时相望不相闻，愿逐月华流照君"（唐 · 张若虚）

She sees the moon, that her beloved is seeing, too;

She wishes to follow the light beam to shine upon her beloved one's face.[5]

(Zhang Ruoxu, Tang Dynasty)

At the final stage of the curriculum, each student checks if an "elegant problem" has been established in the assignment and

offers effective conditions for peer student participants to create heterogeneous artworks that reactivate the same or similar aesthetic experience in their individualized contexts.

All six couplets take water-and-moon as a metaphor. In East Asian traditions, water is a metaphor for reflection, while the moon is a metaphor for the designatum, or meaning. Figure 1 illustrates how the water-and-moon metaphor is used from a slightly different perspective in each couplet.

Figure 1. ***Meanings of Water-and-Moon Metaphors***

	Metaphors	**Reference meaning**
Step 1	Running water	Conceptual thinking
	Still water	Intuitive reflection
Step 2	Bright moon on vast ocean	Cognition of the aesthetic experience
Step 3	Multiple reflections of the same moon	Multiple art expressions of the same aesthetic experience
Step 4	The same moon reflected in bodies of water far apart	Individualized art expression of the same aesthetic experience
Step 5	My shadow cast by the moon	The initiative power of that aesthetic experience
Step 6	To follow the light beam of the moon to shine upon her lover's face	My emotional impulse to share that aesthetic experience

Assessment With Intuitive Precision

Unlike English poetry, classic Chinese poetry is always uniquely formalized in a symmetrical pattern with paired lines of equal length and an exact equal number of Chinese characters (Jiang et al., 2012). Chinese characters are pictograms with hundreds of pictographic and ideographic symbols, either pronounceable or not; and each Chinese character has a single syllable with the acoustical effect of either / (平, Ping) or \ (仄, Ze). When a classic Chinese poem is read, the symmetrical formalization enables differences to stand out of sameness and reversions out of non-reversions in the contrast of visual signs and acoustical effects inherent in Chinese characters, which is an intuitive meaning-making process in a mixture of signs. It is in this way, situated in the embodied experience of water-and-moon, that students can apprehend with "intuition" the requirement of each assignment beyond conceptual representation and with a "precision in philosophy" (Deleuze, 1991, pp. 13, 29).

Ezra Pound (1934) commented on the achievement of classic Chinese poetry as "simply language, charged with meaning to the utmost degree" (p. 36). Unfortunately, some inherent features of Chinese poetry are untranslatable. For example, the third couplet for the assignment connecting to the art world is translated as:

Three reflections of the moon in three pools,

they are neither same nor different.

And the fourth couplet for the assignment artmaking experiment:

Reflected in different bodies of water,

the same moon is looked up at by people thousands of miles apart.

The metaphors are strengthened by the ideographic Chinese characters of "一"(one) and "三" (three, metonymy to many) placed in inverse order and opposite position:

三潭印一月…

一月映三江…

This eye-catching repetition and inversion implicitly and immediately underline the sameness and the differences between the two assignments. Instead of searching for multiple historical artworks (三) as in the third assignment, the fourth demands the student to create their individual artwork (一). The complexity of the requirement is conveyed through the ideographic Chinese character, which possesses the visual power that phonetic language does not. The characters of 三 and 一 visually illustrate the complexity between multiplicity (三) and individuality (一).

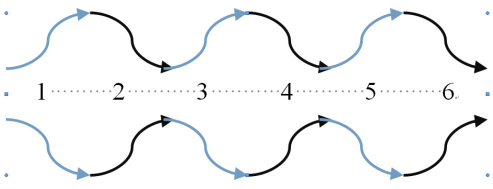
The Chinese number of 三 (three, metonymy to many) is made up of three consecutive 一 (one). All, 三, artworks found or created during the course should each, 一, be "numerical and discontinuous" in its form of art expression; however, all, 三, the artworks should be "continuous and qualitative" (Deleuze, 1991, pp. 79–80) in expressing the same, 一, content of aesthetic experience. Thus, in a visual way, poetry supports precise apprehension of the "三/一" complexity of assessment in a minimalist style.

With precision situated in poetic ambiguity, apprehension of the criteria for assignments are embodied, because it counts on intuitive visual and acoustical effect, and memories of the past experiences. Students find this strategy easy and attractive due to its ability to make complex critical thinking possible without wordy expression.

Proximate Precision Through Systematic Evolution

The six couplets are indicators of three rounds of two successive decisive turns in reverse direction (Deleuze, 1991, p. 29): the turn and the re-turn in division and convergence as diagrammed in Figure 2.

Figure 2. ***Six Steps: Three Rounds of Turn and Re-Turn***



Setting out from a given aesthetic experience, the turn occurs when lines diverge increasingly toward a division in order to differentiate the conditions of that experience, which is the process of discovery; the re-turn is where these lines converge again toward a recomposition of the aesthetic experience in a particular and individualized context of conditions, which is the process of creativity. Discovery supports

creativity, while creativity testifies discovery. The following student case study on Zimeng Cheng identifies how she applied the six couplets to indicate the three rounds of turn and re-turn, and used embodied aesthetics as an intuitive assessment.

Cheng was amazed by the cozy and adorable quality, or Meng (萌) in Chinese, of sheep, which are round, fluffy, and slow moving (see Figure 3). She decided to make Meng the theme of her study. *Meng* is a new adjective that became a popular catchword in China when it was created on the Internet a few years ago.

Figure 3. Zimeng Cheng, *Sheep on Slope*, 2017. Photograph courtesy of the artist.

After the "introspection" (the turn, Step 1) to discover the conditions of this aesthetic experience of Meng, Cheng naturally arrives at the "enduring understanding" (the re-turn, Step 2) expressed as "An object is Meng when it is round and big in body, yet relatively short and small in limbs."

To "connect to the art world" (the turn, Step 3), Cheng found a variety of historical art objects, each in a different way illustrating Cheng's enduring understanding, such as the sculpture of Venus of Willendorf of the Paleolithic age (see Figure 4), and additional contemporary artworks.

Figure 4. *Venus of Willendorf*, BC 22,000–24,000 (User: MatthiasKabel / CC BY-SA, http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0).

"The curriculum of three rounds of turn and re-turn is both fun and functional. It is fun because the critical thinking does not rely on conceptual thinking alone, but centers on the poetic effect as an intuitive indicator and assessment."

To testify her discovery of the conditions of Meng, Cheng chose the character of 西 (Xi), meaning *west*, for her typographic design, which alluded to our travels to Western China. As her artmaking experiment (the re-turn, Step 4), she transformed the square character into a round one to make it Meng (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Zimeng Cheng, typographic transformation of character 西 , 2017.

After the previous two sessions of turn and re-turn, Cheng felt confident writing the "elegant problem" (the turn, Step 5) for her peers: "Pick up a Chinese character and use a sketchbook (APP) to transform the main body of the character into a round shape that gives the expression of Meng." It resulted in heterogeneous Meng Chinese characters designed by Cheng's peers during the following art workshop (the re-turn, Step 6; see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Six Peer Students' Work at Cheng's Workshop.

Through the three rounds of turn and re-turn, Cheng began with her aesthetic experience of cozy and adorable sheep. She ended up visually inquiring into the new adjective of *Meng*—an original typographic design of Chinese characters—and a practical art teaching strategy.

Cheng reflected that the curriculum of three rounds of turn and re-turn is both fun and functional. It is fun because the critical thinking does not rely on conceptual thinking alone, but centers

on the poetic effect as an intuitive indicator and assessment. It is functional because her learning process is clearly structured in a systematic way, which supports a student-centered art learning process. Since each step postulates the subsequent, and the subsequent step substantiates the prior, the six steps comprise a systematic evolution that is continuous in the enduring understanding (Step 2) while heterogeneous in the historical actualization (Step 3), as well as in personal artmaking (Step 4) and pedagogical application (Steps 5 and 6).

