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**A study of early childhood educators' understanding of the  
artistic process and of art education**

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University of Hawaii, 1993

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**A STUDY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE ARTISTIC PROCESS AND OF ART EDUCATION**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

**IN**

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**By**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to gather data from early childhood educators about their understanding of the artistic process and of art education. Data collection included interviews that served as a basis for forming written descriptive profiles of the perceptions, views, and beliefs of the sample group. The reporting of the data in the form of profiles was divided into four categories: 1) Biographical profiles of the teachers participating in the study, 2) Profiles of the views of the teachers' own exposure to art and their creative abilities, 3) Profiles of teachers' views of art in general and, 4) Profiles of teachers' descriptions of art in their classrooms.

The target group included kindergarten teachers in the central and east area schools of the Department of Education on the Island of Maui, Hawaii. A total of twenty-four teachers participated in the final interview process.

The responses showed that teachers held some views that were similar to ones held by art education experts. These views agreed with ideas about art that stress hands-on experimentation with many media and emphasize creating an environment that promotes creative freedom.

Their views differed greatly with art-education current ideas that emphasize art as an academic subject. These ideas view art as a subject having certain concepts and vocabulary that only art can teach.

Teachers viewed their own memories of art as craft oriented and limited mostly to the home. They stated that their own formal art education was minimal in elementary school and, for many, nonexistent in college. All of the teachers expressed a strong desire to know more about art concepts, vocabulary, and media through art education in-service programs.

The results from this study will aid in the development of a curriculum for in-service education for teachers who wish to learn more about methods of teaching art. As a result, these in-service programs will address the needs and concerns of teachers and will present developmentally appropriate art activities that will serve the teachers' expressed concerns.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	iii
CHAPTER ONE: The Problem .....	1
Purpose of Study.....	3
Primary Research Questions .....	6
Secondary Research Questions .....	7
Definition of Terms for This Study.....	7
Limitations .....	8
CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature on Art Education .....	10
Introduction .....	10
Stages of Children's Artistic Development.....	11
Historical Review of Art Education.....	17
Three Views of Art Education.....	21
Teachers' Understanding and Perceptions of Art .....	29
CHAPTER THREE: Review of the Literature for Research on Art Education .....	33
Introduction .....	33
Methodology for Research in Art.....	34
Interviewing as Methodology for This Study .....	36
CHAPTER FOUR: The Methodology .....	39
Overview of the Study .....	39
Design and Implementation of Interview for this Study .....	40
Stated Purposes for Questions Used for Interviews.....	43
Transcribing, Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data .....	46

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary of Responses and Analysis of Data	50
Introduction	50
A Biographical Profile of the Teacher Participants in the Study	52
A Discussion of the Biographical Data	55
A Summary of the Teachers' Views of their Own Artistic Exposure and Creative Abilities	56
A Discussion of the Teachers' Views of their Own Artistic Abilities	64
A Summary of the Teachers' Present Views of Art	69
A Discussion of the Teachers' View of Art	78
A Summary of The Teachers' Descriptions of Art in Their Classrooms	83
A Discussion of the Teachers' Description of Art in Their Classrooms	103
CHAPTER SIX: Implications for Research and for Practice	117
Implications for Research and for Practice	117
Implications for Policy Making	117
Implications for Further Research	120
Implications for Design of Art Education Programs	123
CHAPTER SEVEN: Appendices and Bibliography	129
Appendix A: Permission Letter from Superintendent	129
Appendix B: Permission Notice to Principals	130
Appendix C: Letter to Participating Teachers from Interviewer	131
Appendix D: The Interview Questions	132
Appendix E: The Interview Responses	138
Bibliography	146

# CHAPTER ONE

## The Problem

Art education has existed in the schools for many years, yet it is still struggling to gain a significant position in American education. Parents, teachers, and administrators often fail to understand what art is or what it achieves (Dobbs, 1984).

A great deal has been written about what the experts in visual art feel about how art education should be taught. From Lowenfeld (1987) to Eisner (1984) the academics have agreed that art education is an important part of our curriculum. Early childhood experts have written about their own understandings of art and how it should be taught in developmentally appropriate ways. They discuss its role in the early childhood classroom. But what is the understanding of the insiders? What do the teachers of young children understand, believe, and perceive about art and its role in education? What relationship exists between their understanding of art and art education--and their own personal experiences--and educational background with art?

In the researcher's experience of observing student teachers on the Island of Maui, teachers of young children differ greatly in their understanding of art and art education's role in the classroom. This raises the question: Does the demographic background (childhood experiences, background, and education) of an individual teacher have any relationship to his/her understanding of art? Also, is there a relationship between the art education experts' (the outsiders') and the teachers' (the insiders') understanding about art?

In 1991, a study was conducted by Bryant, Clifford, and Peisner (1991) titled, *Best Practices for Beginners: Developmental Appropriateness in Kindergarten*. This study described developmental appropriateness of kindergarten classrooms as measured by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. (This scale was written by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in 1981, and is sometimes referred to as the E.C.E.R.S.) The research site was 103 kindergarten classrooms in North Carolina sampled on the basis of school size and geographic region. The results showed that art scored the lowest in developmental appropriateness among all subjects. The lowest means were in all areas of the arts such as sand and waterplay (3.15), dramatic play (3.33), and general art (3.12). (A score of 5.0 or above was needed to meet the criteria.)

The Bryant, Clifford, and Peisner study suggested that a further studies might be needed to discover why art scored the lowest on the developmental appropriateness scale.

In this researcher's own observation and review of the literature it seems that teachers have some confusion about how to plan art activities that are both developmentally appropriate and artistically legitimate. Thus the researcher observes a three-part problem. How does a teacher: 1) Plan art activities that are respectful of the children's developmental stages; 2) Ensure children acquire the vocabulary and concepts of art, and 3) Plan art activities that nurture the child's creativity?

The researcher believes that the results reported in this study will help others understand teachers' views about art so that art education programs can be designed to answer this three-part problem.

### Purpose of Study

Formal art education in the U.S. began in the early eighteen hundreds. Since then many promoters of art education have given us specific definitions of the art process and what art education in our schools should strive for. Art has become an important part of the early childhood curriculum (Smith, 1985). The early childhood teacher is expected to teach art on a regular basis. This creates an interesting situation for teachers who, if they were exposed to art or art history at all, may not have been exposed to them in the same ways that current theory would prescribe. In most schools, the elementary teacher is expected to teach all subjects--reading, writing, social studies, and math-- and is expected to have enough knowledge to teach art. Many teachers may have only limited amount of art education if any, while others may have more background in it. Whatever the exposure, the teacher will pass on his/her perception of what art is to the students.

If it is true--as the Bryant, Clifford, and Peisner Study (1991) indicates--that art is often taught in a way that is not developmentally appropriate, then finding out why teachers teach the way they do would be helpful for the design of effective art education programs for teachers. However, if children are being

exposed to art in developmentally appropriate ways, then learning about teachers' experiences, needs, and perceptions could aid in planning programs that reflect the best current knowledge in the field of art education.

Therefore, there is a primary and secondary purpose for this study:

1. The primary purpose for this study is to collect from a sample group of teachers, data that reveals the teachers' understanding about art education and the artistic process and to gather information about how those understandings affect their teaching.

*The premise: A teacher's personal teaching style is based on her/his understanding of his/her role as a teacher, his/her understanding of children, and his/her understanding of subject (art) (Feeney, 1991).*

2. The secondary purpose of this study is to gather information about teachers' present understandings of art that will aid educators in developing curricula for art educators in the future.

*The premise: The more you understand about the learner (the teacher, educator), the more you can tailor your curriculum toward him (Tanner and Tanner, 1980).*

Therefore, teacher educators will understand what teachers believe, understand, and know about art. They will also understand what teachers do not know, or wish to know, about art so new information can be offered.

This study investigates the art backgrounds and understandings of a target group of twenty-four kindergarten teachers. All of the teachers teach in a Department of Education school on Maui, in the State of Hawaii. The sample group included all kindergarten teachers in the central and east area of the

Maui district. Eight schools and twenty-four teachers participated in the study. The ethnographic data collection used an interview format and was gathered between April 1992 and October 1992.

There are three major aspects of research in this study:

1. Literature Search: A historical review of art education in general and early childhood art education is reported. There is also a review of the schools of thought about developmentally appropriate art education for young children. This research evolved by conducting a literature search of books and articles housed in the University of Hawaii, at Manoa, Hamilton library. Other materials relevant to the study were available through federal projects and grant information. The interview questions were formed by using major concepts found within the literature search. This aided in finding a relationship between the theories of the art education experts (outsiders) and the teachers (practitioner, insider) understandings of art by integrating the two.
2. Verbal Interview (See Appendix A for Interview Questions). The interview with each teacher presents data about his/her demographic background in art and art education. It also presents information about teachers' understandings (perceptions, notions, beliefs) about art education and the art process. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.
3. Interpreting and analyzing the data: After the participants' responses were reported, they were discussed and analyzed,

answering questions such as: What connections are there among the experiences of the participants? And how are the responses consistent or inconsistent with the literature and what the experts say. And finally how can this data provide helpful information to write innovative art in-service curricula in for the future.

### Primary Research Questions

The following questions will be explored in this study and relate to gathering information that was defined in the primary purpose on page five. They help define what past experiences and life history the teachers have had with art.

1. What understandings have teachers developed about art education and the art process?
2. How much art production experience, personal art education, and art history background do these teachers have?
3. What factors (such as childhood experiences, teaching experience, undergraduate major, amount of personal art production, or experience with art history) relate to how teachers understand art?
4. How can these teachers' understandings of art be used to create art education in-service programs that are sensitive to teachers' needs and views of their role as teachers of art.

## Secondary Research Questions

The following questions will relate to gathering information that is defined in the secondary purpose of this study on page five. They help define the present views teachers hold about art.

1. What art activities do kindergarten teachers feel are developmentally appropriate and used as part of their curriculum with their students?
2. What objectives do these teachers understand (perceive, believe) to be important in an art program?
3. How do these teachers decide what art experiences are worth using in their curriculum?
4. How important is art in their own lives?

## Definition of Terms for This Study

Aesthetic response: An emotional response stimulated by visual stimuli that can be enhanced by visual literacy.

Art activity: A lesson that stimulates the production or creation of art.

Art center: A specific part of the early childhood classroom that houses paints, paper, brushes, clay, and other art materials. An art center normally has space for two or more children.

Art curriculum: A course of study in art, defining the goals, objectives, course content, materials, and form of evaluation.

Art education: Including art, aesthetics, art activities, and the enhancement of the creative process.

Art poster or reproduction: Visual images created by artists and then reproduced by a printing company.

"Metaform": A visual metaphor. Visually seeing likeness between two things.

Metaphor: As used in language, any similarity between things; a connection.

Portfolio: A collection of a student's endeavors over a period of time.

Understandings: Perceptions, belief systems, or notions an individual has developed about a subject. An understanding is not the truth about a subject. It is an individual's perception that it is true that makes it his own understanding.

Visual arts: All art such as drawing, painting, sculpture design, fiber arts, and printing.

Visual literacy: Being versed in seeing and understanding art works, just as one might be literate in reading.

## Limitations

Only kindergarten teachers in the Department of Education on Maui were interviewed. Therefore, the results of the assessment can only be generalized to teachers who teach in similar programs.

The study included only kindergarten teachers (since they fall in the middle of the early childhood age group), therefore the data will reflect information about that specific age group. The results of this study can only be generalized to similar-type teachers.

The researcher is a coordinator and supervisor for university student teachers and also conducted the interviews. This may have some influence on the answers given in the interview.

Teachers on Maui have limited resources. Maui lacks art museums and lending libraries that larger cities have. Therefore, the difficulty of implementation of an art history-based art curriculum might be easier in larger metropolitan areas. This study's findings are limited to a small group of twenty-four early childhood teachers because of the qualitative nature of this study. Therefore, the views of these teachers may not be an exact representation of the views of the greater teacher population. However, using these findings in addition to other studies and related literature can aid the reader in a greater understanding of what is needed in future art in-service programs.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Review of the Literature on Art Education**

#### Introduction

The literature relevant to this study and relating to art education will be presented in four sections: 1) A review of the information about the stages of art development in young children, 2) A historical review of art education, 3) Three influential views of art education, and 4) A review of literature discussing teachers' understandings of art.

The first section includes a discussion of the stages of art development in young children. This includes studies currently in progress involving the nature of creative development and how these views differ from past views of artistic development in children.

The second section includes a historical overview of art education. In order to better understand and to adequately address the subject of the history of art education, research on general education philosophies were developed concurrently to the schools of thought about art education.

The third section focuses on three significant schools of thought about art education. The first, generally identified with the writing of Lowenfeld, sees the art educator's role as one of a (Rousseauan) tutor, one that emphasizes respect and support of

the child's creative process (Lowenfeld, 1947). The second, identified with the work on Elliot Eisner, states that art education is essential and is best taught like other academic subjects, teaching fine art and artistic concepts (Eisner, 1972). The third school of thought, identified with research by Howard Gardner, stresses the understanding and the teaching of the creative process itself (Gardner, 1989). These three schools of thought will give a basis of understanding about art education.

The fourth section focuses on studies about how teachers may have developed their understanding of art. These studies include a study by Wanda May (1989) that defines the arenas that a teacher may have experienced while constructing his or her view.

### Stages of Children's Artistic Development

This chapter reviews the literature about the stages of art development in young children. Knowledge of development contributes to understanding of what art activities, concepts, and media should be designed to best teach, support, and respect the artistic development of children.

There are many who have spent lifetimes studying artistic development in children. Like Piaget and his theories of cognitive development that chart the

differing modes of thought and distinctive stages that every child goes through in journeying towards maturity (Singer, 1978), Lowenfeld, Gardner, and Kellogg have charted artistic development.

Rhoda Kellogg discusses this development as a constant among all children of the world. "In the natural course of learning to draw, from their very first lines to their later pictorial pieces, all children pass through the same stages of development. These stages may vary from child to child or overlap like waves in the sea. The artistic thrust is universal" (Kellogg, 1967). At the age of two every child begins to scribble. To the adult, scribbling may seem senseless, but to the child it is as natural as eating a cookie; it is a natural thing for a child to do with a pencil or crayons in his hand, and it is meaningful. When he begins to scribble, the child has a primitive sense of figure-ground relationships. His scribbles do not fall at random. They are placed in definite patterns. Seventeen such placement patterns have been recognized and identified. Once the child has developed them they are never forgotten. They keep appearing as his art develops.

At around two and a half or immediately at the end of the scribble stage come the two shape stages. During the first, the implied shape stage, the child scribbles on his paper with multiple strokes. The shape is implied and not contained within a boundary line. But by the age of three he has entered the stage of outline shapes. He draws circles and ovals, squares and rectangles, triangles, crosses, X's, and a variety of odd but related shapes that only he confidently creates into being.

As soon as children reach the shape stages, they almost immediately move on to put these shapes into structured forms, like a fat X inside a square or a thin X and a cross inside a rectangle.

Between the ages of four and five, with a knowledge of the basic scribbles, placement patterns, shapes, and designs stored away and ready to use, children make a dramatic breakthrough. They come to the pictorial stage of their development where, their structured designs begin to look like something that adults have seen before.

This stage may be divided into two parts: early pictorial and later pictorial. The early drawings simply suggest human figures, animals, houses, trees, and the like. The later drawings, however, are clearly defined and easily recognized by adults as familiar objects. They are not more advanced, necessarily. They are just pictures that adults approve of because they are able to recognize them.

In his early pictorial work, the child is seldom as concerned with drawing things as he is so much with creating structures that please him. For example, a scribble with many loops serpentine around a house like shape might look like chimney smoke to an enterprising adult; not so to the child. It is not smoke at all, just a decorative wiggly line that serves to float a figure in the air.

The child's first drawings of the human figure look very strange to adults, for the body is usually round like a ball and the arms sprout from the head. When he draws these creations he does not care whether his pictures look like people. In fact, maybe they are animals; at least adults might call them that because sometimes the ears are placed on top of the head. The same

reasoning holds for the buildings children draw; they may not be houses at all, only variations on designs made up of squares and rectangles. The child is not drawing objects in the world as he sees them; rather, he is striving for something new within a set of forms that he already has learned. The child's idea of art collides head-on with the typical formulas adults have passed down from one generation to another. Watchful and well-meaning teachers who coax young children to draw real-life objects are not being helpful; indeed, their efforts may stifle the pride, the pleasure, the confidence so necessary to the growth of a creative spirit.

Kellogg continues to say that children who are left alone to draw what they like develop a store of knowledge that enables them to reach their final stage of self-taught art. From that point they may develop into gifted, unspoiled artists. Most children, however, lose interest in drawing after the first few years of school because they are not given this chance to develop freely.

Many others have also closely watched the stages of artistic development in children. Viktor Lowenfeld, like Piaget, felt that the child is constantly unfolding his knowledge in a systematic way. He states, "The way a child perceives the world, represents it, and reacts to it, appears to unfold in the same way as biological development" (Lowenfeld, 1947).

Like Kellogg's first stage, the first stage of artistic development according to Lowenfeld is called the "scribbling stage." In this stage which he defines as the range from one to four years old, the drawing consists of mostly random marks that gradually look more controlled by three or four. In the "pre-schematic stage," ages four through seven, the child's first representation has

little or no size or proportion relationship to real objects. The "schematic stage" of seven to nine years old shows that the child is developing definite concepts for forms, and he uses realistic symbols to represent his environment. Although not included in the early childhood age span, Lowenfeld describes the age from nine to twelve as the "dawn of realism" or "gang age." The child's interest in detail illustrates a greater consciousness of self and his environment. It is apparent that both Kellogg and Lowenfeld view artistic development in an upward growth pattern. This differs from Howard Gardner's view of artistic growth that he names the "U" shape model of artistic development.

Gardner believes that artistic development declines throughout childhood but is at its peak when the child is two to four years old. His view of artistic development in young children builds on the theories of Jean Piaget. Gardner feels Piaget ignored the creative and artistic development in children while focusing on cognitive development (Gardner, 1972). He uses Piaget's terms for the stages of development but defines what he believes, happens in the child's artistic development during those stages. The age from one to two is called the sensory motor stage by Piaget. Howard Gardner agrees that the child is primarily concerned with basic sensory motor control and organizing his senses. Therefore in art he shows little or no use of symbols but may draw lines or scratches dealing with his immediate senses. Piaget's pre-operational stage from two to seven is what early childhood educators mostly deal with. In this stage the child learns to speak and uses metaphoric symbols in both language and art. Gardner calls this stage the "Golden Age", because he feels the child is at the highest creative potential as a human being (Gardner, 1972). The

concrete stage, age seven to twelve, is a time for the child to be given structure. The child has a new found ability to work out problems. As an artist the child also needs structure (Gardner, 1972). He must be given information on how to use a medium: he needs help in understanding his culture and his views towards it. For the concrete child to create art he must be given more life experiences.

The difference between Gardner's and Lowenfeld's theories of artistic development is that Gardner believes the role of the art teacher changes through the stages. Gardner believes that during the golden age of two through seven (early childhood), the art teacher should assume Lowenfeld's Rousseauian role. He should protect the child's innate talents and promote the child's natural use of visual metaphors. The teacher's role changes with the child when he reaches the concrete stage, and again when he changes to the formal operational stage of induction between thirteen to adulthood (Gardner, 1982). In the concrete stage from seven to twelve the teacher should give clear cut technical art lessons to help the student achieve the drawing ability he wishes he had.

Howard Gardner's "U" shape model of artistic and creative development states that creative development is at its peak during the years from two to four and slowly drops off as the child learns language and literal classifying of objects and shapes (Edward, 1986). Gardner feels that creative potential starts in upward growth only if the child from seven to nine receives directed and structured art activities so his skills improve enough to please his critical nature at adolescence (Gardner, 1982). Gardner's "U" shape development curve

confirms Picasso's statement about wishing to paint like a child. Picasso states, "Only the practiced artist begins the journey of upward growth in this creative abilities, to finally recapture the creative spirit of his childhood" (Olson, 1991).

All three of these views of the stages of artistic development agree that young children are highly creative individuals. They all state that the creative level changes and develops. The question is, how do teachers adapt their teaching style to these changes? And which schools of thought have early childhood teachers adapted for their own method of teaching art? These questions will be answered in the interviews.

### Historical Review of Art Education

Historically there seem to be two different ways society looks at artists. The first is that man must be trained to do art. The second is that man's talent is innate and that when left alone his talent will unfold (Logan, 1957).

In pre-literate societies, persons were recognized as having special functions and skills. It was believed that some persons in the tribe were more skilled than others (e.g., the shaman or craftsman). By 3,000 B.C., impressive advances were made over primitive man's effort in architecture, sculpture, and painting. Such advances required special training which was often provided by schools controlled by the ruling class (University of California at Sacramento, Lecture, 1982). By 1,000 B.C. most children followed the occupation of their parents. If their father was an artist or craftsman he would be responsible for passing on his trade. In the Greek schools, music, physical education, military

training, science, mathematics, and government were taught, but not the visual arts. They were private and were thought to be only for the free citizen. The visual arts were taught by elders or through apprenticeships. Plato clearly stated in his Republic, "Education in the liberal arts should include traditional music, but not the visual arts" (Solomon, 1984).

With the Romans, and through to the Middle Ages, skills in art continued to be handed down from father to son. The most common method for this vocational education was learning through imitation. In 1,400 A.D., art was being created everywhere. The Renaissance brought out the naturally talented artists to paint for the churches. No formal schooling in the visual arts was required (Johnson, 1988). Apprenticeship remained the basic teaching-learning method. The humanist theory gave very little attention to the ways in which education could contribute to the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture that reached such great heights during the Renaissance. They were considered technical crafts by the literary humanist (Logan, 1957). In 1456 the printing press was invented which made it possible to disseminate knowledge more widely. Some 400 years later printed examples of "what to draw" became the basis for art instruction in our schools (Logan, 1957).

