ARTFUL AND ARTLESS EXPERIENCES: TEACHERS TELL THEIR STORIES

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to research elementary teachers' beliefs and attitudes about art and art education, the source of their beliefs, and the effect and influence of these beliefs on their own teaching of art. Life history research was the design method used and narrative inquiry was the means used to elicit art stories from the participants. This study investigated the life histories of four women elementary teachers through the use of interviews and self-reflective writing, with a specific focus on stories related to "artful" and "artless" experiences. Hermeneutic phenomenology and other interpretive methods were used to collect and analyze gathered data. Collaborative research was employed throughout.

Following the analysis of the data collected, two main perspectives emerged: teacher as maker of art and teacher as teacher of art. Themes that were gleaned from the stories fit within these two perspectives and clearly pointed to issues and concerns that hold strong implications for in-service professional development, in the area of visual arts education. Many of the stories teachers told of themselves as makers of art weighed heavily on negative experiences, revealing much anxiety surrounding various situational encounters with art and a general avoidance of future art-making opportunities. As teachers of art, the participants felt they lacked knowledge, skills and confidence.

This study, which addresses the expressed concerns of generalists related to the making and the teaching of art, holds strong implications for teacher educators who design in-service courses and workshops in art education. This study concludes with suggestions for changes to professional development courses and for a redefinition of the generalists' role in the teaching of art.

Resumé

La présente étude a pour objet l'analyse des opinions et des attitudes des enseignants du niveau élémentaire en ce qui a trait à l'art et à la formation artistique, de la source de leurs opinions et les conséquences et l'influence de ces opinions sur leur propre façon d'enseigner l'art. Le plan de recherche de l'auteure est fondé sur l'analyse des antécédents, et la méthode qu'elle utilise pour obtenir auprès des sujets les données relatives à leurs expériences en matière artistique est celle de la prise de renseignements sous forme narrative. Les antécédents de quatre enseignantes du niveau élémentaire sont étudiés au moyen d'entrevues et du récit de leur propre expérience, une attention particulière étant accordée aux événements reliés à leurs expériences artistiques « heureuses » (positives) et « malheureuses » (négatives). L'auteure a recours à la phénoménologie herméneutique et à d'autres méthodes interprétatives pour compiler et analyser les données recueillies. Toutes les phases de la recherche font appel à la collaboration.

Deux grandes perspectives se dégagent de l'analyse des données recueillies : l'enseignant comme producteur d'art et l'enseignant comme professeur d'art. Les thèmes qui ont été relevés dans les dossiers étudiés s'inscrivent dans ces deux perspectives et ciblent clairement des questions et des préoccupations dont la portée justifie un examen plus approfondi du perfectionnement professionnel en cours d'emploi dans le domaine de l'enseignement des arts visuels. Bon nombre des expériences de production artistique décrites par les sujets ont été particulièrement difficiles, et leur évocation a révélé un sentiment de grande anxiété dans diverses « circonstances artistiques » et une tendance générale à esquiver les occasions de production artistique par la suite. À titre d'enseignantes en art, les participantes estimaient manquer de connaissances, de compétences et de confiance.

La présente étude, qui porte sur les préoccupations exprimées par des généralistes en ce qui a trait à la production artistique et à l'enseignement de

l'art, est lourde de conséquences pour les éducateurs en enseignement de l'art qui conçoivent des cours et des ateliers de perfectionnement destinés aux enseignants de l'art. L'auteure propose en conclusion des modifications aux cours de perfectionnement professionnel et une redéfinition du rôle des généralistes dans l'enseignement de l'art.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my first teacher, my mother Katalin, who passed away during the time of my writing. Her continuous love, support and encouragement, enabled me to embark on a truly "artful" life journey.

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There are many individuals who helped me along the way and whom I wish to thank for their support and encouragement.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> I have fond and vivid memories of myself as a child, at home, enjoying many exciting moments of art-making, inviting my imagination to soar above and beyond my immediate time/space to other worlds where time stood still. I recall my silent adventures to the attic to rummage through the forgotten boxes of old musty books, where within the jackets of these books I would find pages on which I could draw. I remember building micro homes for my dolls within the crawl space beneath the living room sofa.
>
> I remember the first day of school heralding the onset of the new school year with the distribution of supplies; pencils, erasers, rulers and of course, crayons. The scent and the look of these crayons, brightly and deliciously coloured, sharply pointed and neatly lined up in a fresh crisp box, stirred within me much excitement and anticipation.

Reflection

These two snippets of autobiographical text represent glimpses into my "lived experience" (Van Manen, 1992) as a child who loved to make art. As I "relive" these experiences through reflection and from my present perspective of artist and art educator, I recall that the experience of art-making at home differed significantly from my art-making at school. While at home, I could experience imaginative flights into fantasy, magic moments of creating through art and play, experiences that were never replicated in my elementary years of schooling. The school year would start off well with the new box of crayons; unfortunately my artful memories of school end there with the new boxes of crayons. Art was never "taught," it was never treated as a discipline but rather as a hands-on activity of drawing "anything" or some form of holiday art, reserved for Friday afternoons, and as a reward for acceptable class behaviour during the week.

As a mother with two daughters, I have collected the many works of art that my children have made over the years, both at home and at

school (Szabad-Smyth, 1992). I have kept a close eye on the kinds of art-making activities that my daughters have participated in at school and I am disappointed to discover that not much has changed over the last thirty-seven years with respect to visual arts education in the elementary schools. This reality has led me to question the marginality of elementary visual arts education and to consider what can be done to improve the situation.

Initiating a Study of Teachers' Lives

As a teacher educator in the area of visual arts education, I have worked with many in-service as well as pre-service generalist and specialist teachers. As a lecturer at Concordia University, I have taught students of Art Education as well as students of Early Childhood Education. In the summers of 1991 and 1992 I was involved in Concordia University's Summer Institute as Co-ordinator of art education instruction. The Institute provided in-service generalist teachers with a six-day credited course in art education developed by the collaborated efforts of the University and the Ministry of Education. For years following the Institute, I continued to work closely with the Quebec Ministry of Education to deliver numerous workshops to assist elementary teachers with the implementation of the MEQ curriculum in art education. In my capacity as teacher educator, it became clear to me that the needs of generalists were significantly different from those of specialists and that both pre-service and in-service *generalists* shared similar anxieties and uncertainties about the making of art as well as the teaching of art. From my observations, I began to question why teachers might feel this way. Did past experiences or preconceived ideas about art and art education contribute to insecurities, fears and in some cases apathy? Most importantly, could there be a link between how teachers feel and think about art and their own art-making abilities (disabilities) and how they teach art in their classrooms?

After several years of delivering in-service workshops in visual arts education to generalist teachers, (through the Quebec Ministry of Education), I was asked to conduct a pilot research project entitled "A Needs Assessment for Visual Arts Education in the Elementary Schools in Quebec" (M.E.Q., April 1993). For this study, five anglophone elementary schools in Quebec were visited and assessed in terms of their needs for improving the quality of their visual arts education. None of the schools employed art specialists; it was the generalist teacher who taught art in all the schools. What is interesting to note is that although the Quebec visual arts curriculum remains the same for all these schools, what was being done in the individual classrooms, as surveyed by this study, was not the same. Teachers tended to have their own interpretation of art and its significance, which in most cases did not correspond to the provincial guidelines. Often these interpretations consisted of assigning stereotypical or holiday art projects. As a result all the children's work looked alike.

Art Education and Curriculum

Although many provinces and states in Canada and the U.S. have established curriculum guidelines for elementary visual arts education, what has been prescribed is not always what is being done in the classroom. Having a curriculum in place to define a course of study does not insure the implementation of the same. As Sally Carter (1993) points out:

> As elementary teachers orchestrate classroom activities, they involve children in experiences which either enhance or retard creative and artistic growth and are influential in forming student attitudes and beliefs related to the visual arts. Teachers who 'don't have time' and exclude visual arts experiences from the classroom curriculum, play a role in developing students' beliefs that art is not important. (p.53)

Later she adds:

> Seldom do elementary teachers have a sound philosophical approach to visual arts education, as evidenced by some of the reasons teachers commonly cite for arts inclusion: that children enjoy working with their hands, or that art is a relaxing change of pace from the rigors of academic work. (p. 53)

Following from this, art should not be treated as a reward, nor should it be regarded as "busywork." Rather, art should be viewed as an integral part of the curriculum sharing the stage equally with the other subjects taught. Through the use of an interdisciplinary approach, art can inform other disciplines. The reverse is true as well. As a "language," art can help children communicate symbolically their feelings, memories, ideas and stories about their life experiences (Dyson, 1990). Art encourages children to use their imaginations, to problem-solve and to think divergently.

Current educational practice continues to favour a very linear, logical-mathematical approach to learning. Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences calls attention to many ways of "knowing" or additional forms of "intelligences." Gardner adds:

> In my view, it should be possible to identify an individual's intellectual profile (or proclivities) at an early age and then draw upon this knowledge to enhance that person's educational opportunities. (p. 10)

One form of intelligence that is identified by Gardner and that is often overlooked and under-rated in school is "visual-spatial" intelligence. Observing this to be true, Thomas G. West (1991) who has extensively researched visual thinkers and gifted individuals with learning disabilities, states:

> The unfortunate losses occur because of widespread misconceptions about what visual talents are capable of doing and where they are required. Teachers and professionals at all levels understand of course, that visual talents are important for the visual arts, graphic design, architecture, photography, film-making and the like. But few of those who are teaching the basic courses or designing the basic tests may fully appreciate that these same visual and spatial talents are, in some important cases indispensable for the highest level of original work in certain areas of science, engineering, medicine and mathematics--even in areas not usually thought to be highly visual. Consequently, some of

> those with the highest visual talents--those who may have the best opportunity to produce really original work in certain areas--may be barred from just those areas when they might otherwise have made the greatest contributions. (p. 12)

Howard Gardner (1983) believes that the intelligences have a "natural life course" and that the visual- spatial may be the one that survives a whole lifetime if given a chance and one that holds a strong link to what we perceive as wisdom.

Who Should Teach Art?

The on-going debate continues as to who can and should be teaching art in the elementary schools; art specialists or classroom teachers (Ballard, 1990; Carter, S., 1993; Hatfield, 1986; Sevigny, 1987). Budget cuts and the continued belief that art is only a frill, results in very few elementary schools employing art specialists (Lazarus IV, 1987; Mahmann, 1993; Smith-Shank, 1993). It remains the responsibility of the generalist teacher to provide art education in the elementary classroom even though he/she may not have received adequate formal art education. To prevent arts education from disappearing, it makes sense for universities to continue to develop teacher education programs in art education for pre-service generalist teachers. A few American art programs for in-service teachers have been developed over the years: The Standford Kettering Project (1967, Elliot Eisner and doctoral students form Standford University); CEMREL (1971 Madeja and advisory committee); the AESTHETIC Eye Project: Los Angeles County Schools (1975, Hine, G. Clark, Greer & Silverman) and the Institute for Educators on the Visual Arts (1984, Getty Centre for Education in the Arts) (as cited in Sevigny, 1987). Museums have also become involved in developing programs for in-service teachers However, resulting evaluations from some of these in-service projects have criticized the effectiveness of these

prescribed methods in teacher education (Sevigny, 1987). Sevigny (1987) stated the following:

> The lesson this should teach us is that improved art education is not just improved curriculum theory or structured curriculum packaging. When curriculum concepts and materials are separated from teacher aptitude and adaptation to specific situations, mere short-term effectiveness is the likely result. (p. 113)

According to Butt, Townsend and Raymond (1990), the reasons that various educational reforms do not necessarily work may be due to differences between reformers armed with theory and teachers armed with practice. Recent research in teacher education has recognized this as creating an impasse for educational change and have begun to focus on the personal nature of teachers' knowledge and development (Elbaz, 1981). "Life course research" (Butt, Raymond, 1989, p.403) as a form of inquiry, looks at the connection between a teacher's personal and professional life to discover more about teacher development from a variety of perspectives (Butt, Townsend, Raymond, 1990).

Researching Teachers' Curriculum

As noted by various researchers in teacher education (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Goodson, 1992; O'Loughlin, 1990), there appears to be a need to challenge the way we view and research curriculum development and implementation. Instead of solely prescribing what teachers should be teaching, we need to look inside the teaching situation; we need to hear the voices of teachers as they reveal their ways of knowing and how they come to know what they know. Butt, Raymond, McCue and Yamagishi (1992) assert that:

> This preoccupation with prescription had led to the formation of bodies of professional knowledge which have been largely ignored by professionals-in-action since they have found that little of this prescriptive technology is appropriate to specific situations whose nature is uniquely personal, instinctive, intuitive, reflective and practical. The solution of practical problems derives more from reflection-on-action,

> reflection-in-action, professional intuition, craft and art, and the special knowledge held by the teacher. The nature then, of professional action, especially teaching, requires us to focus primarily and initially on the qualitative rather than quantitative nature of practice, in order to derive professional knowledge useful to scholars and practitioners. (p. 52)

Pinar (1975), Connelly and Clandinin (1988) observe that the term "curriculum" holds many interpretations in the research literature but in schools, curriculum is generally referred to as "a course of study." Pinar (1975) challenges the notion that the study of curriculum should focus on "the observable, the external and the public" (p. 400). Instead he prefers to use the term "currere" to replace the word curriculum; defining the study of "currere" by the following:

> The study of currere, as the Latin infinitive suggests, involves the investigation of the nature of the individual experience of the public: of artifacts, actors, operations, of the educational journey or pilgrimage....Currere, historically rooted in the field of curriculum, in existentialism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis is the study of educational experience. (1975, p. 400)

The following definition given by Connelly and Clandinin (1988) closely resembles that supplied by Pinar: "curriculum is something experienced in situations" where situations are made up of "...persons, in an immediate environment of things, interacting according to certain processes" (p. 6). As noted in my pilot study (1993), many of the teachers I observed had in fact ignored or remained oblivious to the provincial curriculum as a "course of study." Instead teachers had their own individual interpretations of what constituted art education in their classrooms; their own "curriculum." My observations of teachers' art teaching practice coupled with my own experiences from childhood, has led me to become interested in teachers' "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) about art and art education. How do teachers come to know what they know about art? And what is the source of their beliefs and attitudes about art and art education that they have individually formulated over time? Growing out of this question

concerning teachers' beliefs and values, the focus of this study is in the area of teacher education (in-service).

Teacher Education Research/ The Study of Beliefs and Attitudes

There has been much criticism regarding the marginalization of the arts in education (Ballard, 1990; Carter, 1993; Lazarus, 1987; Mahlmann, 1993) and the quality of visual arts education as taught by the generalist. However very little research has addressed the concerns or preconceptions that in-service generalists might have about the teaching of art. I have heard many teachers express their insecurities about teaching art because they did not see themselves as "artists." But would these teachers say the same thing about teaching reading, writing or arithmetic? Does one have to be a writer or mathematician to teach these subjects? What are teachers' beliefs and attitudes about teaching art and where do these beliefs come from? Investigating held beliefs and their sources can provide us with a more thorough understanding of how art is perceived and ultimately how these perceptions translate into the classroom.

Fenstermacher (1979), who had studied numerous models/methods of researching teacher effectiveness concluded that the quantitative approach used by many had been very limiting in helping us to comprehend the phenomena of education and educational research. He proposed that educational inquiry should shift its emphasis from a hypothesis-testing paradigm to one that looks at the teacher as subject as well as his/her beliefs. He concluded the existence of a connection between information/evidence presented to teachers and their held "*subjectively reasonable beliefs*" (p.171). If new ideas presented to teachers did not correspond with their own subjective beliefs, then no change, no "*transforming effect*" could occur. Fenstermacher

recommended that attention to "subjectively reasonable beliefs" should constitute an integral part of research on teacher effectiveness:

> The potential for education [of teachers] is realized when the results of the researchers' inquiry are used as evidence, as information, as sources of insight for teachers to consider along with their own experiences. (1979, p. 175)

Many current researchers in education (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991), also maintain that the study of teachers' beliefs should form an essential part of both educational research and teacher education programming. Richardson (1996) notes that since the mid 1980's there has been a change in the way teaching and teacher education have been researched, a change from looking at teachers' behaviours to studying the way teachers think. She adds:

> Studies of the origins of teachers' beliefs indicate that many different life experiences contribute to the formation of strong and enduring beliefs about teaching and learning. Within a constructivist learning and teaching framework, these beliefs should be surfaced and acknowledged during the teacher education program if the program is to make a difference in the deep structure of knowledge and beliefs held by the students. (1996, p. 106)

Recent Studies

There have been a few doctoral dissertations focusing on pre-service teachers' beliefs about art and art education (Galbraith, 1991; Grauer,1995; Myers, 1992; Smith-Shank, 1992b) and a few studies on the art beliefs of in-service teachers only (Denton, 1998; Nelson, 1996; Stake, Bresler & Mabry, 1991).

Grauer's study (1995) looked at teacher candidates in a one-year post-degree teacher certification program (elementary generalists and secondary art specialists) who were enrolled in art education courses. Surveys were combined with interviews and observations before and after practicum experiences to investigate beliefs, possible changes in beliefs and the influences that affect these beliefs. Grauer concluded from this

study that knowledge about subject matter and art education beliefs are inter-related and affected by both teacher education programs and practicum experiences. Because of this strong link between beliefs and knowledge, Grauer recommends that teacher training should include a reflective approach to investigate beliefs along with learning the subject and "practical applications."

Myers (1992) compared the art beliefs of two groups of pre-service generalists, one beginning their teacher education program and the other exiting, both from art education methods classes that focused on the DBAE[1] paradigm. Using semi-structured interviews, she discovered that students perceived art to be different from other subjects and clearly should not include instruction and evaluation. She discovered that these same perceptions changed very little even after the completion of a methods course that stressed the DBAE approach and which taught the value of instruction, analysis and evaluation.

One significant three-year study carried out by Stake, Bresler and Mabry (1991), supported by the National Arts Education Research Center and funded by the National Endowment of the Arts looked at in-service teachers' beliefs as part of a total exploration/assessment of art programs in the primary grades of three elementary schools in Illinois (Chicago and Danville). The study discovered discrepancies between what in-service teachers believed art should be and what they actually practiced in their classrooms. It was believed that these discrepancies were largely due to differences in teachers' beliefs and school values and goals (Bresler, 1992).

Nelson (1996) and Denton (1998) both did studies of in-service generalist teachers' attitudes about art education, their knowledge about art/art education and the way they used art in their classroom teaching.

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[1] DBAE refers to Discipline-Based Art Education and represents an approach to teaching art that attends to art appreciation, art criticism, art history and art-making.

They both concluded that generally teachers felt that they lacked knowledge and confidence to teach art. Teachers valued art and believed in its integration with other subjects but rarely did they teach art as a discipline on its own.

Deborah Smith-Shank's doctoral thesis (1992b) made use of autobiographies, interviews and focus group discussions to gain access to pre-service teachers' stories about art and art education. She wanted to learn about their beliefs and how they came to know what they know about art. Smith-Shank noted that in a good number of cases students had reported situations where they had sensed art as not being very important in school. She attributed this accepted notion as perhaps a result of how these "respondents" had read "clues" or "signs" about art in their school environment. As well, she felt that influences outside of the school environment could also have an effect on art education beliefs and impart their own "signs." For the second part of her study Smith-Shank chose to individually interview twelve of the "respondents" which she renamed "key informants" to discover how these "signs" had been read. The questions asked of these "key informants" encouraged reflection beyond the elementary classroom to include what Smith-Shank refers to as the "cultural landscape of art education" (p. 63). Finally, focus groups were set up to share autobiographies and examine those areas within their individual experiences that helped shape their beliefs and attitudes about art and art education. After having identified various problem areas, the participants volunteered suggestions for promoting more "positive" attitudes towards art in the elementary classroom.

My dissertation builds on the methodology used by Smith-Shank (1992b) that supports the use of autobiographical writing and interviews as qualitative methods to examine how "teachers" value art and how their past experiences have helped to shape their beliefs. What distinguishes Smith-Shank's study from my own is the nature of the two

groups being examined as well as the contexts that are used as referents for reflection. What initiated Smith-Shank's investigation into the art experiences of pre-service generalist teachers was her concern over her students "art anxieties" (1992b, p.19). The in-service teachers that I chose to work with all have had experiences teaching and enough time to overcome the initial anxiety of teaching usually experienced by neophytes, although some still experience anxieties related to art instruction. This study goes beyond pre-service into the classroom to see what is actually being done in the name of art. In-service teachers reflect on their own "practice" of teaching art and on their personal past experiences with art.

Another area that differs slightly with respect to the two studies is with reference to "context." In discourse of "autobiographical praxis" (p. 62), Butt, Raymond, McCrue and Yamagishi (1992), speak of the importance of considering the interplay of time, person and contexts which include:

> Intrapersonal (existential), interpersonal, cultural (collective), practical professional, institutional and societal...(p. 62)

My study begins by addressing multiple contexts within the lived experiences of those teachers who have volunteered to participate, unlike Smith-Shank's study which begins initially with only one context, that of being a student in elementary school. Only in the second part of the study does she include a more in-depth look into multiple contexts related to art stories/experiences. My study also includes stories but from a life history perspective. It focuses on the meaning of art throughout one's lifetime, from a variety of perspectives: the teacher as child, the teacher as student (elementary, secondary, post-secondary, professional development, other), and the teacher as teacher. By examining teachers' life experiences, I gain insight into the source of their beliefs about art and the teaching of art. Other studies into

teachers' beliefs (Britzman, 1986; O'Loughlin, 1990; Smith-Shank, 1992b) have concluded that pre-service and in-service teachers' ways of knowing about teaching are often influenced by their own experiences before teacher training. Because my study explores how one values art and perhaps how one's values have changed over time, it seemed appropriate to look at experiences outside of school as well.

Overview of Dissertation

I began this introductory chapter by expressing my concerns about the marginality of visual arts education in elementary schools and questioning how art and art education is perceived by generalists. I reviewed the literature in the area of curriculum, teacher education research and concluded with examples of recent studies of teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards art and art education.

In the chapters that follow, I start with my own story of "artful" and "artless" experiences situated within the context of my own life history. The purpose of including my story was to introduce myself to the reader and ultimately, the perspective from which I analyze and interpret my findings. Through the process of self-reflection I thought about how certain events in my life helped shape my journey to becoming an artist and educator. Reflection helped me understand how my lifetime passion for art influenced my beliefs about art and art education and how these beliefs differed so significantly from those of the teachers that I had interviewed.

My methodology chapter follows my life story and details my choice to use life history research methods to elicit teachers' stories about artful and artless experiences. I describe the research process of inviting participation, collecting data and final analysis and write-up.

Part II presents the actual life histories of four women elementary school teachers framed around stories of artful and artless experiences.

Each life story includes a brief biography and a description of each teacher's experiences as "maker of art" and "teacher of art." This is followed by personal reflections and a summary linking their life experiences with their beliefs.

Part III is a cross-analysis of the teachers' experiences from the dual perspectives of maker and teacher of art. It serves to highlight common themes and shared meanings and suggests a need to look at the implications for teacher education programs.

Part IV takes a closer look at the particular concerns that the teachers expressed about making art and teaching art and the implications for teacher education. Suggestions are made for improving the quality of teacher training courses that address these concerns and redefining the generalist's role as teacher of art in the elementary classroom. Finally the significance of this study is outlined and ideas for further research are reviewed.

CHAPTER 2

MY OWN STORY

Personal recollections of artful and artless experiences

The purpose of my study was to find out what teachers thought about art and art education; what their beliefs and attitudes about art and art education were and how these beliefs translated into classroom practice. To find answers to these questions, I chose life history research as my method to elicit stories from my teacher participants. To give further meaning to my study, I chose to include my life story as well. I felt I needed to revisit my past and connect the events that helped to shape me as an artist and teacher educator. I needed to understand how and why art became so important in my life. Going through this reflective process helped me to appreciate the journey I was asking my participants to take. Ultimately, the telling of my story would serve to enlighten the reader and myself of my own personal perspective and possible biases. Witherall and Noddings (1991) point out that "the narrator too has a story, one that is embedded in his or her culture, language, gender, beliefs and life history" (p. 3). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) point out that narrative researchers need to understand the perspective from which they speak when they participate in the dual role of "telling the lived story" and "telling the researched story" (p. 10).

My story demonstrates my choice to embrace art and is not meant as a comparison but rather serves to show how my passion for art was cultivated over the years taking me on a path that led me to where I am today. My recollections highlight major life events and detail art-related experiences that I have never forgotten because of their lasting effect upon me. Herein lies a glimpse of my artful life journey.....

As I reflect upon my early childhood years, I am reminded of the trauma I experienced with the death of my father when I was two and a half, and the changes that occurred as a result. My mother was left with very little money, three children to care for and the necessity to work full time as a factory seamstress to support her family. At the time both my brother and sister were in their teens and I, being too young to stay home alone, was sent to live with my aunt and uncle until the age of six. My mother would visit on weekends as the distance between the two homes was too great for daily visits. My aunt and uncle could never have children of their own and so welcomed the opportunity of having me stay with them. With this new arrangement, I was treated as an only child.

During my stay at my aunt and uncle's home, I recall amusing myself in countless hours of imaginative play. Sometimes my vivid imagination controlled me. I recall my early fear of shadows, forms that appeared to take a life of their own. I recall staring at pictures on the wall until the figures appeared to become animated. I remember one particular image that I favoured which hung on my aunt and uncle's bedroom wall that depicted a mother embracing her infant, while seated in a large wooden rocking chair. I recall how the figures appeared to be moving and gesturing to me. I have no memory of making art in this new home, however I have a vivid recollection of a place where I used to play. The shed in the backyard was my little playhouse where I would make grass and mud concoctions, imitation food for my dolls. Sometimes I would play with my cousin but most of the time I played alone. I recall the disappointment I felt when my cousin being only six months older than myself, started school and I had lost my playmate. I used to follow her to school with the hopes that I might also attend but this hope was quickly extinguished when one day I was sent home by a teacher and politely told not to return.

When I finally turned six and was ready to start school, I returned home to live with my mother. This change was very heart-wrenching for

both myself and for my aunt and uncle who had hopes of adopting me. My mother continued to work as a seamstress in a factory and I began school. I was a latch-key child. As a student in school I was very shy and insecure and a true worry-wart. I had always been taught to respect my elders and was raised with the belief that "children should be seen and not heard." I lived with my brother and mother in middle-class suburbia, a proud achievement for my mother; certainly a move upward from the days of having worked as a char woman during the Depression. She and my brother saved their earnings and on their own built the house we lived in. The house seemed to always be under construction. I had to find ways to amuse myself while my mother was busy hammering, painting and filling in "drywall" seams.

It didn't take me long to discover that I was very different from the other children. I did not have a father to care for the family like most of the other children. I did not have a stay-at-home mother either. At that time divorces were rare, the nuclear family was the norm. My Hungarian last name clashed with the common Anglo names in this community. I was often teased for my differences and never quite felt that I fit in.

My art-making done outside of school was uniquely different from that done in school or at home for school. At home, I had the freedom of choice related to time, subject matter, and materials. Sometimes art was part of play, sometimes it was very personal, but always art was a discovery. I hated reading but loved picture books. I remember every Christmas looking forward to the crayons, colouring books and paint books that my sister would buy for me as gifts.

My mother often complimented and praised me for my drawings. She was always amazed at how well I could draw and very supportive of my talent. I have a fond memory of going to her workplace, the dress factory, for a day during my summer holidays from elementary school. I remember feeling very small and the center of attraction among my mother's co-workers. We entered a very dark, very ugly, warehouse

furnished with hundreds of sewing machines and racks upon racks of beautiful designer dresses waiting for inspection. The room was filled with the loud, rapid and repetitive stitching noise of sewing machines racing at full speed. The room was busy with sounds and activity I had never experienced before. I sat by my mother's side at a large industrial sewing machine, as she began work assembling a striking flowing red silk dress. She tossed over a few scraps of this fiery translucent red fabric and instructed me to sew. I responded by telling her that I couldn't sew without a machine so she gave me a handful of straight pins and told me to pretend. I cut and pinned these fabric scraps for hours and brought them home to make clothes for my dolls. I loved my mother's sewing room at home. She had so many scraps of fabric, a multitude of colors and patterns, some remnants from her factory work and some from private customers of hers. She often gave me leftover pieces of fabric which I used to make clothes and bedding for my Barbie dolls. I loved rummaging through her button box to take in all the colours, shapes, and textures found among her assortment of buttons. I used to explore other boxes stored in the attic filled with books and things (much of our belongings were stored in boxes until our house was completely finished). I remember drawing on the blank pages on the inside covers of books. I used to transform spaces into other worlds. The crawl space beneath the sofa became a house for my Barbie doll. My mother's large double bed served as a boat for imaginary journeys to other lands.

When I was in grade four and five, my best friend Barbara and I organized a type of club for the kids in our neighbourhood. We organized plays for our parents in my friend's basement attending to details of set design and costumes. We would pretend to give horseback riding lessons without horses (my friend used to take lessons on real horses). I also remember a place in a nearby swamp where we used to play on already built rafts and imagine all kinds of exciting adventures. In the winter,

the frozen swamp would take on a completely different appearance and suggest a glistening land of fairies where we would skate to our heart's content.

Art-making at school was different, as there were fewer opportunities for discovery. I recall the excitement of receiving new boxes of crayons and the scent of these new supplies at the onset of each school year throughout my elementary education. Art-making was usually reserved for Friday afternoons and as a treat for good classroom behaviour during the week and ranged from drawing anything, to holiday art and was usually not that exciting. I have fond memories of one very unique and exciting art project assigned to our grade one class. This project might have been part of a winter carnival celebration, I'm not sure. We had to make a snow house but without a roof. Left on our own, with no guidance from our teacher, we grouped ourselves to work collaboratively designing rooms, intricate passageways and furniture for our imaginative house in the schoolyard. I have never forgotten the magic and the excitement this project instilled in me.