Implications for Art Education

This curriculum reform could have two implications for art education. One is that poetry can support precise intuitive assessment without the need for a definition. Since the aesthetic value of the visual arts is often indefinable, it is crucial that we seek for an alternative way to reach precision in assessment.[6] The other is that the indefinable precision can be reached approximately through systematic evolution in a way similar to calculus in mathematics. As calculus approximates precision through differentiation and integration, this curriculum approaches precision through three rounds of divergence and convergence that supports student-centered self-assessment.

After sessions of experimentation with approximately 40 students each year for 5 years, the course has prepared around 200 candidate preK-12 art teachers with confidence in pedagogical creativity, and has shared among them 200 innovative and practical art teaching strategies. ■

Endnotes

1. 郭思《林泉高致》：诗是无形画，画是有形诗, quoted by Guo Si in "A Father's Instructions," 11th century, incompletely translated by Y. T. Lin in *The Chinese Theory of Art* (1969, pp. 81–92).
2. 荆浩《笔法记》, incompletely translated by Y. T. Lin in *The Chinese Theory of Art* (1969, p. 80).
3. The second line in the couplet is a quote from "…但愿人长久，千里共婵娟…"《水调歌头．丙辰中秋》 by ShuShi (苏轼, 1037–1101).
4. Excerpt from Li Bai (701–762), *Beneath the Moon Drinking Alone*, translated by F. C. Yue, http://chinesepoetryinenglishverse.blogspot.ca/2013/03/beneath-moondrinking-alone-li-bai-o.html
5. Excerpt from Zhang Ruoxu (660–720), *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night*, 张若虚《春江花月夜》, translated by the author.
6. The indefinable and precision are often contradictory, but it is in every artist's experience that precise identification of the authorship of a piece of artwork is possible through indefinable impression of their style.

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Assessment PAPERS for ART EDUCATION

SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

Assessment of the Visual Arts: Pupils' Voices

Máire Ní Bhroin

"Pupils' experiences and perceptions of all aspects of learning are interesting and important for themselves, their parents, educators, and policy makers."

Assessing Childrens' Art

We have not always heard the voice of the child when discussing assessment in art education. Should the art of 5- to 12-year-olds be assessed? If so, in what way? How do children feel about having their art assessed? What benefits, if any, result from assessing a child's art? How do teachers nurture the child's personal creativity while ensuring and evaluating meaningful learning in art education?

As a visual arts educator in teacher education, I am aware of the complexity of assessing art at the primary level. These complexities have been highlighted by many, including Eisner (1985), who maintained that "our nets define what we shall catch" (p. 93), and Hickman (2005), who argued that "to assess a child's creative output in terms of a grade seems as bizarre as giving a gold star to a child for growing size eight feet" (p. 142).

Most authorities recommend a formative style of assessment for art, but how can this work in practice in the primary classroom? This paper, which stems from a larger study[1] (Ní Bhroin, 2013) investigating formative assessment (FA) in primary art education, focuses on the perspectives and experiences of the child. It defines the characteristics of FA and describes a scheme for their implementation in art education; discusses action research, data collection, and analysis in the context of this study; and concludes with a discussion of the research outcomes and, in particular, what pupils have to say about FA in art.

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Using Formative Assessment Strategies in the Art Classroom

Formative Assessment Defined

FA involves a close collaboration between teacher and pupil in determining learning goals and recognizing standards of excellence and building steps to achieve these. Black and Wiliam (1998) define FA as "all those activities undertaken by teachers *and by their students in assessing themselves*, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (p. 2).

FA in visual arts education is recommended by many, including Eisner (1971, 1985, 2002), Hickman (2005), Lindström, (2006), Ní Bhroin (2015), and Schönau (2012). However, FA is not without its critics, who suggest that it results in weak implementation; restrictive, instrumental learning; and lack of competition (Ecclestone, 2007; Perrenoud, 1991; Torrance, 2007; Webb & Jones, 2009). I chose to use FA in this study because I believe that for children, to award a summative grade or number can be meaningless and may harm their future artistic confidence. Etheridge (2018) similarly preferred FA, arguing that the "vibrant process is reduced when completing an assessment working towards a numerical grade" (para. 2).

Action Research in This Study

Action research involves a combination of action and research, influenced by reflective inquiry, and its purpose is to improve practice. Cohen et al. (2007) define action research as "a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention" (p. 296). I chose action research as the best way to investigate how children experience and perceive FA in the teaching of art but also to improve practice in the area. A further stage in the research involved a team of teachers experimenting with FA in primary art, which is the subject of another publication (Ní Bhroin, 2015).

The Study in Action

Having complied with all ethical requirements regarding data protection, permissions, and anonymity, I visited a Dublin school every week for 4 months to teach art to a mixed class of 28 pupils, ages 11-12 years old. I taught Claymation in order to enthuse the pupils, offer varied creative possibilities, and teach a range of art skills and techniques. The FA strategies I employed included:

- Preplanning discussion,
- Establishing learning intentions,
- Discussing samples of excellence,
- Setting success criteria,
- Questioning/dialogic feedback, and
- Self-assessment/peer assessment.

During the preplanning discussion, I introduced the pupils to Claymation and explained what FA was and how we might use it during the art lessons. Following a viewing of four short Claymation movies, we discussed the merits of story, characters, sets, and visual and sound effects. This discussion laid the foundation for what Flannery (2012) and Sadler (1989) describe as connoisseurship or appreciation of artistic merit.

The pupils worked on their Claymation projects in self-selected groups of two to four. At the beginning of each weekly art lesson, we established the learning intentions—for example, create a Plasticine model. We considered and discussed samples of excellence. Following this, each pupil identified success criteria that they aimed to achieve—such as, to make an expressive face and head. During the art process, teacher and pupils engaged in dialogic discussion with feedback. The art lesson ended with oral or written self- and peer assessment.

Data

Films of Art Lessons, Artifacts, Reflective Journal, and Record Sheets. I asked the class teacher to video-record each art lesson. These videos captured remarks, small incidents, and other events, which may have gone unnoticed in class. I photographed works in progress and kept a reflective journal to record observations. The pupils had record sheets to (1) record learning intentions and success criteria before each lesson and (2) write self-assessments and peer assessments after each lesson.

Interviews With the Pupils. I conducted and recorded group interviews with the pupils before and after the project, using a mixture of open-ended and targeted questions to obtain detailed information about personal and group feelings, perceptions, and opinions (Flick, 2002; Spradley, 1979).

Independent Teacher Report on Artifact Quality. The pupils created nine Claymation movies that involved 36 figure drawings, 28 Plasticine models, and nine set designs. Six independent artist–teachers rated the pupils' artifacts on a scale from 1 to 4 as poor, good, very good, or excellent.

How Data Were Analyzed

All data were analyzed qualitatively, using the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). This meant sifting through written data looking for units of meaning and organizing these into categories. Through a process of inductive reasoning, certain themes emerged. Interpreting the visual data followed the same pattern, except that the units of meaning emerged from visual and sound elements (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Luttrell, 2009; Prosser, 1998).

Study Outcomes: Formative Assessment in Art and Pupils' Voices

Four main themes emerged from analyzing the data: higher standards of artmaking; identification of successful FA strategies for teaching art; positive response from pupils to FA in art education; and challenges to the implementation of FA.

Higher Standards of Artmaking Were Achieved When Using Formative Assessment

The Claymation project involved a blend of art skills: drawing; modeling a figure; designing, constructing, and painting a set; stop

motion photography; and creating a movie. The independent artist-teachers who rated the pupils' artifacts concluded that the standard of artmaking was excellent and "in general higher than expected for the age group involved" (personal communication, 5/30/2012).