The sixteenth century marks the beginning of the realistic movement away from pure abstraction. Many theorists ranging from Montaigne to Rousseau urged greater contact with reality in schooling (Eisner, 1984). But the curriculum still included only reading, writing, and arithmetic, religion, music, and some physical education. But Mulcaster, an education advocate from England, pushed for adapting instruction to the interest of children (Logan,

1957). He felt drawing should be included in the curriculum. Rousseau also called for the development of moral values, spiritual aspirations and an aesthetic taste (Pickens, 1987).

In the early 1800's, schools were built for the general public. Horace Mann formed the basis of a state system school. He proposed that schools use drawing to develop fine motor skills for writing. In 1830 Amos Allcot, a follower of Pestalozzi, starts the first "activity school" that required 30 minutes of drawing class a week (Logan, 1957).

Froebel started the first kindergarten in the 1800's, requiring that manipulative art activities be included in the curriculum. It is noted that both, Frank Lloyd Wright and Wassily Kandinski, were products of some of the first kindergartens. Kandinski stated, "The apparent direction of visual tactile kindergarten training in early years of a child's search for abstract form, has a great effect on the aesthetic growth of a child" (Logan, 1957).

It was not until the late 1870's that disciplined and imitative drawing approaches emerged as the first instance of a required experience in art education in our schools (Smith, 1966). It was also believed that the study of reproductions of paintings would allow the students to see the world as others saw it (Emery, 1988). It was not until John Dewey began studying the natural methods of learning and applied it to art in his book, Art as Experience, that educators associated art with the progressive education experience.

In the early 1900's the teacher was often seen playing the role of a Rousseauan tutor. The teacher acted by shielding the innocent and fragile child from the pernicious forces in society so that his inborn talents could flower

(Lowenfeld, 1987). The teacher's role was to provide the child with a creative environment, give him his supplies and step out of his way. The teacher's task was preventive rather than prescriptive. Although the teacher did little to stifle artistic creativity, he also may have done little to enhance it. Materials for art such as pens, pencils, paint, brushes, or clay might have been provided but no direction or criticism would be given (Lowenfeld, 87).

By the 1920's creative expression was the primary goal of the child-centered schools. Child-centered schools were new schools, schools of play, and country day schools. These schools had been founded in reaction to the traditional schools whose sole purpose seemed to be the squelching of the child's creativity and his ability to create art (Tanner and Tanner, 1980). The new educational reformers still believed the philosophy of Rousseau in the purest form leaving the child alone to develop his own capacity for creative self expression and art.

In 1929, John Dewey wrote that the method of surrounding the child with materials and not giving the child a plan or objective to learn by was ridiculous. He states, "There are multitudes of ways a pupil can react to surrounding conditions and without some guidance, these reactions are almost sure to be casual, sporadic, and ultimately fatiguing" (Dewey, 1929 pp. 97).

It is within this conflict that art educators, must build a philosophy for teaching art. How much guidance if any should be offered? Are children naturally talented or should they be taught skills as we do in any other academic subject? And finally, does exposing children to the work of fine artists inspire or only inflict adult values of what "good art" is? To answer this, one

must look carefully at what past art educators wrote about how art should be taught, and more specifically to what early childhood teachers state as their goals in art education.

### Three Views of Art Education

After 1900, ideas about teaching art and aesthetic development can be viewed as falling into three distinct categories. The first is a view held by many early childhood educators but is most clearly defined by Viktor Lowenfeld. It emphasizes respect and support for the child's creative process. Lowenfeld states, "In art education the aesthetic quality of a final project is subordinate to the creative process" (Lowenfeld, 1947). His view of artistic development in early childhood education is clearly shaped by Rousseau's ideas. Rousseau believed that the child is intelligent, creative, and artistic without the intrusion of authority (Solomon, 1984). The role of the art educator is to create a classroom that makes it possible for the child to create tangible expressions of his thoughts in relationship to his self and his environment (Smith, 1985). He believes the teacher only supplies the material and the motivation, and plays a somewhat passive role. He speaks of the child's use of symbols as a concrete expression of his environment.

Viktor Lowenfeld is a contextualist. That is, he feels art education should be taught in context of what interests the child (Kellogg, 1969). He points out that children at five years of age, see fingernails on people but do not draw them because they do not seem important in context to their lives (Lowenfeld,

1947). The child's interest leads the art curriculum. [This can be contrasted to the essentialist view that art education is the only subject that offers certain types of learning no other subject can teach and that emphasis should be placed on those artistic concepts (Elliot Eisner, 1972)]. Lowenfeld is interested in the creative process and clearly says so in his statement, "Art education should be concerned with the effects of process on the individual, not the product he creates" (Lowenfeld, 1947).

This view has led many early childhood educators to believe that it is inappropriate to inflict adult interpretations of beauty and fine art on children because self expression will be stifled (Feeney, 1987). Because of this belief many early childhood educators choose not to teach the fine arts, or even to expose the children to them in their classroom. It is noteworthy that Creative and Mental Growth, written in 1947 by Viktor Lowenfeld, is still the best selling textbook in art education (Eisner, 1984). Apparently, many teachers in our schools believe that art education for the development of creative and mental growth is still of central importance (Ames, 1990).

Early childhood programs have traditionally advocated children's free interaction in the arts (Lowenfeld), and in the classroom in general. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea that children flower naturally as they come in contact with their environment, influenced such early childhood educators as Johann Heinrich, Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, and Viktor Lowenfeld.

A second more recent school of thought about art education is that children should be exposed to the fine arts by teaching critical appreciation. This idea is attributed to Elliot Eisner and is being implemented by the Paul

Getty Trust's Center for Education in the Arts, formed in 1982. Eisner disagrees that the major function of the visual arts is to give youngsters opportunities to express their creativity and release their emotions. He does not believe like many of Lowenfeld's followers that "Art should be caught, not taught" (Eisner, 1985). Eisner, the essentialist, states, "Great art has something unique to provide" (Eisner, 1987). In this orientation to teaching art the major focus is upon the society and on helping the child understand his social responsibility within society. Like the progressive theory that emphasizes the importance of the child, art education for social and cultural awareness puts art in an instrumental status. This means that art becomes one of the subjects a child is exposed to in order to understand cultural values and social sources of power (Eisner, 1984). Strict followers of Eisner hope to instill "visual literacy". Their method is what Eisner calls "Discipline Based Art Education" (Dobbs, 1984). This art education method includes four areas. The child is introduced to art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art activity. When the child creates art, he communicates to the teacher what he understands about aesthetic elements and how he sees his place in society (Feeney, 1987).

This school of thought bends to the call for, "back to basics" in education. Eisner feels art history is basic. He states "Americans want their children to read and write, but what is also basic, is the artistic wealth our culture and nation offers" (Eisner, 1985 pp. 162). Reading is education, but so is reading the language of art, music and poetry. The fine arts enable humans to share what they think, feel or believe. We must learn to read their story. This belief that art education should teach the fine arts, sees art from the essentialist's

point of view. It sees art education as a way of becoming "visualate" or having multiple forms of literacy which is not a natural consequence of maturation (Eisner, 1972). Eisner states, "If words could say what the visual arts convey the visual arts would hardly be necessary" (Eisner, 1972 pp. 139).

Jerome Bruner advocated a strong subject oriented classroom, stating that young children have a greater capacity to learn than had been thought in the past (Bloom, 1965). Elliot Eisner also believes a child will flourish when given the advantages of exposure to culture and art as an academic subject to be learned and enjoyed.

Both of these approaches deserve consideration by early childhood educators. It is possible to expose young children to fine art in age appropriate ways without inhibiting their joyous enthusiasm for creativity (Feeney, 1987). While "Allowing the child the freedom to create can be the greatest gift an art teacher can give a child" (Lowenfeld, 1942 pp. 101).

The third school of thought proposed by both Howard Gardner and William Gordon states that teaching and understanding the creative process is an important part of being an art educator. To understand the creative process, one must understand the metaphor. To create art one must understand the visual metaphor (Edwards, 1986). Art is a visual metaphor illustrating how the artist views his world. Teaching and understanding metaphoric thinking in art, not only aids children in their own creation of art, but helps them integrate that knowledge throughout the curriculum. This is achieved by actually teaching students to connect different ideas to different subjects and seeing the

similarities between them. William Gordon's work with Synergetics (1962), the teaching of creative thinking through the use of metaphors, can be used as a general theory for teaching art and creativity in the classroom.

Gordon states "Synergetics, is a Greek term for equivalent to, or metaphor, is a gadget free technique of teaching art or any metaphoric type thinking" (Gordon, 1962). In his book, Art, Mind and Brain, Howard Gardner suggests that children who are two and three years old are the masters of the metaphor. Not only do they use the metaphor in their language daily, "Look mommy, a rocket!" when they blast off their spoon from the table, but they use it clearly to create art. Gardner uses his "U" shaped development theory to demonstrate that pre-schoolers and early elementary children use more metaphors daily, than any other time in their life. However it is only the highly trained adult artist who continues to use visual metaphors to express himself in his work (Gardner, 1980). Nelson Goodman agrees that both children's drawings and adult artists exhibit a high quantity of visual metaphors. It suggests that if we help students to retain their use of metaphoric thinking through art, we may enhance their creative development.

To understand how to enhance their creative development, one must understand the metaphor (Gardner, 1982). Aristotle considered metaphor a sign of genius, believing that the individual who could make unusual connections was a person of special gifts (Solomon, 1982). From that ancient tradition has emerged a working definition of metaphor: The capacity to perceive a resemblance between elements from two separate areas of experience and link them together in linguistic form (Gardner, 1982).

Kornei Chukovsky, a Russian short-story writer, collated hundreds of children's metaphors. A bald man was described by one child as having a "barefoot head"; another, seeing an elephant for the first time, declared, "This is not an elephant, it's a gas mask" (Chukovsky, 1968). My own son, Kelly, pointed to his nose during a bad cold and said, "Look, mommy, my nose is raining". Studies by psychologist Richard Billow (1984) show preschool children are especially likely to produce inventive figures of speech. However, children who have been in school and are eight, nine, and ten are far less likely to produce these figures of speech. Children of that age are far less likely than their younger counterparts to produce copious collections of drawings, paintings, and clay figures. The same children reject many of the impressionist or abstract art but are attracted to the more realistic older style of painting. This stage from eight to ten is called the literal stage by Piaget, (Piaget, 1978). However, the work of young children ages two to seven (early childhood) have often been compared to many of the great modern painters. A century ago a French poet, Charles Baudelaire, made comparisons between young children's art and that of many of the great masters (Gardner, 1982). During the period from age two to seven, children learn to speak and draw using metaphoric language. Moreover, they accomplish this feat of learning with such speed that by the time they reach school age they are fluent symbol-using creatures (Gardner, 1982). Young children are not stuck in their fears about their drawings or paintings looking like something else. Realism and accuracy is not important to them in their art. Like their language there is no reason for them to be correct about things. Trees can be purple and horses pink because they feel

they are. Colors and lines become their metaphoric expression. This set of expressions is based on our natural ability to respond to the movement in line, shape, and color (Smith, 1983). Therefore, the children are learning the art elements and enhancing their own creative development.

In summary, these three views of art education represent the most important areas of interest for art educators, when teaching art:

1. Art production - To aid children in expressing themselves in their own visual work (Lowenfeld, 1942).
2. Art appreciation (aesthetics history and criticism) - To aid in better understandings of the works of artists and their importance in society (Eisner, 1982).
3. Art creative process - To teach the use of the metaphor as a method to help students stretch or create tension between unknown information and what is already known (Gordon, 1961).

It is only when children are introduced to all three of these areas, that they receive a complete visual arts education. These may be seen as conflicting ideas but time given to all three of these areas can lead to a well balanced art program. Many teachers easily integrate art history into their art activities and use the visual metaphor as a way to make their studio assignments more exciting (Eisner, 1982).

But are these art education theories actually being used in our schools? Are teachers of early childhood education aware of their existence? And how important do teachers really feel art education is in their classroom? These

questions and others asked and answered would help us create a picture of the understandings (belief systems, conceptions) teachers have formed about art education and the art process.

In summary this literature review suggests to the researcher that the ideal method for providing art experiences for young children might be one that supports creative development and aids children in acquiring art vocabulary and concepts. At the same time, teachers using this method would remain respectful of children's artistic developmental stages. Can teachers satisfy all of these objectives?

We have now returned to our original dual problem: How do we teach art that is both artistically legitimate and developmentally appropriate? There is a substantial body of literature suggesting methods and philosophies for doing this. Many early childhood educators have formed their own understandings about art from this literature and by integrating their own educational background, childhood experiences, and belief systems that form these understandings. But what are these understandings that these teachers hold about art? Which of these schools of thought is most important to these teachers? How do teachers develop these beliefs? And how do they affect art that is taught to our children in their classrooms? These questions will be the central focus of this study.

## Teachers' Understandings and Perceptions of Art

Teachers, like any group, have developed different understandings about the subjects they teach (May 1989). The way that they understand art and art education is no different. Their background, gender, and educational experiences may cause their understandings about art to differ. It is these differences that the author wished to investigate. How are these understandings developed? Is perception, understanding, and development in art a natural growth or a subject broadened by our environmental experiences? The philosophic underpinnings of American thought tend to accept the environment as being the most important influence in an individual's life. Reacting against European beliefs in "inborn" class distinctions, our country laid greater stress on the importance of opportunity and environment to an individual's growth (Ecker, 1966). Sociologists are among the first to point out the ways in which the environment affects attitudes, perceptions, values, and behavior in general (Eisner, 1966). They point out that what we see, is in part, a function of what we understand and value (Ecker, 1966). Still others (J. Dewey, 1953) have suggested that a child's environment, especially in pre-school years, is so important that it determines how he values and understands things later in life (Ecker, 1966). One of the purpose of this study is to collect data from teachers to find out what environmental factors influenced their understandings (beliefs, notions, perceptions) about art.

In a study by Grippen, Rodgers, and Tiebaut (1933), investigating factors of artistic aptitude, it was reported that among individuals actively involved in art, only a few failed to recall early artistic endeavors. Others were able to

actually lay out samples of watercolors or drawings that they had made between five and eight years. To others less specific in memory the expression, "as far back as I can remember" was frequently asserted (Ecker, 1966). An individual's artistic environment and early participation in art appear to have strong influences on his activity and understanding of art later in life.

Another study of the creative process by Brewster and Ghiselin (1955), gives the impression that the closer the individual was to an artist in a studio, the more techniques and means of production are appreciated. On the other hand, it seems that the farther he moves back to view the role of art in education, society, and civilization, the more the individual becomes concerned with the ends of arts and its ultimate value to mankind (Eisner, 1966).

Teachers, like any group, are individuals who have formed different understandings, beliefs, and notions about the art experience. Furthermore their views on art education differ drastically. Wanda May, in her article "Teachers, Teaching, and the Workplace", in Art Education (1989), states that "Teaching and learning art represents a struggle to develop personal understanding and a shared meaning in a social context about ways of knowing art". This struggle to construct art knowledge occurs at all levels of schooling. This includes all aspects of the educational enterprise, from the kindergarten easel to the graduate seminar table (May 1989). May also states that it occurs in many arenas where the very nature of knowledge in art is explored, contested, constructed, and revised. May gives three examples of places that teachers may have developed their own understanding and constructs about art. She call this, "The three arenas of art knowledge construction" (May 1989).

The first arena of construction, according to May, occurs in the university where traditional approaches to theory building can occur a safe distance from the messy world of practice. Teachers construct their understandings about art and art education both in their regular classes and in their training courses to become teachers.

The second arena of art knowledge construction comes from school. This includes both the school they attended as a youngster or their school that is now a work place. "Teachers' knowledge at the work place called school is grounded in experience, its legitimacy is determined by how well ideas make practical sense and 'work' in the context of school" (May, 89 pp. 6).

The third arena for art knowledge construction according to May is the disciplinary field (actual art classes). Art knowledge may vary according to how much importance art was given in the learner's general education.

In Pierre Bourdieu's book, A Social Critique of Judgment and Taste (1984), he states that differences in individuals understanding of art is determined by both culture and class. In discussing people's understanding of art he states that, "When faced with legitimate works of art, people most lacking in specific competence apply to the art, the perceptual schemes of their own ethos" (Bourdieu, 1984). Confronted with a photograph of an old woman's worn hands, the culturally most deprived (lower paid) expresses a conventional remark such as, "This old girl must have worked hard" or, "Oh, she's got terribly deformed hands!" Individuals, who are at higher levels of hierarchy such as executives or bankers, comment about the same photograph in a more abstract fashion. They see the hands as metaphors for general reflections of problems

in the world. Statements such as, "These hands unquestionably evoke a poor and unhappy old age" or, "I find this photo beautiful, a symbol of toil" are often heard (Bourdieu, 1984). One might wonder where teachers lie in this large distinction of understanding of the artistic process. Another large difference in class when comparing understanding of art is the idea of form versus function. According to Bourdieu's studies the lower the class (less education or a common job), the higher the chance that the emphasis will be placed on function being important in art. Commonly heard comments about purely, abstract or "unusable" art were, "I wouldn't want that in my living room" or, "What is it?" (Bourdieu, 1984). Once again, one questions where the average teacher lies in this realm.

In summary, teachers' understanding about art can differ greatly according to factors including: the amount of art one did as a child, and the educational background both in childhood and at the university level. Age, class and culture may also be factors that create this difference.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Review of The Literature on Art Education Research**

#### **Introduction**

The literature relating to research in art education warrants its own review. This review has two sections:

The first section includes descriptions of different types of methodology used to study art education. It also defines additional terms that are used for qualitative research.

The second section speaks specifically about interviewing as a technique for qualitative research and how interviewing was chosen as a method of research for this study. It further defines terms that are used in interviewing to increase the understanding of the reader about interviewing as a method for research.

The literature studied for this project was extensive and covered many topics. It aids both the researcher and the reader in a greater understanding of what has been studied in the past. The interviews that follow will add to this understanding of teachers' perceptions about art and art education.

## Methodology for Research in Art

Choosing a methodology for studying art is difficult. But choosing a methodology for studying people's understanding of art is even more so. After extensive research of different methodologies, used to study art and art education, the author decided to use qualitative naturalistic ethnographic interview techniques for this study.

It is important to define these research terms to understand the type of study conducted and specifically what techniques were used.

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for many kinds of research approaches and techniques, including ethnography, case studies, analytic induction, content analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, life histories, and certain types of computer and statistical approaches. Qualitative research is concerned with identifying the presence or absence of something and with determining its nature or distinguishing features (Watson-Gegeo, 1988).

Ethnography is both a product and a method. It is qualitative and naturalistic. It differs from other forms of research in its concern with holism and in the way it treats the culture or population as most important, not just a factor in the research. It is a descriptive and interpretive-explanatory account of people's behavior. It is a systematic, intensive, detailed observation of how behavior and interaction are socially organized. It examines the social rules, interactional expectations, and cultural values that underlie behavior (Watson-Gegeo, 1988). In education, ethnography has become a set of techniques in

search of a discipline within the social sciences (Seidman, 1991). Numerous methods and approaches described as qualitative, naturalistic, ecological, and holistic, are identified as ethnographic.

Interviewing is one of the many techniques that can be used to gather data when conducting in a ethnographic study. The present study uses interviewing because it is a method that allows for people (teachers) to express verbally what they believe about the subject of art. The researcher- interviewer can then find patterns in the responses of the individuals, ideas, thoughts, and perceptions about art education.

A literature search related to arts education research models revealed a growing number of authors advocating qualitative research methods (Alexander, 1982; Bersson, 1978; Kyle, 1986; Rubin, 1982; Stone, 1985).

Blanche Rubin (one of two researchers of the 1984 Getty Institute for Educators of the Visual Arts) advocated naturalistic research and evaluation which she believes is ideally suited for revealing the structure and processes of art learning and teaching. According to Rubin, personal interaction, observation, and interviewing can provide unique insights to aesthetic experience which can be described more readily than it can be measured (1982). Eisner defined aesthetic qualitative evaluation as holistic and concerned with the present, as opposed to analytic, qualitative evaluation. Robin Alexander (1982) reviewed techniques developed over the past few years as alternative methods to those used in the scientific paradigm. Alexander defined participant observation as a group of methods that stress observation in the setting, informant interviewing, document and artifact analysis and informal

counting of events. Robert Bersson (1978) also recommended the use of participant interviewing methods for understanding the arts. Elliot Eisner stated that teaching is an art and that the goal of research about teaching should be to improve educational practice (Eisner, 1986). As mentioned previously when discussing art research and evaluation in general, participant observation using interviewing and questionnaires is well suited for revealing the structure and process of art learning and teaching (Alexander 1982).

According to the individuals cited above, research about art or aesthetics is best done through qualitative methods. It appears from this review that understanding how individuals perceive the discipline of art can best be identified through interviewing and other verbal methods. In this naturalistic ethnographic study the researcher designed and implemented interviews, gathered information, and performed analysis of the data of early childhood teachers' understandings about art.

### Interviewing as Methodology for this Study

There are many ways to research the experience of a group of educators. They include examining personal and institutional documents, observation, exploring history and through questionnaires and surveys. But if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning that educators involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always, completely sufficient avenue of inquiry (Seidman, 1991).

The adequacy of a research method depends on the purpose of the research and the questions being asked (Locke, 1987). If the researcher wished to ask the question, "How do people behave in this classroom?" then, participant observation might be the best inquiry. But, if the researcher is interested in what it is like for the participants (teachers) to be in the classroom, what their experience is, and what meaning they take into and make out of that experience then interviewing is the best method of inquiry. This understanding is often called "subjective understanding" (Seidman, 1991).

