PLACE AS AN ELEMENTARY ART CONTENT DETERMINANT:

ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SUBJECTIVITY AND ADAPTIVITY

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Changed spaces will change practice" (Oblinger, 2006, p. 1.1).

Considering Place as Important

Place is where everything happens. Nothing happens outside of place (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1900; Norberg-Schulz, 1999). Dewey further relates, "The first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment; not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it" (1934, p. 13). Physical spaces are part of our lives in very real and important ways. We are always somewhere. *Somewhere* can be inviting, supportive, or challenging. Ignoring place does not minimize its importance to living patterns (Alexander, 1979). For example, the comatose are unaware of the very objects in their environments that sustain them. Just as we often minimize the supportive aspects of place in our daily routines, so also the impact of place on teaching content is often overlooked (Chism & Bickford, 2002; Edwards & Usher, 2003). This study considers the importance of the objects of place to elementary art teaching content.

Human behaviors change in relation to the spaces that they occupy (Marcus, 1995; Mumford, 1924). We adapt to the space, move to a more accommodating venue, or alter our activity. Through either *actual* physical constraints or *perceived* environmental limitations, we do different things in different places. According to Zeisel (2006), architectural designers use *imaging* to better understand the challenges in creating supportive spaces to meet clients' specific needs. Many activities simply could not happen without an accommodating place (Norberg-Shulz, 1999). Designers work at "changing the

physical world to achieve identifiable goals" (Zeisel, 2006). As obvious examples, consider playing a pipe organ or engaging in sports activities. Organ pipes are built into planned architectural spaces. The location and placement of pipes must accommodate various sizes, number of pipes, as well as consider optimum acoustics within the expansive place. Sports activities such as basketball, tennis, football, hockey, soccer, and handball all need planned areas that are carefully measured, marked, and furnished with specific equipment. Game rules dictate uniformity for fair competition. Factories provide another excellent example of purposeful space design. The ultimate quality of products and efficiency of production are dependent on the objects, placement, and accessibility within place. The end products, whether from artistic performances, competitive engagements, or capitalistic enterprises, all depend on supportive places.

Linguistic connections illustrate unions between place and activity. As Norberg-Shulz relates, "… acts and occurrences *take place*" (1999, p. 414). A *concert* hall is built to provide a place with acoustics suitable for the best sound transfer from the musicians performing *in concert*. We build *school* buildings to *school* students. Such examples echo ecological relationships between human activities and their accommodating places. In understanding the importance of place to progressive education concepts, Dewey (1900) drew floor plans to support educational priorities and interrelationships. He did not limit his input to only writing a curriculum or developing a new method. Dewey saw the importance of the place in establishing what could or would be taught.

At times we must modify something about us in order to fully experience a place (Marcus, 1995). Scuba diving, astronautic space exploration, fire fighting, and interacting in children's play areas are just a few examples of places requiring us to make some accommodations to become actively involved. As new teachers walk into the classroom for the first time, they find their preconceived notions about teaching must be adapted to fit the space given. Preservice teachers often develop classroom management plans (Bates, 2000; Jones, 2007; Wong, 2009). These plans focus on student behaviors and general organization. However the physically constructed spaces are often minimized or ignored in regard to their impact on the content of instruction transpiring within each place (Chism & Bickford, 2002; Edwards & Usher, 2003).

Differences in Place

Place became of research interest after noting differences (Marcus, 1995; Schwab, 1971). I teach art education courses at a local university. We have a children's art program that serves the youth of the community and, at the same time, provides a practicum setting for the university preservice teachers. The children's art school has yearly enrollments of over 1,000 youth ranging in age from 3 ½ to 18 years. I have taught both children's and adult classes at the university for almost two decades now. Over the years of teaching children at the university and observing art classrooms in the schools, I noted teaching content differences. The young students taught at the university lab studios were some of the same students elementary art teachers taught in the local schools. Yes, the teachers were all different, but there were also differences in the

physical places. Seeing place as connected, and even key to what happens within it (Alexander, 1979; Marcus, 1995; Norberg-Schulz, 1996), this difference became a focus for greater consideration. As researcher, I began to think about aspects of the space for the university children's art school lab studio that seemed supportive and inviting. This is the place where I began my art education profession. The interactions within this space continue to reinforce teaching content. I recall some of my own early impressions of the art lab studio.

Figure 1. University children's art lab studio.

My Place

What a place! The thirty-nine-foot-long windowed glass wall offers a visual appeal that invites one to further explore this designated space for the young children's art classes at the university. The abundant natural light seems ever so *right* for art making endeavors (Ceppi & Zini, 1998; Strozzi & Vecchi,

2002). What a glorious place for children to learn, and yes, for teachers to teach! The view outside the windows brings the eye to move into a grassy area graced with a few tall trees rising above the contrasting concrete abstract sculpture of the international symbol for a human, as it is posed in a running position. The union of nature and art comfortably extends to the wooded nature preserve just behind the building (Ceppi & Zini, 1998; Strozzi & Vecchi, 2002).

Parents first entering our young children's art studio space sometimes comment on both the view and the window expanse as positive physical attributes. They like the spaciousness. They like the abundance of natural light. That one architectural feature of a large windowed wall, although quite a dominant aspect of the space, does not capture the full story of this art studio. The impact of natural light and view cannot be isolated from other details within the space anymore than the hospital study of impacts of light and view could disregard all other physical characteristics experienced within each patient's room (Ulrich, 1984). There is more.

The twelve spaciously-sized tables appear to float freely in a double rank between the window and the parallel chalkboard wall. The elegant simplicity of Mies van der Rohe's phrase "less is more" (Blake, 1960; Gordon,1953) reflects the minimalist modernity fostered by Bauhaus designers and architects in Germany from 1919 to1933 (Whitford, 1984). The white walls, expansive windows, and abundance of open unrestricted space, all situated inside a white building, recall images of architectural works completed by Richard Meier (1991). The tables are constructed from natural birch with plastic laminated work

surfaces. Bentwood legs are repeated on the matching stools. The sturdy birch stools resonate as a “knockoff” of the classic Alvar Aalto model #60 designed in 1932-33 (Fiell, 1997, p. 222). The added primary-colored laminates on the tabletops recall Mondrian’s most famous palette as well as the stained glass work of De Stijl artist, Theo van Doesburg (Overy, 1991, p. 89). This place combines the supportive art of design with functionality (Cold, 2001).

These basic furnishings in the art production area of the studio are neatly bookended with accessible storage and sink areas (Susi & Nyman, 1996; Susi, 1986 &1999). A white laminated counter holding two sinks atop lower red cabinets has shallow white open shelving above it. On those shelves -- set off in mingled groupings between paint bottles, glue, and clay tools -- there is an informal showcase of ceramic works left behind over the years. On the other end of the room there are deep white open shelves holding art materials. These two end walls echo the presence and place for children’s art making endeavors. Other random cabinets, boxes, and stacks have invaded the deep open-shelved area on the far end wall as reminders that purity of form is not always maintained. It is as if Mondrian’s 1940s consistent rhythm of *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (Deicher, 1999, p. 88) was interrupted by a paint spill.

The physical space, including its contents, can be viewed as an object of art in itself. The quest for aesthetic appeal by interior designers and architects emphasizes created spaces as an art form (Cold, 2001). The fields of architecture and interior design are included under studies of applied arts. Place has also taken a stronger role in some postmodern art forms. Installation artists

build on such expanded relationships by including place as a crucial part of their art objects (Kabakov, 1999; Skoglund, 2010).

With a dedicated children's art making space, adequate numbers of tables, storage space with supplies, a chalkboard, and sinks, this could well complete the description of the university children's studio space (Susi & Nyman, 1996; Susi, 1986 &1999). However, there is another major piece. It is almost as prominent as the twenty-four children's art making tables in the front two-thirds of the studio.

Almost one-third of the ample studio floor space is dedicated to an inviting motivational teaching area. Set off with an area rug, three long wooden benches and extra chairs provide places for the children to sit, look at images, and engage in dialogue with their teacher. Here students are led to describe, interpret, analyze, and evaluate artworks within the context of time, culture, and place, (Feldman, 1970). Through engagement with select images, themes, ideas, and applications emerge. Artful connections increase enthusiasm and build purpose. This is where students watch teachers illustrate processes – modeling how making art becomes another way of communicating individual ideas. And this place is where the children connect meaningful ideas about *other's* art works to their own experiences. They brainstorm together and select related personal imagery. This prepares them to creatively engage in making their own imaginative art objects.

Figure 2. University children's art lab motivation area.

Their Places: Three Teachers

The public school elementary art classrooms in this study are all from one school district. Lisa (Caucasian in her thirties), Margaret (Caucasian in her forties), and Esther (Caucasian in her fifties) (pseudonyms) each had their own art classrooms. They also had tables and stools suitable for student art making activities. Water was locally available, and art materials were stored and accessed. Their art rooms had more in common with each other than with the university studio. Their classrooms were all smaller than the university lab art studio. Lisa had the smallest teaching space; her classroom measured 759 square feet. Margaret had 810 square feet. Esther had the biggest room, at 840 square feet. The university studio measured 975 square feet.

The primary difference, which brought me to this study, dealt with the area designed for motivation. At the university from one-third to as much as three-

fourths of the teaching content takes place in the motivation area. Previous to this study, I had never witnessed that same motivational emphasis in an elementary art classroom. I wondered if having the chairs and benches gathered around the teacher and easel reflected, supported, or even mandated the

Figure 3. Gathering places in the classrooms of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

dialogical exchange valued in our teaching program. Places were found for supporting gathered group dialogues in Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's classrooms. Lisa had two area rugs, in a cramped space, placed side by side for the students to sit on while viewing and talking about art. Margaret had an area with interlocking foam pieces wedged between the front teaching lab counter and a low bookcase. Esther had one large rug. Their gathering areas were cramped and less accommodating than the furnished area at the university.

Literature Areas Supporting Aspects of Place

This study was based on three areas of literature that supported aspects of elementary art teaching, place, and teaching content. I refer to them as the three "*obs" – objective*, *object*, and *obstacle*. The first area to consider was art education. A general overview of core art education theories provided various *objectives* from differing perspectives (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Eisner & Ecker, 1966). From these purposeful theories, curricula and methods are

developed to affect *what* happens in the classroom -- i.e. teaching content *objectives*.

The second literature area dealt with built place. Architectural aspects, along with contained furnishings and materials, are *objects*. Architecture literature addresses the ideas of *where* as a situated physical place. Mumford broadly related, that "architecture and civilization develop hand in hand …" (1924, p.193). Architectural studies related understandings of the human activities within the context of places (Mumford, 1924). Places do not stand alone. The importance of where we live and work sets us within a physical framework that supports, challenges, or instructs our lives.

The third area of literature review looks at human interactions with and within physical places. Relationships between occupant and place do not continue without *obstacles* (Marcus, 1995). Over time people change – altered perspectives could result from physical, emotional, vocational, spiritual, or other changes -- affecting interests and purposes. Architecture's relationship with environmental psychology addresses *obstacles* between people and their physical places – i.e., questions of *why* or *how*. Chism says, "The field of environmental psychology explores such topics as place attachment, psychological comfort with space, and the motivational and inspirational effects of space" (2006, p. 2.4). Personal perspectives, ideals, expectations, interpretations, and associations contribute to feelings of attachment, security, and control within physical places. Architects realize that buildings do not exist in isolation from the humanity they are designed to house (Alexander, 1979). The

relationships between occupants and built structures must be considered. Together, the three “obs” were addressed to explore how *the whole* challenges, resolves, and functions as one ecological unit; place is an essential part of our existence, and as such, is life supporting (Arnold & Ballantyne, 2004).

Art Education

What elementary art teachers value, and how they use it to teach art, becomes their chosen teaching content (La Porte, Speirs, & Young, 2008). Overviews of the history of art education provide a basic foundation of various theoretical concepts, goals, and objectives (Efland, 1990, 2004; Stankiewicz, 2001). Metaphorically, these theories provide a surface on which to bounce the practical applications. In this study I did not assume that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were familiar with all, some, or possibly any of the art education theories discussed in the literature review. The purpose for including such conceptual skeletal framework was to make associative connections with the teachers’ own content stories.

Art education objectives were extended to include the Reggio Emilia model. This Italian-based early childhood program was grounded in visual literacy development. The Reggio classrooms provide object collections that invite learning interactions (Ceppi & Zini, 1998). With art viewed as an important key to all learning, art teachers serve as valued resources in the Reggio schools. Many of *The Hundred Languages of Children,* (Gandini & Forman, 1998) are visual languages such as clay, wire, and paint. The Reggio concept offered another idea of what it can mean to be an art teacher. Reggio Emilia schools

also include the notion of place or environment as a teacher (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003).

Object Importance

Objects remain core to discussions about art and art education. Human associations, values, and identities connect to objects. Fariello speaks of "the language of objects" (2005, p. 148). He relates ideas about the language of aesthetic objects. Fariello says, "… through them [aesthetic objects], a transference of meaning can take place over vast periods of time" (2005, p. 148). Museums hold, present, and share art objects; they engage writings, dialogues, and programs about aesthetic objects they house. Ideas, context, and interpretations present artistic, personal, and cultural meanings that build and evolve over time. The study of art includes objects.

Objects have absolute material characteristics. This is the aspect which, in fact, defines them as objects. The first meaning listed for object is, "something material that may be perceived by the senses" (Mirriam-Webster.com, 2010). The object of architecture is real. Goldberger says, "… the basic truth does not change … buildings have a physical reality" (2009, p. 67). Not only is the built architectural space an object for the teacher to work within, but the elementary art classroom is also filled with many other objects (Susi & Nyman, 1996; Susi, 1986 &1999). There are student-accommodating furnishings such as tables, seats, and rugs. Teaching objects include computers, projection equipment, easels, drying racks, kilns, storage containers, books, posters, and art materials. Through observation, phenomenological understandings reveal object stories.

Because of the importance of art objects to art education and the importance of the objects of architectural place to what transpires within spaces, the truth of object is important to this study.

Architectural Environments

The ongoing relationships between places and people become a complete environment or an ecological unit. The support or tension between place and activities affects what happens there (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1934; Marcus, 1995). Teaching content is the result of connections between teacher intent and facilitating place (Oblinger, 2006; Steiner, 1997). When visiting elementary art teaching spaces of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, I did not find the allocated spaces for focused dialogues as structured, expansive, or inviting as the one at the university children's lab studio. Yet, having a separate seating area to bring people together in contemplative dialogue is not a new idea. The large tables found in corporate buildings and in higher education seminar spaces serve as a physical gathering place to foster face-to-face dialogues and collaborative brainstorming activities. I find it interesting that in terms of promoting the development of highly creative new ideas the phrase "think tank" was once used. Although metaphorically referenced, it still gives the strong association to a *contained place for innovative thought development*. It is important to consider developing specific physical spaces to encourage more thoughtful exchanges within a learning process (Dewey, 1934; Oblinger, 2006; Steiner, 1997; Sullivan, 1896).

Research and readings in architecture focus on the functions of place (Alexander, 1979; Brand, 1994; Marcus; 1995; Sullivan, 1896). These resources build the strongest case for consideration of place as key to human activities. Planning spaces reflect ideas of Sullivan's famous "form ever follows function" (1896, p. 403). The challenge of designing buildings to support specific human activities is the architects' mandate; usage breathes living and changing patterns (Alexander, 1979; Brand, 1994; Dewey, 1934, 1938). Brand declares that, "Almost no building adapts well. They're *designed* not to adapt …" (1994, p. 2). That means that we need to fully consider the activities before a place is built. Hutchison, in *A Natural History of Place in Education* (2004), reminds us of the curricular changes brought about with progressive education. The desks arranged in straight lines and bolted to the floor would not support collaborative learning models.

Specialized areas, such as art, brought new challenges to school design. Paechter (2003) adds, "Without … specialist spaces it was more or less impossible for the subjects to be taught" (p 32). Art education literature reviewed dealt with aspects of organization and classroom management (Jones, 2007; Susi, 1986, 1996, & 1999; Wong, 2009). According to the National Center for Education Statistics Statistical Analysis Report on Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools from 1999-2000 (June 2002), 49 percent of our nation's elementary schools have art teachers situated within their own specialized classrooms. It seemed timely to examine more closely what could be learned from their situated experiences. We may need to consider redesigning

and modifying the current elementary art teaching spaces. The dilemma is well stated in the words attributed to Winston Churchill from over 60 years ago, “We make our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us” (Baker, 2010; Brand, 1994; The International Centre for Facilities, 2006). As theories about what teaching art means evolve, we cannot forget the physical places. I turn again to Oblinger, who reminds us, “spaces are themselves agents for change; changed spaces will change practice” (2006, p. 1.1).

Finding the stories of the relationships between *occupants* and *given space* is the focus of the long-term studies of Marcus in *House as a Mirror of Self* (1995*)*. Each teacher in this study had her own *education house*. The questions Marcus addressed were modified for this study as *classroom as a mirror of teacher practices*. Marcus relates that “…most of us do create some space in the world that is ours and, whether consciously or unconsciously, we shape … it to express our values” (1995, p 50). The ecological stories of teacher and place express elementary art education content values. Marcus says, “To appropriate space, to order and mold it into a form that pleases us and affirms who we are, is a universal need” (1995, p. 68).

The three “*obs”* of *objective*, *objects*, and *obstacles* formed the basis for this study of elementary art teachers with their places. Ongoing experiences between, within, and together were an ecological living whole (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1938). This study began with the *objectives* or concepts of art education (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Eisner & Ecker, 1966). Art teaching content was considered in terms of educational theories from the discipline of art. The

objects of architecture as a built place, including the furnishings and housed *stuff* provided the setting for usage and the user (Alexander, 1979; Marcus, 1995). The interactions between the teacher and the architectural physicalities exposed *obstacles*. Personal perceptions about those relationships, from individual contextual experiences, were revealed as teachers' stories.

This study looked at how each elementary art teacher felt about her teaching place (Marcus, 1995). Lisa, Esther, and Margaret discussed their subjective and adaptive exchanges with and within their classrooms. As the teachers recalled other experiences from their own childhood art education, art making activities, and teaching, they were asked to relate memories of associated places. By restorying their own experiential contexts, they were led to *re*consider their personal relationships with their teaching places and their teaching content (Marcus, 1995).

Questions for this Study

The development of the questions for this study began by initially establishing the need to know about the differences between theory and the practical (Schwab, 1970). Three areas of elementary art education theory that I highly value, and previously observed as minimally evidenced, are 1) facilitation of discussions about art images in, 2) developing higher order thinking dialogues using 3) open-ended assignments to build creative problem solving (Bates, 2000) in support of more *meaningful* art making. Noting differences between what is *modeled* at the university and the practices observed led me to this inquiry. What brings us to a worthy question, enticing enough to commit a portion of our

lives to examine, usually begins as a discordant event within an area of great personal interest; it is a “practical problem” (Schwab, 1970). Why all elementary art teachers don’t teach the same things in the same way reflects their diverse experiences (Dewey, 1938).

This study sought interconnected teacher stories, teaching content stories, and the place stories. Narratives of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther formed professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of what it means to be an elementary art teacher. Story constellations (Craig, 2004) revealed relationships. Reviews of the literature of elementary art teaching (*objectives*), architecture and “stuff” (*objects*), and ecological challenges (obstacles) supported specific research goals for this study. With the path revealed and the areas of interest defined, the questions for this study were defined:

1) How does an architecturally designed, completely furnished, and fully stocked teaching space affect teacher content?
2) How do elementary art teachers adapt their teaching places to facilitate their teaching content?
3) How do elementary art teachers modify their teaching content in subjective response to the *physicalities* of their teaching place?
4) How does the *multiplexity* of the teacher’s role in, with, between, and among *physicalities* function as a living ecological teaching entity?

Validating the Questions

If what we do depends on the facilitations of place (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1900; Norberg-Schulz, 1999), then it is important to make sure that those physicalities do not impede goals. Beyond impedance, this study looked for physical spaces enabling and supporting selected teaching content. Oblinger refers to "built pedagogy" as "the ability of space to define how one teaches" (2006, p. 1.1). And Chism tells us that "educators must create structures that support learning" (2006, p. 2.2).

The abundance of objects within art educators' spaces provides an optimal setting for such study. As an outlier (Siegesmund, 1998), elementary art education offers an opportunity to unfold the extremes to better understand the general. If we want to know how *objects impact learning*, what better place to begin looking than where we find lots of *teaching stuff*. Interactions with *physicalities* are not limited to art education; all teaching happens somewhere. As such, the findings of this study can be applied to other educational disciplines. Influences of place and furnishings to teaching content opens an area of pedagogical applications often overlooked. It is hoped that this study will direct others to scrutinize physicalities as key to teaching content.

Place Enables Activities

Kennedy's statement, "Tolerance is the last virtue of a depraved society" (2007) touched off quite a controversy from both political extremes. After encountering it quite by chance, I thought about it a great deal. I found, by taking it out of context and changing it from a sociopolitical perspective, it can easily be

applied to this study. If I changed it to say, “Tolerance is the last virtue in a depraved environmental setting,” two important aspects are revealed. First, tolerance is important. Close reading concludes that tolerance is ranked as a virtue. So also, each teacher understands tolerance – or subjectivity -- within given teaching places. Rarely (if ever) is any place completely and continually accommodating to our optimal needs (Alexander, 1979; Brand, 1994; Marcus, 1995). At times inadequate spaces are all that is made available. The greater the challenge, the more difficult it becomes to *tolerantly* subject oneself to the *depraved* setting -- rather than fleeing the place or altering it in some way to better accommodate.

I recall such an example. A colleague presented a talk about incorporating technology into teaching. She planned to use technology to both share the information as well as to demonstrate specific technological tools. It must have taken a lot of *tolerance* to present within a space that provided no electrical outlet or wireless connection. In subjectivity to the *depraved* environmental setting, she became flexible and shared the information in an altered format. The technology presentation probably lost some value with limited access to technology. It is even quite possible that the purpose of the presentation was undermined by the lacking electrical hookup. After all, those skeptical of using technologies (no matter how informative, engaging, and well presented the information was) could still walk away saying, “And that is exactly why I *don’t* use technology!” The issue becomes how much one can tolerate before physical place limitations undermine planned human activities.

In another example, I was once in an art classroom in an older school that had a kiln over in the corner with piles of materials on top of it and even more stacked around it. After inquiring, I found that there was no budget approval to build required venting for the kiln, so all clay work was dropped from the curriculum. Some teachers may have chosen to use other non-fired alternative options, but this teacher simply focused entirely on two-dimensional projects. The art teacher was very tolerant of limiting the subject matter. Simply adding a functioning kiln may have reintroduced three-dimensional artwork to the students in this school. This teacher *subjectively* limited the course content.

Relationship to Place is Important

Continuing the story of the disabled kiln -- for the sake of exploring logical applications -- I present two possible scenarios. The art teacher may have been relieved to eliminate clay lessons and happily *tolerated* -- or maybe even joyfully rejoiced in the subjective *inability* to work with ceramics. Or the teacher may have finally given up -- tiring of lobbying for the kiln so vitally needed to complete the three-dimensional curricula. Many other adaptive alternatives may have been explored – always with the hope of being able to fire clay and to work with glazes again someday.

If the kiln had been vented and running again, but the teacher did not really want to provide ceramic lessons, that ventilated kiln could have become the physical mandate of a type of *educational reform*. The teacher may have felt that after money was invested, that kiln was expected to be used (whether specifically told to do so or not). On the other hand, if the teacher's tolerance of

no traditional clay work was sadly accepted because the teacher saw no other options, the introduction of a working vented kiln could have been considered *educational support*. Whether from within or from without, I looked for aspects of changes in teaching content that happened with associated physical changes within the teacher's space. I repeat again, "Changed spaces will change practice" (Oblinger, 2006, p. 1.1). The arguments for or against using physicalities to reform or support become an issue generated from the conclusion of this study.

Overview of the Methods

The methodology used for researching the complexity of human experience is qualitative in nature. Pinnegar and Daynes contend, "Qualitative researchers are interested not in prediction and control but in understanding" (2007, p. 4). When studying human experiences, there is a need to know more than *what*; *why*, *how*, and *how come* lead researchers to value descriptive qualities that reveal more. Qualitative research contrasts quantitative studies, but it only begins to address the ways of studying such complexities.

Narrative inquiry acknowledges that all human experience is understood *through* and *as* stories (Clandinin, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Ongoing human undertakings must be viewed within individual contexts to enable understanding. Craig and Huber remind us "that narratives began as living things created in the moment-to-moment action and interaction of particular people in a particular place, at a particular time, engaged in particular events" (2007, p. 247). That described exactly what I wanted to find out about

elementary art teachers interactions with place. I use the word *ecological* to emphasize the living nature of physical places.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry methods were used to build the stories of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, of their places, and of their interactions with their places. As narratives unfolded, "narrative unities" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988) emerged. Shared experiences were found between Lisa, Margaret, Esther, -- and me. In narrative inquiry, my role of the researcher was active, engaged, and transparent (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Researcher storied experiences were openly shared with those of Lisa, Margaret, Esther, and their places. Craig and Huber (2007) remind us that such intertwining relationships enhance the qualitative narrative and what becomes available to be known. Craig and Huber use the words "relational reverberations" to underscore how "… connections such as these offer richness and depth and allow insights that would otherwise not be possible" (2007, p. 255). Often, aspects from Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's stories brought like or related recollections to mind that furthered my depth of understanding.

The idea of a reverberation in a relationship between and among the researcher and the teachers reminds me of the musical overtones that reverberate "above a note [called the fundamental]" (Feldstein, 1985, p. 63). Although we generally perceive a musical tone as one note, there are actually a series of overtones that add to the timbre (sound qualities). The highest qualities of musical notes emit overtones that are purely intonated. Finding something in

the stories of others that relates to one's own is likened to setting in place the full spectrum of finely-tuned overtones.

Each elementary art teacher's stories of her *personal practical knowledge* came together with the others to form shared stories as "professional knowledge landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Associated details reverberated as connective relational threads (Craig and Huber, 2007). Those threads revealed aspects of the elementary art "knowledge communities" (Craig, 1995). The objects of each place reverberated the stories as *lived patterns* (Alexander, 1979). Photography and drawings revealed these phenomenological stories as contributing to a *professional object knowledge landscape*. The union between teacher and place recall Bach's reiteration of humans as "fundamentally attached to what surrounds them" (2007, p.284). I found it important to conduct the interviews within each teacher's space. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther could, and did, visually reference objects in their physical settings throughout the interviews.

Narratives were shared over a period of one year within three teacher's spaces. Five interviews with each participant were designed to collect the personal perspectives about art making, education, and teaching art to elementary students. Teacher drawings provided opportunities for each teacher to communicate visually, adding another dimension to the research (Sullivan, 2005; Bach, 2007; Mello, 2007). Five observations documented the physical spaces, and collected the ecological data of teacher and space during class times. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were selected randomly from four who voiced

an interest in participating. Open-ended interview questions with restatements encouraged discourse and restorying (Kvale, 2007).

The Importance of Revealing Researcher Context

Researcher context contributes to a fully collaborative narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988). My experiences at times reverberated with those of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. We each had unique individual stories as well. If we had all come down the same road simultaneously, our ways of knowing would be limited. Each art teacher's experiences formed understandings of what it means to teach art. From the roads traveled, each teacher developed priorities for pedagogical practice. The intersections of my experiences and those of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther sometimes met and at other times continued as overpasses and underpasses through professional journeys within our *knowledge communities* (Craig & Huber, 2007).

My story leading to elementary art education is only one part with the others. The collaborative nature or "narrative unity" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988) joins the perspective of the researcher's experiences with those participating in the study. Craig and Huber describe what is important about this union, stating, "Because they and participants each carried their individual experiential histories into the inquiry, the relationships they negotiated with one another both shaped and became shaped by the joining of their experiential histories" (2007, p. 267). What becomes a question worthy of research stems from the experiences of the researcher, connects to those studied and is shown to be of consequence to others. With this in mind, I include my own narrative. The roads that brought me

to this study included aspects of learning, teaching, designing, parenting, and engaging in both the theory and practice of art education.

Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all recalled some early experiences with an elementary art teacher. Yet, even now, art education is not offered as a separate subject in many elementary schools. It is apparent that many do not value the teaching of art as a unique discipline with epistemological value or important cognitive substance (Steup, 2010). No art classes were offered in my elementary school, nor were there elementary art classes in my children's schools. Eisner refers to such omissions as "null curriculum" (2002). What we do *not* teach negates its academic value. Without the inclusion of art in my early education, I too, did not initially see its value. I became supportive only as my other professional and personal roads extended.

Art, teaching, children, and interior design are all areas of experience that brought me ultimately to this study. In elementary school, art was about making things within the general classroom; I recall using crayons and paper mostly. There were isolated usages of paint and clay and even one with oilcloth, needle, and thread. The only products I remember were my crayon drawing of my house and family, a painting of a train, a clay beaver sculpture, stuffed oilcloth animals, and a crayon portrait of an old man. I cannot remember ever viewing any images of art objects. In fact, I cannot recall when I first became aware that art museums existed. One semester of high school art was the only formal training that I had before going off to a large university to study music.

Unlike the limited art experiences, teaching has always been part of my life. In my elementary classroom, I remember teaching student peers who needed extra help, and in high school I taught private music lessons. Other formal teaching experiences as an adult ranged from teaching spelling, recorder, Bible history, computer, to reading and math tutoring, music theory, interior design, and several diverse professional organization workshops. Throughout almost two decades at the university, I have continually taught children's art and various university art education courses. Teaching children and adults concurrently seems ever so right for connecting theory and practice.

Looking back, my first degree and vocation as a professional interior designer allowed me to be part of the design community in a major city. Our studio director had a prominent national reputation. Designing model rooms led to publication. Selecting materials, furnishings, and accessories from *trade sources* provided a delightful insight to a world of custom designs rarely seen. Addressing client needs through designing one-of-a-kind applications was exciting; it was always a teaching experience. With the presentation of samples, pictures, and hand drawn plans, the teaching began. Talk of focal points, balance, proportion, etc. as relating to colors, textures, etc. (in the language of art elements and principles) was used to inform and educate clients about the creative intent and end products (Ball, 1960; Diffrient, Tilley, & Bardagjy, 1974; Ramsey & Sleeper, 1970). Form and function (Sullivan, 1896) were custom fit for each client.

Limited art making, teaching, and space designing all preceded experiences with children; parenting added the final layer of understanding and focus. I did not realize while raising my children how unique my situation was in comparison with others. I often think of Piaget's longitudinal studies of his own children's development (1970) when I consider what I learned about child development through my own children -- as I was with them *constantly*. After two decades as a full-time parent, I became aware that teaching *children* is so much more than simply teaching *subjects*.

Drawing from past experiences, methods of teaching my children included redesigning physical places to enhance learning and development. Our home in general, and the rooms for the children in particular, became important spaces to enable child access and promote activities and interactions. Objects were organized and fully accessible to children. Large custom platform areas were built to accommodate kinesthetic, creative, and cognitive play options. These platforms were a favorite play area for each child alone, with other children, and with willing adults. *We* spent many hours there together.

After my children grew older, their continuing experiences with the arts sparked my own interest. I enrolled at the university. Completion of my MA degree, with an emphasis on art education, grew from previous experiences – art, interior design, teaching, and child development. Dewey maintained that "… the principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (1938, p. 35).

Teaching university preservice teachers and supervising student teachers revealed differences between what is taught at the university and what happens in the schools -- theory and practice (Schwab, 1970). Jackson concluded that, "… the teacher's classroom activities have been relatively unaffected by what the learning theorist has to say" (1990, p. 159). To contribute more to education and better my own teaching, it seemed important to find out more about these differences. I came with my own stories to listen, share, and understand theirs.

Researcher and Teachers Together

Similarly, art educators have raised concerns about the contrasts between what is taught in the university setting and what is taught in the schools. "I didn't see the art education district coordinators attending the theoretical sessions at the conference" (paraphrased), was commented by a colleague some time ago. At a higher education group discussion at another conference, I heard voiced, "There is a big gap between the higher education division and the elementary and secondary teachers that we need to address (paraphrased)." In 2008, La Porte, Speirs, and Young conducted a national study of *Factors Influencing Art Curriculum Content* (pp. 358-370). This empirical study of 437 art teachers (p. 358) used a survey instrument to gather information from art teachers about what they learned in preservice classes and what they taught in their classrooms. Researchers concluded that, "Even though students were influenced by what they learned as an undergraduate, what they knew and felt comfortable teaching was the highest influence" (p. 367).

Looking at the differences between theory and practice was not the primary focus of this study, but it led to the building of the questions. To understand more about what separates art education theories from practice (Bolin, 1999), I needed to find the teachers' stories. Dewey pointed out that, "Order is not imposed from without but is made out of the relations of harmonious interactions that energies bear to one another" (1934, p. 14). I recognized the importance of honoring and learning from each other to advance mutual goals of developing learning theories and exemplary practices supportive to art education. From this broad, generally stated problem of gaps between theory and practice, I refocused on the practical (Schwab, 1970); I viewed *Teacher*[s] *as Curriculum Makers* (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). My goal became to understand Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's stories as they transpired within, and in response to, their physical places.

By seeking teacher stories connected to *place*, I focused on an aspect often considered only background noise (Chism & Bickford, 2002). From art education -- a field so focused on objects, I could not overlook the important aspects of physicalities. Within each place was an array of "stuff" used in teaching art. In my quest to better understand the practical, within the context of the milieu (Schwab, 1970, 1973), I recalled Dewey's description, "*Space* … becomes a *comprehensive* [researcher's emphasis] and enclosed scene within which are ordered the multiplicity of doings and undergoings …" (1934, p. 23). I looked to broaden understanding of teaching content -- as part of an ecological

exchange -- through teachers' ongoing adaptations and submissions to their physical environments.

A visual representation was developed to show the relationships between the elementary art teachers, the theoretical content, and the physical place. The graphic situates the elementary art teacher between the art education theories and current teaching physicalities. This study looked at the ecological transpirations between each teacher and her place as focused in the cylindrical circle in the diagram. Art education theories are included as the professional voice. *Elementary art teacher* holds within it diverse personal experiences.

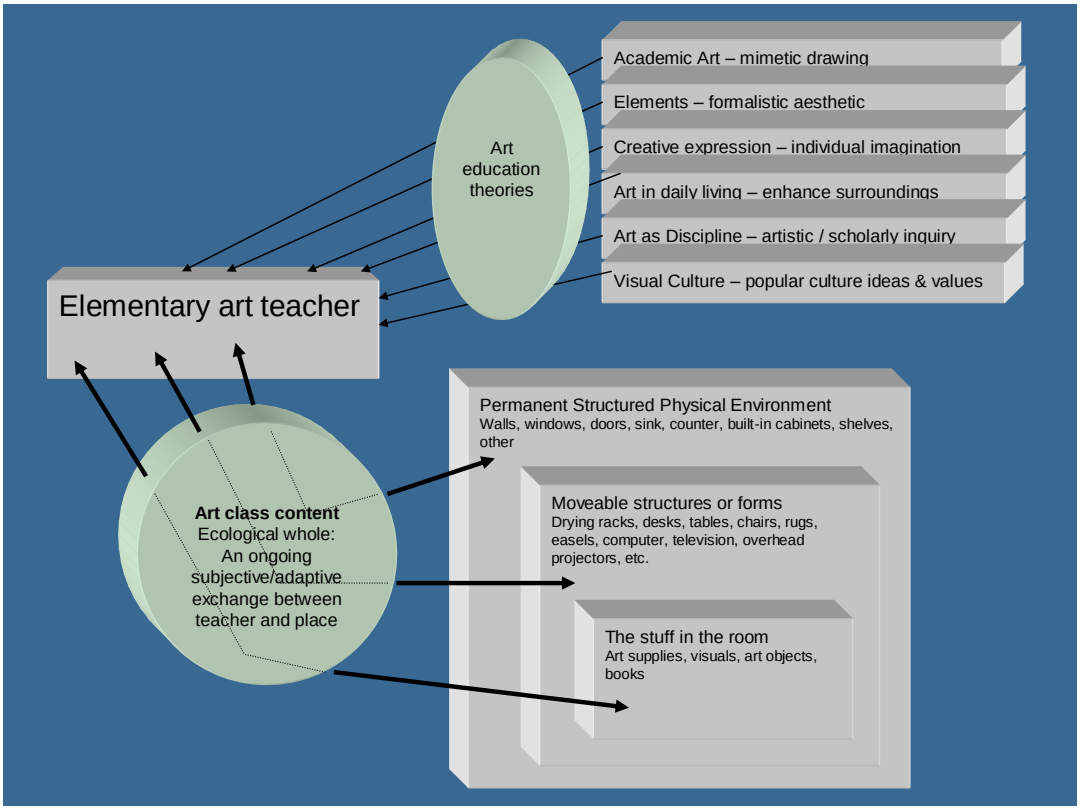


Figure 4. The elementary art teacher's ecological role: theory, experiences, and physical space.

Definition of Terms

Selective word usage and creative restructuring of vocabulary are important to supporting certain concepts in this study. To clarify, certain terms are defined specifically as they are used. *Adaptivity* is used to reference the physical changes Lisa, Margaret, and Esther made to facilitate their teaching priorities. *Adaptations* are part of the living exchange between teacher and place. *Adaptivity* includes a range of responses from simple changes to major undertakings. One way to confront the *obstacles* occurring when teaching within a place -- at any given moment, for any given activity -- is through *adaptivity*.

For this study, *ecological* refers to an interdependent living relationship. Usage of the word *ecological* underscores the active and living aspects of *place* and *objects* as well as the living exchange between Lisa, Margaret, and Esther with *objects* of and within place. *Ecological* aspects consider Alexander's references to architectural *living patterns* (1979). *Ecological* connections reaffirm that *place* is not stagnant or inconsequential to teaching content.

The purposeful joining of the two words multiplicity and complexity into *multiplexity* relates an exponential idea of "so much" – leading closer to aspects of chaos. *Multiplexity* refers to the elementary art teacher's multiplicity of mandates. These include such things as the number of children and the amounts of supplies. Complexity recalls lesson goals, concepts, and materials needed to teach art – such as art visuals, stories, ideas, brainstorming, dialogues, tools, materials, processes, and storage. Multiplexity resounds with the consistent interplay; the many and the complex do not exist in isolation.

*"*Physicalities*"* is another word built to focus on all-inclusive objects of and within the art teachers' spaces. *Physicalities* include the architecturally built room(s), built-in features (such as cabinets, shelves, and sinks), installed objects (such as chalk or marker boards, kilns, and technologies), furnishings (including chairs, tables, art equipment, portable book cases, storage, and technologies), and other teaching "stuff" (such as books, objects, visuals, reusable materials, consumable materials, and tools). The usage of *place, space, constructed place,* and *physical space* all refer to a real physical area; they are not used metaphorically, but rather relate to actual material objects. *Physicalities* may be used to mean the same – with an emphasis on the fully furnished and stocked aspects of *place, space, constructed place*, and *physical space*. *Stuff* is a catch-all term used to denote the movable objects within an art teacher's domain. It becomes the many without listing specifics.

Subjectivity relates to the controls or limitations that the art teacher *feels* impede certain teaching possibilities. *Subjectivity* connects to ideas of submission. The focus is on *physicalities* that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther viewed as limiting selected activities within their spaces. *Subjectivity* may be a matter of individual perceptions and therefore is not an absolute or given state.

This study looked at what Lisa, Margaret, and Esther did within their classrooms. *Teaching content* was what transpired. *Teaching content* differs from any set curriculum or prescribed method in that it can only be understood as it is lived. Such teaching moments happen within a place and time. *Teaching content* is specific, timely, and real.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The three "*obs"* of *objective*, *object*, and *obstacle* formed the foundation for the review of literature. As observed teaching content was part of this study, an overview of multiple art education theories and pedagogical practices from current leaders in the field provided basic art teaching *objectives* (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Eisner & Ecker, 1966). The Reggio Emilia school model connected visual literacy *objectives* to *objects.* Reggio schools find *object* relationships vital to the emergent objectives in their "alteliers," or art spaces (Malaguzzi, 1998; Vecchi, 1998). Place is also viewed as one of the teachers in Reggio Emilia schools (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003). Architecture as an *object,* and as a place housing many other *objects,* sets the stage for studying ecological relationships (Brand, 1994; Ceppi & Zini, 1998; Marcus, 1995). The role of *objects* in the elementary art teaching experiences connected to aspects of material culture (Bolin, 2004). The ongoing exchanges between the elementary art teachers and their physicalities of place allude to architectural environmental psychology issues (Marcus, 1995). O*bstacle* challenges elicited subjective and adaptive responses from the art teachers as they strove to interface between their *objectives* and *objects* (Alexander, 1979).

Art Education: Objectives

Three areas from art education were viewed as supportive of this study; these are 1) theories of art education, 2) Reggio Emilia schools, and 3) elementary art classrooms. The first briefly overviewed the history of pedagogical art teaching theories (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Eisner &

Ecker, 1966). It was from these diverse purposes that the art teachers' choices of *what* to teach in their own classrooms were discussed. Secondly, the Reggio Emilia literature provided an example highlighting the importance of the visual in learning. Third, literature from others in the field of art education relating to the art teachers' physical, object laden teaching spaces was explored.

The overview of the theories of art education provided references for the first area in literature review. This section of the literature review was not intended to provide a fully detailed account of all art education theories across time. That depth and breadth of research alone could provide a basis for numerous other studies. However, I felt it was important to include a summary from the historical range of purposes for art education. Bruner suggests, "Understanding fundamentals makes a subject more comprehensible" (1960, p. 23). An art disciplinary context to situate individual teacher's pedagogical choices adds a layer of understanding to the narratives.

The second body of literature from art education focused on children's visual literacy. The Reggio Emilia schools were chosen as a model because of their use of objects as visual voices and modes of discovery. In Reggio Emilia schools, the art teacher has an important role as a resource (Vecchi, 1998). These schools were notable for their valuing of object explorations and visual engagements; objects lead and support learning (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003). The physical place is considered one of the teachers (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003).

The third area in the art education dealt specifically with the elementary art teacher's classroom. This narrow focus honed in on references to specific information about art teachers' physical spaces (Susi, 1986, 1996, & 1999). Although many elementary schools do not have art teachers, children at this level often experience visual perceptions that involve looking, handling, describing, and material making. Although this study focused on the stories of elementary art education specialists within their own classroom spaces, the study is applicable to elementary generalists. Art-on-a-cart is sometimes used in elementary settings where no classroom space is given for the art teacher. This aspect, although a worthy area of study, is beyond the specific scope and purposes of this study.

Theories

The multiplicity of the pedagogical views within the art education discipline (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner, 2002) contributes to the status of art education as an outlier. The task could be much easier, or perhaps this study would look quite different, if there were only one vision of what art teachers are to teach. Bruner noted a unified purpose as a worthy goal when he said, "The experience of the past several years has taught … that the best minds in any particular discipline must be put to work on the task" – that of "designing of a curriculum that is true to the underlying structure of its subject matter" (p. 19, 1960). In art education, ideas of promoting or defining one "underlying structure of its subject matter" are continually debated within the field. The foundational studies preparing art

teachers are harbored in the resultant disarray and constant reframing of theoretical structures within the field.

Art education in elementary schools has been viewed and labeled as ancillary or as enrichment. As an outlier, the arts have fought to justify their educational importance (Eisner, 2009). The educational placement of art is also debated. Art is promoted both as a discipline of its own and also as interdisciplinary (Siegesmund, 1998). The arts often are targeted for elimination when financial cuts are made. Elementary art education is not *a given* for every child. I agree with Dewey (1938) that differences in educational theory are not simply a matter of selecting one over the others, but rather an opportunity to look at the strengths from each to purposefully choose conditions that promote learning. I leave it to other studies to focus on the need to know what art experiences do to enhance the well being of our children and how they expand learning potentials.

Multiple Ideas

When a specialized art classroom is constructed within an elementary school, the content of what transpires within that space becomes more apparent. The art educator finds an array of content expectations within the discipline (Amburgy, 2002). *Art is about art making* may be the first idea that comes to most. The importance, focus, and amount of art making in the elementary art classroom has been debated over time (Efland, 1990; Soucy & Stankiewicz, 1990; Stankiewicz, 2001). Aspects of making are still generally embraced as a given area of content (Dobbs, 1998; Efland, 2004; Stankiewicz, 2001). Even as

how, *why*, and *how much* making are contingent on theoretical philosophical stance, the act of making remains a major content area in typical preservice textbooks (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Bates, 2000; Hobbs & Rush, 1997; Herberholz & Herberholz, 2002; Hubbard & Zimmerman, 1982; Linderman, 1997; Ragans, 1988). The variety of art making sometimes extends beyond contained classroom seat work to exploring such diverse areas as installation art (Broekemeier, 2003), technologically produced art (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Bates, 2000; Hobbs & Rush, 1997; Herberholz & Herberholz, 2002; Hope, 2004), larger scaled fiber art work (Crislip, 2003), and performance-based work (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005; Hobbs & Rush, 1997).

There is no *one* set art curriculum or one method of teaching endorsed by all theorists and all practicing teachers (Efland, 2004; Stankiewicz, 2001). At the 2009 National Art Education Association (NAEA) convention, Tavin and Carpenter presented *(Beyond) the Reconceptualization of Art Education* and said, “Art education is in a current state of struggle” (April 18, 2009). They looked toward “advancing positive change” through the “politics of visuality.” As postmodern theorists, Tavin and Carpenter view paradigms of self-expression (Lowenfeld, & Brittain, 1987) and DBAE (Dobbs, 1992) as the “red light” areas of the past. The postmodern theoretical argument to deconstruct current or previous systems and totally replace them may be so set for change that important pieces from earlier ideas are rejected. This is not new; Dewey (1938) debated the same challenges of integrating *what is of value* from the past, rather

than choosing between, when he wrote about progressive versus traditional education over 70 years ago.

This emphasis on making art meaningful seems to have some struggles across practice. A very different view from Tavin's and Carpenter's was presented in another session at the same national conference; the session was entitled *2D Concentration Topics in AP* (Lamb & Stefl, April 17, 2009). The advanced placement (AP) portfolios are produced as the products from the highest level of secondary art education. Lamb and Stefl (two AP readers) talked about students building "a body of work unified by an underlying idea that has visual coherence" (April 17, 2009). However the presentation focused on the formulaic principles of design and art elements rather than the development of themes. The purpose of the session was to help teachers guide students to find topics with more meaningful content – not simply a theme of an art element such as color. Despite emphasis on meaningful making, Lamb and Stefl noted the importance for the students to make conscious decisions about, and be able to justify, how they used such elements as color (April 17, 2009). Images from winning portfolios were shown during the session to model themes. Although titled "*2D concentration topics,* " the session mainly dealt with defining 2D versus drawing and reiterating the importance of students being able to articulate the elements and principles applied in their work. When Lamb and Stefl felt compelled to tell teachers, "Don't copy National Geographic" (April 17, 2009), it revealed not only what some students are doing in art classes, but provided

examples of what is being submitted as the *highest secondary art products*. This leads to pedagogical questions.

Thoughtful philosophical developments of theories form the basis for epistemological growth and advancement within the discipline. Even as the discoveries and debates continue at the theoretical level, practicing teachers must continually make decisions about what and how to teach everyday in their classrooms (Schwab, 1969). Their teaching does not cease even though theorists propose new ideas to enlighten and advance the discipline. Eisner and Ecker add, “In order to understand what art education is today, it would be useful to examine some of the developments which have occurred in its history” (1966, p.1). Looking at the history of art education helps us to see how the pedagogical focus has changed over time -- but that isn’t the only reason to examine the past. Dewey’s comment that, “In life … everything overlaps and merges” (1934, p. 18) underscores notions of continuity. From the earlier examples of sessions at NAEA conference, it is apparent that art teaching practices still connect to ideas promoted in the past.

Efland (1990) wrote extensively about the history of art education and later summarized various paradigms in the *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education* (2004). He defined a paradigm as “a conceptual system of ideas shared by a community of practitioners [*sic*]” (2004, p. 692). Paradigm changes are common in art education. Kuhn (1962) introduced ideas of paradigm shifts within the scientific world. He relates how the anomalies within a field lead to the shift of paradigms in ways to address and resolve the crises that arise when

accepted paradigms no longer seem credible within the framework of new thought, experience, and/or observations. Paradigm changes within art education are not universally endorsed. It is not uncommon for practitioners within the discipline to support diverse paradigms, sometimes in direct opposition to one another. The wide variety of sessions at the NAEA conference in April 2009 illustrated this lack of one unified focus. Schwab (1970) suggested that such lack of agreement stems from an incompleteness. He maintained, **"**The weaknesses of theory arise from two sources: the inevitable incompleteness of the subject matters of theories and the partiality of the view each takes of its already incomplete subject" (Schwab, 1970, p.11). Art education theorists continue to struggle in search of a worthy paradigm for a discipline considered as an outlier.

At the convention, I attended sessions that focused on postmodern aspects of social justice, identity, culture, and political agendas -- including a "super session" on globalization (Delacruz, Kuo, Arnold, Parsons, Carpenter, Garoian, Gaudelius, Keifer-Boyd, Manifold, & Thompson, 2009). Another postmodern session promoted reconceptualization of art curriculum (Tavin & Carpenter, 2009). In contrast, I found a scientific study charting new discoveries connecting sight to brain functions; Jeffers presented "empathic activation of the mirror neuron system as a possible explanation for the enduring popularity of Van Gogh …" (2009). Jenson used generalizations of cognitive connections to art in a staged event (2009). Interest in art objects and art history led many to embark on tours offered to local museums. I toured the Prairie School Purcell

House and the Minnesota Art Institute Museum. Both focused on architectural collections. A session on community artist Jun Kaneko connected a local Omaha artist's large clay works to children's projects in the classroom in a DBAE model (Dickel, 2009). There were many sessions focused on art making. One was a secondary teacher "showcase" on Anderson's new printmaking book. The off-site workshops that I attended at the Northern Clay Center and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (2009) were media driven; teachers participated by making objects. Throughout the four days at the conference, each of the practicing elementary and secondary teachers whom I asked told me that the hands-on making workshops were their favorites.

To establish the importance of the visual arts to life and the learner, the national art education leaders have presented a number of theoretical viewpoints over time. Leaders from the field have keenly followed the progression of visions that have defined art education (Efland, 1990, 2004; Eisner 2002; Soucy & Stankiewicz, 1990). Efland's *A History of Art Education* (1990) places him as a leader in documenting the emerging theories and history of the pedagogy. Highly regarded in the field, Efland's summation of six basic art education theories (*Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, 2004) defines the foundation for the history of art education literature. He starts with "four dominant visions of 20th- Century Art Education" (2004, p. 697), adds one from the 19th century, and the 21st century's visual culture initiative. From Efland's overview of the basic art teaching theories, connections were made for identifying Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's theoretical priorities. Within these six "visions" are

content components that could all be found within the art classrooms in this study.