Successful Formative Assessment Strategies for Teaching Art Were Identified

During the art project, I noted that FA strategies for teaching art worked best when artmaking was prioritized over talking about FA. These strategies were most successful when:

- Learning intentions were art-focused and open, and encouraged invention.
- Samples of excellence helped develop a concept of quality.
- The language of artmaking, art appreciation, and assessment was developed.
- Dialogic feedback occurred during the art process and concerned technique and development of ideas.
- Self- and peer assessment were viewed not only to evaluate completed work but also as a way to improve artwork in progress.

I found that questioning and discussion—key strategies recommended by many FA theorists (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Clarke, 2008)—needed to be open-ended and minimized to allow pupils enough time and freedom to experiment and develop their unique art practice.

Positive Pupil Attitudes to Formative Assessment

Pupils Believed Formative Assessment Strategies Helped to Improve Their Artmaking. The overriding opinion of the pupils during the post-project interviews was that their artwork had improved during the FA art project: "I'm much better at art now" and "My overall art improved a lot." In relation to peer assessment: "We helped each other." Having time to self-assess and revise or complete an art piece is central to FA. Pupils said this contributed to improved artwork: "If you had time left over you could go back to finishing a piece." "You could make it better."

Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasized how vital it is for pupils to be aware not only of *what* they learn, but of *how* they learn. Risk taking and making mistakes were part of the learning process, thus promoting a growth mindset in relation to learning (Clarke, 2008; Dweck, 2006). Pupils remarked, "We learned how to learn" and "If you make a mistake, you learn from that," indicating a growth mindset that views experiential learning as a continuous process.

> "Having time to self-assess and revise or complete an art piece is central to FA. Pupils said this contributed to improved artwork: 'If you had time left over you could go back to finishing a piece.'"

Pupils Enjoyed Discussing Samples of Excellence and Felt It Was Beneficial to the Artmaking Process. Pupils were positive about the strategy of looking at and discussing samples of excellence, which they believed helped improve their ideas and art techniques. They stated, "We used our own ideas but they kinda got better;" "It inspired us to do something;" and "It influenced us to do a better job."

Pupils Valued Identifying Success Criteria and Discussing Learning Intentions. Most pupils said discussing the learning intentions, and identifying and writing down the success criteria helped them with their artwork: "It made it easier for us because we knew what we were aiming for." "When you write, it kind of stays in your brain." Four of the 28 pupils stated that they "didn't really enjoy doing the papers."

Pupils Valued Feedback During the Art Process. Pupils reported valuing feedback while the artwork was in progress and remembered specific incidents of feedback, such as "the bit about the camera (angles)," and "showing the proportions of the arms and legs really helped me" to make the character.

Figures 1 and 2. Samples of Claymation sets and characters created by pupils age 11-12.

Figures 3 and 4. Plasticine models created by pupils age 11-12.

Figure 5. Figure drawing by pupil age 11.

Figure 6. Plasticine model by pupil age 11.

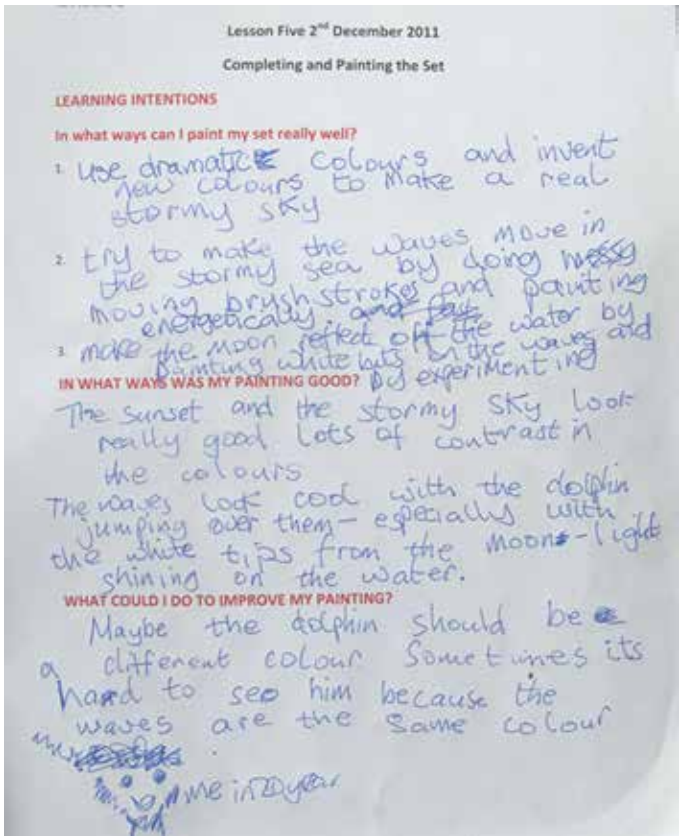

Figure 7. Pupil's self-assessment sheet showing learning intentions and self-assessment.

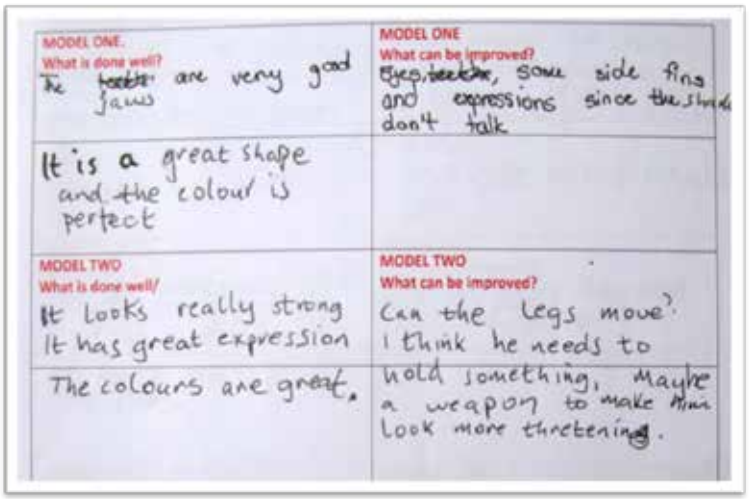

Figure 8. Pupil's peer assessment sheet.

The Ability to Self-Assess Improved Over Time. Pupils' self-assessments seemed superficial at first, but their ability to self-assess improved over time. Discussing art samples helped them gain an appropriate vocabulary and an appreciation of the artistry involved, and written self-assessments became more insightful. See Figure 7 for example.

Pupils Had Mixed Feelings About Peer Assessment. Most pupils were positive about peer assessment in this study: "It was constructive criticism really." When asked about other pupils reviewing their work, the responses were favorable: "[It] was good because they helped as well.… I liked that." However, some pupils mentioned that if there was bullying in a class, peer assessment might be problematic "if someone didn't like you."

Pupils' Oral Assessments Were Often More Thorough Than Written Assessments. I noted that pupils' written assessments were short but focused (see Figure 8). When they reviewed orally, their remarks were more elaborate. Some preferred to comment orally: "what I think is too long (to write). I prefer to say it" (personal communication, 12/2/11). I found that a blend of written and oral assessment worked well.

"Discussing art samples helped them gain an appropriate vocabulary and an appreciation of the artistry involved, and written self-assessments became more insightful."

Potential Challenges to FA in Art Education

The challenges pupils identified related to issues such as time management, peer assessment, and good-quality art. FA takes time to establish, and pupils engaged well with the formative assessment process once the artmaking was prioritized over writing assessment records. Peer assessment could be a sensitive issue and needs a safe, trustful atmosphere with effective strategies in place to eliminate students' fears about bullying and/or being disliked. The final challenge identified by the pupils was the complexity of making qualitative judgments about art: "How do I know what's good art or not?" (pre-project pupil interview; 11/8/11). Clarke (2008) and Sadler (1989) recommend that continued exposure to and discussion of good-quality artworks help to develop connoisseurship; I found that to be true to some degree over the course of the study.

Conclusion

Pupils' experiences and perceptions of all aspects of learning are interesting and important for themselves, their parents, educators, and policy makers. Drawing on the voices of pupils and influenced by pivotal researchers in the fields of art education and assessment, this study illuminated pupils' thinking about using selected FA strategies in their artmaking and proposes a viable form of assessment for primary art education. ■

Endnote

[1] Unless otherwise noted, quotes throughout this paper are personal communications from interviews conducted in December 2011 and January 2012, as part of this study.