Interviewing is asking people to tell you their story; in the case of this study a story of a group of kindergarten teachers understanding of art. Telling stories is essentially a meaning-making process (Watkins, 1985). When people tell their stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness. An individual consciousness gives access to the most complicated social and educational issues, because social and educational issues are abstractions based on concrete experience of people (Vygotsky, 1987).

In qualitative research, interviews can be used in two ways. Either they may be the dominant strategy of data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observations, questionnaires, and other techniques (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). In the case of this study the interview was used as the single source of data collection. It was the primary research tool used to gather data.

Qualitative interviews vary in the degree to which they are structured. Interviews should be structured enough to guide the participant to a particular

topic but still open ended enough to allow for differences of opinion (Seidman, 1991). However, when an interviewer controls the content too rigidly, the subject cannot tell his or her story personally, in his own words and the interview falls out of the qualitative range of interviewing (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982).

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses. It is rather to aid in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of their experience (in the case of this study, teachers' understanding of art).

At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individual's stories because they have worth. That is why it is difficult to code interview data with numbers. This study did not use the information given by the participant-teachers for judgment or categorizing but to help create an understanding of those teachers' actions in the classroom.

It is never possible to understand another person perfectly, because to do so would mean that we had entered into the other's stream of consciousness. But recognizing the limits of our understanding of others, we can strive to comprehend them by listening to their stories that often explain their needs and actions (Seidman, 1991).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Methodology

#### Overview of the Study

In this study the researcher gathered data from early childhood educators about their understanding of the artistic process and art education. The researcher conducted interviews and observations in the natural, ongoing environment of the classroom where teachers work (Watson-Gegeo, 1988). She also tried to weave a pattern of information to create a picture of how teachers understand and perceive art in the classroom and in general. The results are intended to aid in the development of art education in-service courses and materials for teachers in early childhood programs.

The study was a qualitative ethnographic study of a sample group of twenty-four early childhood teachers from Maui who teach kindergarten in the central and east area of the district. The sample included kindergarten teachers, because the author assumed that they were a good representation of early childhood teachers, since they lay midway in the age group considered to be early childhood educators (age 2 - 8). They also were chosen because they teach the youngest children in the elementary school, therefore formally teaching students their first artistic experiences. These initial experiences can provide a powerful impact upon children's sense of future feelings about themselves as artists.

## Design and Implementation of Interview for this Study

The word interviewing covers a wide range of practices. There are tightly structured, survey interviews with pre-set standardized questions. There are also open-ended, unstructured anthropological interviews that might seem almost like friendly conversation (Seidman, 1991). This study will use what Seidman, in his book titled Interviewing as Qualitative Research, called in-depth phenomenological interviews. This method combines life history, and in-depth open-ended questions to help the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study.

A sample group of twenty-four early childhood teachers on Maui answered questions about the understandings they had formed about art and art education (interviews were conducted from April 1, 1992 to October 1, 1992). Each of the early childhood teachers agreeing to participate was interviewed for one session each between April 1 and October 1, 1992. The interview lasted 45 minutes. All interviews were taped and then transcribed. The analysis and reporting of the data was then written by studying the coded transcripts (typed interviews).

The number of participants involved in the study was chosen after reviewing literature on qualitative research. Most researchers agree that there must be sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants and sites, so to best reflect the population they represent. The other criterion is saturation of information. A number of writers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 and Seidman, 1991) discuss a point in a study at which the interviewer begins to hear the same information. He is no longer learning anything new. Douglas, (1985) is bold

enough to state that this usually occurs when the population involved reaches twenty-five. It is for this reason twenty-four teachers were chosen from the Maui District.

In-depth phenomenological interviews must include three parts. The first section asks about the participants' history with a topic. Second, his or her present experience with it. And third, the participants' reflection on the meaning of their experience with the topic (Seidman, 1991). For the purpose of this study the researcher took the three part interview structure and adapted it as follows:

Part 1. (Past experience): What can the participant remember about art as a subject in school? What exposure did the participant have to the arts in the past?

Part 2. (Present experience): What is it art? How does the participant define it.

Part 3. (Art in the classroom): What does it mean to the participant to be a teacher of art? Given what he or she said in part 1 or 2, what does the teacher feel is important about art?

The development of the interview was an important aspect of this study. A review of the literature failed to uncover an instrument that specifically explored and reported understandings held by early childhood teachers about the arts or art education. Therefore, the questions on the interview were developed by the researcher using the existing research on art education. Some of the questions were designed to find out if the participant was aware of the different philosophies of art that were described in the literature search. A limited time factor means that an interview must be very well constructed to avoid confusing the participant. Therefore the interview questions underwent many steps in writing and evaluation before they were drafted into the final form

used in this study. At least five art educators and several educational psychology instructors were asked to review the interview questions. Suggestions from these reviewers led to revisions. Reviewers were asked if they understood each question.

The interview included biographical questions about the participants' age and educational experience in order to give the reader a general picture of the sample population that was involved in the study. It included initial questions about their experience with art in the past. This aided in illustrating patterns of understandings about art that may have developed from childhood. Questions asking the teacher to describe the art experiences and materials they use in their classrooms, help define what teachers value in certain art experiences as compared to others. The interview as a whole should lead to a clearer picture of teachers' understandings of art and the art process.

Access to the participants was achieved by meeting with the superintendent of schools on Maui. Superintendent Lokelani Lindsey met with the researcher and reviewed the interview questions. The questions were then sent to the district curriculum specialist in art, who reviewed them again. (See Appendix Letter A). The researcher then met with the superintendent and curriculum specialists to form a letter of consent and a letter requesting the principals to allow access to their kindergarten teachers through phone calls or letter. (See Appendix Letter B). A letter to the participants requested their participation in the study. (See Appendix Letter C).

According to Seidman (1985), the best advice he ever received as a researcher was to pilot his work before the formal interview. The researcher

held a set of pilot interviews with a small group of willing participants in an art education course held on Maui by the University of Hawaii. This helped to further define whether the questions were appropriate for the study envisioned. Finally the researcher had a total of forty-four questions. The final copy of the questions were sent to the dissertation committee chairperson for approval. The interviews began, and all interview questions were asked to the twenty-four participants. When the transcribing began it became obvious some questions led to long discussions but did not elicit responses that were stated in the research questions. These responses were dropped from the transcripts. Further categorizing of the data continued as described in the upcoming section titled "Transcribing, Data Analysis, and Interpretation of Data."

### Stated Purposes for Questions Used for Interviews

The general purpose of this study was to find out what teachers understand about art and art education. The research questions further clarified their experiences by defining first their past experiences with art and second, identifying how those past experiences helped to form their views and decisions about how they taught art in their classroom.

All of the questions in the interview were written to clarify the general purposes and the research questions of this study. Therefore, the interview (see Appendix D) was divided into three sections.

Section One appears at the beginning and the end of the interview. There were questions that asked the participant to describe his past

experiences with art or art education. Those questions are labeled (p.e.) for past experience. The beginning section asks the participant to describe his or her childhood experiences with art. The last part of the interview and Section One ask for biographical data about the teacher's education and experience.

Section Two of the interview asks the participant to talk about his present view of art in general. These questions are labeled (p.v.) for present view.

Section Three asks questions about teachers' views of teaching art in their classroom. These questions are labeled (t.c.) for teacher's classroom.

As previously stated Section Four asks the teacher to describe biographical data about himself or herself. These questions were presented last because they ask for personal information about the participant that might have caused discomfort if asked in the beginning of the interview.

The following chart shows the relationship between the research questions as described on pages 5 and 6 and their relationship to the individual interview questions:

The Relationship of the Research Questions to the Interview Questions

<u>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</u>	<u>RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</u>
What past experiences and life history have the teachers had with art?	
1. What understandings have teachers developed about art education and the art process?	Section 1 11, 12
	Section 1 Biographical 2, 6, 8
2. How much art production experience, personal art education, and art history background do these teachers have?	Section 1 6, 7, 8, 10
	Section 1, Biographical 7

## The Relationship of the Research Questions to the Interview Questions

(Continued)

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### RELATED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. What factors (childhood experiences, teaching experiences, or amount of personal art production) relate to how teachers understand art?                                                                       | Section 1<br>2, 3, 4, 9<br><br>Section 1, Biographical<br>3 |
| 4. How can these teacher's understandings, views and perceptions about art be used to create art education in-service programs that are sensitive to teachers' needs and view of their role as a teacher of art? | Analysis                                                    |
| What present views do teachers hold about art and art education?                                                                                                                                                 | Related Interview Questions                                 |
| 1. What art activities do Kindergarten teachers feel are developmentally appropriate and use as part of their curriculum with their students?                                                                    | Section 3<br>1, 2, 13, 18                                   |
| 2. What objectives do these teachers understand to be important in an art program?                                                                                                                               | Section 2<br>1, 2, 4, 6                                     |
| 3. How do these teachers decide what art experiences are worth using in their curriculum?                                                                                                                        | Section 3<br>8, 9, 10, 15, 17                               |
| 4. How important is art as a subject and in their own life?                                                                                                                                                      | Section 2<br>3, 4<br><br>Section 3<br>7                     |

## Transcribing, Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data

As noted in the previous section, all of the interviews were taped and transcribed. The teacher-participants' thoughts become embodied in their words. Therefore it is important to note that the words were not paraphrased or summarized by the researcher, but reported as fully and accurately as possible. Although time consuming, the researcher had the benefit of typed transcripts notes for study. Finding patterns within these notes and capturing the interwoven complexity was the goal of this researcher.

Once spoken data was transcribed it became pages and pages of written data. The search for theories and patterns within data began. This detailed analysis by systematically studying the written data sentence by sentence is often called "grounded theory" (Strauss, 1987). Using this method the researcher can report patterns in the data without prior commitment to specific hypothesis. This allows for much more complexity in the analysis of the data, while still allowing for the central characterizing of patterns in the study (Strauss, 1987).

Using "grounded theory" the researcher coded certain questions and provisional hypothesis she had before starting the study. Those codes came out of the literature search and are called the experimental data. For example, research showed that it is important to include exposure to fine art when teaching art. This information was pre-coded so that if a teacher mentioned something about exposing young children to fine art within her lessons, that information could be noted under that category called "Expose Children to Fine Art".

The analysis of data also included breaking the transcribed notes into smaller ideas. That is, dimensionalizing them so that they can be broken into categories. Studying these categories the researcher begins to see patterns in what the participant-teachers said about art. Many patterns were observed but it is the core categories (those categories that turn out to be the core or most important part of the research), that were reported.

The method of categorizing and coding data was as follows:

Two copies of each written transcript were made. The researcher then labeled all data which seemed interesting or relevant to the study. The labels were several words that generally described themes of the chosen excerpts from each participant's interview. These categories were then studied individually for patterns and connections among the excerpts within one category. In addition to labeling each marked excerpt with a term that placed it in a category, the researcher labeled each passage with a coding system that designated its original place in the transcript. This was done by noting the initials of the participant and Roman and Arabic numbers for the page number of the transcript on which the passage occurs. This method allowed the researcher to retrace where the excerpt was pulled from and place it back in context if needed.

Decisions on what categories to report were made in several ways. The repetition of an idea sometimes called attention to itself. Those excerpts would be included. Sometimes excerpts connected to the literature on the subject. Or sometimes the excerpts were just interesting or told in a striking manner that created new insight into the study. Reported data was also chosen by the

presence of certain key trigger words. In his book, Interviewing as a Qualitative Technique, Seidman states that he always is alert to conflict, both between people and within a person. He goes on to say he particularly pays attention to certain key expressions. If a respondent expresses hopes whether filled or unfilled the researcher should be alerted (Seidman, 1991). Other key trigger words are language that indicates beginnings, middles and ends. When a participant expresses frustration and resolutions to problems or to indications of isolation about a topic the researcher should pay particular attention (Seidman, 1991). When these topics of information showed up in the written transcript they were bracketed.

The goal of the researcher, in marking what is of interest in the interview transcripts, was to reduce and then shape the material into a form which can be shared or displayed (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The researcher used two basic approaches to report interview data:

1. The individual responses of the participants were compiled and grouped into categories that had a common theme.
2. Those Individual responses were then marked and grouped into categories, which were studied for thematic connections within and among them.

Specifically the researcher cut the transcripts into pieces of paper holding individual responses. The pieces of paper were piled into stacks that best described the general topic of that individual's response. The researcher decided to create a new title for a stack when more than six teachers had similar answers to a question or if a certain individual's response seemed extremely different from all others.

The researcher then used the following pre-established categories to further decide how to report the data:

**Past experiences** - Past experiences reported under the section titled "Participating Teachers Biographical and Artistic exposure".

**Present View** - Reported under the section titled "Teachers' Present View of Art".

**Teaching art in the classroom** - Reported under the section called "Teachers' Description of Art in Their Classrooms".

A list of the most significant questions and responses were listed and titled "Interviews Responses for Kindergarten Teachers 1992". These may be found in Appendix E at the end of this study. This material not only provides insight into how questions were answered in general but demonstrates the range of responses from different individuals.

Finally, when all the chosen material was reported the analysis of the material began. This called upon the researcher to ask, "What does this data mean?" "What can be learned from this material?" And "How can we use this information to best serve our children?"

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary of Responses and Analysis of Data

#### Introduction

This study is not a study of "the nature of Art", or "what is art education", or even, "what is developmentally appropriate art for kindergarten". It is, a study of teachers' understandings of art and art education. Thus, when this researcher reports that teachers say art should always be integrated with other subjects, she is not arguing that this is true, only that it is perceived to be true by teachers. It is not that art must be integrated but rather teachers' perceptions that it should. These perceptions may or may not reflect what the experts (the insiders) in art education and in early childhood education, believe about art.

It is the shared understandings about art, as a subject, that is the focus of this study. In the interviews the researcher looked for and found variations in teachers' background, exposure, and understandings of art and art education. These variations share common themes regarding how individuals view art. Many of these common themes appeared to reflect the ideas of the three art educators who were discussed in the literature search (Lowenfeld, Gardner and Eisner). However, many of these shared ideas contrast sharply to new ideas about art education and to what is thought to be developmentally appropriate

art for young children, as stated by such groups as National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the State of Hawaii Department of Education Art Curriculum.

Where do these confusions lie? Why are teachers' understandings different than those of the experts? How have teachers' understandings of what should be taught, been developed? These questions and others will be addressed in the following responses of twenty-four early childhood teachers who so graciously agreed to share their thoughts.

The teachers' responses will be organized into four areas each followed by a discussion: 1) A biographical profile, 2) A profile of early childhood teachers' views of their own artistic exposure and creative abilities, 3) A profile of teachers' present view of art, and 4) A profile of teachers' descriptions of art in their classroom. These responses contribute to a picture of teachers' perceptions, notions, beliefs about art in general and in their classrooms. After the summary of responses for each area, there will be an analysis of that data.

Interpreting and analysis do not only happen after reporting the data. All of the marking, labeling, and categorizing used to decide what data was interesting and worth reporting has been a part of the analysis. However, it is the final analysis that will give the interview responses clarification and help us make sense of them.

In some ways it is tempting to stop at this point, to let our responses speak for themselves. But one must push further. The researcher must ask, "What can be learned from these interviews". "What connections are there among the experiences of the participants?" "What surprises have there

been?" And "how have the interview responses been consistent with the literature and what the experts say?" In the final section we will discuss these questions and try to give even greater clarity to our collected data.

### A Biographical Profile of the Teacher Participants in This Study

Information regarding educational background and origins of the participating teachers helps us gain some insight into the basis of their answers, views, and perceptions about art. Questions such as, "Besides your teaching credential do you have any other college credits?" Or, "How many semesters of art did you take in high school?" were used to elicit responses from the teachers.

The participating teachers for this study were chosen only because of the schools they teach in, and the grade level they teach (kindergarten). The sample was not a blind random sample nor a large sample because of the qualitative (not quantitative) nature of this study. However, in the ethnographic tradition, participants represented some common traits as well as differing ones in regards to their education, amount of training, years in service and amount of exposure to the arts.

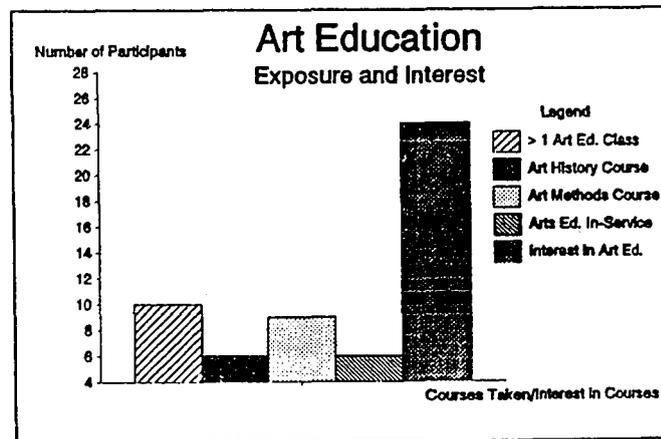
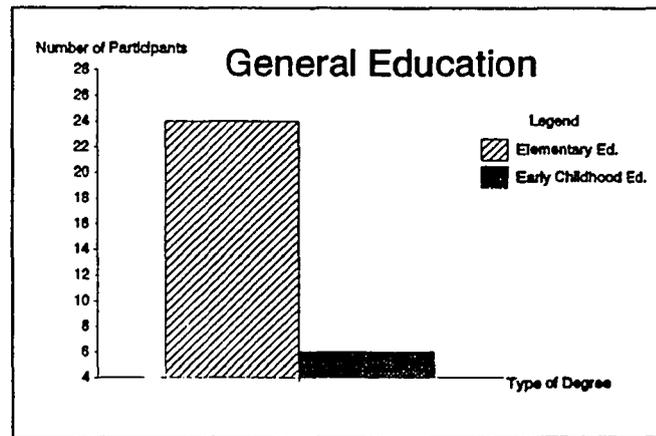
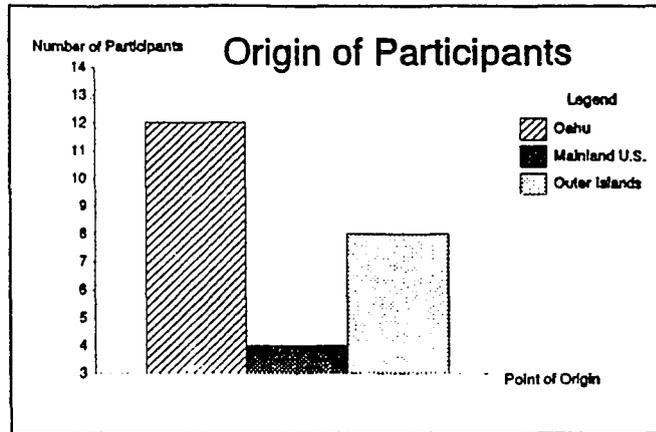
The twenty-four teachers interviewed had at least seven years teaching experience and as many as twenty-two years. The average teacher in the group had been teaching kindergarten for nine years. More than half the participants grew up on Oahu, Hawaii. The remaining four teachers were from other Hawaiian islands, and six were from the mainland United States. All of

the participants had elementary teaching credentials, with seven having specialized degrees or graduate degrees in early childhood education. Most other participants had at least six units in early childhood education courses.

The twenty-four teachers the researcher interviewed comprise three sub-groups with regard to background: 1) Eleven teachers had more than one semester of art studio classes in high school or college, 2) Seven teachers had more than one semester of art history in high school or college, and 3) Nine teachers had an art education methods class in their teacher training program. In the group of twenty-four participants only six had taken an art methods workshop or art education in-service after becoming a teacher. Almost all of the teacher participants expressed an interest in in-service education in art if it gave specific methods or experiences that they could take back into their classroom.

When the remaining eighteen were asked why they had not taken an in-service art education workshop, most of the teachers said that they never remember one being offered. At least half of those (approx. 9) said, that they wanted to take a workshop that allowed them to experience many different mediums and that gave projects that they could immediately offer in their classroom. Also mentioned was the fact that they did not feel confident in their own drawing ability and would like to experience some success in their own efforts.

The following graph illustrates the origin of the participants, their general education experience, and their art education exposure:



A GRAPH OF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

## A Discussion of the Biographical Data

The participants in this study were experienced teachers, with teaching credentials and the average of nine years of experience. As will be reported in the subsequent sections many of the teachers felt inadequate about their own lack of ability to create art. This does not seem unusual since only eleven of the teachers had taken more than one art class in either high school or college. Even fewer had had any type of art history course. Most of these teachers entered their pre-service with little or no art studio or history experience, except for what was learned in their own elementary school classes. This researcher questions why teacher training programs would not require at least one art education methods class. However, teacher training programs in the state of Hawaii have no requirement in art methods to graduate with an elementary teaching credential. This means, many teachers are teaching art, leaning on their ability and knowledge of art when they last experienced it – in their own elementary school education.

All but five of the teachers were trained in the state of Hawaii. Of these five, only one had not had an art methods course in her pre-service training.

In a more positive light, all teachers involved in the study expressed an interest in taking a hands-on in-service art methods courses. And, nineteen specifically expressed interest in learning how to offer art appreciation and art history reproductions in their classrooms. At the present time there are no art in-service curricula written to train teachers of this district in the area of art appreciation and art history.

## A Summary of the Teachers' Views of their Own Artistic Exposure and Creative Abilities.

The goal of the first section was to elicit responses from the participants of this study about their own artistic and creative abilities. The researcher constructed the first part of the interview to include questions like, "Did you feel you were 'good' at art as a child?" And then moved, as necessary, to more specific questions such as, "Can you remember a time when someone told you were good at art or commented to the contrary?"

Four categories emerge from the data regarding teachers' memories of their exposure to art and views on their own artistic ability: 1) Their thoughts on their own artistic ability, 2) Their exposure to art materials as a child, 3) Their exposure to fine art or others art as a child, and 4) Their favorite art experience as a child in school.