Pedagogy: A Brief History of Art Education

The six areas that form the "visions" of the purposes of art education, include: 1) representational drawing as academic art, 2) the emphasis on the compositional elements and principles, 3) the importance of creative self expression, 4) applied design for daily living, 5) defining the components of art as a discipline, and 6) emphasis on visual/popular culture and social agendas (Efland, 2004). Each of these areas is discussed -- providing a basis for connections to the teachers' narratives in this study.

Representational drawing.

From the 17th through the 19th centuries the focus was on creating realistic representations by copying from nature and from the work of established artists (Efland, 2004). Stankiewicz (2001) also relates the socio-educational concepts that supported teaching drawing. They include ideas of "drawing literacy" (p. 2) as an important aspect of being educated during the ante-bellum times. Vocational drawing for industry was valued. The copying of masters was often viewed as more important for women's education (p. 4). Teaching drawing ranged from formulaic programs, most notably those of Walter Smith and Louis Prang (Stankiewicz, 2001), to nature drawings. An emphasis on drawings from nature "in the1890s as a means to promote interest in nature and country life as well as in careful observation" focused on realistically accurate renderings (Stankeiwicz, 2001, p. 17). Today, community Art classes like *Monart* -- based

on Mona Brookes' book *Drawing with Children* (1996) and other how-to books, such as the popular *Drawing on the right Side of the Brain* (Edwards, 1989), promote the development of drawing skills.

In school art classes, students still draw what they see, whether it is done outside as plein air drawings, in response to still life set-ups, or figurative drawings of live models. Self-portraits are often drawn using mirrors or photographs. Although the purposes may vary, this skill of replication is still valued as a component in learning about art. Mimetic replication is embraced by some and despised by others (Dobbs, 1992; Lowenfeld & Brittian, 1987). I have seen copies of masters' artworks in art classrooms on ceiling tiles, stool seats, and as murals in school hallways. The goal of developing drawing literacy that realistically captures images is still apparent today in student artwork.

Formal elements and principles.

In the early twentieth century, the concern with the formal organization of art forms became dominant (Dow, 1920; Efland, 2004). Dow began the movement with his art book *Composition* (Dow, 1920; Efland,1990) in which he rejected academic drawing and promoted his own system "after studying the academic theory of art for five years in France" (Efland, 1990, pp. 177-178). Dow's new system identified "three basic elements of design: line, notan (light and dark), and color … and five principles of composition: opposition, transition, subordination, repetition, and symmetry … all … dependent upon … the great general principle of proportion, or good spacing" (Efland, 1990, p 178). State art education standards, such as those developed in Texas (TEKS, 2009) list the

elements and principles of art as important to curriculum development, but the national standards only refer to them, listing specific terms only in the glossary (NAEA, 1994). The Texas state list includes elements of color, texture, form, line, space, and value and art principles of emphasis, pattern, rhythm, balance, proportion, and unity. As early as 1970, the Feldman model included the analysis of the art elements and principles of design as important to facilitating and engaging in dialogue about a work of art.

The elements and principles of art posted on the walls in the elementary classrooms of Lisa and Margaret serve as an object affirmation of usage, referencing, and/or perceived mandates. The *CollegeBoard APStudio* Art poster says, “Design involves purposeful decision-making about using the elements and principles of art in an integrative way… The principles of design (unity/variety, balance, emphasis, contrast, rhythm, repetition, proportion/scale, and figure/ground relationship) can be articulated through the visual elements (line, shape, color, value, texture, space)” (2008-2009).

Creative self-expression.

Although Vicktor Lowenfeld’s art education textbook *Creative and Mental Growth* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987) -- first published in 1947 -- is most often associated with creative self-expression, there were others before him who laid the groundwork for child-centered art education. These educators seemed to be awakened to certain values they discovered in the art produced by children. Until this time, children’s art was dismissed as primitive. According to Efland (1990), Franz Cizek, an artist born in 1865, shared art materials with the children where

he roomed while he was studying art. He discovered that children's art had its own characteristics. He valued it for the childish aesthetic. Marion Richardson valued the free responses created from imagination, directing children to visualize her descriptions and then draw. Lowenfeld was more interested in art as a means for psychological well being. This focus led Lowenfeld to develop and present stages of artistic development. Creative Self-Expressionists rejected the formalism in the elements and principles as too directed and conforming – not leaving freedom for childhood creativity and exploration (Efland, 2004).

Child-centered learning was the basis for *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*, an educational utopia in England (Neill, 1960). Personal self-expressions are still fostered in art production. The popular Reggio Emilia schools in Italy are resurrecting child-centered learning ideologies. "Choice-based learning," which advocates open-ended child exploration centers (TAB, 2008), could also be considered a type of "Neo-Creative Self-Expressionism."

Applied design: Art in Daily Living.

From 1930 to 1960 art education leaders emphasized the use of art for solving design problems linked to everyday objects (Efland, 2004). This art education paradigm became prominent following the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus concept of bringing artists and craftspeople together was unique. Design innovation was the goal – specifically "to elevate the status of the crafts to that which the 'fine arts' then enjoyed" (Whitford, 1984, p. 12). Material studies at the Bauhaus were based on understanding the artful capabilities of various materials (Droste, 1990) with the goal of developing "contemporary design for industrial

production" (Droste, 1990, p. 60). The goal of the Bauhaus artists and designers was to produce well-designed useful objects, true to the materials, that would be available to the general population. Efland (2004) says that "art in daily living … opposed the excessive emphasis on the self and lack of a social focus" (p. 698). Whitford adds that "Every art school which offers studies of materials, colour theory and three-dimensional design is indebted in some degree" to the Bauhaus (1984, p. 10).

Art careers and practical, problem solving applications are still addressed in the school curricula. Current trends to elevate craft as art (American Craft Museum, 2000) reframe some of the ideas from the Bauhaus -- in particular, the focus on design for everyone. Renewed values of handmade processes invite participation.

Art as a discipline: DBAE.

Beginning in the 1960s, and strongly promoted and endorsed as the key for the validation of art education from the 1980s through the 1990s (Dobbs, 1998; Efland, 2004), discipline-based art education (DBAE) added a wider and deeper academic context. Manuel Barkan led this movement; he was influenced by the curriculum work of Jerome Bruner (Eisner, 2002). Efland added, "Eisner, like Barkan, was influential in redirecting the attention of the field from a single-minded preoccupation with children's self-expression to an emphasis on the content to be taught in art teaching" (1990, p. 236). DBAE expanded and directed a clearer notion of content areas for the development of art curricula.

DBAE claimed that art is a body of knowledge which included four general areas: art history, art making, art criticism, and aesthetics (Dobbs, 1998). DBAE included student discussions of works of art. The Feldman model, popularly used as a guide for such art criticism and aesthetic evaluation includes four perspectives: 1) inventorying what is seen; 2) using formal analysis to discuss the elements and principles; 3) interpreting meanings conveyed by the artwork; and 4) evaluating (1970).

The four general areas of DBAE still are part of art education (Bates, 2000; Anderson & Milbrandt, 2002; Clements & Wachowiak, 2010; Hobbs & Rush, 1997; Hubbard & Zimmerman, 1982; and Linderman, 1997). Art history content has been expanded to include crafts, technologically produced works, and popular culture. Art making remains central to art curricula, but is more expansive and less object oriented. Art criticism can expand beyond the intent of the artist. Similarly, aesthetic values are constantly changing, but still hold value as a place to discuss relevant issues.

Visual culture and integrated curricula: VCAE.

Visual culture art education (VCAE) is the newest art education theory (Bolin, 2004; Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). According to Eisner, VCAE deals with "efforts to help students learn how to decode the values and ideas that are embedded in … popular culture as well as what is called the fine arts" (2002, p.28). Socio-political ideals aligned with social justice issues of multiculturalism, gender, feminism, identity, and postmodernism provide the philosophical

framework for the integration of visual art with other domains (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002).

Freedman and Stuhr (2004) present VCAE as a way of “broadening the domain of art education” in a ways that “go beyond the constraints of learning offered by a discipline-based curriculum and standardized forms of assessment” (p. 816). The objects of art include traditional art forms such as paintings, sculptures, and architecture, but also extend to offer other contemporary forms that not only reflect current life, but also influence lives (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 817). VCAE includes television, films, comics, advertisements, dance, and theater (Freedman, 2003). Symbolism, cultural identity, personal meanings, media intents, and political associations become important to critically analyze (Freedman, 2003; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004). Freedman and Stuhr (2004) promote expanding the integration of art with other disciplines in support of “investigation of ideas, issues, opinions, and conflicts” (p. 826). Freedman (2003) illustrates the concept of broadening the scope of art when she says, “The visual arts are seen at NASA and Disneyland, as well as at the Louvre, and are connected to various other art forms” (p. 17).

These six paradigms set the professional art education theoretical foundation for art teachers. Curricula and methods derived from these areas could direct teaching content. However, MacGregor (1995) proposes that any set curricula or prescribed teaching methods can only be separated from each other in theory, not in practice. The boundaries become blurred or eliminated. Preservice educational experiences, are juxtaposed with the input from other

"stakeholders" (Dorn, 1994, p. 136). *Stakeholders* include "school districts (including the school board, curriculum directors and art supervisors) *who impose* … mandated curricula or … frameworks, local law enforcement agencies, parents, *national and / or state standards*, and the business community" (Dorn, pp. 136-137). Impacts vary and change over time (Brown & Korzenik, 1993).

Approximately 47 states have established standards of *what should be taught* in an art classroom (Hope, 2004). Such standards reflect efforts to unify ideologies and provide guidelines for schools and teachers. Efforts to build quality programs from without begin with selected theories. Schwab maintains that, "theory, by its very character, does not and cannot take account of all the matters which are crucial to questions of what, who, and how to teach" (1970, p. 1). The practical (Schwab, 1970) endorses eclectic teaching content.

Reggio Emilia Model Schools

Reggio Emilia Schools stand as exemplary examples in promoting artful learning for young children. The *atelier* (art room) is central to Reggio holistic learning (Malaguzzi, 1998; Vecchi, 1998). The ateliers are resources for the entire school – similar to our school libraries. Object collections and materials for making are considered as ways to learn and ways to understand; they are the languages of the children (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). The "environment as third teacher" is one of the four "key elements" in the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, p. 13). The other three are "1) image of the child, … 3) teacher as partner, and 4) documentation" (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, p. 13). These Italian schools

have become a model for early childhood educators and elementary art teachers, (Swann, 2008; Tarr 2001, 2003).

Spaces are recognized as co-teachers. This makes them worthy of investigating to see how they function. In the Reggio Emilia schools, the spaces support the "emergent curriculum or *progettazione*" (Edwards, 1998, p. 187). "The teachers honestly do not know where the group will end up" (Edwards, 1998, p. 189). Materials brought into spaces may initiate the learning or they may be added to extend an evolving curriculum.

Foundational Concepts

Parents in the Italian community of Reggio Emilia built the first school immediately after World War II. The funding was from "proceeds from the sale of a tank, some trucks, and a few horses left behind by the retreating German army" (Gandini, 2008, p. 24). I find it interesting that these "object-focused" schools started from cashing in on remaining war objects. The schools evolved into focused visual learning centers later in the 1960s by "introducing an atelier in every municipal infant-toddler center and preschool in Reggio Emilia and a teacher with an art background" (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p. 138). Vecchi and Guidici acknowledge that this "was a brave cultural (and economic) choice, and certainly an unusual one" (2004, p. 138).

Educational theories that formed the Reggio early childhood schools began with the children, "with their mental images and exploratory strategies" (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p. 140) in an "… interactive and socio-constructivist concept of child development" (Reggio Children, 1996, p. 21). Learning is a

partnership between the teachers and the children (Edwards, 1998; Gandini, 2008). The schools are integrated with the community, building a "relationship between schools and the city, children and art, and pedagogy and the atelier" (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004; Gandini, Etheredge, & Hill, 2008). The concepts of emergent curricula, communication, and engagement in projects depend on documentation to reflect, plan, preserve, and exhibit visual/material-enhanced learning (Gandini, 2008; Gandini et al, 2008).

The role of the atelierista (art teacher) is much more extensive than that of the elementary art teacher found in the American schools in this study. The atelierista works more as a consultant – a visual and materials resource. Lella Gandini answered Vecchi's question about why she chose to teach art in a Reggio preprimary school by saying that she was excited about "… the use of visual languages as a construction of thoughts and feelings within a holistic education …" (Vecchi, 1998, p. 139). Not only does the atelierista work with the children directly, but also is a resource for the teachers. The atelierista goes into the classrooms to see what is happening and brainstorms throughout the day with the other teachers -- sharing ideas about potential materials (Vecchi, 1998).

The atelierista also works closely with the pedogogista. This pedagogical coordinator "acts as consultant, resource person, and coordinator to several schools and centers" (Edwards et al, 1998, p. 467). The role of an art teacher as key to supporting and developing the pedagogy, meeting daily with teachers and the pedogogista, all within a supportive visual learning space, certainly differs

from the elementary art teachers in this study. It is with the atelierista that ongoing documentation happens.

Documentation

The amount of energy expended in documentation in the Reggio schools seems amazing to me. Seidel notes that "Every moment of the day, every detail of the physical environment, every dimension of relationships in the school is considered, debated, refined" (2008, pp. 14-15). Such documenting is used to develop emergent curricula by generating extensive notes, photographs, video tapes of the children, and teacher reflections. The teacher even documents "descriptions of her own words and actions" (Gandini, 1998, p. 186). The documentations become curricular objects -- generating and revealing paths taken, exhibits, and also project books that present the processes and products. Throughout all documentations are multitudes of children's drawings.

Project books emerge from the unified voices of children and teachers. Some are about relationships, as in *Tenderness: The Story of Laura and Daniele* (Piazza, 1995), and introducing three-year olds to the Diana school -- *Advisories* (Strozzi & Vecchi, 2002). Project books document problem solving, as in *Shoe and Meter* (Castagnetti & Vecchi, 1997); where the children learned about measuring and communicating to a builder the specifics to build another table for the school. Community discoveries and perspectives are found in the project book *Reggio Tutta: A Guide to the City by the Children* (Davoki & Ferri, 2000). The children's ideas about society justices and injustices are produced in *A Journey into the Rights of Children: As Seen by Children Themselves* (Ferri,

1995). *The Fountains: From a Project for the Construction of an Amusement Park for Birds* (Malaguzzi, 1995), *Poking, Pinching & Pretending: Documenting Toddlers' Explorations with Clay* (Smith & Goldhaber, 2004), and one on theater productions (Ferri, 1995) all document artful explorations from the different developmental levels. The project book exploring the parallels between the work of an artist and those of the Reggio children is *The Expressive Languages of Children, the Artistic Language of Alberto Burri* (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004).

The Importance of Objects

Reggio Emilia schools' merging of *objectives* and *objects* as one, rather than having an ordered relationship, allows flexibility. Vecchi and Giudici refer to "dialogues between matter, light, and space" (2004, p. 48) as object interactions and learning objectives. In another example from the Burri project, teachers worked collaboratively with "the recycling center that collects unused materials from industry to give them new life through creative processes" (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p. 7). Objects were not collected with any particular end product in mind. The materials available had their own input into the emerging objectives. After gathering, "a collection of black and white materials, chosen with the children's help … [some] … were chosen for their variations in texture, weight, size, bulk, consistency, transparency, and elasticity" (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p. 22) and laid out on a carpet of white and a carpet of black for the toddlers to explore. Preschoolers used other materials that they manipulated by twisting, cutting, tearing, and wadding prior to gluing them into their own compositional arrangements. The availability of *objects* enabled *objectives* to explore. It made

me wonder how the children's processes aligned with those of the artist Burri; I pondered how different his choices of discards were from the objects used by the children.

Swann wondered how applications of the Reggio ideas would work at her Iowa university children's group. So she did a study with twelve three and four year olds to "examine how children's construction of relationships in exploring materials helps to explain the constructivist foundations of programs like Reggio Emilia and also contributes to artistic development" (2008, p. 37). By offering various papers and ribbons, Swann observed how the children built an understanding relationship with the materials. She documented physical, mental, and symbolic responses and found that the children all explored the materials in different ways and "used them" for various purposes. All twelve explored the physical properties and manipulated the materials by sorting, organizing, or folding; only nine formed symbols for numbers, letters, and objects.

As I read this study by Swann, I kept thinking about the differences in the objects. Swann offered an "assortment of papers varied in color, texture, and size – cut-pieces and whole sheets of tissue, butcher, and construction papers as well as a few lengths of colored ribbons for novelty" (2008, p. 40). But the Reggio centers have large collections from parents, children, and teachers organized into containers to view as palettes. They worked with unusual recycled objects from industry (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p. 7) as well as sizable pieces of metal and wood of interesting varieties (Vecchi & Giudici, 2004, p.101). The more diverse and unique physical objects seemed to offer more possibilities

of intriguing engagement. As objects intertwine with objectives, it seems that greater learning possibilities could emerge from a *more interesting* and *greater diversity* of materials. Also, there was no reference to aspects of place in the Swann study.

Vecchi and Giudici summarize the art/object relationship to objectives by saying, “The ateliers … have chosen the visual language not as a separate discipline, exclusively devoted to the traditional activities specifically related to it, such as drawing, sculpture, painting, and so on. Rather, they have focused on the visual language as a means of inquiry and investigation of the world, … in constant dialogue with a pedagogical approach that seeks to work on the connections rather than the separation between different fields of knowledge” (2004, p. 138).

Place as a Teacher

Objects and objectives lead us to architecture. The Reggio schools find great importance in the architectural design of the schools. The “environment as third teacher” (Danko-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, p. 13) is reinforced by thoughtful designing. Fu, Stemmel, and Hill explain, “A high-quality environment, with attention to space, organization, materials, and aesthetics, is crucial to Reggio Emilia’s early childhood programs” (2002, p. 111). Architectural enabling of visual learning is a crucial component of Reggio Emilia priorities. Gandini affirms, “This is a place where adults have thought about the quality and the instructive power of space” (2008, p. 25). Reggio Emilia schools are planned to

be aesthetically appealing; they are designed with great attention to detail to support object collections and interactions.

One Reggio Emilia school in particular serves as a model. Vecchi conveys, “[The Diana school] has been cited as one of the most interesting examples of a ‘living space’ by those who study schools for young children all over the world” (1998, p. 129). “There is attention to detail everywhere -- in the color of the walls, the shape of the furniture, the arrangement of simple objects on shelves and tables” (Fu et al., 2002, p. 17). In studying the Diana school floor plan (Strozzi & Vecchi, 2002, p. 6), I found the proportional allocated places for visual art and material exploration learning significantly greater than in the schools in this study. The Diana school has three main classrooms, one for 25 three-year-olds, one for 25 four-year-olds, and one for 25 five-year-olds. Each of the classrooms has abundant space -- with only about one-fourth of that space dedicated to table-and-chair sitting. Additionally each of the three classrooms has an adjacent mini-atelier just for those 25 children. The school also houses a major atelier for bigger projects. It has a large square table that can accommodate up to 16 chairs around it, lots of open space, and some easels near the windows. Not counting the music room, theater, or dress-up areas, the atelier and three mini-ateliers (shown in yellow) total architectural spaces equal the same square footage as that of the combined area of two of the three general classrooms (shown in green).

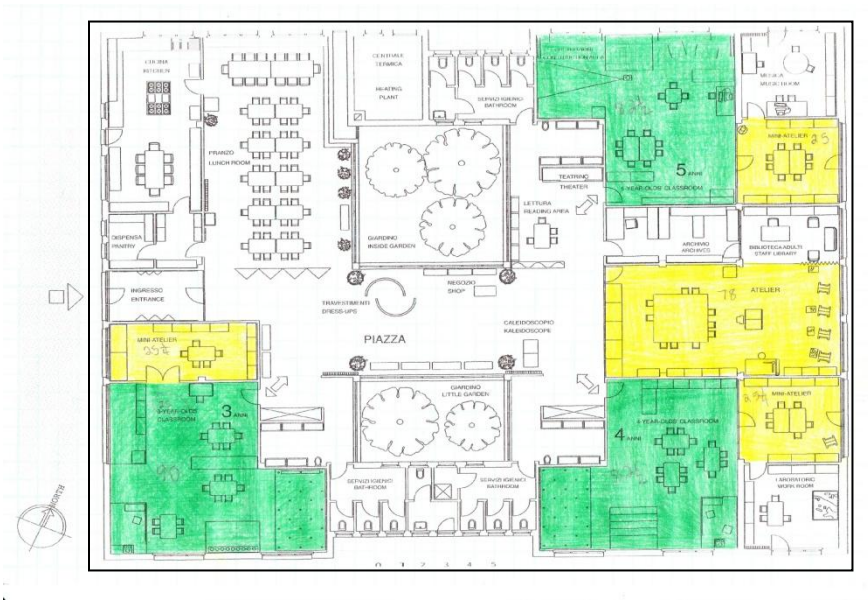


Figure 5. Diana School Floor Plan (Reggio Children, 2002, p. 6) comparing art and general classroom spaces.

Forman and Fyfe said, “Design seeks to instruct and documentation seeks to explain. Design is prospective and documentation is retrospective” (1998, p. 242). The Reggio schools use the physicalities of a space to teach. The extreme care in building places to enable interactions with materials supports visual learning. The Domus Academy Research Group calls it “relational space … an environment characterized by the relations … able to stimulate or permit …” (1998, p. 12). Reggio Emilia school designers fully understand the importance of place.

Elementary Art Classrooms

The Reggio Emilia example modeled designing planned spaces to enable teaching content. Learning through art is important to Reggio Emilia pedagogy. Such support is not universal. The National Center for Education Statistics Statistical Analysis Report (June 2002) on Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000 noted that 87 percent of our nation’s

elementary schools had “visual arts instruction … available” and that 55 percent of those schools “employed full-time specialists to teach.” Of the 87 percent with visual arts, “56 percent had dedicated rooms with special equipment ...” That leaves just under 49 percent of the nation’s elementary schools with art classrooms. I contend that we make places for what we value.

Eisner relates “that how something is taught, how curricula are organized, and how schools are designed impacts what students will learn” (2009, p. 7). Costs of building a special place for art within a school are challenged by lack of support for the arts; without a place to teach art well, the value of art is minimized. The designed place can not only dictate pedagogical practice but it is also an indicator of educational values (Eisner, 2002).

Art Education Discipline Lacks Support

Unlike the Italian Reggio Emilia models, elementary art teachers’ struggle for place is an ongoing issue in the United States. There are two questions of consequence. The first addresses the perceived value of art instruction for children in our schools. The inclusion of art as a subject has been questioned for some time and continues to fall prey to the winds of the moment. Amburgy (2002) described the political battle in Chicago over teaching “fads” or “special studies” in 1893 and relates it to present-day art education status issues. Eisner notes, “Tradition has assigned the arts a marginal position…” (2009, p. 9). Just as the unique or extreme is discarded as an outlier in scientific empirical studies, so also art is one of the first program areas cut during funding shortfalls. The second question addresses how elementary art is taught and by whom. The

place for art is tenuous at the elementary level (Eisner, 2009) where debate continues as to who should teach art to young children (Amburgy, 2002). The debate between hiring specialized art teachers or simply incorporating art into the general classroom continues. Those in art education propose that art is a worthy discipline that teaches crucial ways of knowing that cannot be fully addressed outside a specialist's expertise. Others would place elementary art as useful only in reinforcing interdisciplinary connections.

Necessities in the Classroom

Adequate space for teaching art has been of concern for some time. Chapman (1982) recalled survey results of 187 art teachers in an issue of *School Arts Magazine* in 1979; even then, "inadequate space, equipment, storage" were the first concern of the art teachers (p. 62). Chan and Petrie (1998) make claims that children learn better in "well designed schools." *Well designed schools* enable teachers by supporting teaching content.

Hicks and King (1999) explore the cultural meanings associated with designed environments. "Schools should teach….The environment of the school should be thought of as a three-dimensional textbook for learning" (Hutchison, 2004, p. 76). I wondered how many architectural firms designing elementary schools were aware that the National Art Education Association was a resource for designing art classrooms. The NAEA had a committee jointly prepare a publication 15 years ago on *Design Standards for School Art Facilities* (Goodwin, 1994). No updates have been published by NAEA, and this dated material is still all that is accessible on the NAEA W eb site. From this outdated publication, I

found some interesting recommendations, including, “the room should accommodate … no more than 28 students at the elementary level.” The recommendation is to have “… one art room per 400 - 500 students enrolled in school. … each student should be provided with 55 square feet of net floor space, exclusive of [at least 350 square feet of lockable] storage space, a kiln room, a computer, multimedia laboratory, and teacher’s office.” There should be “… one sink per 10 students … as much natural light as possible … a screen and black-out blinds” (Goodwin, 1994, pp. 4-8).

It would be interesting to know how many of these recommendations are in place within elementary art classrooms found in *49 percent of the elementary schools in the United States* (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). If the art room space is confined to what is on a cart, one can quickly determine the limitations (Mader, 1998). Art materials are of importance to the classroom teacher. Jeffers and Fong relate the lack of materials to the detriment of “actual and perceived professional performance” (2000, p.38). Rozelle (1994) focuses on ways to overcome such challenges. The overall size of a room affects the possible activities that can be explored (Lang, 1996). Taylor and Vlastos (1975) present to architects the need to view educational facility design as pedagogy.

Many objects are used and housed in the elementary art classroom. Interesting objects may be arranged into still life settings (Hickman, 2001); meaningful associations can be made to material culture (Bolin, 2004). Art teachers often bring their own objects and collections into the teaching spaces for such purposes. Elementary art classrooms house lots of *stuff*:

- Papers
    - White and colors
    - Various sizes, textures and weights
- Paints
    - Tempera, acrylic, water color
        - Containers for paint and water
        - Brushes – various sizes and shapes
    - Sponges, paper towels, and other
- Clay – to fire, self-hardening, or other alternatives
    - Kiln
    - Slab roller
    - Slip
    - Tools for
        - Rolling, cutting, incising, and smoothing
        - Building armatures
        - Making impressions
    - Glazes, under glazes, and other surface materials and tools
- Drawing
    - Pencils – variety of hardness and colors
    - Pastels – dry and oil based
    - Markers – variety of colors and tip sizes
    - Crayons – variety of colors and types
    - Inks – variety of colors
        - Pen nibs
        - Brushes
    - Scratch boards and tools

- Printmaking
    - Scratch foam
        - Inks
        - Brayers and barons and trays
    - Press
- Fiber arts
    - Yarns, grasses, reeds, etc.
    - Beads, and other embellishments
    - Looms
    - Needles
- Collage and Assemblage materials
    - 2D scraps
    - 3D objects
    - Wood, metal, plastic, etc.
    - Adhesives
    - Scissors
- Cameras
- Graphic tools
    - Rulers, T-squares, Triangles
    - Compasses
- Computer(s)
- Projection systems
- Visuals
- Cutting board
- Chalk and/or marker boards
- Books
- Objects
- Extra lights
- Teacher's desk/work area
- Easel
- Student work areas
- Storage for student projects
    - 2D
        - In process
        - Portfolios
    - 3D
- Discussion area

Figure 6. "Stuff" list from the elementary art teacher's classroom.

Entering the elementary art room, one may see posters of artworks, materials, children's work, and physical objects for activities. What art educators assume to be integrated into the classroom experiences are really only each individual's beliefs (Diblasio, 1978). Each teacher must decide what is of the greatest value to teach during the brief time that they have with the students (Hope, 2004). Teaching content is dependent on place (Oblinger, 2006). However, studies addressing the physical classroom space are often conducted to address only behavioral issues (Guilfoil, 1986; Jones, 2007: Wong, 2009). Closer scrutiny of place as an ecological entity, partnered with the teacher, can lead to a greater understanding of elementary art teaching content. What cannot be found in the art room is as revealing as what is there (Eisner, 2002).

Material Culture

To further address and justify the focus on place as important to teaching content, I introduce the validity or truth of object as it occurs in the forms of architecture, furnishings, and "stuff" used in teaching. Although there are numerous interpretations and associations with objects, there is an underlying material existence that is true and absolute. The first definition of object, listed in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is "something material that may be perceived by the senses" (2009). What I refer to as the "truth of object" relates to the irrefutable fact of an object's material existence -- whether for a short period of time or for a long duration -- an object *is*. The study of objects in the context of societies is referred to as material culture. This becomes an important aspect of historical research (Waugh, 2009). It led me to include the consideration of

objects as an important part of the stories collected for this study. Although the object is an absolute or a truth, human usage or relationships to objects are not so singularly definable (Campbell, 1996; Fariello & Owen, 2005; Glen & Hayes, 2007).

Our lives are filled with objects; humanity is object laden. This dominance is evidenced through connections to invention, progress, and development; motor vehicles, airplanes, spacecraft, and computers are all objects (Prown, 1993). Perceived evidences of *success* commonly build from notable object accumulations of value. However, the wealthy do not have the only hold on object importance. Although much of what is owned has a cost, there are other collections that require no monetary investment; adults and children often gather and keep useful or simply interesting objects (manufactured or from nature). The growing number of storage facilities echoes the importance of objects to culture. It seems that even if we cannot house it or easily access it, we still want ownership. The importance of the objects to humanity is intellectualized in a professional journal which debuted in March of 1996, called the *Journal of Material Culture*.

Importance of Objects

Art, according to Dewey, "is the best proof of the existence of … realizable, union of material and ideal (1934, p.27). Art is easily connected to object. The word *artifact* nicely nests *fact* within it. Many would argue that simply viewing art as objects minimizes the intent, value, creation, or concepts from any work. Dewey (1934) wrote about *Art as Experience*. Marcel Duchamp

(1887-1968) is often referenced as challenging the relationship of art to object. His ready-mades, presented as “anti art,” became accepted as art in spite of his challenge, and also simply because he labeled them as such (Hunter & Jacobus, 1992; Janson, 1970). The value of process, and the value and origin of object, are challenged, but objects still exist.

The *GFT Bunny* by Eduardo Kac is a postmodern example of an artwork that illustrates the realm of extending meanings and challenging simple objectification of art. GFT is short for “green fluorescent protein.” Kac calls Alba (rabbit’s name) transgenic art ; he claims the reason for producing this glowing bunny is not for genetic adaptations to alter an animal to serve a specific purpose, but rather for spotlighting a social context – to support, love, and care for her as part of his family (2007). Even though the green glow of Alba under a special light is purported as *not what the art is about*, note that *it is* what draws attention to the bunny as an altered object. The truth of object (absolute existence) is necessary to invite greater initial attention to have “some*thing* to nurture.”

The truth of object is also evidenced through noting valued objects from other cultures and times. The Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs’ tombs held a plethora of splendid artifacts of great value to protect, guide, and keep the Pharaohs on their journeys from this world to the next (Schulz & Seidel, 1998). These artifacts reveal truths about ancient Egyptian culture. Even though it is now a more commonly accepted belief that we leave our lives in this world without any of our accumulated objects going with us, it does not minimize the important values

Egyptians placed on objects. Over time and place, people have lied, cheated, stolen, and even killed for objects.

Another aspect of object is found in human connections to support or enhance the knowledge of gods. Object associations provide links to what is viewed as beyond full human comprehension. Religions using iconography and objects add another layer of understanding as they associate the permanence or *truth of objects* to the *truths* of their existential beliefs. Two examples that illustrate this well are Greek Orthodoxy and Hinduism. According to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (2009), "… the images everywhere around are not mere embellishments. They are integral aspects of the whole liturgical 'event'. They reveal and celebrate its meaning" (¶ 2). The church architecture uses a floor plan in the shape of a cross and a lofty dome above representing heaven. The Byzantine human images are preferred "… to suggest the transcendental" (2009, ¶ 18). Greek Orthodox relationships of *truths of beliefs* to *truths of obj*ect are defined under their orthodox icon definition, "The image is equivalent to Scripture as a revelation of the truth" (2009, ¶ 27).

Hinduism uses the word *darshan* to describe the important relationship attributed to holy objects. *Darshan* is "the act of seeing the divine in an image" and is an integral part of Hindu worship (Scheifinger, 2009, p. 277). Hindus believe that it is important to be in the presence of god. This is accomplished through usage of statues (objects). It is equally important for the Hindu to "see god" as it is for the divine presence "to see" the worshipper. Hindu's believe that god comes into the statue to become accessible for worship. These holy objects

are presented with offerings in a *puja* ceremony (Scheifinger, 2009). The t*ruth of object* takes on a greater meaning; it is more than a reminder or representation to the Hindu. Their *truth of object* is filled with "the ultimate truth – god."

Other examples of religious objects used to validate and affirm human relationships with *gods* include seeking *sacred objects* to nurture faith and or gain healing. One such *relic*, the Shroud of Turin, is acclaimed as the cloth that was wrapped around Jesus after his crucifixion. Due to its fragile nature, in the late 17th century, Guarino Guarini designed a reliquary chapel to house and display this object (Scott, 2003). Greek Orthodoxy, Hinduism, and housing the Shroud of Turin are all examples of human efforts to use *truth of objects* to *solidify* existential "truths."

The last example of the absolute truth of objects deals with how perplexing the truth can be for us when it is not within our own grasp. Shortly after contemplating objects as truth, I traveled across the country. Many last – minute changes altered my travel plans. With those alterations, the objects that I took were also reconsidered and modified. When I returned home, I realized that I lost my keys somewhere. I had never lost my keys before. There were airports, cars, rooms, small children playing, multiple bags with multiple zippers, several people coming and going, and even the exchange of baggage going across the country and overseas. How frustrating! The keys were absolutely present -- as true to their nature of *being*. But I couldn't find their *truth* – i.e. their absolute presence. The lost keys still existed -- even when they were out of sight

(Piaget, 1970). What bothers us so much about lost objects is that we know they are; we just don't know *where* they are.

The point made of object truth, brings validity to the inclusion of architectural built spaces as well as the many objects used in teaching art. The architectural object of place is part of the teacher's professional repertoire; it both contains and supports teaching content (Upton, 1985). The elementary art teacher deals with large numbers of objects. Lisa told me that in one year she went through 1,000 pencils. Elementary art teachers have so much *stuff* to deal with daily; they have a firm understanding of the truth of object. *Objects are*. We cannot ignore them.

Architecture

Sometimes what or who we value the most may be architecturally measured (Knevitt, 1994). "Whether by choice or not, where you live and what you see around you are a reflection of who you are – or who society says you are." (Marcus, 1995, p. 213) History and culture reveal the range of built spaces extending the simple, addressing basic needs for shelter, to costly, fabulous, and expansive constructions (Knevitt, 1994). The struggle for space and place is part of human identity. Schools share the struggle.

The perceived value of education does not necessarily guarantee willingness to provide greater funding commitments to school buildings. One public education market research study (Gross, 2004) found ninety-six percent agreed with a bold statement about public schools place in nurturing a common good, but the funding for the schools only had a modest approval. Public valuing

high levels of education with minimal monetary support is not new. Over forty years ago the American Association of School Administrators School-Building Commission said that educational agencies "… must face this limitation realistically; as nonessentials and unnecessary decorative features are pared from the school-building plans, the simple, lean, clear-cut lines of the structure emerge" (AASA, 1960, p. 1). Remember that this commission's recommended simplification of the school buildings coincided with minimalist architectural forms. Even so, ideologies from Bauhaus (Droste, 1990), Frank Lloyd Wright (Hart, 1993), and Moshe Safdie (Kettle, 1970), were founded on quality design for all humanity – not financial limitations.

The endorsement of open plan informal classrooms in the 1970s (Engel, 1973; Kattef & Manzelli, 1974) alerted educators to the interplay between environment and learning. Discussion of the interior space as a logical extension of the curriculum was investigated (Richards, 1986; Taylor & Vlastos, 1975). Feldman (1970) addresses the *aesthetic of the art classroom* as an experience but does not fully discuss the depth of curricular impacts. With approximately 15,000 elementary art teachers practicing (Galbraith & Grauer, 2004, p. 426), the diversity of teaching spaces is intriguing. Those spaces convey a non-verbal message and, as such, promote specific expectations from students entering the room (Susi, 1996).

The physical structures and objects contained therein are given little notice in educational research (Chism & Bickford, 2002). The literature commonly uses the terms of place, space, and environment in much less

concrete metaphorical applications. Howard Gardner, in his role as educational researcher involved with Reggio schools, noted the differences of how our American school architecture often falls short. He said, “In America … we call for artistic works, but we rarely fashion environments that can truly support and inspire them” (1998, p. xvii). With the growing availability of *virtual learning places*, the importance of *actual place* must be understood.

Numerous architectural studies can be found dealing with aspects of light, both natural and artificial, and window views on human behaviors. Higgins, Hall, Wall, Woolner, and McCaughey’s academic searches from data bases (2005) turned up 5742 articles and books on the topics of “light + education” and “light + classroom” (p. 9). One study, in a hospital setting, found that a window in the patient’s room with a pleasant view of nature had a positive effect on the reducing recovery time after surgery (Ulrich, 1984). Although I find these studies interesting, measuring such things as qualities and quantities of light and views of nature on human responses seems limited. In the hospital study, I wondered if the presence of a window emoted positive human response for the patients, could it also do the same for the caregivers. I wondered if medical personal spent more quality time treating those patients. I wondered if the quality of natural light from the window could enhance the visual perceptions when care-givers looked at the patient. It also made me wonder if our societal hierarchies could bear an impact on a perceived importance of the patients in the windowed rooms. The study brought me to find more questions than understandings. These studies do offer information, but I contest that limiting studies to only one

aspect of architecture may be like using a small viewfinder to eliminate the full expansive contributing context.

One way of approaching the importance and value of a physical place is to contemplate life without it. After reading narratives from case studies of people losing their homes (Marcus, 1995), I thought about my future at the university if I lost the art school spaces. Change alone would not be as great an issue to me as what the new space could offer. I value the amount of space and the natural light and view. I would not like giving up that special one-third of the studio where we gather together and engage in dialogue with the children. When place support for teaching content is taken away, teacher knowledge is contested (Craig, 2009). If new built space minimized potentials, it could be enough of an issue to lead me to consider changing my employment. Yes, to me, place matters.

Teacher and Place

Alexander notes, "… Every place is given its character by certain patterns of events that keep on happening there" (1979, p. 55). Art teachers select curricular art content -- i.e., their own eclectic (Schwab, 1970). However, the content taught is not limited to a matter of simple pedagogical choice. Teaching content is also dependent on each teacher's contextual ongoing relationship, in and with, her own physical teaching place. Individual patterns of events occur within place (Alexander, 1979; Hope, 2004). Such patterns emerge from ecological adaptive and subjective processes. Burton explains, "… the body does not make uninvited acts. The facilitating environment, including human

beings and what they say and do, along with the material at hand, offers the invitation to engage in particular kinds of actions rather than others" (2000, p. 335). Teaching content cannot extend beyond the *ableness* of the space. Just as contemporary artist Andy Goldsworthy orders and reorders the physical objects of nature (1990, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004), so also the elementary art teacher orders, reorders, and manipulates classroom objects in support of teaching objectives. After he manipulates the objects, Goldsworthy's arranged nature objects are reclaimed and redistributed in their own environments (1990, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004). Likewise, the art teaching objects within the classroom are reclaimed, reconfigured, *remanipulated*, and redistributed. Living patterns of content among physicalities are ongoing interactive experiences. Teacher choice, stuff, and built space may preclude, influence, reinforce, and disrupt each other over time (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1938; Marcus, 1995).

What happens in the elementary art classroom reflects how life, learning, reasoning, and inquiry originate and grow as experiences within space and time (Dewey, 1938). We find evidence of this notion in common word variations which embrace the impact of both place and time. "Life" lengthens into "lifetime" to more fully express that the process of living occurs across time. When teaching experiences are viewed within their context of ongoing progression or change over time and within space, there is a story, a place, and a storied place (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). The story is not only the teacher's story, but also the story of the place, and the connected story of the teacher with place.

Architect Louis Sullivan's phrase "form ever follows function" (1896, p. 403), underscores the important obligation that designers of built spaces have to accommodate and support occupants and their activities within place. Multiple living patterns exist simultaneously and continuously – never leaving a humanly occupied architectural structure in any constant form of simple existence (Alexander, 1979; Brand, 1995). The level of control that the teacher perceives within a teaching space relates feelings of connection to that place (Marcus, 1995). Yet teachers may not consider impacts of place as supporting or detrimental to their work. And from the perspective of architects and designers, architectural aesthetic impacts may override a closer scrutiny on enabling and supporting the human interactions housed (Alexander, 1979, Sullivan, 1896). In planning the constructed schools, architectural designers must address the flow and complexity throughout the entire building. Each teacher within understands aspects of child development, learning, pedagogy, and specific discipline content in their own way (Schwab, 1970). Alexander (1979) proposes that architectural spaces should be designed jointly with those who dwell and function within each place. He acknowledges such space as changing over time.

> The more living patterns there are in a thing – a room, a building, or a town – the more it comes to life as an entirety, the more it glows, the more it has this self-maintaining fire, which is the quality without a name" (Alexander, 1979, p. 123).

In any built space, Alexander's reference to "living patterns" making the "room…come to life as an entirety" (1979, p. 123) resonates a truth -- in home,

office, classroom, and other places -- as each place becomes a living part of our existence. Alexander (1979) views the living patterns as the happenings within – both isolated and collective experiences of moments over time (Brand, 1995; Dewey, 1938). Each experience that we have within a structure builds a living connection to and with that architectural space. So a built environment is not unlike a living organism "which seems at first sight like a static thing, [*but*] is in fact a constant flux of processes" (Alexander, 1979, p. 356). What we do in a space alters that space.

Dewey called attention to the important relationship between people and place when he explained, "If the gap between organism and environment is too wide, the creature dies.… For only when an organism shares in the ordered relations of its environment does it secure the stability essential to living" (1934, p. 14 – 15). Dewey (1934), Steiner (1997), and Susi (1999) all saw the need to manipulate place in support of specific content. Hostetter (2006) brought a unique example to the news a few years ago. With a rising urgency to combat juvenile obesity, a school designed classrooms without desks and chairs in an effort to keep the children *up and moving* throughout the day. It made me wonder how teaching content adapted. Ecological relationships between teacher and place warrant research.

Subjectivity

In this study, *subjectivity* relates to concepts of how individuals perceive levels of control, restriction, or submission to their built environment, including demands from contained objects. It becomes clearer that built spaces are not

devoid of experience, impact, and even directive (Alexander, 1979; Brand, 1994; Marcus, 1995). Examining from one end of the continuum, we find extreme restriction. Isolation cells in a prison purposefully limit possibilities for movement, interaction, and behaviors in efforts to control the incarcerated. *Child-proofed* environments provide another example of intentional physical limitations within place -- created to protect unsupervised young children from possible injuries. Other built environment limitations are not as obvious.

Occupied spaces do not remain stagnant in the form. Preserved architectural icons can only keep the historic contents by remaining uninhabited. Frank Lloyd Wright attempted to control a *purity of form* by designing and placing all furnishings within his *usonian* structures (Hart, 1993). Had those who habited within a Wright-designed house lived as the architect desired, they most likely would have set the table with Wright's chosen dinnerware. They would have functioned under amazing aesthetic and *living* subjectivity.

Likewise, limiting the furnishings and objects within a classroom change the life or teaching activities within. Dewey reinforced the idea when he added, "the first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment: not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it" (1934, p. 13). Although most discussion of environment or milieu (Schwab, 1971) emphasizes human interactions (Dewey, 1934, 1938, 1990), such interactions are not devoid of setting. In 1990, Dewey described his futile efforts to find desks and chairs for working rather than for listening (p. 31). Hutchison contributes another reference to restrictive student seating from the Boston Quincy Grammar School (mid-

1800s); Hutchison pointed out that the “individual desks for each student—an important innovation for the time—were bolted to the floor” (2004, p. 51). Conclusions are quickly framed about the interactive limitations of such rigid placement of furnishings. Inanimate objects affecting the living context becomes even more important in a classroom with multiple objects, such as the elementary art classroom.

All of the *stuff* within the elementary art classroom provides additional mandates for the teachers -- which can be thought of in terms of subjectivity. Not only do the architectural built environment and the major furnishings control, but also the classroom materials direct curricular content. For example, if there were no paint, then it would be a challenge to teach color mixing theories. A lack of materials can negate “actual and perceived professional performance” (Jeffers & Fong, 2000, p. 38). Object unavailability is only one possible aspect of subjectivity relating to *stuff*. Storage, accessing, processing, and qualities all become issues of subjectivity.

As much as the context of place is part of life, it is often ignored until it becomes dysfunctional. For example, discussing the weather is often considered as something so common and unimportant that it provides a safe zone for conversation. But, extremes of weather are some of the most newsworthy and challenging aspects of human existence. So it is with the objects within each place -- the greater the problems, the more likely we are to notice.

Adaptivity

Obstacles inhibiting chosen activities within place are dealt with by changing what happens (in subjectivity), adapting self, modifying place, or some combination of the three. If "place is … an integral part of existence" (Norberg-Schulz, 1996, p. 414), then changes conform places to use and for users (Brand, 1995; Marcus, 1995). What can be changed within place may be altered as needed; changes may be simple or involve structural renovations. An example of interior adaptations over time was found in *Habitat* -- designed by Moshe Safdie in 1967 in Montreal, Canada; it was originally built as a community living complex, (Kettle, 1970). *Habitat* still functions as housing for multiple families; however, living spaces have been *reconfigured* – increasing the square footage for individual families and minimizing the number of residential units within the entire complex. Three case studies of *Habitat* revealed very diverse interiors (McGill University, 2001).

Aspects of adaptivity within place apply to the classroom. Susi (1986) discusses flexibility in the art classroom. He says that because the seating area for the students is the most easily modified, it would be expected that teachers who do change physical arrangements would be most likely to change table and chair configurations the most. These changes can reflect the teacher's choices for teaching interactions with, and among, the students. Some teachers may modify their spaces in ways to create specific environments reinforcing selected content being taught (Barr-Johnson & Brockmyer, 1981). Place becomes an enabling extension of taught concepts. Susi suggests that since the art room

activities vary from whole group participation, small groups, and individual response, daily flexibility may be the best solution for many art teachers (1996).

Materials and object choices for teaching change over time. Newer content areas, such as incorporating technologies, may require physical adaptations to be integrated into the space. One study about integration of technology into schools captured the impact well through a metaphorical narrative. Zhao and Frank (2003) compared the integration of technology in schools to the ecological changes in the Great Lakes after the introduction of the zebra mussel. They saw the computer as initially invasive and as a “living species” that required adaptations. The study illustrated that even one object change can have tremendous impacts (Dewey, 1938; Alexander, 1979). An art classroom had recently acquired an LCD projector. The classroom computer connection to it was wired across the room from where the projector was set up. The entrance to the room was between the two, so a cord across the floor in the traffic path was not an option. The projector was only used when the classroom teacher had a student teacher working with her so that one could enter commands on the keyboard while the other taught. Physical adaptations had not been resolved. Stories of ecological subjectivity and adaptivity provide ways of knowing.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative is how humanity makes sense of experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). We relate and understand our world and our place in it through stories. Narrative inquiry research is both the method and the phenomena of study (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Stories, as method, convey, relate, and reveal. Common threads intertwine, unique aspects emerge, and areas for further study are unveiled. Pinnegar and Daynes describe the differences between narrative inquiry and other methods as "1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and … the subject, 2) a move from the use of number toward the use of words as data, 3) a change from a focus on the general … toward the local and specific, and 4) acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing" (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 7). Visual ways of understanding are common in the art world. This study of elementary art teachers includes object stories and stories of relationships with objects as additional ways of knowing.

Research through narrated stories is not new. Related object stories are less frequently considered. The Vikings provide an excellent example of both together. The Smithsonian Institution and National Museum of Natural History published a book about the Vikings claiming "sagas as evidence" (2000, pp. 226-237). In teaching an art unit about the Vikings to children (Boykin & Grossman, 1986), it was shared that all that is known about the Vikings' lives and explorations was revealed through their sagas and confirmed by their *art* i *facts*

(Fitzhugh & Ward, 2000). In Viking times, stories about the seafarers' trips to Europe, the Far East, Iceland, Greenland, and North America were told and retold to each generation. The sagas were interwoven with myths of gods and goddesses. Likewise, Viking art objects retell and expand stories. Carvings of dragons on the ships and buildings, rune writings and pictorial memory stones, sculptures, and jewelry all provide saga images. The Viking stories unfold to reveal places and objects associated with domestic life and travels.

The physical strength of the Vikings reflects the endurance demanded of these people from barren northern lands. Ships, carvings, and stone work are object records of such strength. Maritime engineering and carpentry skills were perfected to amazing levels. Vikings built strong long ships that could speed through the water and wider merchant ships designed to carry the loads brought across the seas from distant lands. Ships were so important to the Viking civilization that burial mounds held not only the dead, but the dead with their possessions on ships. Objects of the deceased were situated with storied care on each ship. It is hard to imagine burying an entire furnished ship (Oseberg mound) in the first century in frozen lands (Fitzhugh & Ward, 2000). Just as the knowledge of other ancient civilizations is revealed as their stories are discovered in words, objects, and the developed connections between them, this study looks for the elementary art teacher's story as "a way of knowing" (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 1). Personal sagas of three elementary art teachers, the stories of their objects, and the narratives between and *among* each teacher and her object-laden teaching place were the focus of this study.

Importance of Complexity

Studying teaching is different than examining a rock. Quantitative research has valid applications in appropriate situations. When my daughter chose to complete a geological study for her elementary science fair project (after theorizing simply that all rocks are not the same), she sought and found measuring methods to affirm or disclaim her theory. She included visual analyses, hardness tests, and chemical reaction experiments to test her notions one at a time. The rocks remained "dormant" to the prodding instigated by the young investigator. Counting and comparing can answer questions about "how much" (from the Latin quantus, Merriam-Webster.com, 2009) for specific questions that are easily separated from the whole. In contrast, qualitative research is descriptive and deals with "of what kind" (from the Latin qualis, Merriam-Webster.com, 2009). Unlike rocks, this study of teaching pursues something ongoing, reflective, thoughtful, alive, and human-oriented.

Narrative inquiry, as a unique and specialized method of qualitative research, has roots in social science, history, and literature (Fleming, Riegle, & Fryer, 2007; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Studies of human experiences are sought and understood as stories. Pinnegar and Daynes acknowledge that "to this day, most academic work is nonnarrative … based on quantitative data and positivist assumptions about cause, effect, and proof" (2007, p. 3). Such minimizing of continuing human experience would be considered a great mistake by Alexander (1979), Dewey (1938), and Marcus (1995). I argue that just as we cannot stop the heart from beating to count corpuscles held in a static position

without ending the life we are examining, so also the living entity of teaching cannot be fully understood apart from the ongoing stories. According to Pinnegar and Daynes, narrative inquirers understand that “the complexity of the individual, local, and particular provides a surer basis for our relationships and interactions with other humans” (2007, p. 30). The definition of narrative inquiry as “the study of experience as it is lived” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 69), is expansive and inclusive rather than selective and controlled. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) reviewed key ideas about experiences built on Dewey’s theories (1938). Experiences include aspects of continuity. Every experience builds on those that came before and adds to those yet to happen. Experiences are happenings or interactions. Place is an important aspect of experience. Clandinin and Rosiek define place as “the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take place” (2007, p. 70).