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SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

Behind the Art Room Door: Assessment in the Age of Educational Accountability

Donna Goodwin

> "Teachers who used the same assessment tools but had different pedagogical philosophies, explicit or implicit, used them in dramatically different ways with different results."

Art teachers have always assessed in some manner. However, "seeing what appears obvious is not always easy" (Eisner, 1998, p. 71). It can be challenging to translate what works well in art to those not as familiar with artistic practices. Furthermore, there is little research to support the effectiveness of what art teachers have been doing to assess teaching and learning in the visual arts. This Assessment Paper provides a peek behind the art room door based on targeted classroom observations designed to explore how six art teachers with a range of pedagogical preferences use assessment in their unique settings.

Emily Miller: Navigating the Creative Process

Emily Miller has taught for 9 years at a suburban high school. In her third career, she says, "I am living proof that art is a skill and you can get better at it, just like anything else." She sees mixed-grade and mixed-ability classes 90 minutes every day for a quarter. To her, developing conceptual ideas representing personal voice is equally important as learning a skill. She talks with students as they work and helps them determine solutions as issues arise. She shares a standards-based creative process rubric that peer teachers created as a common assessment. While some use this for grading, she does not; instead, she uses it with students to set goals and determine success. She believes the most effective assessments are informal, formative (Andrade et al., 2014) conversations and observations. She grades neither this nor formal interviews, check-ins, or peer

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critiques to avoid a sense of judgment that might stifle self-reflection. Each project is graded on criteria and documentation of benchmarks, including planning, process, and presentation with an artist statement in online portfolios. The portfolios are graded according to criteria open enough to allow for individuality, yet specific enough to detail expectations. Miller feels digital portfolios are valuable but time-consuming.

Lauren Olsen: About Experience

Lauren Olsen has taught for 10 years at a K–8 magnet academy. She also works on a committee that designs common assessments for accountability. On average she sees students for 45 minutes once a week. Her curriculum is broad to introduce an array of media and techniques as well as encourage personal connections. She is careful not to impose opinions on students' work and directs judgment questions back to students. She predominantly uses formative assessment: "I give specific verbal feedback in the moment. It helps kids get better and it's not about judging." She believes self-reflection and revision through artist statements are the best way to assess students' artistic process. Middle school students have summative project rubrics that are averaged to equal a term grade. Elementary students have guiding criteria for each project and an artist reflection. These are considered with what she calls *studio behaviors* in the final grade for the class, but each project is not graded. While she uses a variety of assessment, grades are based on her knowledge of students (Eisner, 1998, 2002; Gates, 2017) and their overall experience.

"When questioned, students describe decisions made and things learned, and they detail failed iterations that eventually lead to their self-determined success."

Beth Roberts: Adding Creativity

Beth Roberts has taught K–5 art for 23 years at a suburban elementary school. She sees students for 45 minutes on 4-day rotations with little time between classes. She uses well-practiced lessons that encourage students to "add creativity" within prescriptive elements, keeping the results similar and attractive when displayed along the halls. Because of its frequency, this style is termed "school art style" (Efland, 1976, p. 38; Gude, 2013). Her philosophy is for "kids to have the opportunity to be creative." She directs students to focus on inspirational images but to "make it their own." She assesses by observing, explaining: "It happens mentally mostly; I don't have time to stop and write it down." Observation of behavior plays the biggest role in grades. She finds rubrics limiting, and report cards are "just what we are required to do"—not as informative as student self-assessment or a portfolio. She conducted group critiques during this observation; due to time constraints, she normally does not use group critiques but would like to more often. She also gave 5th graders a written test as a consequence for poor behavior. This is not something she routinely does, but stated it provided insight to information she thought they knew but did not.

Susan Quinn: Teaching Artistic Behavior

Susan Quinn is a K–5 art teacher at an urban elementary school with a highly mobile, diverse population. She sees students 5 days in a row for 45 minutes every 6 or 7 weeks. This is her 13th year teaching. She teaches with a Teaching for Artistic Behavior philosophy (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009), where students make their own choices after being introduced to media and techniques. She believes this supports her diverse students, meets multiple learning styles, and provides autonomy in decision making. She uses the eight Studio Habits of Mind (SHoM; Hetland et al., 2013) as a way to introduce process and assess student learning. These align with state standards, and they are posted and consistently referenced as learning targets. She does not evaluate particular works of art, but rather how students discuss artistic thinking and make connections, assessing what she values. Grades are determined for older students by considering progress toward independent artmaking. She references this with a SHoM rubric that students also use for self-assessment. The artwork that comes from Quinn's class is not school art style. When questioned, students describe decisions made and things learned, and they detail failed iterations that eventually lead to their self-determined success.

Jed Brantley: Learning Mechanisms

Jed Brantley teaches at a large, diverse urban International Baccalaureate (IB) elementary school. He has taught for 9 years and is an active teacher leader, piloting an idea that arts instruction can be data driven: "We want to build, not quite a model, more to experience what a data inquiry cycle for the arts feels like." His intention is for students to be as autonomous in their art and actions as possible, describing this as "how the learning mechanism works." A large component of his pedagogy concerns guiding students to make personal connections in their art. He questions students and encourages them to think deeply about their place in the world and how it is represented through metaphor and story in artmaking. Like most in this study, Brantley does not grade each project. He does multiple informal check-ins, keeps checklists, tracks student conversation, discusses self-assessment, and adds his own assessment of progress on a project, using a rubric usually created with student input. A favorite assessment is to create films of students showing and explaining their artwork while wearing a video camera attached to a bike helmet. All of this blends into a determination of student proficiency at the end of a term.

Linda Crosse: Organized and Traditional

Linda Crosse is the art teacher at an International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP) school. She has taught for 25 years—most of them at this school. Her room is organized with a defined process for almost everything. She gives specific steps on a collection of worksheets for projects with direct expectations for planning, creating prototypes, and construction. She says her philosophy involves students being creative, critical thinkers. She has seen educational reform initiatives come and go but says growth has always been about developing skills and increased vocabulary, using critical thinking, and better decision making. She uses assessments adapted from MYP (International Baccalaureate Organization, n.d.)

criteria on rubrics, but she determines the qualifiers within the criteria based on expectations for a final product. Crosse checks students individually to make sure they are following the intended process and gives redirection or approval. She allows time for student self-assessment relative to her criteria in a specific written format and for students to look at each other's work. She does not provide interim input for students to know where she, as the assessor, finds the work relative to the final grade. Crosse is the most veteran teacher in this study and has a traditional, teacher-directed style classroom (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Efland, 1976). There are clear differences between her interactions with students compared to other teachers, despite similar stated intentions.

Commonalities and Implications

There are 12 types of assessment (see Table 1) used by these teachers. Each use them to fit their teaching style and pedagogical intentions.

Six types of assessments were used by all teachers, although in different purposes and ways. Five teachers used a rubric for creative process. Five teachers assessed criteria with a checklist or rubric. Four used digital or physical portfolios. Three teachers used short answer, constructed response questions. Three teachers used a bundled measure test of short answer, multiple choice, true/false, and scripted creative response: two because it was mandated as standardized—one teacher was optimistic about this purpose; the other was not.