A not-so-positive art experience occurred in grade six related to a music project that was assigned to us by our classroom teacher. We had to pick a composer and write about his life. I chose a scrapbook format to contain my project write-up and many of my own drawings as illustrations. On the last page, I included the date of Mozart's death along with a drawing of a bouquet of flowers. As a child I had associated flower offerings as a token of love and remembrance for those who had passed on. My childhood had comprised of many visits with my mother, to my father's gravesite; freshly cut flowers would be placed on his grave. One day while the class was completing some busywork, our teacher, who was standing at the back of the class chit-chatting with another teacher, decided she would share the contents of our music projects with this other teacher. Somehow I noticed her delicately remove my project from the large pile of projects that were stacked on the back counter.

She quickly flipped to the end page where I had included my drawing of the flower bouquet and both teachers burst into laughter, unbeknown to them that I had witnessed this. This experience left me extremely hurt and embarrassed and my trust of this teacher was forever broken.

A couple of positive art activities occurred in grade seven. I remember an activity where we were required to draw a continuous line to fill a blank sheet of paper and then to try to visualize and colour something figurative within. Using my imagination I discovered the outline of a Tucan bird within the mass of abstract lines I had drawn. I remember feeling very proud of the result because it looked so real and I knew that had I attempted to draw this type of bird on my own, I could never get such a likeness. It was like magic! Another time our teacher announced there would be a school art contest. I rushed home to work on my entry and dedicated many hours towards its completion. I chose coloured pencils to copy an illustration of a child from a department store catalogue. Although my piece was not chosen, it hung among the selected entries and was displayed in the school hallway for all to see. As a twelve-year-old, I remember having a particular fascination for drawing pretty girls and I would spend countless hours perfecting my drawing skills in the privacy of my bedroom. I explored a variety of hairstyles and clothing and began to draw women with breasts for the first time.

In high school, I chose art electives in grade nine and grade eleven. In grade nine two projects come to mind. For one of these projects, the art teacher asked us to use tempera paint to depict a dream. I chose lilac as my colour and using a very large brush I painted large circular swirls to resemble a tunnel. My art teacher loved my painting. He framed it behind glass and hung it on the wall in the hallway of the school for all to see. He had never told me that he was going to do this and so when I discovered it hung up, I was really surprised and proud. Another project that I felt was successful was a pastel drawing that I did of my Siamese cat. A combination of drawing skill and the lucky mix of

pastels resulted in a very close likeness of my cat. This piece was hung in the classroom. Near the end of the year I had noticed that these "great" pieces were not returned to me and inquired about this. My teacher informed me that another teacher had borrowed them to hang in her home for a party. This was done without my approval and the works were never returned to me. In grade ten I had a different art teacher, one who was more liberated, free-spirited. I remember a project where we had to do a life-size self-portrait in paint. Once completed it hung on the wall. My teacher took the liberty of putting a pair of glasses on the face and hung my piece upside down. I recall feeling as though he was making fun of me by attacking my artwork in this way.

My coursework in high school was a mix of sciences and art. I applied to various universities for early acceptance into occupational therapy but was not accepted and so I decided to go to grade twelve. After grade twelve, and following the advice of my best friend, I applied along with her, to Sir George Williams University to study Fine Arts. We had a choice to submit a portfolio or take a six-hour studio art exam. We chose the latter. I remember the day of the exam. It began with my friend and I looking for the studio and along the way encountering numerous opened portfolios lining the hallway floor. We were overwhelmed by the quality of the portfolio work submitted and felt somewhat defeated before even beginning our exam. Nonetheless, we decided to enjoy ourselves. We were given several problems to work out through our drawings. I remember one question asked us to respond to the feelings we had about the room/situation we were in. We left that day feeling pretty unsure of our future. Weeks later we were ecstatic with the news that we had been accepted into the Fine Arts program.

Being accepted into the program was one thing, and keeping up was another. Because I had chosen to go to grade twelve which was the equivalent to first year university, I was admitted into second year university. Most of my peers had taken art courses in their first year and

I had taken none in grade twelve so I had to increase my load of courses to catch up on what I had missed. I recall being somewhat shocked to discover that my art courses weren't going to teach me technique or "how to" draw and paint. Instead we were left pretty much on our own to discover by trial and error. I remember an assignment given to us by our painting teacher to paint sixty-four squares using different colours. I took this quite literally and tried to buy as many colours as I could instead of creating new colours through mixing. My squares were critiqued before the class and the teacher told me to repeat this project until I got it right. However it was never explained to me what I had done wrong. After several tries and much humiliation, I finally got it "right". My love of art and my determination to do well, contributed to my success in my studio work.

I chose to pursue a double major, graphics and art education. My mother had supported my choice to study fine arts however, she strongly encouraged me to consider teaching, as this was the way I could earn a living. I understood the practicality of her suggestion however I did not really want to be a teacher. I hated speaking in front of groups. Nevertheless I followed her suggestion and completed a diploma in art education after my B.F.A. degree. Before graduating, I was offered three teaching positions, one at a private school, another at a learning centre for children with learning disabilities and yet another at an institution for the blind. I ended up with two part-time positions, the private school for half-day and the learning centre for the other half of the day. I used art to teach basic skills to children with learning disabilities and at the private school, I taught art to grades one to eleven. Teaching at the private school became a full time position.

Four years after I started teaching, I was married and two years after that I chose to stay home and start a family. I had two daughters and when the first turned two, we moved to Ontario. My two daughters became the center of my world and all my energy was directed at keeping

them healthy and happy. I remember making them quilts, clothes, and toys. I tried to fit in high school evening courses in stained glass and clay, hoping these would satisfy my creative urges.

After staying home for five years I felt the need to return to teaching. I applied for a part-time teaching position at the local community college and ended up teaching painting and illustration in the graphic arts department. While at the college, I met an instructor who became very influential in terms of encouraging me to get back into my own art-making which I had unfortunately abandoned for many years. I registered for a summer printmaking course at Concordia as an independent student and commuted from Cornwall to Montreal three days a week. I started producing art again and began exhibiting in juried shows. Some of my work earned awards.

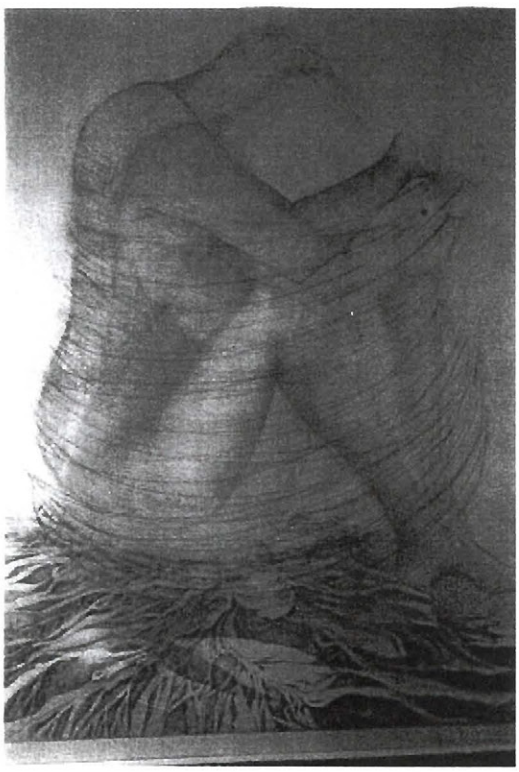

Fig. 1: Cocoon[1]

[1] This drawing titled Cocoon represents a female figure who is engulfed by her thoughts.

The challenge of teaching college students influenced my decision to go back to university to learn new ideas about art education. I had felt my old ideas were stale. This choice was certainly a significant turning point in my life. I was accepted into the M.A program in Art Education at Concordia University. I chose to pursue my interest in children's graphic development and chose to research my eldest daughter's drawings from the age of 15 months to 10 years. Concordia University offered me a part-time teaching position, first to teach a course entitled Art in Early Childhood and eventually, numerous other art education courses focusing on art education in the schools and in community settings. I also taught for the Quebec Ministry of Education where I worked as an art resource person giving art education workshops for in-service generalist teachers. What eventually became apparent in my teaching of pre-service and in-service generalists was seeing the general lack of art in their lives and the consequent insecurities they had about their own art-making. These insights coupled with both my own and my children's lack of worthwhile art experiences in elementary school, led me to question how teachers have come to know what they know about art.

Reflections

Remembering the past and then writing about it was not as easy a task as I had anticipated. Questions come to mind such as what to include, what to exclude. What do I want others to know about me and how much should I divulge? Recollections represent fragments or pieces of memory that have stood the test of time. It is interesting to consider why some of our experiences that may appear of minor importance now have stayed with us and yet others have vanished. At times I questioned the necessity of including stories that appeared trite but resisted the urge to leave out any accounts that related to artful and artless experiences. All my stories (significant or not) came together to provide me with insight into the role of art in my life.

As a child I was very quiet and shy and guided by my mother's belief that "children should be seen and not heard." I had few friends and relied on my imagination and heightened sense of perception to keep me entertained and free from boredom. My play activities always included some aspect of making, whether it be mudpie concoctions or clothes for my dolls made from scraps of throwaway fabric remnants. When I began drawing on my own, my mother was impressed with my "talent" and always complimented me on my efforts. I loved making art and most of all I loved the compliments. My confidence in my art-making abilities was further bolstered when in school my work was often put up for display. Knowing that this was one of the things I was good at, I never let it go. No amount of criticism could discourage me from pursuing this passion, whether it be the grade six teacher poking fun at my flower drawing, my high school teacher re-arranging the display of my person drawing or my professor in university who made me repeat my work until I got it "right." I found my voice through art and I consider myself lucky to have succeeded in a career that allowed me to follow my passions for art and teaching.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Designing the Study

In choosing a research design for this study into beliefs about art and art education, I had to consider a model that would embrace and accept as data, the life histories of my teacher participants, complete with their stories of artful and artless experiences. Subsequently, I chose to follow a constructivist model (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) for this study of teacher stories and made use of qualitative methods to collect and interpret data. I wanted to understand the "lived experiences" of my teacher participants from their own perspective; I wanted to know what role art played in their lives. According to Schwandt (1994):

> The world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors. That is, particular actors, in particular places, at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language and action. (p. 118)

Through the use of interviews and self-reflective writing, art and art education beliefs and their sources were explored by asking teachers to reveal their stories of lived experiences related to artful and artless events/situations. Most importantly, it was up to the teachers to decide what they considered to be positive or negative experiences with art. In the telling of their stories the teachers revealed their own "constructed" realities. Following the gathering of stories, I made use of a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to interpret and reconstruct these "constructed realities" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Themes were arrived at through interpretations of the stories and on-going "partnership research" (Cole & Knowles, 1993) between myself and the participants.

The research design that guided this study made use of life history inquiry as a means to gather data and hermeneutic phenomenology to interpret. The specific strategies for inquiry included the narrative and the dialectical where life stories were elicited and revealed through writing and interview.

Life History Research

> For life is no uniform uninterrupted march or flow. It is a thing of histories, each with its own plot, its own inception and movement toward its close, each having its own particular rhythmic movement; each with its own unrepeated quality pervading it throughout. (Dewey, 1934, p. 35-36)

As Dewey so eloquently intimates, individuals journey through life on paths that are quite unique one from the other. Historically, the study of lives as a research approach had its roots in the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology and is now recognized in the field of educational research (Butt & Raymond, 1989; Cole, 1994; Goodson, 1980). According to Cole (1991) life history research involves a "process of meaning-making" (p. 191), gaining insight into the present lives of individuals by investigating personal past events and the contexts in which these events were situated. Cole (1991) adds that current educational research is looking at teaching as "a complex and personal expression of knowing" (p. 185) that is influenced by a multitude of contexts: "personal, social, cultural and political" (p. 185). Goodson (1980) tells us that life history "challenges us to situate each life within its wider historical background" (p. 71). Focusing on teachers and life history research, Goodson and Cole (1994) have the following to say:

> We consider teachers as persons and professionals whose lives and work are influenced and made meaningful by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school. Events and experiences, both past and present, that take place at home, school, and in the broader social sphere help to shape teachers' lives and careers. How teachers construe their professional realities and how they carry out their lives in

> classrooms is an ongoing process of personal and contextual interpretation. (p. 88)

Traditionally, educational research on teacher development ignored the life history of teachers preferring to focus on the "school lesson" with an emphasis on "situation and occasion" (Goodson, 1980, p.67). As Goodson points out the themes of "teacher interchangeability and timelessness" pervaded (p.68). Research methods involved objective, hypothesis-generating approaches to the study of controlled teaching situations (Cole & Knowles, 1993). Current research trends in education that support a life history approach value subjectivity and recognize that teaching is a personal endeavour, and that to better understand the teaching strategies employed by various teachers, it is imperative that we learn about the person who the teacher is (Goodson, 1980).

Butt and Raymond (1989) outline six different approaches within life-course inquiry into teaching. Three focus on collective biographies and include: the study of teachers' careers and stages of professional development, the study of teachers' working conditions, and the study of teachers' lives and the influence of cultural context. The three remaining approaches emphasize studies of the individual self and include: the study of many individual autobiographies to discover the commonalities among teachers, a reconceptualist approach that explores the notion of how the private self informs the teaching self and finally a phenomenologist method of studying the lived experiences of teachers and the meanings of certain phenomena. Hermeneutics and phenomenology represent philosophies as well as methods employed in the study of persons and their lived experiences. Phenomenology places emphasis on a description of the lived experience while hermeneutics places emphasis on an interpretation of the described experience to give it meaning. According to Van Manen (1992) the aim of phenomenological research is to:

> ...."borrow" other people's experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience, in the context of the whole of the human experience. (p. 62)

This research made use of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach whereby stories related to "artful" and "artless" experiences were gathered and interpreted and the contexts in which these stories resided considered. According to Cole (1991):

> Life history research goes beyond mere articulation and documentation of personal experience to a more thoughtful process of meaning-making, grounded in the contexts of personal and social history. (p. 191)

Narrative inquiry was the means by which I elicited art stories from my participants. Using life history research, I made sense of these stories by considering context and asking where these stories were situated within the larger context of one's life.

Narrative Inquiry

> Lives and their experiences are represented in stories. They are like pictures that have been painted over, and, when paint is scraped off an old picture, something new becomes visible. What is new is what was previously covered up. A life and the stories about it have the qualities of pentimento. Something new is always coming into sight, displacing what was previously certain and seen. There is no truth in the painting of a life, only multiple images and traces of what has been, what could have been, and what now is. (Denzin, 1989, p. 81)

Influenced by the belief that individuals lead "storied lives," narrative inquiry is recognized in educational research as a means to explore the experiential. It is supported by the notion that "education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) make a distinction between the terms "*narrative*" and "*story*"; *narrative* defines the inquiry while *story* represents the phenomena. They go on to say:

> ...people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (p. 2)

The study of teachers through dialogue and narrative inquiry, encompass a variety of perspectives. Some educational researchers look at teachers' "personal practical knowledge" (Carter, 1993; Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, 1990; Elbaz, 1981); others (Casey, 1992; Freire, 1970) choose a more "critical" stance in their portrayal of teachers' lives related to gender, class, ethnicity etc. Pedagogical phenomenologists (Van Manen, 1992) seek to "reveal shared essences that pertain to teachers and teaching as well as the contextual dimensions of education" (Schubert, 1991, p. 213). My choice to use narrative inquiry for life history research supports a biographical method that is interpretivist and phenomenological. Like others (Ayers, 1989; Cole, 1991, 1994; Cole & Knowles, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Cole, 1994; Kinkead, 1993; Middleton, 1993) who have chosen this approach, my aim was to make meanings of teachers' practice by studying the lives of teachers both inside and outside the classroom.

Stories represent "a way of knowing" as well as a way of "thinking" (Carter, 1993, p.6) about our lives. "Narrative structure contributes to our understanding of the meaningfulness of everyday life" (Witherall & Noddings, 1991, p. 3). As Weber (1993) points out:

> through interrogation of personal stories researchers can seek that meaning which is underlying, widely-shared, or deeply-rooted in some common element of human experience. (p. 72)

The story attends to themes that are:

> often moral and philosophical, having more to do with feelings, purposes, images, aspirations, and personal meanings than with teaching method or curriculum structures in isolation from personal experience or biography. (Carter, 1993, p. 7)

Stories bring an awareness to the issues of "voice, gender and power" in educational research (Carter, 1993, p. 8). In the past teachers

had no voice in the research process and were viewed as "objects for study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In telling their stories, teachers can now become the "knowing subjects" (Freire, 1985) of the research design and can subsequently feel a sense of empowerment. As Freire points out, "we need to be subjects of history, even if we cannot totally stop being objects of history" (1985, p. 199). My study of teachers was not initially intended to focus solely on women teachers, however what resulted was that only women volunteered to participate. So it made sense to consider methods of research that were appropriate to use with women. Recognizing that a good number of teachers are women, Carter (1993) supports the belief held by the authors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986) that the narrative represents a good model to use with women. As well the use of narrative inquiry challenges "the dominant discourse on teaching" (p. 8) which is more detached from the personal and more focused on measurement. Inquiry into narrative provides a means whereby practice can inform theory. Witherall and Noddings (1991) add that:

> Understanding the narrative and contextual dimensions of human action can lead to new insights, compassionate judgment, and the creation of shared knowledge and meanings that can inform professional practice. (p. 8)

The telling of stories supports reflective inquiry into the complex and multifaceted nature of lives. What is unique about this form of inquiry is that it is on-going and capable of shifts and changes as new stories surface and as researcher and the researched negotiate for revision and interpretation. New stories are made as we continue to "live" our lives; interpretations follow the telling, the retelling and the reliving of past experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Collaborative Research

There is a move in educational research to view research into teaching as encompassing a more subjective stance whereby:

> Research is becoming more collaborative, more demanding of the participants, less controlled by the researchers, more intensive, and more intrusive. (Cole, 1991, p. 186)

This form of "partnership research" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p.474) challenges the traditional view that saw the "researcher" as the sole controller of every aspect of the research process. Partnership research sees both participant and researcher as valuable contributors of "expertise" (p.478). Cole (1991) points out that this form of collaborative research which supports a "researcher/participant relationship"(p.191) is well suited for life history research because it is more conducive to establishing a sense of trust which in turn can significantly affect the "quality and quantity of information gathered" (p. 194).

Collaborative research methods require the researcher to pay attention to a host of issues that define the research relationship between the researcher and the teacher/co-researcher beginning with the planning stage right up to the point of reporting the research findings. At the start, teachers were consulted for meeting times and how they wanted to space their interviews. Throughout the course of this study teachers were given the opportunity to read the transcripts that I had prepared and add, change or delete if they chose to do so.

Significance of life history research

This kind of research does not set out to prove a theory but rather sees theory emerging from the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this as "*grounded theory*" (p.41) and stress its importance for an "*emergent design*" (p.41) model of research, a design that unfolds.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that the emergent design is best suited for the naturalistic (constructivist) paradigm:

> ...because meaning is determined by context to such a great extent; because the existence of multiple realities constrains the development of a design based on only one (the investigator's) construction; because what will be learned at a site is always dependent on the *interaction* between investigator and context, and the interaction is also not fully predictable; and because the nature of mutual shapings cannot be known until they are witnessed (p. 208).

Life history research embraces many individually constructed realities influenced by setting, context, values, beliefs and interactions between researcher and the researched. *"Thick description"* is the method used to represent/interpret these constructions and their meanings (Eisner, 1998, p. 97). Because the findings are so individualized, vast generalizations cannot be made. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) speak of *"transferability"* and outline the following conditions that one must consider for transferability to take place:

> ...an investigator can make *no* statements about transferability for his or her findings based solely on data from the studies context alone. At best the investigator can supply only that information about the studied site that make possible a judgment of transferability to some other site; the final judgment on that matter is, however, vested in the person seeking to make the transfer, who must be in possession of similar data for the receiving context (p. 217).

The search for reoccurring themes and patterns is possible through the study of many life histories and can represent "shared meanings" among individuals or groups that are studied. A wide range of readers can then discover for themselves the relevance of such accounts to their own experience.

Those working in life history such as Middleton (1993), Knowles 1992) and Ayers (1989) have all chosen to study the lives of teachers to better learn about teachers and their teaching practices. Many life history researchers collect their data from interviews that are designed to explore the life experiences and events of their participants in great

depth. What differs among their designs is the particular slant or focus taken by some of the question categories which in turn are guided by the initial research question.

In a study of New Zealand feminist teachers born during the late forties and early fifties, Middleton (1993) wanted to know how and why these women had become teachers, how and why they came to see themselves as feminists and how their feminism influenced their teaching. To research this, she designed her interview questions around the major categories of "family, sexuality, career, formal education and feminism/politicization" (p. 72) using a chronological format. Under these major areas she identified many subcodes and proceeded to colour code the transcripts according to the major codes. She cut up copies of her transcripts according to their categories and placed them into colour coded files. Transcript copies were sent to the participants to check for coding categories and accuracy of interview data. As well, she encouraged "collaborative theorizing" (p. 73) by inviting her participants to assist in the analysis. According to Middleton (1993):

> It was important to develop a methodology that would enable the women being interviewed to assist in the analysis of their own tape-recorded life histories and to try to avoid imposing alien constructions on their experiences (p. 69).

Motivated by the feedback she received from one of her participants, combined with a request to write a paper on female sexuality and school culture, Middleton focused her attention "on the influence of parents and others and the influence of family marital strategies on the girls' subject choices and academic/professional motivations and aspirations" (p. 73). Her paper used four of her case studies and later served as the final "theoretical framework" (p. 73) to analyze the remaining participants' schooling experiences.

A biographical study conducted by Knowles (1992) to learn about the links between life experiences and "teacher role identity" (p. 127)

among pre-service and beginning teachers, began with questions under the major codes of family, teachers and school and prior teaching experiences. In his analysis "anecdotal references were removed from the data that best represented positions, descriptions of events, perspectives and perceptions of situations" (p. 116). Knowles analyzed the responses for themes and patterns and concluded that the major influences toward "teacher role identity" included:

1. childhood experiences
2. teacher role models
3. teaching experiences
4. significant or important people and significant prior experiences other than very early formative experiences (p. 127).

Knowle's final analysis addressed each of the beginning teachers' life experiences as they related to each of these major influence categories.

Ayers (1989), in a study of in-service preschool teachers, wanted "to discover how these teachers understood themselves and how they locate(d) themselves on their own pedagogical journey" (p. 6). To accomplish this, he collected the life stories of teachers to discover what they believed to be the major influences to their becoming the kinds of teachers they were. According to Ayers (1989):

> The quest is for epiphany and the mundane, for surprise and penetration, and for significant patterns discovered through textual analysis and comparison (p. 138).

Ayers concluded that "'teaching as identity' is the clearest theme to emerge in this inquiry, and 'teaching as identity' is the frame through which each portrait makes sense" (1989, p. 130).

My study of teachers' lives supports the approach used by life history researchers to find answers to questions by looking closely and deeply into the individual's life and with the understanding that lifetime events influence beliefs, attitudes and choices. Reflecting on my own life forced me to look at the events and situations that made up my own journey to becoming an artist and art educator. I wondered what might the life stories of my teacher participants reveal about their experiences

with art? How different were their stories from my own and what could I learn about their own beliefs and attitudes about art? Life history research helped me to find answers to these questions. What follows is a detailed account of my research process and issues surrounding my search for participants, data collection, method of interpretation and final write-up.

Research Process

A Call for Participants

My quest for stories began with the task of finding elementary school teachers who were presently teaching visual arts as part of their classroom curriculum. I was not looking for art specialists nor was I seeking specifically those who were "gifted" in the arts. My goal was to find individuals (male or female) with whom I could develop a *"research partnership"* that would be mutually beneficial and where the participant could feel "a sense of ownership" (Cole, 1991, p. 193). Life history research requires of the participant to invest a substantial amount of time and emotional commitment both with the interview questions that represent in-depth and intrusive inquiries into one's personal life and with the on-going negotiation throughout the research process.

I approached two elementary schools via personal contacts I had; one was my daughter's former teacher who was now a teacher supervisor and the other was a colleague of mine from Concordia. My contacts were briefed about my study and were asked to distribute copies of my "invitation to participate" to any teachers they thought might be interested. Briefly this write-up outlined my research purpose and design and explained how I was looking for the participation of elementary generalist teachers who were required to teach visual arts as part of their regular curriculum. My contacts managed to "round up"

potential participants from their respective elementary schools and supplied me with very short lists of individuals who might be interested. I quickly discovered that my biggest obstacle was finding teachers who would want to sacrifice time for me outside of their demanding and rigorous teaching commitments and on-going staff meetings. As Woods (1986) points out:

> In a way, what one is seeking ideally, is volunteers. Busy teachers do not actually queue up to assist educational researchers, even when it is one of their own number, but some are inevitably more drawn towards, and less opposed to, some projects than others (p. 69).

Added to the inconvenience of fitting me into their busy schedules, I wondered, did generalists feel there was nothing in this for them and so why bother? Were they uninterested with the topic of study or did they feel inadequate talking about "art" since they did not consider themselves "artists." The only reason I was given was that they were "too busy."

Working from my lists, I met briefly with two small groups (one from each school) and then proceeded to contact each interested participant by telephone to set a date for an informal meeting where I would explain the purpose of the study, the procedure to be used, the time commitment, the collaborative nature of the research and any ethical issues that needed to be pointed out (Cole, 1991; Yow, 1994). At the end of these meetings I provided each potential participant once again with a written description of the research purpose and design. A few of these informal individual meetings proved fruitless. I recall a Fall meeting with an "interested" teacher who was at the time a co-ordinator of special education. She informed me that at the time she was a bit too busy and that I should approach her again in the Spring. Unfortunately for me, by the time Spring had come around this teacher had been given a big promotion that entailed a move to a new school and added work. Again she insisted that she was too busy and that perhaps I could try again at a later date. Another teacher who had initially agreed to take

part, accepted my invitation to take her out for breakfast to explain my project. At the end of our breakfast by the "riverfront" she graciously declined to participate as she felt her summer was already too full of activities she had planned for her family. The resounding theme throughout these refusals was that they were too busy both during the school year with teaching and in the summer months with their family plans. With those participants who did agree to go forward with the study and not back out, we negotiated for time, place and any special conditions related to future meetings. In all, I managed to secure four interested teachers, all women (three from two different schools and one from the soccer stands at one of my daughter's soccer games). With all my participants being women, my inquiry became a study about women.

My intention was to pace my interviews a week apart to allow for continuity as well as time for reflection. Again the issue of being too busy or having other commitments interfered with this plan. I had never anticipated the delays, interruptions and postponements that ensued caused by sickness, travel plans, unexpected visitors, report card preparation, summer vacations and the weather.

Data Collection

Data for this study consisted of stories from the lived experiences of teachers as they related to a lifetime of artful and artless events. Data collection consisted of two phases. Phase one began with self-reflective writing, completing a biographical data sheet and the choosing of a pseudonym. This was followed by two semi-structured interviews in the second phase.

Phase I: Self-reflective Writing

At the end of the first meeting, if a teacher agreed to participate, she was asked to write one and a half to two pages about two "significant" art-related experiences from the past; one was to represent a

positive or "artful" experience and the other was to represent a negative or "artless" experience. These stories could be of experiences inside or outside of school and be representative of the teacher as child, adolescent or adult. An "artful" experience could be any visual-arts related experience where the participant came away with a good feeling about making art, teaching art or of having had a memorable aesthetic experience. An "artless" experience could signify a negative or painful encounter with visual arts; even a project that a teacher taught and viewed as a "flop" would qualify. These short written autobiographical texts of key events or "*protocol writing*" (Van Manen, 1992, p. 63) served as short initial glimpses into the lives of the teachers to be studied and provided themes or questions that could be pursued in the interviews to follow. Van Manen maintains (1992), that in the study of humans, experiences represent data and so it makes sense to retrieve and examine these experiences. One way to do this is through reflective writing where participants write about significant life experiences from their own point of view. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) support similar methods that ask teachers to self reflect. They encourage teachers to keep journals to represent *"reflection on action,"* to write autobiographies of their life histories in order to look for patterns or themes, and to write stories about themselves as teachers to learn about their own *"personal practical knowledge"* (p. 26). Smith-Shank (1992) also made use of solicited written stories to learn about how her student-teachers' school art experiences had influenced their beliefs and values about art and art education. My choice to introduce reflective writing was primarily to gain early access to the teachers' life experiences and to get my participants into a reflective mode in preparation for the interviews to follow. I assumed that they would be very selective in their choices of stories to write about as they were asked to only write one story from each of the artless and artful categories. Chances were that in choosing to write about unforgettable experiences, these same stories might resurface later

in the interviews and for now would provide me with themes to consider. From these stories I learned what my teachers valued personally, their likes and dislikes. The stories were written at home and collected by myself prior to the interviews. The time period between receiving the written stories and beginning the interviews varied from one week to months depending on the participant and circumstances. This time space allowed me to carefully review the stories for themes and customize my questioning to delve further during the interview sessions that followed. The written stories that came back to me ranged from a half page to two pages in length and with the exception of one teacher's stories, were all handwritten. What is worth noting, is that all of the "artless" stories were representative of the teachers' experiences as students in a classroom situation. Among the "artful" stories, two teachers wrote of their own positive classroom experiences as students and two wrote about successes they had experienced teaching art in their own classrooms.

As it turned out, the collected short stories revealed "key" art experiences as they related to classroom events. Although the experiences that the teachers wrote about didn't reveal any major turning points in their lives, the events that they did experience had left significant impressions, which in turn had impacted on their ways of thinking about art and art-making. Denzin (1989) refers to these kinds of stories as representative of *"epiphanies"* or "interactional moments and experiences which leave marks on people's lives" (p. 70). He classifies epiphany into four categories depending on the extent to which the event has affected one's life. They include, "the major epiphany, the cumulative epiphany, the illuminative or minor epiphany and the re-lived epiphany" (1989), p. 71). My teachers' written stories represent *"minor epiphanies"* which as defined by Denzin "...symbolically represents a major, problematic moment in a relationship or a person's life" (p. 71).

More in-depth autobiographical writing has served as a way of reflecting on the source of one's practical and personal knowledge for many researchers and educators. Howard Gardner, for example, in his book *To Open Minds* (1991) wrote autobiographically about his search for themes within his childhood that may have influenced his present beliefs about education and human development. Grumet's book *Bitter Milk* (1988) also explores personal theme. This book is dedicated to the theme of women and teaching and is prefaced by a short autobiographical account of the author's life addressing the theme of separability between "public and private worlds" and between "the experience of domesticity and the experience of teaching" (1988, P. xv).