Physical spaces house objects. The objects within place are an important part of place and the patterns of life within that place (Alexander, 1979; Marcus, 1995). The psychologist Alison Kidd studied the connection between thoughts and processing piles of unorganized papers on desks (1994). Kidd’s research, along with that of Sellen and Harper (2002), was inquiry-based. Kidd, Sellen, and Harper wanted to find what experiences kept people from becoming a paperless society. They wondered why, with current technology enabling the elimination of paper copies and supporting environmentalists encouraging such conservation, the printed sheet still held such prominence. Stories of those harboring chaotic stacks of papers revealed connections to the continued

thinking and mental processing of printed information. Kidd suggested that the papers could not be filed away until the mental sorting of the ideas they represented was completed. In their study, Sellen and Harper grouped five aspects of "knowledge work" supported by paper. This "knowledge work" is from the narratives of human interactive experiences with "hard copy." Handling of papers was preferred for *authoring*, *reviewing*, initial *planning*, and *collaborative* activities. They found that hard copies were also favored for *communications* within an organization (Sellen & Harper, 2002, p. 53). Paper, as a tangible object, was found to be a crucial part of the human experiences. This story of *thinking with paper* illustrates the importance of objects to living activities (Alexander, 1979).

Complexities of place are part of life. I find it interesting that our memories of school days often relate to photographed portraits from each grade level. Little of the school experience is found in those pictures. Each isolated student "takes on a pose" in front of a backdrop screen that masks or substitutes real context. Place holds a vital role in the understanding of complex living experiences (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1938; Marcus, 1995).

The Complex Landscape of Elementary Art Teachers

Multiple areas of complexity are part of the teaching landscape of the elementary art teacher. Elementary art teaching content is multilayered and diverse. In this study individual teacher choices were expansive. Lisa, for example, commented.

> I have a lot of choice. As much choice as I want to have ‘cause I agree with all the stuff. Everything I have to do is very broad. I have to make it specific the way I want to -- the way my kids need it to be specific. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

For Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, the elementary art teachers, content included art history, making art, exploring various media and techniques, thinking visually, problem solving, and developing imagery within the context of formal art elements and design principles. The myriad of materials used in the classroom was only the beginning of the story of *object* complexity. Tools and processes added another level of complexity. The interactive object-laden story continued throughout student production and even extended after the making was completed.

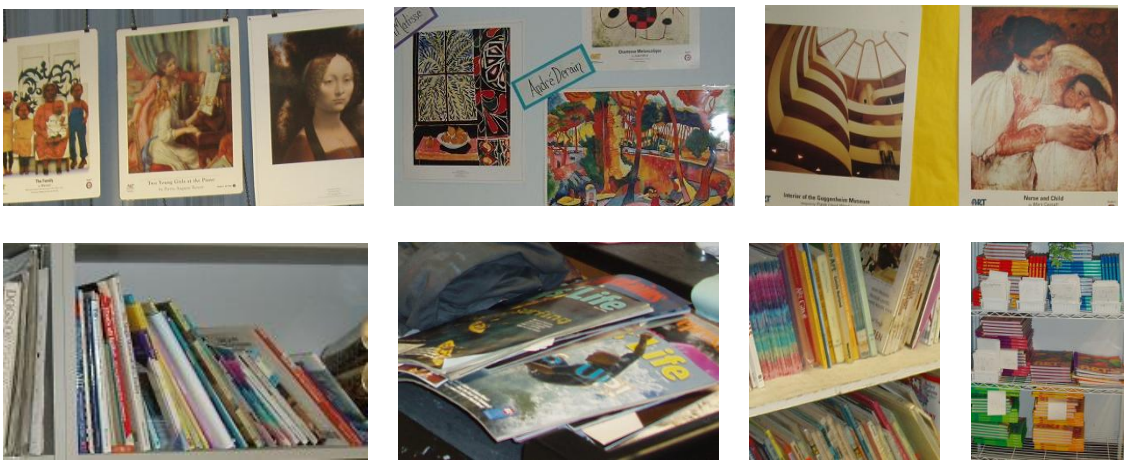


Figure 1. Resources for art images including posters, books, magazines, and textbooks.

Each of the teachers in the study resourced *art images* for their teaching. Enlarged images of artworks were hung on walls. Books and magazines were accessible to teachers and students. Illustrated textbooks sat on shelves. Each teacher had projection equipment. The choice of artworks to reference for

content was flexible. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had personal favorites. How each one chose to show images also varied. Margaret had a hard copy enlarged poster that she used during one class. Lisa used an overhead projector to share Matisse's *Woman in a Purple Coat*. And Esther explained how her computer projection system had a pad on her desk that allowed the students to interact using Smart Board technology from the desk top rather than at the board. How these art teachers accessed and shared art images varied. Many options were available in all of the rooms. They all had posters, computers, overhead projectors, screens, Elmos, and television sets. Some had LCD projectors and Smart board technologies. Image resourcing and multiple choices for referencing added extra object challenges for access and usage. If teaching art to elementary students was only about "reading" visual images over time and place, it would still offer multi-faceted curricular challenges in choice and methods. The story of objects, selection of images, means of resourcing, and modes for interactive accessing is complex.

Figure 1. Means to view images include hard copy, overhead projector, LCD projector, Elmo, and Smart Board technologies.

As important as looking at diverse art is to the elementary art content, *making of objects* tends to be the first association most teachers make. The childhood art memories that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther shared were about materials, processes and products. Lisa recalled early school art experiences.

> I remember making a clay turtle in first grade….I remember crayon batik…mine was butterflies and flowers….We also made oil pastel portraits. I also remember every clay project we did. …[Once] we drew the tree in the courtyard. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Margaret remembered drawing, oil painting, and sewing with her grandmother. She added a school memory, "I made these little books. … I used the whole tablet to make Snoopy books" (Personal communication, May 6, 2009). Esther's early stories were strongly associated with materials.

> And I loved crayons. It was my favorite, favorite thing….
> And to go in there and to see all that stuff and because I'd never seen some of that stuff before.… paints, paints – cause I never had done really paints at home…. large sheets of paper…(Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Graeme Sullivan, in his book, *Art Practice as Research* (2005), describes "thinking in a medium, thinking in a language, and thinking in a setting" (p. 117) as cognitive ways of building knowledge. Art making provides *visual ways to know*. The art teacher thinks artfully. She thinks about connections between art viewed and art projects for students to make. She researches, resources, views, evaluates, connects, plans, inventories, stores, selects, handles, explores, gathers, prepares, distributes, engages, instructs, monitors, assesses, displays, *re*gathers, cleans, secures, and *re*stores all of the associated objects as part of her subjective and adaptive experiences within the elementary art classroom. The elementary art teacher's story is multifaceted and complex. Even as her life

experiences transpire through time, so to, the objects have living patterns (Alexander, 1979). And *the many* occur simultaneously.

The layers of teaching content, the expanse of materials, and the interactions between and among are not the only complex issues for the art teacher. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had unique roles as elementary *ancillary* or *enrichment*, teachers. Along with the music and physical education *specialty* teachers, they each taught almost every student in their schools. The grade-level generalist homeroom teachers typically had no more than 22 to 25 students in their classrooms. The number of students taught by one art teacher in this study ranged from over 500 to more than 800 students. Each day several groups entered and left each art room. Unlike the risers accommodating the chorus, or the basketball court ready to house a game, the *stuff* on the tables for elementary students' art engagement was diverse, dependent on preparation in advance, and had extended lives. Art teacher object stories include movements of the portable, alterations of the changeable, and replenishing the consumable. Working with expendable materials does not necessarily mean that they are quickly removed from the teacher's space after creation. There is even more to the story. In the music classroom, sheet music and instruments may be distributed and reclaimed at the end of class. During physical education classes, the balls and other engaging objects are gathered, used, and retrieved. But the music, instruments, and athletic equipment remain in their original form and availability to the next group of students. This is not so with the papers, clay, paints, glue, etc. used to artfully express, create, and engage in many ways. Art

is object transformation. When the students finished, there was clean up, retrieval, processing, access for further development of the work, and storage. And then it started all over again for the next group. What the children create (both two-dimensional and three-dimensional) sometimes needed a drying place, or an additional process (as kiln firing). Sometimes the work was gathered and put into student portfolios. Some was selected for display in the schools, and some had to be mounted and matted for special events. Physical education teachers and music teachers do not have individual student work *as objects* to contain, process, or maintain. The many *students* in the art room multiplied by the complexities of expansive *teaching content*, volume of *materials*, and diverse *processes* exponentially lead to an idea of *multiplexities*. These complex living patterns (with, between, and among) mandate inclusive consideration in exploring the professional knowledge landscape of the elementary art teacher. Dewey's associated example comes to mind. He said that taking only a part of the experience, without full context, could be likened to isolating one word or phrase from Hamlet (1934, p. 24).

Architectural Study Model

The research of Marcus formed the model for developing my inquiry methods. Marcus studied how humans related to personal residential dwellings in her book *House as Mirror of Self* (1995). The parallel for this study could be thought of as "educational space as mirror of teaching content." Beginning her study in the 1970s and continuing up to the publication of her book in 1995, Marcus was able to talk to more than 60 people about their relationships with

their homes (p. 6). Over that lengthy period of time, the diversity of subjects expanded. She interviewed “young and old, owners and renters, men and women” (1995, p. 6). Some narratives were also gathered over the span of up to 7 to 10 years. Marcus documented the evolving changes between the homes and their inhabitants. She looked at changes in self-images as reflected in homes. Likewise, each individual art teacher related her teaching spaces to her teaching content.

Marcus’ study (1995) focused on exploring the in-depth relationships between place and people. As I delved into her work, I found that her procedures translated very well to my own study and informed my narrative inquiry processes. Parallels that seemed the most relevant were selected. For example, Marcus found importance in connecting to memories of childhood places (p. 19-48). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther shared childhood art and teaching memories. Modifications that seemed to make a better fit for this study were made as needed. Subjects illustrated ideas about their homes for Marcus. I expanded this by including multiple opportunities for the art teachers to express ideas visually. I refer to her procedures in more detail as I outline the research content of this study.

Narrative Inquiry Methods

The means of gathering the narratives were selected to reveal the complexities of the ecological whole. Interviews with each of the teachers formed the core of their narratives. Specific questioning strategies are fully outlined in the following research content section. I videotaped five interviews

each with Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Selecting visual documentation, rather than simply using auditory recording, made reflective visual observations possible. The teachers were also invited to e-mail other thoughts about their stories between meetings. This encouraged them to broaden their narratives and to restory.

Mello's "*The Language of Arts in a Narrative Inquiry Landscape* (p. 203-223) published in the *Handbook of Narrative inquiry: Mapping a Methodology* (Clandinin, 2007) was descriptive and inclusive of methods used in the Marcus' study that were also applicable for this study. Using visual "creative field text" (Mello, 2007, p. 215) provided artful narrative inquiry methods. Inquiries relating to the object physicalities were begun through photographing teaching places with a digital camera. After I measured the art classrooms, kiln rooms, storage rooms, and all of the furnishings in each of the teacher's spaces, I drew floor plans to scale, templates of the furnishings to scale, and finally, a detailed floor plan of each room arrangement. The drawings were used to situate observational inquiry within place. Researcher and subjects used these drawings. I used transparent overlays on top of the plan drawings to take field notes during five class meetings observed for each teacher.

Another "creative field text" (Mello, 2007, p. 215) inquiry method used teacher drawings to restory and broaden interview responses. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther each drew their own narrative of their space at the initial interview. Further, they drew an art memory story after recalling and sharing their art and teaching annals. After inquiry interviews about subjectivity and adaptivity, each

teacher burrowed deeper as they chose and drew their most enjoyable and most dreaded living pattern in their classroom. Together, the three drawings from each teacher became a personal teacher knowledge landscape composition.

The third usage of “creative field text” (Mello, 2007, p. 215) had Lisa, Margaret, and Esther add comments on overlays of the floor plans. Comments about their spaces and labeling ownership on the plans were based on the research of Marcus (1995). This inquiry opened stories about relationships with place, objects, and schools.

Research Context

Participants

School District

The school district had to be close enough for access, and it needed to have elementary art teachers with their own specialized teaching classrooms. Not all of the local school districts have elementary art teachers. Some have only a few. To complete three narrative case studies, I needed to find a district with many elementary art teachers in hopes of finding three willing to participate in the study. Fortunately, I am located in a large suburban area outside a major US city. After selecting the school district, I contacted the fine arts administration. The first step in gaining approval was more challenging than anticipated. The response seemed slow and cautious. With so many legal concerns, it seems understandable that refusals for research “invasion” would be the safest choice.

The research was finally approved after connecting to a key administrator who knew me, knew art education, and knew the university. This process brought a new understanding to Marcus' research. She "made no attempt to select a random sample" (1995, p. 6). The people whose stories she collected all knew of her work and contacted her. Entry into the school system is now highly valued. I hoped that my final work would be well received. According to this suburban school district web site, the district covers 110 square miles and includes 13 cities. There are 6 high schools, 8 intermediate schools, and 24 elementary schools in the district. The student population of 36,153 is comprised of 8.7% African Americans, 19.5% Hispanics, 61.1% Whites, .3% Native Americans, and 10.2% Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Elementary Art Teachers

All of the 24 elementary art teachers received my approved recruitment letter through the school district fine arts office. Direct contact with the teachers was not allowed. Once approval was secured, the administrator was very supportive. She wanted to attach her own note to the recruitment letter e-mails encouraging the teachers to participate in the study. I asked her not to do so since participation is totally voluntary and such an added note could be construed as an administrative mandate. I was already concerned that the letters had to come through the administrative "conduit" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). This presented a concern of gathering "sacred stories" -- those described by Clandinin and Connelly (1995) as altered by the teacher to align with what they felt was the right or expected.

Although Marcus studied over seven to 10 years, I chose to concentrate on three teachers over one year. *The many* remained intriguing to me. I decided that offering one meeting to all of the elementary art teachers could add to the context of the three case studies. The recruitment letter clearly laid out the options stating, “You may choose to meet for the initial interview and documentation of your teaching space only. Or you may volunteer to participate for the full case study.” All *participants* were offered workable floor plans and templates of their spaces to keep. I was relieved that all 24 elementary art teachers did not request that first visit. Designers and architects are paid rather well for such work. It takes a quite a while to measure and even more time to draw and ink the scale-drawn plans and furnishings. This would have been a tremendous time commitment.

Exclusions.

There is one group from the district elementary art teacher population that was excluded from the beginning. Due to a possible conflict of interest, three teachers who teach an after-school art program from my university were not included. Two of those teachers volunteered, but I explained that their employment with the university and my status as director of the program precluded their participation. The two who volunteered may have felt obligated to do so. Had any of the district elementary art teachers been currently enrolled as a student in one of my courses, I would have added them to the list of exclusions. Depending on financial reimbursement or a grade from me could add impetus to developing *sacred stories*.

Initial responses did not always develop into meetings. Two elementary art teachers answered the first e-mail saying that they were interested. When I sent a note back to them to set up the first appointment, neither one responded. I attempted more than once to connect, but then gave up. It made me wonder if they changed their minds or if other factors influenced their decisions. Local principals could also exclude their teachers from participating.

Inclusions.

Only five of the 24 teachers scheduled a first meeting at the end of the academic year. One of the five was leaving at the end of the school year and would not be there to continue in a case study the following year. The other four were all willing to continue. Arbitrary numbers were assigned to each participant and then I had someone (outside the study) draw three numbers “from a hat” to establish which would continue.

Some of the 24 elementary art teachers were past students of mine at the university. Still others received a degree from that same institution. I found it interesting that three of the four teachers who volunteered to participate did know me. The after-school art program had been offered at their schools. One teacher previously taught for us. In some ways, the participants were like those who sought out Marcus to be part of her study (1995). It made me wonder if the *lack* of knowing anything about the university where I teach, the art program I direct, or me as a researcher could also be exclusionary.

Procedures

Initial Meetings

The first meetings were scheduled near the end of the school year. I met with five elementary art teachers. Only three were expected to complete the additional four meetings held the following year. After introducing myself, I briefly talked about the focus of the research. I made sure to leave room for questions and to reiterate that they did not need to feel obligated to participate. Each participant was given the option to continue with the first interview or to end the session. All five continued. They signed the mandatory lengthy consent form and initialed each page. They received a copy to keep. With all of the protocol, it seemed amazing that anyone participated in the study. I wondered at how much our cautionary legalities become a hindrance to research.

Marcus (1995), tape recorded and transcribed the interviews. Having a significant hearing loss, I asked each teacher for permission to video-tape so that I could more easily transcribe what they said through lip reading. All agreed when I assured them that the video was only to gather the story and that no one else would view it. Each teacher was asked what comes to mind when thinking about her classroom. Positive and negative aspects were encouraged. I asked each what she would change if she could. Open-ended questions kept the inquiry flexible and allowed for defining and elaborating. Following each lead provided expansive narratives. Interviews with Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all began with the same questions but then expanded, meandered, and restoried in individual ways.

After the interview, I asked each teacher to draw a picture of how she saw her classroom. The drawings could include images of actual physical space or represent aspects documenting certain activities, relationships of connected feelings, etc. The choice of labeling was left up to each teacher. The inquiry for talking about and drawing physical place was modified from Marcus' study. Paralleling Marcus' procedures of having participants *talk to* their drawings of their houses (1995, pp. 6-9), the art teachers talked *about* their teaching spaces. They related *positive and negative aspects* about their physicalities. Marcus used the drawing activity first, asking each person to "put down his or her feelings about home in a picture" (1995, p. 8). After drawing and labeling, Marcus used a role-playing activity (Gestalt therapy) where each person went on to *talk to* their house. Not being a Gestalt therapist, I felt that asking the teachers to *talk to* their drawing of the classroom might be a bit awkward for us. So the art teachers were asked to draw *after talking about* their spaces. The drawings became an extended art narrative (Mello, 2007). A variety of pencils and markers were made available to use on the paper. Marcus had issues with her subjects relating to their perceived notions of "not being able to draw" (1995, p. 8). There were no such issues in this study. Drawing seemed ever so right for art teachers. It was uplifting to watch them fully engage in drawing.

While the teachers drew, I used that time to gather images of each space. I measured their rooms, kiln rooms, and storage rooms and took digital photographs. Marcus only took notes and photographs as her participants drew. I knew that the measuring would take more time. I found that in my haste to "not

waste the teachers' time," I sometimes had to measure again during a later visit to rectify errors or document missed spots. Lisa happened to be absent on the date for our first appointment. She forgot to notify me. When I reached the school and found out, I asked if I could go ahead and take measurements anyway. This worked out very well. I did not feel rushed and could work carefully.

Going into someone's personal space and taking their time caused personal concerns. I wondered if my awkward feelings at the initial interviews were obvious. I certainly felt a bit like someone trespassing as I climbed around their rooms with my tape measure and photographed all of the spaces. My feelings (from my own upbringing) of invading their personal places forbade me from opening doors on cabinets. To do so *required invitation*. Some of what was stored was revealed later as each teacher referred to other aspects of their environment. If I were to start all over, I don't think I would do it any differently.

First Observation and Second Interview

A year after the initial interviews, three case studies continued. The last four meetings with each of the three teachers included full class observations followed by interviews. I scheduled the observations on the same days as the interviews as a convenience for the teachers. I felt obliged to respect their time commitments. Scheduling four times with each teacher was challenging. It could have become overwhelming if I had requested eight additional meetings. The total of twelve meetings with three teachers all transpired within a month.

When we met again, I had each floor plan drawn to scale. I used the plan with a vellum overlay to make visual and written field study notes. For this first observation I drew lines tracking the teacher movement throughout the class time. This revealed the patterns of movement, as an ongoing part of teaching content. Esther was surprised at how much she walked around the room in just one hour.

The second interview opened the narrative of early life experiences. Marcus found importance in exploring the places from childhood in her research (1995, pp. 19-48). To remember early connections, the teachers were asked to talk about their own art experiences as a child. Because recollections of memories tend to build over time, I e-mailed questions to the three teachers before meeting with them. It also seemed forthright to let them know what was going to be discussed ahead of time. This was our first time to meet again after one year. I hoped this would ward off any anxieties about continuing with the study. Enhanced dependability could be expected with each teacher taking time to ponder, develop, and select stories to share. They were told that the experiences did not "need to be related to formal classes or schooling, although some may be so." I asked each teacher to think of the "earliest art memory." And then I extended the inquiry by asking, "What else do you remember about art activities through your elementary years?" Each teacher was asked to talk about the quality of the experiences in terms of positives and negatives and also to recall the places where the memories transpired. A similar line of questioning about art teaching memories followed. Finally, the teachers were invited to

“draw, sketch, or otherwise illustrate the art place most memorable” on an eight-inch circle of paper. During that time, I took digital photographs.

Second Observation and Third Interview

Field notes were taken on overlays atop the floor plans to accentuate the context of place. The notes focused on the teaching processes and interactions with the *stuff* in the classroom. Time notations were used to keep the activities ordered for referencing as living patterns. The ongoing complexity was magnified as interactions of teacher, place, objects, and students continued.

During the third interview, I asked teachers to respond in free associations to words attributed to art, education, art education, students, and teachers. This was modeled after Marcus’ free-associative exercise relating to the word *home* (1995, p. 174). Narratives about art teaching philosophies and preferred methods were sought through word association inquiry. Although free associations usually build from quick initial responses, I chose to give the words to the teachers before the meeting. I thought that the teachers might be more comfortable meeting with me if they had some knowledge of what was going to be asked of them. Since I had given them advance information for the previous interview, I decided to do so again. A list was sent via e-mail to each teacher prior to our meeting. Some developed their ideas before we met. Esther had her list fully completed before I arrived. Lisa had filled in some words. Margaret did all of her associations during the interview. After listing associated words, they were invited to mark the most valued and then illustrate their own choice of imagery connected to them.

Third Observation and Fourth Interview

The fourth meeting led the teachers to *re*view their teaching space from various perspectives. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther looked again at their initial drawing for their space (from the first meeting – one year prior), their "most memorable art place drawing" (that they completed during the second interview), and the floor plan (completed by me). I asked them to compare and rethink about aspects of their teaching place. Each was invited to label areas on vellum overlays. This was open-ended. Afterwards, each illustrated her most enjoyable classroom activity and her most dreaded. I had opportunities to take digital photographs of areas supporting the observation field notes.

Final Meeting: Fourth Observation and Fifth Interview

During the fifth and final interview, each teacher was invited to mark areas of ownership on an overlay of their teaching room, kiln room, and storage room. They decided who the "owners" were. Then they mapped out what belonged to each. The teachers considered some areas as shared. Marcus' study dealt with perceived notions of territoriality and ownership in homes (1995, pp. 165-172). Field notes on overlays were completed.

Validation

Triangulated Narratives

Inquiry procedures for unveiling narratives are designed to validate, give credence, and show trustworthiness in research. Triangulated stories, triangulated methods, and triangulated participation were chosen to increase validity. Stokrocki reaffirms, "Triangulation increases validity by incorporating at

least three different view-points and methods" (1997, p. 38). The first story was the elementary art teacher's narrative of her own professional knowledge landscape. Inquiry-based interviews looked for teacher stories. The second story was the narrative of the objects. The truth of object was important to my research. The object is. Where something exists, there is a story. Object stories were collected through photography and drawings. The third story was one of the ecological whole. Related experiences and observations during class time were focused on the living transpirations (Dewey, 1938; Alexander, 1979; and Marcus, 1995).

Procedural inquiry methods were used in multiple ways. Researcher drawings, researcher photographs, researcher observations, teacher interviews, and teacher drawings all provided various ways of knowing. These triangulated methods interplayed with the three narrative voices of teacher, place, and ecological whole. The final triangulation for this study is found in the stories of three elementary art teachers. Together, they formed a professional knowledge community "story constellation" (Craig, 2001). The story constellation is a validation used for narrative inquiry research.

Story Constellations (Craig, 2001, 2007)

The *story constellations* are both the method and the form (Craig, 2007). Craig relates that, "Through broadening, the influences and complexities of teachers' professional knowledge landscapes become revealed" (2007, p. 179). The professional knowledge landscapes included each teacher's perspective of what it meant to be an elementary art teacher. Craig explains, "In the story

constellation version of narrative inquiry, meaning is uncovered through excavating and illuminating … also a shared story …" (Craig, 2001, p. 306). How the various teachers reveal certain connected ideas with others and story other independent concepts build into constellation form(s).

Burrowing methods (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) included open-ended interview questions. The dependability and trustworthiness of the research was enhanced by allowing each teacher to respond in ways that best storied their own experiences. There were no directives to "stick to the topic" or attempts to redirect answers within a narrow range of preconceived or measurable expectations. Teacher drawings opened possibilities for visual elaborations.

From these art teacher narratives, the constellations were formed. As part of the elementary art education community, there were connective aspects of stories. As unique individuals with unique experiences, differences were also expected to arise. Having both similarities and differences provided reliability in the story collections. Narrative inquiry recognizes the temporal nature of the research (Conle, 2000). The senses that are used to collect the data and truthfully relate make sense of the experiences studied (Dewey, 1934 p.22). That is, there is a truth in the descriptions relating to what is perceived and a "resonance" (Conle, 2000) during the time and place of the study. "As the stories come together, they interact and shape one another" (p. 300). The stories of teachers, object physicalities, and the teaching observed became an ecological narrative. Selected relational experiences are mapped in story constellations. Figure one gives an example.

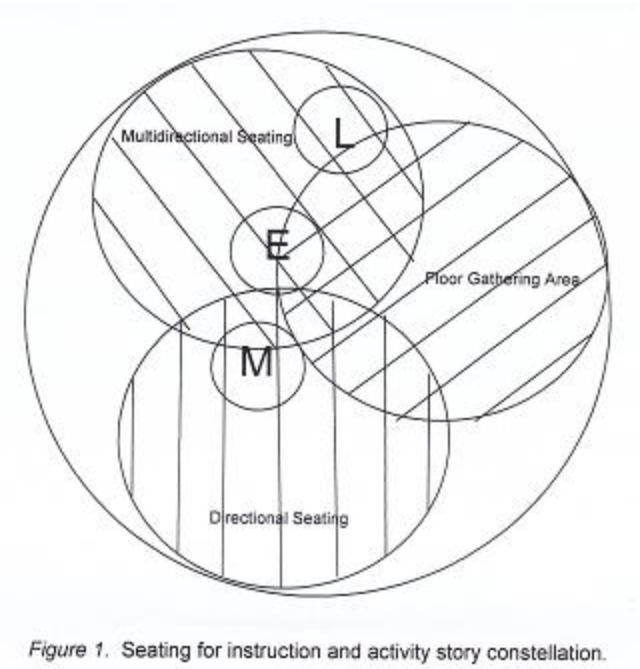


Figure 1. Story constellations show relationships.

Validating Ecological Narrative

Dewey uses the phrase “the live creature” (1934, p. 3) to describe the completeness of human experiences with place (environment). To better visualize ecological wholeness as a fully inclusive, ongoing *multiplexity* across, between, in, and with environmental aspects of place, I write metaphorically from the less common. These parallels are used to promote a greater attentiveness (Craig, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) to situated experiences. The metaphorical application encourages extinguishing tendencies to ignore the importance of place to the behaviors transpiring within them (Banning & Canard, 1986). Schwab (1973) sees the “milieu” as just as important to curriculum development as the other three “commonplaces,” of “conditions of the learner, the teacher, and the subject matter.” He says that they do not exist without the

“limiting conditions” of the milieu (p. 508-509). As Dewey said, “**Space** … becomes a **comprehensive** [researcher’s emphasis] and enclosed scene within which are ordered the multiplicity of doings and undergoings …” (1934, p. 23). It is within such active and interactive place contexts that the teacher makes his or her practical decisions for action (Schwab, 1970).

The methodology needed for this study situated the researcher on a voyage of discovery, at the side of those studied, going out to sea in a collaborative relationship (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). The ship’s captain was the elementary art teacher; the researcher was the first mate. The sea and the sky, complete with unique characteristics, and existing as supportive units for diverse living organisms, provided more than just a stagnant backdrop as the ship progressed. The interactive living exchange between sea and sky were the art teacher’s classroom, students, materials, and equipment. The master of the voyage brought her own life experiences and education embodied as the ship itself with its specialized load. Many ideas for navigating the vessel, along with plans regarding the usage of selected cargo, were crucial to the lengthy trip ahead. Once out in the middle of the ocean, that precious ship and its cargo had to sustain and aid the captain in surviving and making this experience-of-a-lifetime profitable for all who depended on it.

The sea captain could not stop the ongoing movement of the sea or separate the relationships between climatic conditions and life happenings in the air and water from the ship’s own activities, as the journey continued, and the underlying mission of the voyage progressed. The charted plans, made on land

before the voyage, could not override the practical (Schwab, 1970). As each vessel had its own unique situations at sea, this research had to “keep boundaries flexible” (Schwab, 1970, p.8). The entirety of context not only supported, but also was vital to the emergent teaching content. Dewey said, “For only when an organism shares in the ordered relations of its environment does it secure the stability essential to living” (1934, p. 15). I saw teacher content (what actually transpires within a classroom) as living education. My research looked at the ecological whole of the elementary art teacher with her fully furnished and stocked space.

I sought to understand aspects of place that were supportive or challenging to each teacher’s preferred curricula and methods. Each teacher, as a curriculum maker (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), defined her own “eclectic” mix of certain theoretical bodies of knowledge and her practical knowing (Schwab, 1970, p. 10).

My role as a researcher was not to judge the practice of each elementary art teacher (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988;), as if gathering information from the other end of a “conduit” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Craig, 2002), but rather to grow in understanding the elementary art teachers’ “professional knowledge landscapes” from each teacher’s own contextual place (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The conduit metaphor relating to the idea of “pouring in” or dumping through a funnel all of the pertinent knowledge and information and then looking at the other end of that conduit with an expectation of finding exactly the same as from the top feed, could easily overtake my research if I overvalued the content

taught at the university rather than seeking each teacher's own professional practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Schwab, 1970). There were many journeys out to sea before the researcher came aboard, and each ship, with its cargo, is unique.

To gain more understanding of the relationships that elementary art teachers develop across, between, in, and with their teaching place and teaching "stuff," I felt compelled to use research methods that opened and encouraged the sharing of professional knowledge narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). The emerging experiential stories gave contextual insight to the ecological interplay of subjectivity and adaptivity.

CHAPTER FOUR: NARRATIVES OF ART AND TEACHING

Each teacher has a story about what it means to teach elementary art. These narratives, lived and told, and re-lived and retold, grow from life-long experiences. These stories do not simply accumulate; their contours change as a consequence of ongoing experience. By studying the stories from childhood art and early teaching experiences, context is expanded (Dewey, 1938, Marcus, 1995). Free word associations add another layer of understanding to their professional stories. Memories and values of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were shared through told stories and drawn stories. As a result, they defined aspects of their own professional knowledge landscapes and generated aspects of a shared professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

As foreshadowed, this narrative inquiry was based on two previous research studies from the fields of art education and architecture. The first study reinforced reasons to look back. The La Porte, Speirs, and Young survey about selecting art teaching content found that "what they knew and felt comfortable teaching was the highest influence" (2008, p. 367). How elementary art teachers *know* and *what they feel comfortable teaching* develops from their own experiences. The second study, Marcus's study (1995), gathered memories of the past to aid to in understanding the present. Marcus underscored that importance in her second chapter, entitled *The Special Places of Childhood* (Marcus, 1995, pp. 19-48). Hence, to understand more about previous *knowledge* and *comfort* in art teaching, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were asked to recall art and teaching experiences from their youth. They *re*viewed what they

already knew. The opportunity to look back, yet again, brought new understandings of former experiences over time (Dewey, 1938).

Word associations were then used to expand their narratives about personal teaching values. Marcus used free association with the word *home* to draw out related ideas (1995, p. 174). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were given the words *art, education, art education, students*, and *teachers* to restory and broaden (Craig, 2007) their prior art and teaching memory narratives. The order of inquiry was purposeful. Memories were sought first to expand contexts throughout each teacher's lifetime. Word associations provided the teachers with opportunities to sort ongoing teaching ideas. Their word stories were gathered a week after their memory stories. I start first with the recollections of art and teaching.

Early Memories of Art

Lisa Remembers

Lisa was the only teacher in this study who graduated with a degree from an art education program. She previously taught at other elementary and middle schools. This was her fifth year at Rover Elementary (pseudonym). Rover is a large elementary school with 875 students, located in an upscale suburban neighborhood outside a major urban area in the United States. Lisa shared her perceptions about families whose children she taught, "They're a very scientific community here…. A lot of their parents are … at [Star Energy (pseudonym for a science and engineering industry)]" (Personal communication, May 4, 2009). I asked Lisa to talk about her childhood memories of art.

> I remember making a clay turtle in first grade. The art teacher was there, but we were in our first grade classroom. I remember crayon batik. The art teacher had small containers of crayons melting in water on a hot plate. We used the colors to paint a picture – mine was butterflies and flowers. Then our art teacher ironed some of the wax away. We also made oil pastel portraits. I also remember every clay project we did. All of these were made in the art room. I'm not sure why the clay turtle was done in our first grade class. I remember in summer art classes at my Elementary School we drew the tree in the courtyard. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

I burrowed deeper (Donnelly & Clandinin, 1990) by asking which experiences were the most positive. Lisa said, "The clay experiences were the most fun. I remember more details about them." Materials stood out to Lisa as a favored part of her early art experiences. The turtle object was mentioned first, but her positive recollection broadened to the medium. Her turtle reminded me of the clay beaver that I recalled making in fourth grade. Clay offers children unique opportunities for three-dimensional modeling. I remembered that the semester we omitted clay from the curriculum in the university children's art program there were some withdrawals. Lisa had multiple experiences with clay. Her first one stood out the most. There was evidence in Lisa's classroom of teaching content connected to her memories. I found student clay projects in process, a poster of butterflies (remembering her crayon batik), and completed clay animals in her classroom.

Figure 10. Evidences of connections to Lisa's early art memories.

When asked to recall the most negative art experiences, Lisa's first answer was not about art materials or products. It was a classroom management issue. It had to do with classroom *rules*.

> I remember our art teacher always demanded silence while we worked. We were not allowed to talk at all. I didn't really mind because I was usually concentrating too much to talk. But my friends hated to go to art class because of it. None of my friends have positive memories of art like I do. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Behavior expectations in the art classroom interfered with some students' art experiences, but not Lisa's. The art object seemed of primary importance to her. Lisa appeared to enjoy the objects more than most. I have observed that students who are deeply involved in art making rarely carry on conversations during creating time. Lisa's memory reverberated (Craig & Huber, 2007) engagement with art processes rather than verbal interactions. Lisa also shared another negative memory that was related to a teacher's *betrayal*.

> In middle school I did a drawing of a girl from a magazine photo. I did not have time to finish the face, but my art teacher wanted to send it to an art show. Instead of asking me to come in after school or during lunch, she

> had a student from another class draw the face in with marker. I was furious. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

The joy of making was not the only part of art that Lisa cared about. She took pride in her art *products* as well – they became objects that were part of her identity; she identified with them. Her positive memories were about materials and making while the negative memories revolved around teacher issues. Lisa's first recollections were all from school, so I probed, "Can you remember places where you made art at home?" Lisa replied:

> Dining room table. And then later on, my dad made me an art table – a lightbox art table. So then I did it in my room. [paused and then continued and gestured as if drawing on a surface held in her other hand] or in the closet, on a piece of paper – you know – a clipboard underneath it or whatever. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Lisa's art memories about *objects* included material *objects* and product *objects* – as foreshadowed. She mentioned a turtle, butterflies, flowers, portraits, and drawing a tree as products and clay, markers, oil pastels, and crayon resist batik as various media. The light table her father made for her, and her related experiences of drawing the girl from a magazine during her middle school years, involved copying skills. This aspect of her experience reminded me of my own copying from *The World Book Encyclopedia* in my youth. Lisa's associations with paradigms of *Academic Art* or *Representational drawing* lessons came to mind (Efland, 2004; Stankiewicz, 2001).

After talking about her memories of art, I asked Lisa to restory visually. I gave her an 8-inch round paper and markers and invited her to draw, sketch, or otherwise illustrate the art place most memorable to her. She chose to draw a floor plan of the art classroom she liked. Visual details were presented in ways that best conveyed details to Lisa. Main parts of the drawing are illustrated in a floor plan view – counters, sinks, tables, desk, and seats. Lisa drew shelves, drawers, and windows in an elevation view.

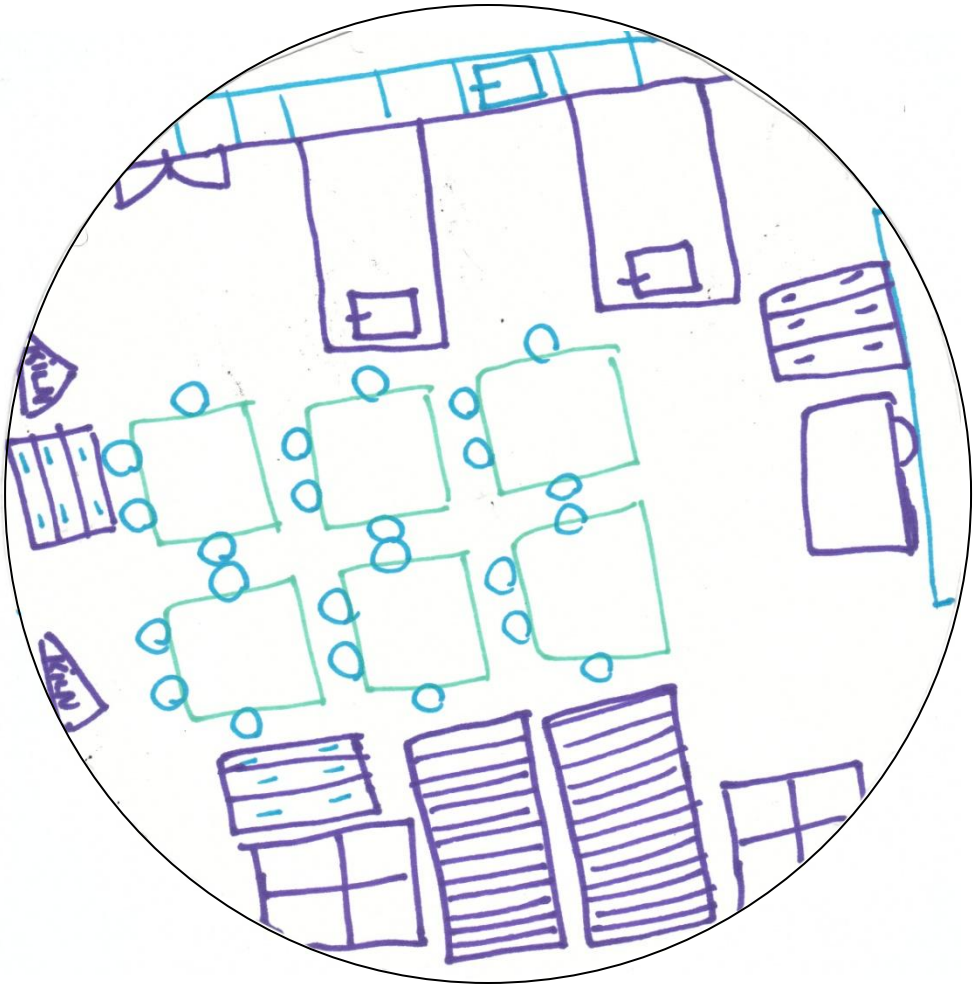


Figure 11. Lisa's drawing of her most memorable art experience.

Lisa particularly remembered the open access to the sinks on peninsula counters. All three were congregated in one area of the room – shown at the top of the drawing. The arrangement allowed several students simultaneous access to water without taking too much area away from classroom space. The right side showed a drawer unit next to a teacher desk. Behind the teacher were a chalkboard and a viewing screen. At the bottom were two windows separated with tall shelf units. Another drawer unit, placed under one window, was similar to the one next to the teacher's desk. A third drawer unit was on the left side of the plan. On either side of that last drawer unit were doors that led into a kiln room and storage area. Lisa remembered all of the work tables centered in the room. The seats faced the front. This classroom had no separate area for students to gather in dialogue away from working areas. Teaching content seemingly transpired with students at their tables. The teacher's desk was positioned to allow instruction from it. Lisa's unity of teaching and art memories was different than those of Margaret.

Margaret Remembers

Margaret taught at Grand Isle (pseudonym). With over 500 students, Grand Isle had the smallest population of the three school sites in the study. It was an older school in the middle of a neighborhood of smaller homes built over 25 years ago. After new housing projects (including newer schools) were built nearby, redistricting left Grand Isle with a very small student population. To fill the gap, special needs students were bused to Grand Isle. It was the center for deaf education for the whole county. With eleven total years of teaching --

including first grade, third grade, and elementary art -- Margaret was an experienced teacher. I asked Margaret to tell me about her early memories of art. Her art memories were rooted in classroom and home experiences. The first story she told was from school.

> That would be in elementary and I'm not sure what grade it was, but we went to an art class, and we did rodeo art, and I made this Indian girl, and it's always stuck in my mind. I don't know why. I just remember that. I think it was a watercolor and maybe crayon. We always did art in kindergarten in that school. -- a lot of different -- The teacher was very creative. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

Margaret recalled that she had an art teacher in elementary school later on but she had no memories except one classroom experience and kindergarten. She added, "There might have been a special teacher doing rodeo art one time." When asked why she thought she remembered the Indian girl, she related, "I remember what I made. I think I even still have it. So I have gone back to it. And that's maybe why I remember it even." I asked if there were any other art memories there from kindergarten. Margaret recollected:

> Um -- making these books. We made these -- well I made these little books. I'm looking at one right now [seemed to see a tablet somewhere in the front of her classroom]. Well, I made these little books out of these – [you] know those tablets where you did the writing [with] the rhymes and everything – the big ones for kindergarten. And I used the whole tablet to make Snoopy books -- made it up and I did the whole -- filled every page.

> And I did so many. And the kids just thought I was -- you know the art person -- making Snoopy books. They all wanted a Snoopy book. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

Margaret couldn't remember if she did all of the Snoopy book making at school or some of it at home. She said, "I think I did it mostly at school. But I probably did it at home, too" (Personal communication, May 6, 2009). Both of Margaret's early school art memories involved a product. One was made for rodeo art; the other for her peers. The materials were not of major importance. She only answered "watercolor or maybe crayon" when I specifically asked if she remembered what materials she used. No materials were mentioned in the story about the Snoopy books. I further inquired, "Do you remember any art activities at home when you were little?" Margaret eagerly responded:

> With my grandmother. My grandmother was an artist. And she did so many things. She sewed. She painted – oil painted. I started art with her when I was about 5. I just sit in her lap and draw. She would get me special markers and things like that. Good – very good memories. And then as I was older, we oil painted together. -- Sewed – all the time. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

I asked if she remembered anything she sewed and Margaret affirmed, "Oh, yeah. We made Christmas especially. She was a big Christmas person you know, and we made ornaments and stockings and little things to set up – Santas and pillows. We made clothes" (Personal communication, May 6, 2009). "Nice memories," I added.

Margaret appeared deep in distant thought as she very thoughtfully replied, "Unhuh. The best."

With closure on good memories of art, I broadened the questioning by asking, "Were there any negative aspects of art that you can remember?"

> Hmmm -- in middle school – hmmm, my teacher—I don't know if she didn't like me or she was just kind of a mad person [laugh] -- mad at the kids. I don't know -- but you know -- didn't like kids. But she was very confrontational and just not -- I ended up…. Middle school was bad anyway. Kind 'o got in confrontation with her so I didn't do art anymore -- in her class. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

"One? Two? Three grades?" I inquired.

Margaret went on, "Just one. I think it was only one semester, too. I didn't go back there. I don't remember how I got out of there or anything."

Unlike Lisa, Margaret's strongest positive art memories were from home. Margaret's attentive grandmother shared a love of art with her as a kind of intergenerational legacy. Margaret's stories about art experiences in her youth held strong associations with products produced. She remembered Christmas ornaments, Santa's, stockings, pillows, and clothes. These are related connections to *applied design* or *art in daily living* (Efland, 2004). She mentioned materials only when they extended beyond the ordinary. Margaret remembered *special markers* and *oil paints*. I noticed that she never mentioned what she used to draw when she was sitting on her grandmother's lap.

Figure 12. Evidences of student products Margaret valued.

Margaret's value of products was certainly evident. She placed student products in personally valued locations. The eagle head pencil drawing was on the wall outside the entry door to her classroom. This was drawn by one of her deaf students. There were small artworks done by students on both sides of her desk. This brought student products into her personal space. Regarding her students' projects, Lisa said, "I've even learned to recognize their styles. Like if they don't put their name on their paper – even out of 575 students, sometimes I can pick out whose artwork that is" (Personal communication, May 7, 2009).

Like Lisa, Margaret's most negative recollection was related to an art teacher. Unlike Lisa, Margaret's relationship was so negative that it undermined her continuing art experiences within the formal art setting. Her close personal relationship with her grandmother stands in strong contrast. Margaret's fondest art memory picture was of her with her grandmother. She shows herself sitting on her grandmother's lap and painting. The surroundings of plants, a bright sun, and the rainbow of colors from the palette to the sky further evoke the inner peace that I saw come over Margaret's face when she summarized the memories with her grandmother as she mused, "the best" (Personal

communication, May 6, 2009).

Figure 13. Margaret's fondest memories of making art with her grandmother.

Margaret's bonding connections with her grandmother, along with their shared artist endeavors, situated Margaret's early experiences in quite a contrast to the academic experiences of Lisa. Continuing on, I found Esther's stories, in some ways, blended elements of the other two.

Esther Remembers

Esther had the most teaching experience of the three, although the majority of her teaching was not in the art room. She taught third grade for 13 years at Northside (pseudonym). Northside, like Grand Isle, was one of the older

elementary schools in the district, with a student population of about 800. The houses in the neighborhood were about 30 years old. Redistricting in the last decade added more apartment complexes to the Northside attendance zone. Over the last six or seven years, many Pakistani and Indian families made their homes in this area. It is the only school in the district with an Urdu language specialist. Esther relates feelings about Northside, “My children went to this school. So this is like my home” (Personal communication, May 8, 2008). Her love of art came out in an interview when she was named teacher of the year. That was when her principal asked her to teach elementary art seven years ago. I began by asking Esther about her earliest art memories.

> Oh, getting a box of crayons, and the smell of those crayons, looking at the colors. I didn’t even want to use them right at first. But I did art on toilet paper, pieces of cardboard, anything I could find. I just did art. And I loved crayons. It was my favorite, favorite thing. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

I confirmed that the experience was before she went to school. She continued:

> Before school started -- yeah. My parents were very, very poor and so for me to get a box of crayons -- it was something I really treasured. You know, it was like -- didn’t want them to break, didn’t want the points to go away, and, but yet, I wanted to use them. I don’t remember too much about having art in school because I don’t think we really had any art classes. But I do remember when I moved to Alexandria (pseudonym). We moved to a little elementary school and I was in 5th grade or 6th grade.

> I think it was 6th grade. And they did have an art teacher. And you had to go up some stairs to get to the room and I remember I was so excited because that's what I loved to do. -- And to go in there -- and to see all that stuff -- and because I'd never seen some of that stuff before. I was just mesmerized. It was just like, 'Oh, my God,' if I could have just lived there, and you know, moved my bed in there and lived there -- I would have been so happy. But I moved like near the end of the year, so I only got to be there maybe a month or two. So I really didn't get to experience a lot of it. But I still remember walking up those steps, the smells, the looks -- not so much the teacher because I didn't really get to know her. But just the things that I looked at were just mesmerizing to me. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

I asked for more details. Esther continued:

> Paints, paints – 'cause I never had done really paints at home. It was always crayons. There weren't any markers or anything like that when I was a little girl. Seeing paints and different paint brushes -- like lots of different sizes Oh, my gosh! I wanted to do them, but I was a little bit afraid because I didn't know how to do them. And I know they did clay. They did something with clay. But they had already kind of done it so I didn't really get to do it. I was very disappointed that I didn't get to do it. But large sheets of paper – 'cause I had used anything at home that I could find. But they would give us this big -- I guess they were probably 12 x 18 -- they looked much bigger to me but -- and they may have been,

> but you know a big piece of paper to do my art on that didn't already have something written on it or something. It was just very exciting to me. I think that it made a lasting impression on me. Anyway that was my elementary experience. That's really -- you know, I think, kind 'o inspired me quite a bit. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther's memories were dominated by her overwhelming pleasures of experiencing art materials.

Figure 14. Evidences of Esther's enjoyment of materials.

That Esther valued art materials was abundantly evident in her classroom. She brought in her own shelved unit to organize the materials in a highly visible and accessible place. I noticed the clear containers. The shelves and cart not only held the materials, but also *presented them* in an inviting way.

Esther had two strong memories – one from home and one from school. I asked her to choose which was the most positive.

> Probably coloring at home because I think I was very quiet, very shy, not a lot of friends. I had some real, you know, a few close friends, but not a lot of friends. Parents never took us many places. And I had two sisters.

> We lived in a little bitty house. I think that was my escape. And I remember making paper dolls. In fact I visited with my sisters this weekend and we were discussing that. Mother would buy us little paper dolls -- the punch out kind and we'd punch them out with the little tabs. And then I would design all of the clothes for them and make them. And we'd cut them out. We had our own little fashion industry going on there with paper [giggles]. But I remember doing that and making my own paper dolls. That was the big thing that we girls did – 'cause I have two sisters. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther's art memories at home were shared memories. She and her two sisters recalled the special times together with paper dolls. Being raised in poverty, purchased paper dolls would be rather special. Her story reminded me of cutting out paper dolls and playing with them at our small kitchen table. It made me wish that I had sisters to share in the play when I was young. Esther even created more clothes to expand the play possibilities. Her art making supported and extended opportunities for sibling interactions *playing paper dolls* that later evoked mutual fond memories. I added, "So, it sounds like you spent a lot of time doing art." Esther responded:

> -- Almost all of the time. -- And drawing pictures from the Bible -- like pictures of Jesus with the children. You know we'd read something in the Bible and then draw a picture about it. That was kind of a fun thing to do. I remember going to Bible school and doing some art projects at Bible school. And that was really fun. Like we put a ship into a bottle, and we

> did some stuff with Plaster of Paris and you know all kinds of cool things like that. And Bluebirds -- that was a real fun thing. Bluebirds we did a lot of art activities. But they were more crafty-type things than real art. You know, making little things. That was fun. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther's favored choice of home activities was not surprising since she had very little opportunity to do art in school. With much of her time spent at home with her sisters, the sibling relationships supported creative play to fill the time together. After thinking of other places where she made art activities, Esther added, "But they were more crafty-type things than real art" (Personal communication, May 18, 2009). Even the controlled *crafts* were enjoyed by Esther. Yet, it was materials that so *mesmerized* her.