Table 1. Types of Assessments Used in Order of Frequency

Types of assessment	Teacher initials						What assessed/how used?
	EM	LO	ER	SQ	JB	LC	
Informal Observation/Questioning/Directives/ Comments/Conversation/Feedback	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Knowing Student • Studio/Artistic Behavior • Goals/Success Criteria • Artistic/Creative Process • Evaluate Practice
Process Pages/Process Journals/ Sketches/Sketchbooks/Student Films	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Artistic/Creative Process • Planning • Required Steps • Pre-/Post-Assessment
Informal Checks for Understanding	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Understanding Directions/Concepts • Pre-/Post-Assessment
Self-Assessment	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Goals/Success Criteria • Artistic/Creative Process
Artist Statement/Reflection	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Personal Connections • Artistic/Creative Process • Reflection • Evaluate Practice • Teacher Accountability • Pre-/Post-Assessment
Peer Critiques	X	X	X	X	X	X	• Goals/Success Criteria • Artistic/Creative Process
Specific Criteria	X	X	X		X	X	• Goals/Success Criteria • Visual Appeal • Skill/Technique • Teacher Accountability
Creative Process Rubrics	X	X		X	X	X	• Teacher Accountability • Artistic/Creative Process
Portfolios	X		X	X		X	• Goals/Success Criteria • Self-Expression • Artistic/Creative Process
Short Answer/Constructed Response	X	X				X	• Knowledge of Art Facts • Personal Connections • Evaluate Practice
Bundled Measure Test		X	X		X		• Teacher Accountability • Facts/Skills • Evaluate Practice
Formal Conferences/Interviews	X				X		• Goals/Success Criteria • Knowing Student

The third teacher used this as punishment. Although several teachers mentioned formal teacher–student interviews as ideal, only two teachers used them.

Student Ownership and Unintended Consequences

Teachers who used the same assessment tools but had different pedagogical philosophies, explicit or implicit, used them in dramatically different ways with different results. All teachers wanted self-regulated, creative thinkers. However, choices in assessment helped to determine if this happened. When students in Crosse's class asked what to do, those concerned with their grade did it to her specifications with little deviation other than neatness and apparent ability (Zimmerman, 2009). Most did not make critical decisions but demonstrated *doing art* in the manner of "doing school" (Pope, 2002, p. 4). Likewise, Roberts's students learned to follow directions to achieve results similar to examples (Efland, 1976). Quinn's students, accustomed to a culture of artistic behavior (Hathaway & Jaquith, 2014), jumped fearlessly into creativity, starting work without prompting. Miller and Brantley facilitated ideation and meaning-making. Students unfamiliar with these strategies (Gude, 2013) or those assessed by following directions reverted to asking what teachers wanted, the opposite of every teacher's stated intention.

Assessment and Grading

The connection between art assessment and grades, a "data-reduction process" (Eisner, 1996, p. 76) necessary in most schools, remains tenuous. Because linking artistic growth to grades can seem inauthentic if a higher grade equates to mastery, and grading student art can feel judgmental, most prefer linking grades to a completion of activities or behaviors (Stake et al., 1991). Every teacher declared embedded formative assessment most valuable and demonstrated that in art, summative assessment is not a "terminal occasion for ranking" (Wolf & Pistone, 1995, p. 63) but rather a learning step to be applied to the next challenge.

Assessment as Advocacy

Assessment can be advocacy. Miller's students' digital portfolios show that art "is not something magical that happens for the talented; art is work, and the documentation of process shows this." Brantley's student films show quality thinking in creating art. These assessments, created in part to meet the needs of educator accountability, demonstrate a "steady supply of passion, heart, and inner resiliency" (Michalec, 2013, p. 28) on the part of teachers and students. They are important elements of the art room that more educators need to see as models to guide their own assessment practices. ■

Author's Note: All names used are pseudonyms. This Assessment Paper represents part of the author's larger dissertation research findings. See Goodwin, D. J. (2015). *Visual arts assessment in the age of educational accountability* (Publication No. 10017917) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver]. Education Database; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

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Assessment PAPERS for ART EDUCATION

SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

Living Assessments: Ensuring Student Growth and Voice in the Art Classroom

Theresa Cerceo and Beth Lambert

"While the technical skills learned are powerful and essential, they most importantly give students a pathway to further develop their ability to express their unique understanding of their world (Eisner, 2002)."

Arts Assessment Landscape in Maine

Beth Lambert

In 2011, the 125th Maine State Legislature felt strongly that the current Carnegie units system of graduation requirements needed reforming to ensure students acquired the knowledge and skills deemed essential for success in school, higher education, careers, and adult life. This led to the passage of Maine's proficiency-based diploma bill in 2011 and its revisions in 2015 as codified in the Title 20-A Education (2018) revised statutes. In the visual and performing arts (VPA), it became clear in my role as a visual and performing arts specialist that, just as schools had to rethink the way they were providing instruction and support, so did the state. In a true proficiency-based education system, the concept of students having only one way (often the test) and only one chance (when the teacher assigns the test) to show they have learned what the teachers require is challenged; students must be allowed multiple opportunities and multiple ways to demonstrate understanding of skills learned.

With this in mind, I began offering professional learning cohorts regionally throughout the state. In 2015, I focused on arts integration and assessment strategies. Working with arts integration expert Lisa Donovan, I brought together teams of teachers, which were made up of at least one VPA teacher and two other content area or general education

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"How do we document these critical interactions… in the form of official assessments that support student growth, add depth to defend our grade reporting, and advocate for our program?"

teachers. As we worked to create integrated units, it became clear that the major challenges to implementation were scheduling and no common planning time. Without addressing these barriers and despite all this great training, teachers would have to go back to their schools and continue teaching as usual. Therefore, I created the arts integration and assessment fellowship and invited two of the teams from the arts integration cohort to be the first fellows. The work of one team, particularly of visual arts teacher Theresa Cerceo, is featured in this paper. Over 2 years, the fellows have succeeded in team teaching arts-integrated courses. They also received more individualized support from Donovan and me via online and in-person meetings, feedback throughout the process of implementing the unit, and student focus group feedback.

Currently, visual arts fellow Theresa Cerceo and I are working to share our work with the larger field in Maine and nationally through papers like these and presentations at national conferences.

Introducing the Living Assessment

Theresa Cerceo

Rubrics as a Tool for Communication, Documentation, and Advocacy

After spending the past few years participating in the above-mentioned professional development, I produced an assessment tool called the Living Assessment that documents teaching and learning in real time and allows for immediate feedback, while gathering evidence for both formative and summative assessments. In searching for the most effective ways to communicate standards, the creative process, and effective composition with my students, I sought assessment strategies and resources that would support student learning as well as provide evidence of reaching proficiency. Despite my efforts, it seems I always ended up with a 5-by-5 rubric—a rubric of five rows and five columns, with the criteria listed in the first column and the subsequent columns describing the "4, 3, 2, 1" explanations of each criterion. I noticed that this tool was lacking in three critical areas:

Communication. Students did not receive feedback until after they completed their work.

Documentation. The tool did not explicitly capture the learning process.

Advocacy. There was nothing to encourage students to comprehend the whole scope of the learning process or the overarching goals of the curriculum and the academic relevance of art education.

Art educators know that quality feedback happens *in process* as we walk around our rooms, interacting with each student face-to-face (Beattie, 1998; Lowenfeld, 1947). But how do we document these critical interactions, these examples of creative process in real time, in the form of official assessments that support student growth, add depth to defend our grade reporting, and advocate for our program?

Professional Development, Collaboration, and New Insights

As a result of my participation in the Maine Department of Education's Arts Integration and Creative Assessment cohorts and fellowship, I developed the Living Assessment, which has expanded my teaching as well as my visual arts program. Lisa Donovan introduced the idea of creating a learning story, a living document in which an educator designs a unit, plans the implementation, gathers data, and reflects, making changes for future use to enhance best practices in teaching. As my work with the cohort developed my teaching practice, my ideas about how assessment and documentation of learning could function grew as well.

When beginning to create units for the cohort, Donovan chose to reference backward [DS10] design, a method of unit development where one begins with the desired goal rather than instructional activities (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). She asked us to complete an evidence and assessment chart (Table 1) containing the following information: standards, evidence (what will the students do to demonstrate…), and the assessment strategy (how the teacher will gather this information—e.g., class discussion, written analysis of an artwork, a sketch; Donovan & Pascale, 2012).