Once the data was collected and separated into "like" responses, patterns began to emerge. The twenty-four teachers interviewed could be broken up into three groups when discussing the first general category called "Teachers' thoughts about their own creative abilities": 1) Those that felt they had strong artistic and creative abilities, 2) Those that felt they were creative but were not artistically talented, and 3) Those that felt that they were neither creative or artistic.

The following are the two most positive responses made by Group One (creative and artistic). It is followed by responses from Group Two and Group

Three (not creative and not artistic) and (creative but not artistic). They tend to illustrate a feeling of humiliation and despair about art. As if art is an untouchable subject for only a talented few.

One participant that felt good about her artistic ability spoke about the specific day she was told she was good at art:

It was in third grade in Catholic school. The teacher walked over to my work, it was a picture of grapes, wine, and a cup, and said, "'L' is very artistic. Her work is always so beautiful". From that day on I believed I was more artistic than others. Other students came to me for help and I always included hours of work on art, including it in my book reports, poems, or whatever the regular classroom work was. I would get in trouble for drawing the cover and never getting to the academic work. This was important to me because I was always in the low reading group and slowest math groups. To be honest I don't think I was any better at art than the others but the teacher told me I was, in third grade, and so it became my image.

Another example of a memory that was very specific and positive was told by "T":

In seventh grade I took a crafts class. I was told by Mr. O. on the third day of class that I was good in art. (I can remember the specific time of day and semester that was).

Still another said:

In early elementary school I remember kids laughing at me because I couldn't draw. I was never artistic. I still to this day, at the first day of school tell the kids, "There is no reason for you, to ask Miss G. to draw a horse for you, I can't draw. This is how I make a

horse". [She draws a stick figure on a piece of paper in front of her]. So yes, I was definitely put down at an early age and I still think my artistic ability is poor because of it.

Quite often these two groups mentioned feeling frustrated because their work did not seem to be "as good" as their peers. One participant commented:

My general attitude about going to art class was that I felt very poorly about it. I know I wasn't good and I wouldn't ever come out with something as good as somebody else... I remember in school being very frustrated that my puppet didn't look as good as Suzy's puppet or that I couldn't make my clay pot just right. But Billy could.

But most of our teachers felt art was something to be dreaded; that you either had talent in it or you did not. Eight teachers remembered feelings described in this comment:

Scared, I felt scared and anxious. I was afraid the teacher would walk by and know I had no artistic talent at all. Or even worse, hang my work on the bulletin board! Unlike other subjects I felt there was no way to improve my skills. I felt hopeless.

But these type of comments were few. Most of the participants described frustrating embarrassing memories of art and their artistic abilities. The following was a poem written by one of the participants and given to me later about her feeling of her own ability:

#### Art and Flying

I sometimes have dreams in which I can fly. In those dreams it seems that all I need is a slight change of focus, a turning of some mental dial, and I can take to the sky. I imagine that slight shift in

reality is what artists experience when they draw, or paint, or sculpt... I have always wanted that experience. To me, it seems as distant as flying.

I am constantly amazed and inspired by nature. I love the textures of black pebbles on a beach, or the light and shadow in a bamboo grove, or the kindness and wisdom of a grandmother's gaze. Once I was swollen with beautiful and striking images. I wished I could release them, that they could flow from me through India ink or piece of charcoal and reveal themselves again to me and to the world. I tried drawing and painting. What I got was not what I saw. The desire was the 2% inspiration. The other 98% perspiration kept me earth bound.

I have attempted what I considered shortcuts to capturing that line or light. At one time I tried photography, and after a while actually became quite accomplished. It was wonderful to snap and steal a slice of the flow to share. I could say, 'This is what I saw. This is what moved me.' After a while I discovered focussing the lens was really focussing my own vision. The shutter was in my mind's eye. I didn't need to develop it or frame it or hang it on the wall. It was enough to be there.

In the same frustrated group were those few that felt while they were very creative in other areas, art was something they just couldn't grasp. When asked what type of art they specifically could not do, they answered: "I can't draw or paint". One begins to wonder if most of the frustration geared towards art is only referring to drawing skill and not to art in general.

The second category that was discussed, was the participants exposure to art materials as a child. Surprisingly, most all of the teachers stated they were given many types of art materials at home as children. When asked who supplied them they commented that their mothers bought them for everyday

play. Most teachers said that they had access to paper, glue, paint, stencils, markers, and crayons. One participant remembered always having clay available in plastic bags at home. Many mentioned that video and TV in the 1950's was almost non-existent, so making things in the home was quite common. One participant reminisced that:

Because there was no television, we would incorporate art with drama and music in our home play. We would design our own costumes... We were also musical, so we formed a trio and acted out a play. The art would be the backdrops and the costume design.

When asked in the interview if color books were available in their homes, only one participant said that she remembered them being a part of the art materials that were supplied. Most said that they were not exposed to color books, and most said it was not something they particularly remember enjoying. Again they mentioned that they felt they had access to many wonderful types of materials and that they enjoyed making cards, placemats, and paintings at home. One of the few teachers that expressed confidence in her own artistic ability said that:

My mother and father always told me I was good at art. I always felt good about my art but in third grade my teacher said I couldn't draw but I didn't believe it... I kept drawing and I got better and better at it. My parents definitely over-rode what happened at school!

It is this type of memory that later seems to lead to the conclusion of most of the teachers involved. That is: The role of the teacher is to never

criticize or critique a child's work. The risk of hurting the child is too great. One begins to wonder if teachers feel the same way about criticism and grading in math and language arts.

When asked again to be more specific about what type of projects they created at home many of the teachers named more 3-dimensions craft type projects, then drawing, and painting. The mothers of these teachers included in their art supplies, pipe cleaners, felt, Styrofoam balls, cotton balls, and such, and over half of the specific projects mentioned were functional gift giving type objects such as Christmas tree ornaments, cards, piggy banks, clay bowls, and holiday decorations for the house.

One woman remembered fondly:

We used to make gifts for all the family. I would send cards and ornaments that we glued together and mailed for Christmas. I remember using construction paper to decorate the house for every holiday. We had tons of paper, glue, and glitter and access to it on any rainy day.

It is within these fond wonderful memories that one starts to see some clarity in answering the question, "How do teachers decide what art experiences to offer?" It seems that often art is used to create holiday gifts and decorations like the cherished beautiful memories of art at home with mom.

While continuing to discuss an individual's exposure to art, the participants were asked about their memories of seeing art as a child. This included fine art or art created by family, friends, or relatives. When asked, "Do you remember a time when you were exposed to other people's art?" most teachers had fond memories of their first visit to a museum. Since over half of

the participants grew up on Oahu, many referred to the Honolulu Academy of Arts. Almost all of those teachers went into detail of their first visit in the following manner:

It was a graduation party... I don't know whose but my mother took us to an art gallery. This was in Honolulu. I felt it was something different. I knew we were somewhere special.

or

We used to love to go to the Academy of Arts in Honolulu. It was one place that my mother would let us walk to. We would all walk (my sisters and I) down to the museum and just hang around.

Curiously most of the teachers said that their trips were initiated by the same wonderful mothers who had brought home the wide selection of art materials for home play. Only two of the participants said they went to the Academy of Arts, because they were taken by their teacher or school. Still, most participants said they had been to a museum as a young child and remembered enjoying it.

If one refers back to the study done by Brewster and Ghiselin (1955), discussed in the literature search, you will remember that it was found that the closer an individual was to an artist working in his studio, the more that individual might show appreciation of art techniques, and the creative products of art. This leads us to listen carefully to our participants response to the question, "Were you exposed to art of friends, family, or an artist at work". Again, it was refreshing to hear that most of the participants said they had many people in their lives as children, working in the arts. One woman stated:

I was exposed to a lot of people's art. My mother and step-father were funky kind of people. This meant they had lots of artist friends and we would go to other people's homes, watch them make pottery, paint, or make sculpture. My mother's best friend was into really different kind of paintings (abstract – non-representational).

Another teacher remembered:

We had lots of other people's work in our home when I was a child. We traveled, my father was in the military. Whenever we got a gift it was a type of art. My father, when I was about in the third grade, gave me an oriental silk painting for Christmas when we were in Japan. I remember thinking why?, this old thing. Now it's my most cherished possession.

Seven of the participants had some member of their family working as artists in their home as children. Those seven teachers did talk more extensively about the value of art and about the importance of observing art of others. Five of those seven used the artist in the school's program and tried to bring in art for their children to view in their classrooms. All seven said they used the children's parents, who were artists, for classroom speakers.

It again seems that the teachers had rich exposure to the visual arts both by being exposed to artists at work and by observing lots of art in their home. They define the art in their home as anything from their mother's collection of music boxes, paintings done by friends or most common Asian type art that was brought home from a trip or travel.

The last category is the teachers' memories of their favorite art experience in elementary school. This category was chosen because almost twenty-two teachers' first answer was "clay". The interesting thing about this

response, was that in most cases, the participant mentioned that it was not presented to them by the regular classroom teacher. Most teachers remembered making an animal or pot that was demonstrated first by someone who came into the classroom specifically to instruct art. In most cases this was an art resource teacher or a parent that worked in clay. When asked why they remembered it so fondly, they said, "With clay there seems to be some techniques to learn. If you followed the techniques you will succeed" (In most cases the teacher or parent had demonstrated a clay technique such as pinch-pot and then the child was allowed to make what he or she wished).

In summary most of the teachers in this study had fairly rich exposure to art, as a child. They had art materials available to them for free play, and they remembered and enjoyed visits to museums and exposure to other people's art besides their own, although most of this exposure was guided by the parents, not the schools. As one participant stated when asked what she remembered about art in school:

I can't remember anything. Isn't that strange I can't remember any thing about art. Well, except for the color in the line hand outs and, oh yeah, the day we worked with clay. I still have that little creature I made, you know!

### A Discussion of the Teachers' Views of their Own Artistic Abilities

Teachers expressed a dismal view of how they felt about their own artistic talent. As reported, most had a feeling of being left out, when it came to the "artistic-talent-department". However, when asked what they felt they

lacked in artistic ability, they almost always answered, "I cannot draw". The teachers quite often defined art as, the ability to draw something realistically or at least someone who enjoyed drawing. It would seem simple to offer an in-service workshop for beginning drawing if this alone would relieve their fears.

Once the belief that art skills are natural inherited traits of only a few is erased, real art learning can take place. At this point art can become a subject to be studied, practiced, discussed and enjoyed like any other subject in the classrooms today. As the poem, "Art and Flying" (page 58), shared by one of the participants, says so wonderfully, "focusing the lens was really focusing my own vision." However, teachers repeatedly talked about art as if it should not be taught. They clearly felt that exposure to a variety of art materials and art experiences with little direct instruction, was best for enhancing a child's artistic abilities.

There seemed to be a contradiction: When interviewed, most of the teachers spoke in detail about descriptions of their memories of art materials and activities that their mothers had provided for them. If providing and exposing children to art materials is the best method of developing artistic abilities, then why does this group of teachers feel so inadequate about their own abilities? Exposure is not enough. We do not just expose children to math, nor do we only expose children to reading. Art, as a subject, is no different. As in other subjects there are concepts to be learned, terms to be defined, and materials to be demonstrated. Art like all subjects, has basic structure that must be taught by a knowledgeable teacher.

When asked specifically what type of art materials were available at home to create art, most of the participants named 3-dimensional type materials such as pipe cleaners, felt, cotton balls, glue, and colored paper. Only one teacher described quality type materials such as paper, clay, charcoal, and fine colored pencils. So, although materials were available to the teachers as children, it becomes important to look at what type of materials they were. It is best that the materials are the type that enable the child to do more than just cut and paste. Drawing materials must be of high quality. Crayons must be not too waxy and paper varying in texture and type. If an individual has not been exposed to these types of materials they may not be familiar with or comfortable supplying them in their classroom.

The teachers' artwork created at home was often holiday or decorative art. Most often mentioned, were projects that created cards, Christmas decorations, gifts or some type of finished project that could be given away. It is not surprising, that many of the teachers still define a good art activity in this way. Many teachers' favorite activity included creating something that could both be used for decorating the classroom and be given as a gift later. The product was the emphasis, just as it had been at home with mother twenty years before.

When looking at the teachers' exposure to art history and art museums, one must keep in mind where the teacher spent their youth. The teachers that lived in Honolulu as children all had exposure to an art museum through the Academy of Arts. Their experiences were fond ones. They included memories of viewing art from other people and other cultures. However, the teachers that

grew up on the outer islands did not have these same experiences. And since none of the participating teachers remembered any art history exposure in their elementary schooling, visits to the Academy of Arts became the only exposure the Oahu children had to art history (other than that seen at home). One questions if this still is true for our outer island children? Unless fine art or reproductions are being displayed in outer island classrooms, children may have little or no exposure to the art history. However, children in larger cities such as Honolulu seem to, at least, be exposed to art on trips to museums.

The study by Brewster and Ghiselin (1955) found that the closer an individual was to a working artist, the more chance that individual will value and appreciate art in his own life. The teachers in this study who had memories of artists or people creating art in their home as children, did seem to place greater value on art as an important part of life. They were more apt to say something like, "I try to bring in parents that are artists in my classroom", or "I use Artists in the Schools Program so I can expose my children to a real artist". Again this supposes that we are not all "real" artists, but it does seem to demonstrate that these teachers value the process of creating and spending time with the creator.

Often, teachers discussed their memories of art in elementary school. As reported before twenty-two teachers listed clay as the favorite art experience they remembered from school. When asked "why", most stated that there were step-by-step techniques to learn when working with clay and that they felt they could be successful if they followed these techniques. In other words, clay, is teachable. Ceramics is often taught in a structured way in the beginning

stages. If you cannot construct the basic forms using pinch pot, or coil , or slab methods you usually cannot create much further. However, drawing and painting is normally not taught with the same technique based knowledge. The beginner is not given the same step-by-step lessons that creates the comfort zone, and enjoyment I think these teachers are describing.

The author would like to note that working with clay is a strong sensory experience. It is not surprising young children would be attracted to these experiences and remember them fondly.

Drawing, painting, collage and ink are believed, by teachers, to be media that the teacher allows the student to just experience. This lack of instruction is the basis of the discomfort and, "I can't draw" attitude that is described by the teachers. If one listens closely the message is clear. People who feel inadequate in art or any subject, want the basics taught in a step-by-step method so that they can experience some success initially and then build later on that knowledge. Thus, in the view of the researcher, introducing students to any form of an art experience should start with structure and end with freedom. This type of teaching allows for comfort within framework and creativity within the freedom.

It is also interesting to note that although clay was mentioned by almost all of the teachers as their favorite art experience in their own childhood, no teacher participant listed clay when I asked, "What are your three favorite art experiences for children in your classroom". When I asked why, most said, that they had no access to kilns or that clay was too expensive to buy. Another reason was that there was so little room in their classrooms to store clay or the

projects if the children made them. Generally, teachers gave physical outside reasons for not exposing children to clay even though they remembered it as a positive experience in their own education.

In summary, the participants in this study, generally, had rich exposure to craft type art materials as children. Most were not given formal art lessons, but remember being given the freedom to create, cut and paste and specifically make decorations and gifts as products for giving. Since most had little or no memory of art as a subject, the teachers did not describe art as a subject that has concepts, vocabulary, or technical skills that can be taught. Art generally is remembered as an activity which allows for creativity and is product oriented in the form of gifts and theme decorations.

### A Summary of the Teachers' Present Views of Art

To begin discussion about how the teacher viewed art in general, the following questions were asked: "Is artistic talent inborn or can it be learned?" Or, "Can you define what art is?, Or, "What does art offer that other subjects don't?.

The teachers were asked many general questions about their views and perceptions of art and its importance in our world. The interviewer commented that people view art in many ways, but she was interested in talking about how they personally viewed art as an individual and a teacher. She pointed out that there were no right or wrong answers and that I wished for them to just talk about art in general. The reader will notice two core categories observed,

regarding teachers' views of art in general. The first category includes views that differed greatly from one teacher to another. The second reports views about art among teachers that seem to be similar.

The teachers' opinions about art, as an inborn talent, differed greatly. About half felt some individuals were born more creative and more artistic than others. Others felt it was only exposure or lack of parental stifling that cause creative and artistic talent.

There were four clear categories of agreement, when defining art, within the participants: 1) Art offers one thing no other subject offers, no right or wrong answers; 2) Art teaches people to make choices and decisions; 3) Art is an individual expression of what the artist is feeling, and; 4) Art and creative thinking is best taught through exposure to choices and as many materials as possible.

Teachers' views about art differed greatly when discussing whether artistic talent and creativity were inborn or something that was developed by strong exposure from both home and school. Many teachers seemed to follow the educational script saying, "All individuals are creative creatures", but when asked specifically, did they think some people were artistically talented or creative more than others, many said yes. When asked to talk about artistic talent in general, and asked if it could be learned, one participant stated strongly:

I think creativity and artistic talent is inborn. But drawing, I think, can be learned. It's like teaching observational skills, but how far you can go depends on the individual. You can teach them a certain amount, but the rest depends on their own talent.

Another said:

You can always pick out the artistically gifted children in a class in the first weeks of schools. They draw on everything and sometimes their attention span is not strong. Some children just seem to be more interested in drawing and creating than others. They like to work with their hands. Some children are just more artistic than others. They clearly see more detail in things they look at.

When asked specifically, "Do you think some people can learn to be artistic?", the same teacher said, "Yes, definitely, but you can only learn to do a little bit more than you already know."

Another declared:

I believe everyone has a hidden artistic talent. It is through grown-ups that don't accept these talents in a positive way, that don't accept all children's art as nice, that children learn to hide their talents. I believe that they should allow creativity to widen and broaden. I believe children are so talented and creative when they are young and somewhere along the line they feel they have to be perfect, linear, and they stop taking chances. (That's why I dropped down from 6th grade to kindergarten, I couldn't watch this anymore). I have parents that come in and say, "Look, that child's work is better than my child's". Those are the grown-ups that are stopping their child's talent from developing.

When asked "Can art be taught", almost all of the teachers commented they were uncomfortable with the word taught. They would say something similar to this response:

I think exposure is a better word. People who are exposed to art throughout their life are not going to

be afraid of it. Since art is "just doing it" and not being afraid to be right or wrong, the more you have been exposed the better you will be.

Or,

I think they have to live through it. You can't teach art but you can expose children to it. You can put beautiful things around... Like my husband, he used to never like art, you know, he grew up without anything around him. Now he sees it all the time and he will go over and look closer at something.

This view was so common among the teachers that one begins to question how they developed this idea about art education. (This view leans toward the Rousseauan view on which Lowenfeld based his writings. That is: Art is best taught by supporting children's creative spirits, letting them unfold by exposure to materials but not direct teaching).

As previously stated there were four categories of agreement among the teachers when defining art. Category number one was: Art offers automatic success because there are no right and wrong answers. With this view seemed to be an underlying perception that art should not be graded, critiqued, or criticized, and that there was really no way to tell good art from bad art. A clear illustration of this came from "E" who said:

Math is black and white, right or wrong. Art is not. Art you can do anyway you wish. There are no answers. No one else can judge whether you did it right because it's about being creative. You don't have any rules or facts to teach, therefore anything someone does can be called art.

This view was fairly consistent among the teachers. When pushed further and asked, "How do you decide what is quality art, and what is not," most participants answered from a teacher's point of view by saying something like this comment (from the newest teacher in the district):

I hang everybody's work as long as they complete it. If they feel good about it, then they are done. I won't hang anyone's work that they don't like (they being the artist), or that they don't want hung for whatever reason.

This agrees with the view of many individuals in the art world, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder or that art is art if the artist says it is. However, if this is true about art then one questions why some art in the art history world is considered to be better than others. (Better meaning more important, more famous). And, as mentioned before, the most curious question to this author is, why does a group of individuals that seem to agree that there is no "right or wrong" way to create art feel so dissatisfied by their own artistic abilities? What do they think they need to know to become "better" artists? And if they knew these concepts would they then teach art differently? These questions will be looked at in later chapters.

The second category of agreement among the teachers' views about art had to do with its ability to teach problem solving. Most of the participants mentioned some time in their interview, that doing art included making many decisions and thus teaches people to problem solve. One participant defined it as:

Art forces creativity. It forces you to problem solve. It asks you to find different ways to do things out of the norm, to find many different ways to look at

things. It asks that you not get bogged down by the rules. It teaches you to be more creative.

When asked to further define what "more creative" meant, the same participant described her husband:

Well, take my husband. My husband will cross the "T". Everything is black or white. You give him something, he reads every bit of the instructions. He has to read the whole thing. He has to follow it exactly like it is. I can't stand that. I just say, "Give me that thing! I'll look at the picture, and then I'll tinker with it, fool around, and put it together. He's that type of person, one that has to follow exactly, he's not creative. I can't stand that, and I don't want my kids to be like that so I like to give them pencil and paper and tell them, "Here, think of another way to do this". Art teaches creative thinking. My husband, he doesn't do art.

Another said:

Art offers a time for my children to create what they want. Creativity is problem solving so I just allow for whatever happens. Sometimes I just get big messes but I'm afraid to give them samples or too much structure because then they might not do it their own way.

Still, one has to ask how do we as teachers give students choices and freedom in art and yet still follow the curriculum that is set up by our state that clearly defines certain specific concepts and objectives to be learned in art? And does giving absolute freedom in the use of materials and subject matter in art, insure that creativity enhancement and strong problem solving skills are being developed?

As one teacher participant declared:

I am constantly straddling the line between how much structure to give in any subject, against how much to allow freedom and creativity. This is especially so in art.