Sylvia Ashton-Warner's book *Teacher* (1980) represents her narrative account of her years spent teaching in a Maori infant school in New Zealand in the late 1930's and lends insight into her feelings, beliefs and philosophy about education. Robert Coles in his book entitled *The Call for Stories* (1989), also provides narratives of his experiences. He writes about his life as pediatrician, psychiatrist and, finally, teacher where he encouraged others to tell their stories.

The self-reflective writing activity was not intended to provide thorough autobiographical accounts as the ones just cited but rather served as a means to initiate reflective inquiry and provide me with possible themes that I could pursue in the interviews that followed.

Phase II: The Interviews

Teachers were asked to commit to at least two interviews which would last approximately one and a half hours each and possible additional interviews if the need should arise. They all agreed to be tape-recorded and were given the option of seeing an outline of the questions prior to the interviews. None chose to see the questions beforehand and all chose to simply "wing it." A few teachers demonstrated feelings of

anxiety prior to the interviews when they commented on their concerns about not having enough to say about art.

Finding suitable sites to carry out the interviews was critical. As a researcher, I had to consider the importance of securing an interview setting that would be physically and psychologically informal, comfortable and conducive to establishing "rapport and trust" (Cole, 1991, p.198). Woods (1986) adds that giving the participants choice of time and place "give(s) them a sense of control and confidence" (p. 70). As well he notes, "The less formal, the more relaxed, the less confrontational, the more promoting a sense of togetherness, the better" (p. 70). When given their choice of location three teachers chose their own homes and one a teachers' room at school. What is interesting to note is that in the home locations, the first interview often took place in the kitchen; the second interview in the living room/den settings.

I arrived at all the interview sessions with cookie treats in hand. The ritual coffee and cookie chat before the "research interview" provided us with a time to get to know each other through the sharing of anecdotes not necessarily related to education. This essential "ritual" helped to alleviate some tension and to establish rapport between "strangers." It supported what Oakley (1986) says about the relationship of interviewer and interviewee:

> ...it becomes clear that, in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her personal identity in the relationship. (p. 239)

Woods (1986) acknowledges the interviewer's responsibility of "being natural" and not "private and inaccessible" (p. 66-67). He prefers to consider the interview as "conversations or discussions which indicate more of an open, democratic, two-way, informal, free-flowing process, and wherein people can be 'themselves' and not feel bound by roles" (p. 67).

Glesne & Peshkin (1992) refer to a type of research relationship that is "bilateral" where "power" is shared and nonhierarchical (p.83). As researcher, I assumed a somewhat dominant position by initiating and framing the study. The participants, on the other hand, exercised control in their choice to participate or not, and where and when the interviews would take place. They could withdraw from the study at any point, refuse to answer any questions and were given control over the pause button during their interviews. My choice to do collaborative research represented this nonhierarchical approach and supported the following definition of collaboration in research as stated by Cole and Knowles (1993):

> True collaboration is more likely to result when the aim is not for equal involvement in all aspects of the research; but, rather, for negotiated and mutually agreed upon involvement where strengths and available time commitments to process are honored. (p. 486)

In attempting to formulate a set of questions that would elicit art stories from teachers, I struggled with the types of questions I would ask and their sequencing. I considered context to be of great importance but questioned how deep I should delve, how far and wide into one's life I should explore; what did I need to know? I chose art as my connecting thread and framework to work within. I chose to follow a somewhat chronological structured and semi-structured line of questioning that looked at art experiences from early childhood to adult life. This multidimensional perspective encompassed the many selves and experiences within one's lifetime within established boundaries. Art stories were not limited to art-making experiences but rather included experiences related to play, aesthetics and other art forms as they defined the self and one's observations of others in an art context. I did not want to focus on individual's professional journeys to becoming teachers but rather on the role of art as lived experience and its consequent influence on the teacher's art instruction. The questions

served only as "general guidelines." I also read through the teachers' written reflective stories to pull out themes or questions that I felt needed further clarification. In this way new questions were developed/customized to delve further into the personal themes that surfaced. At times questions deviated from the chronological time sequence. As Yow (1994) points out: "Chronology is indeed one of those areas where narrators are apt to depart from the expected answer because people often remember things according to significant life events rather than dates" (p.75). The signing of consent forms was reserved for the end of the first interview session so that the participants would know what they were authorizing (Yow, 1994).

The first part of the first interview asked the teacher to reflect upon/tell stories about her artful and artless experiences as a child in the home environment before the commencement of school. Some of the questions asked included:

- Can you recall any significant experiences related to art and play from your early childhood?
- Did your parents encourage art-making? If so, how?
- Do you have any memory of art objects found in your home?
- Did you ever notice any member or friend of the family making art?

The second part of the first interview focused on art experiences that occurred after the start of school, in or out of school. Schooling encompassed the following settings: preschool, elementary school, high school, university/college, interest courses and workshops.

The second interview asked the teacher to reflect on significant people and events in her life, and on her present situation both inside and outside the classroom. About her capacity as teacher, she was asked some of the following types of questions:

- Do you see yourself as being influenced by the expectations from the administration?

- What do you see as the function of art in your classroom?
- When and how often do you teach art?
- What kinds of art projects do you assign your students?
- How do you evaluate your students' artwork?
- Could you describe the "best" and the "weakest" art that has been produced in your class?
- Could you describe an "artful" or "artless" experience within the context of your teaching?

Teachers were also encouraged to reflect upon present art experiences beyond the context of the classroom. For example, in their other roles as parent, student, friend or other and in other environments, were there any art stories they could share? Concluding the second interview, teachers were asked to find a metaphor for themselves as a teacher and how this might impact on their teaching of art. Finally they were asked to reflect on how their past experiences might have affected their present beliefs about art and art education. According to Seidman (1991):

> The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now, and describing the concrete details of their present experience, establishes conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives. (p. 12)

> People's behavior becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them. (p.10)

One question that ran through my mind at the onset of the interviews was whether these teachers would have any recall of art stories as far back as early childhood especially considering none of them had pursued this line of study/interest in their lifetime and because I had been reminded by some that they didn't think they had that much to say about art. My concerns were realized once the interviews began; most teachers had had difficulty recalling experiences of making art as a young child. Subsequently I expanded my line of query to include play, aesthetics and the other arts as areas to reflect upon for art stories.

Another aspect that was included in this study and that had not been planned for was the inclusion of photographs of art works that hung in the teachers' homes. The idea to include photographic documentation came about after the first interview I had with Molly (my first teacher participant). As I was preparing to leave for home, Molly began to reveal stories related to the artwork that hung on her hallway walls. The way she spoke of the artwork revealed something of her aesthetic. With her permission I photographed the work upon my return for the second interview session and for all the teacher interviews that followed I brought my camera along. Priscilla, whose interviews took place in the teachers' room at her school, made many references to the works of art that she had at home. When I asked if I could photograph these pieces she replied that "she" could photograph them herself but that she didn't have a camera. I supplied Priscilla with a throw-away camera and she took the pictures for me. In keeping with the "emergent design" of this study, the use of visual text suddenly became part of my data collection. The use of visuals complements the stories and gives the reader an added layer to contemplate the stories being told.

Questions remained open-ended and loosely structured to allow the participants to journey through key events in their lives. Sessions usually began with general questions and gradually became more personal, more intrusive. Personal questions had to be introduced carefully at the right moment, never at the start of a session. At times I felt awkward asking participants to tell me about their relationships with their parents and found myself justifying this line of questioning by explaining that it might have some relevance to the type of teacher they had become. One teacher refused to discuss her relationship with her mother stating that "you could write a whole thesis on my mother" (Molly, 1997). I respected her wishes and moved on.

When I asked the teachers to comment on the process of reflecting on their pasts and whether they had discovered anything new about themselves, the following comments appeared to support the notion that their experience had been somewhat therapeutic and meaningful:

> I think it's been really good. You don't ever sit down and reflect, you really don't have the time in your life to do that. You might sit down immediately after a fact and analyze why something went wrong or why something went right but very rarely do you look back ten years or fifteen years or twenty-five years and think about what experiences you had. I think I discovered why I approach my kids, my students the way I do. (Molly, 1996)

> Actually, it was really fun to do all this. I hadn't spent much time even wondering about how art affected me—I guess it kind of explains why I'm so off the wall a little bit with art now and people think I'm artistic. (Josephine, 1997)

Some researchers (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Woods, 1986) point out that in some instances interviewees can experience therapeutic results from these kinds of sessions when they begin to learn something about themselves. About the therapeutic benefits of the interview, Woods (1986) states:

> ...It provides a platform for people to speak their minds in a way, and in such detail that rarely occurs to the ordinary person. This can relieve stress, and provide the satisfaction of passing on knowledge and perhaps of helping to improve the world. It can also be a cataclysmic 'critical' event for the interviewee, bringing about a redefinition of personal identity and aims. (p. 69-70)

The interview process provided a time for "reciprocity" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.123). In return for their stories, the interview session gave the participants an opportunity to express their ideas and experiences and to acknowledge that their contributions were significant to educational research.

I noticed patterns in the way people chose to respond. Some would talk non-stop and wander off topic while others were more succinct in their response pattern and had to be encouraged to elaborate. I recall

one interview where we finished sooner than I had expected and I was forced to recall questions from my second list (reserved for the second session interview) that I left at home. My plan was to conduct two sets of interviews spaced at least a week apart to allow for reflection and transcription time. Because I chose to comply with my participants' agendas, this was not always possible. One teacher wanted both interviews done in one session and one had her sessions scheduled on two consecutive days. Following each session transcriptions of the interviews were mailed to the participants for perusal along with a thank-you card. In keeping with my plan to do "partnership research" the participants were asked to read over the transcripts and return them to me with additions, deletions or changes that they deemed necessary.

Research Analysis

My analysis began with a look at the transcriptions of the first teacher I had interviewed, Molly. To date, I hadn't received a returned transcript from Molly nor from any of the other teachers. I telephoned Molly to ascertain whether she had wanted any changes made to the transcription before beginning my analysis. Somewhat embarrassed, she nervously giggled and replied "To tell you the truth, I haven't even read it." From this comment I assumed that Molly was not that interested in the study nor was she concerned enough to ensure that she had not been misinterpreted. She gave me permission to go ahead with my analysis and I assured her that she would have another chance to make modifications (if she chose to) once the analysis was complete and in her hands.

According to Denzin (1989) analysis of life history autobiographical and biographical data may make use of one of two approaches: the "*objective format*" or "*the interpretive framework*" *(p. 49).* The "*interpretive*

framework" which rejects quantifying data (objective format) and relies more on looking at the research material "from within a literary fictional framework" (Denzin, 1989, p. 49) was the model used for this study.

Analysis within the *"interpretive framework"* involved close reading of the narratives elicited in the interview sessions to discover underlying themes and "patterns of meaning and experience" (Denzin, 1989, p. 56). According to Denzin within this model:

> Narrative segments and categories within the interview-story are isolated. Patterns of meaning and experience are sought. In this stage, the individual's biography is reconstructed and the structural-objective factors that have shaped his or her life are identified (1989, p. 56).

My study aimed to "make sense of an individual's life" (Denzin, p. 59) and made use of "strategies which weave the subject's life into and through the researcher's interpretations of that life" (Denzin. p. 58).

The first step to analyzing my data involved looking over the initial interview questions, which followed a somewhat chronological inquiry into the participants' experiences and stages in life. My questions had been organized with respect to the following areas:

- Early childhood art experiences
- Art experiences after the onset of school
- University education—teacher preparation
- Significant people and life events
- Classroom teaching—experiences and reflection

Looking over these categories, I discovered that for analysis purposes some categories were too general, others not general enough. Ironically, the chronological aspect was preventing me from moving forward. Consequently, I created new categories, renamed others and blended some to create more general codes. I proceeded to colour code the transcript according to the following codes:

- Early childhood memories (coded blue)
- Molly's education (coded yellow)
- Out of school art related experiences/Molly's aesthetic (coded pink)
- Molly as art-maker/student of art (coded purple)

- Molly as teacher/preparation and practice (coded green)
- Reflections (coded orange)

As Glesne & Peshkin (1992) point out:

> There should be as many major codes as needed to subsume all of the data, appreciating that more may develop that will hold up as separate codes. The blending of codes occurs over and over as you reread and reinterpret. (p. 134)

As I pondered over this new coding, I still didn't feel it was quite "right" for a final analysis write-up. Somehow it had to be pulled together more. I would have to eliminate some codes as major codes and turn them into subcodes but first I had to find the connecting thread or threads. Returning to my research question helped me to regain my focus. I wanted to know about the teachers' art experiences as makers and as teachers of art. Subsequently, these two areas of focus, "maker of art" and "teacher of art" became my "umbrella" codes with all the other codes fitting in as subcodes. This new arrangement was the "right fit" and served as the framework for each of the teacher story chapters:

(Molly's) Story
- A Brief Biography
- (Molly) as Art Maker
  - Early childhood memories
  - School art experiences
  - Out of school art experiences
  - (Molly's) aesthetic
- (Molly) as Teacher of Art
  - Teacher preparation
  - Artful and artless teaching experiences
  - (Molly's) art curriculum
  - Evaluating art
- (Molly's) Reflections
- Interpretation/Analysis
- Linking life experiences with beliefs

Glesne & Peshkin (1992) describe the coding process as "progressive":

> By putting like-minded pieces together into data clumps we create an organizational framework. It is progressive in that we first develop, out of the data, major code clumps by which to sort the data. Then we code the contents of each major code clump, thereby breaking down the major

> code into numerous subcodes. Eventually, we can place the various data clumps in a meaningful sequence that contributes to the chapters or sections of our manuscript. (p. 133)

Once I had established my major codes and subcodes, I read and reread the "coded" transcripts for themes. I used what Van Manen (1992) refers to as the "wholistic or sententious approach" (p. 92) to "attend to the text as a whole and ask, *What sententious phrase may capture the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole?*" (p. 93). When I read through Molly's account of her early childhood memories of making art, for example, the phrase that surfaced and gave meaning to her experience as a young child making art, was "It was just part of my life." I continued to analyze the text to glean additional themes to fit within the subcode categories. This method supports Van Manen's (1992) description for "isolating thematic statements" (p. 92):

> As we thus study the lived-experience descriptions and discern the themes that begin to emerge, then we may note that certain experiential themes recur as commonality or possible commonalities in the various descriptions we have gathered. The task is to hold on to these themes by lifting appropriate phrases or by capturing in singular statements the main thrust of the meaning of the themes. (p. 93)

Following the analysis for themes, I further analyzed the themes themselves to interpret how Molly's life experiences may have influenced her beliefs about art and art education.

My study explored some of the same areas as the other life history researchers mentioned previously. Life history involves a thorough and comprehensive look at an individual's life stages and experiences. Analysis is directed and made easier if suitable interview question categories are established right from the start. Middleton had customized her interview questions to include the categories of sexuality and feminism to suit her research question. I too, included question categories that were particular to my study; namely, life experiences

related to art. In the analysis process in life history research, it is quite common to see new codes and subcodes developing as themes and patterns begin to emerge from the data and give meaning to the study at hand.

This study looked at teachers' lives from various perspectives related to changing contexts of time and place as well as how beliefs and values about art were formulated and altered over time from childhood to adulthood, inside and outside of "school" settings. This kind of research allowed the teacher's voice to be heard where in the past it was silenced. Using a collaborative approach, the teachers participated in all aspects of the research plan and efforts were made to elicit "consensus" or agreement with respect to interpretation of data.

PART II

TEACHERS' LIFE STORIES

The five chapters that follow represent the individual life journeys of four women elementary school teachers. Through a study of life stories of "artful" and "artless" experiences, themes related to self as art-maker and teacher of art emerged and were reflected upon. Interpretation linking life experiences with beliefs reveal personal philosophies regarding the teaching of art.

CHAPTER 4

MOLLY'S STORY

Enthusiasm and appreciation for life and others

> As a teacher I want to be somebody who instills a love of—not necessarily a love of learning but a love of life and enthusiasm for everything—to laugh some—for life—would like them (students) to leave at the end of the day or the end of the week or the end of the year and be enthused about things they see and people they meet, and appreciate everybody and everything for what they are. (Molly, transcription, p. 34)

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

At the time of our interviews Molly was teaching senior kindergarten (April, 1996) and thrilled with the news that she would be teaching junior kindergarten in the following school year. Over the last fifteen years, with a hiatus of eight years to raise a family, Molly had taught kindergarten and grades three, four, six and seven. According to Molly "Teaching was something I always knew I wanted to do..."

Molly was born in Ottawa, Ontario in 1955 and was the second child of two; her brother is one year older. Molly was raised in a middle class environment by parents who were both teachers, well educated and highly motivated. Molly's mother had been a high school physical education teacher but for only two years. Molly explained:

> ...she taught high school Phys. Ed. only for a couple of years, just after the war, until she got married and then, I think the women from her generation felt obliged to quit their jobs and that's what she did, so she never taught after that. (Molly, transcription, p. 2)

According to Molly, her mother saw her own job in life was to raise her children. Molly described her father as having been a workaholic and one who "didn't play a big role in my day-to-day life." While holding down a full time job, he attended university full time and eventually took on a part-time teaching load at Carleton University.

As a student in elementary school, Molly excelled. She mentioned that she had a great deal of confidence and the reason for this she figured was because her parents presented her with opportunities other children might not have had such as travelling experiences and out of school music and dance lessons. She went on to say that she was "top of the class and good at everything." She was the one the teacher would call upon to present awards to people who came as visitors to her class. In retrospect, Molly reasoned that perhaps she wasn't all that bright, that she had excelled because she knew how to work and she "knew the system." She added "I'd figured that out from an early age."

Beginning at about grade seven or eight, she began to lose her confidence. This coincided with a time when classmates were being streamed into seven academic levels, level one representing the brightest of students. Molly took the test to qualify for entrance into the top enrichment level but she didn't make it, much to the surprise of her classroom teacher.

Molly's parents had high expectations for their children and were very influential in their academic pursuits. Molly remembers when her parents sat down with her in grade nine to review university entrance requirements and planned her entire high school course load which consisted of courses in science, math, English, history and no arts. Molly was led to believe that "everybody went to university." She went on to say:

> I can remember being so surprised when I finally figured out that really not everybody does this. It was a real shock to me cause you know from the time I was born everyone talked about university and you know you talk to my parents about it now—'that's so that you knew that it was there' kind of thing—but both my parents were very well educated and my mom's parents both had degrees and dad's didn't—but my mom—so you know, I sort of came from this family history and they—it was just assumed (that you went to university). (Molly, transcription, p. 19)

Molly recalls how her parents sat down with her brother to help him choose an area of concentration from a list of business, engineering,

medicine and law options. He chose law and upon graduation told his mother "Well, I graduated from law school but you can't make me a lawyer." He presently lives in France and teaches English in university and works as a translator.

With little guidance from her parents, who thought Molly knew what she wanted to do, Molly decided she would become a physiotherapist and began her studies at the University of Western Ontario in 1973. After the first year of heavy science courses and low marks, she decided to switch into physical education and completed a B.A. in physical education. She wandered around for a year and then attended Queen's University for one year to improve her marks and attain an honour's designation, but her marks didn't improve. She worked for a year at a halfway house disco and in that same year married a man she had met at Queen's. They moved to Medicine Hat where her husband worked as an engineer and she as a recreation supervisor. During this year she had done a great deal of coaching for swimming and rowing and realized that she would like to teach "cause the kids I coached were such neat kids." Molly and her husband moved to Vancouver and Molly applied to teachers' college at Simon Fraser University. She mentioned that she got accepted not because of her marks but rather because of her experience and enthusiasm. Finally in 1981 she graduated from a program that allowed her to teach elementary level.

Molly's choice to pursue higher learning was largely influenced by parental pressures. Not exactly sure of her goals but yet driven to succeed, she persevered and discovered teaching as her call. Ironically she had chosen physical education as had her mother. Visual arts never played a significant role in her studies and yet it would become a subject she would be required to teach.

MOLLY AS ART-MAKER

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

It was just part of my life

Molly's early childhood memories of making art include the constructing of sandcastles in her "huge" sandbox when she lived in Halifax, as well as at the beach on their many vacations to the sea. She recalls making forts out of cushions and blankets at home and mentioned:

> There wasn't anywhere specific that we would have to go to do—you know art kinds of things or activities. I think our whole house was kind of a spot that you could do that kind of thing. (Molly, transcription, p. 1)

In her room she had a desk completely stocked with crayons, pencils, pens, markers and paper. She mentioned "there was always lots of things available to work with."

Molly couldn't recall her first art-making experience because "it was just part of my life—it was—it's like you sit at the kitchen table and draw." She fondly recollects making art with her mother:

> I can remember my mom sitting with me and as I created something out of construction paper, she'd sit beside me and you know that's when we'd spend time together and chat and she would create too or if I would be colouring in a book, she would colour as well but I think that's the kind of encouragement I got. It wasn't so much a formal encouragement it was more of a subtle type of thing. (Molly, transcription, p. 2)

She explains how her art-making at home was non-threatening and even in later years, others would join the table and it became "a family experience—it was a time you could sit and talk."

SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

I was my harshest critic

Overall, Molly enjoyed her Friday afternoon art classes in elementary school, taught by "regular classroom teachers." She recalled this as being a relaxing time where she would paint, do crafts and seasonal things, what she referred to as "basic art." Her memories of specific projects done during this time are vague with the exception of the "mural" which she chose to describe as a negative or "artless" experience. Her written reflection of this experience is as follows:

> It was easy to recall a positive art experience. My parents and teachers were all positive individuals, encouraging creativity, not concerned with a perfect finished product. That's how I remember. I suppose because I was a conscientious student, my teachers always praised my work.
>
> I believe I was my harshest critic. Any negative experience with art, I believe, came from me. I do recall one assignment which caused me grief and embarrassment. In grade six, each member of the class was to paint a picture of children, people, playing a sport. I chose basketball. My small painting was okay. The teacher thought it was worthy of reproducing for a mural. I can remember creating the small version with confidence, the mural with no confidence. First, I was sure she had made an error in judgement when she asked me to paint. Secondly, the larger version never looked right. I painted and repainted the scene, hoping to recreate my better, smaller painting. Finally, when I conceded that it was never going to be perfect, the mural was hung in the main hall. I remember the embarrassment of producing such an inferior product and having the entire school being able to view it daily. (Molly's artless experience, 1996)

Molly was "shocked" that the teacher chose her work to be included in a larger group mural and surmised that perhaps this might have been be a reward for being such a "really good student." However, in her eyes this was no reward. She enjoyed socializing with the others whose work was also chosen for this mural and working in that special place behind the glass partition but found the chore unpleasant, terribly frustrating and finally embarrassing. Molly added:

> It didn't turn out the way I thought it should. I didn't even think that the finished product on the mural was the same as—was as good as what I had on my little piece of paper. I tried to just take what was on the little

> paper and just enlarge it and that didn't work at all. It was horrible. (Molly, transcription, p.9)

Molly never asked the teacher for help. Instead, she said,

> I just did it—I just kept my mouth shut and did it. And when I was finished she thought it was lovely. She told me—she said, 'That's lovely'. I can remember her saying, 'That's lovely'. I thought whoa, she doesn't know what lovely means. She's from a different—I was really surprised but—and it hung on the wall of the main hall. It drove me nuts. (Molly, transcription, p. 10)

Reflecting on how her own elementary teachers viewed art, she thought that they were very much like the teachers today who see art as a subject that has to be taught and "you do what you have to do to make it interesting...but because you don't really understand everything about it you don't delve into it like someone with a real background would."

I felt like an artist

After grade six, students at Molly's school were sent to a larger school for grades seven and eight. It was at this new school that Molly had her first art teacher and did art activities that she had never done before with new and different materials. She was intrigued with her art teacher and with the art room. In her reflective notes she wrote:

> Miss F. was a tall, rather awkward looking woman. She dressed casually, wearing an apron. It didn't help. I remember her hands and arms being covered in paint, glue or clay. Her clothes never seemed to escape the mess. She always told us not to be afraid to get dirty.
>
> I suppose the teacher set the atmosphere in that room, but as an eleven-year-old, I thought it was the room itself. The large wooden desks were splattered with paint, the stools we sat upon made us realize that this room was different from our regular class. The large panel of windows provided plenty of light. The room was filled with artwork of students past and present. There were jars, containers, [and] equipment hanging, resting and leaning in every available space. I'm sure all students who entered that room spent many minutes at the beginning of each class just exploring. (Molly's reflective writing)

In this unusual, yet fascinating space and under the guidance of her art teacher, Molly created a clay piece that gave her pride and recognition. In her reflective notes she wrote:

> In the spring of grade seven we began working with clay. Miss F. introduced us to the equipment, explained our assignment and let us create. I had grandiose plans. My clay figure was supposed to be a man, sitting on a rock, cradling a child in his arms. Even with much encouragement from Miss F., the finished product showed no resemblance to my initial plans. Miss F. glazed him black. I remember being very disappointed with the exercise.
>
> Towards the end of June, our teacher chose the items that would represent our school at the Canadian National Exhibition. There were many great works of art created by the students that year, so I was really surprised when my black clay figure was chosen. I remember questioning her decision, I don't remember her explanation. I felt very proud. Late in August, my family visited the exhibition to view the artwork. Was I surprised to see that my awkward figure had won third prize. I felt like an artist. The next year, I know, I created with more confidence. It wasn't until years later that I realized that they probably honoured every piece of work that was entered into the competition. But for me, the recognition I received gave me confidence in a subject area that I always considered one of my weakest. (Molly's artful experience, 1996)

Molly's written stories of an artful and an artless experience both represented instances where Molly had made art in school and where her worked was chosen by her teachers for display purposes. Both times she was surprised and initially not satisfied with her work. What may have made a difference with the grade seven clay figure and which changed her feelings of disappointment to pride, was winning third prize at a Canadian National Exhibition. This meant that her work was accepted and prized beyond her teacher's eyes and beyond the school's walls. Winning gave her external recognition which helped to boost her confidence somewhat and feel "like an artist."

A question of confidence—Process versus product

Molly commented frequently on her lack of confidence with respect to art-making. She had never been put down by teachers' comments nor ever felt any external pressure to be "good at art" but she was very hard on herself, often disappointed when her art work did not conform to the "teacher's finished product." As a child at home her mother would help her fix her "mistakes" whereas at school Molly explained, "I don't think I

had that same confidence that you could fix things or maybe the teachers weren't as approachable that way." After grade six, Molly became very critical of her art-making endeavours which never seemed to match the academic successes she had experienced with her other subjects throughout elementary school. When I asked Molly when did her confidence begin to decline she replied:

> Probably at the age when girls just start becoming aware that there are other people out there that might have a—yeh, might be critical of what you are doing—or you're trying to fit in with your peers and I bet it was around grade six, seven, eight that I first became—'cause just before that you don't really care. You just do what you have to do and you do it to the best of your ability and even if someone looks at you and says I don't like that, well tough, who cares—but you want to fit in when you're eleven, twelve, thirteen and then it—it's important to you so you don't want to do anything that anybody would consider—you know—would criticize you for—put you down. (Molly, transcription, p. 8-9)

Molly noted that this lack of confidence sharply contrasted with the confidence she had had as a child making art at home where "it was just do whatever you want and it's all beautiful, you know how moms are, it's great." She compared the two this way:

> ...the experience at home was non-threatening. There were no expectations. What I did at home no matter what I did or how I went about it—it was wonderful. The school experience on the other hand, was something that had to be graded and I was a really serious student right from the start so probably I felt that there were certain expectations I had to reach and I didn't see myself as being able to attain those whereas at home the expectations only came from me. (Molly, transcription, p. 12)

In comments to follow, Molly began to elaborate on how her art experiences at home differed from those at school, how her art at home was more about "creating" while at school it was more about making an "artpiece", a "final product." She explained this distinction as follows:

> I think when I was a very young child, it (art) was creating. You just create. You didn't really know you were producing art. I think as you get older and a little more self conscious, like my little ten-year-old—she—you then know that oh art is art piece. You go to the museum and—artwork up on the wall and you sort of think I can't do that so I'm not an artist. (Molly, transcription, p. 29)

Molly defined her early childhood art-making as process-oriented, her school art as product-oriented. What is interesting to note is that that these two "ways" of making art resurface later when Molly describes her own art teaching methods or approaches.

Talent

Lack of confidence in her artistic abilities was one of the reasons why Molly shied away from taking art classes in high school. She reasoned that the "kids that took art in high school were artists." They had "talent" and had already "a big interest" in art. After observing some of the work produced by the art students, she concluded that the art teacher made them think in ways that were foreign to Molly. She explained:

> It wasn't just go and draw basketball players and I can always remember thinking well I couldn't think like that—or to look at something differently. You know you might want to do this but he might say yeah, but look at it from a different point of view—or I want it—and I didn't think I could think that way. (Molly, transcription, p.11)

Molly's parents had a large influence on her not choosing art as a course elective. She explained how her parents were "academic people" and didn't view art as an academic subject. Instead they convinced her to take Latin, science, math, English and history and to reserve the arts type options as extracurricular activities. When asked if she would have liked to have taken art in high school, she replied, "I think I probably would have liked to have tried it. I would have been really nervous thinking that maybe..."

OUT OF SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

No talent—just hard work

Molly never took visual arts classes outside of school however, her parents did support her participation in arts-related activities with piano and highland dancing classes. Molly began piano lessons in grade five

after successfully convincing her parents to get a piano which she referred to as "a gift from heaven." Reminiscing about one of her "better" piano teachers, Molly remarked:

> I worked so hard for her and she really appreciated what I did and she got things out of me that I mean—I would go to her house for a lesson and I would come home so inspired. (Molly, transcription, p. 16)

Molly loved piano and managed to quickly obtain her grade eight level she said, not because she was so talented but rather because she worked hard at it. However level nine in piano became too much of a challenge for her. It took longer to learn new pieces and according to Molly:

> ...it just didn't come as easily. When I started taking grade nine I think I practiced an hour and a half a day instead of an hour because I wanted it. But I didn't have in me what you needed in order to get there. I could have spent three years at getting my grade nine and I probably would have passed with flying colours but that's not what I wanted. I was used to things coming a lot faster. (Molly, transcription, p. 17)

Molly had equated piano with fun and enjoyment and this was not what was happening. Years later, she took up piano lessons again, shortly after she got married. She explained "I'm a very goal oriented person so it [piano lessons] gave me a reason for sitting at my piano—kind of got me back into it and was really nice."