Table 1. Evidence and Assessment Chart

Standard	Evidence	Assessment strategy
A. Disciplinary Literacy A2. Elements of Art and Principles of Design	Label where the artist used line, shape, pattern, etc.	Label a reproduction of… for compositional elements.
D. Aesthetics and Criticism	Explain and evaluate how Picasso created a composition that is unique and effectively conveys its intent to the viewer.	Class Discussion: What did you notice? What type of emotions does this painting evoke? What choices did the artist make to create this composition?

Assessment as Learning Tools for Students

My work with the cohort, and specifically Donovan's evidence and assessment chart, framed my thinking and sparked an idea. I wanted my assessment tools to reflect the deep work students were doing in the creative process. I also wanted my students to understand the assessment as a tool to help them critique and reflect upon their learning, which creates an opportunity to refine their work and grow. My aim was to insure ownership of learning. I decided to forgo the 5-by-5 rubric and redesign how I would communicate with my students.

My initial focus in redesigning the basic format of the assessment tool was to provide a place to collect evidence and document "in-the-moment" observations and discussions—in short, the creative process in action. This new assessment tool would:

Support student growth by making the expectations for each step of the lesson/unit explicit and by providing feedback to students as to how their work relates to standards, goals, and the creative process.

Add depth to scoring by giving feedback while students are in process. In doing so, the final score includes the working process that allowed them multiple opportunities to learn and develop concepts and skills.

Advocate for the relevance of arts education by helping students connect the creative process to academic themes and overarching goals.

As I began to use the tool and received feedback on my fellowship's work, its purpose expanded. It became a place to write observations that would serve as personal reflections and reminders about individual students. I would use these notes with the whole class or during one-on-one meetings. The tool provided standards-based talking points specific to a student's or the class's needs (Table 2).

By integrating formative assessment strategies in the assessment tool as a way to promptly review teaching tactics and growth toward proficiency targets, I was documenting the twists and turns of the teaching/learning process. I could pinpoint with the students, in real time, where they needed to demonstrate learning and what was missing. We then worked together to create short-term goals. The Living Assessment changes constantly throughout the process of lesson implementation. It is impacted by each action and each moment, transforming and fine-tuning the teaching for each student while capturing the nuances of the educational process. For example, when

"I could pinpoint with the students, in real time, where they needed to demonstrate learning and what was missing. We then worked together to create short-term goals."

creating sketches for a community mural, one group clearly had a lack of commitment to the project. The "Post-it" critique that followed documented that this disconnect was obvious to the viewer and to the teachers. The sketch lacked almost any attempt at demonstrating skill or awareness of composition (Figure 1).

The Living Assessment gave the students of this particular group clarity as to how they were not meeting the target and allowed me to forge a discussion with them despite their seeming lack of interest (which was really their reaction to not having connected with the theme yet). By reviewing the rubric, students reflected on their goals, and it became clear that they needed to generate more ideas on the theme of community and relate these ideas to the wider school community (Table 3). By working through this process, I could document and guide them to reflect, refine, and revise in order to meet goals. As a result, the students developed an idea that was relevant to them and the wider school community (Figure 2).

Supporting the Conversation: Effective Communication and the Creative Process

The Living Assessment provided my students and me with a direct link from the everyday classroom conversation and the various steps of creation to the standards being assessed and the expectations set. It quite literally changed how I was teaching. I began to use this format in my K–8 classes. I enhanced it by seeking input from the classes. With the document projected on the board, the students helped fill in the "Proficiency in this looks like… " column (Table 4). Not only did this give them ownership of their learning, it allowed for in-depth discus-

Table 2. Example of Living Assessment Rubric

Community Mural Rubric			
Visual arts standards	**The mural exhibits that as a community…**	**Proficiency in this looks like…**	**Ongoing assessment feedback**
A. Disciplinary Literacy A1. Artist's Purpose	The students are skilled at developing a work of art based on observations of surroundings, including events in home, school, or community life.	• Brainstorming to make personal connections • Relating to the wider school community • Working to bring the community together in a positive way	Students had trouble with broad topics and finding personal connections. Prompting and redirecting was needed.
B. Creation, Performance, and Expression B1. Media Skills	Students can choose suitable media, tools, techniques, and processes (m., t.t., and p.) to create original artwork.	• Making notes for possible? • Verbalizing reasoning as to why the choices are the most effective ones. • Aiming to use processes (m., t.t., and p.) appropriately (asking for guidance and accepting critique when necessary).	Measuring possible spaces and determining materials are accomplished. Students who are not yet engaged are struggling to commit to choices.

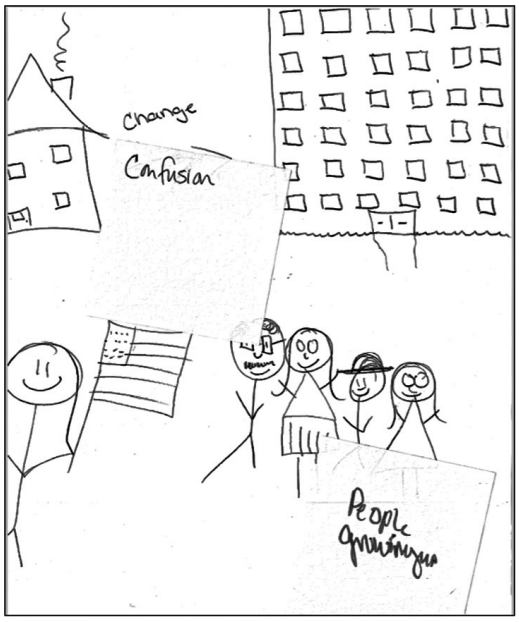

Figure 1. Initial sketch with "Post-it" critique comments from peers.

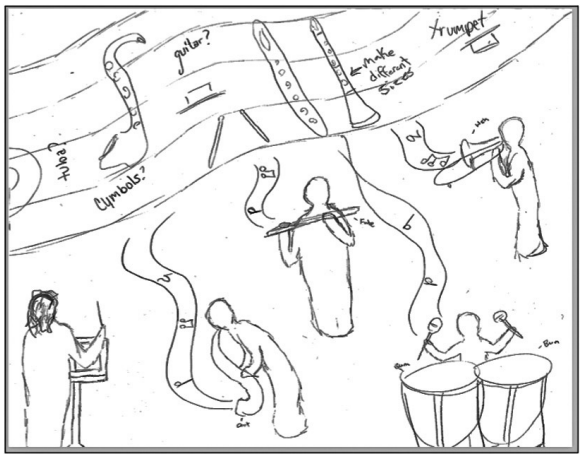

Figure 2. The revised sketch shows more personal engagement and more attention to the overall composition. The student's ideas are presented more clearly.

Table 3. Continuation of the Living Assessment Rubric With Documentation Illustrating the Post-it Critique Feedback

Community Mural Rubric			
Visual arts standards	**The mural exhibits that as a community…**	**Proficiency in this looks like…**	**Ongoing assessment feedback**
B. Creation, Performance, and Expression B3. Making-Meaning	The students, based on formal and informal critique and self-reflection, can refine their work.	• Students craft responses to peer and teacher critiques. • Students make changes to make the message clearer.	Students completed sketches, and a "Post-it" critique revealed that some groups need to clarify purpose and perhaps make more personal connections to the content in order to do so.
C. Creative Process	The students are skilled at analyzing their ideas and experiences in order to synthesize information and create innovative work.	• Ongoing: collecting (lists, sketches, etc.) • Ongoing: changes are documented (on sketches or notes) • Work progresses from planning stages toward completion.	Second round of sketches showed more clarification of and refinement to the idea. One group was divided into two groups.
	Individual Student		
E5. Interpersonal Skills	The student can work with other artists to collaborate on ideas while working together to develop goals and criteria to guide and reflect on those ideas through the creative process.	• Consistent engagement throughout the process (start to finish). • Encouragement for peers to share ideas. • Respectful disagreements permitted and compromises encouraged.	Students broken into two groups are more engaged in planning. There is equality in the discussions now.