The third category of agreement among the teachers will be called, "Art is an individual's expression of emotions and feelings". This idea has been discussed before throughout most of the art education literature. Howard Gardner discussed art as being a visual metaphor for our thoughts. And more specifically children's art creations act as visual analogies for how the child sees his world. Professionals in the field of art and psychology often look at the art product as the inner personality of a child (Lowenfeld, 1987). This view of art was discussed by all twenty-four early childhood teachers. One told me art enables her to talk to her student about things they might not have brought up in the course of school day conversation. She told about a little girl:

What was that girl's name? It doesn't matter what the girl's name was. But a couple years ago, this little girl drew something (she wasn't even writing yet), and something came out. She was very withdrawn and I got this picture of an adorable plane with a smiling face with her dad inside. He was leaving and his face was crying. In the picture was a drawing of a little girl crying down below. I asked her about it and she told me her daddy had left to live in Honolulu. Her mom and dad had split up and were getting divorced. She couldn't have written that, I never would have known. This happens a lot in kindergarten with parent break-ups. No one comes in to tell us what's going on in the family. Drawing can do that.

It is also interesting to notice, what the teachers did not mention. The teachers did not give examples of art being therapeutic, in a cathartic sort of

way. That is, that the children themselves might become healthier because they had the opportunity to express their inside feelings or emotions. This view (therapeutic art therapy) would add to what teachers said, making the art product not only a record of the problems and conflicts the child is facing (for the teacher to read), but also part of a process that aids in creating healthy individuals.

Also interesting, is that none of the teachers discussed the idea that exposure to fine art might be a way to show examples of others expressing their feelings, views and emotions about the their society and world. Because the teachers mentioned the importance of the expression of feelings in art, they might also find it interesting that fine art is a wonderful way to show the visual metaphors of how others see the world.

Finally the fourth category of agreement for the teachers about art in general was that "Art and creative thinking are best taught through the exposure to as many materials and choices as possible." However, this can be demonstrated the following two teachers' comments: (almost all of the teachers talked extensively about this).

To teach art you must expose a child to unlimited amount of materials. My art table has paint, clay, pipe cleaners, glue, crayons, chalk, wallpaper scraps, and anything I can get donated. I don't tell them what materials they may use. I just let them chose. I never tell them what they have to draw. I just say you can draw or paint or glue a picture of the frog in our book we read today or you can just do anything you feel like.

Or as another participant asserted:

I try not to put my kids in a box (stifle their *creativity*). And I try to give them as much choice of materials as possible. Art is doing something differently, so I want them to not copy each other. I want them to take ownership of what they are doing and feel good about it. So I try to provide varied amount of experiences with as many types of media as possible, without them ever feeling they were right or wrong. For me art is an extension of feelings and emotions rather than creating something beautiful. I cannot create something beautiful in art because I feel so poorly about myself in the art area. That's why I try to make it so open and free for the kids. Give them as many choices as possible because I don't want for them to experience what I did. (*Frustration with her own art skills.*)

We see again this strong belief communicated by most of the teachers that freedom and little structure when teaching art is important. Lack of structure seems to mean allowing for many choices.

To summarize we have talked about how teachers' views about art differ and how in some ways they are the same. One could conclude that how teachers perceive the importance of art and what it has to offer, will affect their decisions about what art experiences they will offer to children in their classrooms. The following chapter will look at these teachers descriptions of art in their classroom. How and what do they decide to teach? Where do they get their ideas? What are the impacting forces on these teachers? In other words, what stories can these teachers tell us about the art experiences they are offering children?

## A Discussion of the Teachers' View of Art

The teachers in this study shared perceptions about art in many ways. But there seemed to be one strong difference of opinion among them. This pertained to artistic talent and whether it could be taught. Many teachers felt that some children demonstrated greater artistic talent early in their life. They mentioned traits such as "constantly drawing on things" and "liking to use their hands", as something they observed in these children. A comment by one teacher that, "these children see more details than others" comes closest to starting to define what art educators strive to achieve in all children: an ability to see. Art as a subject can offer individuals a way to really see (Edwards, 1986). According to Edwards, the role of the teacher is to expose, teach, define and discuss the concepts of art. These can be seen in line, form, shape, balance, and color. They can be talked about when observing composition of other artists or by discussing the children's own work. Teaching individuals to observe negative space or contour lines or to observe contrasting colors allows children to learn to see. In learning to see, the mystery and fear of not seeing dissolves. Thus, the individual becomes visually literate.

Eight of the teachers felt that extensive exposure to other people doing art, made someone particularly talented. This view, although it agrees with the Brewster Ghiselin (1955) study, does not agree with our own sample group. We have noted that our participants, had a great deal of exposure to others doing art and to art materials and yet most stated that they did not feel they had adequate artistic abilities.

Still others felt artistic ability and creativity was best addressed, by not stifling the child's natural creative spirit. This idea is written about in detail in the book titled The Magical Child by Joseph Chilton Pearce. Pearce in his non-published doctoral dissertation (turned book), talks in depth about the responsibility of adults to allow for creative growth in children. He points to the toddler as a creative spirit that adults and our school systems slowly push and educate the child to a linear, non-creative, non-daydreaming adult (Pearce, 1977).

Others agreed stifling a child's fantasies and daydreams had a negative impact on creativity, but added that children who had exposure to many art materials and art experiences, would prove to be most talented. This view seemed unusual to me since the biographical profile points to a group of twenty-four individuals that had fairly extensive exposure to art materials by their parents and yet express a feeling of frustration about their own artistic talent.

Finally most all of the teachers mentioned, that exposure to the arts, and not direct teaching is most important. They often stated that the word "teaching" art bothered them. How did they develop this view of exposure, but no teaching? In our literature search we found that the required text for art education, in most colleges has been the book, Creative and Mental Growth by Viktor Lowenfeld (Eisner, 1984). Lowenfeld's view is that allowing for creative freedom and expression while exposing children to materials is important. He seems to see the teacher's role as a facilitator but not as a teacher. Can it be that all of these teachers read Lowenfeld? Only nine teachers had an art

methods course. It may be that Lowenfeld's theory is so woven throughout all of the early childhood literature that this school of thought has been adopted by all the teachers. More likely this view is commingled with what teachers called their own lack of knowledge in art. Seeing art as a subject that does not need to be taught, allows the teacher to hand the children the materials and hope for the best. Even the National Association for the Education of Young Children describes its objectives for developmentally appropriate art in the following way: "Children have daily opportunities for aesthetic expression. Children experiment with a variety of art media that are available for creative expression. The teacher should facilitate creative expression such as easel and finger painting and clay" (NAEYC, 1992). This view appears to be pervasive in early childhood education. Art is a subject that needs not be taught. Therefore and discouragingly, art will never be something that any individual can learn.

The teachers interviewed held many commonly shared beliefs about art. One of these beliefs was that art offers success for all, because there are no right or wrong answers. Teachers believe that art should not be judged, critiqued, graded or criticized. This view further supports the teachers' perception that art cannot be taught. If they see their role as a "facilitator" for the creative spirit, how can they then grade that spirit? If there is nothing to teach, how can there be something to grade? Teachers did say that art exposes people to problem solving. They seem to believe that this is one of art's main objective. But how, and should we grade problem solving and ability?

Again we see reference to art being free of rules. Lowenfeld, in his book Creative and Mental Growth (1987), disagrees with the idea that art should be

seen as a discipline. (Discipline Based Art Education states that art should be taught sequentially and taught like other academic subjects, and that the students progression should be monitored). He strongly states that treating art like other subjects, such as math, writing, or language (subjects that have technical concepts to learn), overlooks the essence of art and the importance of art to children's growth and expression. He states,

There should be one place in the school system where marks don't count. Art should be a sanctuary against school regulations, where youngsters are free to be themselves and to put down their ideas and emotions without rules or censorship.

He, like the majority of teachers in this study, sees art as a sanctuary for decision making, where the child can make choices about themselves and how they fit into his environment.

Teachers felt art also offered people a chance for emotional release. This view agreed with most of the art educators' views of art. That is, art is a subject that creates visual metaphors for our thoughts. However, there were two areas of concern that the teachers did not discuss. One was the idea of art being used as catharsis (the view that is the basis of art therapy) and the other views art as a way to see how other see their world (art history).

When asked why art was important, no teacher listed art as an activity that made the individual feel better because he/she had expressed himself. This view of using the arts to express one's most inner feelings is a common one. It is held by Lowenfeld when he talks about the child's expression of his world and how it relates to the "whole child". It is written about by Gardner and most all of the major art education experts in the field.

The other view never mentioned by the teachers as an important outcome of art, is the idea of looking at others' art to see a picture of their world. But, we already know that our participants had very little art history background, so they may not be familiar with viewing fine art as a way to experience another person's world.

Finally teachers believe that creativity and art ability can best be enhanced by exposing individuals to as many materials as possible. This idea conflicts with views of some of the experts in early childhood education who state that too many choices may be confusing to young children (Smith, 1985). The advantages of limiting materials is also discussed in the chapter called "Curriculum for the Arts" in the book, Who Am I In The Lives Of Children? by Feeney, Christensen, and Moravcik. They state, "Children benefit from using the same art media over and over and find the same basic activities satisfying over long periods of time. It takes many experiences with the same materials to fully explore their possibilities" (1987, pp. 37).

However, this idea of exposing children to many materials and allowing a free subject choice is validated by Lowenfeld. Lowenfeld and Lambert, in their eighth edition of their classic work on art education, Creative and Mental Growth, (1987), said "For the child the value of the art experience is in the process. We must understand the child and see his picture as part of his life" (pp. 142). Children need to choose their subject, choose their materials, and make them their own. He goes on to say that a discipline based art education (art activities that are sequential and teach art skill) is based on teaching the child the skills of how to use a particular media pre-chosen by the teacher. He

is particularly against this idea because it also assumes that the teacher knows what these skills are and how to put them into proper sequence so that the learner can develop competency. This argument seems to be a good one. According to our sample less than half of the teachers have had an art education methods class and even fewer have had background in art history, one wonders if they would see themselves capable to teaching art as a discipline. However, lack of knowledge in art is not the best rationale for choosing to teach art using Rousseauan methods. Nor was that the intention of Viktor Lowenfeld. In-service art education could aid in filling these holes and offer suggestions for learning activities while answering teachers needs.

In summary, teachers view art's main objective as enhancing creativity and problem solving. Teachers believe that art should be experienced with little structure and lots of exposure to materials. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers in the next section describe art in their classroom as they do.

### A Summary of the Teachers' Descriptions of Art in their Classrooms

We have discussed, in our literature search, three views of what art in our schools should be like, according to the experts. Have teachers chosen to follow one of these "schools of thought" about art? Do they lean toward teaching art as a discipline? Do they teach aesthetic awareness through art? How do they make their art curriculum decisions? And what are some of the impacting forces on those decisions?

To aid the reader in understanding what art is like in these teachers' classrooms, I have reported the responses in four parts: 1) The classroom and creating an aesthetic environment, 2) Curriculum decisions about art, 3) Negative forces impacting teaching art in the classroom, and 4) Positive forces affecting the teaching of art in the classroom.

In the interview I asked the teachers many questions to describe their classroom environment. When asked how they went about making their classroom aesthetically pleasing, most teachers felt it was important to use the children's work to decorate their classroom. Many said that they used walls, bulletin boards, and string hanging across the room on which to hang their students' work. Most teachers agreed with "L" who said:

Hanging the children's work develops self-esteem. They love to see their own work up. I hang them across the room with clothes pins and string. Every inch of my room is covered by their work.

Another teacher who had a particularly "busy looking" room (no space left without something hanging) said:

I think the most important thing in the world is to get the students' work up. I fill every space. At the beginning of the year I use posters from the teachers' store but then I slowly take them down and replace them with the children's work. They love to see their work up.

They often commented that the commercial type decorations (pumpkins, alphabet letters with clowns, etc.) were very helpful for them at the beginning of the year and around the holidays. Many teachers mentioned how much the children liked them, especially the descriptions using characters that were

familiar to them, like the Ninja Turtles or holiday figures they recognized: Santa, Turkey, Easter Bunny etc. One of the teachers, who had taught the longest, mentioned that she had saved a collection of posters for every holiday:

I have a set of decorations for my bulletin boards for every holiday. If it's Easter, I can change my alphabet to Spring colors. I have large figures that go on every door that my mother got me for my room. The children love seeing the decorations change. I use the colors of each season to decorate (orange and black for Halloween, red and green for Christmas).

This idea of decorating the room for holidays was common. One teacher felt it was specifically important for kindergarten because the children are not familiar with the symbols or even the idea of the repetition of holidays year after year. She said:

It is important to establish the holidays as a pattern in their life. Holidays are consistent, and they help children know what time of year it is and what to look forward to.

Since only three teachers said they used fine art in their classroom, I pushed further to find out why others did not. Three reasons were given: The first was that hanging fine art might give the message that we think the children's art is not as good. The second was that hanging fine art is not developmentally appropriate for kindergarten, and the third reason was that hanging fine art involves the teacher's knowing a lot about art history.

Only three of the teachers interviewed used fine art posters in their room. None of the teachers had any type of children's art history books in their curriculum. And none of the teachers could remember using original art from others or a lending library within their teaching.

When asked why they excluded these from their teaching, the teachers gave varying answers. Many felt exposing children to other art only encouraged the children to copy, or might send a message that this was "good" art and their art did not compare. Another reason stated by one teacher was that children in kindergarten have "enough going on." She said:

I think second grade is a really great time for things like that (fine art exposure) to go on. I think at that age they are much more ready to talk about other art, have opinions, generalizations and all that it takes to look at fine art.

Another said:

I would have to be very careful with what I hang in my classroom. A lot of the fine art has pictures of things children would laugh at. I had a calendar once with a Madonna and child and the child was naked. The children make jokes or were embarrassed. Also I have to watch what parents might think.

But most teachers admitted that the main reason they did not use fine art in their room was because they lacked knowledge in the subject or it was not easily available. Most said something like "D":

I would like to use fine art, but I never had an art history class. It's a very intimidating subject. I don't know anything about Picasso or how to connect what he did to other concepts. Plus the posters are not available, if I wanted to anyway.

Teachers differed greatly in their room set-up for teaching art. It was interesting to observe that eight of the teachers with an early childhood education background commonly used activity centers to teach art. Those teachers often described using a table that always had art materials available. They mentioned rotating the material every few days for variation. Again they stressed that the child could create what he wanted at that center and that no direct assignment was given. Most of the teachers who had an art activity center included one or two easels, but many expressed that they had problem with adequate space in their room. None of the classrooms had more than two easels for a room holding twenty-five children. The teachers who had these art activity centers often allowed the children to go to these tables during any free time. About half of the teachers felt art learning centers were "too uncontrolled" and offered art experiences only when the children were at their desks and during specific art activity time. For most, this was in the afternoon and integrated into something else they were doing for another subject. Whether the teacher offered art experiences through learning centers or to the class as a whole, teachers continued to express their belief that it was important to offer a lot of freedom and as little direct instruction as possible.

The second category of discussion will aid in defining how these teachers made curriculum decisions about art. It is clear that the majority of the teachers had never seen the Art Curriculum Guide K-12 (draft) for the State of Hawaii. When asked if she had read the Art Curriculum Guide one teacher said:

I didn't know there was one. Where would I find it?  
Does it give art activities I can use? Or is it just like  
the other curricula, too hard to read?

When asked if they knew what concepts in art are developmentally appropriate for kindergartners, most asked for clarification. When asked if they knew what elements of art or principles of design should be introduced at kindergarten level, almost all asked if I could give an example of an element of art. Many admitted they did not know what an element of art was. One teacher asked: "Is that like drawing or ceramics or painting? I offer those. Give me an example of an element of art."

When told that one was color and others were line, shape, and form, that teacher said:

Oh, I teach about those: they come into integration with other things. I don't teach them specifically about color but we talk about color. When you teach you cannot just say we're going to do this and this and this. You can, but it won't make sense: it would be all in fragments. Isn't that right?

One teacher, when asked if she followed what the DOE stated as objectives for art in our schools, said, "I don't care what the DOE says." When asked if she follows the DOE curriculum for other subjects, she said:

Not really. Only if it's being tested or I'm required to have the students know it so they can move on to another grade. Then the teachers in the grade above will expect you to teach it.

It seemed that this was true for many of the teachers. They used the state curriculum for subjects their children would be tested on or that other teachers held them accountable for. Since most view art as a subject that does not need to be "taught" and a subject that stresses creativity, they don't feel

pressured to follow any set curriculum. The State of Hawaii, Department of Education, Art Curriculum K-12 (draft) lists in its scope and sequence charts line, shape, form, texture, and color as the elements of design that should be introduced in kindergarten. None of the teachers interviewed could list those as concepts to be introduced. Only one teacher had seen a state curriculum for art.

The Hawaii State Art Curriculum Guide (draft) states that the time allocation for art K-6 is 90 minutes per week. It is recommended that, when possible, 120 minutes be made available for K-3. None of the twenty-four teachers involved in the interview process knew what the time allocation for art was although most said that they included art throughout their day and it totaled at least 120 minutes per week.

If the teachers do not use a curriculum guide to plan their art experiences, how do they make their choices for art activities? There were three specific ideas that emerged from the data that described how teachers plan art activities in their classrooms: 1) Art integrated into literature, 2) Art made to decorate the classroom, and 3) Art as a gift to take home. None of the teachers described art as a subject in itself that can be taught sequentially and based on the principles or elements of design. What they did describe was art integrated into literature and reading as the most common method for planning art activities. One teacher described a typical art experience in her classroom as:

Reading a story and then talking about the children's feelings or whatever was the main topic in it. Then we pass out paper and draw something that has to do with the story. They can use anything. (I keep my

stuff in coffee cans on shelves: pencils, crayons, chalk, scissors, or whatever.) They just create something that came from the story. It doesn't even have to be from the story. If what's on their mind is their dog who was barking so loud first thing in the morning, then they can draw that.

Another teacher, who is known for her strong reading program with kindergartners, said:

I have my children re-create the "big books" we read in class. I read one first, and then the children all chose a page to re-create. They don't copy it, but they can look at it for ideas. Then we laminate each page and publish our own "big book."

This description of art as a method to teach something else (another subject) was very common. It was interesting to notice that the teachers that stated that they closely followed the DOE curriculum guides were more apt to state that there was no time left in their week to teach art. They therefore integrated the art activity into another subject. One of the participants, who seemed most concerned that she teach all that was required, stated:

We are required to teach certain subjects: art is not one of them. So I use art as one of the methods of teaching some of the required subjects. For example, if I am teaching about insects in science, I might have them count different insects' legs for math. And for art I would let them make an insect out of clay or perhaps draw one.

Another common way teachers make curriculum decisions about art is based on their belief that art is a product. This product is well-suited for two uses in the classroom: 1) Gift giving and 2) Decoration for the classroom environment. This does not seem unusual, since many of the teachers' fondest

memories of their teachers as children were based on using art for gift giving. As reported in the chapter about the teachers' memories of art as children, art at home was often based on making holiday decorations, thank-you cards, or gifts for family. This idea is reinforced because children like to make things to give, and parents love to receive these gifts. This was expressed by one teacher who said:

Art is a fun, relaxed time. They love to show their parents what they produced. They are very proud of their work, and they love to bring their parents their art as a gift. Their parents love it too.

Another said:

I always try to have the child make something he can take home. In early childhood education that is very important. I do integrate the art with what I'm teaching somewhere else. Like if we're talking about metamorphosis, then that's when I have the children dye different types of macaroni. You know, rice for the eggs, macaroni for the cocoon, and pasta for the butterfly. This makes beautiful decorations for springtime because we use pastel colors. I always try to use the colors of the seasons so we can make our room look beautiful.

Teachers clearly appear to base activities on what the class is reading or studying or what holiday or season is approaching. The focus on holidays is reinforced and made easier because there are thousands of teacher resource books that help the teacher plan art activities based around the holidays.

When asked "Where do you get most of your ideas for your art activities in your classroom," the majority of the teachers stated that they most often used commercial books and ideas from other teachers. When describing how they

decided what activities to use they often said something like, "If I pass by a room and I see something that looks really nice in a teacher's room, I'll ask her how they made it." This initially seemed to conflict with the most important perception teachers had about art that should be free of direct instruction. But when asked to clarify how they allowed for the individual freedom and creativity they had previously stated was very important, many of the teachers said the purpose of certain art activities they did with the class was to help children learn to follow directions.

It began to appear to the researcher that there were two types of art activities being described. One where the child could create anything and no direct teaching took place and another type of art activity where the objective was to teach following directions. When the researcher asked the teachers to clarify the difference, the researcher said:

So, in one definition of art you definitely define it as a subject that allows children to do something anyway they want, to make choices... And in the other you say it's important that they learn to follow directions. Do you see this as two different things?

One characteristic response came from the teacher who said:

Yeah, but there are all types of skills I'm trying to integrate. Following directions is one of the skills. Young children love to follow directions... I'm not saying "OK, you're learning to follow directions today. But to make some art projects to decorate with and so on. It's a hidden incidental. Yes, I'd add to my list of objectives that art teaches children to follow directions.

In summary, curriculum decisions about art were made most often with the goal of integration into other subjects in mind (since the teachers have not

been exposed to a state art curriculum and know little about using art as a sequentially based subject). Most choose to use art as a method of giving hands-on experiences in subjects like literature or reading. The exception to this is a product-oriented type art that often holds a holiday or gift-giving theme. One of the underlying objectives to this type of activity is that it aids young children in learning to listen and following directions. These are very popular among the kindergarten teachers because they feel that they are beneficial to parents, teachers, and the children. There seems to be little or no differences among the teachers that had early education background. Those teachers also commented that art was a wonderful hands-on experience to teach listening skills.

The third area of responses pertains to the negative forces affecting the teaching of art in the classroom. There are four areas of importance we will examine regarding this issue: 1) Time constraints, 2) Budget constraints, 3) Parental expectations, and 4) Lack of art education training for teachers.