Highland dancing—a form of structure

Molly first took up highland dancing when she was very young and living with her family in Halifax. Molly felt that this type of dancing was well suited for her because she was "not a real expressive person that way, physically, so highland dancing is very structured and very exact so it was wonderful for me." She continued with these lessons for nine years until the end of grade eleven when "it didn't sort of fit in with the rest of my life anymore." Her interests turned to synchronized swimming which she did for her two last years of high school and continued with in university.

Craft-making—structured art

As an adult, the only form of art-making that Molly has been involved in outside of school has been in the form of crafts where written instructions dictate the structure the art form is going to take. She told me that her art-making is "more of a craft, a crafty type thing than actual art." She is quick to criticize this as not being very "creative." Molly described her art-making as an adult as follows:

> I would say me making art outside of a structured school setting is me buying the book on how to crochet and following the instructions—very structured art—art that you'd sort of just kind of fill in the blanks you know—a lot of cross-stitch. You're leaning on a pillow—when my kids were really young—and you're watching the kids you could do that or even when I was nursing I could do that. So—very—like art that is very—it's not really my—it's my art because I specifically did it but I was just copying something. It wasn't a creative thing. (Molly, transcription, p. 28)

Fig. 2: Cross-stitch pillow

When I asked Molly if she had taken any interest courses in art like a watercolour course for example, she replied, "oh gosh no—I'd die in a place like that, I'd be criticized."

MOLLY'S AESTHETIC

To discover Molly's aesthetic in terms of what she valued in a work of art, how she would respond to a work of art, and how she would characterize a person with artistic merit, I asked her to reflect on any meaningful art objects from her past as well as friends and family members whom she viewed as artists.

A piece of memory

The earliest memory Molly had of any significant art object in her home as a child, was a painting of a Dutch family that hung in her bedroom.

Fig. 3: Dutch Family Painting

She described her memory as follows:

> When I was a little girl there was a painting that hung in my room. I don't even know where it came from—it was of a Dutch family—it's a very dark painting....every night when I went to bed I used to look at that painting.

> ...when I was a little girl I had a little flashlight—it was a lady bug flashlight. I think I got it one Christmas—so my light would go off. I must have been about seven or eight and I can remember turning my flashlight on. I had a routine you know—I'd take it around the room and then when I was older I'd read by it—but um—Yeah—and I'd hit the picture and I'd look at this little girl in the picture and the shoes that she wore. (Molly, transcription, p. 4)

Molly now has this painting in her home which hangs in her computer room. She mentioned that she was thrilled to have received it although she does find it very dark. Her childhood memories weave personal meaning into the painting; special meaning beyond the decorative, making this piece of art very special in Molly's eyes.

No real art objects

Molly explained that her recollections of family "artists" came solely from her mother's side. Her father's parents died before she was born and she reckoned there was very little art from this side of the family because they were not "privileged" and consequently didn't have time for "that sort of thing."

Molly's grandfather on her mother's side was a woodworker and painter. Several of his oil paintings of ships on stormy seas adorned Molly's parents' home. Today an ornate wooden chair, made by the grandfather, sits in their front hall. Molly added that her parents were never ones who would go out and buy paintings. As a result Molly explained, "there were no real art objects in the house—anything of monetary value." When I asked her why she might not consider her grandfather's creations as "real art", she corrected herself by saying they were real art, "far better than K-mart reproductions" but what she meant was that her parents did not make purchases of artwork.

Molly pointed out her uncle's creative skills (her mother's brother who is a painter and woodworker himself), at repairing a wooden lion carving made by her grandfather and noted that he had married an artist. Molly has early memories of visiting this aunt's art studio:

> ...she has renovated their home and so her whole top floor is her studio and just filled with neat stuff. I can remember visiting them when I was a child and she would always have neat pens and erasers and paints and all kinds of things—goodies—but we couldn't touch them. She doesn't have any children so she really doesn't understand that kids just want to grab this stuff and go—yeah—but um—she's very talented and she's sort of devoted her life to it although she never sells anything but she does create. (Molly, transcription, p. 5)

Molly remembered as a child posing for a pastel portrait of herself done by her aunt:

> You see when I was about ten I had to sit for hours. She did a pastel of me. My mom has it and it—I'm very sad in it like I have a really sad look on my face. She put a daisy behind my ear to sort of make it look a little more animated—I don't know but you sit there—you're ten years old and you sit for hours as this lady draws you. (Molly, transcription, p. 6)

Molly described her aunt as having been involved in numerous art forms from wearable fabric and knitted art forms to fine pencil drawings and designing the interior of her home with meticulous and exquisite taste. She characterized her aunt as a "purist" with "definite opinions about how art should be taught." Molly showed me a coloured pencil drawing of a rose done by her aunt and which now hangs in her hallway.

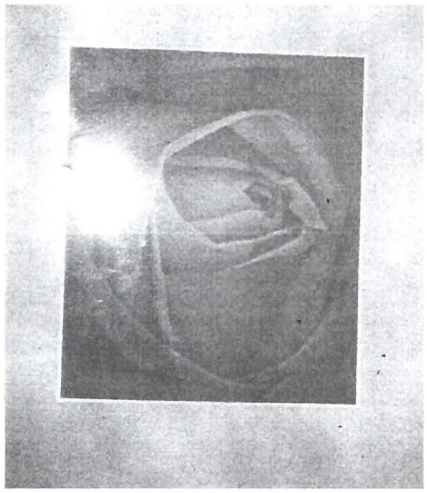

Fig. 4: Molly's aunt's coloured pencil drawing of a rose

She explained how her aunt could talk about this piece in technical terms but that her own description would be very basic, more emotional, adding that "I think for most people that's the way it is." I asked Molly to talk about the rose drawing in terms of what stood out for her. She replied:

> I like the lines and I like the colour. I like how it is soft and I like the colours that she uses—the change in colour—so that's pretty basic you

> know. My aunt would be able to talk more technically about it and she would explain to you why it is the way it is and what it means to do—to understand it. (Molly, transcription, p. 5)

Molly demonstrated a lack of confidence in her ability to respond to this piece of work and pointed to her aunt's expertise in both the making and responding to art. Comparing herself to her aunt she mentioned:

> I've always been in awe of her talent because I was never—you know how—it wouldn't matter who taught me how to do it—I couldn't do something like that. I don't have whatever it is to—I don't have that natural talent to do that so I've always been in awe of her. (Molly, transcription, p. 6)

When I asked Molly to tell me about any friends who might be artists, she mentioned that her sister-in-law who attended the Ontario College of Art studied fabric and had made dolls and creative baskets adding that "it's more of a craft, a crafty type of thing than actual art."

Just before I left to return home (after the second interview), Molly showed me some of the artwork hanging on her hallway walls, a kind of "show and tell." Two large woolen tapestries caught my eye and I inquired about these pieces.

Figs. 5 & 6: Woolen tapestries made by Molly's mother-in-law

Molly explained that these were not really art but rather pieces designed and created by her mother-in-law to represent each of her daughters. Repeatedly, Molly discounted craft objects and art produced by family members as "real art." According to Molly, "real art" objects are bought; they have monetary value unlike some of the art pieces hanging in her home that have more emotional/sentimental value or that can trigger memories from the past.

MOLLY AS TEACHER OF ART

TEACHER PREPARATION

Creativity and structure

To discover more about Molly, the teacher, I asked if she had had any teachers as mentors or role models. She recalled two women from her stay at Teachers' College; one was her faculty advisor and the other her cooperating teacher. Molly described her faculty advisor as untraditional, overwhelming, exciting and easy to talk to. She had been teaching at a community-based elementary school and was given a two year appointment to teach at the College.

> ...this woman was just so excited about everything that happened in education and yet she seemed to be very realistic about how you go about learning and teaching and her feet were solidly on the ground but she was willing to explore and try new things. I think that being at teachers' college—that was really refreshing because there you are trying to learn to figure out how to do this and what to do and she was a little overwhelming initially because she had so many great ideas and—but I think because she was a little bit different that made her really a...(Molly, transcription, p. 25)

Molly spoke about how this teacher had come from a public school that had a very non-traditional structure where "the parents have a little more say in what goes on" and where "a lot of the initiative would come from the kids." Her advisor gave examples from her own teaching that

that follow a theme and that were a little more "structured" made up Molly's curriculum as well.

> They follow a thematic. If I wanted something specific done it would be whatever that theme would be for that week so that would be the project of the week. I really made an effort to steer away from little crafts where everything looks the same or they—or everybody made a little owl out of construction paper where I had already pre-cut the papers. I never did that sort of thing. If they were going to make ladybugs out of thumbprints, I'd show them an example that I had done and then they would just do whatever and we would talk about all the different things they had to incorporate in that little ladybug thumbprint. We talked a lot. I guess when I teach art I talk a lot—a lot of discussion about what you see and also a lot of looking at books with the kids and a lot of things—you know you read books by Eric Carle and he does all that wonderful tissue paper. So you talk about how does he get this and what did he have to do and you notice the colour. (Molly, transcription, p. 31)

Molly had a theory about why certain children preferred to work freely at the craft table while others preferred more structure. She reasoned that their choice was largely influenced by their home environment and whether or not they were permitted to make a mess with art materials.

> A child that comes from an environment where you can make a mess, throw things around—they—you know paint on the tables, who cares—your clothes get dirty, it doesn't matter. Those kids are the ones that first go to the craft table and spend a lot of time there because it's something from home that they are very comfortable with. (Molly, transcription, p. 14)

Molly gave the example of her oldest daughter who at the time when she was in kindergarten, was very shy and quiet and spent most of her time at the craft table. At home, Molly's daughter was very creative and free to explore and play with art materials at the kitchen table and Molly had questioned her daughter's kindergarten teacher about her daughter's choice to spend the whole day at the craft table. Molly was intrigued by the kindergarten teacher's reply and in some way was perhaps influenced by it. The response she had given Molly was as follows:

> 'Don't worry about her. She's getting far more from that craft table than you realize and that's the reason I have a craft table in my kindergarten room. Come in some day and listen to the language that happens at that table or listen to the ideas that your daughter has that she is sharing

Molly explained that these were not really art but rather pieces designed and created by her mother-in-law to represent each of her daughters. Repeatedly, Molly discounted craft objects and art produced by family members as "real art." According to Molly, "real art" objects are bought; they have monetary value unlike some of the art pieces hanging in her home that have more emotional/sentimental value or that can trigger memories from the past.

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supported the inter-disciplinary approaches advocated by this school. Molly explained how her advisor would respond to her students' choice to study whales for example.

> She would bring—this woman did an incredible amount of work and if the kids wanted to do whales, the classroom was turned into an ocean and there were whales floating all over the place and she would—she brought in all the different things she had designed to make sure they got the basics within that concept of whales. So it was a very untraditional school. They'd knock down walls and you know—. (Molly, transcription, p. 26)

The other mentor that Molly spoke about was her cooperating teacher who according to Molly was:

> very traditional but very effective. The kids loved her, the parents loved her. She ran a very efficient classroom very different from the woman that I had met up with at the school but—when you take the two of them together you see all sorts of wonderful things that can be done. (Molly, transcription, p. 26)

Molly described these two teachers as extraordinary and excellent. Their approaches had been quite different, however Molly could envision an approach to teaching that could combine creativity and structure. What is interesting to note is that these same themes of creativity and structure resurface later when Molly describes her approaches to teaching art.

During Molly's one year stay at Teacher's College, she chose music and literature electives over art education.

> I can remember seeing the art room and what they were doing—they were doing some really neat things but I didn't take that course. It was an option so maybe it was music or art or drama—I didn't take drama either. I did a lot of literature courses I remember—children's literature and a writing course but—. (Molly, transcription, p. 18)

Throughout her university studies, Molly never took any formal art courses. It was only after she became a teacher that she took the occasional art workshop offered on professional development days.

ARTFUL AND ARTLESS TEACHING EXPERIENCES

Step by step art

Molly's first teaching appointment was part time, teaching grade three and four English, language and math in a French immersion school along with another teacher. Teaching art became the responsibility of the other teacher.

> So basically we were teaching language and math but this woman—we shared a little office together because we sort of moved from a couple of rooms a bit and she was an incredibly creative person. So she would—she did all these neat things with art and literature and all this stuff so—She really inspired me and I've always missed her because she was a great person. If there was something that had to be created or drawn she would just do that for me you know. (Molly, transcription, p. 22)

The next year Molly was posted in Prince Rupert and assigned a grade six/seven class to teach. This was the first time she recalls having to teach art. I asked her to talk about the positive and negative experiences of teaching art to this group. Molly admitted she didn't know anything about art when she first began to teach and as a result many of her project ideas "bombed." She relied on books and magazines for ideas and taught art once or twice a week.

> You look through those magazines to get ideas. Like when I taught the grades and you'd be teaching grade six or whatever and you look through the magazines and a lot of those little projects would bomb because they didn't mean anything to me either—it would be like I've got to have an art lesson this week so I'd look at something, fold the paper this way and add this here and glue that and so those sort of things bombed. (Molly, transcription, p. 33)

The project ideas that were successful were those that Molly felt she could get "enthused" about.

> I either liked the finished product or I liked the method that you used or I thought I had fun trying it and the kids had a good time doing it and it was maybe working—or because it's different than regular everyday sit down and read and write. I guess some of the ones that were successful were the ones that—I don't know how to put it—well that I had an enthusiasm for. (Molly, transcription, p. 33)

Molly recalled an art project that she organized with her grade six class and that she viewed as rewarding. She had ordered a resource package of slides and instructions from the curriculum centre, outlining a project idea of drawing crowds of people waiting at a bus stop. The plan was to sketch all the people to resemble the old-fashioned clothespeg form, but the details of clothing, facial features and surroundings were to be individualized. Molly elaborated on the project as follows:

> I told them it had to be people at the bus stop but the bus stop could be anywhere. It could be downtown Toronto or it could be in the middle of the prairie. It didn't matter where the bus stop was—so use your imagination there—but it's um—but it was in Prince Rupert so for some for these kids the bus stop—course they all—they all take in context of what's immediate in their life and um some of these kids had the bus stop with these wonderful fishing boats. Their fathers were fishermen—fishing boats in the background. Oh they were the most wonderful pictures because they could relate to everything. They knew what a bus stop was. They understood how people lined up at the bus stop or waited for a bus. In Prince Rupert it rains all the time so some of the pictures were wonderful pictures of all these people huddled around a little bus stop with the rain just pouring down you know and I guess if you looked at it you could probably—it would have a social comment for—it was a really good lesson. (Molly, transcription, p. 34)

Molly deemed this lesson successful and enjoyable for her students because it provided them with a starting point and "they didn't have to start from scratch and they could take ideas that were familiar with them." She went on to say "they were asked to really extend their imagination to the point that they weren't afraid to." Eventually these pieces were displayed at a school-wide art show at a mall. Molly added, "there they were these clothespeg people standing there, the stupidest little lesson but it had a great impact."

Molly felt she could easily relate to this type of project because it matched her own drawing abilities and because there were instructions that took her through the project step-by-step. It provided Molly with a structure to follow and one that she could deliver to her students with confidence.

Kindergarten—art is creating

After her stay in Prince Rupert, Molly retired from teaching for eight years to stay home and raise a family. It was through her observations of her own children making art that Molly began to rethink her ideas about art-making especially as they related to early childhood.

> But it's actually since I've had my own kids and I see the way they just sit and create that I think my ideas about art have changed and the teaching of art has changed at least within the classroom (p. 30).
>
> I love my children's art-making. I think it's because when kids do art it's not art to them, it's just creating. They just do in their—there's no—they're not inhibited—they just do whatever they want and they create really neat things—some very simple, some not. I encourage them to keep creating. (Molly, transcription, p.28)

When Molly returned to teaching, she taught grade seven and eight for a short while but was not required to teach art. Following this she was given a kindergarten class to teach and it was here that her new ideas about art took root. Molly's idea that "art is just creating" was the impetus for setting up a "craft table" where the children could create things on their own during "activity time."

> I have a craft table where kids go and create whatever they want and I have kids that will spend a good part of a week just creating things and just don't mean a thing to me—out of toilet paper rolls and with strings hanging off them and yet they can come and tell me a lot about what they've done and why they've done it and how it works and the changes they made to make it better in their eyes and yet if I put out sort of a formal craft where it has—their finished product looks basically the same as everybody else—the kids in my class aren't keen to do that. The odd one is, the girls—they'll go because they like doing those little things but I don't get the same enthusiasm. I have children who will go to the craft table that's always there no matter what, that craft table is always there. And they'll go and do whatever they want. (Molly, transcription, p. 13)

Molly described art-making at this table as non-threatening and where "nobody's sitting there giving them guidelines saying you have to take that there, you have to cut it like this."

Molly admitted that not all of her students preferred to work in such a free manner; some favoured more structure. Art-making projects

that follow a theme and that were a little more "structured" made up Molly's curriculum as well.

> They follow a thematic. If I wanted something specific done it would be whatever that theme would be for that week so that would be the project of the week. I really made an effort to steer away from little crafts where everything looks the same or they—or everybody made a little owl out of construction paper where I had already pre-cut the papers. I never did that sort of thing. If they were going to make ladybugs out of thumbprints, I'd show them an example that I had done and then they would just do whatever and we would talk about all the different things they had to incorporate in that little ladybug thumbprint. We talked a lot. I guess when I teach art I talk a lot—a lot of discussion about what you see and also a lot of looking at books with the kids and a lot of things—you know you read books by Eric Carle and he does all that wonderful tissue paper. So you talk about how does he get this and what did he have to do and you notice the colour. (Molly, transcription, p. 31)

Molly had a theory about why certain children preferred to work freely at the craft table while others preferred more structure. She reasoned that their choice was largely influenced by their home environment and whether or not they were permitted to make a mess with art materials.

> A child that comes from an environment where you can make a mess, throw things around—they—you know paint on the tables, who cares—your clothes get dirty, it doesn't matter. Those kids are the ones that first go to the craft table and spend a lot of time there because it's something from home that they are very comfortable with. (Molly, transcription, p. 14)

Molly gave the example of her oldest daughter who at the time when she was in kindergarten, was very shy and quiet and spent most of her time at the craft table. At home, Molly's daughter was very creative and free to explore and play with art materials at the kitchen table and Molly had questioned her daughter's kindergarten teacher about her daughter's choice to spend the whole day at the craft table. Molly was intrigued by the kindergarten teacher's reply and in some way was perhaps influenced by it. The response she had given Molly was as follows:

> 'Don't worry about her. She's getting far more from that craft table than you realize and that's the reason I have a craft table in my kindergarten room. Come in some day and listen to the language that happens at that table or listen to the ideas that your daughter has that she is sharing

> with the other kids and a lot of the other kids in the class see her as the expert—that's her place where she really shines.' (Molly, transcription, p.14)

Molly added that in her own kindergarten class, she sees that the children who opt for the craft table are usually "the ideas people" and that "they might not be the best with the numbers and the letters and that sort of thing." They choose this place because they can feel "comfortable."

Molly noted that the children who favour a more structured approach are those who come from a home deprived of materials and the opportunity to explore. Molly explained:

> They like the crafts where I say cut on this line and you know—pin this here and colour this—because they haven't learned how to just create—to be free with it. (Molly, transcription, p. 14)

Molly gave an example of a bright girl in her class who couldn't even hold a pair of scissors because she was never given a chance to "make a mess" at home.

> She never went to the craft table and even when it was an organized craft she would really shy away from it and when I asked the mom about it the mom said 'oh well I don't like a mess in my house'. They never ever had paper or pencils or a mess was not allowed to be made and she saw it as a mess. (Molly, transcription, p. 14)

Molly mentioned that these children sometimes change and are "drawn" to a freer way of working once they begin to observe how the other children so easily create on their own and how their "messes" are considered acceptable.

MOLLY'S ART CURRICULUM

Two approaches—free art and structured/thematic

Molly admitted that she couldn't really treat art in her classroom as a discipline because she felt she didn't know enough about art and added that she wasn't even aware of an art curriculum. The function of

art is to "enhance everything else that happens in the classroom, it's an extension." In her kindergarten teaching she supported a free approach to art-making, a belief that "art is just creating." She argued that this approach was "to keep the creativity happening, to keep the ideas flowing." However when asked whether she would use this same approach with older students, she opted for a more interdisciplinary approach using themes.

> ...if I were to teach ten-year-olds which is about grade five, I wouldn't want to have art every Friday afternoon from two to three. You'd want to make it something that is part of other things so that they could see that you were—it's part of the creating process and you know sure you'd have an art lesson and if you had something specific to do you might do it but I'd want it to be more of a—you know something that was integrated and happen because of something that happened in a story you were reading or whatever. And I guess because I don't have the theoretical background in art I can't say well we're going to work on line and colour and whatever. It would be more of a thematic and I think I'd probably just pick up ideas from books that I look in—that's where a lot of it would happen from. I don't think it would be a really structured program in my class because I don't feel qualified to do that. (Molly, transcription, p. 30)

Molly told me repeatedly that she did not feel qualified to teach art in a "structured" way, a way that required her to be knowledgeable of art terms and art theories. Instead she used methods that were more child-centered and process-oriented and thematic if some kind of direction was needed.

EVALUATING ART

Energy and enthusiam

Molly never felt qualified to evaluate art and hated marking her students' artwork. She believed that art was not like math where you either can or can't do it. Everyone can create art but some are just more capable than others and might go on to become artists, she said. She often questioned whether she should mark for product or for effort and compared marking art to marking gym. She wondered, do you give an outstanding mark to the student who can play soccer well or do you give

a good mark to the student who is trying hard and yet tripping over his own feet? Because Molly never felt qualified enough to judge the artistic merit of a work of art, she chose instead to focus on the individual and the process and not the product in her evaluation. She explained:

> You know I have to say when I taught art as a subject it was more the energy and the enthusiasm that the child put into it rather than what the finished product was because I didn't have a clue whether it was as far as artistic terms go—unless there was something specific I was looking for and they hadn't incorporated that into whatever they were doing then—you might mark it. (Molly, transcription, p. 32)

Another important aspect to look for according to Molly was whether the child could talk about what he/she has done.

> You know my kindergarten class if somebody's sitting at the little craft table creating something and when you ask them what have you done well if they can't tell you a thing about it then you know that they haven't connected with it at all. That's right. But if they can sit there for five minutes and tell you that this do-hickey means this and you know you attach this here and you've got this and then you know that they've truly created something that means something to them and they can share with others. (Molly, transcription, p.32)

Molly used the discussing criteria to identify strong art from weak art. Strong art according to Molly is art that a child can tell you about the process used to get the final product or if the teacher is "looking for something specific, they can tell you how they incorporated that into whatever they were doing and what it all means to them and why they chose the particular subjects or method that they used." Weak art would be if the person couldn't discuss their work and "someone who just didn't take an interest in it and it meant nothing to them and they couldn't talk about it." The emphasis was on enthusiasm and interest in the process and much less on product. Molly added that she recognized the value in all her students' work and in her teaching tried to convince her students of the excellence in their work with an emphasis on effort. This approach to teaching and evaluation, Molly explained, was largely influenced by her own lack of confidence in art:

> That's why I teach the way I do because I lacked confidence so I always make sure that the kids know that what they produce is excellent and some produce something that is more appealing to others but doesn't mean that's the way it has to be. Everybody's artwork has a value whether it's just to them or to the masses. (Molly, transcription, p. 35)

MOLLY'S REFLECTIONS

Molly was asked to reflect on how her past experiences may have affected her present way of teaching art. She blamed her lack of confidence in her own art-making abilities, from pursuing further studies in art and art education. Had she chosen to further her studies in this area, she believed her approach to teaching would be more structured, meaning more inclusive of a variety of art processes and artistic terminology and theories.

> I think because of my lack of confidence with art, what I perceived as a lack of ability to do exactly what was asked to do—I think that's why I teach art the way I do. You know what you create is fine—that's good—we're not all going to be a Van Gogh or at least produce art that other people want to buy but that's not the important thing. I think if I had a lot of confidence in my art and what I had done as a child and as an adolescent or whatever, I would probably teach art in a more structured way and you know maybe I would actually—maybe I would have taken the time to learn about all the different art processes and all and the theory behind it. I don't know art theory whatsoever. (Molly, transcription, p. 35)

When queried about whether she had discovered anything new about herself through this process of reflective practice, Molly replied:

> I think it's been really good. You don't ever sit down and reflect—you really don't have the time in your life to do that. You might sit down immediately after a fact and analyze why something went wrong or why something went right but very rarely do you look back ten years or fifteen years or twenty-five years and think about what experiences you had. I think I discovered something new, nothing earth shattering. (Molly, transcription, p. 35)

INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARY

LINKING LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH BELIEFS

Molly conceived of two approaches in her own teaching of art. One approach is based on her belief that "art is creating" and supports a process-oriented perspective that is free, open-ended, and exploratory. A second approach used by Molly is more "structured", product-oriented, teacher-directed, thematic, and interdisciplinary. Molly noted that she could never teach art the way it is taught by trained visual arts specialists because, unlike them, she is not knowledgeable about art techniques and theories, never having pursued studies in art or art education.

Art as creating

Molly's idea of "art as creating" derived from her own positive life experiences when the emphasis was on process and not product. Molly first experienced "art as creating" when she was a young child making art at the kitchen table alongside her mother. She described these times as non-threatening, "a family experience" and "just part of her life." There were no expectations and whatever she did was considered "wonderful." Years later, as a mother with children of her own, she observed how her daughters created "really neat things" by just playing and exploring with materials that were always made available to them. Based on her observations, Molly recognized her own children's propensity and eagerness to explore and adopted this as a suitable approach to organize art activities for children of early childhood. Molly often mentioned that she never felt qualified to teach art and so a free and open-ended style would release Molly from having to actually "teach" art and consequently take attention away from Molly's perceived lack of expertise in the area of art education.

Art as a structured activity

Molly mentioned that beginning at around grade six, she was starting to lose confidence in her own artistic abilities. She felt that the focus of the school art experience was on product where one's lack of skill or talent would stand out for all to see. Molly was her own worst critic and even when her pieces from grades six and seven were chosen for exhibition purposes, she never felt fully satisfied with her product. It appeared that Molly had experienced hit or miss experiences in art where her teachers, with the exception of the art teacher in grade seven, gave her very little art instruction and guidance. Her extracurricular dance and piano lessons, on the other hand, were very structured and through this type of "instruction" combined with hard work, Molly was able to experience successes and feel good about her accomplishments.

After grade seven, Molly never took any art or art education classes. When she finally had to teach art, she had to rely on books and magazines for ideas because of her lack of expertise in art. She admitted that many of these ideas "bombed," however the one project idea that worked with a class of grade six was a structured step-by-step activity of drawing people at a bus stop. This project was well received by her students mainly because they "didn't have to start from scratch." This kind of structure that was step-by-step provided a form of instruction that Molly was comfortable with and one that some students preferred. Even when working with her kindergarten children, Molly recognized the need of some to be provided with structure by way of themes and instruction where a demonstration and a sample are provided. However she discouraged her students from producing work that all looked alike.

When Molly does crafts on her own, she prefers step-by-step instruction. The thought of taking an interest course in art where she has to come up with her own ideas and come up with a "product" frightens her.

Molly's choice to evaluate process over product may be largely influenced by her negative experiences from her elementary years where the emphasis of evaluation appeared to be more product oriented. She evaluates students for their interest and enthusiasm hoping to instill confidence in their art-making abilities regardless of product outcome.

Art as enhancement

For older students that she may one day teach, Molly viewed the role of art as a form of enhancement where art could weave itself thematically among the other disciplines, rather than be treated as a subject on its own. She recognizes that her lack of knowledge in the area of art prevents her from teaching art as a subject.

Molly mentioned that as a student in elementary school, she began to think of some students as having artistic "talent" and only those whose interest was in art pursued art courses in high school. She mentioned how they could think in ways that she could never and began to realize that those who were "artistically gifted" had an interesting difference about them. Molly spoke of being in awe of her artist-aunt's talent and fascinated with the assortment of art paraphernalia found in her studio. Even the art room in high school was "different" with paint-splattered furniture and a teacher who "wore an apron." Real art hung in museums and the art world represented for Molly, the exotic, the unknown and the unattainable. Molly implied that to teach art as a subject one would have to be an expert trained in art and art education.

Molly's metaphor

Molly mentioned that she would like her students to feel "enthused" and "to appreciate life and others." This spills into her teaching of art in the way she puts emphasis on process rather than product so as to provide her students with optimal positive experiences. She mentioned that the most successful projects are those where she

and her students can feel "enthused about" what they are doing. Her criteria for evaluation is based on energy and enthusiasm and whether a student can talk about his/her artwork in a way that demonstrates key interest. She views art in her classroom as a form of enjoyment and as a complement to the other subjects being taught.

CHAPTER 5

PRISCILLA'S STORY

I have rules. This is my house and you are a guest in my house.

> I am demanding but fair. I am very strict but I have a sense of humour and I can be fun but I have to have fun first. If we're all having fun together, then everything's okay because we're not bothering anybody or stepping on anybody's toes or in anybody's space and then we can all have a good time of it.
>
> They (students) have to understand the perimeters of me which is that I have rules. This is my house and you are a guest in my house. I don't go around after you however, cleaning up. It's my house but it's also our house so I have a few sayings such as don't ever treat me like I'm your mother because I refuse to go around behind you and pick up. Your mother can do that for you but she can't do it for thirty-four and neither will I. And if I set a rule that you don't wear outside shoes in my classroom, you don't. I will never back down. I am the adult and you are the child and I will win. And if you have an assignment, it's so much better to do it and do it on time then to have to do it anyway—because you will—because that's your responsibility. My job is teaching and your job is being the best student you can be. And if we both do our job we've got it made. Don't ever say I can't to me. When you say I can't, you're saying I'm a loser, don't waste your time on me. But the minute you say I'll try then you've got me hooked and I'll do anything I can to help you, because you're not a loser, you're on your way to being a winner. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 46)

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Houses and home surface as significant themes throughout Priscilla's life story. She used the metaphor of house to signify her classroom/school/space that she occupied as teacher. This "home" was the site where Priscilla chose to be interviewed, unlike the other teacher participants who chose their actual "homes" away from school. We met in the small teachers' conference room for two consecutive days after school at the height of winter.