Table 4. Example of Living Assessment Rubric Co-created by Teacher and 4th-Grade Students

Grade 4. Giant Invasion			
Visual arts standards	**My work and my discussions show that…**	**Proficiency in this looks like…***	**Ongoing assessment feedback**
A. Disciplinary Literacy	I can identify space and how the artist created it.	I can identify that the artist used: • a horizon line • form in the human figure (3D) • overlap and shading (value) • size relationships to make space	
B. Creation, Performance, and Expression	I can use size and space to create the illusion of 3D space.	• Horizon line • Form in the human figure (3D) • Overlap and shading (value) • Size relationships to make space	
C. Creative Problem Solving	I can start with an idea and, through sharing and talking with my partners, elaborate on our ideas.	• Put together or combine ideas (agree). • Talk over disagreements and work them out. • Reflect and make changes.	
E. Visual and Performing Arts Connections			
D. Aesthetics and Criticism	I can give my opinion about artwork and back it up with evidence (clues) from the artwork.	• Evidence or clues are present in my writing.	

**Note:* Section created via class discussion.*

sions that included a wide variety of topics pertaining to teaching and learning: unpacking standards, studio habits, depth of knowledge, the creative process, and critical-thinking skills.

In providing my students with assessment tools that are explicit in expectations and give relevant feedback, they learn to appreciate the complexities of the content. While the technical skills learned are powerful and essential, they most importantly give students a pathway to further develop their ability to express their unique understanding of their world (Eisner, 2002). Students will use these tools for creation, communication, and collaboration long after they leave our classrooms. For them to fully reach their potential, students must receive explicit instruction and be involved with the beautiful process of assessing their work in the creative process (Dorn et al., 2004). The Living Assessment teaches and documents this process, strengthening student understanding of why artists create, how to use the creative process to analyze the world around them, and how to deliberately design works that effectively convey their unique voices. ■

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SECTION V

Visual Arts Assessments: Case Studies From the Classroom and Beyond

NAEA School for Art Leaders at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art: A 5-Year Evaluation Plan in Action

F. Robert Sabol and Enid Zimmerman[1]

"There is positive research-based evidence that suggests that the SAL professional learning community will continue to grow and coalesce into a powerful base of leadership with a yearly addition of new SAL graduates."

The fields of general education and art education are in an unprecedented period of change, and educational leaders are experiencing new challenges and opportunities that require higher levels of creativity, innovation, and visionary thinking than ever before (Sabol, 2006, 2014; Zimmerman, 2015). In 2015, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) launched the School for Art Leaders (SAL) program at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art to provide transformative experiences for art educators to become participatory leaders and advocates of positive change for the field of art education. Linked directly to NAEA's Strategic Vision (2015), the SAL program supports building community, advocating for art education, learning through critical literacy, conducting practice and research for dynamic instruction and authentic assessment, and leadership development. Each summer 25 SAL participants, chosen from a competitive application process, meet at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, for 5 days to become part of a professional learning community empowered to assume leadership roles in a variety of educational settings. The SAL program is supported by NAEA, the National Art Education Foundation, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the National Endowment for the Arts, and local and state organizations.

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In 2021, we completed a 194-page Summary Report of the Findings of the Evaluation of the National Art Education Association School for Art Leaders 2015 to 2019 Program at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. This external evaluation of SAL was intended to (1) strengthen future processes and outcomes of this leadership experience, (2) build an adaptable model for developing a community of creative and collaborative art education leaders, and (3) establish a leadership development program that can be adapted and extended to other educational settings. Our assessment of the SAL program is intended to evaluate its efficacy for teaching art education practitioners to assume leadership responsibilities that benefit visual arts students in pre-K–12 schools, higher education institutions, museums, and art and community centers. The assessment also imparts important outcomes that are intended to provide support for leadership development among all art educators across the field, and not only for those who attend the SAL program. Thus, the creation of a community of leaders in art education, combined with leadership education and findings from our evaluation, has great possibility to create positive changes in perception and understanding of how leadership in art education can play significant roles in local communities and beyond.

SAL Application Process

Art education professionals who are new to leadership, as well as those who have a range of past leadership experiences and are seeking to enhance their skills, are encouraged to apply to join the SAL program. Required are 5 years or more of professional practice and current employment as an art educator in a school district, museum, college or university, local or state agency, community organization, or other art-focused work context. Applicants are asked to commit to (1) fully participating in the program at the Crystal Bridges Museum, (2) completing additional activities required after attending a 5-day summer session, (3) participating in future evaluations of their leadership impact in art education, and (4) joining in ongoing art education leadership community building. They are also expected to have organizational support from a state association and/or school/institution. NAEA anticipates that the graduates of the program will actively apply their leadership skills to enhance their institutions and/or NAEA and its affiliates, and to contribute a positive impact on the field of art education. Selections are made based on each applicant's readiness for the SAL program, previous leadership competencies, diverse professional experiences, geographic location, instructional setting, volunteer service, and ethnicity. Other indications of leadership potential also may be taken into consideration.

"The creation of a community of leaders in art education, combined with leadership education and findings from our evaluation, has great possibility to create positive changes in perception and understanding of how leadership in art education can play significant roles in local communities and beyond."

Methodology of Evaluation Design

Our 5-year evaluation of the SAL program was not intended to assess the SAL program's curriculum or roles of the Program Director or Guides who provide presentations, workshops, reflective experiences, and small-group activities. It was designed to collect substantial quantitative and qualitative data that demonstrate how SAL graduates evolved in their leadership development and their personal, collaborative, organizational, and public voices as described in the SAL Leadership Model (Figure 1). This framework draws upon Thurber and Zimmerman's Leadership Model (1997, 2002), the Total Leadership Model (Friedman, 2008), Mindful Leadership (Marturano, 2014), and the NAEA Core Leadership Competencies Model (NAEA Task Force on Leadership, 2014). Collaborative, community-building, creative, balanced, and integrated leadership development is emphasized in this framework as SAL participants continuously move from focusing on their own leadership abilities, to collaborating with others, to building their leadership in local and professional groups, to forming leadership initiatives beyond their local settings.

This 5-year SAL evaluation is longitudinal in design, and its main objective is to determine the leadership development trends of those who attended. Evaluation of the SAL program includes data collected through (1) direct observation and video recordings collected during SAL summer meetings, (2) an online survey instrument administered shortly after each new cohort completed its SAL experience, (3) an online survey where previous SAL cohorts reported their leadership-building initiatives, and (4) audio and video focus group interview recordings with each SAL cohort collected at yearly NAEA Conventions.

On the SAL evaluation surveys, participants were asked to supply demographic data and respond to questions about how participating in the SAL program affected their personal and professional lives. We designed the survey to provide both quantitative and qualitative response items, and it consists of questions focused on SAL participants' leadership roles, funding applied for or received, role changes in their schools, working collaboratively with others, published writings and/or exhibits of their artwork, participation in state and/or national conferences, local and national leadership roles they have assumed, their present positions, and other outcomes of attending the SAL program. The Leadership Model (Figure 1) also was used as a reference to develop questions about collaborative, creative, and community-building processes that have potential to link all NAEA strategic goals and reinforce best practices in quality personal and professional leadership development.

Focus group discussions with SAL 2015 and 2016 cohorts were held at NAEA Conventions in 2016 in New Orleans, New York City in 2017, Seattle in 2018, Boston in 2019, and online in 2020 following the canceled Minneapolis Convention. An overall consideration of group attitudes and ideas was emphasized in these focus group discussions (Krueger & Casey, 2009). We collected qualitative data through open-ended questions that concentrated on personal details of activities; uses of leadership education provided at SAL; accomplishments after attending SAL; suggestions for the next SAL summer program;

Figure 1. School for Art Leaders Educational Framework.

how the SAL community could continue to be built; and how their teaching strategies, students' accomplishments, and leadership roles may have changed due to attending SAL.