When I asked Esther if she had any negative memories about art, she responded, "Not around art." It was easy to understand her lack of negative memories. With her focus on materials, Esther could not be let down. Materials equaled art to her. When there were materials, there was art. Esther's recollections of materials were very sensual. She described the look and the smells of her crayons. It was as if she could not take in enough when it came to art materials. The truth of object seems to scream out to Esther. As a child raised in poverty, she cherished art materials. The art room was described as a "material haven." Esther's experience brought back recollections of the first time I saw someone with a Rapidograph pen. I half jokingly used to say that I became an interior design major because I wanted to have Rapidographs. Esther talked

about materials for quite awhile before she mentioned any art products. She first referred to products of personally-designed fashions for the paper dolls. Her other drawings were faith related. Early in her narrative, Esther related, “I just did art.” The lack of focus on product or process aligns with ideas of *creative self-expression* (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Lowenfeld promoted art for children as an open-ended creative process. There was no room for prescribed art production nor were there rules involving usage of certain techniques. Self-guided personal material exploration was core to the theory of *creative self-expression*.

Figure 15. Esther’s favorite art memory was at the art museum.

Esther's *best art memory* drawing was far removed from her childhood art stories. It recalled her involvement with the museum before becoming an art teacher. As a third grade teacher at Northside, Esther served on a committee that worked with the local school district and the art museum in developing curricula incorporating art into other academic disciplines for elementary generalists. The program was based on *DBAE* (Dobbs, 1998; Eisner 2002). Esther related.

> I was part of that committee and that was kind of exciting…. It was one of the most fun times of my life. That was a wonderful … experience. Something I would not ever go back and change. I'm so glad I was part of it. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther's drawing of an art museum, after her participation in collaborative development of the *Teaching Elementary Subjects with Art* (pseudonym) program, made me wonder if that was her first museum experience. Her drawing led me to recall my earliest memory at an art museum as an adult. Since Esther was raised in a "little bitty house" by parents who were "very, very poor," I would consider that art museums were most likely not accessible to them. The collaboration, in which Esther was involved, between the museum and the schools was designed to *bring museums* to all children through interdisciplinary learning with art. The connection of art to teaching led Lisa, Margaret, and Esther to recall their memories of teaching.

Early Teaching Memories

Lisa Remembers

It was a challenge for Lisa to come up with childhood recollections of teaching. Her earliest memory she recalled was from high school. Teaching memories also connected with art memories for Lisa. Although I asked for *any* teaching memories, and even emphasized that they did not need to be art-related, Lisa's were all art-related. She recalls her first teaching memory:

> First thing was a "how to" talk – they didn't do the activity. But we had to do a *how to*, and I don't remember the art activity I did – crayon resist – or tissue paper collage. It was in high school. And I did my *how to* on how to do this art project. It was so easy [big smile]. It was the easiest talk I've ever done. I always got really, really nervous in front of people and I wasn't nervous at all. That made a huge impression. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

For Lisa, teaching art was not complete without objects. Inclusion of an art product and materials seemingly made the teaching more valid. Lisa continued:

> But then, actual art activity with children was in college – teaching – it was our middle school art methods class. And we all decided as a group to do mosaics – Islamic mosaics. So we had all these pictures of Middle Eastern mosaics and a slide show that we'd organized and then they – we went out and got fish rocks and sand and glue. We mixed all the sand and glue together and put it all in plastic plates and then they'd put their fish rocks in. We had to do it in the library and it was very messy. The

> librarian was about to have a fit. We didn't care too much but it turned out really nice. It took forever to dry. We did it in two – we came back one other time and popped them out of the plates, and the kids talked about their mosaics. That's the first time I remember teaching a real activity. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

To further elicit her, I asked Lisa to recall her most positive memories of teaching.

> That's a really hard one, 'cause there's a lot. My favorite projects, as far as kid reactions and the way that I feel about things, are when we are doing something that affects things – using art as communication to share ideas that are beliefs – or state things. In a middle school I taught at, we teamed together with a sculptor. They had all these empty storefronts in downtown. The people who owned them had given us permission to use them as a place to put sculptures. So we had to come up with a theme for our sculptures. And the artist worked with the kids after school – helped them through the theme and through making it. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Lisa further described the processes:

> Then she took it and set it up. And they had a big arts' night, and they were *opened* with arts' night on a tour with a map. But the kids wanted to do, *The Future of the World is in Your Hands*. And they all made – they came up with lots of different ways to make hands – three dimensional hands – and had them floating and wrote messages to people on them on things they thought were important. I've never seen students work so

> hard in all of my life. They wanted everything to be perfect. They wanted their message to be clear. And it was so easy for me. All I had to do was get them what they needed. There was no me trying to say, well you need to be a little more careful of this or let's clean up this edge. They were handling all of that. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Lisa connected the student exhibit with a mural activity she taught at Rover:

> Every other year, here, we've done big earth day things in the hallway – big murals in the hallway of and environment. And the whole school works on it. And watching them go through it in the hallway is really neat. They all get really quiet like they're really going through the jungle or the wetlands and they're pointing out animals. It's more like it's alive. That's what I like the best – when they get really serious about it. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

To clarify, I added, "When it means something to them?"

Lisa said, "Yes, more than just this is a really great picture."

Lisa's stories about teaching began with materials and related some information about products. This echoed her early art memories. The *how to* talk in her class taught a step-by-step process. I imagine that Lisa would have remembered the materials had they been included in the teaching. She talked a lot about the mosaic materials and the processes used. Then, Lisa related deeper values. Her student's art work completed with the local artist and the hall mural projects both included higher order thinking and creative problem solving. Lisa saw what resulted when her students created art that was meaningful to

them – art that shared a message. Using art to relate meaningful ideas began with *Art as a Discipline* or *DBAE* (Dobbs, 1998; Efland, 2004) with the critical analysis of art images and grew stronger in focused purposes with *Visual Culture* or *VCAE* (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004; Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). Lisa's school-situated teaching memories contrast those of Margaret.

Margaret Remembers

When I asked Margaret about her first teaching memories, she began where she left off with the art – in her grandmother's living room. She continued:

> Well, I don't know how much I taught, but I did play school with my cousin in my grandmother's living room again -- way back when. Mostly she was teaching me. I thought she was going to be the teacher. 'Cause she made me do all kinds of stuff. [Laugh] -- reading assignments and writing assignments. She was pretty, you know, tough. And then I guess my first was just when I first started teaching really. I mean besides teaching my own kids things -- and kids -- I've always liked teaching kids to read and stuff like that but I never really. But, formally I first started teaching 11 years ago – first grade. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

Margaret remembered playing school and teaching her own children reading and writing. She had not planned to teach as her life's work. I remembered that her early art memories were positive with her grandmother and in kindergarten, but then turned negative in an art classroom in middle school. When Margaret recalled playing school, she said that she did not think she would be a teacher. Her teaching memories were separate from her art memories. Her passion for

art had led her to college studies in advertising and interior design. Margaret liked teaching reading and academic subjects, but art teaching came later. Education was not Margaret's first calling. This reminded me that I was like Margaret; I also came to teaching art when two separate paths of applied art and teaching children intersected. Unlike Margaret's initial distancing of herself from teaching, Esther always wanted to teach.

Esther Remembers

Esther had much stronger early associations with teaching. She shared:

> Well I knew from the time I was in first grade that I wanted to be a teacher. I mean I just knew it. There was nothing else that I wanted to be -- never has been anything else I would want to be -- other than being a mother, which is also a teacher. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Although Esther always wanted to be a teacher, her first professional job introduced unforeseen challenges:

> My first teaching experience – hmmm -- formally it was in a school in Mainland (pseudonym). And I got hired to take the place of a teacher who didn't do the extra coursework that they need to do to keep every five years – you know updating herself. She refused to do it, and so they told her goodbye, and they hired me to take her place. And it was a very stressful time because all the teachers kind of blamed me for walking in and taking her class, and I didn't even know about it. I just thought she was moving or something. I had no idea. And so, that first few months were very stressful for me as a teacher. Other teachers were not very

> friendly, and she took almost everything from the room and stripped it; so there was nothing there. I already had the class going. It was kind of difficult. It was a third grade classroom. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther started teaching with positive enthusiasm. She had no idea that her position alone aligned her as an *enemy* to the staff. They supported their former colleague, of whom Esther knew nothing. She had to find ways to work around the challenges of the hostile environment.

> And so it kind of got me off -- kept plugging away, and plugging away, and dealing just with the children. At first I was trying to deal with all of the stuff going on around me, and then I decided I wasn't getting anywhere. So my best thing was to shut the door and enjoy the children and that's what I did. And here I am still many years later doing it. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

In the end, Esther concluded:

> So, you know, I think I probably made the right decision -- stop worrying about things I couldn't change and what the others were doing and just get on with what I wanted to do, and I did, and that was good. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther's strong desire to teach carried her through a very rough start. Beginning teachers often depend on colleagues from their schools to mentor them during their first year. Esther was truly alone. Not only did she lack any supportive peer guidance, but she even felt hurtfully targeted. Her classroom

place became her fortress. She referred to “shutting the door” as a physical decision connected to her chosen route to professional survival. She found the solace, unavailable from peers, in her physical place, with her students; there she had control.

Esther recalled other teaching experiences:

> But I also taught like in Sunday school. I taught Bible school. So it wasn’t just necessarily in the school building where I was teaching. I was teaching in other places, too. So that was a lot of fun. I enjoyed doing that. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Extending teaching opportunities beyond her troubled school situation provided support for Esther. She mentioned “enjoying the children” at the school and teaching Bible school as “a lot of fun.” Esther had to seek out and find positive experiences that supported her desire to teach. Esther’s stories of art and teaching were brought together with those of Lisa and Margaret. Together they formed a professional knowledge landscape of early memories of elementary art teachers.

Situated Stories of Art and Teaching

Lisa, Margaret, and Esther shared their memories of early art and teaching experiences. The story constellation (Craig, 2001, 2007) that developed shows the contrasting situated memory landscapes in which the stories were set. The three teachers’ early memories were similar, but also contrasted with each other. All three teachers related stories of art and teaching from past experiences. The stories were viewed with their connections to formal

or school memories and informal or home memories. The story constellation shows those areas with diagonal lines. The left side of the figure is formal or school-based memories. To the right are informal or home-based memories. Early art memory stories and early teaching memory stories were combined before placing Lisa (L), Margaret (M), and Esther (E) into the story constellation.

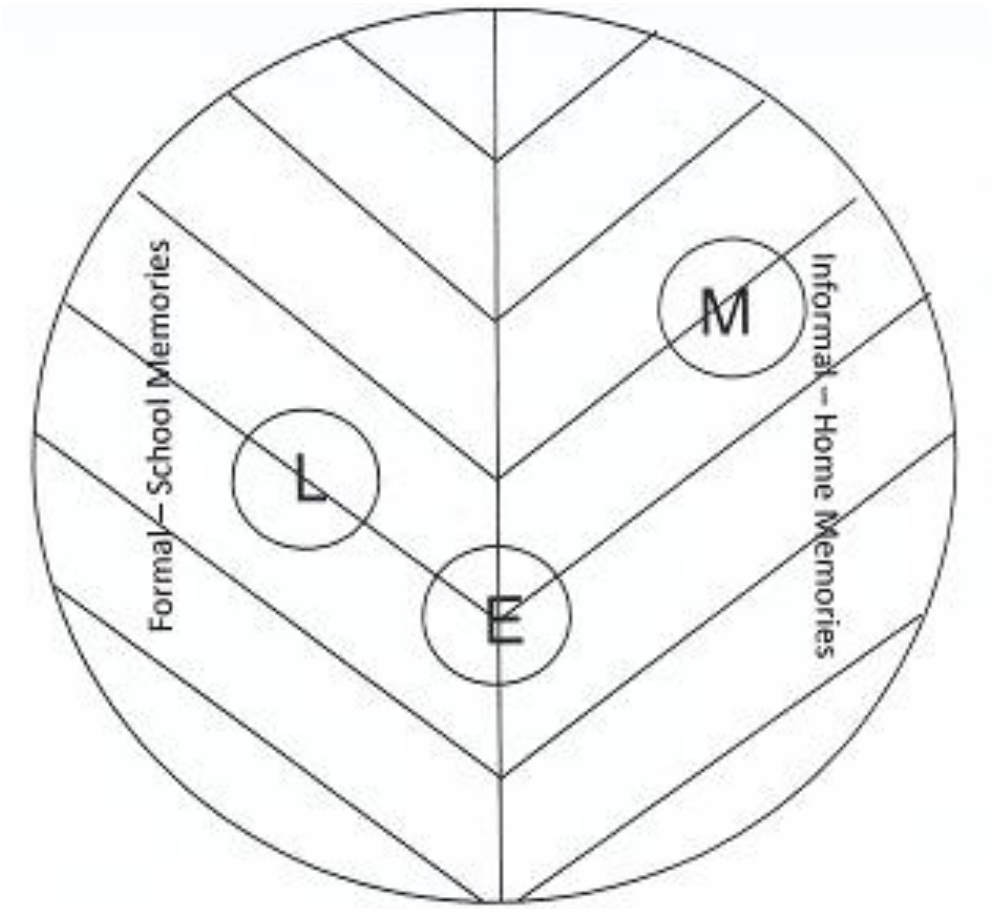


Figure 16. Story constellation of situated art and teaching memories.

Lisa is placed in the center of formal school memories. Readers will recall that she connected all of her art and teaching memories to a school setting. Her only home memory was elicited when I specifically asked for an art memory from home. Lisa related all of her teaching narratives to teaching art in formal settings. Her focus on teaching art was fully supported by her early memories.

As for Margaret, she shared some school memories, but I have positioned her favoring home memories after taking into account the overwhelming *qualities* of her early memories. Her Indian girl was the only positive art memory from school. Readers will remember that the Snoopy books were Margaret's own idea and not a part of the kindergarten curriculum – even though she generally made them there and her peers were her *patrons*. In my view, the contrast between her negative school memories and her cherished memories of doing art with her grandmother placed her strongly into the informal home setting. Even Margaret's teaching memories began in her grandmother's living room. Margaret initially pursued art vocations that did not involve teaching. She did not perceive herself as an art teacher until she became one.

Finally, Esther's recalled experiences situated her equally in both areas for art and teaching. Her love of art materials was evident both at school and home settings. Even though Esther had limited art experiences in school, her recollections still crossed the line. Similarly, Esther had a lot of formal teaching experiences but continued teaching in alternative venues as well. Esther said that all she ever wanted to do was to *teach* and that she was making art "all the time." It seemed that wherever Esther was, teaching and art were part of who she was and what she did. – they both greatly informed her identity.

Figure 17. Compared drawings of selected early art memories of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Art Teaching Content Values

In this section, stories relating to personal professional values were expanded through free-associations (Marcus, 1995). Marcus had each person free-associate words with “home” (1995, p. 174). In like manner, to *unwrap* professional and practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Schwab, 1970), each of the three elementary art teachers in my study was invited to free-associate words with *art, education, art education, students*, and *teachers*. From their responses, they probed even deeper by choosing the ones that were most important to them. The words were sent to each teacher a day before we met. I began by questioning Lisa.

Lisa’s Values

Lisa previewed the word list before I arrived and had already written down some associations. As we began, I clarified that *art* and *art education* could have similar words attributed to them and could overlap. I went on to add that words about *art* could also extend beyond what is taught; art could also be associated with touring a museum or making her own art. Lisa associated words to *art:*

> I tried to think of art as the product. Mostly there's still creative choices and imaginative, but still I guess then is has to do with that. *Creative choices, imaginative, scientific sometimes, soul, emotion – emotional, tactile, kinesthetic, problem solving, colorful* – sometimes. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

From her list of words associated with *art*, Lisa chose *creative, imaginative, emotional*, and *problem solving* as the most valuable to her. Even though she said, "I tried to think of art as the product," her spotlighted choices had strong connections to process. That reaffirmed her early art narrative emphasizing objects of product and process. Lisa went beyond simply relating the process to material manipulations and applied thinking applications. Thoughtful making leads to *problem solving*. Higher order thinking involves associations with *creative* and *imaginative*. Originality is the second personality trait of creative people listed by Davis (1999, p. 78). Davis also considers both originality and *problem solving* as *creative abilities* (p. 96). *Imagination*, according to Efland (2002), is "the act or power of creating new ideas or images through the combination and reorganization of previous experiences" (p. 133). This definition would align *imagination* with process as well. Lisa's selected words associated with art connect to the process of making art. The art education theory that most directly emphasizes ideas of creative self expression is that of Viktor Lowenfeld (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). "Emotional Growth" is realized through providing "opportunity for personal identification" (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Lisa valued *creative self expression*.

We continued to the second word on the list – *education*. In her memory stories, Lisa's art and teaching went together. This time, she focused more generically. She read her list:

> *Necessary, predetermined, curriculum, specific* – it's not always but a lot of it is *formula*. I guess not so much the teaching itself, but more the -- well sometimes the teaching itself – but also the products they have to produce in there are very predetermined. Even the education itself -- I was listening to the second grade teachers in the teacher's lounge at lunch. They don't agree with a lot of the curriculum, but they have to teach it anyway -- just like they tell them to teach it. So they don't even have a whole lot of choices -- which I didn't really realize. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

I asked Lisa if she felt that she had more choice as an art teacher.

> I have a lot of choice. As much choice as I want to have 'cause I agree with all the stuff. Everything I have to do is very broad. I have to make it specific the way I want to -- the way my kids need it to be specific. (personal communication, May 4, 2009)

When I asked for an example, Lisa told the earlier shared story of the contrasts between Rover and Pullman. Encouraging restorying and burrowing, I offered the statement, "And since all those schools were in the same school district, you had the flexibility as an art teacher."

Yeah, we had the curriculum, the basic principles -- you know -- teach shape, teach what pattern is, teach historical context. But the way that we can teach it is totally up to us. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

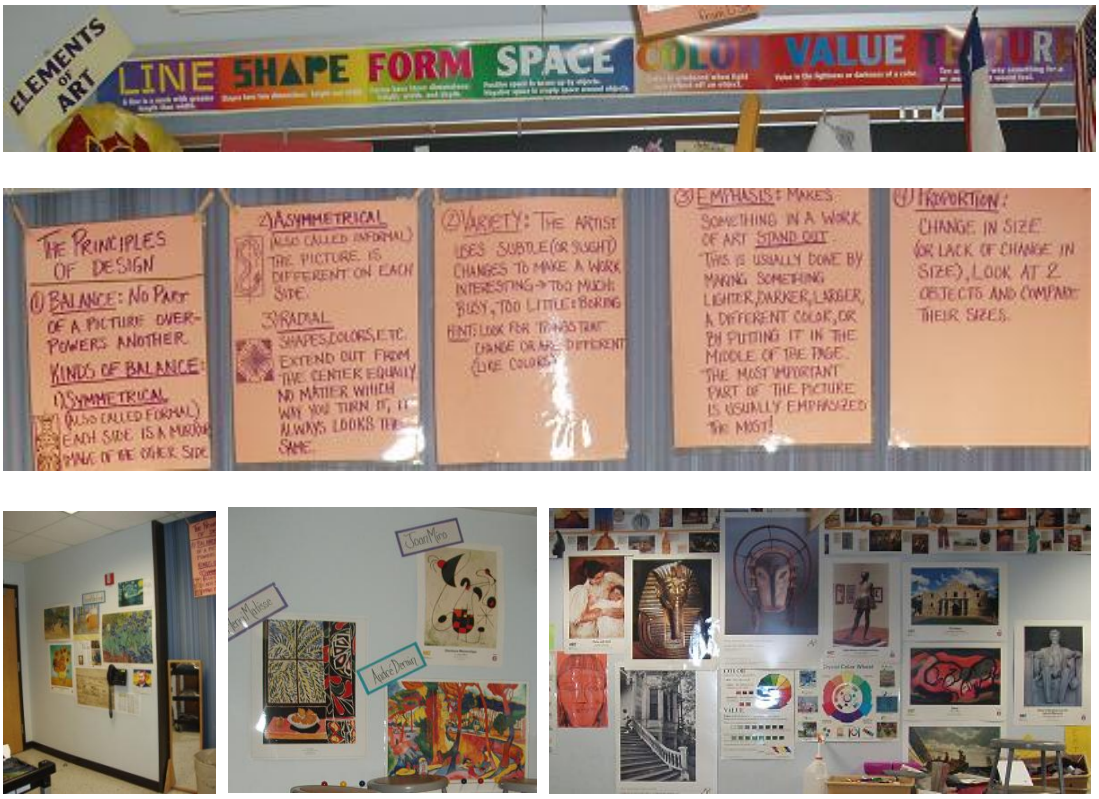


Figure 18. Lisa's elements of art, principles of design, art images, and timeline.

I continued by asking, "So are the textbooks mandated in any way, or are they simply a resource if you ever wanted to use them?" Lisa added *textbook* to her associated words list. She replied:

> Resource. And they're handy for the pictures. And some art teachers use them more specifically. I think they would be -- if we had more time. It would be nice as proof of what we're saying being true. They see it in text -- they think oh, this is a big deal. But we don't have time. It is either that

or product. I'd rather make choices and do product. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

Figure 19. Lisa's art textbooks neatly stored on a shelf at the back of the room.

Lisa chose *predetermined* and *specific* as her most valued words attributed to education. She described general classroom mandates as *education* and opposing to her freedom of choice. Lisa felt that her choice of teaching content was up to her as long as she included basic elements, principles, and art history as *predetermined* and *specific* to art. Dow's *formal elements and principles* (1920) and *DBAE*'s focus on art history as one of the four supporting members of the discipline (Dobbs, 1998) are found in Lisa's

description of required aspects within a curriculum. Her emphasis on art products relates to *art in daily living* (Efland, 2004). .

As a researcher in the art education field, but in a curriculum and instruction department, I felt it was important to begin the word associations with art and education before jumping to art education. There are applications of art and teaching that build into curricula and methods. The teaching content in an elementary art classroom, although similar in some ways, is not the same as that of an artist, a museum docent, a crafts center facilitator, or a classroom generalist teacher. The third word association put the first two, art and education, together so that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther could each build their own meanings.

When asked to relate words to *art education*, Lisa chose the words *self esteem, choices, problem solving, messy, busy, interdisciplinary, prints,* and *products*. She most valued *self esteem, choices, problem solving*, and *interdisciplinary*. Interdisciplinary, as a concept, meant connecting art to other subject areas. I saw several science connections in Lisa's classroom. There were several science-related images displayed on three walls of Lisa's art classroom. Lisa talked about the science connection.

> They're a very scientific community here … It's one of those things where I can make choice pull a little bit more science in there -- get more interested. That's neat. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

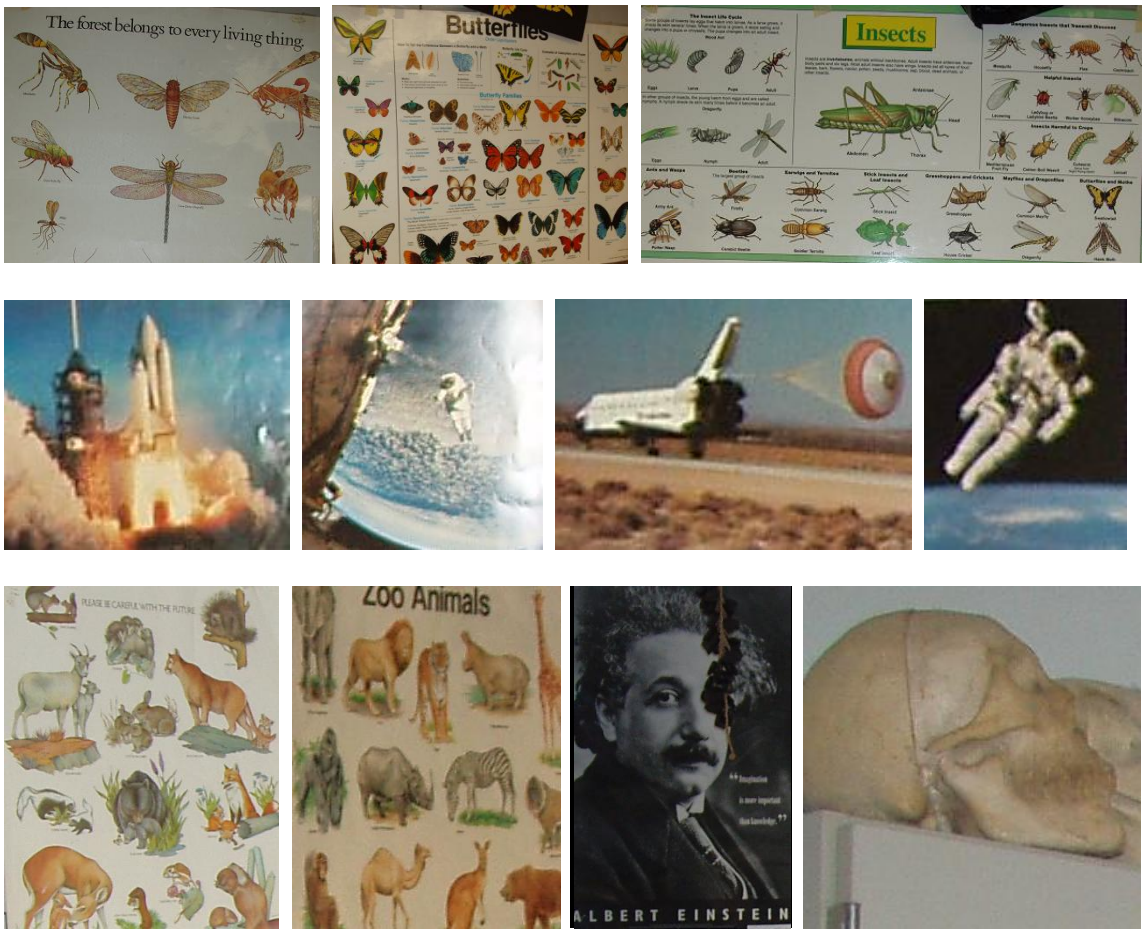


Figure 20. Lisa's interdisciplinary connections to science -- posters and a skull.

Lisa's most important words associated with art education repeated *problem solving*. That underscored the relationship between art and art education. *Self esteem* connected art education to the *student*. Ideas about learners are important to developing teaching content. Lisa talked about the words she chose to define *students*.

> *Learners, interested, nervous* – some of them, *excited, proud*, when they get their work out. There aren't that many nervous kids, but it feels like there are because they're the ones I spend all the time with. Put their soul in front of them -- and the ones who are really trying to put their soul out there are the ones who get the most nervous. So it's almost more

> beneficial for them. Well depending on how much support they have at home – how much they've heard good things about their art. [thoughtful expression] I know there's got to be more about students. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

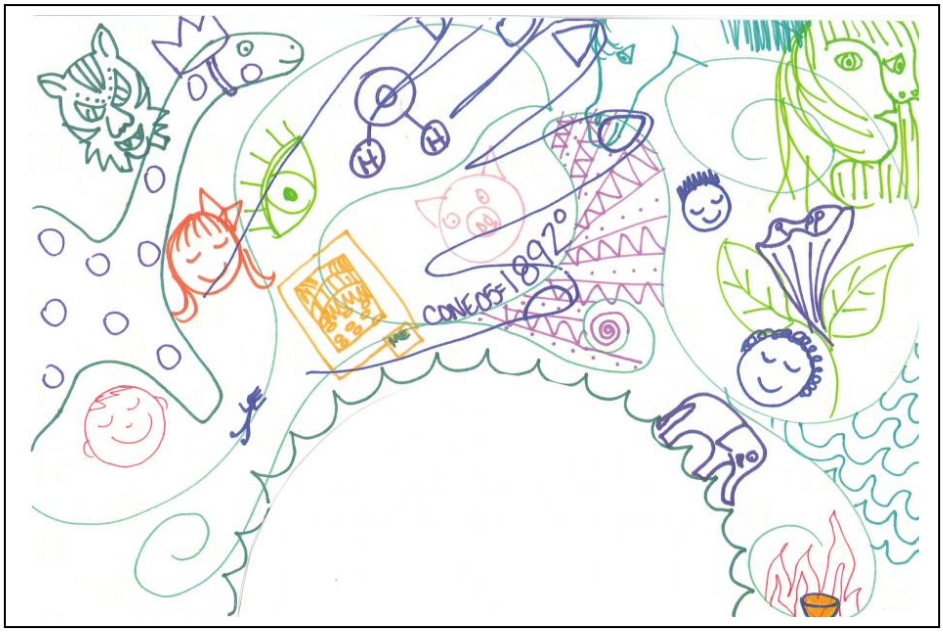
After I assured Lisa that she did not have to fill in all of the blanks, I wondered if this part of the interview was losing momentum. But since I had sent out the list prior and there was still one left of the five, I continued. I wanted to know what words Lisa would associate with *teacher*. She continued by listing her three valued attributes of *overwhelmed, excited*, and *lifelong learners* (Personal communication, May 4, 2009). She explained further:

> *Useful, tired*. We're very *useful* people [she laughed]. *Tired, life-long learners* – always trying to learn more to teach them different ways. I want to say happy, but not really happy, sometimes *overwhelmed*, not as much by what. For the regular teachers, I think they're overwhelmed by everything everybody wants them to do. But me -- it's not so much that. With me, it's what I want to do compared to what I can do -- and that bothers me. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

Lisa saw joy in her role as a teacher. Her struggle with the word happy reflected the dilemma of balancing preferred teaching content with the limitations of time and place. Multiplexities of teaching elementary art are voiced in "overwhelmed" and "tired." Then I gave Lisa a piece of paper and assorted markers and encouraged her to visually represent her most highly valued words from her lists.

ART: creative, imaginative, emotional, problem solving
EDUCATION: predetermined, specific
ART EDUCATION: self esteem, choices, problem solving, interdisciplinary
STUDENTS: proud, learners, interested
TEACHERS: lifelong learners, overwhelmed, excited

Figure 21. Summary of Lisa's most highly valued words.



Lisa included Monet's *Lily Pond* labeled "me" to associate art and teacher with *creative, imaginative*, and *lifelong learner*. The green abstracted head in the upper right corner represented the art of Picasso. She added patterns as a principle of design. This showed some of the predetermined and specific content for art teachers. There are four happy children faces placed throughout the drawing. They all look *proud, happy*, possibly *interested*, and definitely display strong *self esteem*. The large hand could have related to ideas of making or of the teacher's hand in everything. *Interdisciplinary* connections to science included the water molecule and the fire and water on the lower right side. Cone

05 = 1892 relates to clay and the science and math of firing the kiln. Lisa included an imaginary dinosaur with a crown, a more realist tiger face, a pig, a horse, and an elephant. These could emphasize *choices, problem solving* (different animals), or connect to the study of various world regions and times. There is one small multicultural image. Next are Margaret's word associations.

Margaret's Values

Margaret had a couple of words jotted down on her list when I arrived to interview her. She seemed a bit concerned about the process of making the word associations. I restated that they were *different categories* and no responses were wrong. With some hesitation, she began associating words with *art*.

> All the *artists* -- that it would take a long time to list. *Aim* – like artistic aim. *Focus*. It helps me to focus --- if I can do art long enough to focus [she laughed] paint – long enough to finish I should say. All the *principles* and all the *elements*. That's what I think of art. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Then we had words relating to *education*. I asked Margaret, "What do you think of when you think of teaching?" She responded:

> Margaret: "I put *fun*, but …. Lot of times it's fun."
>
> I prompted, "For the teacher? For the student?"
>
> Margaret: "For both."
>
> I continued to prompt, "The process?"

Margaret: "Yeah, the process. *Learning, knowing*. It's fun … you can see that you taught something; it's really fun. [she smiled] *rewarding* is a good one for that one. For the kids I think it's just really *good for them* to learn. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Margaret needed reassurance for the word associations. I added jokingly, that this was not a test. Before she listed words associated to art education, I added, "To you education might be about teaching art. You've taught other things too. Words attributed specifically about *art education*. And you can repeat some if you want, too."

> Uh huh. Again all the *principles* and *elements* of design; I mean elements of art, principles of design, and visual -- *visual literacy*—that's a big one for me. I like to teach that; I think that's important. And the other classes, I don't feel that they touch on that a whole lot -- hmm some maybe – some more than others. And the *critiquing* and *evaluating*, describing the pictures, paintings, artworks, just learning how to talk about art and just communicating in general and to really look – there's visual literacy again, *problem solving*, the *higher level thinking* – besides the critical thinking – well it is critical thinking and critiquing – they go hand in hand, *analysis*, and *synthesis* – all those [things in] Bloom's [Taxonomy] -- the *multiple learning styles*, it kind of combines a lot of those together with art you know – you get the kinesthetic with the visual and the auditory. They kind of all go in; a lot of *hands-on experience.* (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Figure 23. Margaret's elements of art, principles of design, art images, and timeline.

After Margaret felt more comfortable with the word associations, she laughed and observed, "When I wrote they didn't come out, but when I talked they did" (personal communication, May 7, 2009). She continued to associate words attributed to *students*.

> *Personalities*, I mean you see different personalities come out in many ways – in the things they say and in their paintings, their drawings – they all have their own style. That's amazing to me, and I've even learned to recognize their styles like if they don't put their name on their paper – even out of 575 students, sometimes I can pick out whose artwork that is. It's pretty -- you know. It's like handwriting, or even your face, I mean it's just a characteristic. With students, they're *fun*, *interesting* – very interesting, too -- to see some of the things that [are] going on in their mind coming out on the paper. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Margaret continued with thoughts about her special needs students:

> Especially a lot of kids that seem to *have a lot of issues*, their art just is very underdeveloped. And then the kids that seem to more -- maybe stable is a good word, I guess -- it's a lot neater and more developed.

> Hmmm I mean, it seems like they all progress, but the underdeveloped don't progress nearly as much – over the years – like from like kinder. But there is some. And then it depends like on the severity [several levels and types of special need student populations are at Grand Isle.] (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Then Margaret turned her attention to her successes in teaching deaf students:

> We have a huge deaf ed population. There are maybe 6 or 7 in each grade level. They seem to be much more in tune with the visual. They catch on to things that some of the regular would not see. They see things quicker. And there's quite a few of them that are very talented -- very talented artistically. It's amazing. In fact, I would say almost most of them; there's some way more than others I mean but, they really express themselves through that very well. It's pretty neat. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Talking about words attributed to students led Margaret to consider a full range of student potentials. Simple word associations could not complete the narrative. For Margaret, there was a greater multiplexity of students' needs.

I was finally at the end of the list. The last word association was *teacher*. Margaret considered for a moment and then began:

> Hmmm, should I say what I was thinking? *Crazy* [she laughed]. 'cause I wonder if I'm crazy to do this. [continuing laughing] sometimes. I don't know just -- I don't know (Personal communication, May 7, 2009). .
>
> I prompted, "And what sort of pulls in that idea -- the excess, the crazy?

> Margaret: Yeah the *excess*, that's a good word for it. Just like how many things you're doing at one time. That makes it an *extreme challenge* and sometimes very stressful and some days better than others. I'm sure you could probably tell today was much better than yesterday afternoon. A lot of it has to do with the dynamics of the classes too. If I have some rough classes in the mornings, sometimes my afternoon's classes are better. But then sometimes… it kind of depends on everything --- and what kind of day I'm having in general, too. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

Margaret related interdisciplinary connections:

> To me it's the kids are a lot more interested in learning about art and doing an artwork than how to work with numbers or something. So that part of it makes it real good for me [big smile]. Then I can sneak in learning numbers and reading like in that one lesson today and without them even being aware really of -- like hiding the vegetables in the fruit maybe [laughs]. I think if I went back to the classroom, I would definitely use art with everything I taught. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

The idea of associating words was initially a stumbling block for Margaret. With the awkward start, I decided not to ask her to go back and select her strongest associations. Margaret's responses for art were somewhat scattered. It seemed that she realized the immensity of the word and couldn't decide which way to proceed. The frustration came out in her first response of, "All the *artists* -- that it would take a long time to list." From there, Margaret thought about the artist's perspective in making art. She ended with the elements and principles as

ART: artists, aim, focus, principles, elements
EDUCATION: fun, learning, knowing, *rewarding*
ART EDUCATION: principles, elements, *visual literacy*, critiquing & evaluation, problem solving, higher level thinking, analysis, synthesis, multiple learning styles, hands-on experience
STUDENTS: *personalities*, fun, interesting, have a lot of issues
TEACHERS: crazy, excess, extremely challenging

Figure 24. Summary of Margaret's associated words.

the simplified answer. When Margaret went on to *education*, she emphasized *rewarding*. Fun for the teacher and student made Margaret's role a positive one. She revealed her care about the *students* as individuals when she told how she could often look at their art and connect it to the student who made it. Margaret drew her own composition relating her values for art, education, art education, students and teachers. She included references to Seurat, van Gogh, Mondrian, Michelangelo, painting, sculpting, students interacting, and the teacher. A rainbow, not unlike the one in her art memories, extended from her.

Figure 25. Margaret's values drawing.

Esther's Values

Esther had her associated words chosen before I arrived for our conversation. She shared those attributed to *art* as, "*creativity, imagination, inspirational*, it's *very personal*, *very unique*, it's *enjoyable, beautiful*, it's *visual*, it's *emotional*, and it's *cultural*" (Personal communication, May 20, 2009). From the list, she chose *imagination, personal, enjoyable, emotional* and *cultural* as the ones most valued. All of her art words relate to *creative expression* -- from a personal perspective.

Esther continued to read from her list of words associated to *education.* "*Knowledge, teaching, information, curriculum, skills*, undertaking -- [shook her head no and changed to] *understanding, developmental, hands-on*, and *life-long* (Personal communication, May 20, 2009). *Knowledge, developmental, hands-on*, and *life-long* were chosen as most highly valued. *Knowledge* and *life-long* learning are common terms used for education in general. *Developmental* perspectives recall Piaget's developmental levels of children (1970) and Lowenfeld's levels of artistic developmental (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). *Hands-on* supports material explorations as *creative expression* (Efland, 2004; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

Art education associations were, "*aesthetic values, inspiration again, creative, hands on, environment, problem solving, self-expression, visual, perception, principles* and *elements, judgment*, and *cultural*" (Personal communication, May 20, 2009). Esther circled *creative, hands-on, self-expression*, and *many cultures* as higher priorities. *Many cultures* was the only

phrase that showed up again as outside *creative expression* categories. This connected with Esther's students. Esther commented:

> I just noticed that some of the words were repeating in that. And I thought that was kind of interesting. Cultural, life-long, hands-on, I thought those were interesting -- anything that's part of being at this school because we have so many children from so many different countries who speak so many different languages. It is something you have to adapt to. What they hear at home and what they see at school -- Everything is just so different. The Pakistanis and the Indians here are so much into their culture, and their parents instill that in them. And some go to … church every single day. So they do their homework in the car going to church and you know they never get to come to the art nights and stuff that we do in the evenings, but they're very well-rounded little children. It's just interesting to see. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

Esther continued:

> With the children it's just the language in here. They don't understand a lot. Their favorite color's green; they like to wear their sweaters and jackets, and in here I don't like them to have that. It's just little things like that If they're going to get paint or something on it they wear their sweaters, they wear their jackets, summer, winter, fall it doesn't matter they have those jackets on. It's little things like that. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

Esther talked about connecting art to her Middle Eastern students:

> The understanding art has been a little bit harder for them, too. But I did show something hit it -- The Taj Mahal. We were doing architecture and oh, my gosh they got so excited. So you really have to look at what you're doing and try to bring something in from their culture. And that makes them very excited. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

Esther talked about what she has learned from cultural perspectives:

> One year I did bring – we had a dog come in. 'Cause we were doing dog art… so we brought an actual dog in and a lot of them have fear of dogs. It's not a good thing for them. So that was like an eye-opener for me. It made me a little bit more sensitive. Because it's in their culture; they don't do dogs. And I didn't even think of that. But that was like my second year in this position, and I thought bringing a dog in was a great idea. You know, but it was really fearful for some of those children. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

Esther appreciated staff support to better understand those from other cultures:

> But, I also think it is very interesting they've been calling me *teacher*….We got that new Urdu teacher in kindergarten. She teaches only the little children who speak Urdu….She told us that's a sign of respect. They don't call you Mrs. So and So if they really respect you. They call you teacher, or doctor, or lawyer, or whatever your profession is. So now I like it [hearty, happy laugh]. I just think it's so interesting. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

The cultural makeup of Northside Elementary changed radically around the time that Esther began teaching art. New and different customs, beliefs, fears, and languages were introduced into the school environment. The entire school had to find ways to invite, support, and enable cross-cultural learning. Esther perceived her *students* as, "*life-long learning, literate, potential, problem solvers, treasures, joy, intelligence, honesty* – cause boy are they honest, *imaginative*, and a *product of their environment"* (Personal communication, May 20, 2009). She chose *life-long learning, potential, problem solvers*, and *product of environment* as most valued. Esther talked more about the students being a product of their environment.

> It's like a different value system that some of the parents have where I don't think they value education as much as some of the ones that we had before. And that really was quite a shocking change for us; so we had to adjust to the teaching skills for that. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

The parents of the Pakistani and Indian students volunteered at the school. The language barriers sometimes were challenging, but the value for education was shared between teachers and parents. Esther appreciated the parental interest and support. Pakistani and Indian cultures, although a significant and sizable population at Northside, were not the only diverse groups at the school. Without identifying any specific cultural associations, Esther related other challenges in teaching children whose parents were not particularly supportive of education. She found it was difficult for the children who had no

outside reinforcement for learning. In general, diversities at Northside were prominent and important aspects addressed through Esther's teaching. She saw art in a positive and supportive role. *Visual literacy* extended beyond language barriers, and *visual cultures* connected all students. Referencing her students, Esther said, "They love the art. It's just like their favorite thing. They love to come down here." Esther's perception of art as a connecting bridge for all of the Northside students helped her to teach the changing student population.

Esther viewed teachers as, "*nurturing, devoted* or devotion, *commitment, humorous, a good listener, fair, consistent, flexible, organized, dedicated, respected, confidential*, and *effective*. Most important were *nurturing, fair, flexible*, and *organized*.

ART: imagination, enjoyable, emotional, personal, cultural
EDUCATION: knowledge, developmental, hands-on, life-long
ART EDUCATION: creative, hands-on, self expression, many cultures
STUDENTS: life-long learning, potential, problem solvers, product of environment
TEACHERS: nurturing, fair, flexible, organized

Figure 26. Summary of Esther's most high valued words.

When I asked Esther to draw something that she valued from the categories, she said, "That's very hard to me" (personal communication, May 20, 2009). It was not surprising that Esther could have been overwhelmed to draw after her lengthy lists of diverse associations. I told her that she could just pick one part. With marker in hand, Esther narrated as she drew.

> Nurturing is very important. Because a lot of these children do not have very happy home lives. This is the place where they feel safe. I don't quite know how to put all that down. How do you draw nurturing? I'm trying to figure that out. This is going to be very crude. Is it okay if I draw a cross in here? -- because my kind of a place to -- I witness and I teach by my model. Can I write some words with it, too? And I have to put my favorite color in here. I looove yellow. It's just the happiest little color. (Personal communication, May 20, 2009)

Esther's illustration of values related to the final topic of teachers. She did not forget the purpose -- as she connected nurturing to the nurtured – students. The symbols and words define attributes as continual actions.

Her "happiest little color" was used for the students. As a teacher, Esther was very dedicated to positive outcomes for her students.

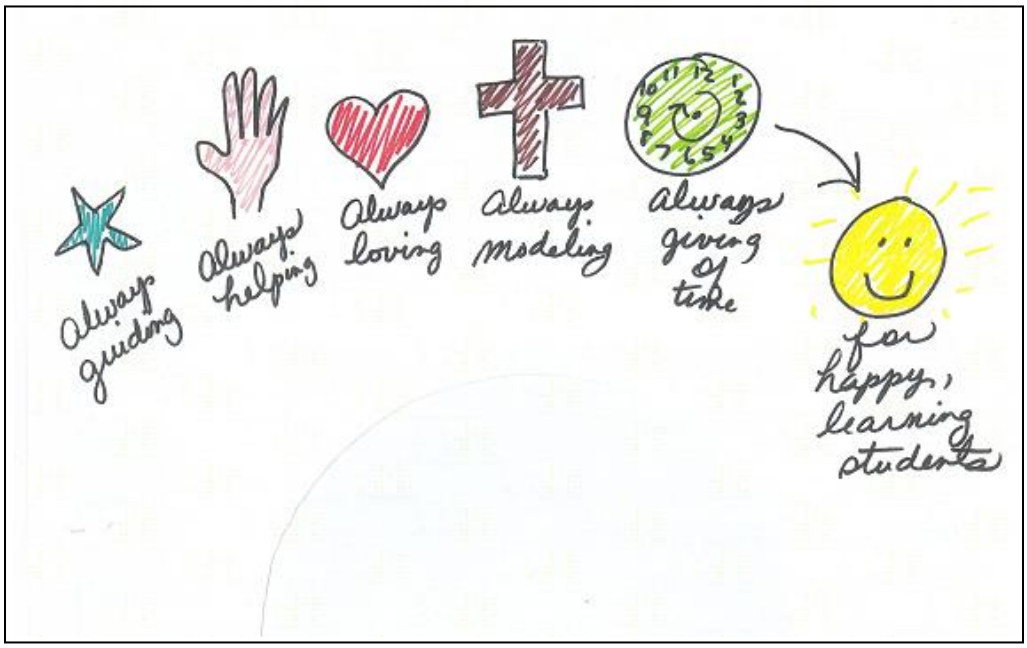


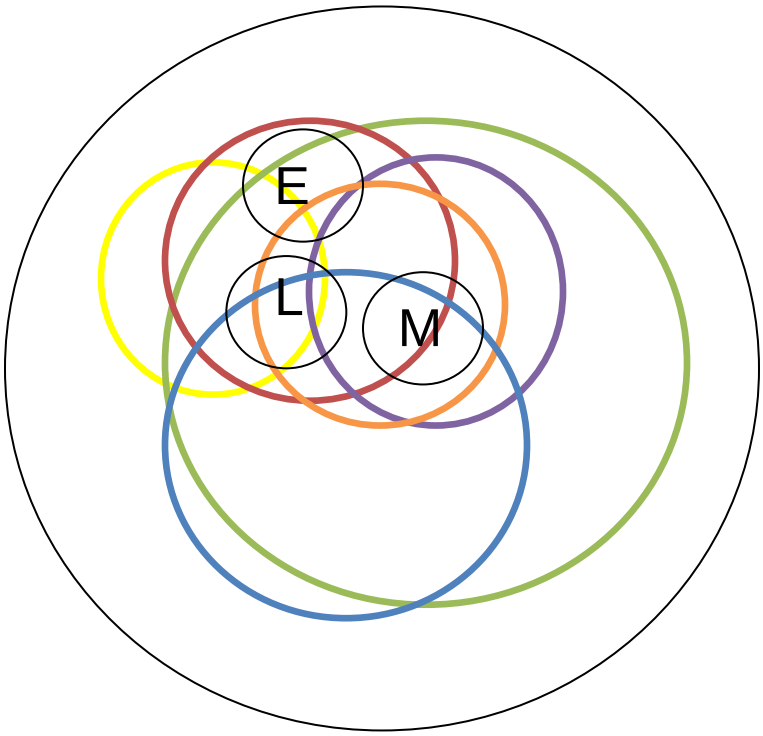
Figure 27. Esther's values drawing.

The research texts in this chapter were presented in words and images to better understand the teaching theories that were most valued by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Evidence, vividly apparent throughout the chapter, will now be presented in a story constellation.

Situated Stories of Art Theory and Practice

Through their narratives, drawings, and the phenomena photographed in their teaching spaces, Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's connections with the six common art domain theories (Efland, 2004) were explored. This story constellation (Craig, 2001, 2007) views Lisa (L), Margaret (M), and Esther (E) as situated within a theoretical art education professional landscape. Early memories of art and teaching and word associations revealed both common threads and individual preferred values. Above all, the story constellation is relational.

The large black circle is the elementary art teaching landscape. Within the professional landscape are circles of various colors. These represent the six common areas of art teaching theories – theoretical professional knowledge. The theories developed over time and yet still hold aspects found in the practical applications in art classrooms. The sizes of the circles are relational. The green circle represents the most dominant pedagogy -- the formalistic aesthetic built on the elements of art and principles of design (Dow, 2007: Efland, 1990, 2004). All three teachers were shown completely within the green circle. Margaret and Esther listed elements and principles in their word associations. Margaret and Lisa had the elements and principles posted in their classrooms.



Academic Art -- Representational Drawing

Formalistic Aesthetic -- Elements and Principles

Creative Expression – Creative Self-expression

Art in Daily Living -- Applied Design

Art as a Discipline -- DBAE

Popular Culture – VCAE

Figure 28. Story constellation situating Lisa, Margaret, and Esther with art theories.

All three teachers are also situated somewhat within the orange DBAE circle. Art poster images were found on the walls in all of their classrooms.

Additionally, Margaret and Lisa had art history timelines stretching across the top of one wall. As for Esther, she talked about developing art-related lessons with the school district and museum.

There were also contrasts in the story constellation that emerged. Esther was fully within the creative self-expression red circle. Art materials held high value to her. Esther valued the hands-on experience of self-expression in her memories as well as her art education word list. Lisa crossed into the red creative self-expression circle a little. She remembered materials and products. But her favored list did not include materials. Margaret was not in this red creative-self expression circle. Her specific memories were very product-oriented. Margaret often omitted references to materials used.

The blue circle of representational drawing or academic art includes both Lisa and Margaret. Both of them referenced products in their memories. They were object-focused rather than child-focused. Margaret knew her students by the art products they created. To her, student art products were identifiable like their signatures. Lisa said that when there is a choice in teaching, she values the product. Esther did not talk about the products her students made. I left her out of the blue circle.

Applied design or art in daily living, shown as the purple circle in the story constellation included mostly Margaret. Her background education was based within this domain. Her early art memories included making useful objects including her Snoopy books (illustration) and sewing. There was a small overlap with Esther as it related to her memory of designing paper doll fashions. Lisa did

not reference applied design experiences from her past or from within her classroom.

The final yellow circle referenced popular culture or VCAE. I had to contort this theory and severely minimize it to find make any applications at all. I found no stories about students “decod[ing] the values and ideas that are embedded in … popular culture … fine arts” (Eisner, 2002, p. 28). I did not find diverse media (Freedman, 2003) or any “investigation of ideas, issues, opinions, and conflicts” (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 826). There was no evidence of inclusion of social justice issues (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). Lisa came close when she talked about valuing meaningful art making. Her example of her former students preparing the theme and exhibit *The World is in Your Hands* reaches in that direction. The writing of messages was definitely aligned with visual culture. In contrast, some of the other art work she mentioned was not. The globe resting in the hands came across simply as a word play or visualization of the title. This memory came from a middle school. The concept was developed with an artist. Including Esther in this circle was even more of a stretch. She qualified only by circumstance and potential. The multicultural student population made her aware of other cultures and opened the possibilities of addressing cultural issues through art. She chose to include the Taj Mahal in the architecture unit. Margaret was left out of this circle. Although she teaches students from a deaf culture, no cultural art associations appeared.