As discussed before, teachers quite often used art as a method for adding a hands-on activity to the study of another subject. When asked why they did not teach art as a subject within itself, most teachers described a time constraint problem. One teacher said:

Art is time-consuming, so many things are required. We need more time to teach. I can't get all the areas in I'm supposed to teach according to the DOE administration. Math, reading, spelling, and then there's career day, new programs such as Dash, and that's not counting May Day celebration and teaching for testing.

Lack of time was mentioned by every teacher as the major constraint to teaching art. Most felt it was not stressed by their administrators or ever tested. Teachers in upper grades did not hold them as responsible for creative-artistic development as they did for the development of reading or math skills.

Math and spelling are subjects that can be taught in twenty to thirty minute blocks, but art, they felt, takes much more time. One teacher lamented:

The administration expects us to bring the kindergartners to a certain point before they can go on... They require that our children be able to write their A.B.C.'s both small and capital letters by November. Most children can write a full sentence when they leave my room and many are reading.

Each year they expect us to teach more. I think it's too early for these five year old, they end up burnt out by third grade. But it's what's expected. I don't want to be the only teacher that sends her kids on to first grade without reading and writing skills. This leaves me much less time for other subjects such as art. Ten years ago it was never like this.

When asked to clarify why they thought art was so time consuming, almost all of the teachers mentioned the problem is the clean-up and preparation. They often said it was what they liked least about art. Regarding preparation one teacher said:

There is so much preparation for the teacher in art. I usually have to cut out all the shapes we will use. The children can't do any cutting in kindergarten: it's too much for them "motor-wise". And then there's passing out materials: just getting started takes a lot of our time.

Another teacher speaking about her solution to clean-up, which she listed as what she liked least about art, explained:

I hate the mess. But cleaning it up is their responsibility. At the beginning of the year, I teach them the basics. How to turn the water on, turn it off. I have them practice. We get a sponge and I say "all together, squeeze 10 times, wash out, squeeze 10 times then put it away". We say "squeeze" all together. It's a fun kind of thing. So they remember it. So when it's time to clean up, they're over there... "squeeze and squeeze and squeeze and squeeze," and I find they say it out loud. I do this at the beginning, and it helps my clean-up problem in art. But it is very time consuming.

Money was another large constraint to teaching art. I was surprised how many teachers mentioned this, however most were not complaining. They said in a very matter-of-fact way that they spent their own money to offer any art activities other than drawing. One teacher (the same one that said "I don't care what the DOE says" when asked if she used the district's curriculum) explained about the money situation:

I pay for most of my art materials myself. I've moved around a lot so I'm still not tenured, so every year you go into a teaching situation six days before school starts and have to set up your room.

*Interviewer:*

*"When you say yourself, you mean you pay for your art supplies out of your own personal money?"*

Oh, definitely! I spend about \$10 a week for everything. Maybe \$300 a year. I'd say half of that is art supplies. So \$150 per year. And I think that would be very conservative.

Every teacher interviewed said that they spent their own money on art supplies. Some estimated they spent up to \$1,200, and others said they only

spent \$150. But all explained that if they wanted to offer anything other than crayons, paint, or marking pen drawings, they needed to buy the supplies. Many mentioned that Christmas and holiday gift giving art activities were exceptionally expensive because quite often the gift needs to be a surprise and it usually is made of something that is not considered a regular art material. One teacher explained:

I like to make Christmas tree ornaments every year. I need thirty Styrofoam balls for the bases and lots of material to glue on. It gets expensive. But it's the kids' favorite art activity.

As we discussed in the chapter on teachers' memories of their favorite art activities in school as a child, clay was undoubtedly the fondest and favorite memory. But when many of the teachers were asked if they offered clay as an art activity in their classroom, many replied that clay was not available unless they bought it personally and even if they did offer it they had no kiln available to fire the pieces. Therefore most did not offer clay as an art experience in kindergarten. This seems unfortunate since most early childhood texts and books about development of appropriate practices list clay as one of the basic materials that should be offered to young children (Bredekamp, 1987).

Another negative impact on curriculum decisions concerning art came from parental expectations. One teacher who was quite educated in art methods and sometimes used the Kettering Project (an art curriculum written by Elliot Eisner that uses elements and principles of design as starting points for art lessons) to teach art in her classroom stated that parents expect "pretty craft-like" projects to come home with the children. She explained:

Parents often save their young child's art in the early years. It is hung in the home and used to decorate. Parents tell me how much they love certain art products. These pieces are usually the three dimensional type that are "pretty." The children love them too. But when I use the Kettering curriculum or teach art concepts they quite often don't come out with a finished product. I know more art learning took place but the parents don't see art in that way.

Another said:

So many of the subjects don't offer an end product the parents can see. The children can take their art home, and this makes their parents very happy. I still have the art my mother saved that I did in elementary school.

Often the teachers defined art by its end product. They would say "the parents liked it", or the project was "pretty" or the project was not successful because the product was "not attractive". Again one wonders why art is left with the huge responsibility to "decorate". Could math ever be pretty? What if social studies as a subject were responsible for always creating an end project. And are woven yarn geometry patterns or paper mache volcanoes, art projects, or end products of math and social studies?

Lack of knowledge due to little or no art education training also appeared to have negative impact on art curriculum. The teachers were very honest about this problem. They often said they felt very under-trained to teach art. As mentioned previously only nine of the teachers interviewed had taken an art education methods class, and it was discouraging to hear that only three of those participants felt that the course they took had prepared them to teach art in elementary school. This means that the remaining teachers were teaching

art, using their experiences of art from their own school experience in college, high-school or memories of elementary school. However, according to our interviews less than half had any art in high-school or college and only seven of the teachers had ever taken an art history class.

Many of the teachers admitted that their training in art education was lacking and that they would have taken a course if they had known how much of the early childhood classroom's day was based around art. A teacher:

My college of education advisor made sure I took all of the required methods courses. I had two or three in reading and children's literature. But when it came to art, well, it wasn't required so I took a special education course. I'm sorry now, I'm faced with my inexperience in art everyday.

One wonders why the colleges of education have not pushed for more art education. Do they also see art as an extra but not a basic? Many teachers felt, at this point, in-service education classes were the way to do some "catch-up" in their art education background, which leads to our discussion about what teachers' view as the positive forces impacting their curriculum decisions about art.

The fourth category of discussion is titled, "Positive forces impacting art in the classrooms". Four classes emerged about this issue: 1) The students' natural interest and enthusiasm, 2) The support of DOE art resources individuals, 3) Art resources, and 4) The aid of outside individuals.

The teachers listed students' enthusiasm as one of the reasons they decided to offer art so often. A teacher explained:

The children love art. It is the subject they like best. If I have an art activity table as one of my learning centers it is always the fullest. The children are the largest positive force impacting my decision to do art.

Another impact often mentioned by the teachers was the aid of supporting individuals such as the district resource teachers. Many said they aid them by coming into the room and modeling a well-planned, fun art activity for the class or in offering art in-service to help them develop their own ideas. The teachers at the schools with an on-site art resource teacher often expressed this type of appreciation:

Every week or two, our art resource teacher came in (she was moved to Kihei) but when she was at our school she would come in at a scheduled time and model an art lesson. The lessons were always wonderful and well planned; she was really an expert. She treated art like any subject, with vocabulary, and concepts she expected them to learn. I found I could use her lessons as models for me to use the following year.

A teacher that had expressed the greatest fear of her own art ability offered this positive statement:

There's a wonderful lady at the district office, her name is "R". She has set up some in-service for teachers. I was afraid to go because I'm so bad at art. But I took one last summer and I really learned a lot. I used all of the lessons this year in my room. She gave us some concrete methods to use, I just wish we had someone at our school all the time. Sometimes I sign up for the art resource person but they can't come they're spread too thin. So I use parents.

The participants mentioned that they have been noticing more art visuals coming to their school. Some had received the black and white posters that

demonstrate each of the elements and principles of design in photography form. (These are new to the district and came from the Department of Education State Office of Curriculum and Instruction). Most teachers had seen them because their grade level chair had received them, although most teachers commented they had not been trained in how to use them. None of the teachers had them hanging in their room. About half of the participants mentioned that they knew about the new fine art that was sent out for each grade level to every school library in Maui. Again they said they felt it showed support for art by the district but that they weren't sure how to use them. (These were fine art posters, called "Discover Art", and were ordered by the district art resource individuals at the DOE).

One teacher said:

The Librarian at my school told me that he was going to just give them away. He said, the school district keeps sending us all this stuff and never tells us what to do with it. The teachers don't know it's even here. The posters they sent last time, no one ever uses. They're all dusty. Why do they sent this stuff with no training?

A few teachers mentioned parents as being a positive resource to teaching art. They said they always asked:

Is anyone's mommy or daddy an artist? In Maui there are usually two or three in every classroom. I call them in and get them to speak and demonstrate what they do as soon as possible.

Artist in the Schools (a program that hires artist in the community to teach art for two weeks in the public schools) was listed by about a quarter of the teachers as a helpful program. Again they saw it as one more way to bring

someone who "had talent" into their room. However one teacher (who had expressed integration of subjects as important previously), expressed a concern with the program:

I had one of the artist from the Artists in the Schools program come in. It was good, except what it had had nothing to do with what we were learning in other subjects. It seemed out of context. Besides I had already done a similar printmaking activity just 3 weeks before. There needed to be better communications between the artist and the teacher.

Six of the teachers had participated in workshops about art education that were arranged by outside organizations. All of those six found the workshops to be helpful. Three of these had attended a workshop taught by the researcher. All of those individuals said they now included fine art in their teaching. Outside organizations often have access to grant money to support the arts within the community. Teacher training in the arts is essential. Hopefully these outside organizations will continue to support teacher training for art.

In summary, the teachers' description of art in their classrooms was both discouraging and hopeful. Teachers seemed to base their views about the way art should be, on their memories of art when they were young. Therefore, they were both influenced and agreed with the ideas of art as a product oriented subject. These products were used to decorate or for gift giving as they were in their own childhood. Apparently, many parents also still enjoy this view and expect children to bring home products of art.

Teachers say they believe in allowing for a lot of freedom in art and therefore expose children to many materials and plan little or no concrete

instructional objectives. The exception to this is when they teach art lessons that focus on following directions, and then they make art that is very similar from one child to another. Very little fine art exposure is being offered in these classrooms, however, teachers believe hanging the children's own art is extremely important. Art is generally not thought of as a subject in itself. Teachers were not familiar with its objectives, concepts, or elements. Therefore, it is often used as a hands-on method of teaching another subject.

Time constraints and budget constraints have a negative impact on teaching art in the classrooms, as much as parental expectations of art being product oriented.

The lack of art education training for teachers seemed to have a severe impact on offering appropriate art experiences to children.

Teachers listed student enthusiasm about the subject as the number one reason they enjoyed offering art. They felt art resource individuals were helpful in offering exciting new ideas to teach art. Some teachers continued taking workshops to further their knowledge in art education. As a whole, the teacher participants described an optimism about art and art education for their students and themselves. They admitted they were lacking in certain areas and were open for further training. Hopefully, this training will take the form of in-service art methods courses for all teachers.

## A Discussion of the Teachers' Description of Art in their Classrooms

There were four areas of discussion that continued to emerge from the data. These areas of discussion were separated into four categories as described in the summary of responses.

The first category is the classroom environment. The teachers seemed to agree that using the children's work as decoration and display, was the most important thing they could do to create a visually pleasing classroom. They felt hanging the children's art aided in building self-esteem. When pressed further, and asked, "But do you think hanging their art creates an aesthetically pleasing room?" they answered, "Yes, children's artwork is beautiful."

As a college supervisor of student teaching, the researcher observed that teachers most often use children's art and commercial decorations to decorate their rooms. Many of the rooms of the cooperating teachers who worked with students teachers, appeared to be cluttered. This is because of the lack of storage for their learning materials. They often hang their children's art work on windows, walls, and strings above the children's heads. Classroom bulletin boards often are decorated with commercial products that are reproductions of some cartoon type characters. They are often poor quality. The combination of storage problems, commercial made decorations, and children's art hung in between, often makes for a cluttered looking, non-aesthetic, overly busy looking classroom. This type of room leaves little space for displays of fine art, beautiful books, toys or plants that are prescribed by many early childhood experts. A room that has children's art products everywhere has little room for

the beautiful nature items that children seem to enjoy. Montessori and Waldorf classrooms of today use rich pastel colors for their walls, baskets to hold nature items, and covered beautiful books to create a sense of beauty and order in their classrooms.

Creating an aesthetic environment does not mean, leaving out hanging children's art. It does mean, according to many (Feeney, 1987, and Montessori, 1984) that children's art is hung at eye level, consideration is given to color, order, balance and textures in a room. Once again, we see the need for the study of art and aesthetics including some key elements of design. These elements should be seen within the children's art experiences, art products and their environment.

The teachers in our study also commented on the importance of the holiday symbols being presented to kindergarten. They remarked that repetition of the holidays and teaching the times of the year are important issues for this age. This issue is one that was consistently talked about and should be considered when writing developmentally appropriate art experiences for young children. Once again, one wonders if art experiences and classroom decorations could be designed to incorporate the holidays and seasons and yet use quality materials, symbols, and fine art to express the same theme. Every teacher could be taught in the basics of art history. They then might chose and Andrew Wyeth for exposure to a fall harvest, a Renaissance Madonna or Mary Cassatt for paintings representing Mother's Day. It is possible to introduce

kindergartners to fine art in age appropriate ways without sending the message that the fine art is "better". The Scream by Munch can give the same scare as a glitter pumpkin with folded accordion legs any day!

An article titled "A Thing of Beauty: Aesthetic Development in Young Children" by Stephanie Feeney and Eva Moravcik, and published in Young Children, Sept. 1987, agrees that exposing children to exciting visual experiences is important. They state, "School is a place where children are introduced to new visual experiences. Teachers have the responsibility to provide the very best that our culture has to offer by introducing a range of good art". But they depart from this agreement when they go on to say,

"This art should not be what is merely easiest or most familiar. Most children have plenty of exposure to cartoon characters, advertising art, or stereotyped simplistic posters. These do not foster aesthetic development and are sometimes demeaning to children. Children often say 'they like them', but the fact that children like something - for example, candy, staying up late at night, and Rambo dolls does not necessarily mean it is good for them".

This article goes on to say that fine art should be hung in the classroom at eye level instead of the commercial type of decorations. An example might be a rabbit by Dürer to replace a Easter bunny commercial poster.

This idea, that hanging fine art influences the viewer's own art, is a common one (Congdon, 1989). In the Renaissance period, you can observe the influences of previous masters in much of the art. A study conducted by Schwartz in Germany and reported in 1965, looked at the effect of providing examples of fine art to children. Drawings were displayed in classrooms but were not provided as examples for children to copy. The study showed that

children, who were exposed to fine art, scored higher on a scale of graphic development (their drawings and paintings) than groups not exposed to art. Schwartz concluded that children's norms of taste and their creations were influenced by exposure to fine art (Feeney, 1987).

Second, regarding fine art being developmentally appropriate or sometimes embarrassing for young children, one must remember there are many types of fine art that children can be exposed to. If the teacher fears a nude Christ child might make children giggle, she may choose the colorful paintings of Matisse or the childlike drawings of Picasso. But, as a friend of mine, from France, once said,

Children in Europe are exposed to museums and art from the earliest of age. They can often be seen in the museums viewing all art, including nudes and sophisticated subjects with their parents or teachers. They have learned to talk about art.

Can we afford to not give our children these experiences? Will the Ninja turtles be more recognizable than the Mona Lisa? Even the Ninja turtles would recognize Donatello!

Third, the response, that the teachers felt they lacked knowledge in the subject of art history and its connection to other concepts is something that should be discussed. Art education in-service programs should include an introduction to art history. In-service should illustrate how cubism is just a fragmentation of a visual picture or that surrealism is just a picture of our dreams. They should demonstrate this idea of fragmentation and can be carried through poetry, sequencing, or anytime the teachers' objectives include

breaking something into smaller parts. Fine art is like all other subjects, it can be easily integrated into other concepts with only limited knowledge of the subject. A short two hour in-service for teachers, in the subject of fine art has proved to be very successful in aiding teachers in this area.

As reported in the data, teachers were split in opinions regarding whether to offer learning centers. All six of the teachers with early childhood education training had included art learning centers in their rooms. Half of the participants offered art while the children were in their desks. But the idea that little direct instruction and a lot of freedom should be allowed still prevailed in both groups. The participants did not see their role as a teacher only as a facilitator. They could not list their objective for their art experiences. They did try to expose the children to some artistic concepts but they did not expect those concepts to be tested or measured for competency. As in planning for any learning center or teaching experience, it is important that clear objectives are written for the experience to be successful. Art continues to be the exception. Why?

The second category of discussion, regarding art in the classroom, pertains to how the participants make curriculum decisions about art. It was clear that they were not familiar with the present Art Curriculum Guide K-12 (Draft) for our state. Most had not seen it and could not list any of the elements or principles that were listed in its scope and sequence. The State of Hawaii Department of Education needs to finalize this well written curriculum draft and in-service our teachers in its use. If we do not hold teachers accountable for teaching art in our state, it will not be taught. As one teacher said, "I teach a subject if it's tested or if the DOE states that is required." Art is required and

teachers should be held accountable for it, just as they are for the other subjects.

The teachers were asked how they went about deciding what art activities to offer their children. Teachers based their art experiences on three ideas: 1) Art integrated into literature, 2) Art made to decorate the room, and 3) Art as a gift to take home.

I feel it is important to look at these three areas when planning art education programs. These areas are described by teachers as areas of need. In other words, outside influences such as, a need to integrate subjects, a need for decorations, and a need for gifts to take home, become important issues to take into consideration when planning for art activities for children. It is important we listen to these needs and plan children's art experiences that fulfill them. However, we must teach the art elements and principles, include art appreciation and use developmentally appropriate materials and themes.

Integrating art into literature is a fascinating way to plan for the theme of an art experience. That is, the idea for the visual subject, emerges out of a book the children have been read. For example, if the book is Where the Wild Things Are, the visual subject, may be based around the child creating his own version of "a wild thing". The idea could be stretched further if the visual subject or theme was based around the idea of a child's fantasy. (In the book Where The Wild Thing Are, the boy joins a fantasy world). This use of literature as the theme does not exclude using fine art (Chagall would work nicely) or from the teacher teaching the art concepts, elements and principles that are developmentally appropriate. An in-service must include training teachers to

include these elements in planning appropriate art activities for children while continuing to use literature as a theme. The researcher must also mention what this may risk. An unfortunate handicap of integrating art into other subjects is that art can be exploited to make other subjects more palatable. In this process, although other subjects may benefit, the youngsters' interest and delight in art can be jeopardized. Art, once again, becomes second to something more important.

As reported in the data, teachers feel art experiences that create products that can be used for decorating or gift giving are important. The researcher felt that teachers were somehow not as proud of doing holiday art and that it conflicts deeply with their belief that art should allow for freedom and creativity, but that the three impacting forces: 1) The children like it, 2) The parents like gifts, and 3) The need for decorations in the classroom motivates the teachers to add product oriented art into their list of art activities offered. Again, there is no reason that this idea has to be discouraged. Developmentally appropriate art activities can create aesthetically pleasing end products, also teach the elements, and expose children to fine art. These products can aid in "decorating" the classroom for seasonal holidays and still be given as framed or matted gifts. (I personally have found that most frame shops are willing to give pre-cut mat board away at no charge to teachers that ask). It is difficult to compare a mold of a child's hand pressed in plaster to a matted or framed original drawing of Daddy, for Father's Day. The difference is that the products of some art activities all look alike while others may enable the child to create original drawings, paintings, or art pieces. The latter is preferred.

The teachers that described their favorite art projects as ones that created products that all looked similar often rationalized them by saying that their objective was to teach the children to follow directions. This makes sense as long as we do not confuse the product or the lesson with art education. This type of lesson is not art education. It is not art according to the experts nor is it art according to the teachers own previous definition of art from earlier reported data. (They defined art as something that enhances personal creativity.)

The third area of discussion is the negative forces impacting teaching art in the classroom. The three problems that emerged from this category were; 1) Time constraints, 2) Budget constraints, and 3) Lack of art education training for teachers.

Lack of time was the reason most often given for not adequately teaching art in the classroom. This is a difficult issue to solve. As discussed earlier art is often used to create end products. End products take time to create. Products that allow for the use of many types of materials are difficult to manage and clean up. Therefore those type of experiences are difficult to incorporate into a 120 minute a week time slot. Many teachers try to make it work by saving art for the last few hours of Friday afternoon. But according to Frank Wachowiak, in his book, Emphasis Art, "Quality art experiences cannot be abbreviated into 45 minute art lessons so commonly scheduled". In most cases the preliminary drawing alone should take one period. A completed project may take three or four art periods depending on the age of the child and the grade level. When art is scheduled once a week classroom teachers of art may be concerned that they cannot hold the child's interest in a project that extends over such a long

period. Or they may be just limited in how much time they are willing to give art. Among alternatives suggested to counteract the time factor and still produce a quality work of art, is limiting the size of the paper used in the art lessons. This may seem to contradict common ideas about children in early childhood's need to work large, but Wachowiak agrees that limiting the size of paper to 9 x 12 or 12 x 2 inch surfaces instead of 12 x 18 inches for detailed designs and 12 x 18 inch paper instead of 18 x 24 inches for free Tempra paintings can aid in creating less time consuming but quality art projects.

Limiting the types of materials used, and including only five or six quality mediums can help in clean up time and is more appropriate for early childhood age children. Pencil, crayon, paint, and clay can be used over and over to create and teach wonderfully planned art experiences, without the time consuming clean-up.

Money was another constraint that was mentioned by most of the teachers. Until school administrations see art education as a basic subject and an important part of giving a "whole" education, teachers will have to collect glue and buttons for their classroom art supplies. According to every art education expert we have reviewed, quality art materials are an important part of offering quality art education. Once again, these materials do not have to be extensive in variety, but good quality paints and clay can never be substituted by play dough and poor quality watercolors.