Priscilla's life story is about displacement, victimization and isolation and her struggle to rise above the negative effects of these experiences. Priscilla was born the youngest of three children in the small rural village of Mille Roches in 1947 and lived there with her

parents until 1955 when they were forced to vacate because of the expansion of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Flooding was initiated and villages virtually disappeared under water. Only some houses were moved to create new villages and because Priscilla's house was too large it was not one of them.

Priscilla fondly reminisced about her home in Mille Roches which was built originally as a hotel complete with 30-40 rooms, a general store and butcher shop. Once the Seaway project was begun, Priscilla's parents rented out rooms to the Hydro workers. Priscilla described her home to me:

> It had something like thirty or forty rooms and then they turned—I don't know whether when my parents bought it—our house was sort of on the side, all on the left side and we had a summer kitchen and a winter kitchen and then the front right side of the place was the store or the village store or the general store and a butcher shop and all of that stuff and up above were all of the boarders' rooms.
>
> ...what they did when they bought it was they either began the general store or it was already one and then they closed off all of those rooms and closed off that wing with those rooms in it and we just had a big living area for ourselves upstairs which then later on became smaller rooms for the workers. (Priscilla transcription, p. 2)

Eventually the house was dismantled and the family was granted free land to relocate. Pieces of the old hotel were salvaged and a cottage was built on a hill in a new island location. Later the family purchased a home in Cornwall around the time Priscilla was nine years old.

Priscilla remarked on being saddened by the move and having felt somewhat displaced. Accompanying these feelings, she was anxious about changing schools. She did not have many friends and was continuously teased for being overweight. Priscilla described herself as being a "good kid", yet somewhat spoiled:

> I was not a bad kid and I didn't get away with a lot. I was a good kid but I was spoiled and I knew I was spoiled—just in the fact that I never got slapped or I never got, you know, grounded. There was no such word in our house. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 27)

As a student in school, Priscilla explained:

> I was Miss Perfect—I was the most perfect student—I raised my hand. I was quiet as a bunny, I did all my assignments. My assignments were always done on time. They were always neat. If I had to rewrite them six times, I did it. I was the—tried to be the perfect student. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 32)

When Priscilla was asked to reflect upon her relationship with her parents, she commented on how she saw her parents as "older" and often preoccupied with hard work. Her parents never participated in activities with her she thought, because "it was unheard of in our day—the stuff that parents do for kids these days was just totally unheard of in those days." Priscilla added "you did things with your brothers and sisters or with your imagination." When asked to describe her relationship with her father she told me:

> I didn't really have a relationship with my father. I'm sure when my brother and sister were growing up that he played with them and all kinds of things but when I was born—I guess my feeling is right now that my father was an older man. He loved me and all but I think he was just so busy at that time in his life—maybe with the Seaway going through, the idea of having to sell the store, the idea of having to get a job at his age and support the family—ah, all of the Seaway stuff with the moving and finding a new home and getting a new job and everything that went—I mean....once he got the job in Cornwall and we moved into Cornwall, he was work, work, work, because he was an older man with a new job and so he had to keep up with the young guys and so—I mean he spoiled me and all and he was really a tough disciplinarian—I can remember that. But he never ever hit me but he scared the hell out of me. He played tough and talked tough but he was a softy. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 31)

Priscilla's mother had always been very supportive and sympathetic during Priscilla's time of need. Her mother's soothing words used to help her surmount the hurt that accompanied being teased for her weight. Priscilla recalled how her mother used to say:

> Don't worry. If ever you are on the roof of a tall building and there's you and a skinny person and the wind comes up, the skinny person is going to get blown off and they'll fall down and they'll shatter. And if you get blown off you'll bounce. So look at it that way, Priscilla. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 27)

The relationship between mother and daughter became even stronger with the death of Priscilla's father when she was in grade seven. They became "inseparable pals" and Priscilla spent a great deal of her adolescent years close to her mother, even to the extent of coming home at lunch so that her mother wouldn't be lonely. Following high school, Priscilla attended Teacher's College in Ottawa and came home on weekends to again be with her mother. She described the car rides they used to take together on weekends:

> Mum and I would go for drives in the country or take a road we had never been on before and we decided to go left or right or straight, that kind of thing and so the entire year that I went to teachers' college I never partied—I never—I was mummy's little girl. And being chubby of course, I'd never had a boyfriend so I'd never ever done any of that pulling away from my mother part. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 27)

After completing her one year at Teachers' College and with some influence from her mother's personal contacts, Priscilla was hired to teach a grade five class in Cornwall. A major turning point occurred at the end of this first year of teaching when she met the man of her dreams, a civil engineer, and fell in love. She described this as the time when she "went to hell in a handbasket." She started smoking cigarettes and visiting bars for the first time in her life and going on long car drives with her new friend. According to Priscilla she was a "teacher experiencing her teenage years." She was now making up for all the parties and dating she had missed in high school.

Priscilla's mother did not take these changes well and feared she would lose her daughter and consequently be all alone. Priscilla described the break from her mother as a tremendously difficult period for both of them:

> ...so my mother was leery of George (pseudonym). She could see the writing on the wall that at some point possibly he was going to take me away. And I would wake up often to find letters left on the toilet seat—how could I do this to her? How could I desert her after everything she had done for me and so on and so on. It was really hard but I thought

> my God I have got to have a life. Like if I push George away from me now then I'm going to be mum's little girl. I'm going to be an old maid and I'm having a ball, I'm having a good time. I'm not doing anything wrong and if I push all that away then I'm trapped. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 29)

The painful break took place and George and Priscilla were married. Priscilla's mother moved into an apartment on her own and sold her house to Priscilla and George. According to Priscilla:

> The break had to come and when it did come, she realized that now she could travel. I was happily married and had a house and—she got together with her friends and off they went. And they went to California and she went to Vancouver and she into a Jolly Sixties Club and off she traveled and—this took the guilt off me, I'll tell you. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 30)

Priscilla continued to teach elementary school and at the same time returned to university part-time to receive her Bachelor of Arts degree and Bachelor of Education. Her degrees took her a total of sixteen years to complete through night classes and summer sessions. Following this she went on to complete courses in Special Education, Guidance and courses to become a principal. At the time of the interview, Priscilla had taught for a total of twenty-seven years in six different elementary schools and for three of these years, she taught English as a second language at a community college, in the evenings. She has taught grades from Junior Kindergarten to grade ten, with the exception of Grade 1 and Grade 9. As well, Priscilla has served as a consultant for the gifted and special education and has steered numerous school committees.

Priscilla had been educated as an elementary school teacher but received very little formal training in art education. What follows is a look at the role of art and art education in Priscilla's life and how this translates into her own personal philosophy related to the teaching of art in her classroom.

PRISCILLA AS ART-MAKER

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Creative play

Priscilla had very few memories of making art as a young child. She recalled how she used to make things as part of her creative play. She told me about a "wonderful place," a huge field between school and home, where she would often play and construct "houses" with her friends:

> Well the first thing that comes to mind is taking leaves in the fall and making them into rows of walls for houses—and leaving openings for doors and then we designed furniture with leaves and then we got even more adventurous and went and got twigs and—oh, bushes and tall weeds that are stiff and stuff. We made furniture and accessories for the rooms—then we made paths from one house to the other so we could visit each other. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 2)

Priscilla remembered being sent outdoors to make "mud pies" during the times when her mother was busy cooking meals for the Hydro workers:

> She would hire girls from the village to come because she would have to make meals for like twenty-five, thirty men—and they would make huge pots of mashed potatoes and twelve pies at a time. So when I would watch my mother make these pies and things, then I would go out and I would go out and make mudpies—which my mother used to always make me do—to get me out of the kitchen, I guess—kicking me out. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 2)

Priscilla used to dress up her cats and pretend they were her babies:

> ...dressing my cats in doll clothes and feeding them with doll bottles and putting them in my doll carriage and pushing them around—because my father had harness horses as a hobby so we had lots of seed and feed around and so that meant you had rodents which meant you had barn cats which meant I had them as babies to dress up and play with. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 1)

Art-making in these early years were remembered as part of play involving imagination to transform and construct props that occupied her play space.

SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

I lost my faith in my artistic abilities

Priscilla's only memory of making art in elementary school took place when she was in grade four in her new school. Art was taught by a "neighbour lady" who used to come in specifically to teach art once a week. Priscilla viewed these art-making sessions as frustrating, embarrassing and stressful due to the fact that she would always run out of time attempting to find a "great" idea. She would have to spend extra time outside of class to complete a project which she would view ultimately as mediocre at best. Priscilla chose to write about these art sessions as an example of an "artless" experience:

> I can remember very vividly my grade four classroom in Cornwall. Mrs. I., a neighbour, came to school at various times throughout the year to teach art classes. I really liked her. She was an older lady (to my grade four eyes) but she had two daughters I looked upon as heroines.
>
> Carol and Jesse (pseudonyms) were very creative girls. They had backyard carnivals with plays performed by their friends, a fortune-telling gypsy booth and a variety of fascinating and weird goings-on! On May Day each year they would gather wildflowers from the bush and fungus off trees and create beautiful arrangements. Then they'd leave one on a doorstep, ring the bell, run away and hide to watch people's reactions. Sometimes they'd let me be a part of their schemes and plans.
>
> For all of these reasons I really wanted to impress Mrs. I. with my creativity. However, I must have been too eager because every single time she came to teach us art, I totally blanked out. Try as I might I would spend almost the entire art time thinking about what stunning creative drawing or painting or whatever I was going to produce that would literally blow Mrs. I. away. I could "see" her face blossom into a huge smile and "hear" her telling Jesse and Carol how wonderfully creative and artistic I was. However, this never happened.
>
> Without fail, I would end up with ten minutes or so left of the art period and never get anything done. It got so bad that sometimes I'd try to be sick on Mrs. I.'s art days just so I wouldn't be embarrassed.
>
> Eventually, I became a teacher and Mrs. I and I taught at the same school. Jesse became an artistic director or something at a theatre in Ottawa. Carol went the Orient for some reason I never found out. I never did tell Mrs. I. about our "art classes" together but I'll always remember how hard I tried to be creative and how miserably I failed. (Priscilla's written reflection on an artless experience)

The pressure to create something "spectacular" came from Priscilla herself. She described her teacher as having been a "sweetheart," a nice lady who "taught us very kindly" and instilled excitement with her project ideas. She never made Priscilla feel awkward. Although Priscilla never had problems picking up the technique being taught, she did struggle with the content :

> She showed samples. Maybe that's what threw me. They were always so nice, so mine had to be nice like those but I didn't know how I was going to get there. I didn't know if my talents could equal anything she held up and showed. So I spent so much time sweating about it and worrying about it. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 7)

Priscilla wanted so much to impress her classmates by creating something wonderful. She feared being laughed at or put down for artwork. She went on to explain:

> I was never good at math and I was never really ever good in school stuff and I was always the fat little kid. I was always the fat little kid and I always felt anytime I had the opportunity to make others go "wow, you did a good job on that or hey, look at what Priscilla did"—and so it had to be just right. It couldn't be anything that kids could laugh at or put down because my whole life was already laughing at and being put down....So there was no way in art—given the opportunity that I was going to do anything that I could get laughed at or—. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 7)

Priscilla admitted that she had put undue pressure upon herself to be successful at art and after a while she gave up trying, frustrated with "being a fat little kid and now having to try and shine in art class and never seeming to be able to do it" (Priscilla, transcription, p. 8).

Priscilla informed me that she had never had a teacher who inspired her in art. She added "I can't really, honestly say that I've ever had an art teacher that made me want to stretch myself, try new things and have fun with it." Priscilla never took art courses in high school but remembered having taken Home Economics as an elective instead. The artless experience of making art in her grade four class remains as a memory reminding her of her frustration and self-perceived ineptness with making art.

OUT OF SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

As a child Priscilla never took part in any art classes outside of school but as an adult, she once took a ceramics class with her mother, which lasted only a few nights. Other creative endeavours included piano lessons and story-writing.

Piano lessons—the end of my artistic music career

At the age of eleven, Priscilla registered for piano lessons. Because her mother couldn't drive her to these lessons, she had to take buses and walk through a rough part of town. One evening on the way home with her friend, she was sexually assaulted by a man "with a gold tooth." Priscilla told me about her experience:

> Coming home one night I went past the Lafayette Hotel and it had been raining and I had my umbrella. I had my girlfriend with me. She had come to just be company with me. And this man pulled me from the alleyway into the alley of the Lafayette Hotel and put his hands down my blouse. And terrified me to no end—his hands all over me and down my blouse and stuff. Any my girlfriend ran away—she just ran away, terrified out of her mind. I just started yelling, I guess—I don't know and the only thing I remembered about him was he had a gold tooth in front. Anyway she finally came back to see if I was dead or alive, I suppose, and the two of us ran. I made her promise to not tell her parents, not to tell my parents. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 15)

Her friend did tell her parents, who in turn told Priscilla's parents. At the police station Priscilla was asked to look through "mug-shots" but couldn't find the man with the gold tooth. Priscilla never returned to her piano lessons. She went on to conclude:

> So that was the end of my artistic music career. Well, it goes to show you how things happen, right? And it was only because there was no other way for me to get there and I just couldn't bring myself to go back again. Well I could have become a great pianist or even play guitar. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 16)

I thought I was a real poet

Shortly after the move from Mille Roches, around the time when Priscilla was in grade four, she used to spend time with her family at the

cottage where she would write poetry and construct little poetry books complete with illustrations:

> I used to write a lot of poetry and I thought I was a real poet and I would write short little poems and then draw pictures to go with them and make little poetry books and that kind of stuff. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 3)

Years later for both grades six and seven, Priscilla had an inspiring teacher whom she called "the light at the end of the tunnel." He aroused in her a lasting interest in literature and sustained her appetite for writing. She claimed that he "turned her right around." Reflecting on this time she shared her memories:

> I do remember the enthusiasm that I would go home and I would write poetry for hours or I would read books—because I had been such a lonesome lonely kid. I was now into reading, swallowing, inhaling books from the library. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 15)

This teacher strongly influenced Priscilla's choice to pursue an English major in university and to eventually become a teacher.

PRISCILLA'S AESTHETIC

I learned about Priscilla's aesthetic when she shared with me the "stories" of meaningful objects from her past and when she described whom among friends and family were artists.

Art that tells a story

The most memorable art object that Priscilla recalls growing up with was a mother of pearl image of a Japanese style bridge situated over a pond, with the moon shining overhead. Her mother always had it hanging on the wall, regardless of where she lived.

Fig. 7: "Japanese-style" bridge

Priscilla described it as being huge, measuring four feet by two and a half feet and surrounded by "a beautiful carved wooden frame with goldleaf on it." She recalled how she would stare at it for hours because of its beauty and its story potential:

> I love things that tell stories—any kind of art that you can look at and there's a story there—that you can look at all the different pieces and make up stories to go—with the names of the people and what they've been doing yesterday, what they're going to do tomorrow, and what's happening. That was one of the things I could look at for ages because not only did it reflect and the light bounced off it and everything, but I thought it was just beautiful. I thought it was made by fairies, you know, it was gorgeous and it just sort of was my treasure. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 4)

Priscilla now owns this work of art and has it "in protective storage" in her basement. She added that her aunt, her mother's sister, owned an almost identical piece. It puzzled Priscilla as to why both her mother and aunt would have similar images and queried the reason behind their acquisitions.

Priscilla carried on about her preference for art that tells a story. When she and her husband were renovating and decorating their home, they visited many art galleries to look for paintings. They acquired an oil painting that told a story of a man riding a horse through a blizzard.

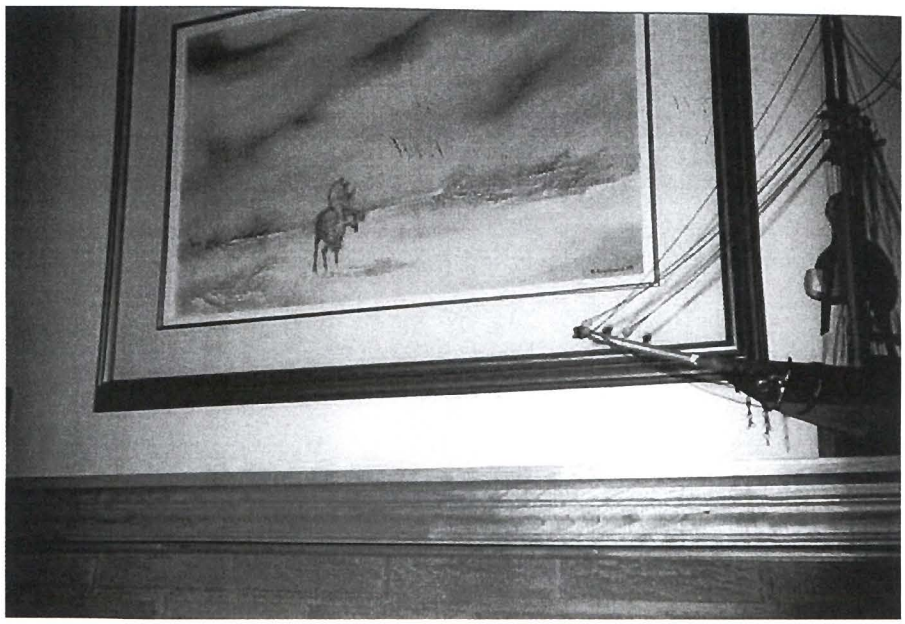


Fig. 8: "Man riding a horse in a blizzard"

Priscilla told me the story:

> It doesn't look like much but this guy on a horse in the middle of a blizzard—that's all it looks like. But there's a story to it and the story is that this fellow was in a concentration camp and he escaped in the middle of a raging blizzard. No one saw him go. He faded into the blizzard and just about when he had given up and thought 'I might as well die because I can't walk another inch,' this horse is there. This horse is just standing in a field, and he pulled himself up, and he got onto the horse and I guess he passed out and the next thing he knew this horse had taken him to a farmhouse where the people hid him and

> saved his life and so on. And so this picture is of this passed out kind of figure on a horse in the middle of this raging blizzard but it's the story behind—. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 36)

Priscilla kept stressing the importance of story. She described some art she had at home that consisted of ceramic pieces glued onto barnboard that depicted "an old house with a tree and a tire hanging from the tree and a little for sale sign out front."

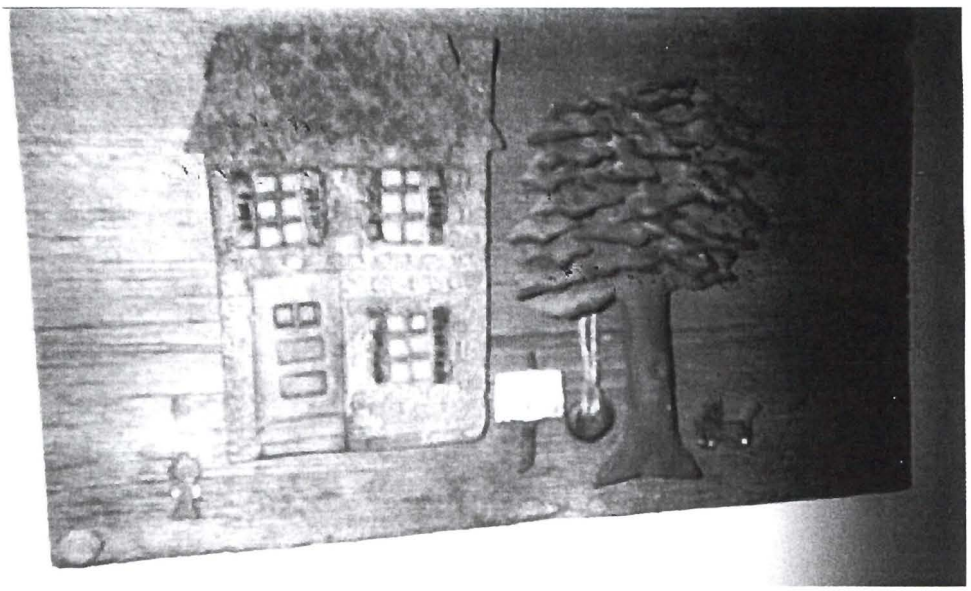


Fig. 9: Old house ceramic piece

She imagined this might be a story of a young family with children who had outgrown their home. She explained that it is not enough that a work of art be just a pretty picture, "I want something to tell me stories." Another example she gave was when she had purchased a beautiful Bateman print of an African eagle as a birthday gift for her husband because he loved the work of Bateman. She bought the work because it pleased her husband's aesthetic but for herself it had no meaning because it lacked a story.

Fig. 10: African eagle print by Bateman

Priscilla informed me that she had seen a fair amount of art through her visits to the Montreal Museum of Arts and numerous museums throughout Europe. And while in Europe she got her fill of European churches:

> I've been through every bloody church from England to Rome and back. I have looked at so many ceilings and so many—honest to God, after a while you don't ever want to look inside another church or another piece of stained glass—who cares? Like Westminster Abbey—like I did them all and I saw enough churches to last me for my lifetime and another one on top of that. But that was another artistic experience that was wonderful until you got sick of it. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 36)

My mother was an artist

After the death of her husband, Priscilla's mother signed up for oil and watercolour painting courses at the local college. Priscilla mentioned how her mother used to devote entire days to painting during her stay at the nursing home. Her mother used to sell her work and Priscilla remembered that once when she had donated a piece to the Township, "they had a big night in her honour for that." Priscilla reasoned that if her mother could "sell" her work, she must be good.

Priscilla inherited some birch tree watercolours from her mother and told me about another painting her mother had done of a field of lupins in the Maritimes:

> There was one painting that she did from a trip that my mother, my husband and I took before we were married of the Maritimes. It was the first time ever to the Maritimes and she painted this—came back and painted this beautiful painting with a field of lupins and it was just beautiful—nice lupins and so on. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 5)

Fig. 11: Field of lupins painted by Priscilla's mother

Priscilla remembered once how her mother had helped her construct a salt map. This followed the time when Priscilla had visited her handsome sixteen-year-old cousin and he showed her his high school salt map project. She went on to explain:

> And he showed me something he was doing in high school and it was flour, water and salt and then you sprinkle sparklies and it was like a landform with mountains and things and then you painted the water. And I thought it was the most wonderful thing that I had ever seen of a three dimensional thing on a piece of plywood, and I went home and my mother, I think, helped me with that, now that I recall. I don't know what I made but my mother knew the recipe, flour and water and salt and so then I think I made— don't know what I made, but it sure had a

> lot of lumps because I liked the lumps part and I painted water and stuff. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 10)

It appeared that Priscilla had been fascinated with the process and impressed by the fact that her mother could teach her how to achieve the same results as her cousin.

Capturing that scene to the nines

Priscilla recounted another story where she had been impressed by artistic skill. After graduating from high school, Priscilla, her mother and sister took a three-week trip to Europe. On one of their bus rides Priscilla met a young man her age who came from London, England and they soon became friends. Years later she invited him to come to Canada to visit with her and her mother for three weeks. During his stay they happened to go for a car ride one day and came across an incredible sunset. Priscilla's mother remarked how she wished she had been talented enough to paint this scene. Priscilla's friend said he could do it and when they returned home, he impressed them both with his ability to replicate the likeness of the sunset using oil paints. Priscilla described the incident to me:

> Son of a gun—didn't we get home—my mother gave him a canvas, got out her oil paints and within an hour he had captured that scene to the nines. It just blew me away. My mother was just flabbergasted. It just sort of blew me away that this guy could say I can paint and came home and actually did it. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 36)

What impresses Priscilla in a work of art is that it can tell a story. Priscilla sees an artist as one who has a skill in realistic rendering and one whose work can sell.

PRISCILLA AS TEACHER OF ART

TEACHER PREPARATION

Understanding and empathetic

The most significant influence towards Priscilla choosing teaching as a career was her grade six and seven teacher. She described him as understanding, empathetic, "chubby" and with a sense of humour. He inspired within her a love for English; he was her mentor. She explained his influence on her:

> He was chubby. I was chubby. He loved English and he inspired a love of English in me like it's never stopped to this day. He made me love poetry—he made me love reading. I also guess a significant—while it was a change in your life in the grade six/seven year kind of thing?—and you were going into puberty so a lot of things were going on plus that was the year I think—it was in grade seven, that my father died. He was very understanding and empathetic so you take all that and wrap it all up and this was the teacher that—I really—I guess I would say in my whole elementary life—was like a friendly inspirational kind of person. If I hadn't bumped into that teacher, I don't know maybe which path I would have taken in life. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 26)

She admired the way he treated all children with respect, "talking to kids like they're real people." She remembered his sense of humour and how when he laughed he "jiggled." She described him as her "one island of comfort" during those rough years when she was teased for her chubbiness and called names.

Art ideas for the classroom

The only formal art training that Priscilla received was during her eight months at Teachers' college and later as an in-service teacher, she attended a one-day art workshop as part of professional development. She claimed that these art sessions were not about developing personal skills and abilities in art but rather to present generalists with different "art ideas." Her art experience at Teachers' College brought back negative memories of her grade four art lessons:

> And I sort of remember it as being sort of like grade four art class with so many kids that were so good and then there was just me who never seemed to get anything done. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 17)

She learned how to teach drawing to children, how to construct an art folder, how to evaluate art and how to prepare an interesting bulletin board with creative cutout letters pinned to the board in such a way as to create a three-dimensional effect. When I had asked Priscilla if she had been taught how to use art in an interdisciplinary way, she explained how the integration of art might include drawing a cell for science with an emphasis on neatness and using a ruler.

Years later as an in-service teacher she attended a one-day workshop for generalists which was taught by the school board art consultant. She shared with me what she had learned:

> They had a thing where it's a can and it's liquid and you make a shape and you dip it into the can and you dry it and it becomes a flower petal—that kind of stuff—or it was taking photographic paper and lying objects on it out in the sun. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 17)

At the end of the session, she received a certificate and was left with the impression that this kind of workshop was designed to help teachers who "were running dry on art ideas to use with their classes."

ARTFUL AND ARTLESS TEACHING EXPERIENCES

There's no love there

Priscilla revealed to me her indifference and insecurities towards the teaching of art, largely influenced by her own lack of art skills and knowledge:

> There's no love there because I don't feel I have the skills or the depth in this subject to try and inspire other students in it—how can I inspire and pull out skills and talents from a child that I don't feel I have them myself. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 18)

Planning art lessons is seen as drudgery, trying to find projects that will fill up a forty-minute period. She refers to her project ideas as "nuts

and bolts" or "hodge-podge" where lessons don't connect and where theme and the teaching of any art skills is lacking.

Priscilla recalled that when she first started teaching she used to look at *Instructor Magazine* for art ideas. She explained to me how she would create a master plan of art lessons to last her an entire teaching year:

> I made a little chart on a piece of paper and divided it. September had four spaces because there were four weeks and then October and four spaces or whatever—and then I wrote down what I was going to do just briefly in each of those four weeks, and then I wrote down what I needed as supplies. There was no theme to it. It was just get me through the bloody year. You know if I have to come up with forty-three lessons dear God, you know? (Priscilla, transcription, p. 20)

Standby projects

Priscilla has a repertoire of "standby" project ideas, projects that she has done repeatedly over the years. One example she gave was stained glass window-making for Christmas. Another successful standby project involves using pattern and design to embellish or transform letters of the alphabet so that they can express various moods or feelings. She relies on standby projects because "they're quick and easy and you know exactly what they should look like when they're done within reason because everybody has their own style." Priscilla informed me that she gets some of her ideas from her visits to other schools during professional development days:

> When you walk around other schools on PD days and you have them in other schools so you go to meetings in other schools and you see the art all around. Anybody that ever teaches art—they'll look at everybody's walls and everybody's bulletin board in every school they ever go into because that's where you get your new ideas. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 21).

Priscilla prefaced her written reflection on an artful experience with this brief account of where her ideas come from:

> As a classroom teacher responsible for teaching all subjects over the years, one tends to try to become an "expert" at what you do. However, I've never felt the luxury of creative inspiration. I depend on seeing other

> classrooms and what is on display on wall and in hallways of schools I visit. I also depend a great deal on craft and art magazines and on my file of previous successful lessons throughout the years. I try to keep a sample of work to show the next time I teach the lesson, or to remind me of what it should resemble when done. (Priscilla's written reflection, 1996)

Priscilla finds viewing a finished project instead of just hearing about how to do it, is more useful to her. Although Priscilla herself, learns better by seeing a completed project example, she feels torn about the idea of showing examples to her own students for fear that they might copy. She doesn't want her students to copy her example mainly because she feels that they "could do a hundred times better that I ever did." Feeling somewhat insecure about her own artistic abilities she will often tell her students that her example was done very quickly and represents only a rough idea. Priscilla explained how in the past there have been instances where students who were very good in art have criticized her art teaching adding to her already existing insecurities:

> I've been burned in the past too by kids who have been very good in art and scared the heck out of me because 'that's not the way you do it Miss'—not that I have never accepted criticism—I will readily be the first one to say, 'yeh, I'm sorry, I'm wrong,' but again it goes to the feeling of self-concept, the feeling of capability or something. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 44)

Priscilla's most successful standby project is the papier maché monster or cat construction. For this project she sets aside three entire days and allows her students to "go wild and crazy." Priscilla chose to describe this project done with a group of grade eight students as an example of an artful experience from her teaching past:

> It was very difficult to do this lesson because we had wall-to-wall carpeting and no running water. However we also didn't have any neighbours we could disturb and I really wanted to give papier maché a try.
>
> We lugged large pails of warm water out to the portable and began to mix the wallpaper paste. Of course we couldn't get out the lumps so one student was sent to the staff room to get the electric mixer while another one searched out a twenty-foot extension cord. The rest of the class was

> busy tearing newspaper strips and covering every inch of our carpet with plastic drop sheets.
>
> Finally, out on the lawn, we got the paste to a useable consistency and decided that unlucky students could break up any lumps they found with their fingers. We blew up the balloons, we used tubes from toilet paper and paper towel rolls. We went at it!
>
> Since no one ever came out our way except the janitor, we set aside the entire day for art and then we would go out on the lawn to read while one layer dried beside us in the sun or the grass. All day long we built four-foot snakes, cats, aliens etc. and had a terrific time. That night I begged the janitor not to clean the room at all because we were planning on round two the next day. Very reluctantly he agreed because he was worried someone would find out.
>
> The next day we spent drying our creations in the sun—turning them every so often while fake teeth and eyelashes, hair and beards, earrings and jewelry were made or fashioned from bits and pieces. The third morning they were dry enough to paint and by the middle of the afternoon the glue gun gave each piece a unique personality.
>
> The kids had a ball and so did I! The janitor was relieved when it was over and so was I! This lesson was done at the right time, with the right group of grade six's and in the right place. Plus we got away with the mess, the noise and art for three days. It was the best time I've ever had in art. (Priscilla's written reflection on an artful experience, 1996)

Priscilla reasoned that this project was such a success because she and her class were in a "portable" classroom, away from the rest of the school and away from anyone who could "judge" what they were doing. Because they used the outdoors as well, there was no worry of a janitor being upset with any messes. There were no time constraints because Priscilla was the only teacher for this class and so she could take as much time as she wanted on a particular project. It is a little more difficult for Priscilla to replicate this set-up with her present classes because they have rotating schedules and she loses them for part of the day.