The narratives of art and teaching emerged from recollections of earlier experiences (Dewey, 1938; Marcus, 1995). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all

referenced early art making, interactions with art supplies, and certain created art products. They talked about teaching experiences. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther each associated their own words (Marcus, 1995) to *art, education, art education, students*, and *teachers*. From their generated lists, each chose the most value laden from each category.

As part of the professional knowledge landscape, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had parallel journeys that resonated in narrative unity (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988; Conle, 2000). Their stories also had unique individual aspects that expanded the landscape – broadening ideas (Craig, 2007) of what it means to be an elementary art teacher. This was a good place to begin. Understanding the purpose or *objectives* of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther began the journey. The three teachers' narratives included aspects of place. Photographed images of supportive visual phenomena from within their teaching places confirmed that nothing happens outside of place (Alexander, 1979; Dewey, 1900; Norberg-Schulz, 1999). The study continues with narratives of each teacher's place.

CHAPTER FIVE: NARRATIVES OF PLACE

Alexander claimed that, “Every place is given its character by certain patterns of events that keep on happening there” (1979, p. 55). The phenomena found in the teaching places of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther provided their own stories. They evidenced living patterns (Alexander, 1979). Marcus added, “Whether by choice or not … what you see around you [is] a reflection of who you are” (1995, p. 213). The teaching places were storied to further understand teaching content patterns. Referencing floor plans I drew to scale, photographs I took of the spaces, and drawings rendered by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, the narratives are told.

Lisa’s Place

I measured and drew Lisa’s architectural spaces. Each furnished item was measured, drawn to scale, and placed onto the floor plan. This plan drawing served as a map for phenomena narratives. There was a period of one year between the first documentations of the space and the last four visits. That time span provided a basis for comparisons. Lisa made no major changes in the arrangement of her classroom furnishings from one year to the next although some images on the walls were changed. A new slab roller was introduced. The student work table arrangements remained in the same configuration. Considering Lisa taught in this space for five years, I reasoned that she had determined one preferred arrangement. Lisa shared, “But I can only do so much with the tables.… There’s like two or three different places to put the tables and

that's it – where I can walk around and they can still walk around" (Personal communication, May 6, 2008).

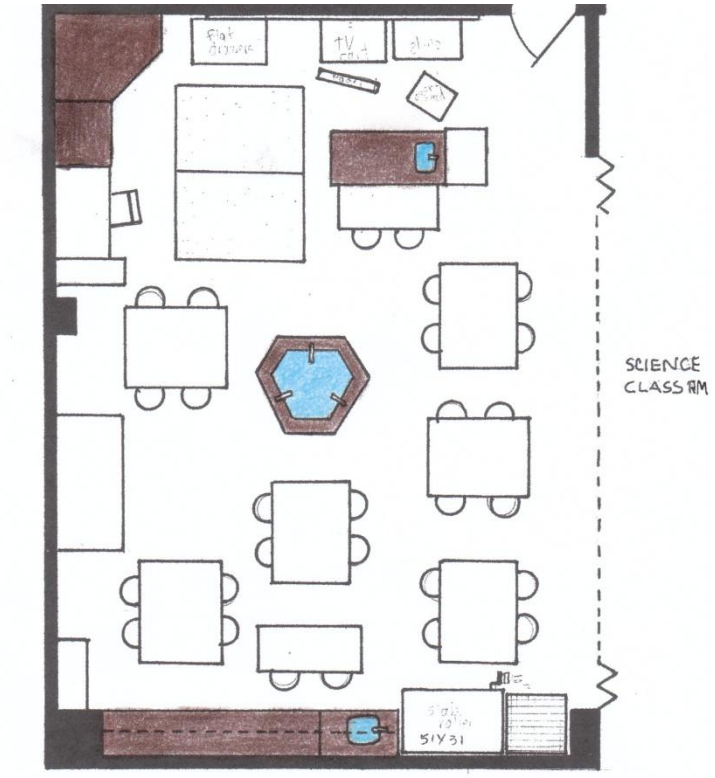


Figure 29. Floor plan of Lisa's art room (759 square feet).

There is one entry door into Lisa's art room from the hallway. It is shown at the top of the drawing. Three walls are *permanently* constructed. The dashed line on the right side of the drawing indicates a flexible vinyl accordion curtain that opens into an adjacent science lab classroom. This art classroom space has no natural light. Neither has it windows or skylights. There are four areas noted on the plan that are structurally permanent -- they are secured to the floor or to a wall; three of them are plumbed with sinks. The need for access to water was fully addressed here. The built-in sinks indicated this place was a specialized classroom.

The photographed phenomena were collected at the initial visit and again a year later. Readers will recall I began the study with Lisa by documenting her space. Her room was the only one in the study that I viewed prior to our first interview together. Due to family illness, Lisa was not present for our first scheduled meeting. I was allowed to visit her room to photograph and measure. By beginning Lisa's stories with place, I found that I could give those spaces and objects my full attention. Metaphorically, I recalled how young children sense a lack of attention as soon as the parent engages in activities that exclude them. To me, that association reinforced how ongoing human exchanges within places potentially upstage the silent object narratives surrounding them. Photographed stories of Lisa's spaces began.

First Impressions

Figure 30. View of Lisa's art room from entry.

The initial visual impact of the room reminded me of trying to pack too much into one paper bag. The view across across the room from the doorway revealed several black tables spaced around a central pedestal sink unit. Most

tables were arranged for four students to sit two-on-a-side across from each other – supporting dialogue and collaborative exchanges. Walls and cabinet doors were covered with poster images. Additional images mounted on colored paper hung over the tables. Students appeared to be in the midst of a miniature museum or gallery. Looking at artist's works could not be avoided (Dobbs, 1998; Efland, 2004). My minimalist-focused design background sought a calming empty visual space; while, at the same time, I imagined cluttered artists' studios containing such collected object stimuli. Even in the absence of activity, this space mirrored the multiplexity of teaching elementary art.

Right Side Entry and Curtain Wall

Figure 31. Vincent van Gogh gallery on entry wall of Lisa's classroom.

As I stepped into the room and glanced to my left, I found a space dedicated to Vincent van Gogh. Multiple images were gathered around the

obligatory phone, phone number directory, and fire alarm. The assembled art works were in a prominent location -- reminiscent of artwork chosen for residential entryways to elicit a first impression upon arrival. As this was the only artist collection posted, I posited that Vincent van Gogh could possibly be Lisa's favorite artist.

Since the objects on the wall first attracted my attention, I continued around the room with my camera, capturing images of each wall -- in a designer's perspective of detailed elevations. The stories unfolded.

Figure 32. Lisa's right wall with gallery and retractable curtain wall.

Most of the first wall consisted of a vinyl accordion dividing curtain. Lisa shared:

> That wall! The curtain in between the two -- they did that so that they could open it up and have a larger class or workshops in here, but it never happens. And so it would be nice if they just changed it into a wall. I had things hanging from the ceiling, but the Fire Marshall said that they weren't down low enough. If I put them down lower, the kids knock them off. (personal communication May 6, 2008).

The fire marshall had just visited Lisa's room during the previous week. It appeared that Lisa had figured out a way to hang things from the ceiling in front of that long curtained wall. The process of stringing and attaching from the

ceiling must have demanded extra effort and accommodation. I could hear the frustration in Lisa's voice as she complained about the new mandate. The

Figure 33. Principles of art posted in front of Lisa's curtain wall.

laminated posters hanging in front of the screen listed and described the *principles of art* (Dow, 1920: Efland, 1990, 2004). The next year these were gone; Lisa had instead mounted some space pictures directly onto the curtain. The interdisciplinary science focus took up the entire curtain wall. These were not the only science-related images posted. The interdisciplinary relationships with science are clearly evidenced. The small sizes probably attached better. The *not a wall* still seemed a challenge for Lisa.

Figure 34. NASA space images hung on Lisa's curtain wall.

Back Wall with Sink Counter

Turning the corner from the end of the curtain wall, I continued to photograph the back wall. The space was full of objects. Inventorying from the left were a drying rack, stacked stools with three artworks hanging above, a built-in sink with two animal posters above, and the counter with open shelves and

cabinets above and below holding another poster, some colored paper patterns, and objects. Upon closer viewing, details emerged.

Figure 35. Overview of back wall in Lisa's classroom

Figure 36. Details on left side of back wall in Lisa's classroom.

Usage of the drying rack established that wet two-dimensional art work was ongoing. Three art posters, labeled Joan Miro, Henri Matisse, and Andre Derain, were hung to the right of the drying rack. They remained in the same place for the full year. As I viewed Lisa's selected art posters, it resonated with a dialogue I had with Esther concerning her art history curricula. I remembered the conversation:

> Esther began: "I love Van Gogh and I enjoy teaching Picasso. They're my two the kids really relate to."
>
> I asked, "Do you do the different artists for different grade levels?
>
> Esther: "I try to do that."
>
> I probed: Is that part of the curriculum?"
>
> Esther continued: "Unhuh. They gave us a list of who to teach and when, but most the teachers don't – they just teach who they like and what they want to. So that's what it kind of boiled down to, I think – just teaching when you wanted it. I try to teach different grade levels different things." Personal communication, May 21, 2009).

Esther's dialogue resonated what the reader recalls Lisa related about freedom of choices, "I have a lot of choice. As much choice as I want to have"(Personal communication, May 4, 2009). This school district's administrators appeared to trust their elementary art teachers' practical knowledge in developing their own curricula (Schwab, 1973). The three artworks, seemingly fixed in place, could have validated them as more of Lisa's favorite artists, or she might have frequently referred them in favored curricula. Besides Van Gogh's gallery, they were the only art posters on the walls with written artists' names posted on them. Even if they were not Lisa's favorites, I doubt that they would have remained there for the second academic year if they held little or no aesthetic appeal to Lisa. All four artists reflect DBAE modern Western art (Dobbs, 1998).

Figure 37. Changes on left side of back wall in Lisa's classroom.

At the end of the day, the stools were stacked – some were conveniently located in the space between the drying rack and the sink counter. A year later Lisa had her newly acquired large slab roller placed there. This roller was purchased for her by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). At 51 inches by 31 inches, the clay slab roller occupied a significant amount of space. I recalled that Lisa named clay as her favorite art material from her early art classes. To work with clay with over 800 students presented a challenge. Clay projects take up more space than two-dimensional paper work. Lisa adapted her clay projects to in response to storage issues. She shared:

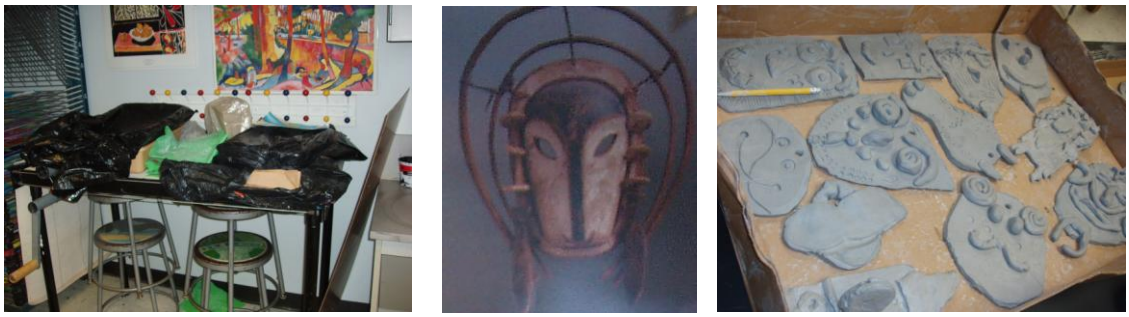


Figure 38. Lisa's prepared clay slabs stacked in plastic bags, mask poster, and student masks.

> There's not a lot of storage…. Three-dimensional stuff has to go pretty much right after they do it…. The clay stuff is not so bad … as long as I

> can stack it. If it can't stack, we can only work on it one class. But as long as it is like a flat mask… (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Lisa adapted her clay projects to include more flat pieces as a means to offer more student opportunities to create with clay. She stored the clay slabs in trash bags to keep the clay moist. The mask poster on the wall and student projects relate to products. The slab roller made it quick and easy to prepare consistent thicknesses that were ready for work. Lisa described an applied lesson:

> I do clay mummy case slab boxes with them. But they don't put box together until the end. The slab boxes I can / we can cut them and have all of the pieces ready and decorated, and then they put them together the next class. (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Figure 39. Images on the left wall relating to Lisa's mummy case lesson.

Close to the center of the back wall, and to the right of the slab roller, Lisa displayed posters on the cabinet doors. The animal and undersea posters from the first year were replaced by a butterfly poster and collaged butterfly sample for a class project. Interdisciplinary connections of art and science were enhanced and supported in this way. Below the cabinet was a low sink. Its height, a few

inches lower than the adjacent counter, was a good height for the students. Lisa talked about this sink:

Figure 40. Lisa's posters on back wall cabinet over sink.

> That one splashes so they can't wash their hands back there. 'Cause it literally makes a flood down on the floor. And the paper towels are right there – that's nice – wash your hands and dry your hands. You shouldn't drip all over the floor, but the sink part's just so shallow – and then the faucet's so high. It just goes all over the place and it gets all over the counter. And then if they've got paint on them, there's hope of that paint coming out of their shirt until it gets wet and then it soaks in. So they lean up against the counter, the water goes all over their shirt -- then it's never coming out. There are just so many bad things about that sink. It would be better if it was just gone. (Personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Lisa had strong feelings about object challenges within her spaces. She had taught in this room for five years, and she had over 800 students. She added, "Water's always an issue -- water and storage" (Personal communication, May,

5, 2009). A seemingly well-planned sink -- with frequent usage, and under specific conditions, revealed unforeseen problems.

Figure 41. Right side of back wall in Lisa's classroom (2008 – 2009).

Half of the back wall was built for easily accessible storage and counter space. There were a few changes between the beginning of the year of the study and the following year. Lisa hung an additional animal poster over a shelf. The posters consistently referenced science connections. Instead of keeping the pattern drawings on colored paper on the cabinet doors, Lisa relocated them to the wall between the counter and shelves. Pattern drawings reiterated focus on the dominant pedagogy of formalistic aesthetic, built on the *elements of art* and *principles of design* (Dow, 1920; Efland, 1990, 2004). Books were arranged on

Figure 42. Storage details above and below counter of right side of back wall in Lisa's classroom.

lower shelves and palettes, totes, and materials were stored on the top shelves. Their placement varied somewhat over the year, but the objects remained within this same general area. Paint and brushes were kept inside cabinets. The lower cabinet held clay tools. Accessible paint bottles and jars with clay glazes were consistently found on the counter. Paint and clay media appeared to be frequently used. At the end of the counter was a small table-top slab roller. I

Figure 43. Detail of counter on right side of back wall in Lisa's classroom.

wondered if Lisa ever used this after she acquired the large slab roller table. The importance of the slab roller to Lisa was evidenced by her pursuit of a bigger, more efficient one. Her allotted budget would not pay for it, so Lisa went to some effort to request, and possibly justify, the PTA funding. I also recall screening such requests while serving on a PTA board.

Left Side Gallery, Materials Table, and Teacher Space

Turning the corner from the back wall I took two photos to show the full length of the left side of the room. The only built-in was in the right corner at the front of the classroom. The cabinet, with attached small desk, was designed to hold a television. This long wall, parallel to the vinyl curtain wall, had the greatest expanse of art images posted. Along the top edge -- hugging the ceiling -- was an art history timeline. I have never understood placing art history timelines, not unlike wallpaper borders, at the top of walls; and yet I cannot remember finding them anywhere else. I recall taking time to move one down to eye level in a

university art education classroom. With small images and even smaller written information, such high placement reminds me of the sky above – we know it is up there and we are under it, but we don't know exactly how it relates to what is

Figure 44. Lisa's main art display (left wall) and teacher desk area.

happening below. It seemed to me that the general art history outline had a place, but lacked purpose. I wondered if its expanse, or limited inclusions, challenged relevancy. Its placement bespoke a context under which art teachers functioned. It could have been there so that the *sky* of art was not left out; it was, as such, a sacred story (Crites, 1971). The timeline was broken with an art poster that covered a portion. It seems logical that the poster was a later addition.

Figure 45. Lisa's art history timeline partially covered by art poster.

A metal portable shelf unit stood at the left end of the wall, at the back of the room. The elementary art textbooks were neatly stacked there as *resources*.

I inquired about textbooks, “Are the textbooks mandated in any way, or are they simply a resource if you ever wanted to use them?” Lisa answered:

> Resource. And they’re handy for the pictures. And some art teachers use them more specifically. I think they would be, if we had more time, it

Figure 46. Lisa’s textbooks on a shelving unit.

> would be nice as proof of what we’re saying being true. They see it in text they think, ‘Oh, this is a big deal.’ But we don’t have time. It is either that or product. I’d rather make choices and do product. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

The placement of the textbooks under the timeline seemed appropriate. They both represented contexts of art education as sacred stories (Crites, 1971) not to be disturbed or questioned. The art history timeline was a theoretical sacred story relating to *DBAE* (Dobbs, 1998; Efland, 2004) and the accessible textbooks were a school district sacred story. Lisa’s *choice of product* began in her early art memories. Her district was supportive of her choices. Lisa’s personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1983) chose *product*.

The images across the left wall included color wheels used to teach *color* relationships (element of art), illustrations of human *proportions* of the body and face (*principle* of art), drawings of two-dimensional, geometric, and organic *shapes* (*element* of art), *pattern* (*principle* of art), a poster about compositional *balance* (*principle* of art), *symmetry* (*principle* of art, *overlap* (unifying technique), and a *value* chart (*element* of art) (Dow, 1920; Efland, 2004). The poster with three different ways to render a pot of flowers illustrated realism, expressionism, cubism (one application of abstraction), and surrealism. These conceptual posters were placed amidst selected art images. Sections of the concepts were sometimes covered by art visuals. That seemed to indicate that Lisa used this wall to pin up art images relevant to her lessons. Instead of taking down basic concepts, she may have just temporarily placed selected images over them.

Figure 47. Art concepts posted on Lisa's wall.

The art Lisa hung on the wall represented various art media. She included examples of photography, sculpture, paintings, and architecture.

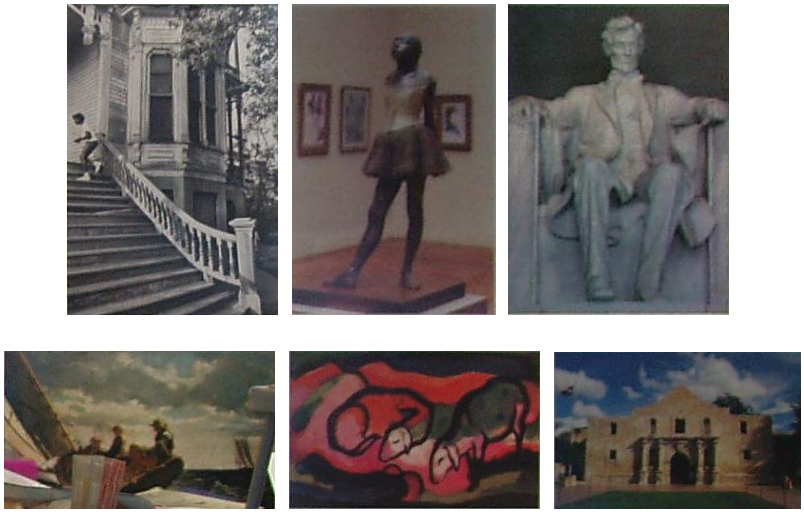


Figure 48. Works of art from various media posted on Lisa's wall.

The artworks on this wall changed during the year. I observed Lisa teach from the front of her classroom and sometimes from this side of her room.

The large folding table situated below these images provided a place for Lisa to place materials to be accessed each day. The items on this table varied – depending on what she taught. There were markers, paints, glue, scissors, trays, flowers in vases, glazes, a white box with materials to texture clay surfaces, and scrap papers underneath. Lisa and her students accessed items from this table area – including the box of colored papers stored underneath.

Figure 49. Materials for the day staged on long table in Lisa's room.

Figure 50. Lisa's desk area.

At the right end of the wall, Lisa's desk area housed the computer, printer, and papers. The poster of Albert Einstein added a cognitive interdisciplinary focus. Scientific thought was part of Lisa's personal space. It stood out in juxtaposition next to teacher-selected informational notes, calendars, and lists pinned up on the wall. Lisa selected paintings by Monet, Van Gogh, and Renoir to enter her personal space. A small bookcase separated her desk from the classroom on her left side. The massive corner cabinet established the other border of the periphery and segregated her space from the teaching objects along the front wall. Small collectibles filled the counter space around the corner television. Lisa's collection included small clay animals.

Figure 51. Lisa's personal collection next to desk.

Front of Classroom

Figure 52. Front of Lisa's classroom.

The front of the classroom was the last to be photographed. This space was also the most densely "populated." Space behind the fixed teaching lab counter was packed. The chalkboard was used like a bulletin board – with objects held in place with magnets. Some of the objects looked as though they were student-generated. Two flags hung above the board on the right side. A long poster with the *elements of art* listed and defined fit above the chalkboard (Dow, 1920; Efland, 2004). A projection screen hung from the ceiling immediately in front of the chalkboard.

Figure 53. Lisa's posting of elements of art.

Figure 54. Lisa's storage of student two-dimensional work and teaching corner.

The corner cabinet and flat-files were used for student portfolio storage. Lisa named "lack of storage space for student projects" as the *first answer* to the *first question* in our *first interview*. My general question was, "What comes to mind when you think about your classroom?" Her specific answer about lack of space came so quickly that she laughed and then apologetically added, "It's a nice size classroom. I've been in much smaller. But there's not a lot of storage. Well, there is -- but not as much as I need" (Personal communication, May 6, 2008). She kept the two-dimensional work for 873 students here – "under the TV that's where kindergarten through 4th grade's flatwork [two-dimensional art] goes and then fifth grade's is in a flat-file right next to that" (Personal communication, May 6, 2008).

Just right of the corner cabinet there was a chair. Its placement in front of the area rugs and the many children's books along the chalkboard tray to its right indicated that this space was used for reading stories to the students as part of a motivational activity. On a later visit I observed that the easel had been moved over to the chair position. An illustration of a painting Monet's bridge, something underneath on cubism, a list of criteria for a project, and a drawing of a frog were displayed on the easel. A stack of finished paintings were piled on the top of the flat-file cabinet. This was a busy area for Lisa. Teaching, modeling, viewing art,

grading, and storing student work all happened in this one small corner. The area rugs were tightly spaced between Lisa's desk chair, the teaching space in front and the fixed lab counter – crowding Lisa and students.

Figure 55. Lisa's seating space for children on rugs.

On the wall between the television cabinet ant the chalkboard and hanging in front of the chalkboard were classroom rules and guidelines. *Generic rules* were mounted on a red poster – prominently displayed to the right of the large paper mask. A *no* list and a *do* list were also posted. The joy of making art seemed important to Lisa. Her first generic rule began with "Have fun." Talking was allowed in Lisa's classroom. The reader recalls that silence in

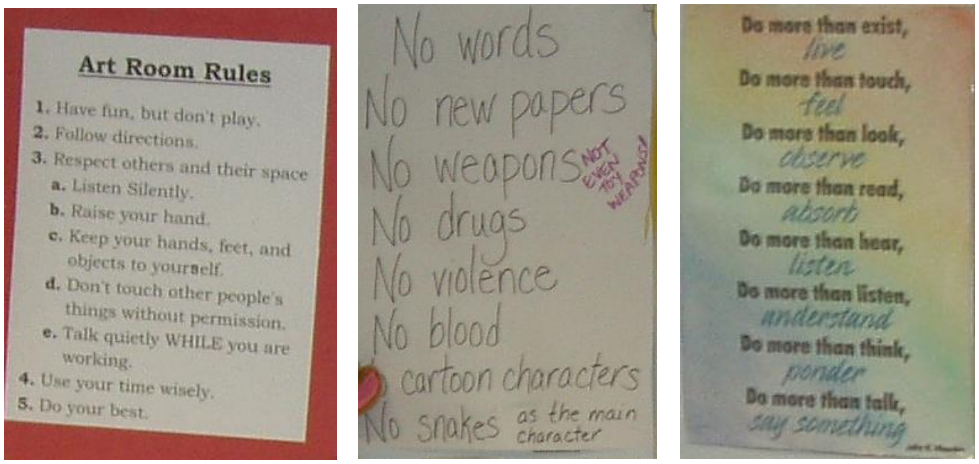


Figure 56. Lisa's posted classroom rules.

the classroom was a remembered issue from Lisa's childhood art classroom. It appeared to me that she did not want a rule mandating *total quiet while working* to alienate students from enjoying her art class.

The bold hand-written *no* list surprised me at first. Classroom management resources for teachers underscore usage of positive statements (Bates, 2000; Jones, 2007; Wong, 2009). After pondering, I considered that this list could have been the most revealing – i.e., the most honest. It seemed as if this list may have reflected issues Lisa had addressed so many times, that she finally wrote them down. All except one on Lisa's *no* list dealt with what students could not include in their art expressions. The one exception was "no new papers." Immediately, recollections came to mind of my students who wanted to throw away their sheet of paper and start on a new clean sheet. Art problem solving first and material conservation second walked hand-in-hand as my first given answer (and most likely Lisa's as well) has always been, "No, find a way to make it work."

"No words" told the students that they needed to change their language of communication in the art room to visual ways of showing rather than labeling. "No weapons, drugs, violence, or blood" negated referencing societal ills. She added "not even toy weapons" in red capital letters. This brought to mind combating students' justifying arguments; I imagined Lisa hearing something like, "But it's not a real gun. It is a toy gun." It seemed obvious that the same argument was made more than once to warrant posting on the list. "No cartoon characters" and "no snakes as the main characters" dealt with minimizing visual

literacy by either copying someone else's characters or by reducing the image to the simplest form. I identified with both. Students copy images because it is easier than developing their own. Snakes are the first animals to emerge from clay. I also often disallow them -- unless the student can show a way to go beyond the simple form in some way.

The last section of the front wall is separated from the main classroom by a fixed teaching lab counter with lower cabinets complete with a small sink. Lisa shared her frustration with this fixture:

> It's another place to store stuff and that's all. I wish it would move. They're starting to do those on rollers in the new classrooms.

I enquired, "Without the sink in them?"

Lisa confirmed and continued:

> Yeah. I've never used the sink anyway. The sinks have those tubes and so if you turn them on the wrong way they squirt everywhere. It comes out really powerfully. The children like to play with tubes. Everything gets wet up there. So I put a bag on top of it. (Personal communication, May 14, 2009)

Figure 57. Lisa's fixed lab counter with covered sink at front of room.

Lisa used the counter as a surface for materials and papers. She had a rolling cart with supplies parked on the right end and a student work table up against the front of the unit. Between this fixture and the chalkboard, I found a crowded

Figure 57. Lisa's area between the chalkboard and fixed lab counter with projection screen.

space which housed three carts: the first with the Elmo (overhead enlargement projection system), the second with an additional television set, and the third with the overhead projector. An easel stood amidst them. The shelves under the carts were filled with materials and objects. This space resembled a parking and loading zone of sorts. The counter protected, somewhat secluded, and isolated this space. The chalkboard appeared obsolete with the other visual media upstaging it. When used, the projection screen awkwardly "tented" in front of the technological traffic jam. With so much there, I inquired about usage.

I asked Lisa, "What technology do you tend to use the most?"

Lisa responded: Probably really the computer. Yeah, because we pull up pictures of things and I can project them on the TV. I would use the Elmo if I had a projector for it.

I probed, "Oh, you don't have a projector for the Elmo?"

Lisa added: No, I keep asking. Everybody else does. That's okay. I don't use it a lot now.

I wondered who everybody was, so I continued, "Other generalist teachers or other art teachers?"

Lisa clarified: Music has one. Science has one. PE doesn't. The art department bought the Elmo – not the school. And actually I can project it on the TV. That's one of the reasons they gave me that TV [the extra one on the cart]. Because it won't fit the other -- not enough cords -- something about the cords. But then it's just not that much bigger. It's easier just to show them the book. There's a few times when a zoom in on Seurat would be helpful, but it's not enough to make it worth setting it all up.

Lisa shared her preferred set up:

> The art teacher at Bishop Elementary (pseudonym) got a grant. She got a projector with a grant and she had it attached to the ceiling, and it's wireless -- so it goes from her computer, her laptop, her Elmo. The Elmo is wired in; it's wired in against the wall. 'Cause I don't' want it out here all the time 'cause it'll just get messy. It's wired into the wall and the wires go through the wall into the ceiling to the projector. So if she plugs it into the Elmo it works from the Elmo. So she has all that -- it just projects. It's great. She has a great setup. (Personal communication, May 14, 2009)

Technology for Lisa was troublesome. She had the overhead with transparencies and the Elmo opaque projector with one of her two TVs. She

found that enlarging images from a book with the Elmo was not worth the effort of gathering and moving things around for the TV--sized image. Lisa related how much easier it was to quickly find an art image online when students requested a reference. Lisa longed for an efficient overhead projection system. She had never used a Smart Board. The location of the overhead screen was also a problem. It descended behind the fixed-in-place lab desk area which limited viewing to upper portions of the screen; this placement further distanced images from the students. Lisa remembered having a screen put up in front of the vinyl accordion curtain at Pullman Elementary, “I had them put the screen right in front of the curtain. Because we didn’t have one at all, so I had choice.”

Center Sink Area

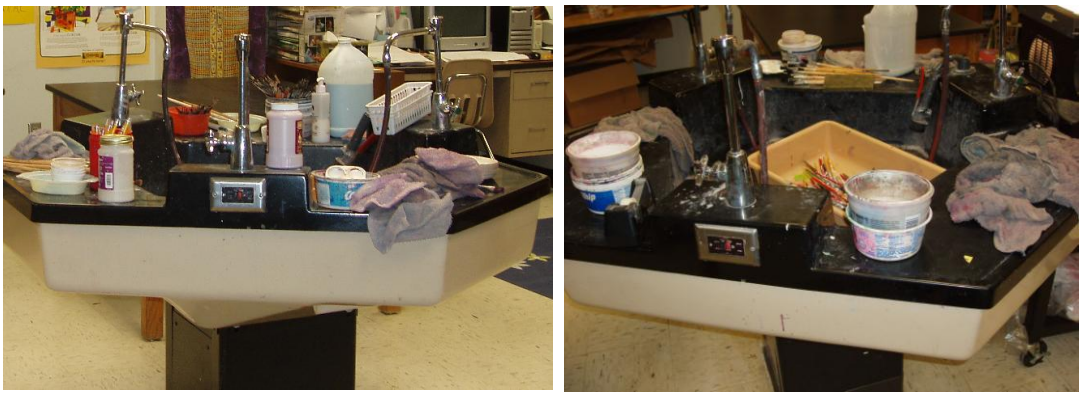


Figure 59. Lisa’s pedestal sink in the middle of the room.

The last area of Lisa’s classroom space was the center of the room. Lisa’s second “negative aspect of space” described at our first interview was the large pedestal sink. Lisa shared:

> The sink in the middle of the room is good and bad. It keeps them from taking my classroom away. If they need another 5th grade classroom they’re not moving me into a storage room. I had high school art in a

storage room. It's really high the kids can't wash their hands at it because it is too high.

I probed, "Do you use it?"

Lisa answered: I use it for cleaning materials a lot.

I continued, "But not for children?"

Lisa verified: No, they go up there to get the rags and they wipe the things with the rags. (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Lisa valued having sinks in the art classroom, but she was perplexed with the design and placement. She talked about this pedestal sink again a year later.

> It's like they just made a room, stuck a sink in the middle and said let's call this an art room. … But the other schools, I think now these are lower. I think they're doing the sinks a little lower in the middle so that the kids can get around them. – But still those faucets without the tubes.… If that could be used by kids, it would be great! You could get six people around it at the same time – at least. But then there's no paper towel there. But then if you had rags – I don't know. (Personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Kiln Room

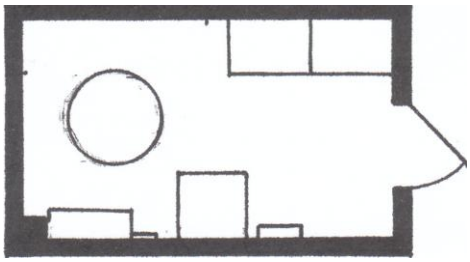


Figure 60. Floor plan of Lisa's kiln room.

Lisa had both a kiln room and a storage room located just off the main hall outside the entrance to the classroom. The kiln room had a short kiln vented with

a hood at the back. Located on the left side were a small shelf unit, electrical boxes, an easel, a weaving, and a tall rolling cart. Metal storage shelves stood on the right side. The shelves and tall rolling cart held clay projects in various stages of completion. The size of the kiln and space available for clay storage appeared somewhat limited for a school with over 800 students. Lisa talked about her kiln room:

> It's got electrical equipment in it. It would be nice if it didn't have that so that I could have more shelves. But this electrical equipment also dries the clay faster. So if I have to fire it in five days instead of seven, it does just fine. But then I can't put any wet clay in there because it's so hot it dries it out even in the bag. (May 5, 2009)

Figure 61. Lisa's kiln room.

Lisa talked about limitations:

> There's enough room for about three grades of clay at a time to dry and fire in the kiln and stuff like that, but it's still very limiting. (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Drying out clay worked well for shortening the process time for firing of finished student work. However the trade-off demanded that all of the clay reserve materials needed another storage space. Lisa related how she also had to keep ongoing clay work in the classroom. Referring to her tall rolling cart, Lisa added:

> That's one of my favorite things because it can roll out here. The kiln room gets really hot because of the electrical equipment, so if it needs to stay wet until the next week, I can't put it in that room [kiln room]. It has to be in here [classroom] or it will dry out in there [kiln room]. (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Ongoing clay projects were established by the presence of clay projects on storage shelves and on the rolling cart. Lisa was very familiar with limitations of storage in her kiln room; she seemed to use her kiln frequently.

Storage Room

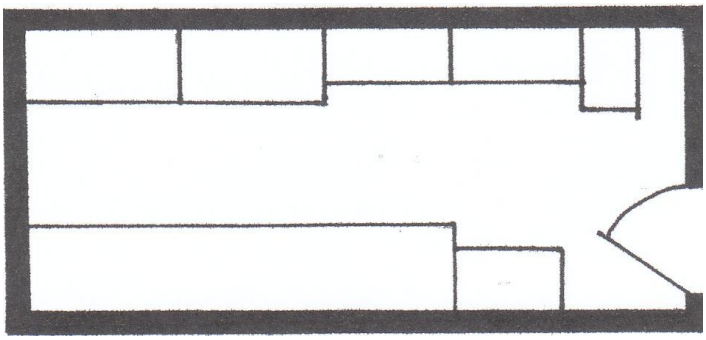


Figure 62. Floor plan of Lisa's storage room.

One side of Lisa's storage room had two sections of deeper metal shelves at the back and two sections of slightly shallower metal shelves with plastic trays toward the front. End spaces were stuffed with large mural papers on top of a box. A file cabinet was near the entry. This room housed Lisa's stock of materials, visual resource posters, and evidences of murals and other projects. The other side had a long counter with drawers below and shelves above. Vertically divided storage spaces held art visuals. The cutting board was on the counter. The space in the middle had more folded murals. The abundance of objects seemed to stuggle for placement. The narrow space between the overflowing shelves became additional storage rather than simply access. Lisa

Figure 63. Lisa's storage room.

was glad that she had the extra storage area; she devulged, "I like that it's in the other room to some extent 'cause the paper cutter's away from everybody else" (Personal communication, May 5, 2009). Lisa thought more about issues of storage. She mused:

> It would be nice if my materials could be stored in my room so that I could get them without having to leave the room. So if I had shelves or cabinets there, like some of the rooms do, then everything is accessible to me. And then that storage room would be nice to put student art work in – to

keep it away from them until it is time for them to use it. They're very curious – especially if it is 3D and brightly colored. (Personal communication, May 6, 2008)

Recollections of too much stuff packed into a closet made me wonder if Lisa retrieved some items less because of storage location. For instance, I wondered if she wanted to refer to an art image during class, but if it was not one in the classroom, would she go to find it? I wondered if infrequently used materials could be forgotten.

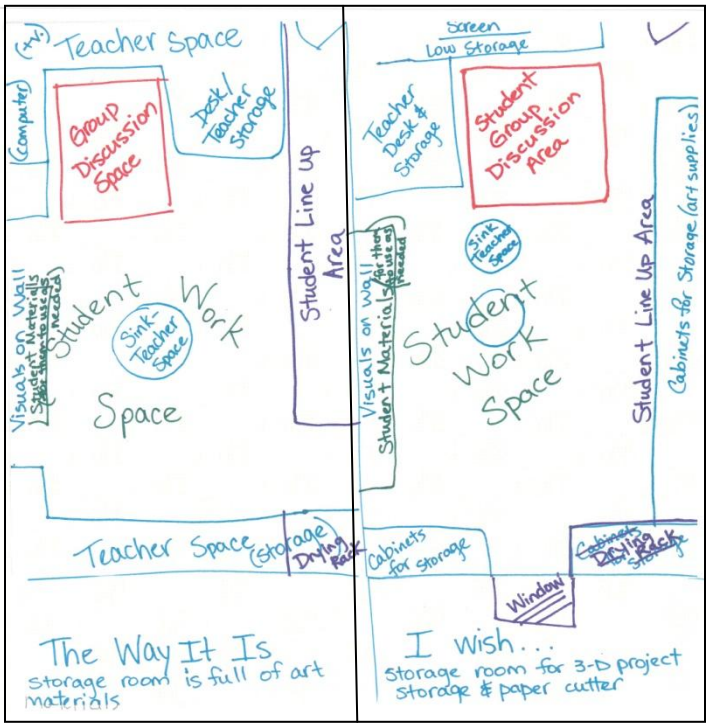


Figure 64. Lisa's drawing of her teaching space.

From our first interview, Lisa began to think about her spaces in different ways. I asked her, "How do you see your classroom? Show it in a sketch – just anything about your space." Lisa inquired, "How it is or how I wish it was?" To which I responded, "Either – or a combination of both." Lisa then drew her space as a combination of what she had and what she wanted.

Lisa adapted her space. At the front of the classroom, Lisa eliminated the "desk teacher storage" teaching lab counter. She moved all teacher desk and storage over to the left front where her computer is now located. In its place, Lisa drew in "student group discussion area." This area was drawn larger than the existing rug area and was placed closer to the projection viewing screen. Lisa added low storage under the screen, but kept the left wall for art visuals and "student materials (for them to use as needed)." The surface area, as table or counter, was lengthened. Along the back wall, Lisa specified cabinets (without shelves) for storage. She kept the drying rack in place, but added a window. The long vinyl curtain wall was replaced with cabinets for storage of art supplies. Lisa also retained the pedestal sink, but moved it to divide the space between the student tables and the front areas of the room so that she would not have to arrange tables around it. That sink remained labeled "teacher space." Lisa's water issues were not limited to the pedestal sink. I noticed that Lisa did not provide for students to have access to any sinks. With Lisa's place stories shared, I look across the professional knowledge landscape to introduce the place narratives of Margaret.

Margaret's Place

As was the case with Lisa, I drew Margaret's floor plan and added all of the furnishings drawn to scale. Photographs were taken near the end of the first school year when we met for our initial interview and again the next year. The arrangement of student work tables on the floor plan reflects where they were situated during the final four observations. Unlike Lisa, I was never alone in

Margaret's classroom. Margaret's classroom, measuring 810 square feet, was 51 square feet larger than Lisa's classroom and 30 square feet smaller than Esther's place. Margaret had 575 students. This was her fourth year teaching art at Grand Isle (least amount of time of the three in the study). During her first year teaching at Grand Isle, Margaret had 975 students. Reader will recall that new housing developments and new schools brought about redistricting; Margaret's now smaller school refocused after adding various populations with special needs. Margaret predicted that there would only be 400 students the year following the completion of this study.

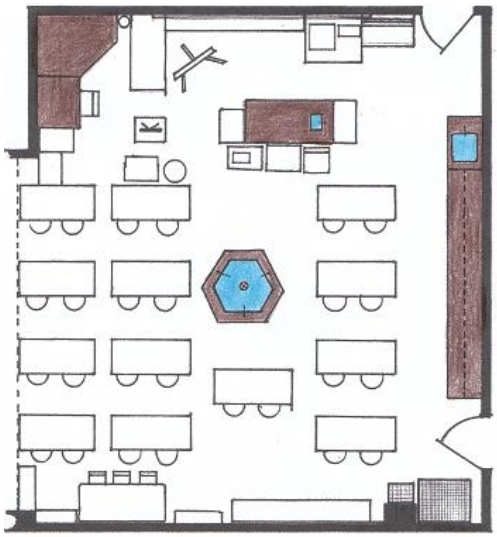


Figure 65. Floor plan of Margaret's classroom.

First Impressions

The first question that I asked Margaret during our first interview was, "What comes to mind when you think about this classroom? What kinds of feelings?" Margaret replied, "Energy; happy and energy; I'm ready to really go" (Personal communication May 7, 2008). Energy was obvious in Margaret's packed space. The floor plan gave context. Colored areas on the plan denoted

structures built in place. Three sink areas are plumbed through the slab foundation. Photographs revealed details. I began with the same area that Margaret drew during our first interview. The front of Margaret's classroom became my "poster child" of *elementary art classroom multiplexities challenge concepts of chaos*. From images on the wall, to teaching aids (including, but not limited to, technologies), to material resources, to processing tools, to examples of projects, to student work, to schedules and resources – all were found within this area – yes, and even more with closer viewing. Margaret's first answer to my question, "When you think about this classroom, what are the negative aspects?" did not surprise me. Margaret laughed as she replied, "Clutter. Stuff

Figure 66. Overview toward front of Margaret's classroom.

everywhere – mostly kids' art projects, and of course, the materials" (Personal communication, May 7, 2008). She came back to the subject again at the end of the year:

> In here there are so many materials to keep up with and manage, and pass out, and clean up, and work with, and decide what's going to go together, and what the kids can handle. And there are just so many things. And it's storing all of it; it's huge, you know. And then being able to retrieve it without losing it [laughs]. (Personal communication, May 7, 2009)

As I began to look at this space, I found that the complexity troubled me. Prior to continuing to describe the phenomena, I stopped, contemplated, and reflected. It seemed that Margaret's place had a degree of *nervousness* about it for me. Initially, I thought this part of the study with Margaret would be the easiest connection. In many ways, I identified with Margaret. We shared an interior design focus. She had once taught for the university after-school program. All of our previous encounters were positive, even though Margaret had decided that she could no longer teach with the university program. When student teachers took over teaching the after-school program at Grand Isle, I had once substituted in this classroom; and while I taught, Margaret was there. I looked forward to the interviews with Margaret. I felt that we both enjoyed the interviews, the research, and the collegial rapport. In the end, Margaret shared that she would miss our meetings. So would I. In spite of the positive aspects of the study, I still felt something was missing.

When I viewed the photographs I had taken, the phenomena studies seemed equally awkward. Photographs were taken mainly during our first interview. There were only a dozen or so from the four interviews at the end of

the year. I compared the phenomena studies with those of Lisa. I knew that, in contrast, having Lisa's room to myself at Rover Elementary had allowed me to take in more of the physicalities; but even the later photographs, when Lisa was there, posed no problems. During the interviews with Margaret, I had not noticed such feelings that now overtook me. Understanding limitations was important.

I finally was able to discern the cause of the gap. Interviews were scheduled only at times that Margaret could meet with me. Every meeting with Margaret after school was *shared* with her students because the administration had scheduled her for "tutorial" time at the end of the day. Students were left to work on their own, but Margaret was responsible for supervision. Not only was I never alone with the space, but also Margaret and I were never alone during the interviews. Furthermore, I could not take pictures that included students. Our positive relationship somehow bridged this less-than-accommodating setting. As I look back, it seemed rather amazing that Margaret shared as much as she did – on camera – with students all around. With new understandings, I began from Margaret's own corner of the room.

Front of Classroom

Figure 67. Front of Margaret's classroom.

Figure 68. Margaret's teacher desk corner (2008 – 2009).

Beginning on the left end of the front wall, reader will remember the student drawings that Margaret had surrounding her personal space. The images covered the file cabinet and the doors on the corner cabinet. Other than a few family photographs, a CD music collection, and school-related papers, students' creations dominated her space. A personal note from a student was added to her collection during the year. when asked about positive aspects of teaching, Margaret responded:

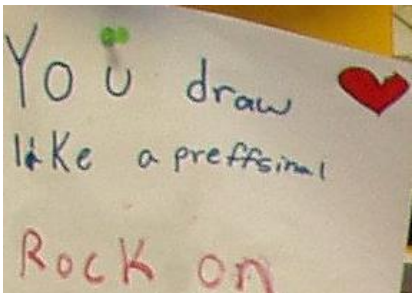


Figure 69. Note from student posted above Margaret's desk.

> The kids – especially the little ones – when just out of the blue, they come and give me a hug; and they make art for me. And the older ones, too -- They make art for me a lot. They draw me pictures and write me notes. It's really – I love that. It makes me feel like I want to do it forever. There

are lots of things that make me not want to do it forever -- so that's good; it's real positive [she laughs]. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

Margaret enjoyed her students and she was open to developing caring relationships. The students often responded visually by drawing pictures and adding notes. Student artwork displayed around her desk invited more.

Figure 70. Margaret's desk.

Margaret had the smallest desk area of the three teachers in the study. She only used the small built-in area provided. It was secluded and separated from the student area by a tall file cabinet on the left. Her laptop took up most of the surface space. The laptop is Margaret's only computer – for grading, correspondence, and hooking up to the LCD projector to teach. I asked her if it was her personal laptop. Margaret answered:

The school gave us laptops. After three years, they belong to us. So I believe it's been three years since I got it. But now it's pretty close to completely broken. I've put in [a work order] for another tech person; he takes about a month to get to our requests. I don't know if they'll replace it or not. I paid insurance, so it seems like they'd be able to. So, I don't

> know what I'll do if it completely goes out – if they'll give me a computer. I mean they have to give me something, or else I'm going to have to sit back here or move one of these [gestures toward three newly added student computers at the rear of the room]. (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Technology problems were an ongoing challenge for Margaret. In reference to the TV in the corner, Margaret commented:

> I never use [the TV]. The only thing I can show on it is from my computer. And I have to go through this little converter thing and all this business. It shows this really grainy, blurry picture. I can't get anything else on it, so I don't see the point of it. That's so much better [she gestures toward the viewing screen]…. I'd like to give that TV back to somebody. But I'm sure they don't want it. (Personal communication, May 11, 2009)

Children's books and other assorted objects were placed in front of the *never used TV* by the end of the year.

Figure 71. Posters above Margaret's desk.

Above her desk and corner cabinet area, Margaret hung posters of classroom rules, color wheels (*element of art*), shapes (*element of art*), and

colors with associated images (Dow, 1920; Efland, 2004). Margaret placed them on bright yellow background paper surrounded with contrasting scalloped black border trim. This drew attention to them and boldly announced boundaries between her work space and classroom information. Generic classroom rules could have been a purchased poster; the poster appeared to be manufactured and the rules were typical. Color and shape posters were common to elementary art classrooms (Dow, 1920; Efland, 2004). However the simple color identification poster seemed more appropriate to preschool than to the elementary level. I considered that Margaret may have taught basic color awareness to certain special needs students. All posters remained in place throughout the study – just as certain concepts of elements and principles continue to dominate art education focus (Dow 1920; Efland, 2004).

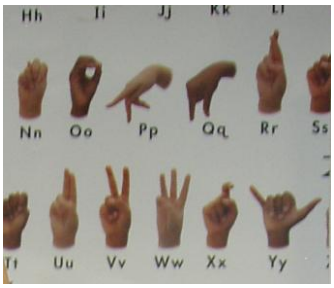


Figure 72. Sign language alphabet posted in Margaret's classroom.

Between the shape poster and the chalkboard was a sign language alphabet poster. Besides the color identification poster, this was the only other visual display that appeared to relate specifically to special needs students. I imagined the alphabet was not for them as much as for others; I wondered if many hearing students learned signing to communicate with their peers. Seeing the poster reminded me which letters I best remembered from my childhood. I

recalled mostly writing on a pad to communicate with my deaf mute grandparents.

Figure 73. Teaching easels and other objects next to Margaret's desk.

The area around the corner from Margaret's desk and in front of the chalkboard was used as a teaching area and for projects and supplies. Margaret used the small easel on the top of a rolling cart to illustrate. The papers on the shelf underneath were for the students to access for completing the project. A table was arranged perpendicular to the chalkboard and situated behind this cart. Children's art books and projects were stacked on top of the table and in containers below. Margaret had a floor easel that she used to display art works for select lessons. The left side of the chalkboard was used as a word wall. I recalled Margaret's comment, "I can sneak in learning numbers and reading" (Personal communication, May 7, 2009), as reminiscent of her previous teaching experiences.

Figure 74. Margaret's chalkboard with bookcase below.

Margaret used her chalkboard to teach -- even though she had to reach over her low bookcase to do so. The students viewed the chalkboard from the other side of the fixed lab teaching counter. When I asked Margaret if there were any areas in the room that she felt were hers only, she responded, “Yes, back here [she gestured to this space between the counter and chalkboard]. -- even though I share it sometimes, -- especially if I’m having a tough time or a bad day – I mean, nobody comes back there. It’s mine” (Personal communication, May 11, 2009). This space houses Margaret’s refrigerator, microwave, and coffee maker. Margaret clarified, “I never use the coffee maker. It’s there in case I ever want coffee for a break” (Personal communication, May, 11, 2009).

Figure 75. Margaret’s space between lab counter and chalkboard.

The paper cutter was on the counter, complete with a “do not touch” note taped to it. On the left, Margaret’s chimes stood ready. From this vantage point storied she may have used them to focus student attention. I wondered what she used for the deaf students. The LCD projector peeked over a stack of student paintings from its perch on a rolling cart just in front of the teaching lab counter. At the right end of the counter, the Elmo sat atop a student desk. Clay boxes were stacked on the floor under the counter and a large box of yarns nested on

the seat of a rolling chair seemed ready to present itself with short notice. Simultaneous presence of various media led me to conclude that Margaret used differing materials throughout each day.

Figure 76. Margaret's floor seating space between lab counter and chalkboard.

Plastic foam mats connected and provided a small invited space for Margaret's students -- within that limited space between the chalkboard and teaching lab counter. It was only from this photographed angle that the floor space seemed usable. The two added pillow cushions told me it was possible. As I looked up, I saw an art history timeline at the top of the wall. It was partially hidden by the viewing screen. Under the timeline was a motivational self-esteem sentence. Once again, they seemed to relate more sacred stories (Crites, 1971) of art education. The art classrooms at Grand Isle Elementary had the same *sky* as Rover Elementary. When Margaret later drew her space, she included the screen but not the posters.

Figure 77. Margaret's art history timeline and motivational poster above chalkboard.