It is significant that every participant mentioned clay as one of their favorite memories of art in elementary school. It should be mandatory that

access to clay is allowed in every classroom. Kilns for firing the clay should be available in every school. The initial cost may be extensive but the learning experiences and memories are felt for years to come.

Parental expectations are another issue that had a negative impact regarding curriculum decisions about art in the classroom. The teachers said, parents expect the art projects that are brought home to be attractive and displayable. They said parents verbally tell them that they like the "pretty" projects their children bring home. Therefore they should include this type of art in their art experiences. Once again, one wonders why art is left with this burden of creating end products. No other subject faces this expectation in our elementary schools. However, if this is important to the children, the parents and the teachers, then there is no reason why developmentally appropriate, concept teaching art experiences cannot end in creating aesthetically pleasing end products.

Finally, the teachers talked about their own lack of knowledge in art education and the negative impact it has on teaching art in their classroom. Teacher training programs that do not require art methods courses for elementary education majors are deficient. Our universities that offer pre-service teacher training do not require even one art education class. This must be changed. However, in-service and workshops in art education for teachers should be funded and offered by both our Department of Education and by private organizations that wish to enhance the visual arts education of teachers for the sake of our children.

The fourth category of discussion is: positive forces impacting art in the classroom. Four areas will be discussed: 1) Student enthusiasm and interest, 2) Resource teachers support, 3) Additional art resource materials available, and 4) Aid from outside individuals.

Teachers named "students interest and enthusiasm" as the main reason they offered art in their classroom. Young children love creating art of any type. By observing close to one hundred classrooms in the past four years as a student teaching supervisor, I have noticed that students seem extremely open and excited when the teacher introduces art. It could be suggested, that all subjects be integrated into art. If art is received with such enthusiasm by children, why not teach all of the subjects through art. The visuals from art history, the hands-on experiences of studio experiences and the conceptual learning that takes place when you talk about the principles such as balance, rhythm and unity would all become the starting place for other learning. Art would truly become basic.

Another positive impact on art is the aid given by the art resource individuals both from the DOE and outside organizations. Continued support from these two sources is much appreciated by teachers. The DOE, for the state of Hawaii, has recently supported the following events that aided in teacher training and classroom resources for the visual arts: 1). Resource teachers, 2). Visual aids to teach the art elements, 3). Discover art, fine art reprints. (These were listed by the participating teachers.)

First, teachers named individual resource teachers who they felt were very helpful in modeling developmentally appropriate art experiences for

children. This idea of having trained art educators teach art in elementary schools is very successful. Since teaching art requires materials, fine art, and a certain amount of specialized knowledge, many states such as California and Nebraska have chosen to have children report to an outside art specialist for 60 to 90 minutes per week. If districts cannot budget this specialized classroom and teacher, it is important that they supply one or two art resource individuals to each school that can aid in the teaching of art in each classroom.

Second, most of the teachers said that they had seen the black and white art posters illustrating in photographs the elements and principles of art, sent this past year to all of the DOE schools. They expressed appreciation for them and their quality. However, as the teacher who described her librarian's comments commented, "Why do they send us this stuff with no training to follow?" In-service in each school, for use of these posters and other art resources must be arranged. This must happen at the same time that the resources arrive at the school. In-service should motivate and educate teachers to use the materials that were distributed.

Third, one-half of the teachers listed the newly distributed Discover Art fine art reprints, a welcome resource. Again they were not sure how to use them in the ways that suited their needs, i.e., integrate into literature, decorative art, or gift giving art, but they had heard some schools were receiving a workshop put on by a Maui District DOE art resource person. These reprints by Shorewood are of excellent quality. Unfortunately, there is only one set for early childhood level (K-3), and it includes about twenty posters. Librarians must also be in-serviced as to their importance, to aid them in learning proper

ways to care for these materials and to create a check-out system. The Kettering project posters in most schools have been spread out throughout the school and are unavailable for use. The researcher checked each school library in the Maui District and there were very few whole sets of fine art reprints left for use by teachers.

Aid from outside resources was also mentioned by the participants as having positive impact on teaching art in their classrooms. The artist in the schools program and the use of parents to teach art were both beneficial to teachers teaching art. Recent teacher trainings put on by the Hui No'eau Art Center in Maui and other outside organizations teaching methods for teaching art, also seemed to be helpful to the participants. The artists in the schools program sponsored by the DOE was mentioned by one quarter of the participants. Of those six teachers, two said that the participating artists need some additional training in classroom management skills and integration of subject matter. They felt they were strong in talent by weak in teaching expertise. Once again in-service for participating artists could be beneficial, so that their artistic skills can be communicated while demonstrating strong classroom management, knowledge of integration and fine art.

Finally, outside organizations such as the local art centers and Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children, have been offering short but excellent teacher training programs and workshops for art in the past two years. Three of the participants had taken one of these workshops in the past years. All three were using some fine art in their room. If our school districts continue

to scream "budget cuts" and "back to basics", it must be an important goal of the outside arts organizations and their supporters, to aid in teacher training in-service for art. Art must be kept alive by the support of our community.

In summary, developmentally appropriate art education for children according to art educators, the Department of Education and the teachers themselves, involves planning creative art experiences that allow freedom and yet teach the artistic concepts that only the visual arts can teach. However, teachers have expressed certain desires that they wish to meet. These include the integration of art into other subjects, art that aids in celebration of the holidays and seasons and the creation of art products that are both aesthetically pleasing and can be given as gifts. When planning art education programs one should be cognizant of the needs teachers express as important to them. However, one must keep in mind that teachers must be made aware of the major schools of thought about art so they may make well informed decisions about art curriculum. In this way teachers will gain the knowledge that enables them to offer developmentally appropriate art activities that meet their own personal needs and those of their children.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Implications for Research and for Practice

In this study we have reviewed literature about art education and presented three of the most prevalent views. The researcher also gathered data about understandings teachers have about art. We have discussed the importance of using both of these pieces of information along with other research to plan effective and appropriate art education programs for teachers. Chapter Six, Implications for Research and for Practice, will include the following: 1) Implications for Policy Making, 2) Implications for Further Research on Art Education and 3) Implications for Design of Art Education Programs.

#### Implications for Policy Making

What do teachers understand about art? Why do they see art this way? And how do they integrate these understandings into their classrooms? We have learned that the early childhood teachers in this study have degrees in education, are caring intelligent individuals who are working with limited time, a limited budget and in most cases teaching in the best way they know how. They are concerned about their lack of knowledge in the subject of art and express a desire to participate in art in-service programs.

These teachers have told us what they remember about their own art education, and many are teaching art today with methods that are similar to the ones used when they were children. They have fond memories of art as a free creative activity that resulted in visual decorations and colorful gifts. However, their memories of art as a subject that is difficult to understand and limited to the very talented, have caused them to feel a lack of confidence in their own abilities.

These teachers are teaching what they know. They know from their past experiences that art should be fun and allow for a great deal of creativity and freedom. These ideas lean toward the views of Viktor Lowenfeld (1987) that encourage children to experience art while allowing them the freedom to create. Many teachers have carried from their childhood experiences the idea that one of art's functions is to make visual decorations. Many of the teachers feel very good about this idea and have made an effort to collect files of holiday and gift giving activities. Since many of the teachers have not had an art methods course and most likely have not been exposed to Viktor Lowenfeld's work, one might conclude that the teachers' understandings were developed by their memory of art as a child.

An art education course is not required at this time in order to receive a credential from the teacher training programs in the State of Hawaii. Will the Colleges of Education and the Hawaii State Department of Education continue to allow teachers to teach art relying only on their childhood experiences of the subject? In the opinion of this researcher the primary responsibility for teacher training in art should belong to the Colleges of Education. However, there are

three groups that must work together to support proper teacher training in art: 1) Colleges of Education, 2) Departments of Education, and 3) The teachers themselves.

The universities that offer teacher training programs have a primary responsibility to train their students in all subjects. However, teacher training programs in the State of Hawaii do not require an art methods course for its pre-service teachers. This author believes that art methods courses for its pre-service teachers should be required for at least one semester. Most early childhood teachers offer experiences using art materials to their children daily in kindergarten. Teachers need to feel competent in their own ability to use these materials so they may offer artistically acceptable art experiences to their students. By working together with the Departments of Education they should know what subjects pre-service teachers will be required to teach. The Hawaii State curriculum states that 120 minutes per week are suggested for teaching art to grades K-3. Teacher training programs are aware of these requirements and should be made to stand accountable for them. Art and art education courses should be required for all teachers earning a credential.

The Departments of Education should require all teachers they hire have at least one semester of art education. As stated previously, by working closely with the Colleges of Education, the Departments of Education should take an active part in persuading the universities that art is important to them and to education in general. Finally, teachers themselves, like any professionals, should push themselves to continue to learn about their field. If they know they

lack knowledge in art, they have a responsibility to our children to participate in in-service workshops that will enhance their knowledge. These three groups working together can better art education for our children.

The students themselves can tell us something about how art should be taught. The classroom is a society. In integrated, traditional societies such as Japan or ancient Hawaii, where there was a shared belief system about celebration, work, and life in general: All people were artists. Making art was not for the talented few but part of every day living. Art was included in celebration, in learning responsibility, in decorating the home, in the passing on of artistic skill, and the sharing of the cultural past. All educators have the responsibility to remain sensitive to cultural influences. Celebrating holidays and their decorative symbols can be a rich and visual artistic experience. However, continuing to make leprechaun hats and three leaf clovers and never mentioning menehunes (Hawaiian elf-like small magical creatures) to a classroom of children from Hawaii is not sensitive teaching. The cultural symbols and celebrations that teachers offer in their art activities should enhance these celebrations and relate to the culture of society.

### Implications for Further Research

Although important insights were gained from this study, much more could be learned from further research. This study was limited to a small group of participants on a small, somewhat isolated island in Hawaii. This study of art educators did not address directly the rich fabric of cultures that make up our

schools. Another study could be designed to examine the cultural aspects of art education. These cultural aspects may include further investigation into holiday symbols and family celebrations that are related to art.

Continuing along the same line of thought about culture, a follow-up study might be designed to address parental perceptions of art. Ohana, family, is one of our valued treasures. Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties, sisters and brothers have great influences on their children. Education extends beyond the immediate class of students. Children come home to their families and share what they have learned. Future studies could reach into these families to explore their understanding of art.

There are two factors this study did not address. One was the location where teachers earned their degrees. Those who were educated in Hawaii might have quite different perspectives than those who earned their college degrees from the U.S. mainland. The second factor was teachers' ethnic background and whether it might have any impact on art education and the art process.

Because of the qualitative nature of this study it had a small participant population. Twenty-four kindergarten teachers from the island of Maui may not be representative of the views of the greater teacher population, especially because the majority of students and teachers reside on Oahu.

In view of what the researcher has learned, the study might reveal additional insights if new questions were asked. For instance, how do administrators view art and art education? Or what do the students themselves

feel about art? These questions and other research about the understanding of the subject of art education would further enhance our ability to plan excellent art education programs for teacher training.

This study has already stimulated an interest by groups (some were involved in the study and some were just interested in the subject), to continue further projects or actions pertaining to improving art education. The following are some of the actions stimulated by this study:

- 1) The State of Hawaii Office of the District Superintendent in Maui has requested to review the results and has stated they are willing to offer art education in-service programs to solve some of the stated concerns.
2. A video is being produced, videotaping kindergarten teachers teaching art using developmentally appropriate methods. This video is being funded by a grant from Olelo the public access section of Oceanic Television in Honolulu, Hawaii.
3. The University of Hawaii Department of Relations has expressed interest in writing a script for a radio spot for stations KWXX and KAVH (the college information stations) about the results of this study.
4. The researcher has designed two in-service workshops to be held this summer that address the needs and concerns stated by the teachers in this study and will teach art and developmentally appropriate art methods for teachers to use in their classrooms.

## Implications for Design of Art Education Programs

After reviewing some of what art educators say about art and listening to response from teachers about their views concerning art, this author has concluded that the ideal method for providing art experiences to young children is to support creative development, aid children in acquiring artistic concepts, while remaining cognizant of the child's stage in his artistic development.

To do this educators must offer quality art experiences that have a regularly scheduled and undisputed place in the curriculum of the elementary school. When art is not allotted sufficient time in the school week, when it plays a role subordinate to other subjects in the classroom and consists mainly of peripheral activities such as making maps, stereotyped holiday decorations and endless gifts for mom, it cannot be expected to perform a vital role in the creative growth of children.

Teachers in this study expressed a feeling of frustration with their own artistic ability and knowledge. They expressed a desire to gain art knowledge and an interest in receiving in-service art education. Art education must take into consideration the needs of the teachers while helping teachers to plan developmentally appropriate art experiences that include exposure to fine art and the teaching of art concepts. Art educating programs for teachers must address teachers frustrations about their own artistic abilities and eliminate their false assumptions that anything a child draws, paints or constructs is "art". It

may indeed be a child's visual statement, but it is not necessarily art. To be art, it must be expressed in the language structure and form of art and yet allow for the freedom and creativity that these teachers have so well defined.

The introduction of in-service training in art should include two areas. First, it should include introductory lessons into the basics of a few media. Beginning drawing exercises would be very important. These types of exercises would demonstrate to the teachers that they are able to draw. Learning to use materials is not a problem, if only clear precise instructions are given.

Teachers in this study who expressed a dissatisfaction with their own artistic ability most often were speaking about their ability to draw. In the researcher's fifteen years experience as a teacher of art, she found that teaching drawing and composition first is most important. Students seem to express almost immediate satisfaction with their work, and have greater confidence later in other media if they acquire basic skills. The interesting thing about teaching beginners is the almost immediate success they achieve. Betty Edwards in her book, Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, shows examples of individual drawings demonstrating this. In only a few beginning contour line lessons, or a few hours with a well-trained art teacher, people can learn to "really see." Basically, teachers' drawing abilities could be improved to a point of self-satisfaction in only a few short hours. This alone usually proves that art skills can be taught. It also enhances the individual's interest enough for him to want to continue studying art.

Second, in-service programs in art would need to review the basic elements and principles of design, so as to familiarize the teachers with the framework of the subject of art. Included should be training in how to use existing resources, for example, the art posters illustrating the elements and principles of design that the Department of Education's Office of Instructional Services recently sent to every public school in Hawaii. These two introductory exercises would aid in bringing back the confidence of the participating teachers involved in an art education program.

Art education programs need to cover the art vocabulary and concepts specific to art. Teachers must build basic skill development to be able to use artistic language effectively. The artistic language is no less important to a child's development than the verbal language. Just as writing offers a child a way to express who he is, the language of line, form, and color allow an individual to express what it is like to be human. Leaving out the language of art leaves the child in a world where education has no meaning. In general, art gives the child a place to use basic skills he has learned and relate them to this own understanding of the world.

If the areas of basic drawing skills and artistic concepts are covered in the introduction of art education programs, teachers should feel comfortable enough to move to different areas of learning about art. These areas would include information about stages of artistic development, using fine art in the classroom and creative ways to use art materials.

Art education programs should include information on children's stages of artistic development. If teachers understand where the child is, in his or her development they will be able to combine the appropriate art concepts for each activity while allowing for the creativity they felt was so important.

Art education programs should include exposure to fine arts reproductions along with concrete examples of art activities for children that relate to each reproduction. For example, if the teacher is talking about the idea of something being cut into sections such as sentences, or breaking math into easy parts, the teacher could expose children to Picasso's cubist work. For early childhood, exposing children to fine art may mean just hanging artworks at eye level, allowing children to enjoy their beauty. However, when the teacher teaches science or literature, and the concept is closeness to nature, it would be difficult to not refer to a flower by Georgia O'Keefe carefully placed in the room.

Teachers should be exposed to available materials that aid them in exposing children to art history and art appreciation. There are hundreds of fine art reproductions in their libraries, but most are not used. The researcher visited twenty public school libraries and most of the materials are dusty or still unopened. Once again this is not the fault of the overworked teacher, but of a system that sends curriculum resources and fails to educate its users. Art education in-service programs that teach how to use such materials are pertinent.

Over the past three years, the Hawaii State Department of Education sent posters of the elements and principles of design to all the schools. The

teachers expressed and appreciation of these materials but said they were not given any information about how they might be used. An exciting two hour workshop for teachers could promote their use and enhance art education in our schools.

In-service programs in art education and art methods for teacher training must also keep in mind the needs expressed by teachers. In this study, teachers said, art activities that integrate into other subjects decorate their rooms, celebrate the holidays, allow for individual freedom, while being affordable to the classroom budget are important.

They also said that learning to follow directions is important in early childhood and that they felt comfortable teaching that while offering art. Although some of these objectives seem non-congruent to art as a subject, it is important that the art in-service instructor listen to these needs and create art activities that can include these factors, yet stay true to the objectives art offers. There is no reason teachers cannot celebrate Mother's Day by creating beautiful hand stamped wrapping paper and cards that express through line and color the feelings of love and nurture. Artists such as Degas or Renoir can be hung in the room, and of course the book, I'll Love You Forever, by Robert Munsch would be a wonderful children's literature connection.

Art education like any other subject has basic vocabulary, concepts, and skills to learn. It offers children the opportunity to express themselves, create freely, observe how others create and it can teach children to follow directions. Art education offers children opportunities to problem solve, and to celebrate the symbols of their culture.

There is a way to offer our children these rich understandings of art. The Colleges of Education, the Departments of Education, and the teachers themselves must work together to provide meaningful and worthwhile art experiences for children.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Appendices and Bibliography

JOHN WAIHEE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
54 HIGH STREET, 4TH FLOOR  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793

January 29, 1992

APPENDIX A

CHARLES T. TOGUCHI  
SUPERINTENDENT

Ms. Lori Phillips  
R. R. 1, 689C  
Kula, Hawaii 96790

Dear Ms. Phillips:

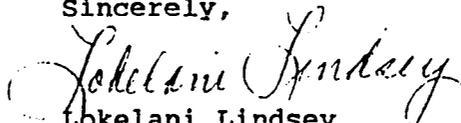
I am pleased to hear that you are in the process of developing an Early Childhood Art Education Curriculum. The Department of Education recognizes the importance of an art education for young children, one which expands on their knowledge and appreciation of art as well as provides hands-on experiences with art production.

In response to your request to interview twenty-four kindergarten teachers, I request that you first meet with Ms. Mona-Amy Mo'ikeha, District Business Specialist, and Ms. Robin Curammeng, District Art Resource Teacher, to discuss interview guidelines and the Department of Education's Art Curriculum Guide, K-12.

Please contact Ms. Curammeng at 877-7795 to arrange a meeting.

We appreciate your interest in our students and the art curriculum. We hope that the students will soon benefit from your endeavors.

Sincerely,

  
Lokelani Lindsey  
District Superintendent



Appendix B

STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
54 HIGH STREET, 4TH FLOOR  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793

March 16, 1992

Action Required

Memorandum No. 92-595  
Instructional Services

Memo to: Mr. Albert Kawai, Principal, Haiku School  
Mr. Howard Omura, Principal, Kahului School  
Mr. Jules Ino, Principal, Kula School  
Ms. Helen Orikasa, Principal, Lihikai School  
Mr. Riley Kaneshina, Principal, Makawao School  
Mr. Gary Matoi, Principal, Paia School  
Mr. Osamu Kawakami, Principal, Pukalani School  
Mr. Yeiko Arakaki, Principal, Wailuku Elementary

From: Lokelani Lindsey  
District Superintendent

Subject: **Teacher Interviews About Early Childhood Education**

Graduate student Ms. Lori Phillips has requested permission to interview 24 kindergarten teachers at several of our elementary schools to gather information for a University of Hawaii graduate project she is working on.

I have invited Ms. Phillips to contact you to request permission to interview some of your teachers on a voluntary basis. The interviews will last no longer than 45 minutes. Ms. Phillips would like to begin interviewing teachers on **March 30, 1992**. She knows that she cannot interview the teachers during instructional time.

Please direct all questions to Ms. Lori Phillips at 878-6109.

LL:IM:sm

June 1992

Dear Kindergarten Teacher:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Hawaii in the College of Education. For my doctoral dissertation, I am collecting data on early childhood teachers' understanding of art and art education. The results of this study will aid in the development of a curriculum and in-service for early childhood teachers who wish to learn more about methods of teaching art. It would be greatly appreciated if you would agreed to participate. All that is required of your time is participation in a 45 minute interview on a day of your choice. This meeting can be held after your school day has ended at 2:30 p.m.

If you are willing to participate please fill out the bottom section of this letter with the day and time you are willing to meet with me. Please place it in the stamped self-addressed envelope and mail. Without the help of teachers like you educational research could not be conducted.

Your participation and your concern for art education in Hawaii is greatly appreciated. If you have additional questions about this study, I may be reached at 878-6109 and my advisor, Dr. Stephanie Feeney at 956-7856. Thank you.

Sincerely

Lori Phillips

Stephanie Feeney

-----  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW

DATE:

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TIME:

GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Interview will take place from:  
/92 to /92.