When asked to comment on what she viewed as a weak project idea, she mentioned paper snowflakes, "something that everybody does." She stated that she hated this project and found it tough even for herself to fold and cut to get it right.

Integrating art with drama and special events

At the time of the interviews Priscilla was teaching English to grade seven and eight students who were on rotational schedules. Although she was not required to teach art as such, she did incorporate art-making into drama by way of set design and in the making of props. She says that drama provides a "raison d'être" for doing art:

> We're doing a big play. There has to be scenery for the play. There has to be lighting and sound effects so the scenery has to be designed and painted and then in this particular scene, their faces get melted off so they have to do masks that they could put on as faces. So to me, that's art. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 21)

Based on the idea of integrating art with drama, she has no problems finding ideas but what "terrifies" Priscilla is the logistics involved in orchestrating art activities. She told me that to plan for the papier maché mask project, for example, she had to figure out how many pails of water were needed, how to protect the tables from the wallpaper paste and generally how to keep the mess under control so as not to infuriate the "janitor." Priscilla added that she felt art projects done for drama had a more "laissez-faire kind of freedom" to them compared to art projects assigned in a regular art lesson where art is viewed as a discipline.

Priscilla told me about how she was organizing a craft project for her class following a request from the Principal to all classes, to provide some kind of art for the school's Festival for the Arts night. This whole situation created great anxiety for Priscilla, starting with trying to come up with a "creative" idea and one that would be as good as those of the other classes. To decorate the tabletops (where parents and guests were to be seated), she came up with the idea of candle covers made out of dog food cans with nail holes punched through them. The light from votive candles would shine through the holes creating interesting patterns. Each step in the process towards the completion of this project brought enormous stresses for Priscilla. She worried about getting the cans done

in time, whether the students would even bring in cans, the noise made by 34 kids hammering cans and finally the logistics and price involved in getting these cans spray painted. Concluding her thorough description of the stresses she experienced, she remarked, "you see how I get all anxious about it—I used to be courageous, a lot more courageous than I am now about doing these things."

PRISCILLA'S ART CURRICULUM

Art as product—standby projects and integrated art

Priscilla told me that even though she feels uncomfortable teaching art, she continues to teach it because she knows that kids really like to do it. She went on to say:

> Kids love to do it. It's not a paper and pencil thing and it's fun, but I'm still not easy with it. And if I feel I'm easy with something I want to do it. And now that I am not forced to do it, I have an art lesson once a week. I would just as soon forget it. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 41)

When I asked Priscilla to comment on what she saw as the function of art in her teaching, she answered by saying that she would like to see her students come away with a good feeling about what they've made, that they would have had a good time experimenting with different materials and coming up with some exciting ideas of their own. She conceded that she didn't see this happening too often in her art classes and concluded that maybe she was not a good teacher of art.

Priscilla mentioned that when she peruses catalogues for art materials, she often has regrets about not having learned how to do some of the projects shown. She feels uneasy about trying something new and worries about the possibility of a project idea failing. Priscilla listed some of her regrets and insecurities:

> So anyway, they put out all these art catalogues and I go through them and I wish that in my life I had done some wood-burning, or I wish in my life that I had done some sculpting, or I wish in my life I had carved a bar of soap or—but I've never done any of those things. And I'm not about to just go out and do it on my own—and kids are talking about making a

> mold—a mold of their hand. That would be fun. But I've never ever made candles in sand—I mean I can't remember anything really I did. If I had had that in my recipe that—then I feel uneasy about doing it, I'm not about to feel at ease about pulling something out of a hat and saying 'we're going to try this and if it works, it works and if it doesn't, it doesn't.' (Priscilla, transcription, p. 41)

Priscilla's art curriculum places emphasis on product. When working on individualized projects, Priscilla wants her students to feel a sense of pride in what they've made. Art-making should be fun for both students and teacher and projects need to be quick and easy to plan and carry out. Successful project ideas which she views as exciting and fun for her students, become standby projects to be repeated again. Priscilla describes her project ideas as "hodge-podge" where there is little connection from one lesson to another thematically or technically.

When integrating art with drama or making art for special events there is still an emphasis on the product but the art "product" plays a different role. It is less individualized and as a prop for a play or special event, its purpose is of a more collaborative nature. The play or special event becomes the source for ideas, however Priscilla continues to experience much anxiety surrounding the logistics of organizing art projects.

EVALUATING ART

Using criteria

When evaluating art, Priscilla makes use of criteria and specific instructions that students must follow in order to succeed in a given art assignment. Giving the example of a lesson in poster-making she outlined the kinds of criteria she might establish:

> Well when I teach the lesson I tell the kids the kinds of things I'm expecting to see—for instance I like to see a frame—okay let's say I'm teaching posters, then there has to be some proper proportioning of where things are located. You can't put something near the top and have this great big gaping space with nothing in it—that your letters have to be neat, that there should be a frame around the edge—that you use all the same size letters. It's whatever my instructions are and then I just

> look to see that those were followed. Anything above and beyond that is fine. But if my five criteria for making that poster have been followed then it's a one or an 'A' or whatever. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 43)

Enthusiasm and attention to task

Priscilla makes a distinction between strong art and weak art based on a student's display of enthusiasm and active involvement. She told me that part of her evaluation is influenced by the enthusiasm shown regardless of the quality of the work:

> I think part of the evaluation is how enthusiastic I've seen that student approach the task. You've got students who have done something just to do it and get it done—no matter how good it is, it influences my mark. But if I see somebody else has got—and they kind of look back at their own and think about—'gee, you know I could do something like that to mine.' I guess it's all in how into what they're doing they are. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 44)

Overall, Priscilla's strategy for assessing her students' artwork involves attending to product and process. She establishes formal criteria to evaluate the art product and looks at the student's enthusiasm and involvement to assess their process.

PRISCILLA'S REFLECTIONS

Priscilla had been very reflective throughout the interviews I had with her. Most importantly, she identified her insecurities and perceived deficiencies as a teacher of art and explained the life events that had led to this lack of self-confidence.

Priscilla reminisced about how art in school before grade four used to be free and fun. There was no homework in art and you got to use lots of different materials and bring home artwork that your mother could hang up. Priscilla elaborated as follows:

> Well I thought art was fun and fun because of all the different things you got to use, like you got to use sparkly things and glue that smelled awful but I liked it, and—wax crayons that really had nice colours and scissors—making those placemats that weave in and out for your mother—bringing home stuff that she would stick up. So I guess it meant fun—it meant fun and using something different than a pencil

> and a book. It wasn't a book thing. You didn't have to memorize anything and there was no homework. So it was fun that way. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 39)

After grade three, Priscilla felt pressure to perform and art became "work." "Now," Priscilla added, "getting ready to teach an [art]lesson is again pressure, work." She equates her feelings surrounding her lack of confidence as a teacher of art with her lack of confidence as a student in grade four. She went on to explain how she feels pressured teaching art:

> I guess I don't have the self-confidence that I should have in this thing and so doing it is like that—going back to the old days, oh God, what if this doesn't work, what if that doesn't work and it's going to be messy, he's going to be mad. And I've got somebody on the other side of the wall with their class going on and if I let them get too loud and get into too much and blah, blah and I've got this timeline and then I've got to make sure the kids have washed their brushes and cleaned up the sink because I don't want the janitor to get mad at me if the floor's dirty and there's—and if we plug the sink—it's a hassle. It's not easy. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 39)

Priscilla confessed that teaching art was "like pulling teeth." She explained how she views herself as a "control freak" and art sessions by their very nature often give way to noise and much activity associated with fun. This noise is seen by Priscilla as "loss of control" and returning the class to a tolerable noise level is hard work and stressful. Priscilla shared this reflection with me:

> I'm not relaxed enough with it. I'm not at ease enough with it. Maybe there's something in there too—I'm just throwing this out and it could very possibly be because I'm such a control freak? And yet I don't mind a lot of noise. I'm not one that has to have a silent room that's for sure, but maybe it's the loss of control. When they're free and they're laughing and they get going overboard as kids will do—and I don't like it when I'm forced to yell. I don't like it when I'm forced to be a witch with a "B". And that's what happens in art classes. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 38)

When asked to comment on what she had learned about herself through reflective practice, she drew a parallel between the way she teaches art now to the way she was taught art in grade four. In both instances the elements of fun and exploration were lacking from the art experience. She explained to me the comparison she made:

> Well, it's made me think about art in terms of the fact that up until grade three I thought it was wonderful, exciting, terrific. I ran home with my stuff. And now I'm doing to kids exactly what was done to me as of what I feel was grade four. And I'm not allowing kids that opportunity to fly and experience and have fun with and enjoy stuff—in an artistic way. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 46)

Priscilla mentioned that there is little encouragement from administration to pursue visual arts education because the emphasis now is on math, science, and English. She personally stresses the importance of school art experiences as a means for students to have fun, although she admits she has difficulty providing an atmosphere of fun in her own classes.

INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARY

LINKING LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH BELIEFS

Priscilla approaches art education with the belief that art should be fun and a diversion from pencil and paper bookwork. Her training in art education is minimal and teaching art is a constant struggle. Because her skills and knowledge in visual arts are limited, she relies on project "ideas" to make up her curriculum content. The emphasis is primarily on "product," fed by ideas she has gathered from magazines, occasional workshops and teachers' bulletin boards. Over the years she has developed a repertoire of project ideas that are quick, easy, fun but lacking in thematic connection or academic rigor. As an English teacher she has integrated art with drama and used drama as a source for ideas toward the construction of scenery and props.

The two main approaches that Priscilla makes use of in her teaching of art include the use of "standby projects" and the integration of art with drama and special events.

The use of standby projects

Priscilla mentioned that she gets ideas for projects and techniques from seeing the "finished products" of others. This involves seeing an end product without the theoretical lead-in or motivation that precedes the art-making. The earliest mention of Priscilla focusing on product was when she was in grade four and she tried unsuccessfully to impress her friends' mother, who was at the time teaching art to her class. She wanted to create a "spectacular" art piece that would win the admiration of her classmates and teacher alike but this didn't happen. Instead she experienced total frustration and lack of confidence in her artistic abilities because the end-product was not to her (Priscilla's) satisfaction. This artless experience was a turning point that led to Priscilla's discomfort with art and eventual struggle to teach art.

She came away from Teachers' College knowing how to decorate a bulletin board and little knowledge of art skills, techniques or theories. As a practicing teacher she attended art workshops that presented her with project ideas; again the focus was on product. Her training in art education seemed to emphasize project ideas as opposed to the teaching of technical skills or knowledge in art concepts. As a result of this training, Priscilla is convinced that teaching art involves finding project ideas. Her struggle to find quick, easy and fun ideas is reminiscent of her struggle as a student in grade four trying to succeed at creating a "spectacular" work of art. Priscilla has even commented on how her present anxieties parallel those she felt as a child.

Art as integration

As a young child, Priscilla used to play in the huge field between the school and her home. In this "wonderful place" she used to construct houses with leaves; play (drama) and art-making were integrated. In later years Priscilla developed an interest in reading and writing and at the cottage she would illustrate the stories she had

written. This interconnectedness of art and story from childhood has stayed with her into adulthood. Priscilla prefers artwork that tells a story and is not just a pretty picture.

Her childhood interest in literature led her to pursue English as her major in university. As a practicing English teacher, she integrates art with drama, where art serves as a tool to construct stage sets or props for various plays. This appears to be a carry-over from her childhood years when art and play were linked.

Priscilla's metaphor

Priscilla views her classroom as her house where her guests (her students) must obey certain rules. She is very demanding and sometimes strict, however there is room for fun as long as both teacher and students are having fun "together." Conducting art sessions in this "house" ushers in the potential for chaos, or according to Priscilla, "loss of control" where noise levels and messes get out of hand. Although Priscilla firmly believes that art should be fun, she continuously struggles with making artwork in her classroom and a positive experience for all.

CHAPTER 6

KRYSTLE'S STORY

I' m a breath of fresh air.

> I think my personality is friendly and easy to get along with and I enjoy the kids so I think when I come in there, there's an immediate—they like me and I like them, not all the time obviously. I certainly affect kids that I have not got along with and their parents and they have gotten along with but the majority has been—they'll say 'you know, Mrs. E. you're the first one who's really not necessarily taught our kids best but you've been interested—you've liked our kid and you're pleasant to be around.' I mean I have my moments and I really would—last year was harder for me to be a breath of fresh air because I was tired and I had a rough bunch of kids so I wasn't always—but I was the majority of the time—that's what I would like to think. (Krystle, transcription, p. 27)

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

At the time of our interviews Krystle was enjoying her first sabbatical leave after twenty-one years of teaching pre-kindergarten to grade six. Krystle mentioned how this time off from teaching had given her the opportunity to be really involved in the lives of her nine-year-old son and five-year-old daughter. The occasional coffee party invitation from other "stay-at-home mothers," exposed her to a subculture of mothers who relished in teacher and school bashing and who "lived through their kids," Krystle told me. She confided her dislike of these women and commented on how their views were often in conflict with her own.

Krystle was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1954, and was the first child of two; her sister is two years younger. She described her family life as "normal" and "average" with the occasional sibling rivalry. Krystle described her sister as having been a "super student" and an over-achiever and added "anything she'd touch turned to gold." About her

family, she explained, "we were not rich but we certainly had things—we had a house and a car and we went on holidays."

Krystle's mother stayed home to raise a family. Krystle described her as conservative, not very confident but a good mother who took interest in her children's welfare. Krystle mentioned that as she (Krystle) became older, she felt pressured by her mother to succeed in her academic pursuits:

> As I got older I felt she had pressure on me to do more than she had done—not necessarily to excel but—She's been a supportive person you know through university. She typed all my papers and in cegep she did that—she was very involved. (Krystle, transcription, p.19)

To this day, Krystle's mother, who is now widowed, continues to be involved in Krystle's life as a mother bringing up young children.

Krystle's father worked as a manager of a heating firm. She described him as having been supportive, "fun to be around" and kind of "wild and crazy." Reflecting on her family life as she was growing up she explained:

> You know we didn't come from a large family so it was the four of us a lot—it wasn't cousins, aunts, uncles always—it was a very small type of situation. I don't have big memories of parties at the house or anything. They weren't entertainers which you know is the contrast of my sister and I—we always have people over and it's very sociable. They weren't—they weren't rude or—but they kept to themselves. They were actually very happy with each other's company so we never had a lot of visitors, that kind of thing—but he (father) was—when he was in his social situation—he was the one who was more fun and fun to watch. (Krystle, transcription, p. 20)

Krystle lived with her family until she got married. During her university years she had dated occasionally and had some friends. Overall, Krystle viewed herself as having been socially immature.

When asked to describe herself as a student, Krystle spoke of being friendly and funny, yet immature and lacking confidence. She told me that she had had an inferiority complex, and added that she couldn't

understand why because she had no recollection of ever being put down at home. She reasoned that "it was just my nature to be like that."

Krystle majored in Social Science at cegep. Being self-conscious and "conservative," she felt somewhat different from the other students and found the experience "overwhelming." She went on to explain:

> The classes were big, the hallways were full—you know, I don't think crime was the big thing as much as just you know, rebel behaviour. I mean I wasn't part of it—I was more of an observer. I guess it was entertaining—I don't know. I don't think I even went into the cafeteria—but that was just the way I was, you know. (Krystle, transcription, p. 20)

After two years in cegep, Krystle entered a three-year program in Early Childhood Education at McGill. She mentioned that she had finally found her "niche" and along with this she regained her confidence. She added:

> I was very comfortable being with people who also liked kids—although there were people from all walks of life. I'm not saying they were all like me but I was more comfortable—maybe I enjoyed what we were doing or maybe I did well at it and stuff, but who knows. (Krystle, transcription, p. 18)

KRYSTLE AS ART-MAKER

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

It wasn't a big thing

Krystle's early art-making included more experiences outside of home than at home. At home she remembered colouring in her colouring books and added "it(art) wasn't a big thing." At her family's summer cottage she and her sister used to paint on the steps at the country house with watercolours and watch the rain wash it off. Their dad would encourage them to build boats and the like with wood they found at their cottage. Krystle explained how her parents were very "positive" about the art and the crafts that their children made at school to the extent that it

"wasn't tossed in the garbage when it came home, it was always kept." Krystle went on to say:

> I can't say it (art) was encouraged to 'oh, well that's great, do you want to do it at home?' It was done somewhere else and that was fine. But they were positive about it. (Krystle, transcription, p. 1)

Krystle recalled that most of her early childhood art-making experiences included the making of crafts outside of the home in settings like Sunday School or Brownies or making art in her friends' homes. She told me of one particular visit to a friend's home that had a lasting impression:

> I remember going to a kid's house whose parents obviously were much more artistic if you want to use that word and it was more—it was big sheets of paper and you know all that great—and hang it up in their basement type of thing. (Krystle, transcription, p. 1)

SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

Art that looked like everybody else's

Krystle noted that art-making in the early elementary years focused primarily on the making of craft items or holiday art on Friday afternoons. She didn't remember art as having been part of the curriculum. In kindergarten she made a pencil holder for her mother at Christmas. She enjoyed the crafts she made for the holidays, she explained, because she had a product at the end which "looked like everybody else's." Occasionally when she would be asked to create or draw something on her own she would feel compelled to compare the quality of her work with others in the class. Winning the teacher's approval or acceptance of her artwork was important to Krystle as well. When asked to write about an "artful" and "artless" experience, Krystle chose two experiences from elementary school where the teacher's criticism and choice to exhibit Krystle's work were important enough to

leave lasting impressions. About an "artless" experience, Krystle wrote of an experience when she was eight years old:

> During a Saint Patrick's Day art class we had been tracing shapes of shamrocks using different shades of green. I had softly written St. Patrick's Day in the collage of shapes. They were all hung up in the back. The teacher was sitting at her desk explaining why some were "good" or "bad." Mine was bad because there were words on it. She said that art was learning to follow directions—she took the picture down! (in front of all) (Krystle's artless experience, 1997)

Krystle's artwork had been viewed as "bad" by her teacher and was not allowed to be hung with the others. Years later, Krystle went through another experience which was the reverse of this one. Her work was praised and displayed by a different teacher whose expectations had been met. She described this as her "artful" experience:

> I remember at the age of ten an "art class" where we had done a collage involving earth colors. It happened to be what the teacher wanted and she raved about how good this was and hung it outside the class with two other pictures. I was thrilled. This had never happened to me before. (Krystle's artful experience, 1997)

As a child, Krystle only felt confident about her art-making when "a certain thing looked good or it looked like everybody else's." She added, "I never remember saying, Wow, this is good because it's mine—it's good because it looks good."

Emphasis on product

In grade six, Krystle's classroom teacher happened to be an artist and a former high school teacher who had been "bumped to elementary school." Krystle heard others say that whoever got her as a teacher, it was because they loved art. Krystle was concerned about being in her class because this teacher was "talented" in art and she could spot out those who were good in art from those who weren't. Art was now taught as a discipline; crafts and holiday art were something of the past. Krystle described to me the kinds of projects that her artist-teacher assigned where the main focus was on skill acquisition:

> She'd always have the finished product and show it and this is what we're going to do and maybe something that's—today we're going to work with blues, how many shades of blues? I remember folding the page into a million pages and that would be dark blue, light blue, you know pale blue and whatever. And that was a lesson. And another time maybe an outdoor scene was a big thing. I remember, you know, like looking out the window, drawing exactly what you see, that type of thing, observation, I guess. People, silhouettes of people, that was always a big thing in the older grades—that type of thing—now we'll do silhouettes. Puppets were a big thing for a while too. (Krystle, transcription, p. 4)

The emphasis was on individualized/unique results and not on creating pieces that all looked alike. Krystle mentioned that the main motivation was to be good enough to have your piece hung up. Most of the attention was on product and projects tended to be very disjointed.

Krystle recalled a grade seven Centennial mural project where again the focus of attention was on product but this time collaborative production with few creative choices made by the students. All grade seven students were asked to participate in the creation of a clay mural that depicted Canada. Clay molds which represented symbols from various provinces were hand painted by students and attached to the large mural support. Krystle elaborated as follows:

> It was a rectangle and the design was already on it. Like you had the fish from out West, or you had part of the Rockies in Calgary, or British Columbia, kind of thing. And you got to paint it the way you wanted. although it was—I don't remember it being very creative—I remember that this huge—whatever you do—don't mess it up because it's going to be hung up for everybody to see. It was a Centennial project. (Krystle, transcription, p. 5)

Krystle found the finished product beautiful and felt good at being part of a big collaborative project. She found individualized art-making was more stressful because she would always compare herself with others in the class. She went on to say:

> I was always comparing myself to everybody else like any kid does. It was not as good as Suzie's beside me. I wasn't the type to say ' I don't care, it's mine anyway.' I hadn't quite reached that point in my life. (Krystle, transcription, p.7)

Talent

In high school, Krystle chose art as an elective in grade eight. She reasoned that she had made this choice because she thought it might be easier than a subject like calculus but later found out art was much more difficult than she had anticipated. She soon discovered that no one was going to teach her to be good at art and that there were others in the class who had "talent" and who truly had a passion for art. Krystle described her experience as follows:

> It wasn't a positive experience—it was—I remember the labs, all the paints and the colours and thinking what have I got into because it was something either—I can't say I had a passion for it either. You know some kids have a passion for it—they have a portfolio—they knew what they wanted. I wanted to learn to draw like everybody else but you learn in an art course that's not really what it's about. If you can't do it then you really, to me, you shouldn't have been there. (Krystle, transcription, p. 7)

She became frustrated when she couldn't get her work to look a certain way especially her drawing assignments. Krystle commented on her lack of skills with respect to drawing:

> ...that was part of your assignment, drawing a person. And all of a sudden like some people could do it—like where did that come from? How come she can do that and I can't? (transcription, Krystle, p. 3)

Krystle had a close girlfriend in her art class whom she viewed as very good in art. Krystle told me "she didn't do anything except make me jealous because I knew then that you either had a talent or you didn't—she was really an incredible artist." Taking art in grade eight proved to be very stressful and far from enjoyable.

OUT OF SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

Relaxation and fun

The only art course that Krystle took outside of school was a ceramics course she registered for in her adult years. She attended this course along with a girlfriend and saw it as a form of relaxation and fun. Her classes were once a week for several weeks. She explained how she enjoyed "the finish product better than learning what to do" and added "I don't know how good I was but that's not supposed to count—I had fun."

KRYSTLE'S AESTHETIC

Krystle revealed her personal aesthetic in the way she described significant objects she grew up with and those among family and friends whom she viewed as "artists."

Pattern

Krystle described the home that she grew up in as one that was filled with pattern and bright colours that she personally didn't care for:

> What stood out was a lot of pattern. It bothered me. I couldn't stand the pattern. They were always loud, probably very nice pattern on the carpet, pattern on the chesterfield, on the foot stools—everything. My mother liked bright colours—I remember that—she liked red and I remember the bathroom and the kitchen being in red and I hated it. She still likes red. (Krystle, transcription, p. 3)

Something different

Her memory of significant objects that she grew up with included soapstone carvings in her family home and two Egyptian tapestries that hung in the country home. About the soapstone carvings she recalled: "they were soft and they were heavy—like a seal—I can't remember the other one—but a very simple big heavy thing." She loved the Egyptian tapestries because of the colours and the shapes and commented on how she enjoyed looking at them often. She elaborated on the content of these pieces:

> They were Egyptian people with their swords and the shapes were—was an angular type of shape—the shoulders, the back, the legs, the knees-it was all on—things were on an angle—it was a bunch of Egyptians coming up to probably the Pharoah sitting in a chair. The colours were mute and—it was just something different and that always caught my eye because it was in the living room and I remember looking at it. (Krystle, transcription, p. 2)

Krystle was pleased to reveal to me that the tapestry pieces are now in her possession and have been placed in the basement family room. Overall it appears that Krystle is not fond of busy pattern and loud colours but rather prefers simple design and something that she views as "different."

Talented ones

When asked to comment on any family or friends whom Krystle viewed as artists she spoke of a girlfriend from her past who had studied drawing and painting and did a bit of tole painting. Krystle was impressed with her friend's talent, interest and desire to produce folk art. She went on to say:

> I was always amazed at how this was something very important to her. She worked at McGill—she wasn't a teacher or anything but it was something that was very solid in her life. It was something she and I had nothing in common in that area, but it was something she made time for in her life and she was very—she was good at it. (Krystle, transcription, p. 17)

Krystle spoke with pride about her son whom she believes is "incredibly talented." She mentioned that his passion for art began to show at the age of three when he began drawing with chalk on sidewalks and with sticks in the sand on the beach. Krystle reminisced about the first time she noticed her son's drawing talent:

> I remember we were away—the first thing he drew was a car in the sand on Old Orchard Beach—and my husband and I were just amazed and everywhere we'd walk he'd pick up a stick—a very active child but this is one way he is very happy—since then he draws beautifully. (Krystle, transcription, p. 16)

He went through various drawing interests which included Ninja characters, animals, super heroes and now at the age of ten he was beginning to introduce 3-d perspective in his drawing plans of houses. Krystle mentioned that crayons, markers and paper were always made available to her children and added "we had chesterfields marked up with the stuff—I didn't care." Krystle remarked that her five-year-old daughter also has a passion for drawing. Referring to both her children she made this comparison:

> We had our basement redone and they both made plans of the basement—they sat—they drew—hers obviously not as good as his or not as sophisticated. (Krystle, transcription, p. 17)

Krystle is very supportive of her children's love of art. She had signed up her son for ceramic classes and her daughter for summer art classes. Finally she stated, "I don't know where they get it from—I'd like to think I had something to do with it."

KRYSTLE AS TEACHER OF ART

TEACHER PREPARATION

More to art that just drawing

Krystle knew for a long time that she wanted to become a teacher because she had always loved working with children. She went on to explain:

> I always enjoyed working with kids. I had—in high school, I babysat a lot. I liked being around children and in the summers I did the Opportunity for Youth projects—I ran daycamp. I was a camp counselor at guide camp. It wasn't something I thought about—it was something that just seemed to be a fun thing. I knew I'd have to earn a living but I thought this would be a fun way of earning a living. (Krystle, transcription, p. 18)

During her three years of educational studies at McGill, she had enrolled in two half-year art methodology courses. She recalled being concerned

at the onset of these courses, that she might not be "good enough" in art to be able to teach it. She soon learned that the emphasis was not on product but rather on "the knowledge you would be able to give to the children." She was shown, for example, how to develop lessons that stressed the elements of art and which relied less on the artistic abilities of the teacher.

> You know it was that type of curriculum and instruction course—you had to come up with a lesson for colour, a lesson for this and a lesson for that. And that I could do because I was successful at that. I was able to figure out lessons to teach different colours—the colour wheel. We did all the reds and the primary colours and that type of thing. (Krystle, transcription, p. 11)

She viewed this learning experience as positive and one which "opened up a few windows." She discovered there was more to art than just being able to draw well.

> I remember doing a lot of colour, a bit of drawing, but then I remember doing things like puppetry, plasticine—you know, different types of art. (Krystle, transcription, p. 11)

Interdisciplinary approach

Another area that was stressed in her methodology courses was to make use of an interdisciplinary approach combining language arts and visual arts.

> You know once you had a story, did you have a follow-up activity? –you know, we did a lot of that type of thing for different stories. What can you do? What type of either craft or project can you have the child do?--and I found there was a lot of emphasis on that. (Krystle, transcription, p. 11)

Krystle told me that she found comfort and success with this approach because she was good at coming up with ideas.

> You read a story about the kid going on a trip on a boat—you made the boat together and every kid made their own body on the boat and I loved that type of thing because you could see it. That's the type of thing I really like. I thought if this is art, this is fine. (Krystle, transcription, p. 11)

Prepared, organized and flexible

From her curriculum and instruction courses at McGill she was taught that to succeed as a teacher one needs to be totally prepared, organized and flexible. She explained how this belief at the time was totally in keeping with her personality and style of teaching and how over time it had become part of her own teaching philosophy.

> You have to be organized and you have to be prepared but it's okay that you're going to have to take your lead from the kids. (Krystle, transcription, p. 17)

Experience versus product

Since graduating from McGill, Krystle has attended several professional development workshops in art offered by McGill, an art supply store and a resident artist at her present school. From these sessions, Krystle has learned that you don't have to be an artist to do art with children and that the emphasis on art-making can be on the experience of making rather than product. Krystle mentioned that although she continues to feel some anxiety at the onset of these kinds of workshops, she continues to participate because it is a chance for her to get ideas and to share and have fun with others.