The right section of the chalkboard held art images. The space between the chalkboard and door to the hall was filled with paper lists around the telephone. The lower view from the student classroom side of the teaching lab counter included a busy resource and portfolio area. The left front had two tables put together. Materials and artwork were stacked on top and on the floor underneath. Margaret referred to this as her supply table. Underneath were boxes with student clay projects or other materials or projects (varied). Next to the table were two rolling carts, the first held the Elmo and the second had the LCD projector. On the shelf under the projector lived a community of stuffed animals. On the right of that cart was another student desk holding student portfolios. A colored drawer unit was placed snuggly against the teaching lab counter. It held student supplies.

Figure 78. Margaret's "stuff" between lab counter and student tables.

Yarns and other objects on a chair showed this as a changing area. At the beginning of the study, Margaret placed a small art rack next to the colored

supply drawer unit; the next year she had moved a small desk to that area and removed the art rack.

At the end of our first interview, Margaret was asked to draw her classroom as she saw it – with or without labels. She chose this front teaching area. I was surprised at the details that she included. Margaret's own labeled

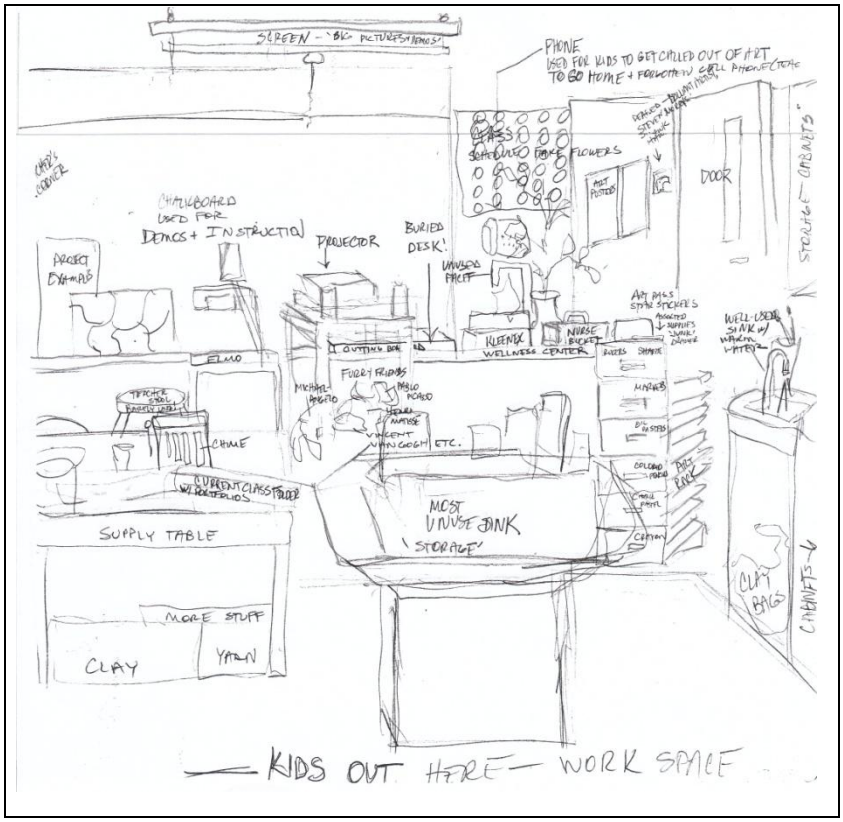


Figure 79. Margaret's drawing of her space.

sketch of the front of her classroom provided details that were not as obvious. Margaret knew where everything was, she knew what she had placed there. Margaret was very visually fluent -- when it came to rendering images, she drew well. Looking at her drawing, I found myself overjoyed that I had not restricted her to "no words." Her drawing revealed the same complexity as my photographs – but her labels added her context and knowledge. For example,

Margaret labeled the teaching lab counter “wellness center.” She included “Kleenex” and “nurse bucket.” Unless I had opened the container, I would not have known what it held. Other details that she added extended information. Margaret labeled “class schedule” above the phone. I had not looked closely to determine what information she had posted there. I don’t quite know where her teacher stool was that she labeled “rarely used.” Additional information was revealed about the stack of stuffed animals; Margaret labeled, “furry friends -- Pablo Picasso, Michelangelo, Henri Matisse, and Vincent van Gogh, etc.” She must have used them to relate to the artists in some way. I did not observe Margaret using the stuffed animals. She drew in all three sinks in the room and labeled which one she used.

Margaret verified the use of the chalkboard for teaching with her label “chalkboard: used for demos & instruction.” Her project examples propped on the chalk tray were labeled as such. On her supply table Margaret set the work folders for each class when they came into the classroom. The Elmo and projector are side-by-side so that she can enlarge and project. I asked Margaret if she used her LCD projector very often. She offered:

> I do. I use it a lot. When I’m just starting a lesson, I show art work up there a lot. I’ll show some on the easel here [gestures], but if I have it just in a book – I don’t have a print – I’ll show it up there.

I clarified, “On the Elmo?”

Margaret continued:

> Exactly. I don't show movies too much, but I do occasionally make a slide show of different art works. I did Wassily Kandinsky for fourth graders just recently. Pablo Picasso – no, Wassily was third grade --Pablo Picasso in fourth grade. We did some abstract work, and I showed them like five or six artworks of his. So I love that. I love having that.

Margaret recalled how she obtained the LCD projector:

> And that was the first year I started here. The tech here always came in and helped me [big smile], and we even did this contest – digital art contest, and we got – one of our girls won in the whole state. So, it was pretty cool. He was awesome! He was wonderful. He came in. I didn't even ask for that projector. He came in and said, 'I'm giving this to you.' I said, 'Are you serious? Wow!' (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

The Elmo and LCD projector needed to be connected to a power source and to each other to enable Margaret to show large images on the screen. It seemed logical that she used large images due to so many objects set between the chalkboard and the students. It appeared that there was no place for students to

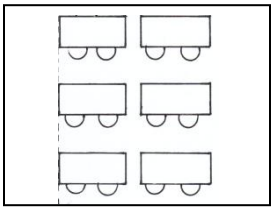


Figure 80. Margaret's student table arrangements (2008 photograph – 2009 floor plan drawing).

gather closer for motivations. The LCD projector brought the image into viewing range for students seated at the tables. That validated the changed table arrangements with all students facing the front of the classroom. At the first

interview Margaret had arranged the student tables in groups. They were placed so that the students could simply turn their heads to the side to view the screen.

Right Side with Sink Counter

The right side of the room had a long permanent counter with a built in sink on the left end -- quite near to the entry door. The cabinets below and cabinets and shelves above were filled with paints, glazes, and other objects. Lower cabinets next to the sink are used to store student portfolios. Margaret adds, “And the top – this whole thing is paint and brushes – various types. Well, actually I’ve got watercolor, tempera, and acrylic. And I’ve got glazes up here, and more paint down here” (Personal communication, May 11, 2009). Paints dominated this area of Margaret’s space. The reader remembers Margaret’s

Figure 81. Right side of Margaret’s classroom sink, counter, and storage.

early memories of painting with her grandmother. Large bottles of liquid tempera paint with pumps were lined up for easy access. We quit using pumps for acrylic paint at the university when we had trouble with them clogging up; it was too hard to remove hardened acrylic. The problem at the university may have stemmed from the fact that the acrylic paints were not used very often. I inquired, “Do the pump dispensers work well?” Margaret affirmed that they worked for her.

Figure 82. Margaret's counter with paints, hair dryers, and slab roller.

When I asked her if they ever clog up, she replied:

> Yeah. [smiles and laughs] I stick a paperclip in them. I just leave the paperclip on the shelf and just go [gestures] if it's stuck. I just stick it in.

I asked, "You just use it for tempera? Not acrylic?"

Margaret continued:

> Uh huh. Well, actually I am getting some pumps for the acrylic. I just didn't have any. 'Cause I think that would be better. And they're probably gonna get clogged worse, huh?

I clarified, "We used them, but not as often."

Margaret responded:

> That paperclip works great – except when it gets that bubble and it sprays me. That's why I wear this [looks down on art apron she has on] – especially when I'm painting. (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Margaret had liquid watercolor, acrylic (not in view), liquid tempera, and cake tempera. The pumps worked for her. I surmised that she used the paints frequently enough to minimize problems of hardening. Margaret valued paint

Figure 83. Paint clean up in Margaret's small counter sink.

media. Along with painting came issues of process. Distribution and clean up came to mind. Margaret distributed water and paints to her students. They were taught to carefully carry water containers to the sink and counter for clean up. The shallow sink at the end of the counter served both Margaret and her students. In Margaret's drawing of her space, she labeled both the central pedestal sink and the small sink on the teaching lab counter as "unused."

Center Sink Area

Figure 84. Margaret's pedestal sink in the middle of the room.

The center sink was of interest. Its prominent location needed to be addressed. Margaret talked more about it when asked what she would change in her classroom if she could:

> I might move that sink. I really don't use that sink and it's just kind of really in the way – right in the middle of the room.

I interjected, "So do you use the water at the sink at all?"

Margaret continued:

> No. I used to when I first started… I don't know if you want to hear all my stories about it [laughs]. It was just really this year that I quit using it so much. Now every now and then – if we have filthy hands, and I have like two minutes to wash, I'll let them use it. But the pressure goes so high – really fast. Something hits under that water and it just goes everywhere. And the kids have to use a stool to get up there, you know. So it's really just a lot more trouble than it [is worth] – and water gets all over here, and people are slipping and sliding. It's just like, 'Oh, my gosh!' [laughs] Rather not do that. So that's why – you saw me – I get the rags wet and I pass them out and they pass it around. That seems to work really well. (Personal communication, May 7, 2008)

Margaret no longer used the prominently positioned pedestal sink for cleanup. For three years she tried to work with it, but finally gave up. The rim became used as a central area where she placed specific items for ease of student access. Margaret used the counter sink to clean up; she said that the central pedestal sink had no warm water. When asked at the end of the year what kinds

Figure 85. Margaret's supplies accessed on pedestal sink.

of things she would want in extra space, Margaret thought about expanding sink and counter areas:

> Like maybe have paint counter and sinks on this side as well [signifies parallel wall across the room], so half the class could go here and half the class over here so we're not all in one. This sink [center pedestal] is useless – especially with the younger kids, which is half the day. They can't get up there. And even the older kids – I don't want them up there because they just stick something in that spout when it's running it sprays out [extends both arms fully in gesture] over everybody and then if they spill it's all over here and it's just a disaster. (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Return to Right Side with Sink Counter

The restoried sink issue had reverberations of similar stories that Lisa had shared. However, unlike Lisa, Margaret allowed her students to use the low counter sink. Margaret found the low sink and counter worked well enough that she even wanted to replicate it on the other side of her room. I took one more look at the storage wall; I noted the textbooks neatly stocked on Margaret's shelves over the counter. The positioning of objects in front of the books seemed

to indicate that, like with Lisa, the books were not regularly used. The art textbooks appeared again as a *sacred story*. It made me wonder why the district even adopted art textbooks. A door was located just beyond the sink, counter, and storage area; it led directly into Margaret's kiln room.

Figure 86. Margaret's shelved textbooks and supplies.

Back Wall Storage and Student Computers

This area changed more over the year than any other in Margaret's art classroom. Pictures document the initial objects, including a highly used drying rack in the corner. Temporary metal shelves used to store clay projects were

Figure 87. Margaret's back wall with drying rack, clay storage, aprons and posters.

replaced by wooden shelves. After the change, I asked Margaret if she had acquired enough space for the clay. Margaret replied, "Yes. I mean I could still use more, but I don't have anywhere for a shelf anymore" (Personal communication May 8, 2009). In the middle of the wall was a spot allocated for

art aprons. At the right end of the wall (all underneath another art history timeline), Margaret had illustrated posters of the principles of art (Dow, 1920,; Efland 2004). Clay works were wrapped and stored on the top of a tall rolling cart. An art visual and rules about free drawing were posted on the wall, including one stating “never trace.” Three computers were installed on the right side during the year of this study. I asked Margaret if three computers were enough. She responded:

> I think three’s plenty. The only thing is I would like them to be hooked up to a printer – and don’t have that. So if the tech could ever help me do that.

I asked for clarification, “Oh, do you have a printer? It’s just not hooked up?” Margaret continued:

> Yeah. There’s several printers in the school, but we have a very difficult time getting the person who is supposed to help …. And I’m already trying to schedule her to help me through things now. Like the scanner. I don’t even know where the scanner is. So I take my stuff I need to scan home and e-mail it. (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

Overtime Margaret had acquired objects that supported her teaching content. The LCD projector came to her without her request. Shelves in the back of the room took longer. Just when Margaret finally received approval for PTA funding for her clay storage shelves, she, quite by chance, found a perfect unit ready to be discarded. She quickly took possession of it and moved it into her room. Computers were easier to come by than the technical support for operation.

Margaret was frustrated by unfulfilled object solutions. I felt that she struggled more when she had to depend on others to remedy those issues.

Left Side Curtain Wall with Art Posters

Margaret's art room had the vinyl curtain divider separating it from the science lab. The art posters that she displayed all included people. I considered that Margaret may have recently taught a lesson about portraits. Some of the same images were still there at the end of the year. I thought about Margaret's student portraits displayed around her desk and on the front teaching lab counter. I considered her valued relationships with the children. It seemed to me that people were important to Margaret. These images reinforced that idea.

Figure 88. Margaret's curtain wall with displayed posters.

Margaret had a poster about shape, form, and space, another about line and texture, one only about line, a poster that listed all elements of art, and two more color theory posters all on the right end of the curtain wall. Elements of art were well posted (Dow 1920: Efland 2004); there were four alone dealing with aspects of color. The emphasis on color theory supported observation of diverse paints on the supply counter across the room. Margaret had figured out a way to

display her art and theory posters in front of the curtain wall by using chains, hooks, and clam clips. It seemed that changing posters would be easy with the clam clips. By developing this hanging system, Margaret had adapted an area of her space that troubled her. In response to my inquiry about negative aspects of her space, Margaret had stated, “I don’t like this curtain” (Personal communication, May 7, 2008).

Figure 89. Margaret’s posters attached with clam clips to suspended chains.

Storage Room

Margaret’s extra supplies where in a long room accessed off the main hall. She shared the space with science storage. Margaret held some hope that the science materials would soon be moved out of the room:

> They are talking about moving it over into the science lab – which would make more sense. Well, actually just one teacher was talking about that being a good idea. But I was going to bring it up some more. ‘Cause … a lot of them don’t even know it is there. And then when they’re in the science lab, it’s kind of a pain to go all the way over. It’s kind of difficult for me to go back and forth, too. It would be nice to have a little opening or something. (Personal communication, May 11, 2009)

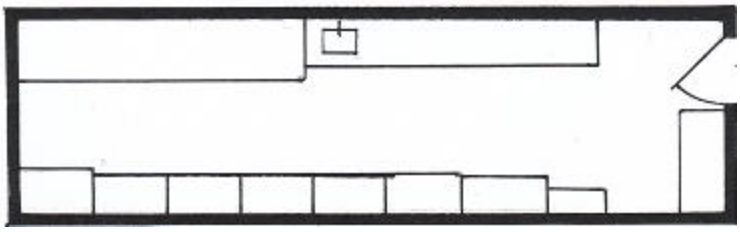


Figure 90. Floor plan of Margaret's shared storage room.

The four metal shelf units on the bottom left of the plan were filled with science materials. The remaining four, nearest the door, as well as the built-in counter, drawers, and shelves on the other side, were for allocated for art storage. Margaret even had a sink in her supply room. Margaret kept a collection of recycled art textbooks over the sink; she hoped someday to remove the art pictures from them. Cardboard, mat board, and tissue paper were kept accessible on the counter next to a cutting board. Margaret listed assorted papers, supplies, paint, and clay storage within this room.

Figure 91. Margaret's shared storage room.

Kiln Room

Margaret had very little space in her kiln room – just enough for the small kiln and two metal shelf units. One shelf was used for fired clay and the other for clay waiting to be fired. Both the storage room and kiln room were off-limits to

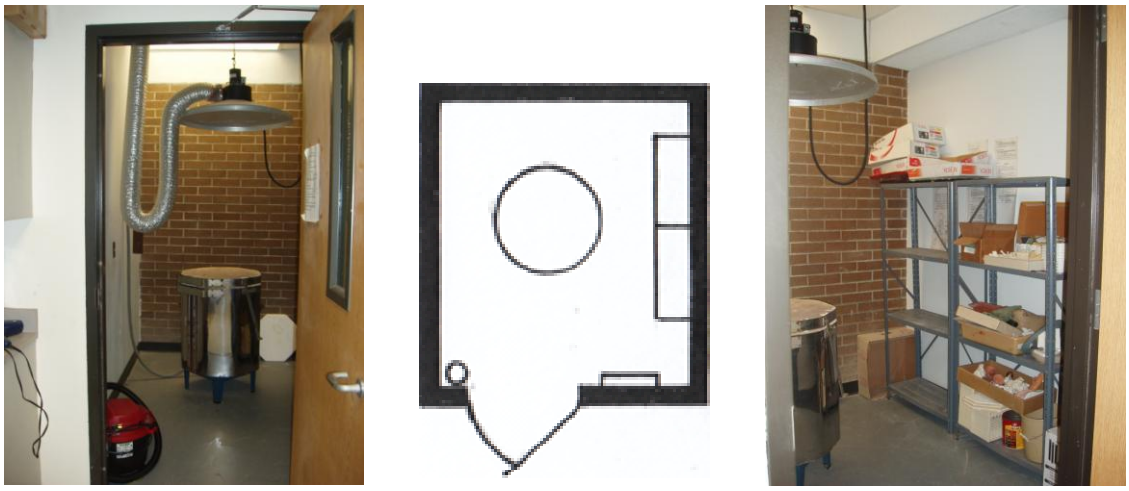


Figure 92. Margaret's kiln room.

the students. Margaret's Grand Isle Elementary students had access to a fully staffed and stocked art facility. The school, nestled into an older neighborhood, had some common characteristics with Northside, where Esther taught art.

Esther's Place

During our first interview, I asked Esther to talk about the positive things in her classroom. She described her feelings about her space:

> Every time I come in here, to me, it's just a happy place. And I like it when the children are happy. And that's the positive part of it – how the kids feel about the room – and how when they come here they're happy. That makes me happy.

Esther continued:

> I decorated it in yellow because that's my favorite color and it's a happy color. It's just my classroom. I don't know how to express that – except it's just my comfort zone. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

The reader recalls Esther's strong associations to creative self-expression. Words could not capture what Esther wanted to share. In words, descriptions of feelings connected to her classroom environment became simplistically inadequate. Esther *felt her place* just as she was *mesmerized* by art materials as a child.

Unlike both Lisa and Margaret, who succeeded previous art teachers at their schools, Esther inaugurated the art program and art room at Northside. I asked Esther if she remembered her first art classroom. She responded:

> My first one? It was this one. I'm one of the ones who helped figure out for the district what needed to go in it. The supplies, and like the drying racks, and all the stuff that needs to go in an art room. I was part of that committee and that was kind of exciting. (Personal communication, May 18, 2009)

Esther taught at Northside for 20 years. For 13 years she was a third grade teacher. Originally, there was not a specialist art teacher or an art room at Northside. When the school district designed art rooms, they formed a committee, including elementary teachers, to specify stocking of the spaces. I asked her when they added the art room. Esther recalled:

> We were trying to think about that yesterday. I think it has been at least 10 years – and it may be a little bit longer than that. We had it before and it just stayed empty and was just like storage kind o' area. Nobody used it and it was just here. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Over ten years before, former district coordinators for art and science had decided that the best way to enhance art and science education in the elementary schools was by first establishing supportive facilities. They realized that "changed spaces will change practice" (Oblinger, 2006). Plans were based on the truth and importance of objects to both science and art education. Storage and usage of extra materials and processes were perceived as stumbling blocks for elementary classroom teachers. It was felt that such supportive spaces would enable them to better teach science and art curricula – at least until specialists were added.

Esther (at the time a third grade teacher) teamed with other colleagues and a local museum education coordinator to develop interdisciplinary art curricula for elementary generalist teachers. Those curricula are still used. Unfortunately, the shared art teaching room at Northside did not serve as well. Esther referred to the furnished art room as "empty" and a "storage kind o' area" during the three years before she became the fulltime art teacher. Esther's role (as a classroom generalist) on the committee developing interdisciplinary art curriculum and advising the stocking of the space gave her intimate connections to what eventually became her art room. Her principal perceived her as ideal for

the job when the art teaching position was opened. As the first art teacher at Northside Elementary, Esther continued to take charge of her teaching place.

First Impressions

Of the three teachers in this study, Esther made the most changes to her classroom over the year. At our initial interview, she announced, “I like moving things around and changing things a lot” (Personal communication, May 8,

Figure 93. Esther’s initial classroom arrangement.

2008). When I first entered Esther’s room, student tables formed a broken “U” around the central pedestal sink. There were similar rows of tables facing outward at each side wall. Students were spread out as far as possible. Esther’s arrangement seemed to focus students on individual engagement with their own work. At the end of the study (the following school year), Esther had arranged the room in almost a completely opposite configuration. All of the student tables were grouped in collaborative threes and gathered into the center of the room. Instead of leaving a large space around the central pedestal sink, tables butted right up to it on three sides.

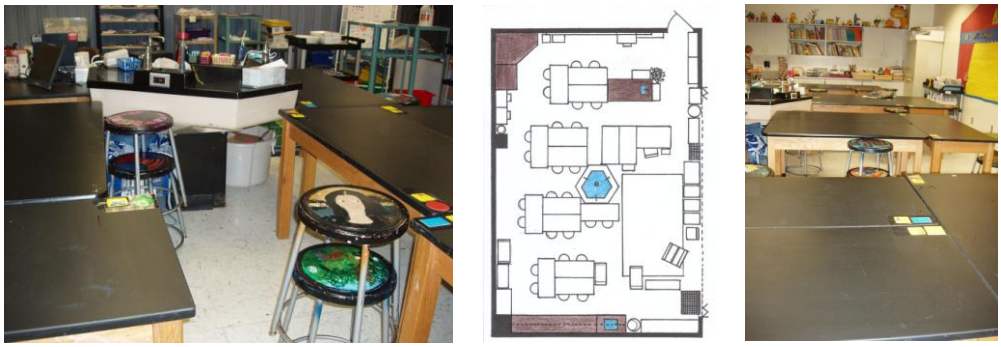


Figure 94. Esther's second classroom arrangement.

This arrangement can be most clearly referenced on the floor plan. Student table groups were almost entirely on the left side of the room. The teacher desk -- a bit surprisingly to me – was centered in the room. Esther's desk faced the

Figure 95. Esther's desk in center of classroom.

classroom entrance door. She had reshuffled the "front" of her classroom. Esther moved the student dialogue rug to the new "front."

Esther's classroom was larger than Lisa's and Margaret's. Both Esther and Margaret had 15 student tables. Neither used all of them for students. Lisa

had the equivalent of 14 student tables. Lisa had six square tables (equal to 12 rectangular tables). She was the only one with the larger tables and was also the only one who did not change the seating arrangement. Lisa had much less flexibility. Esther's later grouping of tables appeared very crowded to me; it seemed more so when in the room (as seen in the photographs) than on the floor plan. The view from the doorway revealed changes over the year. Esther's desk is the first in view upon entry. The books and tree hide the teaching lab counter.

Figure 96. Overviews of Esther's classroom from entrance (2008 – 2009).

Center Sink Area

Esther's response to my first question from our first interview affirmed her spatial concerns. I asked her, "What first comes to mind when you think about this classroom?" With no hesitation, Esther offered:

> It's too crowded. I never seem to have enough room. I like to have a gathering space for the children [gestures down to the floor] and to talk with them or show them an art print and be allowed to talk together. And this large sink is in my way [gestures to central pedestal sink]. That thing over there [gestures toward teaching lab counter] – the counter top thing is in my way. Every summer I put in a work order to have those removed and they haven't done it so I don't think they ever will. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Figure 97. Esther's unwanted pedestal sink and teaching lab counter.

Esther felt subjected to working around the two massive areas with sinks she rarely used. The size and location of both units were aggravating to her. In that context, the arrangement of tables around the pedestal sink brought me to thoughts of *circling in for the kill.* Continuing on with that thought, Esther's later grouped tables, shoved next to the sink, seemed to have *attacked the enemy*. War was not over; Esther put in the work order to remove them *every summer*.

Esther found that perseverance could pay off. When something requested was fulfilled, another adaptation was resolved. Esther smiled when she told about her new rug; she was truly excited about having it:

> And I finally got my pretty rug that I have been asking for for seven years, and that made me happy! And I really like that 'cause the kids were sitting on the dirty floor and I didn't like that. So this makes me feel much better for them. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Figure 98. Esther's new rug for student seating.

Even though the space was crowded, Esther was thrilled to have her seven-year request for a rug finally materialize. Esther talked more about her adaptations in dealing with a lack of space:

> It's just not quite large enough I don't think -- and not enough cabinet space to keep things. I have to put a lot of things on carts and then I have to keep moving them and rolling them around and that's a little bit inconvenient, you know. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Rolling carts were in new places with various materials throughout our interviews. Esther explained how she organized the carts:

> I use a lot of the carts – I will have a cart for each grade level. It will be labeled and everything that they need will be on that cart, because I won't have any time to hunt their paper or go get their paints ready. It's like being a teacher with a cart, like they used to have to travel around. I have to have the room arranged so that I can have enough space to line the carts up so I can pull them out real quick and get going on them and get

Figure 99. Esther's organizational carts.

them started. The books I need, the paint, the brushes – whatever I need has to be ready. So it's not good. It's much easier if you can leave it out on the table. I keep telling them that, but they just don't listen, so I don't know. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)At every interview I noted changed location, purpose, status of projects, or materials on Esther's variety of carts. She anticipated using them even more the next year when her schedule changed back to mixed grade levels every day. Esther was the only teacher in the study who taught all one grade level each day. Margaret even mentioned it and talked about how nice it would be to teach the same lesson, with the same materials, for a whole day. Esther preferred her current schedule.

Right Side Entry and Curtain Wall

Figure 100. Esther's curtain wall (2008 – 2009).

Changes in Esther's room were not limited to only rearranging the furnishings. Esther also changed what she had on her walls. Photos facilitated

comparisons. A student recognition area just inside the threshold was changed into a circus tent -- housing “amazing art.” Esther posted an image of the interior of the Guggenheim by Wright and Cassatt’s *Nurse and Child*. Although one was architecture and the other portraiture, both exhibited strong expressive and emotional imagery. The Guggenheim organic interior structure resonated with musical fluidity. Cassatt’s painting emphasized tender adult-child relationships. Esther’s curtain wall changed from a backdrop for student workers to a rolling cart depot. Her teaching easel moved from one end to the other. I admit that I would not have noticed that the trash cans stayed in the same place except for Esther’s comment about them, “They [students] can’t remember where they are, and they haven’t moved in seven years. They have been in the exact same spot” (Personal communication, May 22, 2009). It seemed to me that as fluid and expressive as Esther was with her teaching space, form still followed function (Sullivan, 1896). She shared her ideas about the divider, “Blue wall/door dividing art/science lab makes the room dark – color is depressing to me” (Personal communication, May 21, 2009). Esther liked what another teacher had in front of the blue curtain, so she sought the same:

> And I have asked the PTA this next year to build me some more shelves because I saw it at Thompson Elementary (pseudonym). PTA got her these big metal heavy steel shelves, and she put little curtains over them and did little art print things. And that’s where she stores like this stuff that I have on carts. She has boxes with each class and her big stuff like the

sculptures or weaving were stored in there…. I don't know if I will get it or not, but I'm hoping I will. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Esther was open to better ideas for increasing the functionality of her spaces; she used a lot of containers.

Back Wall with Sink Counter

Esther was an organizer. She wrote on her first drawing of her space, "Love for my room to look pretty, show a lot of art, be prepared when children arrive, be easy to move around to pass out things, etc." (Personal

Figure 101. Esther's back wall.

communication, May 21, 2009). Her attention to neatly arranging materials for student access was evidenced at the right side of her rear wall. Esther's engagement with materials and her orderly propensities, combined with her willingness to invest, enabled her to create an area that reminded me of a supply store display. Esther evaluated her endeavors:

Figure 102. Esther's containers changed (2008 – 2009).

This year I tried to organize the supplies back there with color coding. Oh boy, that didn't last too long. I loved it. I mean I had everything so neat, nice, and organized. And right now, it looks like it went to pot. I think it's gone. But it did work for awhile. But when you get real busy, I don't have time to put stuff away. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Figure 103. Books and textbooks at the back of Esther's room (2008 – 2009).

Esther's shelves maintained an ordered appearance in spite of her claims. Views of her book shelves over a year evidenced some movement of books on the lower shelves, but little on the upper shelves (including textbooks).

Figure 104. Esther's sink used by students.

The small sink in counter area had limited use for Esther. She described:

> That sink back there is too small. The hot water is the first handle the kids come to and that's what they turn on, and it gets hot. I don't like that. The sprayer is right there for them to grab – which I don't like. I wish they had done it different back there. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Left Side Wall Gallery and Teacher Space

Figure 105. Esther's gallery wall (2008 – 2009).

Yes, Esther liked change. Her wall displays also changed drastically. On her longest wall, Esther took down all of her gallery art images and Garfield characters to make a new circus theme. Initially, her gallery was filled with art images -- from postcard to poster size. Esther spoke about the art images, “I like all the art that’s up” (Personal communication May 8, 2008). A year later the space under the big top was a place to hang children’s art. I considered the wall was empty because there were only a few days left on the school calendar.

Figure 106. Esther’s wall of art images changed to a place for children’s art.

At the front corner, a teacher space was adapted into Esther’s “recovery area – where the kids can go if they are having a little trouble settling down or whatever.” That was the first year that she was required to accommodate behavior issues with an isolated physical space. Esther added, “And finding a quiet secluded spot in here was kind of difficult” (Personal communication, May 8, 2008). New mandates dictated allocation of area within an already crowded classroom. I never observed this space in use.

Figure 107. Esther's computer area changed to student recovery area and space for materials.

Having a teacher space was valued by Esther:

> I like to have my own little office area where the kids don't come. So I always try to make a little space for that so I have my own territory that I can kind of retreat to if I need a place. My desk … and my computer area is my space, and the kids know not to go there. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Figure 108. Esther's desk and personal space in center of room.

Esther's students respected her space. It was a little greater challenge when she placed herself prominently centered in the room:

> I call this my office and don't like the kids to be in there, even though now they walk by it. And some of them touch it [unhappy voice], and I don't like it. I don't like them touching my desk area -- seems like that is the

> only place in the room that is really, truly just for me. (Personal communication, May 22, 2009)

Esther claimed more desk area than either Lisa or Margaret. She also had a different technology connected to her LCD projector. Esther used Sympodium – a Smart Board technology. Instead of interacting at the screen as with the common Smart Board, Sympodium had a table-top touch pad with an attached stylus. This small pad had to be in a position for Esther to access, the students to access, accommodating connections to the projector (placed for proper imaging on the screen), and connections to the computer. Outlets on the pedestal sink were used. Teacher desk placement now made sense. Technology mandated certain positioning. With only one computer, Esther needed to use it for teaching and desk work. Using the Sympodium was worth the total room change; Esther contributed:

> I've got this neat thing right here – this little thing right here. It's called a Sympodium, and it's really, really cool. You know the weatherman can draw the arrows and circle things? You can do that with an art print – looking for shapes. It has a little stylus, and you come up and find all the triangles, or the rectangles, or the squares, and they draw on it and so the art print is projected up on there [gestures toward screen at the front of the room] and they mark on it. Where do you see blue? And they come circle it – really, really, really cool! (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Technology in the art room must be considered. When these classrooms were designed, Smart Board technologies were not prominent and poster and

overhead transparencies were the norm. Esther said that she frequently used her computer and LCD projector for teaching:

> I make a lot of Power Points for the kids to see. In fact, when I gave the fifth grade's art test to them, I did a Power Point on Picasso – 'cause they had to write an essay on an artist. I was surprised at how much they remembered. 'Cause they saw the Power Point two times, but they remembered so much from it. I was really surprised. The kids are into that kind of stuff now-a-days you know, so really it worked on them. I was like, 'yes.' I was afraid they wouldn't be able to answer any of the questions and write about him. But they even remembered the little tiny details. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Esther kept up with current technology. Her Elmo also needed to be connected to the LCD projector. She added, "I use the Elmo often to project a demo thing so that all the kids can see it – for the older kids especially" (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Front of Classroom

Figure 109. Front of Esther's classroom.

At the front of the classroom, Esther found the teacher lab counter too high to use. She only used it for storage. Flowers were in the unused sink in the unit. Esther had a white marker board on her front wall rather than a black

Figure 110. Esther's computer desk and marker board.

chalkboard like Lisa and Margaret had. When her desk was on the front left side of the room, there were student drawings posted on that end of the board. Two of them were hearts. Not unlike Margaret, Esther valued student admiration. The teacher space filled that entire corner. She placed her computer on the small built-in desk attached to the corner cabinet. An art poster of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* hung over that area. *Starry Night*, as Esther's chosen artwork, reinforced notions of her preferences for expressive emotionalism.

What was not viewed in Esther's classroom were certain *sacred stories* of art history timelines, posters of elements, and principles, or other art making concepts. A color wheel was hanging on the right side of the marker board, and the shapes drawn on the board referenced art elements. Esther taught the longest and seemed to value using her visual space for her own aesthetic -- rather than supporting a conceptual content setting. Yes, she displayed artwork, but she was unafraid of replacing the masters with the children's creations. It

could be that over her years of teaching she became assured that what she taught did not have to be on constant display. She enjoyed stuffed animals, Garfield, flowers, and plants.

Figure 111. Esther's collections of personal objects in her classroom.

Storage Room

Like Lisa and Margaret, Esther had a separate supply room and kiln room. Access to the supply room is troublesome. Esther informed:

> I have to go out into the hallway and in through another door to get to my supply room – which means I've left the kids unattended if I have to run get something and I don't really like that. I wish there was a door way into the supply room directly from this room. It's hard to maneuver two big heavy doors to try to get supplies in and out. (Personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Figure 112. Esther's storage room.

At our very last interview I found there was even a greater issue for Esther and her supply room. She was not the only one with access. Esther shared:

> [Other teachers] can come in and get anything they want out of it. And when I'm ordering stuff, I'm like ordering for the whole school and with no budget.

I led her to continue, "-- and you have no way of knowing?"

Esther shook her head and continued by finishing my sentence:

> who takes what. One day I was planning on using wiggle eyes for our little project. I went to get them and they were gone. Somebody, you know, had used them, and they don't tell me. I tried a sign-out sheet; they still didn't sign it out.

I asked again, "So all teachers have access to the room?"

Esther responded:

> Yes, they do. This is the only room they don't go in [kiln room]. They don't like the kiln room; they're afraid of it. (Personal communication, May, 22, 2009)

All teachers in the school had keys to the art supply room. That equal access created a difficult scenario for Esther. It could have sounded inconceivable for any school to allow all teachers to use the art supplies ordered by the art teacher – except for our storied knowledge about how the art teaching program originated at Northside. Dewey (1938) emphasized the importance of understanding the ongoing continuum of life experiences. Narrative inquiry opens the dialogue to broaden and deepen connections.

Northside's art room originated with communal ownership; this was a part the story of its existence. Everything was provided for anyone who wanted to

use it. One might point out that at Grand Isle, Margaret did not have this problem. And at Rover, Lisa did not even feel compelled to share glue when a teacher came in to apologetically request a little for one project. But unlike either Margaret or Lisa, Esther taught at Northside when everything was shared; from the inception of the art room, she was only another common owner. Esther even facilitated sharing when she helped to prepare the lists of what materials to stock – for entire staff access. I contend that it was quite possible that others at Northside may have had no idea about the challenges this made for Esther now; after all, she had been just like one of them several years ago. From other teachers' perspectives, nothing had changed. The art room was still there; they never used it. Supplies were there; they always used what they wanted.

It is possible that Esther may not have voiced her dismay in fear of harming her positive peer relationships. The reader remembers how difficult it was for Esther during her first year of teaching when she felt like an unwelcomed intruder. Esther seemed more of a peacemaker to me. It was true that now Esther was a seasoned teacher, with years as a comrade with her colleagues, but her role changed. Because of that, she was the only one who fully understood her new relationship with the art material objects. Those objects had become crucial rather than only supportive. Esther's own truths about the objects held a new and varied definition from the rest of the administration and staff at Northside.

Kiln Room

Teachers helped themselves to art supplies in Esther's classroom as well as the storage room. Only one place seemed inaccessible to them – the kiln room; "they're afraid of it." I laughed as I responded to that statement from Esther with, "So that's where you plan to store things." Esther laughed as well when she answered, "Yeah, that's where I put things I don't want anybody to take" (Personal communication, May 22, 2009)

Figure 113. Esther's kiln room.

Fortunately for Esther, her kiln room was larger and accommodated more storage. Rolling carts next to the kiln could only park there when nothing was being fired. Since Esther chose to limit the clay work, she was able to use the kiln room for general storage as well. Esther explained:

> Clay really wears me out. There are supposed to be two projects, and I can only do one. It's just too much to have to do two to fit everything else in our curriculum. So I do it one time and that's it.

I further enquired, "Do you set up to do the clay for all of the classes at one time, or do you stagger things in your schedule?"

Esther continued:

> This year and last year I did it all at one time with everybody because of the way the clay came in and the way the schedule is this year. Last year the clay came in very, very late. I didn't get it until almost the end of the school year, so that was kind of a necessity to do it all together. This year we're on a different schedule where I have all of first grade on one day and all of second grade on one day, and so I thought it would be easy. They are each doing something different – just do it all at the same time; and I can tell whose is whose. Lots of momma's were offering to help me, so I said okay. But it's been a lot of clay – a lot of stuff to store and keep.

Esther further considers:

> Although it has gone kind of smoothly, it's still a lot to do at one time. So it's probably better if I tried to stagger it out… [But] there's no clean up time [between groups]. So I don't know how I'm going to work it…. But I

> think I would stagger it next year and not do it all in the same week. ‘Cause it also aggravates asthma and all of the clay dust – it gets on the floor; it gets on the furniture; it gets everywhere; and it’s not healthy for me or for the kids. So maybe if I … did one grade level, it might solve that problem. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Esther did not like working with clay. Her allergies were aggravated. There were also storage issues throughout the process. She had volunteer mothers help.

How Lisa, Margaret, and Esther Viewed their Places

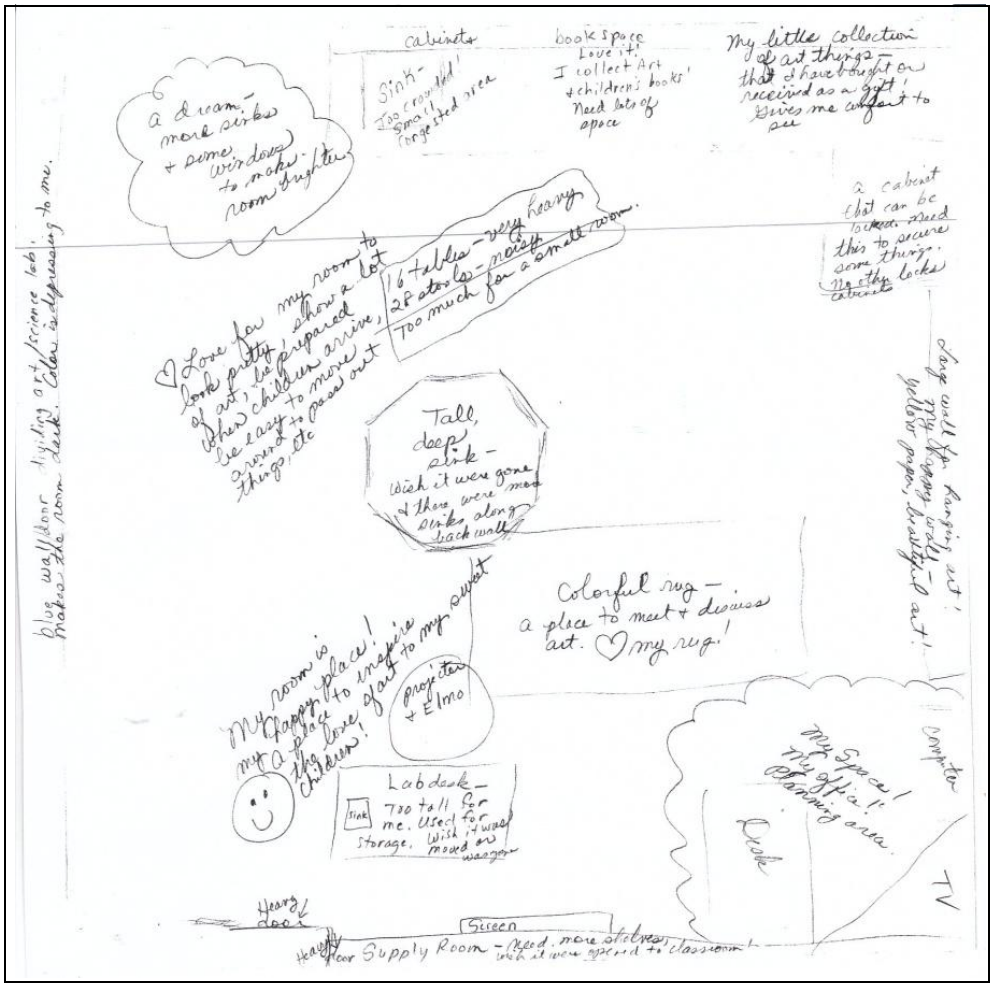


Figure 114. Esther’s illustration of her room.

During our first interview I asked Esther to illustrate how she saw her classroom. She mapped out general areas and added written comments. Esther included a smiling happy face and a heart; she said, “My sweet children” (Personal communication, May 8, 2008). Positive areas noted included her bookshelves at the rear of the room that housed her art and children’s book collection and her “collection of art things” above. Esther labeled her side art gallery wall “my happy wall.” Her office space and “colorful rug” completed the positive notes. Projector, Elmo, and screen were simply labeled. Esther listed the obstacles as the lab desk, tall deep sink, back counter sink, curtain wall, and limited space and access to the storage room. She included adaptations eliminating the lab desk and pedestal sink, and adding a locked cabinet, more sinks, and windows. Esther labeled doors and tables as heavy and that there were too many tables and stools for the space. Esther’s first drawing of her place is grouped with those of Lisa and Margaret.

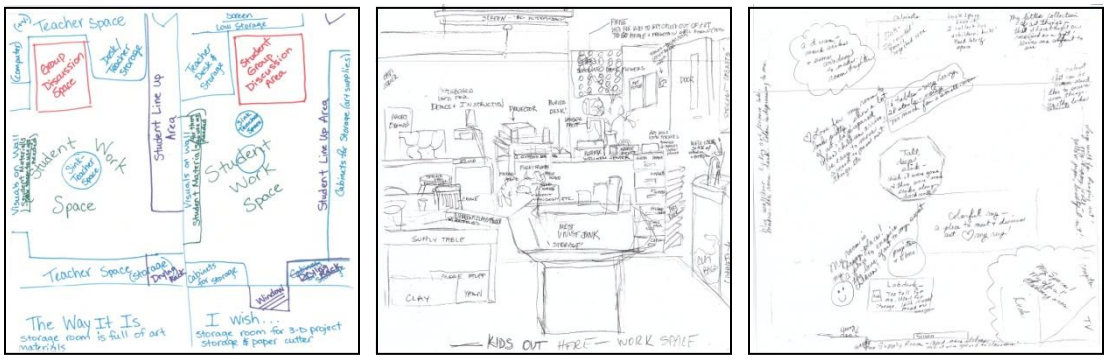


Figure 115. Lisa’s, Margaret’s, and Esther’s illustrations of their classrooms.

Relational Subjective and Adaptive Narratives of Place

Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all tried to harness physical aspects in each of their places to incorporate aesthetically pleasing elements and to make them

pedagogically useful. From their place narratives, I viewed how Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, equipped with art teaching objectives, met such situated object truths. Emergent obstacles elicited subjective and adaptive responses. Dewey conveyed it this way, “Space … becomes a comprehensive and enclosed scene within which are ordered the multiplicity of doings and undergoings …” (1934, p. 23). Each of the teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes had both common ground and individual expansive qualities.

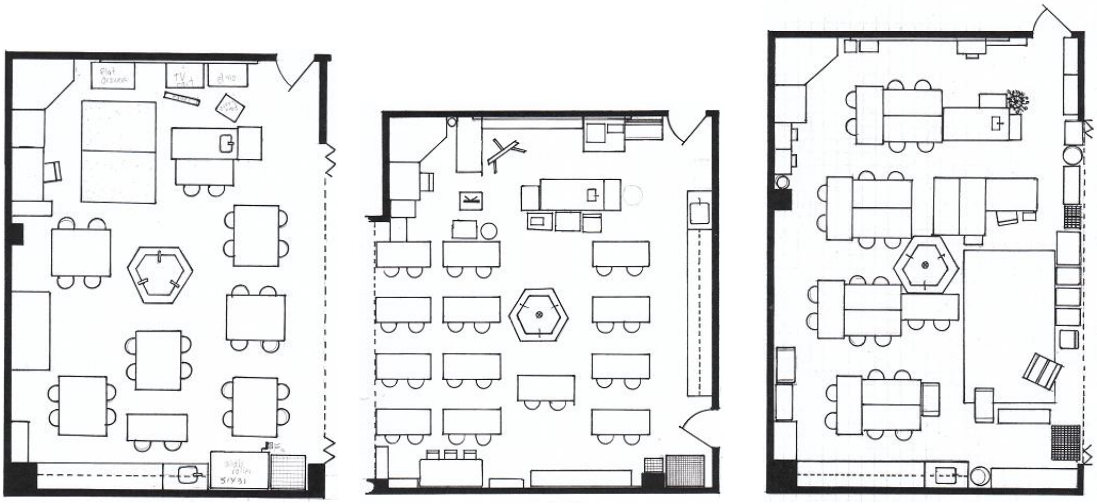


Figure 116. Comparing floor plans of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Floor plan views reveal common fixtures and furnishings. Student work tables were movable. Lisa’s six square tables were twice the size of the rectangular ones in Margaret’s and Esther’s rooms. The square tables made Lisa’s student work spaces less flexible. Lisa acknowledged, “The tables for two are more versatile; you can move them around a lot more” (Personal communication, May 14, 2009). She was the only one who did not modify classroom arrangement throughout the year.

Table and seating locations accommodated, validated, or challenged individual work, group collaboration, and visual orientation. Students in all three classrooms were observed sitting at their tables during teacher instruction. From whatever area of the room they chose to teach, some of Lisa and Esther's students needed to turn to focus. Margaret taught from the front of her classroom. She adapted her arrangement to best enable student engagement with her there. Lisa and Esther had grouped tables together; they both had students gather on the rug areas when they wanted the students highly focused direct attention. Margaret had an accommodating floor space tucked behind her teaching lab counter, but students never accessed it during my five visits. It was not clear if she used it for motivation or as a place for the students to access books. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther adapted arrangements or their instruction.

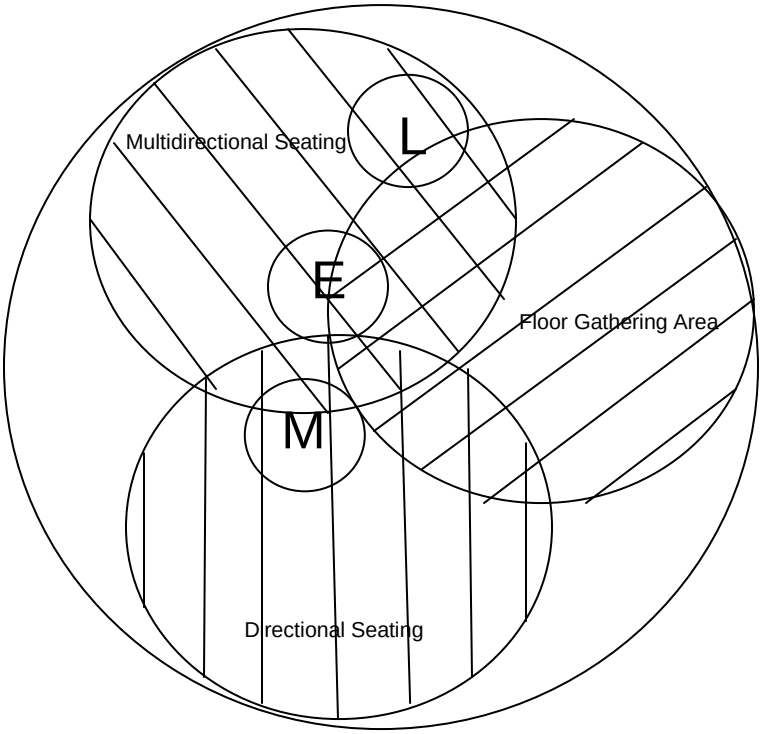


Figure 117. Seating for instruction and activity story constellation.

The story constellation of seating for instruction and activity shows the relationships between how Lisa, Margaret, and Esther ordered student arrangements in their classrooms. Three large lined circles represent directional seating (all students facing one direction), multidirectional seating, and gathered seating in another area (often floor rug). The small circles are lettered to represent Lisa (L), Margaret (M), and Esther (E). Lisa had multidirectional group seating during the entire year. Her square tables restricted her from seating all students facing in one direction. She used her floor rugs as a gathering area. Esther had multidirectional seating, but her first arrangement had rows of students facing the center and outer walls. She also used her area rug to gather students closer. Margaret placed her students all facing the front of the classroom. Her earlier arrangement had them across from each other in opposing directional rows. Margaret is close to the circle for gathered seating on the floor. She had an area; it was minimal; and I never saw it used.

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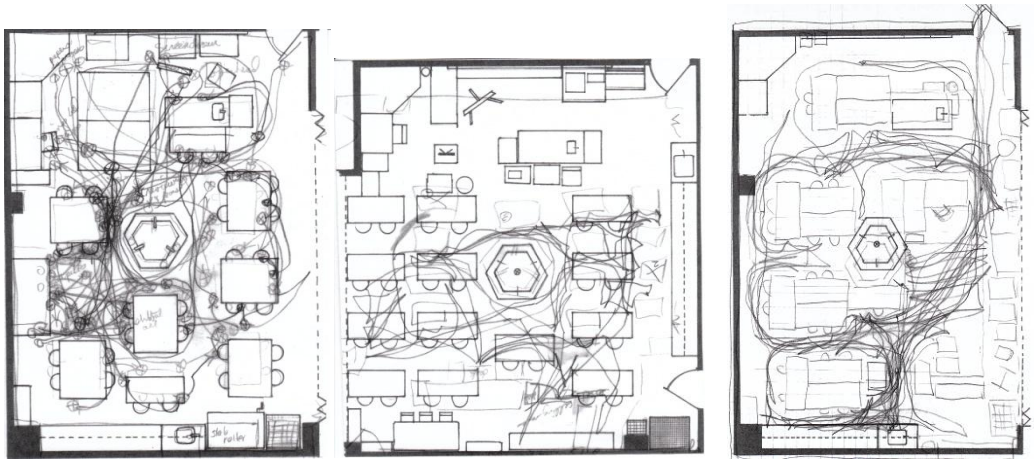


Figure 118. Mapped movements from observations of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Teaching content, in terms of how instruction is given and individual versus collaborative responses, held relationships to physical arrangement. The layout of the furnishings also impacted teacher mobility. Documented traffic paths from one class period highlighted highly accessed areas and movements. Lisa's movement was mostly on the left side of her room. She had her materials' table there. She illustrated processes from the large table just below the pedestal sink. Margaret's movement reflects multiple paths from one area to another. Esther moved the most through the open area around her floor rug and back to the rear counter. Access to the left side of the room was limited to coming around from the top or bottom. All three living patterns (Alexander, 1979) were restricted from direct crossing through the middle by the pedestal sinks.