We used content analysis to categorize and analyze data through quantitative and qualitative findings in survey results and focus group meetings (Mertens, 2010). Then, we made suggestions for retaining and strengthening successful parts of the SAL program and recommended modifications that needed to be addressed. For example, some revisions were made, such as changing the timing of the due dates for the SAL applications, adding new topics and program changes for SAL learning and practice during the SAL program at the Crystal Bridges Museum, adjusting configurations of the online SAL survey for the SAL longitudinal study, and adapting procedures to keep SAL participants engaged as a community after each SAL program ended. We attended entire 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 SAL 5-day summer sessions at the Crystal Bridges Museum to gather data, observe SAL firsthand, and interact directly with SAL participants. The Program Director and several SAL Guides later verified our findings and helped triangulate data and, when appropriate, some changes were made by the SAL Director. Then, we wrote detailed annual reports based on the survey results; focus group discussions; feedback from the Program Director and Guides; our program observations; tape and video recordings; and photographs of presentations, group activities, and visual journaling.

Demographic Data

Aggregated findings from responses provided on data collections from the 2015–2019 cohorts produced an overall response rate of 62%. Summaries of responses revealed that SAL participants most commonly came from the Western Region (34%), followed by the Southeastern Region (27%), Eastern Region (25%), Pacific Region (12%), and international contexts (2%). Most respondents worked in suburban school settings (49%), while those in urban settings (38%) and rural settings (13%) followed with decreasing frequency. In general, most art teachers in the United States are women (Sabol, 1998, 1999, 2001), and this is reflected in the SAL survey, where women (91%) represented an overwhelming percentage of respondents compared to men (9%). The races of respondents included 80% White, 10% Hispanic/Latino, 5% Black, 5% Asian, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native. Secondary art teachers represented the largest group of respondents (26%), followed by those from supervision and administration (22%), middle and elementary (18% each), museum education (7%), higher education (6%), and "other" (3%). When asked to identify their years of teaching experience, those with 21 or more years of experience (52%) represented the largest group, followed by those with 16–20 years (35%), 11–15 years (10%), and 6–10 years (3%). Of all respondents, 72% hold master's degrees, followed by those with bachelor's and doctoral degrees (14% each).

"SAL graduates are assuming an ever-increasing range of leadership roles and positions within their school districts or institutional settings, within their states, and across the country."

SAL Participants Develop Their Leadership Skills

The emergence of SAL graduates as leaders indicates that the knowledge and skills they developed were making an impact locally, regionally, and nationally as they were becoming change agents for and active proponents of art education. Based on direct observation of SAL participants in various leadership roles, during in-depth formal and informal discussions, and on survey responses, and in their general spirit, it appears they are working to educate themselves as leaders and are committed to providing strong leadership for the field of art education.

Findings from this 5-year evaluation of the SAL program provided evidence that SALs are actively assuming roles as leaders locally, district and statewide, as well as nationally. Strengths of SAL networking, utilization of the leadership models and tools, and findings about leadership trajectories of SAL graduates and their establishing connections to the NAEA goals, indicate initial successes of the SAL program. They are assuming an ever-increasing range of leadership roles and positions within their school districts or institutional settings, within their states, and across the country.

Advances in leadership growth is evident in all instructional Divisions of NAEA and across all four Regions of the Association. SALs are presidents of their state art education associations, and a SAL is President-Elect of NAEA. Further, several SALs have been elected to the NAEA Board of Directors; the NAEA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission; and the NAEA Research Commission. Others have achieved success as leaders by being influential as trailblazers in roles in their states or local government agencies. At the school and museum levels, SAL graduates are building leadership by forming groups of museum and/or cultural institution educators who meet regularly with district art educators and have established a variety of art exhibits that connect schools or museums with local communities. Settings for these exhibits include local artists exhibiting their work in a school gallery, student exhibitions in a district art gallery, at a hospital, in an assisted living center, a cafe, and a local museum. Other SAL graduates have exhibited their own artwork in a variety of venues, including a staff show at a museum, on a professional art website, at a university art gallery, at a state NAEA members' exhibition, and at a district art exhibition. The emergence of SAL leaders within their school districts indicates that knowledge and skills SALs have developed are making an impact locally as they are becoming change agents for and active proponents of art education. Based on direct observation of SALs in various leadership roles, during in-depth formal and informal discussions, on survey responses, and in their general spirit, it appears they are working to educate themselves as leaders and are committed to providing strong leadership for the field of art education.

"We also suggest an increased focus on the role of research in leadership development and having SAL participants demonstrate their engagement with research as part of their leadership development."

Outcomes of the SAL Program

Findings from the 5-year evaluation of the SAL program provide evidence that SAL graduates are actively assuming roles as leaders locally, district- and statewide, and nationally. Strengths of SAL networking, utilization of the leadership models and tools, findings about leadership trajectories of SAL graduates, and their establishing connections to the NAEA goals indicate initial successes of the SAL program. As it continues to progress, the SAL program is becoming better known within the field of art education, and a growing network is being built across the country. SAL participants are engaged in furthering their education leadership through local, district, and state programs in which they have received or will receive certificates and master's and doctoral degrees, held offices, and/or were recognized for their leadership skills and abilities. There is a growing commitment to engaging in NAEA leadership roles from local through national levels. This is growing evidence of how many SAL graduates are making contributions to art education leadership at all levels, and how they are furthering NAEA's mission that should continue into the future. Some examples of SAL participants' personal observations are: "SAL is life changing… personally, professionally, and socially," and it is "the single best leadership training I have had in arts education." One SAL participant observed, "I feel like I belong to a much larger community and I have a network of resources available to me at any time." Another described SAL as

> one of the few top professional experiences in my career that viewed its participants with respect and [saw] them as capable beings who can make a difference in this world… and how it can be a great avenue to bring forth unity and harmony in the world.

Almost all SAL cohorts demonstrated leadership at local, state, and/or national levels. On the surveys, they responded that SAL was a life-transformational experience both in their personal and professional lives, and that they built professional leadership communities. As the SAL program continues to evolve, most SAL cohorts appear ready and willing to take on leadership roles at all levels and in a variety of educational settings locally, regionally, at the state level, and nationally. We recommend in the future a more diversified group of SAL participants be created when selecting participants, with respect to broadening representation of cultural backgrounds, races, genders, teaching settings, and other factors that would increase diversity among SAL participants. Leaders depend on research to inform their practice and decision making. We also suggested an increased focus on the role of research in leadership development and having SAL participants demonstrate their engagement with research as part of their leadership development. An important aspect of the SAL program is NAEA's commitment to permanently maintaining the SAL program and continuing its support of cohorts that have completed the program. This can be accomplished by continuing to provide a variety of additional professional development experiences for SAL graduates, maintaining and expanding communications among all SAL graduates, continuing to have virtual meetings that connect SAL

graduates to their own community, and mentoring other art educators to becoming effective leaders.

Although there are some additional means through which the SAL leadership experience can be enhanced, the overall accomplishments of SAL participants and their engagement in the program are significant and notable. There is positive research-based evidence that suggests the SAL professional learning community will continue to grow and coalesce into a powerful base of leadership with a yearly addition of new SAL graduates. As the program continues, a model is being developed for future art education leaders. It is up to those who have been engaged in the SAL program to use knowledge and skills they acquired at SAL to pursue their own goals and aspirations, and to provide leadership that is reflective of their experiences to a wide art education audience. ■

"Although there are some additional means through which the SAL leadership experience can be enhanced, the overall accomplishments of SAL participants and their engagement in the program are significant and notable. There is positive research-based evidence that suggests that the SAL professional learning community will continue to grow and coalesce into a powerful base of leadership with a yearly addition of new SAL graduates."

Endnotes

[1] The authors' names are listed alphabetically; both contributed equally to this publication.

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