ARTFUL AND ARTLESS TEACHING EXPERIENCES

As a student teacher, Krystle's concerns related to the teaching of art centered on such things as the ordering of supplies and how she would maintain control of her students and the inevitable messes that would ensue. She also worried that if she had to teach older students they might not want to do the projects she had chosen. She remembered thinking "if I have to do an art lesson in grade five, I'll quit." Fortunately for Krystle, her student teaching assignment was to teach kindergarten, a decision she was comfortable with, possibly because she felt the younger students wouldn't question or object to her ideas. When I asked

Krystle why she felt threatened teaching art compared to teaching other subjects such as math, English or science she replied:

> Because I guess it's a looser thing. Obviously kids think maybe math and science are more important so they are going to do it—where art is—hey, who cares. I mean there's still that, and then you know I thought what if they don't like what I do or if they're not good at it, how am I going to convince them that they are and do it? (Krystle, transcription, p. 9)

Follow-up

After graduating from McGill, Krystle had no problems coming up with ideas for art projects. She had followed the interdisciplinary or "follow-up" approach presented to her by her instructors in teacher training. She admitted that she had been somewhat stiff in her early attempts to integrate language arts with visual arts but over time she gained confidence and began exploring variations on her original project ideas.

> When we came out of McGill I remember it was follow-up, follow-up—that was the expression they used to use. And so we'd read a story and then I'd have them draw a picture. And then I graduated to they draw a picture and then they can write a line underneath it. But then as I matured or realized that you know, it didn't have to be a picture—draw something you feel about the story or my big one was draw what you like and dislike about the story. And then I got into, well pick a character that you would like to be or add a character, draw it, tell about it. (Krystle, transcription, p. 10)

Most of the time Krystle incorporates art into the literature lesson. When she teaches kindergarten her students' early journals are made up entirely of pictures they've drawn.

Art as craft

Krystle pointed out that when she first began teaching, she used to focus on holiday art with her kindergarten class. She referred to this as making crafts although there was no set product that they would have to replicate. Instead she encouraged her students to explore with the colours of the various holidays and come up with their own creations.

> When I first started teaching, I was more of a craft seasonal person—like Halloween I would let them explore in kindergarten—I'd pick orange paint and the orange crepe paper and the black—let them do whatever they wanted with orange and black—well I thought this was really great—just take the red and green of Christmas and explore—I thought this is important and the kids liked it. They didn't have to create something (specific). (Krystle, transcription, p. 28)

Krystle admitted that she didn't always know what she was doing but was convinced "that this was good for the kids" and a great opportunity for them to have fun.

Krystle mentioned that in her present teaching (grade three) she occasionally has her students make craft items such as Christmas wreaths, to decorate the classroom. She admitted that there's not a lot of self-expression involved when making crafts but that the children seem to have fun.

> The kids have fun and it looks pretty but I don't think there a lot of self-expression in that and I know that. But I do a lot of that—do a lot of let's decorate the room. What could we do? (Krystle, transcription, p. 10)

Collaborative theme

When asked to describe the strongest art project she had done over the last year teaching grade three, she spoke with enthusiasm about a collaborative effort organized by the school to involve all the classes in a project on the theme of the circus. Krystle's class contributed clowns and balls, a project that was designed and taught by another teacher who shares the class with Krystle.

> We did a fabulous thing on—I say fabulous not because of what I did but the whole school did a thing on the circus and we did a lot of things like the colours of the circus, the type of movement in the circus and we did the activities in the circus. We made clown hats, faces—decorated however they wanted to do it. That was a big success because it was kind of a happy bright theme and it worked. (Krystle, transcription, p. 12)

Because it was a collaborative effort there was a sharing of ideas among all the teachers. As well, assistance and expertise was made available by a resident teacher who happens to be a visual arts specialist.

Lack of art knowledge

Krystle described sponge painting as one of her weaker-type project ideas. She explained that with projects of this kind that deal more with the elements of art and visual language, she feels she lacks the necessary art background and theoretical knowledge to be able to discuss her students' work with them. She admitted that she doesn't know what to look for in setting up objectives for these kinds of projects.

> We did a thing on sponge painting—'here's your paper, here are the colours, here's the sponge, go for it'—I tell every kid it's good but deep down I'm not sure what we're doing. I don't have that knowledge, maybe I don't have that interest, maybe I don't have the background—that to me is a weak thing. Or do something just with circles or squares—why? I'm not sure what I'm looking for. (Krystle, transcription, p. 12)

Krystle reasoned that even if a project is not a success, it can still be fun without a finished product if the experience is good.

Logistics, noise and mess

Krystle noted that there are some difficulties or problems associated with teaching art. There is the problem of logistics which demands one to be very organized.

> You have to plan. You can't decide you're going to do it at 10:00 and at five to ten discover you don't have enough paper left or there's not enough glue. It's the time factor that's a big problem in school. (Krystle, transcription, p. 13)

Other problems include dealing with the caretaker who "has a bird because it's messy on the floor" and the high noise level that goes with children having fun. Krystle added that problems can be reduced if one is organized and well prepared.

> The problems happen when you're not organized and you'll have many times like that. You fall behind—you have to be prepared—make sure your supplies are there and ward off your trouble-makers. You know you always have those behaviour problems. Sit them close to you so that they are with someone who is going to help them along. (Krystle, transcription, p. 14)

KRYSTLE'S ART CURRICULUM

Two approaches—interdisciplinary and art as craft

Krystle supports the belief that the function of art in the classroom is to provide an outlet for self-expression and to furnish students with an opportunity to have fun. She sees it as a way to get away from routine reading and writing and a chance to share one's accomplishments with others in the class.

> I think having fun is really important. I don't think they have enough of that. Some kids enjoy it more than others so that gives the kids who enjoy it a chance to have fun at something they like to do—and it's another way of sharing what they do in class. A finished product looks nice in the room—better than empty walls—better than me putting up the posters—let's put up their drawings. (Krystle, transcription, p. 13)

Krystle's approach to teaching art places emphasis on process rather than product. She had mentioned that even if a project didn't turn out as planned, if the children had fun doing their art, then in her eyes it was a success. From her training as a teacher, she learned to teach art using an interdisciplinary approach that integrates visual arts with language arts. She integrates art with the rest of her curriculum and believes in an open-ended, non-judgmental approach.

> Don't judge and don't make it a lesson, make it part of your curriculum and I think that's what I do and I"m proud of that. We do something (art) for everything we do. (Krystle, transcription, p. 13)

Krystle mentioned that from her years of teaching she has begun to notice that the use of the interdisciplinary approach by other teachers is very strong in kindergarten and grade one but after that it's not encouraged, "you read the book, you write about it, that's it."

The making of crafts is another area that Krystle occasionally has her students engage in. She continues to follow the "holiday" theme for inspiration and values this form of art as a way to provide fun for the students and decoration for the walls.

Krystle prefers not to teach art as a discipline mainly because she does not feel that she has the necessary training, skills, background or interest to do so.

To date Krystle has taught all grades. She explained to me that her approach to teaching art remains the same for the younger and older groups, however the content is adapted and modified to be more age appropriate.

> I guess having taught more younger grades and being more comfortable and stronger in the younger grades, when I got to the older grades I brought a lot of it with me and the kids were happy because they would say, 'our teachers have never done this.' (Krystle, transcription, p. 11)

EVALUATING ART

Enjoyment, interest and staying focused

Krystle's method for evaluating art involves attending to process rather than product. Although she did mention that in her evaluation she looks for detail and fine motor skills which imply looking at product, overall her attention is on process. A student who is strong in art, according to Krystle's evaluation scheme, would be one who demonstrates enjoyment, interest and who can stay focused.

> I guess I would look at detail, fine motor skills—I have to admit that's something that shows with maturity—whether the child enjoyed it or not, maybe not from the product but if I was around when they were doing it, whether they were interested, whether they were focused or whether they were under their desk and just finishing something up or copying something they did originally. I guess it would depend on what we were doing. (Krystle, transcription, p. 26)

Krystle admitted that marking for process in this way, is problematic when evaluating children who have difficulty concentrating or working with time constraints.

> You had a kid who was nearly retarded and he just couldn't concentrate and yet it didn't really mean that he couldn't do it. I mean you're apples

> and oranges type of thing but time constraints really are a problem. (Krystle, transcript, p. 26)

Ideally, Krystle would prefer that children not be evaluated for art: "...don't put kids in a situation where they're going to feel it's right or wrong." She believes that children have enough "pressure" and that at this age they don't need to feel they're good or bad in art. Asking a child to draw a horse for example and judging the outcome, Krystle added, is "like a dictatorial thing." Instead of teaching art as a separate lesson, Krystle supports an "open-ended" approach where art is integrated into her regular curriculum. Artwork produced by all her students is guaranteed exhibition space not just those "judged" to be "good enough."

KRYSTLE'S REFLECTIONS

When asked to reflect on what art means for her now compared to when she was a child, she mentioned that as a child making art she often compared her work to that of her peers convinced that one had to be a "good artist" to succeed in art and that meant being able "to draw something really well."

> I guess I had always looked at art from the point of being a good artist. Forget being creative or enjoyment—just you were able to sit down and draw something really well. (Krystle, transcription, p.27)

Now, as an adult, she sees art as pleasure, a form of enjoyment and something one can appreciate.

> I can go to the museum and like things because I like it because of the style or whatever. I either look at it and like it or I don't like it—different artists and stuff I still know nothing about but I don't look at that as such a bad thing. (Krystle, transcription, p. 26)

From her experiences as a teacher watching her own students have fun with art, she began to view art-making as an essential part of growing up; "it's part of the kids' curriculum as much as running and jumping outside." She believes that it is important to expose children to art and

this can be done by "letting them see different colours, letting them explore and by taking them to the museum."

When asked to comment on what she had learned through the process of reflective practice she stated that the experience made her aware of how different we all are with our own individual preferences and strengths.

INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARY

LINKING LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH BELIEFS

Krystle strongly believes in the value of art as a way to provide students with an outlet for self-expression and a fun departure from the rigors of regular bookwork. She sees art as an essential part of children's development, part of growing up and "part of the kids' curriculum (just as much) as running and jumping outside." The emphasis of her art program is on process where students are evaluated on their interest, enjoyment and ability to stay focused, all process-related criteria.

Krystle favours two main approaches in her teaching of art: the making of crafts or holiday art and an interdisciplinary approach that integrates language arts and visual arts.

Making crafts

As a child most of Krystle's art-making experiences took place outside of her home and consisted mainly of making crafts at organized gatherings such as Sunday School and Brownies. At school in her early elementary years, Krystle produced craft items and holiday art as well. She enjoyed this art form because the artwork at the end "looked like everybody else's." She lacked the confidence to feel good about any work she had created on her own outside of crafts and would often compare

her work with others in the class. She became very discouraged when in grade six her teacher taught art as a discipline and students were evaluated on their skills/abilities to produce a work of art good enough to be exhibited. This focus on individual product and skills proved very stressful for Krystle. Nonetheless, she registered for an art class in grade eight with the belief that she would learn to be good at art. She was disappointed to discover that there were students who were naturally "talented," according to her beliefs, and whose drawings were far superior to her own attempts. This continued emphasis on product took the enjoyment away from making art—enjoyment that Krystle had once experienced in her early elementary years making crafts.

Krystle still has a secret love for crafts and occasionally has her students make holiday crafts. In her teaching and evaluation she chooses not to focus on product and believes that art should be a fun experience. As an adult, Krystle registered for a ceramics course to relax and have fun.

Interdisciplinary approach

Krystle's two half-year art methodology courses at McGill provided her with a good foundation in art education and a lasting influence on her style of teaching art. This experience initiated a turning point in Krystle's belief system about art and art education. She discovered there was more to art than just drawing and coming up with a skillfully produced product. She learned to teach the basic elements of art but did not continue with this in her teaching because she felt she lacked the necessary art training to do this well. Instead she chose to adopt the interdisciplinary approach which was presented to her as a way to integrate language arts and visual arts. She is comfortable with this approach which she believes supports self-expression, is enjoyable, adaptable to any age group and non-threatening since attention is taken away from the "product."

Krystle's metaphor

Krystle described herself as friendly, easy to get along with and "a breath of fresh air." She is proud of her reputation as a teacher whom the children like because she can be "fun."

> I would say the kids like me. It's always been a strength and I've also always gravitated toward the underdog. Behaviour problems are always put in my class because I can manage them and I make them feel good—not all the time—that's the philosophy I've had and I've had success with. (transcription, Krystle, p. 25)

When asked how does this translate into the teaching of art, Krystle replied that she is more open to trying new things, to experiment, and to not obsess about messes and time restrictions. Finally she added,

> Just because you don't know anything [about art], doesn't mean you can't try or you can't do it....I try to be as creative as far as lessons and reading and that type of thing—organization over the years really pays off. (Krystle, transcription, p. 25)

CHAPTER 7

JOSEPHINE'S STORY

All or nothing—be passionate about things.

> Okay, I'm not sure what my metaphor is but to me, everything I approach, I approach with passion—wow, math is fun—like we really get into it and—wow, you really need this because when you go to the Giant Tiger store you've got to know how to make your change and –everything seems to be—I want everything to have a reason and to have a purpose and to be special and interesting. So, I don't know—how do you describe passion, passion of—like you have passion for anything? You can have passion for using your bodies—why throw them out [our bodies]?—God gave us such nice bodies. We've got to use them—you can't waste them, my goodness. We've got to get them [our bodies] back in better condition than we got them. Everything has to come with a lot of feeling which is hard for some students who are more laid back and withdrawn. But even they can get excited about certain things and it definitely does happen. Just last week a parent came up to me and said 'I don't know what you told them about first communion but my little guy was sitting in church practically shaking because communion is coming and he's so excited and happy about it.'
>
> ...if you're going to do something you may as well do it with all of you or don't bother doing it.
>
> ...I'm a runner, so if I'm going to run I'm going to give it everything I've got or I'm not going to go for a run now. (Josephine, transcription, p. 23-24)

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

I met with Josephine for her interview on a delightful sunny day in mid July. With directions in hand, I traveled countless winding country roads to find "the white house on top of the hill, on the right side of the road." When I had finally reached my destination, I was quite surprised to see a small grouping of cows grazing in the front yard. A steep long driveway led me to Josephine's pristine white, Victorian-style country home. At the end of the driveway I was greeted by Josephine, her husband, their two daughters ages thirteen and fifteen and a neighbour's two-year-old daughter whom Josephine babysits during the summer months. I was graciously ushered into the kitchen where our interview

was to take place. Josephine offered me a cup of coffee while she finished eating her breakfast bagel with jam and with little hesitation our sessions began. I recall the numerous distractions/interruptions that ensued as we began. My fieldnotes read:

> There is much noise as various family members bustle in and out of the kitchen. The little one shrieks from the outside pool and later comes in for snacks. We talk for a while about anything but it is apparent that Josephine wants to get moving on this. Josephine's husband tries to tiptoe around us while doing various chores around the house. Josephine is slightly distracted but tries to stay on task. She is a lovely woman, very friendly, lots of smiles, warm and silently strong. (fieldnotes, July, 1997)

Josephine was born in Laval, Quebec on June 22, 1956. She has two brothers: one biological brother who is two years older and a foster brother who is two years younger than she. She became the middle child at the age of six when her then four-year-old foster brother joined the family; he stayed with the family for ten years. Josephine described her family as a "good family."

Josephine viewed her relationship with her mother as that of best friends adding that her mother made up for the sisters Josephine never had while growing up. After attending a convent for elementary school, followed by high school, Josephine's mother enrolled in secretarial school during the Post-Great Depression years. Josephine added that she sensed that her mother had a secret yearning to become a teacher. During Josephine's early years of growing up, her mother was a stay-at-home mom. Later, when Josephine was around ten, her mother entered the work force as a full-time secretary and worked until the age of sixty-five. At about this time Josephine's mother suffered the loss of her husband. Josephine went on to describe with pride and respect the changes that took place following this tragedy, most notable her mother's choice to pursue continuing education studies at McGill University.

> I respect my mother immensely. She's been widowed for twenty-five years now and she has done amazing things with her life. She's traveled and she went back to university. My mother has done more courses—

> none of them are towards a degree, you know—she's not degree-oriented but I'm sure she has [the equivalent of] a Ph.D by now and her big focus is archeology if you can believe it. She goes on all these digs—like I have this t-shirt on right now that says Turkey on it and she just came back from a dig in Turkey in the Spring. (Josephine, transcription, p. 10)

Worth noting is that Josephine's mother was eighty at the time of this interview! Over the years her mother has taken various courses in art, world religions and archeology. As well, she was given a teaching position as lecturer to teach a course in continuing education for older adults titled "writing the story of your life." Josephine summarized her mother's philosophy in life which is to keep busy and believe "there is nothing that you can't attack."

Josephine described her father as active, hard-working and a good family man. She viewed herself as "daddy's girl." Her dad was born in Prince Edward Island and moved to Montreal where he worked as a "liner-type" operator for the Montreal Gazette. Reflecting on her father's line of work she recalled the following:

> He would read the newspaper in the morning from the first page to the last page. He'd sit there for about two hours smoking and drinking his coffee and he would actually be looking at it because he would go 'hah, look at this, page 42, a misprint—why in the world—how did that get by us?" And he would look at everything in the paper—all the small print was his domain. (Josephine, transcription, p. 12)

Josephine concluded that watching her parents read was "a big thing" for her during her years growing up.

Josephine found her elementary school years quite unsettling. Every new school year was marked by a move to another school as every one of her English elementary schools transformed to a French school, totaling eight moves in eight years. Josephine shared this recollection with me:

> Our elementary experience was very strange in Quebec being that every single year we changed schools because the French took over our school and so the English students would be moved on to another school and this happened eight times in eight years—once in the middle of a year

> so—you know there wasn't a whole lot of stability when I look back at my education. (Josephine, transcription, p. 9)

The four years of high school that followed were just as unsettling. She felt uncomfortable and afraid in a school of two thousand students and security guards. After high school Josephine parted ways from her friends by choosing a different cegep from them. She wanted to start fresh with new friends and use this opportunity to shake off her shyness.

> So then I remember finishing high school and thinking all my friends are going to Vanier Cegep and I decided I was going to Dawson and I'm just going to leave all this gang and start clean, which I did—and funny I have a very strong recollection of being on the bus on the way to Dawson and saying 'I'm never going to be shy again.' I've done it with the shy thing and I looked around and I decided that there, that gang of people seem to be fun and I walked right over to them and decided that they become my friends for the whole two years that we were at Dawson and—it's true I did get out of my shy period which was lucky for me because I guess I wouldn't have been able to be a teacher if I remained that way. (Josephine, transcription, p.10)

In cegep Josephine chose to study health sciences in hopes of becoming a physiotherapist. During this time her dad became very ill and Josephine and her mother spent every night for the next two and a half years travelling by bus to visit her sick father in hospital. These many tiring visits to the hospital ultimately influenced Josephine's decision to change her career plans:

> I got so tired of being in hospitals that I thought I will never ever do anything medical in my life so I changed. I did the health sciences and graduated well from Dawson and went into primary education—which floored my dad—he couldn't believe I had done that. (Josephine, transcription, p. 10)

Josephine went on to McGill University to receive a Bachelor of Education Degree. After McGill, she married and left her family home to live with her new husband in Thunderbay where she chose to pursue studies in psychology. After a six-year stay in northern Saskatchewan, where she taught Métis children and where she had two of her own children, she and her new family moved to Ontario where her husband's family lived.

JOSEPHINE AS ART-MAKER

EARLY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Art was not a big part of my life

Josephine had very little recall of making art as a child. She remembered being given paper and pencil and practicing writing her name but added: "We weren't a put a drawing on the fridge type of family—I don't remember ever seeing my artwork up on the walls." When asked about creative play activities, Josephine confessed that she didn't think she had been very creative as a child; she had been more interested in spending her time reading, adding that "reading has always been a big part of my life." She remembered crawling through the snowforts that her brother made and associated playing in the park with feeling noxious from the swings. She loved "watching Mr. Dressup cut and paste and have his own corner with everything all organized." Josephine mentioned that she never had a corner of her own and "in those days, I don't think we had a lot of construction paper."

SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

It wasn't profoundly wonderful

When asked to recall any school art-making experiences Josephine began by saying:

> To be really honest, art does not stick out as any major part of my school experience all the way through. I guess we did art—I'm sure we did art but it was never a really exciting time for me. And I remember not doing much with my artwork, like I said, we never put it on the fridge and we never—I guess we'd throw it into a drawer and at the end of the year, we'd clean up the drawer and that would be—I never held onto any of my artwork or anything so obviously it wasn't profoundly wonderful. (Josephine, transcription, p. 3.)

Josephine never cared about art, never felt confident about making art and remembered never being complimented for her creativity. The artwork that hung on the hallway walls all looked alike and represented

copies of the teacher's examples. Reflecting on her frustrations with art she mentioned:

> I don't remember ever feeling that art was fun or that it was a time to express myself. It was a time to try and draw what was on the board or make the cards that we were supposed to produce—I could never do it right. It never came out quite the way it was supposed to look. (Josephine, transcription, p. 20)

Art was reserved for Friday afternoons and now looking back, Josephine reasoned that art was not considered as important as maybe math, science or English. Josephine never took art courses in high school—art and geography were on her "black list" of courses to avoid.

OUT OF SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

I begged to be allowed to quit

Josephine recalled a bad experience she had with art at the age of six when she and her brother were registered to take Saturday "art classes" at a local community centre. She described the insecurities she experienced related to an art activity that was assigned and chose to write about this incident as an example of an "artless experience":

> As I think back, I distinctly remember being six years old and my mother enrolling my eight-year-old brother and I in the community recreation art class for Saturday mornings. I recall being seated at long tables with adults walking around telling us things. The project I remember was drawing and colouring a clown. I remember trying my best to duplicate the model drawing. I actually thought I was doing quite well. That is, until I saw my brother's finished piece. His was pointed out to the group and hung up on the wall. Mine was sent home with me (my brother went on to become a draftsmen and later an engineer). I begged to be allowed to quit art lessons. I must have been pretty persuasive as I never returned! (Josephine's written reflection, 1997)

As an adult, Josephine registered for a variety of six-week winter courses in arts and crafts offered at a community centre in Northern Saskatchewan. She explained that because of substantial funding provided by the government to the Métis population, many specialists were hired to offer various types of courses at the centre. Josephine

proudly pointed out a stained glass lampshade hanging in her dining room that she had made in one of her courses. She was more satisfied with the results of her stained glass course compared to the projects she had made in other classes. She reasoned that she was good at stained glass because it is "such a precise thing." She felt frustrated with some of her other art experiences at the community centre mainly because she felt she never stood out as being very good.

JOSEPHINE'S AESTHETIC

When asked to share her childhood memories of any objects around her home that had appealed to her aesthetically, she pointed out that her mother was an artist and many of her watercolour paintings hung on the walls. She fondly reminisced about her old four-poster bed where she spent countless hours reading and cramming for exams:

> I loved my bed. I spend hours reading on my bed—it was an old four-poster bed and my mother always made sure it had a really pretty little bedspread on it or whatever and I loved my bed. And I studied all through—actually all through high school and all through university. All my major cramming was done on my bed not at school. (Josephine, transcription, p.3)

Talented ones

Those whom she viewed as artists among family and friends included her mother, brother, her own children and a colleague at work. Josephine spoke of her mother having made art before her children were born and after her children left home. She described her brother as being "really talented" in art as well as her son and oldest daughter:

> It turns out that all of them [her own children] are really quite talented in art. Jesse my youngest wants to be a cartoonist when he's older and he spends hours duplicating different cartoon strips and he draws and writes the little writing and he likes that and he'll do all those you know, and he spends a lot of time on art. Then Jennifer is more like me in a lot of ways—she hangs in there but it's not her great love and my older Ruth is quite talented in art. She's like my mom—she can draw and she got a 94% or something in high school—art in grade nine. So at least they're—I'm encouraging them somehow to feel good about it. (Josephine, transcription, p. 9)

Finally, Josephine spoke of a colleague who is also very "talented" and can draw on demand when other teachers need a "picture" quickly.

Josephine defines those who are artists among family and friends as those who are "talented." In spite of lack of confidence in her own artistic abilities, she supports her own children's interest in art and has great respect and admiration for her own mother's artistic endeavours, both past and present.

JOSEPHINE AS TEACHER OF ART

TEACHER PREPARATION

I was able to steer away from art

While studying to become a generalist teacher, Josephine never took any art education methodology courses. She went on to explain:

> I was able to steer away from art. Mind you, I didn't do that deliberately but like I said, I always ventured towards things that I had more success with I guess, like everyone must do and that wasn't one of them. (Josephine, transcription, p. 5)

Josephine registered for physical education courses and avoided art education mainly because "although it wasn't said you had to be an artist, I remember it was all the talented students who had art background who took those courses." She added that although the art methodology courses were considered "general" level, she worried about being overwhelmed by those who were more talented than herself and concluded she wouldn't risk the embarrassment.

Directed-art versus self-expression

Reflecting back on her educational methodology courses, Josephine remarked on how she was encouraged to link language arts with visual arts. This was to be done by moving the child from a reading experience to a writing experience and finally to a drawing experience.

Josephine added, "although we never did any of it in class, I guess we were encouraged we should do that." Josephine saw this as "directed-art" and went on to explain:

> And you know, any art we did was directed-art—you know where you had the idea and you wanted then to follow through it. There wasn't a whole lot of freethinking and free-expression here. It was more—we were just post hippie stage—we didn't want anyone to express themselves freely. (Josephine, transcription, p. 5)

Josephine told me that as a practicing teacher she had attended many Professional Development art workshops but had generally come away from these sessions rather disappointed. These workshops were usually given by other teachers and not specialists and according to Josephine supported a very structured approach to teaching art. She went on to explain:

> It seems to me we haven't advanced anywhere in art in education. As far as I can see we're still back at that okay, now we can do this project on—you know—after you've completed this language unit and have everyone draw the sun and the moon and it's so directed—and I find the teachers are having a hard time letting go of that control also. They don't want the kids to express themselves just anyway. They want them to reproduce nice things that look good on bulletin boards. (Josephine, transcription, p. 6)

Josephine disapproves of art activities that are too teacher-directed, lacking in "self-expression" and where all the students are required to follow instructions to come up with the same product.

ARTFUL AND ARTLESS TEACHING EXPERIENCES

I'd figure it out somehow

Reflecting on her experience as a student teacher, she recalled the challenge of having to teach grade two and grade five children in an inner city school where the focus was getting the students fed and motivated to do school work. According to Josephine, this was about "learning to teach in a tough situation" and attending to the needs of students of all different nationalities, life experiences and learning abilities.

Experiences related to the teaching of individual subjects did not initiate any recall with the exception of Physical Education which she said the children loved because they were "hands-on type of kids." After pausing for a moment Josephine added: "..of course art would have been a hands-on thing too now that I look back." When asked if she had had any concerns or expectations regarding the teaching of art to elementary school children (as a student teacher) she replied:

> No, I just looked at art as something that I would probably have to teach and that I'd figure it out somehow. Everybody else seems to do it so I guess I felt like I could handle it. (Josephine, transcription, p.5)

As a generalist teacher Josephine did her own research into ways of teaching art and finding suitable project ideas:

> I bought tons of art books along the way just because I have no ideas of my own and. I tried to read up a little bit on different philosophies of how to teach primary art. There are a lot of different ways of doing it—nobody approves of each other's ways it seems to me. (Josephine, transcription, p. 15)

At the time of the interview, Josephine had taught a total of ten years with a short break of a few years to have children. She had taught all grades from kindergarten to grade five and was presently teaching the English section of a grade one and grade two class in a French immersion school. Josephine remarked that she was not required to teach art as this was usually done by the French teachers but chose to do so, regardless, as part of her students' language experience. She devoted Friday mornings to teaching art to her grade two class and Friday afternoons for her grade one class.

Art-making—freedom versus structure

Josephine viewed her Friday art sessions as a time for the children to escape from the pressures and the daily struggles of being rushed from place to place during the school day:

> I wanted them to feel that art was a time where you just laid back and you know, applied yourself and nobody was putting a time limit on you or making you do anything. (Josephine, transcription, p. 14)

She described the purpose of art was to "get away from our structured curriculum and to be free." Josephine would get some ideas from books but rarely planned her lessons in advance preferring to teach art that is not structured but "really off the wall," something that none of the other teachers whom she works with would do. Josephine chose to describe one of her "off the wall" projects when asked to write about an artful experience:

> Although I have somehow developed enough skill to replicate cartoon characters and other simple pictures to hand in my classroom, no "art pleasure" has really compared to watching my grade two's paint with their hands. After the required lecture on being careful and avoiding the table, walls and each other, they all proceed to totally ignore the pointers and delve into their imaginations, creating some wonderful pieces of art. It is fun to see them begin prudently, barely dipping their fingertips in the paint. By the end of the period, even the most prudent have buried their hands in paint and managed to smear it up to their elbows. After cleaning up their hands, they seem to have just as much fun using sponges to wipe the table off. Each one of them insists on explaining something very important about their creations. Although other teachers cringe when I recount these lessons, I think the only word to describe them is delightful! (Josephine's artful experience, written reflection, 1997)

Josephine observed that the grade two's relished this free approach to art-making and would often chose to work the entire Friday morning. The grade one's on the other hand, often needed some structure and less time.

Josephine prefers to steer away from what she refers as "conventional art projects" or teacher-directed structured art projects where all the children's work looks alike. She illustrated with the following example to prove her point:

> ...like everyone is going to do this red apple and we're all going to put the seeds right here in the middle—no, four seeds, seven seeds--we see that all the time—those kinds of projects where well, it looks nice and they all turn out looking nice. (Josephine, transcription, p. 23)

She points out that some children might prefer to have their apples full, not eaten and without the seeds showing. Josephine's approach is to give children choices and to initiate art projects that are more open to interpretation.

Holiday art

Some of the art projects that Josephine assigns her students revolve around holiday themes such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Halloween and Valentine's Day. These must be done Josephine added because "they [children] want to do all those things." Josephine explained that holiday art often requires a teacher's sample to be shown to the class and invites comparisons between their own work and that of the teacher's. For this reason, whenever she can, Josephine tries to avoid showing examples that she has made. Instead, she will provide the materials and ask the students to use their imaginations. Josephine gave an example of a Valentine's Day project that she viewed as a flop but that her students viewed as a success. After handing out sheets of white, pink and red construction paper and cut-out hearts, she asked her students to work freely using their imaginations to create Valentine creatures. They could be people, animals, any creatures that they could tell a story about. Much to her disappointment the results didn't match up with the imaginative inventions Josephine had seen in her book of ideas:

> I thought they'd be really neat. Actually I had seen some idea in a book and there were a—you know, like big heart with a heart body and the arms and this—all made out of hearts and antennas like Martians and things and I could see them being really—well they didn't turn out like that at all.... Well, they turned out so dull-looking—I had imagined you know, great works of art.(Josephine, transcription, p. 19)

What resulted was that the children had merely drawn onto the heart shapes without exploring the possibilities of building new forms by adding additional shapes and accessories. Although disappointing for

Josephine, the children had in fact come up with stories to tell and had enjoyed the activity leaving Josephine to question who really decides whether a project is a success or not.