Inadequate Sinks and Spaces

All three teachers listed limited space and sink issues as the greatest obstacles. The two were not entirely separate issues. The large pedestal sinks dominating the core of their spaces became a focal point in the rooms. I

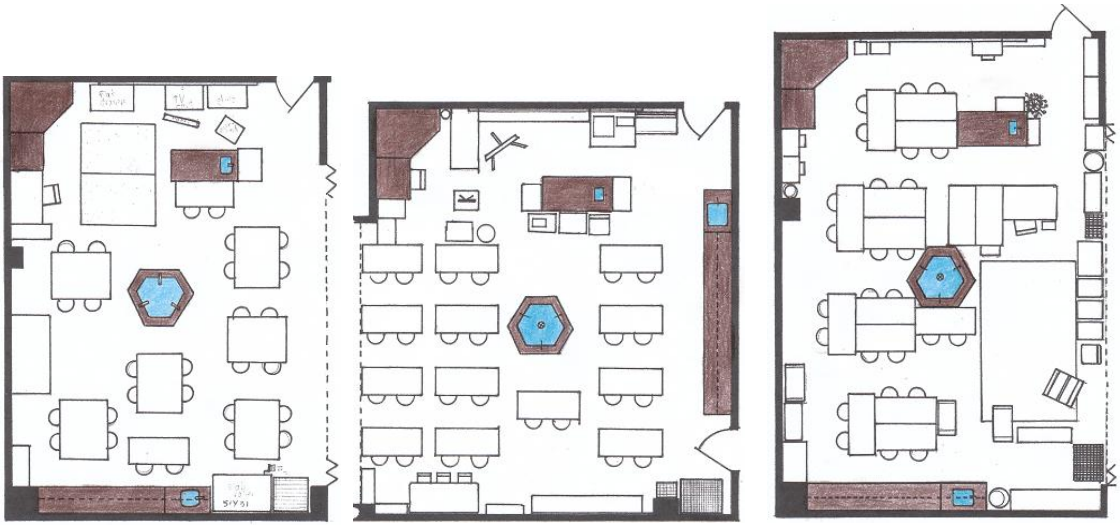


Figure 119. Built-in structures in Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's classrooms.

considered that Lisa's theory of their presence securing the room as only suitable for art instruction held validity. I had wondered before if that was part of the underlying intent. Place contains and enables (Alexander, 1979); Ceppi & Zini, 1998; Dewey, 1934; Marcus, 1995; Strozzi & Vecchi, 2002). If place supports art instruction in a way that would not equally support general usage, it becomes a worthy patron. These center sinks and teaching lab counters were still empty promises and space grabbers to Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Their need for more space was aggravated by the blatant presence of sizable fixed units. Peripheral counters were not seen as problematic. Margaret even wanted another one on the other side of her room. Lisa and Esther desired additional storage but preferred a modified sink design.

With the obstacles unveiled, I looked to find out if and how Lisa, Margaret, and Esther dealt with these object challenges. Reader will remember that the space was not the only issue with the sinks. Water was not well controlled from existing faucets. Adaptations had not helped much. It splashed everywhere, formed puddles on the floor, and the reach was up too high for children to access. Margaret attempted to submit to the sink – she used it throughout previous years. By the time of this study, none used it for students anymore. All three occasionally used it for teacher cleanup. The encircling counter became the most functional aspect; it became a convenient place access materials.

However, the greater issue was not necessarily how Lisa used the sink to do teacher clean up, or how Margaret and Esther "served" materials from its ledges, but what impact this sink, and other functioning sinks, had on the

Figure 120. Adapted usages of pedestal sinks by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

teaching content. When I asked for negative memories of teaching, Lisa recalled water and sink access from her first teaching position:

> My first year as a real teacher I was in a basement in a school…. There was a bathroom there. It was about half the size of this table – about two feet by four feet. It had a toilet in it and a little bitty sink and that was the only sink I had…. It was just hard working in that space…. You had to go up a flight of stairs to get to any water source. So even getting a bucket of water back downstairs was hard. And the sink was little and shallow, so it was hard to get it. So usually I was filling it up with cups. That was difficult…

I further inquired, “Did you end up changing any activities because of it?” Lisa continued:

> No, I just barreled right through. I was too young to know the difference [smiled]. I don’t think I did. No, we even did paper mâché. It just took longer. Everything took longer. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

Lisa recalled the water retrieval and clean up from a bucket as a negative situation and quite a challenge. Her memories were of submitting to the situation and “barreling right through.” She added, “I’ve always been appreciative after that” (Personal communication, April 27, 2009). If “everything took longer,” it affected teaching content – quality and quantity. I reasoned that extra time spent “dipping water with a cup” and “dumping buckets” could have been better used for more research, preparation, teaching, assessment, and reflection.

Inadequate sink usage did not deter Margaret. When I asked her to share her favorite and least favorite activities in her classroom, I was initially surprised when she named painting as best. Margaret validated her choice:

Painting -- ‘cause once they get going on it, they’re [she whispered] quiet. And they’re just so into it. And they’re so proud of themselves when it’s done. That’s what I like. And they don’t feel like they need me, need me, need me.

Margaret reflected and added:

> Except for the cleanup -- there’s the good and bad with everything. (Personal communication, May 8, 2009)

It did not take me long to remember Margaret’s fondest memories of painting with her grandmother – or her counter full of various paints. Margaret loved painting.

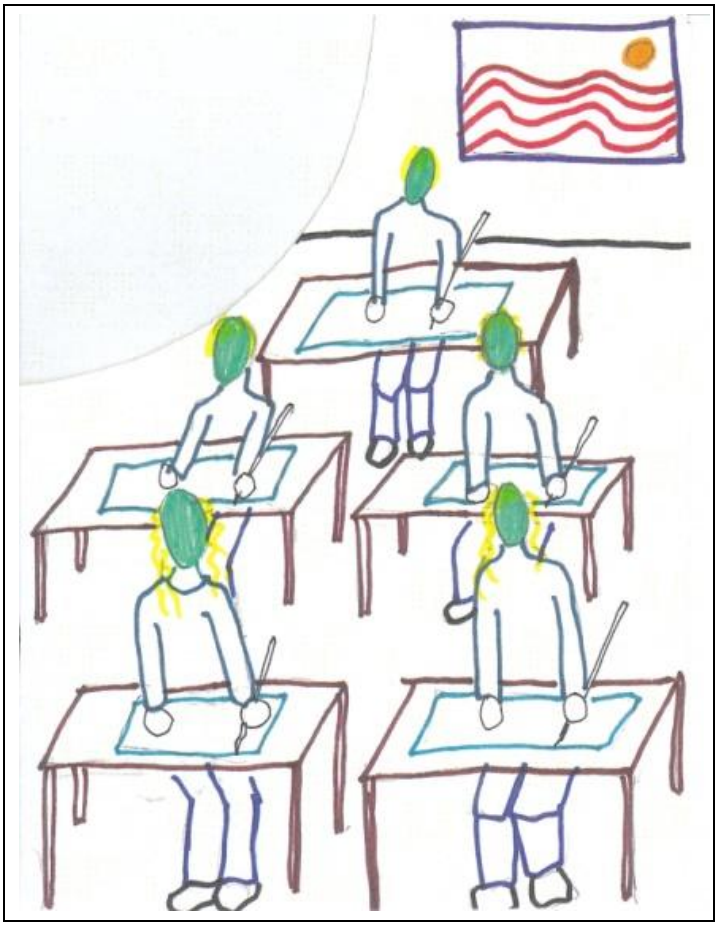


Figure 121. Margaret's drawing of her favorite classroom activity.

Margaret relished seeing her students engrossed in painting. She did not look forward to cleanup, though. Painting was important to Margaret and was not an art content area that she would readily put aside. She did not want to submit to her sink issues; she tolerated the situation, while wishing for better.

Esther was mesmerized by art materials. She remembered paints and a variety of brushes from her youth. When I asked her what teaching activity was the most challenging to do within her space, one of her choices was paint:

> I don't like using liquid tempera paints. It is very hard to get them out -- have enough containers. I tried egg cartons, and then they mix all the colors. And when the kids are kind of back to back, it's hard to get them

refilled. It is very hard to use liquid. I mean, I love them – liquid tempera – but it's very hard to use it.

Esther needed to keep the painting, so she found an adaptation:

So I went to the tempera cakes. They're fun, they're good, but they're like the water color, and the kids struggle with getting enough water on them to make them work properly. Maybe I don't exactly know how to use them the correct way.

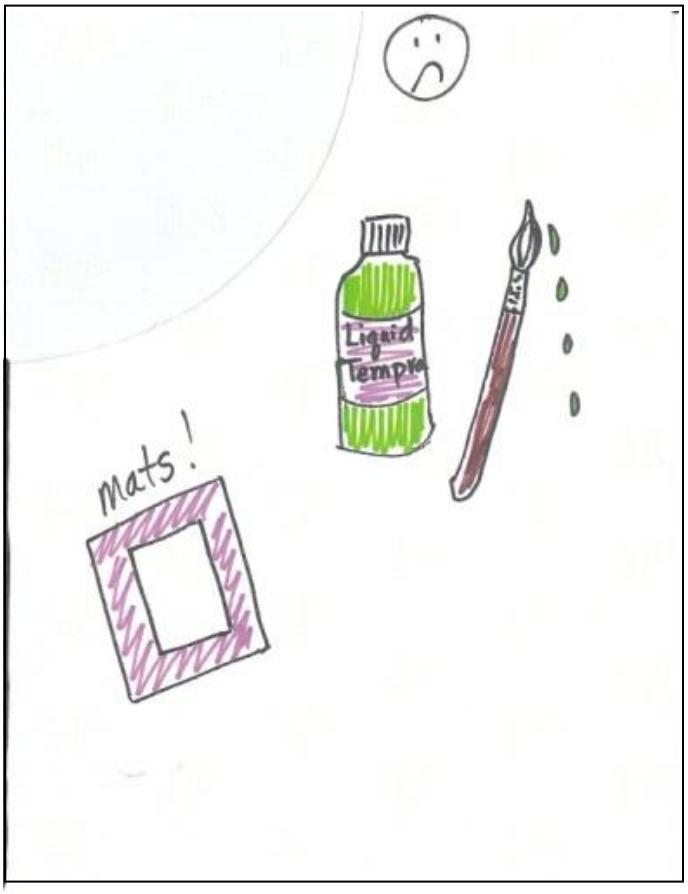


Figure 122. Esther's drawing of her least favorite classroom activities.

Esther revisited the idea of liquid paint:

Liquid tempera paint bothers me although I love to use it. But it's just very hard to distribute, clean up -- and then you have the leftovers. And maybe

> I don't use it for a few weeks, and they put in little cups with lids. The kids will spill the little cups. (Personal communication, May 21, 2009)

Esther's choice of cake tempera eliminated cleaning palettes and paint spills.

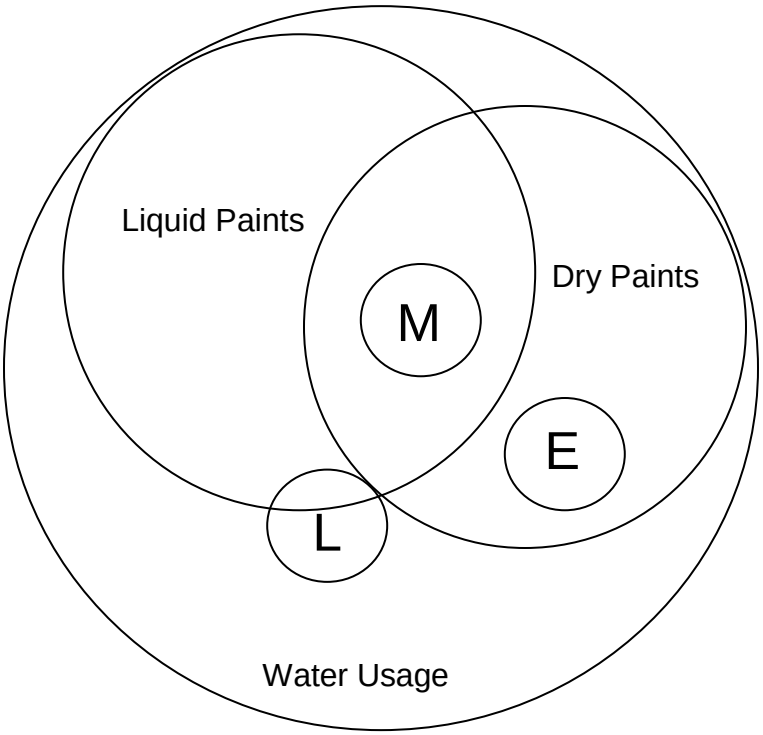


Figure 123. Painting story constellation.

Although several media require water, I focused on painting. Water containers needed to be filled prior to painting; brushes, water containers, and palettes required cleaning afterwards. Paint as a medium connected to water usage provides a relational story of selected application. Selected application is twofold. First, paint is only one medium that requires water usage in the elementary art classroom. Most likely, some cleanup with water would be used daily with each class. The second selected application stems from relating only what was referenced or evidenced during the five interviews and four observations of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. The full area within the largest circle

is labeled water usage to situate painting as necessitating water access. Medium sized circles denote liquid paints and dry paints (cakes). Small circles are Lisa (L), Margaret (M), and Esther (E).

Lisa did not talk specifically about painting, but she acknowledged extra time was needed when there were water limitations. Large bottles of paint locally accessible in a prominent location on her counter indicated usage. Lisa's only reference was written on her choice of larger paper; no observations of classes included painting. Phenomenon placed Lisa into the liquid paint circle.

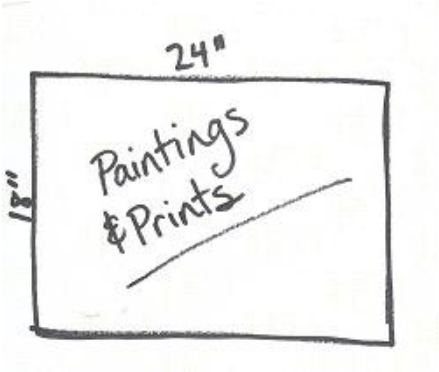


Figure 124. Lisa's drawing of her least favorite classroom activity.

Margaret's love for painting kept her thinking about better adaptations. The reader recalls the pumps on her bottles of paint to allow quicker distribution. Cleanup did not offer her such shortcuts. Margaret referenced painting, her counter top was filled with paints, and I saw her students paint (cake tempera). Both liquid and dry paints were equally accessible on Margaret's counter. I placed Margaret fully within the wet and dry paint circles. Esther gave up liquid paint usage altogether because of the extra problems with distribution, conservation, and cleanup. Esther is only in the dry paint circle.

Media objects (including brushes, liquid paints, dry paints, choices of palettes, sponges, paper towels, etc.) and connected water issues had physical impacts on Lisa, Margaret, and Esther – affecting resultant teaching content. Each teacher developed her own painting lived pattern (Alexander, 1979) within her place. Overall, I considered that the pedestal sink concept for group cleanup – had it not been laden with functional design problems – could have supported content areas such a painting in a fine manner. Designing an even better option (Sullivan, 1896) could change art content, minimize material maintenance time, and allow more time for instruction and creative responses.

Inadequate Spaces for Art Making

Ranking as high as the sink issue, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther agreed that lack of adequate space and storage was a major physical classroom challenge. Lisa had the most to contribute regarding limited space for specific art making endeavors:

> Every other year here, we've done big Earth Day things in the hallway – big murals in the hallway of an environment. And the whole school works on it. And watching them go through it in the hallway is really neat. They all get really quiet like they're really going through the jungle or the wetlands, and they're pointing out animals. It's more like it's alive. That's what I like the best – when they get really serious about it.

I probed about place, and Lisa continued:

> The paintings were done in here. All the tables squished against this side so we had a big enough space there to be able to walk around the mural –

about 24 feet by 9 feet. Then six of those went up in the hallway – big, huge, hallway mural. (Personal communication, April 27, 2009)

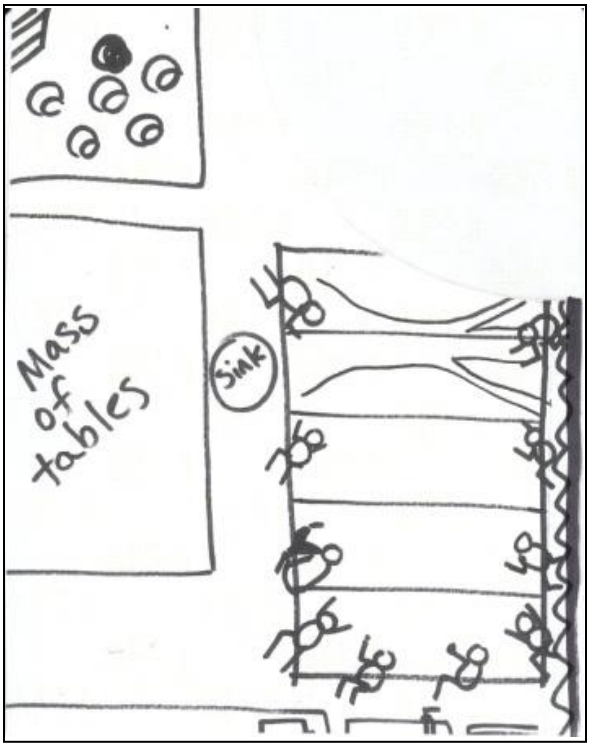


Figure 125. Lisa's drawing of her favorite classroom mural activity.

Even with the major adaptation of space, Lisa chose the mural project as her favorite to teach in her classroom. Kindergarteners and first graders did not work directly on the murals. Lisa shared more about adaptations:

> I took first and kindergarten in the gazebo [behind school] that week. We drew names that week, and I have five huge pieces of rolled paper glued together down there [on floor], and half the class is painting on that while the other half is watching *Bill and I* on wetlands, or *Reading Rainbow* on coral reefs, or whatever we're doing – learning about – doing their artist research – learning about what we're making. So I've got about 15 down

> on the thing and about 15 here [half of room with tables], and they swap about half way through the class.

Lisa considered the physical challenges:

> When I had smaller classes they did this too, but I have just too many little ones. And actually it's crowded, but it works. At least it will fit right between the sink and the curtain. It was nicer when I could open the curtain – when there wasn't a science teacher. Because then, I could have people working on animals while we were working on that. There's just not quite enough room for half of the class around the mass of tables. (Personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Art processes and products were valued by Lisa. Her narratives placed the mural story immediately following the one of her students' gallery installation. Lisa saw fulfillment in her students' responses to large collaborative works – completed and installed. Her willingness to make great adaptations impressed me. The undertaking overwhelmed her space, but it promoted artist feelings of great accomplishment. Lisa refused to submit to physical constraints when it came to producing art. Kindergarten and first grade students had adapted teaching content during mural time. Lack of adequate space did affect content.

Inadequate Storage

Storage spaces provided challenges to Lisa, Margaret and Esther. Similar in magnitude to Lisa's huge mural projects every two years, Esther had taken charge of a yearly art night at Northside elementary. She described the event:

> For the last five years, we've done *Art Night* – 15 different art activities the

> kids can do. They bring families. It's for families. And they came with their families, and we had door prizes, a theme – like last year we were Hawaiian. We gave them a lei when they came in, and everything had to do with Hawaii. And they traveled around and did all of the art activities. And it was just a lot of fun. We average about 400 kids, about 300 parents, and about 150 volunteers. And it's a lot of work, a lot of work; but it was very good.

Esther reflected and then continued:

> But I'm not doing another one. I've already told them I've done my last one. Five is enough. They can – PTA can find something else to do. They sponsored it and paid for it. We spent about $200 on each booth. The kids just love it. They are thinking there's going to be another one, but there won't be.

Esther's frustration extended past the overwhelming organization and leading of each evening of fun:

> My supply room's a wreck … art night just about did it in this year. (Personal communication, May, 21, 2009)

Lisa's and Esther's big projects were draining in preparation, organization, accommodation, installation, and in material object relationships. Both extended throughout the school. Both enjoyed the student opportunities associated. Lisa looked forward to working another mural; her challenge was adapting space for students to create the art and modifying teaching content for those not included. Rover's mural came together over time; the students made it; the installed work

remained on the walls for a time. Esther was overwhelmed by the size, time, and scope of her event. Esther's activities were brief and crowded. She did not relate what types of art projects were made in each booth – it all happened spontaneously and simultaneously and then disappeared. Esther ended up with an unorganized mass of leftover materials in her storeroom. I considered that the remaining extra stuff could have been a significant piece of what finally ended the story for Esther.

Storage issues went beyond massive projects and single magnitude "disaster" events for Lisa, Esther, and Margaret. Esther wanted "more storage shelves and stuff" (Personal communication, May 8, 2009). Readers will recall her hope to have shelves added in front of the curtain wall and how she stocked and used many rolling carts. Esther sought direct access to her storage room from her classroom. Margaret desired the same local access to her storage room. Readers recall Margaret's wish to have her cabinet, counter, sink wall repeated on the other side of her classroom. Lisa envisioned more doored-cabinet storage within her classroom for supplies and conversion of her storeroom to accommodate all student work.

I returned to the question of if and how inadequate storage affects teaching content. Initial thoughts associated crucial teaching objects to content. For example, without accommodating place for a kiln, traditional ceramic work might not happen. Storage issues could also be related to process issues. Readers recall how Lisa altered some of her clay projects -- using flat pieces because of limited storage. Clay storage was needed during making, drying,

firing, and glazing. During this study, my university studios were emptied for building renovation. Our small temporary classroom was approximately a quarter of the original space. With 31 children's classes, I had no place to house hundreds of clay pieces; clay was temporarily eliminated from the curriculum. Margaret had shelves added to the rear of her room to house clay work. Esther restricted clay to one lesson for each class during each academic year. Carts provided all three teachers with extra clay storage space.

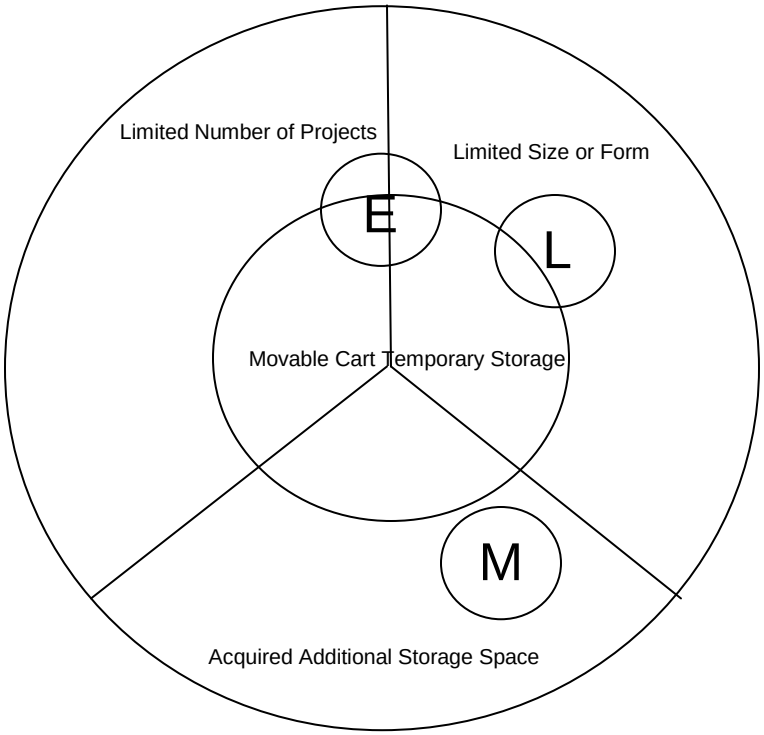


Figure 126. Clay storage impacts on teaching content story constellation.

Relational aspects of subjectivity and adaptivity for storage of clay projects were shown. The large circle represents clay work. Issues of inadequate storage were addressed by limiting the number of projects, limiting the size and form of the projects, acquiring additional storage space, and using carts for transient storage. Margaret (M) was the only one to acquire extra storage for

clay during the study. She had shelf units added to the rear of her room. In referencing floor plans, it was noted that although Margaret had the smallest kiln room, hers was the only one accessible directly from her classroom. That located her new shelves in close, usable proximity. Lisa described how she accommodated storing clay work by predominantly using slabs; Lisa had the large slab roller. Esther minimized the number of clay lessons. Her projects that I saw were all made out of flat slabs. Lisa and Esther used their carts for clay. I saw the most cart usage in Esther's spaces and a significant amount in Lisa's areas. Margaret used flat cardboard boxes instead of carts.

Inadequate Storage for Student Projects and Portfolios

Another important storage issue was considered. With Lisa teaching 875 students, Margaret 575, and Esther 800, storage of student work was a significant challenge for all of them. Student work was retained for project continuation, teacher and student assessment, and display. Margaret listed "clutter" as a negative aspect of her classroom at our first interview. She further defined it as, "mostly kids' art projects and, of course the materials" (Personal communication, May 7, 2008). When I asked how much student work she had at a given time, Margaret replied,

> At least two to three of everybody's art projects -- at least one of those would be three-dimensional…. Right now I store them in that cabinet – in that first cabinet. And it's just really tight.

I probed, "Do you keep their two-dimensional work in folders?"

Margaret nodded and replied:

> -- and they have a separate portfolio – just made with construction paper – with their name on it. And they stack those at their table and put it to match the color. And they stack those up in the class folder. So when they come, I can just pass it out so fast. 'Cause otherwise, it would take the whole class to pass them out [laughed]. (Personal communication, May 7, 2008)

Keeping student portfolios is necessary for continuing work. Lisa related other important considerations in keeping student work for portfolio review:

> I keep most of their artwork here. The little ones do so much. Every nine weeks they pick a best one and sent the rest home. But then this time of the year, some of the classes are still picking; they pick their best one. I keep it here then, and all the other stuff goes home all at once. It's kind of nice for them to see all of their stuff out – proud. And then I put their best one up in the hallway. (Personal communication, May 4, 2009)

Making aesthetic choices was part of teaching content. Students and teachers assessed and chose. A body of work became an invitation for evaluations and reflections. However, just as Margaret revealed, Lisa also shared that there was "no room for artwork – no really good place to store student art – flat or 3D" (Personal communication, May 5, 2009). Lisa used the flat file drawer unit provided for art visuals and the corner cabinet for all two-dimensional student work. Lisa discussed limitations:

> When you have 180 fourth graders, you can't store 180. Before they used the science lab, I could store stuff on the floor in there. So we used to …

> do paper maché masks with a whole grade level and paper mâché built on top of balloons and crumpled paper. That's out. There's nowhere to put it. (Personal communication, May 6, 2009)

Lisa saw storage as limiting teaching content. She reiterated that the teaching area was not the main problem for her:

> Well actually, I can't think of anything that this space is bad for as far as the kids – it's all storage. Like the paper mâché – I think this space would be fine for doing the paper mâché even with the – I could put a bucket in the sink for them to use to scrub their hands off. But there's nowhere to put the projects – so that's out. (Personal communication, May 5, 2009)

Not only did objects within the space affect teaching content, but also what was not accommodated eliminated options. Eisner called such lack of content "null curriculum" (2002).

Esther kept her students' two-dimensional work in the flat file drawers, like the ones where Lisa kept fourth and fifth grade work. Since the area was smaller and Esther taught 800 students, I asked, "Does a lot of stuff go home with them right away?" Esther responded:

> Usually at Christmas I send stuff home and at the end of the year -- the little ones sometimes more often -- because they like to take it home with them. The other kids we usually save some so that we can – I've had portfolios before, but it took up so much space; I just didn't do them this year. But I have had portfolios where we had one for each kid and one for the class and all. (Personal communication, May 22, 2009)

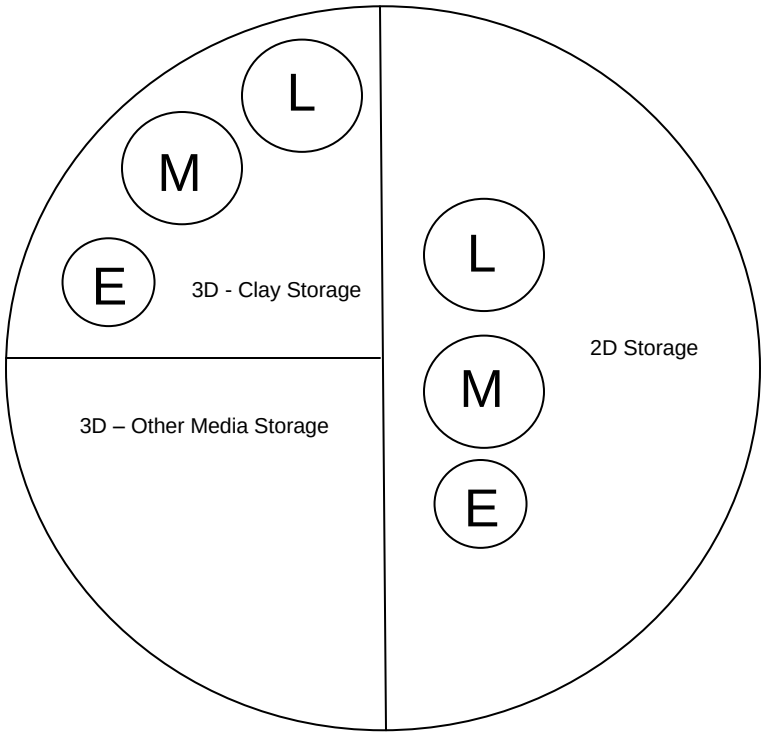


Figure 127. Student project storage impacts on teaching content story constellation.

Esther still kept students' artwork – simply not as much and not organized into individual student portfolios. There were no designed storage areas in any of the classrooms specifically for keeping student work, except for clay. Three-dimensional teaching content was severely limited. Esther had her fifth grade classes work with wood sculptures. She related, "loved doing the wood sculptures. It was just so much fun." When I inquired if they went home right away, Esther responded, "It went home – except for a few pieces that we displayed" (Personal communication, May 21, 2009).

The large circle represents potential storage for student projects. Two-dimensional and three-dimensional art work lie on either side of the vertical division. Lisa (L), Margaret (M), and Esther (E) are placed in areas where they have somehow accommodated storage. Esther is in a smaller circle to illustrate

that she has limited the amount of student project storage – both two-dimensional and clay. The quarter of the constellation with other three-dimensional media is a void. None of the teachers had current storage for any three-dimensional work beyond clay. That quarter is null curriculum (Eisner, 2002). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther named their greatest challenges water and storage. However the most crowded spaces in each of their classrooms

Resourcing Art Images and Technological Challenges

Resourcing art images was an important aspect of initial questions that led me to this study. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were teaching during technological transitions. All three presented art images as part of their teaching content. How they did so varied. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had enlarged art posters provided by the district; some came with the adopted textbooks. The interdisciplinary art curriculum that Esther worked on had many large posters of art works from the local museum's permanent collection. Each of the schools had those images provided. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had some of these art posters on their walls. Lisa kept others accessible in her storage room. Margaret stored hers in the large flat files provided. Esther did not refer to where she kept art posters. Margaret was the only teacher who I observed teaching a class using poster art visuals. Esther had one on her teaching easel. Margaret valued her enlarged art posters; while referencing ownership of spaces, she voiced, "Oh, art posters. Oh, I really want those to be mine" (Personal communication, May 11, 2009). That led me to consider that she frequently used them for teaching.

Figure 128. Art visuals stored in Lisa's storeroom and Margaret's flat files.
Art visuals displayed on Margaret's and Esther's teaching easels.

Enlarged posters limited art taught to those images available. However, that was not the only option available for accessing art images. One way to expand the usage of hard copy images was through Elmo opaque projection. Lisa found using the Elmo with the television on a cart did not enlarge enough to warrant the effort. All reference using the Elmo on occasion. Other viewing options included LCD projectors and Smart Board technologies. The

Figure 129. Accessing visual images from posters, overhead projectors,
LCD projectors, Elmos, and Smart Board technologies.

traffic jam at the front of Lisa's and Margaret's spaces and Esther's unusual classroom arrangement were all results the ongoing *battle* between options.

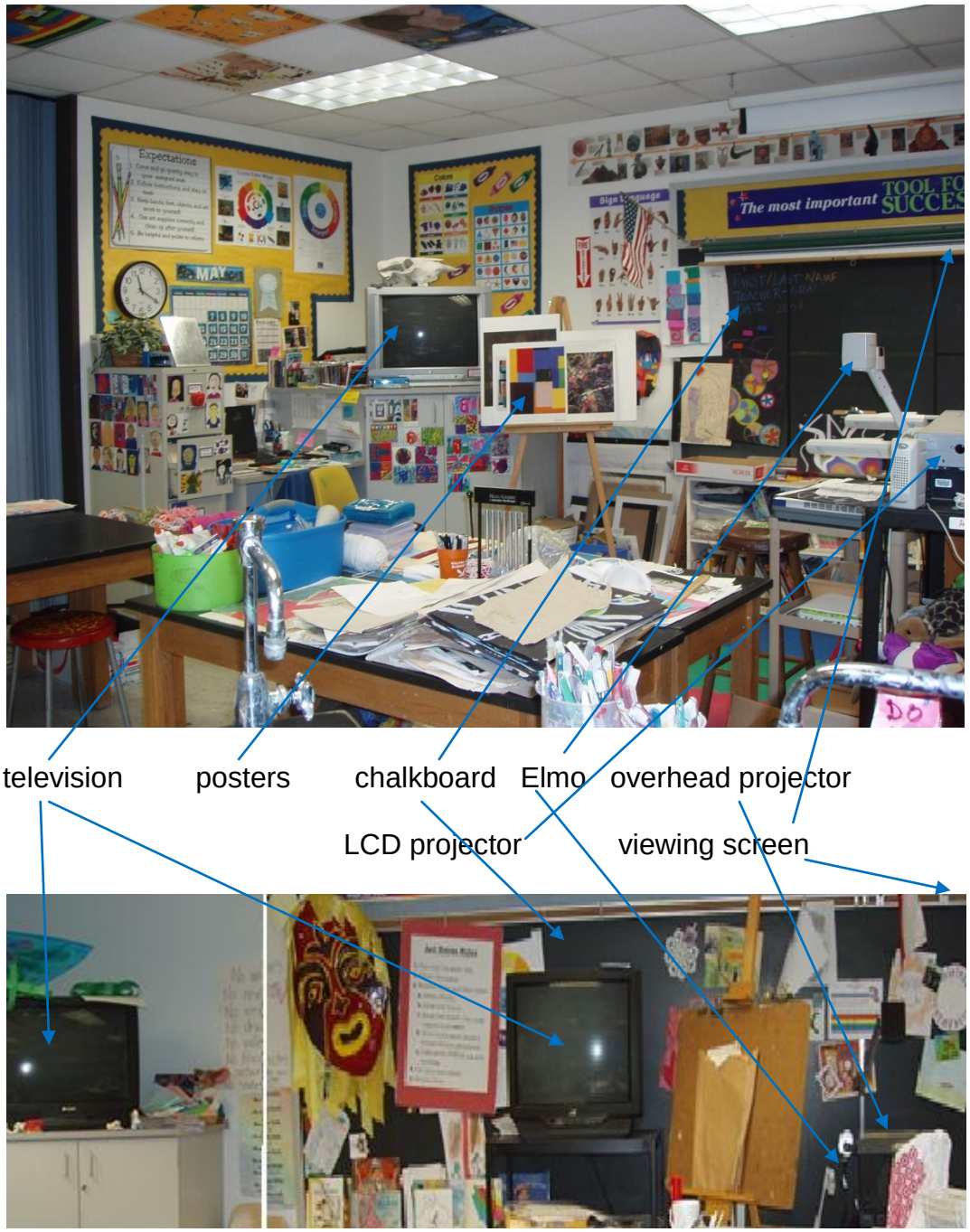


Figure 130. Choices for sharing images overwhelm Margaret's and Lisa's teaching spaces.

Technological issues had not been resolved for Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. The televisions in the corners were unused. Margaret and Esther had LCD projectors to produce large images on a screen; Lisa did not have one. The Elmo and computer could be connected to a television or projector. Only the

larger screen images were favored. Lisa used her overhead projector as her only option to enlarge. Both Margaret and Esther used PowerPoint lessons; Lisa did not have supportive technology to do so. Esther was the only one with Smart Board interactive capabilities. She marveled at teaching options it facilitated.

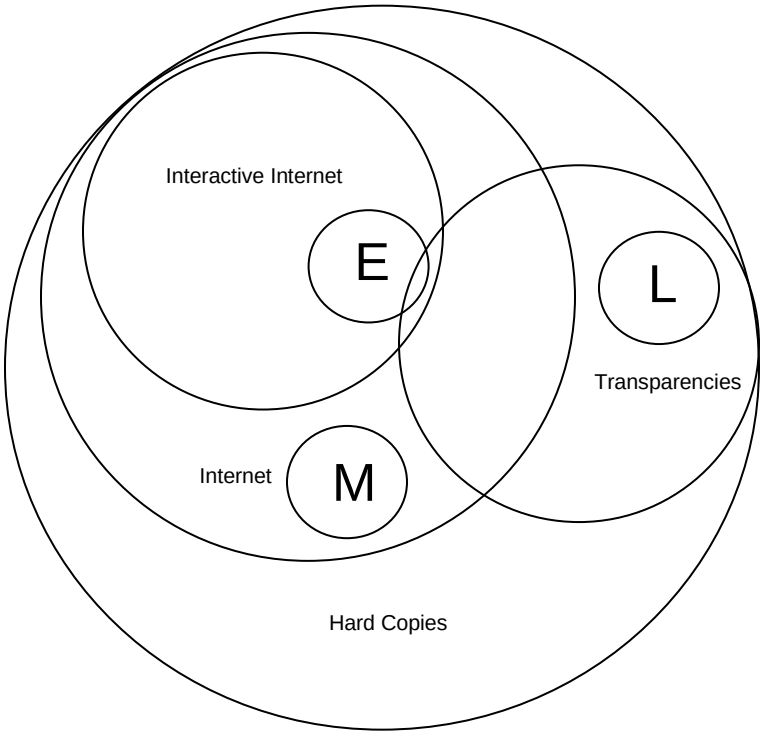


Figure 131. Teacher image usage story constellation.

This story constellation is layered. Hard copies, including posters and books – magnified by the Elmo or not – extend throughout the entire constellation. Esther (E), Lisa (L), and Margaret (M) all fell within that large circle of using hard copies of visual imagery. Lisa used transparencies and hard copies. Margaret had internet access to her LCD projector; she used internet and hard copies. Esther was the only one with Smart Board technology. Esther used hard copies, internet, and interactive internet. She said that she still rolled

the overhead cart into the room at times, so her circle includes minimal use of transparencies.

The narratives of place unveiled and extended parallel told stories offered by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Places and teachers functioned as an ecological unit. Story constellations highlighted relational aspects of subjective and adaptive interactions. Connections of place, teacher, and responses to teaching content were viewed. In the conclusion, applications from this study are addressed.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Through this narrative inquiry, the importance of place was studied as an *architectural truth* with recognizable impact and ecological importance to teaching content. Bach (2007) underscored the inseparable nature of person to place by reminding us that we are all “fundamentally attached to what surrounds [us]” (2007, p. 284). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther are three elementary art teachers whose professional identities connected them to the physical space and material objects in their places. Dewey proposed that ecological completeness is not devoid of place, readers will recall that he observed that “the first great consideration is that life goes on in an environment: not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it” (1934, p. 13). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther actively and intentionally worked in and with their furnished spaces in ways to enable and facilitate their teaching as earlier chapters, particularly Chapters 4 and 5 have shown.

In her architectural studies, *House as Mirror of Self*, Marcus (1995) viewed individual place relationships as transformative; as such, places reveal living patterns transpiring within them (Alexander, 1979). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther altered access of materials, tools, visual resources, and furnishings to enhance ongoing activities. Some physical challenges, such as the large sink units in the center of their rooms, could not be altered by the teachers; the physical presence of those sinks transformed teacher actions. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther submissively modified their living patterns to accommodate immovable obstacles, whose positioning they could not change. As can be seen in my dissertation

research, teacher interactions with place are ongoing; teachers and places both share in conveying those stories. *Teaching content* is a *living pattern* within each classroom. Furthermore, the method to most intimately study lived experiences is narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). From the interviews, observations, photographs, and drawings, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther storied, lived, and restoried what it means to be an elementary art teacher -- "in an environment: not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it" (Dewey, 1934, p. 13). Both professional knowledge landscape narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) shared common threads and acknowledged individual differences.

Expectations and Revelations

I began this inquiry with elementary art teaching *objectives*. A review of the literature established the content of art education as broadly based without one singular universally supported theory (Efland, 2004; Eisner, 2004). Although national and state standards apply to the discipline of art, what, how, and in what way to teach is largely left up to the individual discretion of teachers such as Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Such being the case, I found importance in finding what art theories and practices Lisa, Margaret, and Esther each valued. Studies support notions that the greatest influence on teaching content comes from individual experiences rather than from taught educational theories (Jackson, 1990; La Porte et al, 2008).

Figure 132. Most memorable art places of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Initial interviews led Lisa, Margaret, and Esther to recall early art and teaching memories. Lisa's rendering of her middle school classroom, Margaret's painting in her grandmother's sunroom, and Esther's image of the art museum broadened the span of art influences on these three elementary art teachers. Lisa's formal art schooling, Margaret's artist grandmother, and Esther's experiences writing interdisciplinary lessons for a museum collection reflected various time periods throughout their lives. Such diverse responses underscored how lived experiences contribute in forming their identities as well as the impact those identities have had on the teachers' personal practical knowledge. Lisa's pedagogical favoring of product was rooted in her recollections of the art objects she made in her youth. Clay experiences were as important to Lisa's teaching as they were to her early making. Margaret's cherished times spent creating art with her grandmother and her appreciation of the end results led her to value her students' engagement with making and satisfaction at completion. Esther's love for materials stemmed from her appreciation for objects rarely available to her impoverished family. Her close relationship, and shared hours of play, with her sisters led Esther to value shared childhood explorations. Esther wanted her students to be happy; she provided materials for them to explore. Her museum

experiences brought newly found excitement to Esther that she conveyed to her students through presentations of her favorite artists.

The first story constellation indicated relational impacts of formal and informal experiences. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all recalled both home and school art and teaching memories; however the qualities varied greatly. From this study, personal differences were given voice and credence. Lisa's memories of school art and teaching, Margaret's recollections of making art and playing school in her grandmother's home, and Esther's split between formal and informal activities reveal contrasting experiential influences – with long-term effects.

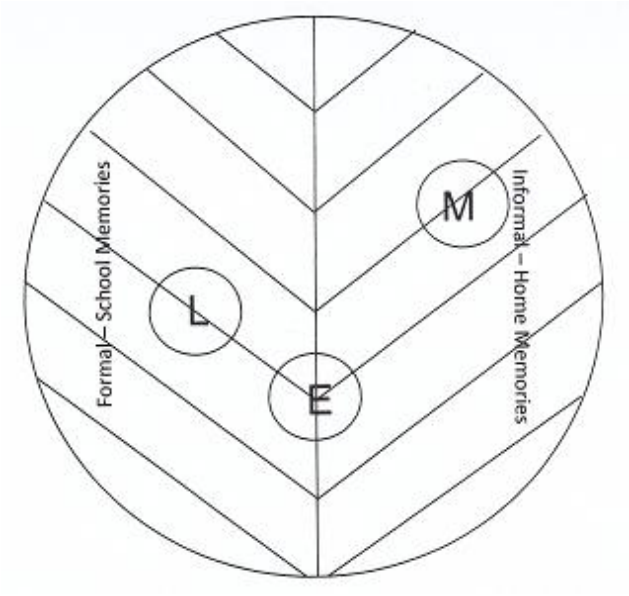


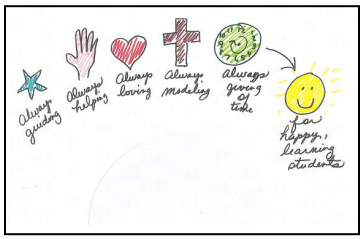
Figure 133. Review of formal and informal art and teaching memories story constellation.

Recalling early art and teaching experiences set a context (Marcus, 1995) for professional art teaching choices. Free associations (Marcus, 1995) with art, education, art education, students, and teachers reveal values. After listing many words for each topic, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther drew imagery from words

they most highly valued. Lisa's science connections; Margaret's involvement of many students, art media, and artists; and Esther's focus on teacher support for a positive learning experience all contributed to the nature of their professional knowledge landscapes as and highlighted personal value structures that were part and parcel of their personal practical knowledge.

ART: creative, imaginative, emotional, problem solving
EDUCATION: predetermined, specific
ART EDUCATION: self esteem, choices, problem solving, interdisciplinary
STUDENTS: proud, learners, interested
TEACHERS: lifelong learners, overwhelmed, excited

ART: artists, aim, focus, principles, elements
EDUCATION: fun, learning, knowing, *rewarding*
ART EDUCATION: principles, elements, *visual literacy*, critiquing & evaluation, problem solving, higher level thinking, analysis, synthesis, multiple learning styles, hands-on experience
STUDENTS: *personalities*, fun, interesting, have a lot of issues
TEACHERS: crazy, excess, extremely challenging



ART: imagination, enjoyable, emotional, personal, cultural
EDUCATION: knowledge, developmental, hands-on, life-long
ART EDUCATION: creative, hands-on, self expression, many cultures
STUDENTS: life-long learning, potential, problem solvers, product of environment
TEACHERS: nurturing, fair, flexible, organized

Figure 134. Values of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Detailed stories from Lisa, Margaret, and Esther, and retold through classroom objects, placed them relationally within a story constellation of art education theories. There were two common areas to all three teachers. Formalist study (Dow, 1920; Efland, 1990, 2004) of the elements and principles of art was the only art education theory that all three teachers, and their classrooms, fully supported. DBAE (Dobbs, 1992; Efland, 1990, 2004) was evidenced to a lesser degree, but equally, by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. Only Lisa and Margaret were included in representational drawing (Efland 1990,

2004). In contrast, Esther was fully within creative self expression (Efland 1990, 2004; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). VCAE (Efland, 2004; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004) was only found marginally in Lisa's teaching experiences with the themed gallery exhibit and even less with Esther's inclusion of the Taj Mahal.

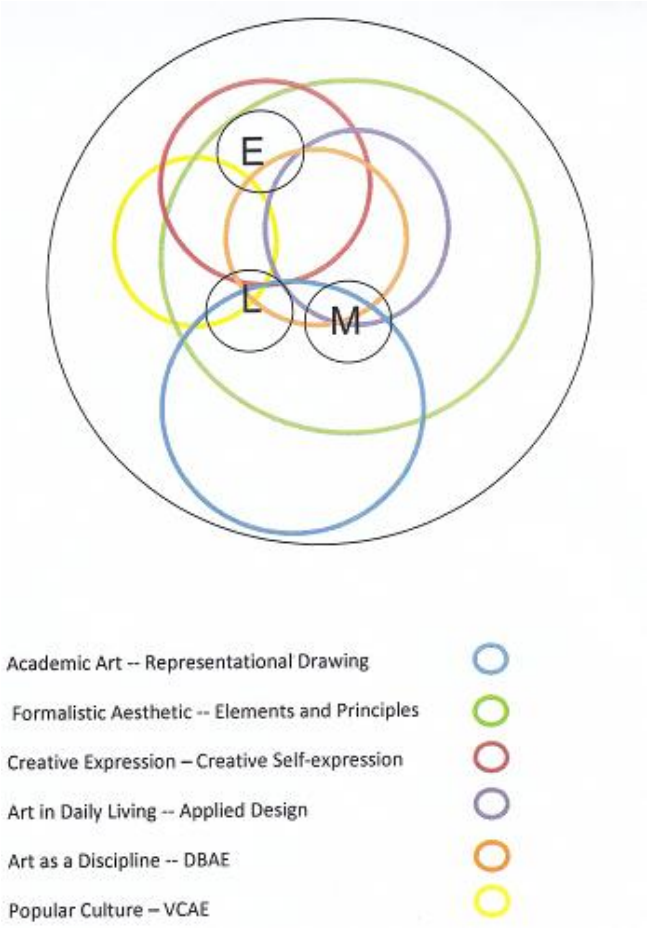


Figure 135.. Review of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther art theory story constellation.

I initially anticipated professional diversities; educational foci in art education, elementary general education, and applied arts are all within likely ranges of possibilities. However, there were certain storied details that contributed unanticipated aspects. Lisa's school art memories dominated her recollections. Since she seemed steadily focused on teaching art, I expected more stories of extended art experiences at home and possibly in other informal

settings. Her light table at home presented visions of image copying. It is possible that Lisa's early art experiences might have expanded had there been more time for her to continue her narratives. Lisa may have emphasized her school experiences because of the nature of this study.

Margaret's lack of positive art experiences at school surprised me. Often students carry their art making interests into an art classroom where they become outstanding students. Of course, excelling at art can also have its drawbacks when not recognized or encouraged. Such high contrast in the nature of Margaret's memories made her role as an art teacher less predictable. Esther's creative, expressive love for materials and happy children making art contrasted with her interdisciplinary curriculum development that focused on museum objects. I would have enjoyed an opportunity to observe Esther teaching a lesson using art works. It seemed probable to me that creative expression would dominate; I would expect to see Esther teach art history as a separate art domain. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther brought their common and individual perceptions of what it means to be an art teacher into their teaching places. Within those spaces, chosen values anchored within their personal practical knowledge guided, modified, and prevailed, while they concurrently responded, adapted, and evolved.

Ecological Exchanges Build Teaching Content

After reflecting and relating selected aspects of teaching art, Lisa, Margaret, Esther, and their places (as equal living entities) engaged in stories of subjective and adaptive exchanges. Navigating within the architectural space, in

ongoing relationships with furnished necessities, and amidst a myriad of ever-changing resources and materials, each teacher taught art to hundreds of young children. No moment in time repeated as the moment previously lived. Each day, each class, and each interaction was situated within, dependent upon, and contributing to living patterns (Alexander, 1979). From narrative inquiry, the teachers' relationships with people (students), places (their classroom spaces), and things (art education phenomena) emerged.