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

## **AN INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN UNDERSTANDING OF ART AND THE ART PROCESS**

*Section 1. It's been said that our past experiences with something develop our understandings about it. I'd like to talk to you now about your experiences with art in the past, both as a child and a young adult. Would that be alright with you?*

### *Past Experiences*

- p.e* 1. *An aesthetic response is sometimes defined as an emotional response to something of beauty. Can you recall a time when you had an aesthetic response to something you felt was beautiful? (Example: a sunset, a sculpture, a building...)*
- p.e* 2. *When was the first time you were exposed to other people's art? And could you tell me about it?*
- a). Those of a famous artist?*
  - b). Those in a museum?*
  - c). Art of relatives or friends?*
  - d). Did you ever watch someone create art?*
  - e). What influence did this art have in your life?*
- p.e* 3. *Did you have art hanging in your home as a child? If so, can you tell me about it?*
- p.e* 4. *Was art displayed in your home more at one time of the year than others?*
- a). Holidays?*
  - b). Celebrations?*

- p.e. 5. Was art created in your home more at one time of the year than others? When and what was the reason?
- p.e. 6. Did you create art for gifts or card giving when you were a child?
- a). What type?
  - b) Can you describe them?
- p.e. 7. Did you have color books in your home? Did you like to color in them? How did you feel about coloring in them?
- p.e. 8. Were you given any art supplies at home as a child? Was drawing or painting something you enjoyed doing by yourself in your spare time?
- p.e. 9. Did you feel you were "good" at art as a child? Did any one ever comment to the contrary?
- p.e. 10. Did you ever take an art class outside of school?
- a) What type?
- p.e. 11. Tell me about your favorite art activity you did in school as a youngster? Describe your feelings?
- p.e. 12. What do you remember about art in elementary school? Did you enjoy art class?

*Section 2. There seems to be many ways individuals view art but I am interested in talking to you about how you feel about art, i.e. your understandings about art both as an individual and as a teacher. There are no right and wrong questions or answers, so please just express whatever comes to your mind as we talk. First, I'd like to start with talking about your feelings about art in general.*

*Present Views*

- p.v. 1. Talk to me about artistic talent.
- a). What is it?
  - b). Can it be learned?

*p.v. 2. Do you think people can learn to draw? Please explain.*

- a). Be more creative?*
- b). Develop aesthetic taste?*

*p.v. 3. Do you have any art hanging in your home? Describe*

- a). Your own?*
- b). Your children's?*
- c). Local artists?*
- d). National or international artists?*
- e). Prints? Do you mean poster? Crafts?*
- f). What artists.*

*p.v. 4. Many people say art is an individual's expression of beauty or aesthetic sense. Can you think of other reasons art is important in our lives?*

*Section 3 Now I'd like to discuss with you how you feel about teaching art in your classroom. Again there is no answer or idea I am looking for. It is only important to share your understandings, beliefs and notions you have about art as a subject in your classroom.*

*Teaching in  
Classroom*

*t.c. 1. What is it like for you to teach art? Be specific.*

- a). What do you like best?*
- b). What do you like least about teaching art?*

*t.c. 2. Can you tell me what a normal art experience is like in your classroom?*

- a). Can you describe a typical art experience?*

*t.c. 3. What percent of the art experience you provide would you call "successful"?*

- t.c. 4. *What does art offer your students that other subjects don't?*
- t.c. 5. *Can you tell me what materials are in your art supply closet?*
- t.c. 6. *How often do you provide art experience for children?*  
a). *How long do they usually last?*  
b). *Are art experience available through the day?*
- t.c. 7. *When do you ususally hold art class?*  
a). *How many times a week?*  
b). *What time of the day?*
- t.c. 8. *Do you ever use an art resource teacher in your classroom?*
- t.c. 9. *What factors have influenced how you teach art in your classroom?*  
a). *What do you think has had the greatest impact?*
- t.c. 10. *Are there things you'd like to do and why not?*
- t.c. 11. *Are you pleased with your art experiences in the classroom?*  
a). *Why or why not?*
- t.c. 12. *Do you use art history posters or prints in your classroom?*  
a). *Books?*  
b). *Other visuals?*  
c). *Actual artwork?*  
d). *Why or why not?*
- t.c. 13. *Can you talk about some of the things you do to make your room aesthetically pleasing?*  
a). *Flowers?*  
b). *Commercial decorations?*  
c). *Papers?*  
d). *Art?*

14. Can you describe an activity that asks the child to express his/her emotions through an art activity?

- a) Do you use this in your classroom?
- b). How often?

t.c. 15. Do you base your art activities around unit themes that are also integrated throughout your other academic subjects? Or do you teach art as a separate subject?

t.c. 16. How do you see your role as a teacher when children are involved in an art activity in your classroom?

t.c. 17. Where do you get most of your ideas for your art activities in your classroom?

- a). Books?
- b). Others?

18. Could you please give me an example of your three favorite art experiences for children?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_? What are the objectives of this lesson?
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_? What are the objectives of this lesson?
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_? What are the objectives of this lesson?

t.c. 19. What do you see as some of the most important concepts or ideas children can learn about art?

- a). Do you believe you are teaching these to children?
- b). Why or why not?

Section 1. Now all I need is some biographical information.

Past  
Experiences

p.e. 1. How old are you?

*p.e. 2. Besides your teaching credential do you have any other college credits?*

- a). Graduate work?*
- b). What type of degree?*
- c). Training in Early Childhood Education?*
- d). Degrees in Early Childhood Education?*

*p.e. 3. Where did you grow up?*

*p.e. 4. How many years have you been teaching?*

*p.e. 5. What did your parents do?*

*p.e. 6. How many semesters of art did you take in high school?*

- a). Art history?*
- b). Studio art?*
- c). General art?*

*p.e. 7. How many semesters of art did you take in college?*

- a). Art history courses?*
- b). Art education courses?*
- c). Studio courses?*
- d). Courses in art education?*

*p.e. 8. Have you taken any workshops or in-services in art education? Describe each one briefly.*

*p.e. 9. Would you be interested in participating in art education in-services or courses? Please be specific.*

- a). Type?*
- b). What would you like to learn?*

Appendix E

**INTERVIEW RESPONSES FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS  
APRIL 1992 THROUGH OCTOBER 1992**

Every Kindergarten teacher in the central district of Maui that agreed to participate in the study was interviewed (N=24). The following is a sample of responses for select questions. All the teacher's responses are reported to a particular question. Select questions were chosen by the researcher, because the answers to them led to clearer understandings of the participants as a whole.

"It has been said that our past experiences with something develop our understandings about it. I'd like to talk to you now about your experiences with art in the past, both as a child and a young adult."

Section 1

Past experiences

p.e. When was the first time you were exposed to other peoples art?  
Could you tell me about it?

1. It was at the Academy of Arts, I'll always remember that.
2. I saw a Picasso at a gallery downtown.
3. It was a graduation party. . . . My mother took us to an art gallery. It felt very different. We knew we were somewhere special.
4. My uncle he was a potter. I love to watch him.
5. The Honolulu Academy of Arts. We used to take the bus.
6. My mother was an artist sort of.
7. We had lots of people's art in our home when I was a child.
8. My mom's best friend was a painter, we would go to her home.
9. I don't remember any specifically.
10. Maybe when a ceramic teacher came into my 3rd grade.
11. I went to the Academy of Art when I was in 5th grade. I was fascinated.
12. I don't know.
13. I was exposed to a lot of other people's art. My stepfather and mother were funky kind of people. They had artist friends.
14. My uncle was an artist.
15. My mother loved to take us to the Academy. She painted too.
16. I went to the Metropolitan in N.Y. in 5th grade.
17. I'm from Connecticut, we had lots of local folk that did art.
18. Cartoons? Is that art?
19. My brother liked to draw.
20. My tutu was a painter in Oahu.
21. I guess in high school. In my only art class.
22. I took an art history class in college.
23. My first visit to a museum was in Honolulu, I'll never forget it.
24. My father and uncles worked with wood. Does that count?

p.e. Was art created in your home more at one time of the year than others? What was the reason? (18 yes) (6 no)

1. Yes, we were always making presents for family. We loved to glue, paste, and put together.
2. My mother always gave us materials, but at Christmas we really went wild.
3. We draw pictures all year around.
4. Yes, in the summer we would create shows for the neighbors. We made costumes and back-drops.
5. Not really.
6. Because there was no television we would incorporate drama, music and art in our home play.
7. My mother had supplies ready for us for any rainy day.
8. Yes, Birthdays and Christmas we made gifts for everyone.
9. We made all our own birthday cards.
10. No, not really we always made things.
11. Yes, birthdays and holidays we made decorations.
12. Yes, in school especially we always made this fun art for each holiday. I loved it.
13. Yes, creating art is fun it helps us as kindergarten teachers teach the holiday symbols. Children start to see patterns in the year.
14. Not really, we did art all year around.
15. No.
16. Christmas ornaments were big. Also decorating the windows at our house.
17. I guess so, art in summer school was always fun.
18. No.
19. At Christmas we made ornaments, Easter we made baskets.
20. We couldn't watch a lot of T.V. so we made a lot of things year around.
21. Gifts. We were always making someone a gift.
22. I loved to create things from household items my mother gave me. Especially in the summer when there was no school.
23. In school we made something for every holiday. Mine was never very good.
24. Yes, but it was more often done on rainy days or days we wished to make something to give to someone.

p.e. Did you have color books in your home? How did you feel about coloring in them? (23 yes) (1 no)

1. No, not especially.
2. No, they were boring.
3. No, I never had one.
4. Yes, we got them when we were sick.
5. No, but I loved coloring in them all the same direction.
6. No, not that I remember.
7. No, I had superman drawing paper.
8. No, they didn't seem fun.
9. No my mother hated them.
10. There weren't invented yet!
11. Not that I remember, other people had them.
12. No, we did that at school on worksheets.
13. No.
14. Not that I remember. My cousins had them.
15. Color books were boring, I wasn't interested.
16. No.
17. No, just paper and pens.
18. No. More glue and paste stuff.
19. No.
20. Colorbooks were at our dentist office.
21. No.
22. Not that I remember. I did give them to my kids.
23. No, but my children love them.
24. No, I wish we could of afforded them.

p.e. Did you feel you were good at art as a child? Did anyone comment to the contrary?

Good=(3 yes) (21 no) Comment= (16 yes) (8 no)

1. No, I've always been awful.
2. I was good in music, I could never draw.
3. I can't draw. My brother could.
4. Yes, I was in 3rd grade Catholic school. My teacher told the class I was good at art.
5. No.
6. No, I just never felt comfortable.
7. No, I remember my teacher telling me I wasn't drawing correctly.
8. No, my teachers said I wasn't neat enough.
9. No, I'm just not good in art. I like to sew.
10. Yes, in seventh grade I took a crafts class. Mr. O. told me I was good in art.
11. No.
12. Not that I remember. No, I was average. I never liked it.
13. I liked it a lot. I was always embarrassed by my work.
14. No. The teacher would try to say it was good but, I knew.
15. Yes, I thought my work was good. But in Jr. College my teacher said I needed to "look" better.
16. No, I dreaded art.
17. I never could draw. I wish I could.
18. In elementary school, kids laughed at me because I couldn't draw.
19. My brother was a great artist. I was scared to death of it.
20. I felt very poor at it. I could never come out with something as good as someone else.
21. Scared, I felt anxious. I was afraid the teacher would walk by.
22. No, I hated it when my work was hung up.
23. No.
24. I used to break out in a sweat when the teacher said "art time." I'm creative in other things.

p.e. Tell me about your favorite art activity in school as a youngster? What do you remember?

1. Clay. I loved it. A lady came in. We made a pot.
2. Clay. The day we worked with clay. I still have that little creature.
3. Ceramics, we painted a pot for Mother's Day.
4. Clay. We made little animals. I still have mine!
5. Paper maché, we made huge statues.
6. Clay. I loved working with it. My school had a kiln.
7. Clay -- but we hardly ever got to do it. It was messy.
8. Clay -- an art resource teacher let us do it.
9. At my school in 3rd grade my teacher let us visit a potter.
10. I made a monster in clay.
11. Ceramics, you don't have to draw.
12. Ceramics, it's non-fail.
13. Clay is my fondest memory. At least it's learnable.
14. Dough and clay. We did it once a year.
15. My first grade teacher let us make pots. I made a blue ash tray.
16. Pinch pots. Slabs. I had a wonderful ceramics teacher.
17. Watercolor and pastels, I loved to work with them.
18. Clay, we made maps and a volcano.
19. Paper maché and clay because it's step by step. You can be given instructions.
20. Clay.
21. Clay. A potter came in and demonstrated.

22. Ceramics in 6th grade was fun. I took it in high school too.
23. My favorite, I don't remember. I didn't like art.
24. Clay was fun. I made a yellow and gold vase my mother has it.

## Section 2

### Present Views

There seems to be many ways individuals view art. I am interested in how you feel about art, i.e. as an individual and as a teacher.

p.v. Talk to me about artistic talent. What is it? Can it be learned?

1. I think creativity and artistic talent is inborn. Drawing can be learned.
2. I'm uncomfortable with the word taught. We're all creative, we need exposure.
3. Learn to be more artistic? Yes. But, you have to want it.
4. All individuals are creative creatures. But artistic? I don't know.
5. Yes, I think you can improve your artistic ability.
6. I know you don't think so, but not everyone is artistic. I guess you could learn.
7. You can always pick out the artistically gifted children in a class.
8. Yes, some people are just born more talented in art than others.
9. Some kids are more talented than others. You can spot them.
10. I notice kids that have trouble with language are good in art.
11. Artistic Talent, that's what I don't have. I never will.
12. Yes, it can be learned but we need experts to teach it.
13. Everyone's creative. Not always in art specifically.
14. I believe everyone has a hidden talent. If grownups don't stifle it.
15. Artistic talent is a gift. Some kids are good in art, some in math.
16. I think exposure is a better word. Yes, we are all creative.
17. I think they have to live through it. You can not teach art.
18. No, we are all creative. Yes, it can be learned too.
19. Everyone has a gift. Mine was not art.
20. I guess so. Yes, everyone is artistic in some way.
21. Artistic talent can best be developed by providing the materials . . . as many as possible.
22. Providing freedom for children. The more freedom the more artistic talent will develop.
23. Some kids can draw more detail than others. I guess you could teach someone to see more detail.
24. Not everyone can understand art, it takes years of training.

p.v. Many people say art is an individual's expression of beauty or aesthetic sense. What is art? And can you think of reasons art is important in our lives?

1. Art is important because it creates beauty in our world.
2. Art offers a place for no right or wrong answers.
3. Art can't be judged.
4. Art has no black or white. There are no right ways to do art.
5. I guess it allows artists to express themselves.
6. Art is what artists do. Musicians sing. Poets do poems.
7. Art is beauty. People who make it have to be good problem solvers.
8. Art is . . . that's a hard question. But I know it's important.
9. Art should never be graded. Art forces people to think creatively.
10. Math is black or white, art can be cooking, sewing, painting anything.

11. Art for kids should allow as much freedom as possible. I try to stay out of the way.
12. Great art can be seen in a museum. Children's art is nice too.
13. Art can be anything.
14. You can't do art wrong, so why do I feel so awful about mine?
15. I do not know anything about art. That's why I don't like teaching it.
16. Kids like art. Art forces creativity. It asks you to do things out of norm.
17. Art is done by kids but art doesn't seem to be as important to adults.
18. Arts, that's a hard one. It's just so hard to understand.
19. Art has very few rules or concepts to learn so it's difficult for the average person to understand.
20. Art can be pottery or a poem. It's all important.
21. Art is something hard to understand or teach.
22. Art should never be judged, that's what's good about it, it has no right answer.
23. Art is something that I wish I could do. It forces problem solving, I know that.

### Section 3

#### Teaching in the classroom

I'd like to discuss with you how you feel about teaching art in your classroom. It is important you share your understandings, beliefs, and notions you have about the subject and how you choose to teach it in your classroom.

t.c. What is it like for you to teach art?

1. I like it because the children love it.
2. It's difficult to find time, but I like to teach art.
3. It's my least favorite subject because of the clean up.
4. I love it.
5. It's very time consuming so I have a hard time fitting it in.
6. I like it because it allows for no right or wrong answers.
7. Art? Art is always fun.
8. Art is so difficult to control for clean up and preparation.
9. Art is fun, I like to integrate it.
10. Art is very time consuming to prepare so I don't get to it often.
11. Children love art. It's their favorite subject.
12. I use art to teach all of the basic subjects.
13. Art works great to teach literature and social studies.
14. I create all of my "Children as Authors" books using art activities.
15. I teach art with all my subjects.
16. In early childhood we integrate all of the subjects. Art integrates well.
17. Art is difficult to clean up and prepare for and it's expensive.
18. Art allows for creativity like no other subject.
19. Art is easy to teach because there are no set rules.
20. I feel intimidated but I enjoy it.
21. I like art because it makes my room look beautiful.
22. I like art because I can use the results in my classroom.
23. It's my least favorite subject to teach.
24. I wish I had more training in it.

t.c. What does art offer your students that other subjects don't?

1. No right or wrong answers.
2. Freedom.

3. Creativity -- no rules.
4. No right answers.
5. A way to express their thoughts.
6. Freedom to express themselves.
7. A break from the basics.
8. No right answers.
9. No right answers.
10. A way to create without worry of being wrong.
11. Fun.
12. Free time.
13. It offers them time to relax and create.
14. It gives them a time to solve problems without worry of being wrong.
15. Fun time.
16. They learn to use a lot of materials.
17. No right answers.
18. Freedom.
19. Problem solving time.
20. A great way to express themselves.
21. They can learn to use lots of different materials.
22. Children love to use different art materials in different ways.
23. No right answers.
24. No one way to do things.

t.c. When do you hold art class?

1. Twice a week. Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
2. Once a week on Fridays.
3. Only in the afternoons when they have finished their work.
4. Art is integrated into every subject.
5. No particular time, I integrate it into other things.
6. All day. In kindergarten we don't separate the subjects.
7. About 75% of my day is some type of art.
8. Art in kindergarten is an all day activity.
9. I teach more art around holidays and celebrations.
10. I teach art only in the afternoons.
11. I teach art whenever I have extra time.
12. I teach art almost all day, integrated into all of the subjects.
13. I use art to teach everything in kindergarten.
14. Art is Friday mornings.
15. The children can go to centers during their free time.
16. Twice a week.
17. Only in the afternoons when all other subjects are finished.
18. I use art to teach literature.
19. The children illustrate all of their writing.
20. During literature I let them draw.
21. I integrate it all day.
22. Three days a week especially around the holidays.
23. Once a week on Thursdays a resource lady comes.
24. I let them draw anytime.

t.c. What factors have influenced how you teach art in your classroom?

1. Money and time.

2. I base my art around what we are reading.
3. The holidays, art helps us decorate and celebrate for the holidays.
4. The materials, I am limited in what I can do.
5. Other teachers. I watch for what other teachers do.
6. I look for good ideas in other rooms.
7. I base my art on what we are studying in other subjects.
8. Art usually helps us celebrate an upcoming holiday.
9. I use teacher resource books.
10. Whatever we are reading, the children illustrate.
11. Money limits me, I have so little resources.
12. My ideas come from other teachers. Today, we are making turkeys. I saw them next door.
13. We make a lot of projects for take home.
14. I like to let the kids just draw what they like.
15. I just allow them to create what they want.
16. Children decide what they want to draw.
17. Art has no set rules so I just let them draw freely.
18. Holidays are wonderful for making cute projects.
19. Other teachers.
20. Other teachers.
21. I have a resource file of holiday favorites and I add to it.
22. Literature based, I teach everything from what we are reading.
23. Other teachers -- I see ideas that work and I use them.
24. Whatever materials I have a lot of.

t.c. Do you use art history posters in your classroom?

1. No -- I don't know about art history.
2. No.
3. No.
4. No. Where would I get them?
5. No. They're not available.
6. I don't know how.
7. No.
8. No.
9. No, but I buy laminated holiday decorations.
10. No. I use the children's work.
11. No.
12. No.
13. No, they're not relevant for this level.
14. No.
15. No, where would I get them?
16. No, never.
17. I wish I knew how to integrate them in.
18. No.
19. No.
20. No.
21. No.
22. No, I saw them in the library but I've never used them.
23. No.
24. No.

t.c. Do you base your activities around unit themes that are integrated throughout your other academic subjects? Or do you teach art as a separate subject?

1. I integrate all subjects. That's what we do in e.c.
2. Integrate art always, just like all of the subjects.
3. My art is usually part of my literature.
4. Art is related to the unit I am teaching.
5. Thematic.
6. I base my art on the topic I am teaching or holiday approaching.
7. Whatever holiday is approaching, it's never separate.
8. I don't have time to teach it separate.
9. Art should be related to what you're studying.
10. Art is a separate subject I use for afternoons.
11. Art is related to my unit theme.
12. Integrate.
13. Relation to unit.
14. Separate most of the time.
15. The children illustrate their writing.
16. The holidays we do decorations and I integrate other art.
17. There is never time to teach any subject separate.
18. It's related to unit theme.
19. Unit relationship.
20. I like to base it around my monthly theme.
21. The children draw to make other subjects more concrete.
22. Unit integration.
23. The children just create whatever they want.
24. Integrate.

t.c. Could you please give me an example of three favorite art experiences for children?

1. Free drawing, Christmas ornaments, Girl's Day trees.
2. String picture, big book illustrations.
3. Collage, drawing with crayons, sponge print, stamps.
4. Easter baskets, Girl's Day hats.
5. Crayon etching, turkey banks, blow ink.
6. Blow ink, watercolor on crayon.
7. Tempera and fingerpaint, plaster hands.
8. Puppet bags, outline their bodies, sponge paint.
9. Scratch crayon, fingerpaint, tissue collage.
10. Draw a picture of anything, collage.
11. Christmas ornaments, decorate eggs.
12. Outline bodies, blow ink.
13. Blow ink, crayon, string, meat tray stamp.
14. Turkey plaster model, Easter trees, drawing, sponge paint.
15. Tempera paint, crayons drawing free.
16. Blow ink, dough, crayons.
17. Finger paint, dough, stamp with meat tray.
18. Puppets out of bags, blow ink.
19. Hats for each holiday, crayon resist.
20. Dough ornaments, Easter hats.
21. Easter decorations of tissue flowers, free draw, paint
22. Water color, sponge painting, crayon draw.
23. Craypas, sponge paint.
24. Halloween paper masks, turkey with tails, tissue collage.

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