Sinks, Water, Teachers, and Teaching Content

Water issues were troubling to all three teachers; they did not like using the sinks provided. Least used was the small sink in the teaching lab counter; not one teacher referenced usage of it. Pedestal sinks in the center of their classrooms offered promise, but produced uncontrollable problems. Margaret had tried to use it the most, and finally she also restricted student access. Margaret and Lisa both used it at times for teacher cleanup. Sinks on counters along the wall, however, were favored and most used. Accessing water was definitely an issue involving aspects of subjectivity and adaptivity for Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

The purpose of this study was to connect issues between teacher and objects of place to teaching content. Painting is not the only art medium that requires extended water usage, but it is the most common. Considering other media, no teacher referred to printmaking; clean up requires water cleaning of inked surfaces, brayers, plates, students, and tables. In application, Margaret had students drawing over marbled paper. If they made the paper, vats of water

were needed to float colors on the surface. However, water would most likely be accessed, set up, and disposed of by the teacher. When Lisa talked about potential adaptations to work with paper mâché, she referenced using a bucket of water for students to wash off their hands. Lisa remembered a better sink design at another school. She told how that particular sink design enabled teaching an art medium that she does not include in her present classroom; Lisa even described the location, structure, and usage:

> It's up high, has a counter on the side, and it has a rim around it. So I can even do like tempera batik. – Put their paintings on the counter – it was a sink and a counter with a whole rim going around the whole thing – put it there and spray it and rub it gently. That was really nice – one of the parts I miss. (Personal communication, May 5, 2009)

In this dissertation work, I was able to focus on how sink and water struggles affected painting choices. The painting story constellation illustrates relationships between Lisa, Margaret, and Esther and their object places; subjective and adaptive responses are evident. Margaret used both liquid and dry (cake) paints; she also used her center sink the most. Esther surrendered to the problems associated with using liquid paints and employed only watercolor and tempera cakes in her art classroom. Lisa's liquid paints were located on her counter ready to use throughout the year -- suggesting probable usage in the future.

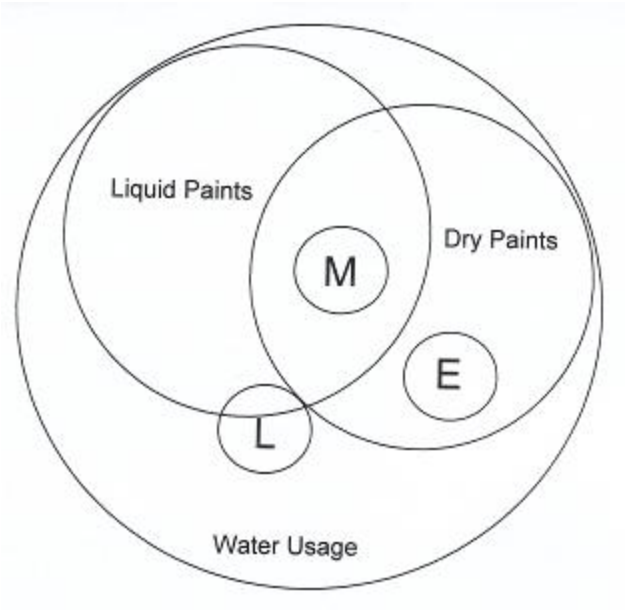


Figure 136. Review of water usage effect on painting story constellation.

In this dissertation study, I fully expected to see teaching content adaptations due to the large student populations and the extensive engagement with materials used in art making. Teacher responses were inconsistent though; Lisa, Margaret, and Esther (each in her own way) had managed to adapt certain physicalities extremely well. I was surprised by Margaret's selection of painting as her favored activity within her classroom. It seems that engaging students in painting was so valued by her, that she accommodated and adapted whatever she could; pumps on her paint bottles supported Margaret's will and drive to adapt. Overall frequency of paint usage by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther could not be established. However, I suspect that enhancing student water access and more efficiently designing other physicalities, supporting painting within place, could very likely increase paint curriculum for all three teachers.

Storage, Clay, Three-Dimensional Work, Teachers, and Teaching Content

I contend that a *truth of object* could be found in assumptions about elementary art specialist teachers' expected usage of materials -- beyond those commonly found in general classrooms. I suggest that the *real*ity of the existence of objects, combined with views of art education as predominantly focused on object making, reinforces expectations that more involved objects (diverse media) will be forthcoming from the art room. I would consider paint as the most common two-dimensional medium and clay as the most common three-dimensional medium. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had a lot of freedom of choice in what and how they taught; however, their furnished places definitely included expectations for clay projects. Each teacher has access to a separate kiln room furnished with a functioning kiln -- and the school district supplied clay.

Two physical challenges proclaimed by Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were sink issues and storage. Storage of three-dimensional work was the most restrictive. Lisa explained, "But when you have 180 fourth graders, you can't store 180 …" (Personal communication, May 6, 2008). Margaret added, "And there are just so many things. And it's storing all of it; it's huge, you know" (Personal communication, May 7, 2009). Esther agreed in her wish for, "…more storage shelves and stuff" (Personal communication, May 8, 2008).

Working with clay also requires storage where the clay will not dry before using, storage after making and prior to first firing, storage after firing, storage after glazing until second firing, and storage until students take the objects with them. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther found various ways to accommodate these

clay storage challenges. Adaptations included acquiring extra shelves for storage, limiting the size and form of clay projects, limiting the number of projects, and utilization of mobile carts. Both Esther and Lisa worked predominantly with flat clay slabs. Esther restricted clay usage to one lesson for each class each academic year, probably due in part to felt limitations. Margaret was able to add an extra storage area. Both Esther and Lisa used rolling carts to store the clay objects throughout processes. Lack of storage for clay projects affected teaching content; size, form, and even number of lessons using clay medium were limited.

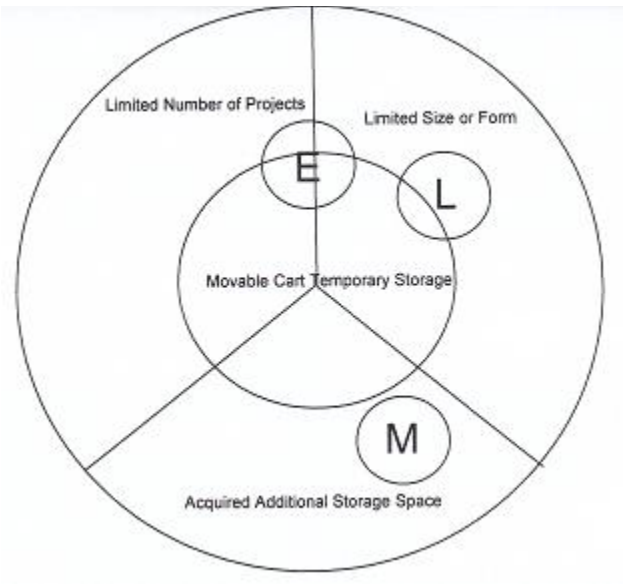


Figure 137. Review of clay storage adaptations story constellation.

Structured facilities addressing clay mandated medium inclusion. Clay was the only three-dimensional medium that had physical spaces specifically designed for it. Lisa's 875 students at Rover, Esther's 800 students at Northside, and Margaret's 575 students at Grand Isle completed more two-dimensional than

three-dimensional projects. The absence of an accommodating place for student work affected what and when certain projects were taught – in a nutshell, the art experiences offered students. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all asserted that storage of student work was a problem. Lisa claimed, “No room for artwork; no really good place to store student art – flat or 3D” (Personal Communication, May 5, 2009). Esther quit keeping extensive student portfolios. She included a wood assemblage project for the fifth graders, but declared that it had to go home immediately. Lisa planned a project to create large collage bugs for the end of the school year. She sent them home with the children on the day they were made due to storage issues.

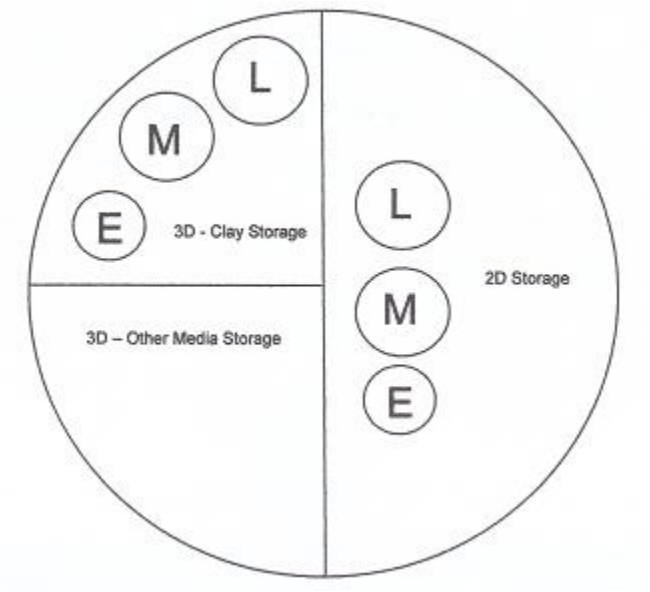


Figure 138. Review of storage for 3D objects story constellation.

Storage relationships are shown in the story constellation. Esther is shown in a smaller circle because she limited clay lessons and eliminated individual student portfolio storage. The divisions within the large circle indicate storage needs. Other than clay storage, there was no place to keep three-

dimensional media. Esther's comment, "I loved doing the wood sculptures; it was just so much fun" (Personal communication, May 21, 2009), led me to consider that project was atypical. Her acquisition and preparation of the materials supported those ideas. Esther gathered wood after a major storm, had it cut by her son-in-law, and went to local home improvement businesses to augment her supply with donated wood scraps.

I had anticipated more adequate storage for clay projects within the kiln rooms. It was disappointing to conclude that clay storage restricted size, structures, and number of lessons taught. That led me to a greater understanding of why clay is favored so highly by the children attending the university after-school program. The ingenuity and determination of art teachers was again noted in Lisa's adaptations which allowed clay projects to go beyond simple relief sculptures. Slab building allowed her to store more and still have products that emphasized three-dimensionality. Esther's wood sculptures demanded a lot of preparation and planning. Teacher energy and dedication provided extended options in spite of place limitations. It became obvious that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all desired more three-dimensional art opportunities for their students.

Art Image Resourcing and Instruction

I chose to end my dissertation research study with the stories of teaching elementary art that originally led me to this study. As such, I return to my own narratives of experiences. As established earlier in this dissertation, I value making connections between the study of art images and meaningful creative

response. The role and usage of art images by art teachers varies – as do ideas about visual literacy. To some educators, visual literacy is centered on ways to perceive what is seen. The discipline of art history leads students to describe, interpret, and evaluate art images. Visual literacy, to others, emphasizes aspects of art making as a means to communicate through illustration. I consider bridging the *reading* of visual images with *making* as the most challenging and insightful. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther each had art images in their classrooms; each had selected ways to share images. Seating for students viewing art varied along with the means each teacher used to enlarge images. Floor seating areas were separated from the work areas. Lisa and Esther used area rugs to gather students for instruction. Images were used by all three teachers to illustrate art making processes. Lisa used a transparency for students to view various patterns and then make their own. Lisa also shared an insect poster for bug making. Margaret illustrated how to make Mother's Day cards.

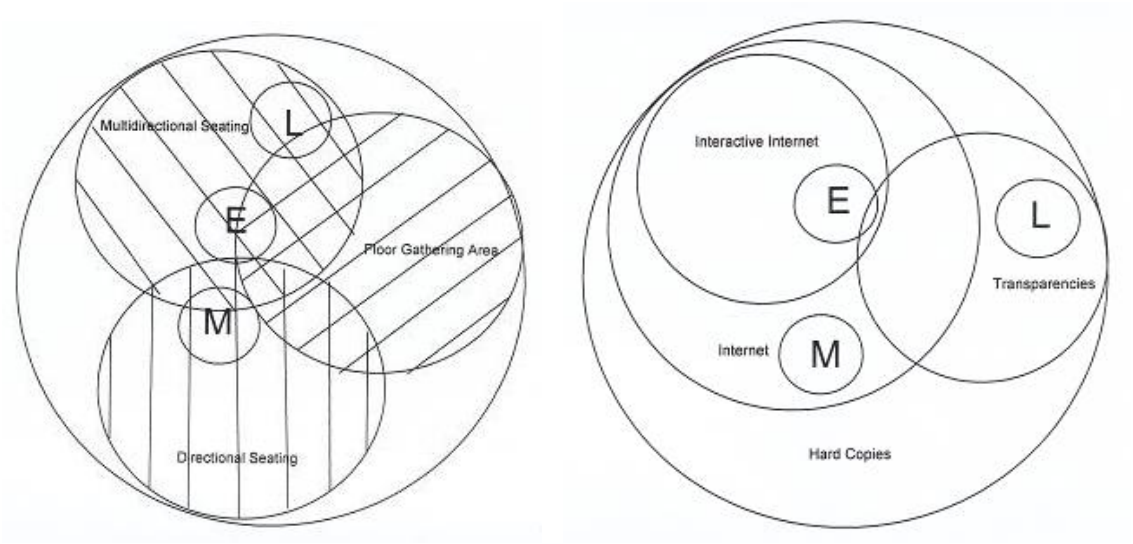


Figure 139. Review of seating and technology story constellations.

I was glad to hear stories about incorporating art images into instruction. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther all referenced viewing artworks. Esther talked about using her Smart Board technology to project art images. Margaret had her students seated to view the screen at the front of the room. Both Margaret and Esther mentioned preparing PowerPoint lessons about artists. Margaret used posters on an easel to show art to the students who were seated at their work tables. I anticipated a lack of critical analysis dialogues based on previous observations over the years. However, all that I can conclude from the stories gathered is that art images were used, and Lisa, Margaret, and Esther taught the students about artists. How they did so, was not evident to me during my five observations in their classroom settings.

Imagery is vital to teaching students historical and cultural art connections. Ways to access images are diverse. Large art posters and transparencies have become dated with the addition of Elmo systems, LCD projectors, and Smart Board technologies. At Rover, Grand Isle, and Northside equipment transitions seemed to be ongoing. Concurrent with this study, I experienced like transitions for accessing art images in my university classroom setting. For fifteen years I had used hard copy art visuals for teaching children's classes at the university. Unfortunately, the selection of enlarged art teaching posters is quite limited. This was never allowed to limit shared imagery. From purchased books, I made select enlargements for each class every semester. The investment of time and money was only magnified by problems of organization and storage. Hundreds of such images are housed in specially purchased cabinets with custom dividers;

they fill half of a room at my home. With grant money, the children's program at my university purchased a Smart Board. Since installation of the Smart Board, image resourcing is almost without limitations. The time, money, organization, and storage of extensive hard copy images always seemed overwhelming to preservice teachers. Smart Board technology has the potential to impact art teaching content; easier access and interactive capabilities could enable greater visual connections.

Place Enables or Limits Teaching Content

Finally through bringing several story constellations together, as I have done in this work, a more realistic reading of the ongoing exchanges between teacher and place are brought forward for discussion, analysis, and synthesis. Issues of subjectivity and adaptivity emerge in concert. Realities of multiplexity are understood more clearly. None of the story constellations exist in isolation from the others. None are cut off or estranged. Effects on teaching content are ongoing and multifaceted. Water issues, painting, clay processing, storage issues, image resourcing, and seating arrangements are part of Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's ecological existences in their professional knowledge landscapes. Impacts of place that limit teaching content are shared experiences for 875 students at Rover, 575 students at Grand Isle, and 800 students at Northside. Within each place, amidst the concurrent and changing living exchanges, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther storied their most positive and most negative classroom activities.

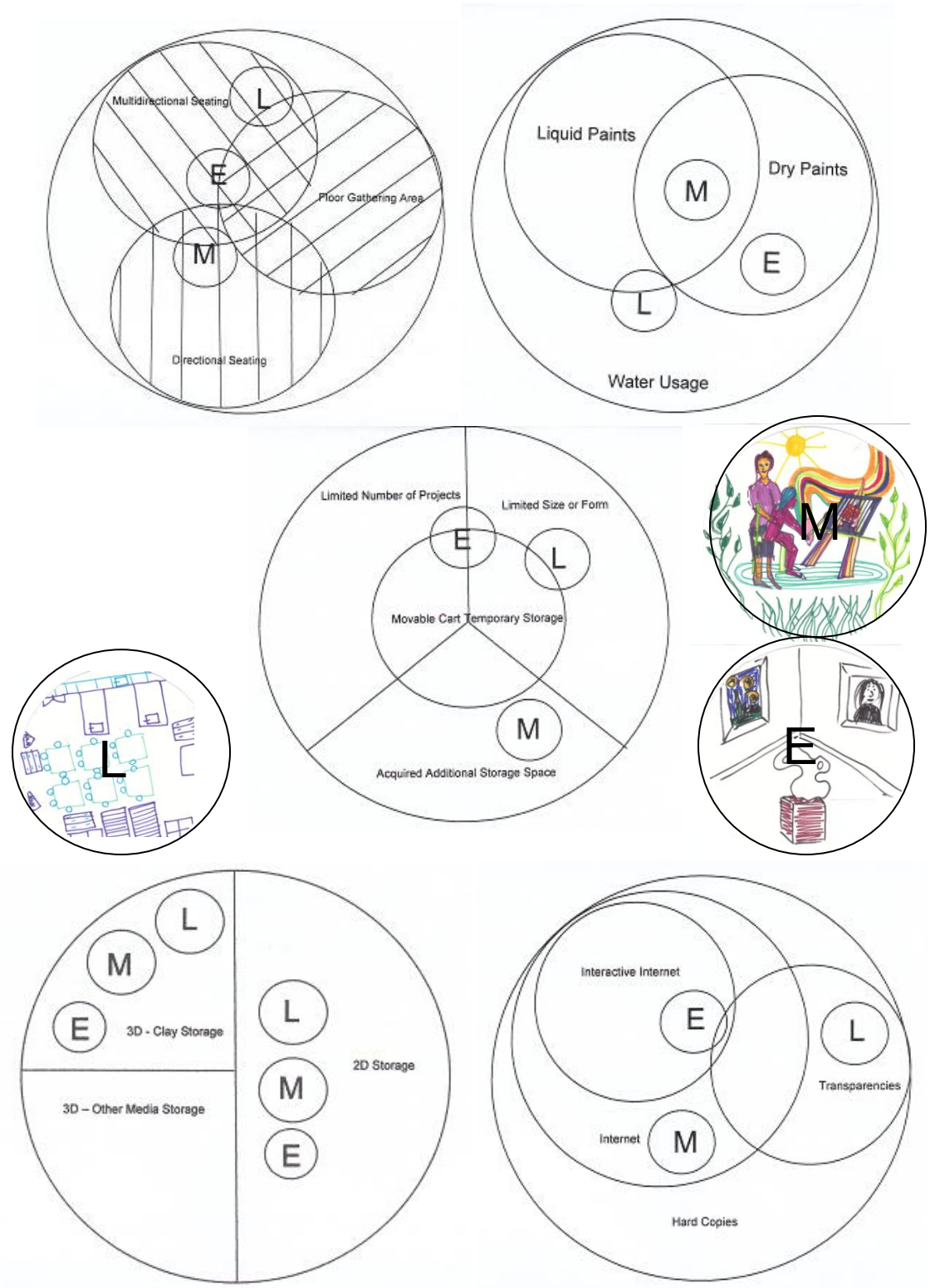


Figure 140. Concurrent presentation of story constellations.

Favorite and Least Favorite Teaching Activity in Classroom

Decisions about what and how to teach art remain with each teacher agent. Lisa boldly declared that her choice was product. I am convinced that art teachers will continue to teach what they each value whenever possible. This is evidenced by Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's drawings relating most favored and least favored art activities in their classrooms. Lisa chose the mural project. I was amazed that she chose the one thing that required a huge amount of adaptation. Shoving tables to one side of the room, filling the other half with a large paper on the floor, and taking two grades somewhere else for classes was more than I envisioned an art teacher to do – and repeat every two years – let alone to *prefer* that activity over all others. Lisa's description of the installed mural, student reactions, and whole school participation were certainly strong motivators. I remember that place did impact teaching content on a daily basis. This huge undertaking was not the norm, and may be Lisa's favorite partly for that reason. And for someone who highly valued product, Lisa's murals validated her choice.

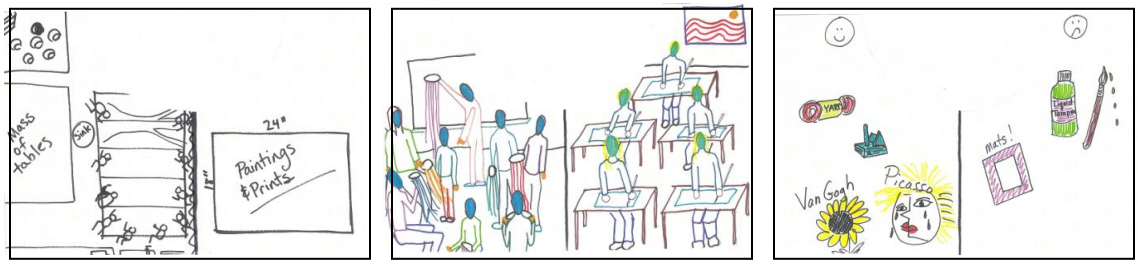


Figure 141. Lisa's, Margaret's, and Esther's preferred and least preferred activities.

Margaret favored painting, despite recurring water issues. Her least favorite activity was a weaving project. Margaret chose what engaged students the most and required the least re-teaching. Esther favored weaving, the wood

sculpture, and her two favorite artists, Van Gogh and Picasso; Esther shared, “I have my favorite things that I like and I guess every art teacher does” (Personal communication, May 20, 2009). She disliked making mats for student exhibits and using liquid paint in the classroom. The wood sculpture assemblage project was the result of a lot of extra work and preparation. I recalled once again that this project was a singular experience.

Strengths of the Study

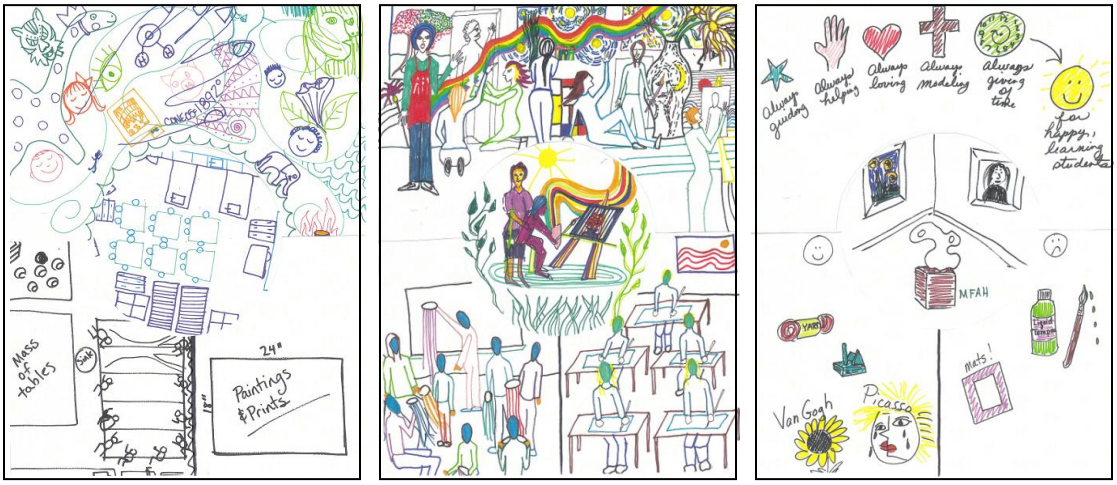


Figure 142. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther.

Including three cases studies of three teachers in this narrative inquiry allowed for comparison and contrast – indeed, triangulation of stories of experience. A limited study of one elementary art teacher would not have afforded as many nuanced experiences. Upon invitation, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther storied three very different backgrounds in art and education. Those varied perspectives underscored common issues and expanded alternative views. The diversity they presented strengthened this inquiry into *Place as an Elementary Art Content Determinant: Ecological Aspects of Subjectivity and Adaptivity*. Willing, open, and mutually respectful conversations with Lisa,

Margaret, and Esther fostered narrative exchange. Strengths of this study are found in the methodology.

Narrative Inquiry Framed as Story Constellations

Several aspects of narrative inquiry gave substance and credence to this study. I contend that the broader and deeper understandings of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther as elementary art teachers were best revealed through their shared stories. Esther's situation requiring her to share all of the art supplies with the entire Northside teaching staff could only be fully understood within the contexts of her earlier narrative of the school. Comprehending Lisa's preference for teaching her large mural activity was made possible within the context of her storied art and teaching memories. Margaret's unique experiences, with several twists and turns, revealed aspects about how she reframed values within the context of her personal practical knowledge for herself and her students.

Narrative inquiry led Lisa, Margaret, and Esther to *re*view and restory their early experiences. This allowed important aspects to surface. They each chose their memories; memories of significance to each dominated. I see greater validity in participant purposeful selection over random selections; Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were allowed to select what supported and validated their own contextual narratives. After initial storied choices, questioning dialogues aided Lisa, Margaret, and Esther to again select supportive stories to best define, elaborate, broaden, and burrow.

Place and object stories had great significance to this study. Creative field texts (Mello, 2007) provided alternative ways of understanding. Researcher

photographs and video-taped interviews invited visual understandings through multiple views, viewings, and reviewings. Just as Lisa, Margaret, and Esther selected, expanded and restoried, I could do the same with images from each place. Video-taped interviews allowed individual gestures and expressions to be observed – offering extended significance. Inclusion of teacher drawings (Marcus, 1995) ideally suited Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. I witnessed fully engaged peaceful looks on their faces as each of them was afforded a space and a time to draw. Multiple visual ways of knowing added narrative authority to the teacher and place ecological exchanges. Use of metaphors (Craig, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) aided in explaining less obvious associations between physical environments, objects, and teachers. Alexander (1979), writing from an architectural point of view, elaborated his perspective of relationships with *living* places and *living* spaces as *living* patterns. Exchanges with objects are not often considered *alive*. In research, metaphor usage is common only to qualitative methods, particularly to narrative inquiry.

Relationships between and among Lisa, Margaret, Esther, and their places are understood through story constellations (Craig, 2001, 2007), which were made part of the method and the results. In effect, they were both means and ends of my dissertation investigation of the ecological stories of teachers and places, as vital in developing teaching content. Story constellations were formed as visual ways to relate significant threads of knowing from narratives. Once each story constellation was formed, Lisa, Margaret, and Esther were relationally situated within them. This approach enabled greater visual understanding and

even facilitated associations that I was later able to make between and among story constellations, including my rejoining of them into one visual area to reemphasize their concurrent and inseparable living patterns.

Study Challenges

There is always more to a story, and there are always more stories that could have been told. Narrative inquiry is deep, detailed, and timely. Just as with any research approach, there are blind spots. Extending the narratives and collecting more stories would have been optimal. In particular, I would have liked to have been able to create more object narratives. A certain unexpected story from Lisa led me to notice. After our interview ended one day, Lisa began to tell me about her challenges with pencils. She said that she once had a heavy duty pencil sharpener, but it broke. Lisa could not find another of the same quality. She wanted to mount a replacement sharpener on the wall. A staff member came to install it, but informed Lisa that there was not a stud to mount it at her preferred spot by the entry. Her second choice of location was also abandoned because there were wires in that wall. Finally, Lisa had the sharpener mounted on the top of her short bookcase next to her desk. The installer could not get the last screw in, so it wobbled. Lisa described the wobble becoming progressively worse with the never-ending sharpening of *so many pencils*. Lisa continued the story at our next interview when I reintroduced the subject by asking, “Didn’t you say last time that you had 1,000 pencils this year?” Lisa elaborated:

> Yes, and I went today and got more. The last two boxes I got from the office were great until they got halfway down, and now they aren’t

> sharpening at all. They are all wood. So I went and got two more boxes this morning. It's sad when you've got this much pencil left and you can't get it to do anything except get shorter. I'm so frustrated with pencils. (Personal communication, May 14, 2009)

Lisa's pencil story brought me to the realization that there are so many more object stories that impact living patterns and teaching content in significant ways.

I would have preferred extending this study to include aberrant narratives such as this one, but I realized that Lisa, Margaret, and Esther had long and busy school days. They had personal lives outside of school. I wanted to gather and analyze their stories with as much detail as possible, and yet, I did not want to overstep boundaries and demand too much of their time. I knew that each of the five meetings extended each of their days by an hour. As committed as I was to my study, I had to recognize the impact on Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. I also had to think of myself having a time-restricted dissertation study to complete. Looking back, I consider myself very fortunate to have found three teachers willing to give time to my research.

At the beginning of the study, I considered asking teachers to keep journals. After consideration, I discarded the notion based on experiences with university students failing to complete them. I thought it might be too much to ask of volunteers. I did offer each teacher options to e-mail me at any time; neither Lisa or Margaret or Esther did. Although participant written narratives are efficient, personal conversations seem more connected and opportune for clarification, expansion, and elaboration.

Importance, Implications, and Applications of the Research

Important implications for art teachers, as well as for all educators, are threaded through this dissertation study. The physical places provided for elementary art at Rover, Grand Isle, and Northside were obviously designed with great care and awareness of specific needs for art teaching; these facilities are most likely some of the finest. This study revealed living patterns from the perspectives of Lisa, Margaret, Esther, and each of their places. In so doing, the subjective object challenges and teacher adaptations were understood through stories. Impacts on teaching content were substantiated. It became apparent that ongoing exchanges were the only way to fully understand how place functions with teachers and not inconsequently shapes not only how teaching transpires, but what content becomes taught, through what medium, in what way, and with what adaptations. Developments of new designs for furnishings need to be based on user narratives -- over time and in place. What is taught and how it is taught are dependent on place and teacher. Place must support and enable teaching content. Awareness of multiplexities encourages change; more space, better design, and fewer students could greatly enhance teaching content and support additional teacher choices.

Such focus is only applicable to the multiplexities of the elementary art classroom. However, this setting was optimal because it demanded that attention be given to objects of place. Just as it would be difficult to understand a compulsive hoarder without addressing his or her relationships with stuff (people, places, and things – not unlike professional knowledge landscape), it becomes

impossible to walk into an elementary art classroom and remain unaware of the magnitude of art stuff and how it relates to the teacher knower and what is known to her/him. Continuing the comparison, one could learn more about human relationships with objects from extreme boundary stories of those who have elevated object importance beyond normal expectations. I contend that place and objects within place must "scream" to be noticed. Understanding how place supports, limits, and defines what transpires in terms of activities within is absolutely essential to places of specific mission – like art education. In medical settings, accessible objects needed at a moment's grasp can save a life. Although teaching spaces are not life supporting in a medical sense, I argue that education is also vital to humanity. As such, understanding the importance of place to what happens within it -- that is, what becomes known, how it becomes known, and with what entailments – then becomes crucial to education. I contend that designing places needs to be addressed as integral to curriculum and instruction.

The findings of this study are timely. Technological changes within the elementary art classrooms are only indicators of greater technological changes. Establishing the importance of place raises questions about virtual spaces. Opportunities to learn online are expanding daily. Could virtual schooling only provide *virtual learning*? I suggest that more studies about place are needed to prepare for educational changes. Researching ways to support and enable alternative places are important.

Future Study

One significant area for additional research is that of the role of the elementary art specialist. With elementary art teachers, situated in an art room, in only 49 per cent of the United States' elementary schools in 2002 (National Center for Educational Statistics), it becomes obvious that research is needed to establish the value and need for these specialists. Additional budgetary cuts threaten the future of the arts. Research could bring new justifications for schools to support art teachers. Lisa, Margaret, and Esther each had art classrooms with a connecting vinyl curtain divider separating their areas from science classrooms. It appeared that the art classrooms only existed as *if*-s. There was a curtain *if* someone wanted to change the room usage. Lisa talked about using the vacant science lab to extend storage and making; after a science teacher was hired, the option was gone. Margaret wished, "I mean, really, I wish I had a much bigger room. But like the science lab – wish they would just give that to me" (Personal communication, May 8, 2009).

Research is needed to substantiate the importance of elementary art teaching. I in fact included Reggio Emilia schools in the literature review for two reasons. The first reason was because Reggio Emilia philosophy considers "environment as third teacher" (Dank0-McGhee & Slutsky, 2003, p. 13). The second reason deals with using Reggio Emilia models to enhance the role of the elementary art teacher. Research could open possibilities for elementary art teachers to be more greatly valued as resources for visual literacy.

Visual access to view art images through interactive and expansive technologies offers extended support for art teachers. Newer technologies may have a greater impact and potential to art teachers as they continue to make strides to advance visual literacy. Studying alternative ways of using art images equips teachers with additional pedagogical choices.

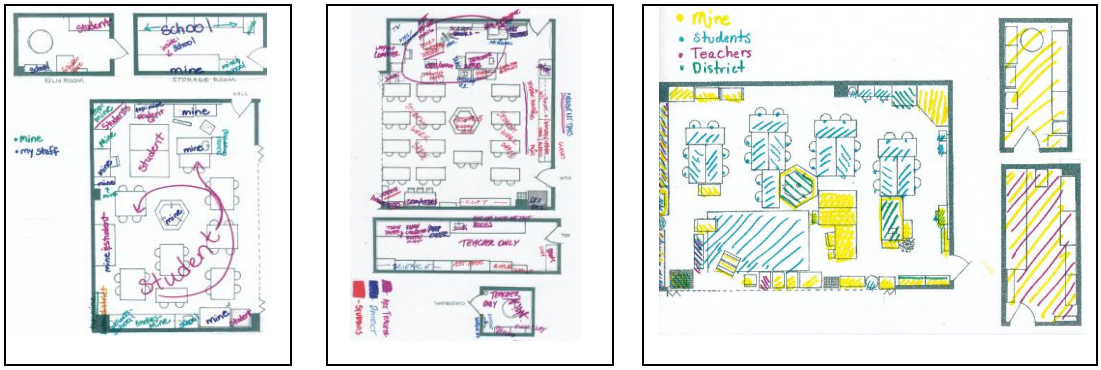


Figure 143. Perceptions of ownership.

Research questions arising from this study could look at the impacts of perceived ownership (Marcus, 1995). Lisa, Margaret, and Esther labeled their classrooms showing who they thought owned what. Additional inquiry could reveal how each teacher judged ownership. Esther labeled what she did not want -- two sink units – as belonging to the school district. Margaret began considering all of the art materials that she acquired from money she raised from fundraisers. She began to feel it was hers to give to the students. Esther invested her own money for storage containers adding, “I don’t get a budget” (Personal communication, May 21, 2009).

Although “…life goes on in an environment: not merely in it but because of it, through interaction with it” (Dewey, 1934, p. 13), place is too often -- with serious consequences -- ignored. Attentiveness to possibilities, probabilities, and

promises offered through objects and place manipulations opens a myriad of educational opportunities/possibilities. Heightened awareness of interactive exchanges between teachers and place objects can inform, support, and enable teaching content as I hope the story constellations I created – in the throes of my research alongside Lisa, Margaret, and Esther have shown.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCHER VALUES: THEORY AND PRACTICE

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This section is included to offer additional background and context. More specifically, my own values for art education and teaching content are revealed. It became apparent, as the study evolved, that these sections were not directly related to understanding the professional knowledge landscapes of Lisa, Margaret, and Esther. I began with what I taught, but journeyed to understand others within the art education community. I offer my values, not to usurp any others, but rather for full transparency.

Art Education Concepts Taught at the University

The gap between teaching theory and practice, that begins defining the problem for this study, is of concern to me as a university instructor. University course outlines are built from the teaching theories embraced by the leaders in a given discipline. Art education, as a discipline, also is based on theoretical considerations. An art education theory formally introduced in the 1980s, called discipline - based art education (DBAE), set out to *re*define the academics of art education (Alexander & Day, 1991). The words “discipline – based” boldly purported that art is not ancillary, but rather a vital and valid discipline, epistemologically rich and developmentally rewarding. DBAE outlined what constituted the then-valued aspects for teaching art (The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 1987). No matter what theories are more fully embraced now, there are still remnants of DBAE key concepts in the national (1994) and state standards (The Center for Educator Development in Fine Arts, 2009; Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Fine Arts, 2009).

DBAE (Alexander & Day, 1991: Dobbs, 1992; 1998) categorized the four spheres of knowledge vital for teaching art: art history, art making, art criticism, and aesthetics. Although DBAE has been criticized, revisited as neo-DBAE (Hamblen, 1993), and boldly rejected for capitalistic connections with the Getty Institute, privileged promotions of limited Western Art agendas, and attempts to mimic cognitive teaching (Jagodzinski, 1997), the core four disciplines still inform art education in some form or manner. DBAE's inclusion of engaging with art works, creative making, developing perceptions, and evaluating still remain part of what several university texts teach art teachers to teach (Bates, 2000; Anderson & Milbrandt, 2002; Clements & Wachowiak, 2010; Hobbs & Rush, 1997; Hubbard & Zimmerman, 1982; and Linderman, 1997).

Three aspects that I particularly value led me closer to forming the problems for this study. These areas are art history (including contemporary art), art criticism (including diverse perspectives and individual voices), and aesthetics (including alternative ideas of value and meaning). The related teaching content (curriculum and methods), specifically of interest to this study, includes the use of cultural exemplars, student dialogue, and creative problem solving. I address how these lead to enhancing art making endeavors.

Cultural Exemplars: Building Perception

Artworks provide visual ways of learning about the expansive world, just as musical compositions resonate with the sounds from various cultures and across times through manipulated organizations of pitch, tones, and timbre. Continuing the music education parallel, I relate the example of Dr. Shin'ichi

Suzuki's (1969, 1983) method of teaching music to very young children. He found that perception was a significant primary concept in addressing this teaching challenge.

Dr. Suzuki was a violin teacher who was asked to do something rarely requested, namely to teach violin lessons to their very young children. True to his calling as a teacher, Suzuki did not dismiss the request because the violin was too large for the young musicians; instead, he had smaller instruments made. Likewise, he did not reject the request because of the difficulty of mastering the violin. Instead he analyzed how Japanese children, at a very young age, easily learn what many consider the most difficult language in the world (1983, p. 1). Suzuki did not base his teaching on simple tunes, or expect lesser sound qualities from the violin. He chose an extensive repertoire which rapidly built up to include increasingly difficult violin pieces. One important key to teaching such a repertoire and developing high quality musical expressions from the children was to increase auditory *perception* through hours of daily listening. Dr. Suzuki found that hearing violin music performed by professional musicians was very important in the development of technical expertise as well as the expressive musical qualities in his students' performances (1983, pp. 99-105). Children's parents played the selected violin music in the background at home throughout the day. As early violin performance begins with listening, teachers sometimes have new students and their parents listen at home and attend other students' lessons for a considerable time period *before* allowing the beginner to pick up his or her own instrument.

In our university art education program, perceiving visual imagery is valued as important. Bates (2000) refers to the selected images as “cultural exemplars” in her university text *Becoming an Art Teacher*. Logically, to know something visually, seeing is a prerequisite. Just as Dr. Suzuki taught violin playing and listening together, we also explore images across time and place to learn about others and to learn from their “makings.” This art perception has more to offer than copying or just developing drawing skills. Eisner describes the process in this way: “What perception entails is not so much classification or categorization, but a savoring, a qualitative exploration of a variety of qualities, qualities that constitute the qualitative wholeness of the object or event being perceived” (2009, p. 8). I do not propose teaching art by copying artworks; artists visit museums and galleries in order to develop visual perception not to copy what someone else created.

An example from our art lab classes involved developing visual perception through looking at visuals of Viking memory stones before making their own memory stones (Boykin & Grossman, 1986). What did they learn by looking at these crafted objects? Viewing images led the children to understand the Viking context of a memory stone, rune stone, or Jelling stone. The children found out where and why the Vikings carved images on boulders. They discovered the rune letters, Viking ornamental designs, and the contextual meanings that connected imagery to the Viking culture. They saw what was important to the Vikings. The students experienced how visual stories were made, viewed, read, and interpreted centuries later. The children are not Vikings; they did not live

during that time or place; and their life context is very different. Little would be gained by copying Viking art forms. But as the children related aspects of Viking memory stones, they thought about what memory or memories they would want to share with people passing by now and for years to come. Students used the three visual means they saw on the Vikings' stones to show their own ideas. All were eager to develop their own meaningful memory stones using their personal imagery, letters, and intricate designs, drawing on their experiences as they viewed and explored the Viking stones. The looking engages discussion, which leads to personal expressions.

Dialogue with Children: Higher Order Thinking

Viewing cultural exemplars is an invitation to inquiry. Engaged looking reveals more than shapes, forms, and lines. Understanding what, why, who, when, and context for the artist's work adds layers of meaning (Barrett, 1992). The learning psychologist Kuhn (2001) mentions four "knowing strategies" (p.4). She points to "inquiry, analysis, inference, and argument" as ways to acquire knowledge. A dialogue with children referencing the cultural exemplar(s) revolves around facilitating discussion that builds all four areas. The more we look, the more we see (inquiry and analysis). From learning about contexts, associations are built (inference and argument).

The more students share, the more they see; ideas build together. Teachers identify cultural exemplars in order to build such "knowing strategies" about "particular subject matter, artist, period in art history, culture, places, style of art, universal ideas, content from other subjects, any art element or design

principle, studio process or medium" (Bates, 2000, p. 41). In dialogue, students' personal experiences reflect and merge with new information from the exemplars and their classroom peers. In the field of creativity, Pfenninger and Shubik (2001) speak of "novel contexts" building thinking skills to the "highest cognitive brain function … creativity" (p. 91). Ideas of interpretation interplay, change, and grow with the unraveling of perceived details (Feldman, 1970).

In another example, based on a dialogue of Jacob Lawrence's illustration of *The Bundle of Sticks* (1997, p. 46-47), students work through the visual clues until they expose the essence of the Aesop's Fable (-- without previously knowing either the title or that the ink drawing even related to a fable). Taking from the artwork the theme of "working together to accomplish more," students build their own lists of examples of such activities in the home, neighborhood, school, community, state, country, and world. Brainstorming, after discussing the cultural exemplars, continues the cognitive process by promoting the development of personal parallel meanings. This serves as the beginning of creative problem solving and the building of meaningful visual connections.

Creative Problem Solving: Meaningful

The genius Leonardo da Vinci, born in the 1400s, is a well-known creative problem solver. Leonardo perceived his world visually. Mathe (1989) says, "The science of Leonardo da Vinci is a 'visualized' science" (p. 19). His sketchbooks reveal visual documenting, visual thinking, visual associations, and visual inventing. Robin Mackworth-Young, in her foreword to the catalog *Leonardo da Vinci Nature Studies from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle* spoke of his

drawings: “On Leonardo’s death the contents of his studio … included several thousand drawings” (Pedretti, 1982, p. 7). Leonardo perceived objects and aspects of nature and applied the knowledge to the design of inventions such as flying machines (Mathe, 1989). Davis claims, “One of the most profoundly important concepts … of creativity is the relationship … self-actualization” (1999, p. 2). We reach our potentials through creative experiences. Pfenninger places creativity at the top of the “highest (cognitive) brain functions” (2001, p. 91) -- ranking above intelligence.

Through dialogues with children, discoveries are made relating to the aspects seen, as well as possible reasons why the artist may have created an artwork. Each artist’s context is different, as is the perception of each student. Meanings change over time. For example, in one image from *100 Boots* by Eleanor Antin (1999), titled *100 Boots on the Ferry* (photographed in the Upper Harbor, New York City, May 16, 1973), New York’s twin towers dominate the city on the distant horizon. Immediately after 9/11, the boots were consistently interpreted by my students as firefighters’ boots. This meaning, to these viewers, was authentic and valid. It reflected their contextual understandings and experiences. Even though the image held no such associated meaning to Antin when she photographed it in 1973 (28 years before 9/11), such associations grew out of a particular historical event and time in history.

Creativity is defined by Isaksen and Treffinger (1985) as “making and communicating meaningful new connections to help us think of many possibilities, … think and experience in varied ways … using different points of

view, … think of new and unusual possibilities, and to guide us in generating and selecting alternatives" (p. 13). The children learn of meanings through dialogs using cultural exemplars selected by teachers to support themes. Each student must then create his or her own meaningful expression through the use of materials and techniques introduced in the lesson. Sydney Walker (2001) says "what to *make* is a conceptual problem when it extends beyond the subject matter" (p. 49). Without the cultural exemplars and building of brainstormed ideas through the dialogue, cognitive potentials in art education could be minimized.

Practice: What is Taught in the Schools

Observations in the schools revealed that the dialogue often becomes limited. Years ago I observed an elementary art teacher who understood the importance of using cultural exemplars, leading discussion, and even building interdisciplinary connections. The teacher was excited that someone had donated piles of stamps to her art program. For the lesson that day, the stamps were placed in bowls accessible by all of the students. The plan was for them to look at the diverse stamps, consider other social studies from their general classroom (interdisciplinary aspect), and then design their own idea for a stamp. Unfortunately, the perceptive engagement time of looking at the stamps was extremely limited. It seemed that each child only picked up a stamp or two long enough to identify it as a stamp. Instead of brainstorming categories from imagery on the stamps and noting details, the drawing began with a quick reminder to also think about what they are studying in social studies class. Most

of the students in this one-hour class finished early; the great majority drew American flags.

I wondered how creative or meaningful this mass reproducing of the current flag stamp could have been. The result could fall into the category that Bates calls “bat making” (2000) -- meaningless making. “Artists work from the big idea, but to motivate and sustain their interest and to make their ideas worth pursuing; they find personal connections to them” (Walker, 2001, p. 19). The process could have encouraged more creative responses if there had been more facilitated inquiry scrutinizing specific stamps and finding details relating contextual attributes and ideas. The building of a list of categories such as person, place, or object could have led to a more diverse response in individual “makings.” Making a more meaningful connection of choosing to represent someone, some place, or something of significance to each child within the scope of ideas explored may have led to a higher levels of engaged art making.

Such experiences lead me to wonder, along with others, why things change once teachers go out into the schools (Bolin, 1999; Jackson, 1990; La Porte et al., 2008). I knew the “postage stamp teacher” as a student peer at the university; we both had the same understandings about teaching art. Now her place was different. There is so much more going on her classroom. I saw limited engagements with cultural exemplars. I wondered if the elementary art teacher felt that the deeper connections to art works were no longer applicable or relevant. The practical (Schwab, 1970) needed to be more fully considered.

Making Judgments

In relating the differences between perceived concepts of teaching art as an introduction to the methods taught at the university, I developed a teaching model. It is presented as an experiential/reflective activity. As students come into class, I ask them to take markers and “draw whatever you want.” Most finish within five to ten minutes; some who finish early, may look around wondering what else to do. Then on another paper, I ask them to “draw what the teacher draws.” As I draw, sometimes I talk about the color, the lines, the shapes, and the methods, and sometimes I silently proceed -- always varying the pace. I give no verbalization about the objects, meanings, or building conceptualizations.

A discussion is then facilitated concerning the two drawing experiences. I ask what is “wrong” or frustrating with each of the activities. The answers usually include not knowing what to draw for the first exercise and the problems of seeing, keeping up, and not knowing what is being drawn for the second activity. Too many choices and having no choices are the extremes of the exercise. We talk about the open-ended drawing as reverting to something already known and the follow-me drawing frustrations of trying to exactly replicate someone else’s markings.

After exhausting student input, the first activity is summarized as the “sin of omission,” most commonly used by teachers with little art background or confidence in art making. The justification, usually made, is that it does not limit the student’s own creative expression. But, in the end we agree, that there really is no teaching going on in this model. “Choice-based learning,” promoted by

Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB, 2008) proponents might challenge that conclusion in their proposed “full-choice” curriculum (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

The second activity is labeled the “sin of commission” and is connected to teachers who are strong art makers. The guiding objective for these teachers is the quality of the product. When the product becomes the goal, a teacher may micromanage how and where everything transpires, step by step, to assure a strained notion of “success”. *How to Draw* books and sheets purchased by parents and found in art classrooms discount aspects of artistic development and the personal voice of the children. There is little room for children to make their own art making decisions. I ask the class if we are training children to work in a sweatshop – i.e. product/production focused.

At the end of the discussion the question is posed if either, or both, of the two examples are what most think art education is all about. Most students agree that these models cover their general notions of what it means to teach art. I refer to the two examples as the opposite poles of a continuum, and then label my model “Bipolar Artclass Dysfunction” – acronym: BAD. Dewey said, “There are those who see no alternative between forcing the child from without, or leaving him entirely alone. Seeing no alternative, some choose one mode, some another. Both fall into the same fundamental error. Both fail to see that development is a definite process …” (1990, p. 195).

A key question in developing my research hinges on developing a better understanding of the practical (Schwab, 1970). Yes, I teach art to children in ways that align with what I teach the university students. I have seen different

teaching content in schools. And there is a need to understand (Eisner & Day, 2004). My knowing is different from other teachers' knowing. I wondered if national and state standards are less reasonable or valuable to the practical (Schwab, 1969, 1970). Even though I have taught art to elementary aged children for fifteen years, I have never consistently taught art in a public school elementary art classroom. It seems that I have much to learn from those who do.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL

First Interview

- What comes to mind when you think about this classroom?
    - Positive aspects
    - Negative aspects
- If you could change anything about your classroom, what would it be?
- How do you see your classroom? This can be actual physically present objects and spaces, activities, feelings, associations, etc.
    - Would you like to show this is a sketch?
        - How you draw it is up to you.
        - Feel free to label.
- As you sketch, I will take this time to photograph and measure

Second interview

Childhood art memories

- Sometimes we learn from our own stories, so I would like you to talk about your own art experiences as a child. These do not need to be related to formal classes or schooling, although some may be so.
- What is the earliest art memory that you can think of?
- What else do you remember about art activities through your elementary years?
- Is there any timeline or are there connections that you make between some of your recalled experiences?

- Which of the aforementioned activities stand out as the most positive?
- Which …as the most negative?
- Describe what you can remember about the setting or place for each. Where were you? What was there?

Art teaching memories

- What was your first teaching experience? Again, this can be informal or formal.
  - What do you remember about it?
  - Can you describe the place?
- What were the most positive memories you have of teaching?
  - Where did they occur?
  - Can you remember any details of the place?
- What were the most negative memories you have of teaching?
  - Where did they occur?
  - Can you remember any details of the place?

Draw, sketch, or otherwise illustrate the art place most memorable to you on the provided eight-inch circle of paper.

Third interview

Associations

- List words attributed to art
- List words attributed to education
- List words attributed to art education

- List words attributed to students
- List words attributed to teachers
- Mark the most important ones to you.

Illustrate your own choice of imagery connected to those you value most from your lists.

Fourth interview

Putting ideas together

- Talk about your most memorable art place drawing.
- Look at the scale drawing of the art room completed by the researcher and the drawing done by the teacher during the first interview.
    - What areas would you label?
    - How does this compare with your first drawing about your space?
    - Do certain things dominate each? What do you think about each?

Illustrate your most enjoyable teaching/learning activity in this room.

Illustrate your most dreaded activity within this space

Paper is provided

Fifth interview

Who uses the spaces/furnishings/objects within the room?

- What spaces/furnishings/objects do you consider yours?
- What spaces/furnishings/objects do you consider as belonging to your students?
- Are there spaces/furnishings/objects that you consider to belong to someone else?

    - Who?
    - Which spaces?
- Note on an overlay of the floor plan your ideas of “ownership”.