Working with themes

Josephine mentioned that she rarely provides structured art lessons mainly because her students are now used to and prefer doing art their own way. Instead she will select a theme and invite her students to visually interpret as they please. She gave an example of how she might go about initiating an art project based on the theme of apples:

> I'll throw out a theme like apples and I'll say well look there's red construction paper and there's paint and there's crayons and there's scissors and things—go ahead—think of whatever you like and so you get the apple trees and the apples and apple mobile—it's fun to see them produce whatever the heck apples means to them. (Josephine, transcription, p. 15)

Josephine explained that the children are largely motivated by the materials; occasionally they'll collectively brainstorm for ideas.

Murals that focus on a particular theme are quite popular but Josephine added they require more organization to delegate responsibilities so that everyone is kept busy. Josephine referred to mural-making as her strongest project idea because the children have fun making them and experience a sense of pride when they receive positive feedback from other teachers and students who have stopped in the hallway to view their mural on the bulletin board.

When asked if there are any drawbacks with respect to teaching art, she mentioned that it is messy and she feels that she has to keep her janitor happy. She added "I feel guilty if I do create a disaster area."

JOSEPHINE'S ART CURRICULUM

Free art/thematic

Josephine sees the purpose of art in the classroom as an opportunity for her students to get away from "the structured curriculum" and a chance "to express themselves without pressure." She supports the belief that art-making should be fun, free of deadlines and never imposing. An open-ended, free approach to teaching art is what she advocates. Her students are given themes which they in turn can interpret any way they choose using their imaginations. Josephine elaborated on this:

> It gives them a chance to do whatever is going to come out of them and makes them feel that they produced it without me making them....In art, it's their chance to express themselves without pressure. To me, when you have an art time with pressure, it doesn't come off well which is what they are experiencing in other classrooms and they find it hard to let go with me. (Josephine, transcription, p. 19)

Josephine added that in her classroom art is the one subject that children have control over what they do because as a teacher she doesn't impose any kind of structure. She wants the children to be free to express themselves in an environment that is non-judgmental or critical of outcome.

She strongly rejects a structured approach to teaching art where projects are too teacher-directed and ask children to follow specific instructions with results that all look alike.

EVALUATING ART

Enthusiasm, application and enjoyment

When Josephine was asked how she evaluates art she replied that she never assigns grades. She added that because she is not an expert in art, she especially doesn't feel competent enough to grade her students' art projects. Instead her assessments are based on her students' degree of enthusiasm, enjoyment and application with respect

to art-making. Her school reports use grading criteria such as good, very good and excellent; generally her students receive very good or excellent. She likens evaluating for art to assessing people's religious devotion:

> It's like religion—what you're not religious enough? Like to me, everybody has their own beliefs and they're excellent at them. You know, I guess it's a matter of how you want to interpret these grading systems. (Josephine, transcription, p. 17)

In art, Josephine noted, "everyone has their own style" and "it's really bold to say someone else's style is not acceptable." Josephine finds the notion of marking individual art projects problematic mainly because she has no idea what criteria could be used:

> I would prefer to not ever have to give a grade. How could I? What would I base it on—other people's projects or I don't know—does the province come up with standards of art? Well of course I wouldn't do it anyways so they could come up with all the standards they want to. I'll do what I want to anyways so now I would prefer not to grade art. (Josephine, transcription, p. 17)

Josephine added that unlike other subjects where students strive to come up with the same right answer, the products arising from art-making vary one from another making assessment difficult:

> Other subjects have products that you know, they're more concrete. I mean you either add right or you don't and you know like there isn't a lot of creativity in addition. Whereas this is the one thing where it's none of my business what I wanted it to look like. It's more their business and they have control over it. (Josephine, transcription, p. 20)

Unsure about evaluating for product, Josephine chooses to evaluate her students' process in terms of how committed they are to their art-making and the degree of enthusiasm and enjoyment they display. She looks out for children who fight during the art period or those who refuse to share. When I asked Josephine to describe the difference between a strong and weak piece of art produced in her art classes, she chose to compare a strong and a weak student in terms of how they worked (process) in the art class and the outcome of their efforts. She described her strong student as "an excellent artist" who

loves to draw whenever he has a spare moment and who can "reproduce things from his head that I can't do from copying." Although he is a very strong student, Josephine recognizes that there are others in her class who could also be considered strong because they too invest much time and energy into their artwork but their artwork may not be as "appealing to the eye" as that of her "artist student":

> Now would I say he is the best at art?—everyone in my class would—they would all right away say that. However, there's other little kids who, I don't know, they put so much of themselves into their art and the product doesn't come out quite like his, and yet colours and you know use of different types of materials and things—I would say their art is really outstanding too so it's hard for me to say—I don't know what—again, we're trying to evaluate you know. As far as appealing to the eye, I suppose Kevin [psudonym] would be the best, you know, because he is so good. (Josephine, transcription, p. 17)

Josephine described one of her weakest students as one who is lazy, doesn't always follow instructions and rushes through his work. She gave an example of how he had followed through with a project she had assigned the class which was to paint and stuff funny paper sunshine faces to hang on the hallway wall:

> Well they all did wonderful things and they were funny—funny things with glasses on and sunglasses on and big noses—except for this one little fella whose came out in this weird shape that had nothing to do with round or anywhere near it and he put so much paper in that he couldn't glue it together, staple it together. Anyways, the whole thing was really my idea of not so nice and it was done in fifteen minutes whereas some of them took a good two hours to finish these. That was my idea of a lousy piece and I didn't hesitate to tell him. (Josephine, transcription, p. 18)

Josephine had him make another piece which turned out to be a small mean sunshine face; she viewed this outcome/behaviour as rebellious. Josephine prefers to focus on process rather than product although if the product demonstrated lack of commitment she will follow through to "fix" the situation. If she sees that a child is rushing through a project and not applying himself/herself she will "get on their case" and try to coax them along:

> If they really go for it, like the ten-minute people, then I'm kind of on their case, 'come on you can put more of yourself into this and I know you can sit down and take your time on this'—like I might push that a little bit, you know the rushing stuff, but if some child is enjoying themselves and they think it looks good—and every once in a while I have this one particular child in mind who is a little rascal and he's lazy, I'll get on his case and I'll say 'you know, frankly, if you really think of it did you really try on this?' and I'll try and get him more or less to admit. I won't say you didn't do anything here but I'll try and get him to say 'no, I didn't'—'well here's some more stuff, try again'. So I kind of evaluate them that way. (Josephine, transcription, p. 16)

Josephine added that she would never criticize a child's artwork to make them feel "inferior." She recalled with distaste her years as a student teacher when she observed children being yelled at and put down and vowed that once she became a teacher, she would never deliberately make someone feel bad. Josephine makes a point of hanging up all her children's artwork be in on the bulletin boards in the hallway or bordered around the blackboard.

JOSEPHINE'S REFLECTIONS

When asked to reflect on how her past experiences might have affected her present beliefs about teaching art, Josephine pointed out that possibly her attempts to make art a fun experience for her students is a result of trying to reverse the negativity she personally experienced with art as a child:

> I guess I've gone totally opposite of what I grew up with which is really hard to believe that I would do because look what I did there when I went to cegep—okay enough of being shy, that's me. I've decided that something wasn't right in my life so I changed it and so I guess I decided that art was dull and boring in my life so better turn out to be fun now and even though I'm not really into art or producing any kind of art, any time I have to do it, it better be a fun experience and it better be meaningful to them or else why bother. (Josephine, transcription, p. 25)

When I asked Josephine to reflect on anything she had learned from this process of reflective practice, she said it gave her a chance to think about her style of teaching art and it confirmed her belief that "art is an area where you shouldn't have to conform."

> I hadn't spent much time ever wondering about how art affected me. I guess it kind of explains why I'm so off the wall a little bit with art now and people think I'm artistic. As a matter of fact people will come up to me and say things like, ' would you take care of this because you're really artsy?' Hah! I'm the most unartsy person I know, but I guess I give off that impression because I don't want to be stuck to a structure, to traditional ways of doing things and yet I'm a real traditionalist. I guess I'm a real stubborn person. I don't like to be told what I have to do. Meanwhile, I'll make my own little project, my own little plans and I'll stick to them except I'll make them myself so maybe that's what I've gotten out of this—that I realize exactly how I am like. If the principal came down and said this is how I want art to be done, you could be sure it would never get done that way. Not because I'm really rebellious and yet, I just don't like to conform. (Josephine, transcription, p. 25)

INTERPRETATIVE SUMMARY

LINKING LIFE EXPERIENCES WITH BELIEFS

Josephine's approach to teaching art is to allow her students to be "free" in a classroom atmosphere that supports "self-expression." Her themes and method of instruction are usually open-ended where the children have the freedom to choose the content and method of interpreting a given theme. Occasionally she will design art activities that acknowledge various holiday celebrations but again, because Josephine chooses not to "structure" the art class by way of too much instruction, the children are free to interpret as they please. Josephine strongly disapproves of art instruction that is too teacher-directed and where all the children's work begins to look the same.

Free art/self-expression

Josephine mentioned that as a child she never enjoyed making art, preferring instead to read books. Her idea that art in the classroom should be a freeing experience and not be part of a "structured curriculum" is likely influenced by the many "failures" and disappointments she experienced as a child trying to make art. In all the

instances that Josephine cited as negative art-making experiences, she was being taught in a "structured" atmosphere where her final product was always being measured against those with more "talent" or skill. She remembered that in school she "could never do it right—match up to the teacher's examples." Art instruction with her brother at a local community centre turned out disastrous when her brother's clown drawing received praise from the instructor and got to hang on the wall. Josephine lived with a mother and brother who were "artists" and this coupled with no positive art-making experiences, may have influenced Josephine's decision to avoid art classes in high school and university. Josephine mentioned that she chose to venture towards things that offered her success. She figured that only "talented" students took art education courses in university and she didn't want to "risk the embarrassment" to herself should her work not match up to those of her peers. Josephine complained about her university methods course which defended an interdisciplinary approach to integrate language arts and visual arts. Josephine saw this as being too directive and lacking in opportunities for self-expression. She also spoke of her disappointment with various professional development workshops where again she found the suggestions too supportive of a structured approach to teaching art. Josephine is confident with her own approach where art can provide children with a release from their daily pressures, free of time limits and free of structure. She is against "conventional art projects" preferring instead to teach art that is "off the wall."

Josephine would prefer not to have to evaluate art done by her students mainly because she doesn't feel competent enough to establish criteria for evaluating their final work. She sees her students' work as representative of various "styles," too subjective for evaluation. Instead she chooses to focus on process; the effort and enthusiasm demonstrated by her students.

An interesting twist to Josephine's belief in unstructured art instruction is with respect to the success she herself experienced with a stained glass course she took in Thunderbay as an adult. She attributed her success to the fact that the course was such "a precise thing" and she felt good about the outcome. Perhaps as an adult her needs as a student of art/crafts have changed. At this time she appears to welcome structure for herself. However, as a teacher of art she believes her students need less structure, more freedom, a way to reverse the negative experiences that Josephine herself experienced as a child making art.

Josephine's metaphor

Josephine's metaphor is about being passionate about learning and to have fun. Josephine has made a conscious effort to make art a fun and meaningful experience for her students believing that this can be done by giving them freedom to make their own choices. She places emphasis on the art process rather than on the product where comparisons can be made and invite possible disappointment. She measures her students' successes in terms of their enthusiasm, enjoyment and commitment to their own art-making. Josephine is strongly committed to the belief that "art is an area where you don't have to conform."

PART III

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' ARTFUL AND ARTLESS EXPERIENCES

CHAPTER 8

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS: TEACHERS' ARTFUL AND ARTLESS EXPERIENCES AS MAKERS OF ART/AS TEACHERS OF ART

The individual life journeys detailed in the previous chapters included the artful and artless experiences of the teachers as makers of art and as teachers of art. Themes related to experiences and beliefs were revealed through a very thorough and multifaceted investigation into the participants' lives. What follows in this chapter is a cross-analysis of the teachers' stories to determine common themes or shared meanings as they relate to the making and teaching of art. Vast generalizations cannot be made; however by drawing comparisons from the teachers' experiences, reoccurring patterns or themes emerge to represent more "widely shared" meanings (Weber, 1993). Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention the occurrence of "transferability" when outside readers begin to see the relevance of the accounts to their own experiences. A look at shared meanings or commonly held beliefs can inform professionals of generalists' ways of knowing about art and art education which in turn can help in the design of in-service professional development workshops for generalists.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS:
TEACHERS' ARTFUL AND ARTLESS EXPERIENCES
AS MAKERS OF ART

> ...whereas all normally functioning people, having once learned to speak, go on speaking throughout their life, very few people continue making images. Most of us are severed from this native ability to visually "speak." It would seem that a major contributing factor must be how we have been taught to make images. We have *learned* to be embarrassed by our efforts. We have *learned* to feel so inept and disenfranchised from out own visual expressions that we simply cease doing it altogether. Only our dreaming mind continues to make images throughout our life, and even these we erase upon awakening. (London, 1989, p. xiii)

This first cross-analysis looks at and compares the artful and artless experiences of the teachers as "makers of art." Artful experiences imply positive experiences where the maker comes away with a good feeling about herself and her accomplishments; the opposite holding true for artless experiences. Dewey (1934) used the terms "esthetic" and "non-esthetic" when referring to positive and negative art experiences and spoke of their reliance on various degrees of passion. He claimed that "...when we are overwhelmed by passion, as in extreme rage, fear, jealousy, the experience is definitely non-esthetic" (p. 49). Working with this definition of the non-esthetic, Smith-Shank (1995) discovered that the art anxieties felt by the pre-service teachers she studied, grew out of past experiences replete with "rage at perceived injustice," "fear" and "jealousy" (p. 34).

The findings in this study of in-service teachers shared many of the same results as Smith-Shank's study (1992b) of pre-service teachers as they relate to art anxiety. The stories that the teachers in this study shared about themselves as "makers of art" weighed heavily on negative experiences, revealing much anxiety surrounding various situational encounters with art. Early childhood experiences were innocuous in comparison to the school experiences where lack of confidence, the

influence of teachers and classmates and the awareness of those with "talent" all contributed towards a fear of making art.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Art and Play

> Once upon a time, when we were very young, every moment of our day and every item and event within it were novel. With no conceptual framework against which items were to be arranged, we toyed and played with everything. We combined ordinary things in extraordinary arrangements. We stuck things into scandalous places, we shattered things revered by others. We know better now, now we are tamed, trained in the ways of our elders. And much of that is to the good. But not all. (London, 1989, p. 27)

The teachers' stories of art in early childhood spoke of an interconnectedness of art and play; very little reminiscing was made about particular product-oriented art-making activities. Art experiences were viewed as not really standing out as anything special but rather as part of play and "part of life" in these early years.

Molly described art as being "just part of my life." She made sandcastles in the sandbox and on the beach. Indoors she would make forts with cushions and blankets and the kitchen table was where she, her mother and family members would congregate to "make art" and chat.

Krystle also did not view art as being "a big thing" but rather as a way to entertain herself and her sister at home and at the cottage. At home she used to colour in her colouring books and at the cottage she and her sister used to "paint on the steps at the country house with watercolours" or build boats with scraps of wood they found around the cottage.

Priscilla associated art with creative play where she and her friends would construct imaginary houses with leaves in a nearby field between school and home. She recalled making mud pies and dressing up her cats as her babies.

Josephine was the one teacher who admitted that she did not see herself as having been very creative as a young child. Stressing that "art was not a big part of her life," she shared memories of crawling through snowforts that her brother made and watching Mr. Dressup cut and paste in his nicely organized art corner.

Overall the teachers associated their early art experiences with everyday play and concluded that art did not really stand out in any important or special way. This led me to wonder whether these teachers saw art as special only if done outside of play activities. Szekely (1992) points out that play is "creativity at its most fundamental level" (p. 165) and a very important component of the art-making process. About the connection of art and play, Szekely has the following to say:

> Playing—in school or art—is a connection to the freshest source an artist can have, the clearest spring of creativity within each person. The act of playing is less burdened with pretension, traditions, or set ideas than almost any other human activity. In art, play is the experimental part of the process, the part that frames art ideas and rehearses them.
>
> ...it often takes a lifetime of formal training to appreciate the beginning of artistic consciousness, the beauty and invention of early creative play. (1992, p. 174)

If follows from Szekely's theory that early play experiences can be viewed as the early beginnings of the art-making process. Szekely (1991) believes that an individual's early play experiences affect the way one approaches art as an adult.

Dissanayake's (1995) research into the meaning of art and art-making and more specifically the relationship of art to play and ritual, led her to conclude that the three shared many of the same characteristics:

> ...art was not a variety of play or ritual, but like them it was concerned with a special order, realm, mood, state of being. In play, ritual, *and* art things were not ordinary—they are less real or more real than everyday reality. (p. 49)

Both Szekeley and Dissanayake recognize significant commonalities between play and art and that both are very special even

when done together. The teachers on the other hand, shared the belief that art in play was not that special mainly because it was just "part of play." Consequently, they dismiss a view of themselves as makers of art because they were "only playing" with art.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ART

Art classes generally took place on Friday afternoons. Molly referred to her art experiences as "basic art" taught by "a regular classroom teacher" and consisting of painting, doing crafts or seasonal things. Krystle's art classes focused as well on making crafts and holiday art; she felt that art was never part of the "curriculum." Josephine's experiences in elementary school were non-eventful and frustrating and she came away with the notion that art was not viewed as important as other subjects like math, science or English. Priscilla recalled the visits from a neighbour lady who used to come into her class specifically to teach art once a week. Priscilla's art-making during these times proved stressful and frustrating.

Lack of Confidence

> The notion that there *is* a right and a wrong in creative expression is inherently debilitating....'Right' or 'wrong' always pits 'us' against 'them,' and more often than not we lose. It is we who are found wanting. Extrinsic systems of evaluations always create winners and losers and always require us to look outside ourselves to know who we are and how we are doing. (London, 1989, p. 57)

All of the teachers spoke of the anxiety they experienced when trying to get their work to look like others in the class or at least resemble the teacher's samples. They all expressed a lack of confidence in their art abilities to replicate the work of "others" often resulting in feelings of frustration and an overall sense of ineptness. This echoed what Smith-Shank (1995) found to be true among the elementary school experiences of her pre-service teachers, that they "...were disappointed

when art activities and lessons did not live up to their expectations" (p. 35).

Priscilla's grade four art experiences proved frustrating because as she admitted, she had put undue pressure on herself to create art that was "spectacular" or "great" and that would impress her classmates. She found that she was always running out of time trying to find a "great idea." Comparing her work to the teacher's samples she explained:

> I didn't know if my talents could equal anything she held up and showed. So I spent so much time sweating about it and worrying about it. (Priscilla, transcription, p. 7)

Josephine never felt confident about her art and like Priscilla, had difficulties trying to copy the teacher's examples:

> It was a time to try and draw what was on the board or make the cards that we were supposed to produce—I could never do it right. It never came out quite the way it was supposed to look. (Josephine, transcription, p. 20)

Krystle felt confident making crafts where the product at the end easily looked liked the others in the class but when asked to create "art" on her own where the quality of her work was compared to others, her confidence would waiver. In grade six, Krystle had a teacher who was knowledgeable in art, one who focused on skills and one who could spot those who were "good" in art. The emphasis was on individualized art-making and Krystle's constant comparing with the work of others in her class, caused her much stress:

> I was always comparing myself to everybody else like any kid does. It was not as good as Suzie's beside me. I wasn't the type to say I don't care, it's mine anyway. I hadn't quite reached that point in my life. (Krystle, transcription, p.7)

Molly enjoyed her Friday afternoon art classes in early elementary school which she viewed as a "relaxing time." After grade six however, she became very critical of her art-making abilities. She would become disappointed when her work would not look like the teacher's and when

her art marks did not match the high marks she received in her other subjects:

> The school experience was something that had to be graded and I was a really serious student right from the start so probably I felt that there were certain expectations I had to reach and I didn't see myself as being able to attain those. (Molly, transcription, p. 9)

At this time in her life, she wanted to "fit in" with the other girls and feared being criticized or "put down" should her work not compare with theirs:

> You want to fit in when you're eleven, twelve, thirteen and then it—it's important to you so you don't want to do anything that anybody would consider—you know—would criticize you for—put you down. (transcription, Molly, p. 9)

The teachers spoke of their loss of confidence when in later years the emphasis in art was on a finished product that had to conform to the classroom teacher's examples and to the work of fellow classmates. This contrasted to their earlier years of schooling when art was more process-oriented and for some provided a time for relaxation and fun. Smith-Shank's study concluded with similar findings:

> The contract they understood did not include being graded, competing with peers, or being told that they had to do artwork in the style rewarded by their teachers. Their initial contracts with art were trouble-free and remained so until the students encountered demands which broke the original contract and constituted a new one. Although this shift in contract happened occasionally in elementary school, in most cases contracted demands changed dramatically when students entered middle school. (Smith-Shank, 1992b, p. 39)

Teacher's Influence

> The phobia that many of us have about making art is mainly due, I believe, to having bad early experiences in which our art has been devalued by significant "others," with the corresponding sense of being personally devalued. (London, 1989, p. 62)

Common among all of the participants was the desire to impress the teacher with their artwork and win her approval. The kind of teacher feedback/encouragement received varied among the participants.

Priscilla and Josephine reported never having felt inspired by their teachers to be creative nor did they ever experience any teacher-student interactions regarding their artwork. Priscilla commented on her struggles to replicate the teacher's samples: "they were always so nice so mine had to be nice like those but I didn't know how I was going to get there" (Priscilla, transcription, p. 7). In addition to never getting help from the teacher, she added "I can't really honestly say that I've ever had an art teacher that made me want to stretch myself and have fun with it." Josephine shared the same sentiment when she told me: "I don't remember ever being asked to be creative and being complimented for my creativity" (Josephine, transcription, p. 3). Smith-Shank's study (1995) mentioned that many of her teachers claimed that they had difficulties succeeding in art because either they had "insufficient innate ability" and/or they had received "insufficient instruction, or insufficient help to complete the task" (p. 37).

Unlike Priscilla and Josephine, both Molly and Krystle had received encouragement and recognition from some of their teachers and had been fortunate enough to experience some successes with their art. Reflecting on most of the teachers Molly had in elementary school, she figured that they struggled as teachers do today to make art as interesting as they could, given that they had very little background in art education. She recalled two accounts of teachers selecting her work for exhibition purposes. The first time her work was chosen, Molly thought it was a reward for being "a really good student." The second time her work was chosen by a real "art teacher" she had in grade six and because her work managed to win third prize at the Canadian National Exhibition, for a short moment she felt like "an artist." Krystle also recalled having her work chosen for display:

> It happened to be what the teacher wanted and she raved about how good this was and hung it outside the class with two other pictures. I was thrilled. This had never happened to me before. (Krystle's artful experience, 1997)

Like Molly, Krystle had an art teacher in grade six and noticed a difference in the way art was taught. Examples of what was expected were shown and emphasis was placed on individualized work; only good work was displayed.

HIGH SCHOOL ART

Others with Talent

> If the shadow of judgment falls too early and too heavily on barely emergent newness, it invariably finds it deficient. We must protect the emergent from the too-wise, too-informed eye of critical judgment. If not, we risk squashing awkward but promising shoots before they can develop into maturity. (London, 1989, p. 60)

Josephine and Priscilla never took art classes in high school. Josephine considered art and geography on her "black list of courses to avoid" and Priscilla took Home Economics instead.

Molly and Krystle both participated in art classes in grade eight. Grade eight was considered high school for Krystle but not for Molly because they had studied in different provinces. Molly explained how she had shied away from art classes in high school because "kids that took art in high school were artists." She viewed them as having "talent" and "a big interest" in art. Her parents' influence also contributed to her choice not to pursue visual arts. Krystle's choosing art as an elective in high school was based on her belief that art would be an easy course to take. She quickly discovered the opposite to be true and became discouraged when she saw others in her class with "talent" and "a passion for art." She learned that she would never be taught how to be good at art because this was something you either had or didn't have. Smith-Shank's study (1995) revealed that "in several instances, artistic talent was perceived as a special gift—and as a gift that was not passed out democratically" (p. 39).

OUT OF SCHOOL ART EXPERIENCES

With the exception of Josephine, none of the teachers had ever taken art classes outside of school. Josephine recalled that at the age of six she and her brother had been registered for Saturday art classes at a local community centre. Discouraged because her artwork was not recognized and praised like her brother's, she convinced her parents to let her quit. As children, Molly and Priscilla both took piano lessons. Molly also participated in highland dancing where instruction was very structured and exact. Priscilla loved to write poetry and construct poetry books in her spare time. Josephine also had a fondness for literature and used to spend countless hours curled up on her bed with a good book.

As adults all the teachers reported having participated in either making crafts at home or attending craft courses at some time. Molly would buy books on crocheting or needlework and following precise instructions; she would create craft items to entertain herself while caring for her children. Josephine attended craft courses while stationed in northern Saskatchewan. Both Krystle and Priscilla tried their hand at ceramics; each had brought a companion to their respective ceramic classes. Overall these teachers viewed these sessions as a time to relax and have fun; there were no reports of feeling inadequate. They followed step-by-step instructions and generally didn't have to worry about coming up with an "original" idea.

PERSONAL AESTHETICS

Individual differences related to taste were revealed in the descriptions given by the teachers of the kinds of art they like to have hanging in their homes.

As a child, Priscilla loved to read and write poetry. As a university student, she chose English as her major and eventually developed a taste for art that tells a story.

Josephine as well as Priscilla both had artist mothers and spoke of growing up surrounded by their mother's watercolours. Josephine and Krystle both spoke enthusiastically about their own children's talent for drawing and both expressed a need to encourage their children's interest in this area.

Krystle grew up surrounded by rich colours and patterns that she didn't much like. Her own taste is simple design and work that is "different."

Molly prefers to have work of sentimental value hanging in her home; much of the work is done by family members or they are inherited pieces from her family. She along with Priscilla and Krystle, have acquired artwork from their parents that once hung in their family homes. It is interesting to note that not all of these pieces hang in their present homes; many are stored away in boxes for safekeeping and remain as objects from their past.

When the teachers were asked to define an "artist," it was generally agreed that an artist is one who has the skill/talent to render images realistically. A couple stated that true art is art that can "sell."

Summary

The outcome of the teachers' shared stories as makers of art, revealed experiences that were both positive and negative. Teachers cited experiences as positive when they enjoyed their art-making and when they received recognition and praise for their efforts. Experiences viewed as negative were associated with feelings of discouragement, frustration and failure to succeed. Their perceptions were largely influenced by how they personally interpreted messages and feedback they received from outside sources. Smith-Shank referred to these kinds of outside influences as "sanctions" defined as "...events or actions that signify success or, in many instances, failure" (1995, p. 37). Elaborating on this Smith-Shank (1992b) noted:

> Sanctions seemed to be remembered as central to most experiences with art. Positive sanctions seemed to be like Tinkerbell's fairy dust which allowed Peter to fly. After receiving positive sanctions, students became confident that they not only could fly artistically, but that they could crow about it. Negative sanctions, however, were like blows from the tails of fearsome dragons. (p. 43)

The kinds of positive or "artful" experiences that my teachers recalled included the following:

- Making art at home as a "family event" (non-threatening, no evaluation)
- Receiving support and recognition from teachers and parents
- Winning awards and receiving special treatment from the teacher
- Making art/crafts where you don't have to come up with an original idea (step-by-step instruction).

Negative or "artless" experiences which usually occurred in the context of schooling, included:

- Inability to replicate the teacher's example or the work of others in the class
- Getting your work to look good to impress others—wanting to "fit in"
- Not being able to get as high marks in art as in other subjects
- Seeing others as having "talent"
- Little help, support or recognition from the teacher

The artful and artless experiences that these generalists cited paralleled the positive and negative sanctions expressed by Smith-Shank's pre-service teachers (1992b).

Molly and Krystle who had experienced more "artful" experiences (in their childhood) than Priscilla and Josephine made a choice to pursue art beyond the grade six level but not beyond grade eight. The "artless" experiences that Priscilla and Josephine suffered discouraged them from signing up for future art classes. All the teachers had reported times when they felt anxious about making art because of their lack of confidence in their artistic abilities. They didn't consider themselves talented enough to succeed as they would have liked to. General feelings of inadequacy contributed to the avoidance of art in some instances and

consequent lack of knowledge and skills in the area of visual arts and visual arts education.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: TEACHERS' ARTFUL AND ARTLESS EXPERIENCES AS TEACHERS OF ART

Generally, the artless experiences that the teachers had endured during their elementary and high school years had contributed to their feelings of inadequacy as "makers of art." For Molly and Josephine these negative feelings had weighed heavily on their choice to avoid art methodology courses. Josephine and Priscilla had picked up some art teaching "tips" or "ideas" in their educational methodology courses but no formal art education. Krystle was the only teacher who chose to sign up for two half-year courses in art education methodology and even though she came away with some useful teaching techniques, her insecurities about her own artistic abilities still remained intact.

This second part analysis of the teachers' experiences as "teachers of art" highlights the key issues that these teachers currently face when teaching art lessons. As well, it is a look at the art curricula that they have individually developed based on their limited knowledge of art and art education, and the influence of their art beliefs formulated over time and grounded in their past experiences as "makers of art."

The main issues surrounding the teaching of art as expressed by the teachers included logistics, loss of control, a general lack of knowledge and skills in art and closely connected to this, lack of confidence in one's abilities to teach art.

ISSUES SURROUNDING THE TEACHING OF ART

Logistics/Loss of Control

Teachers voiced concerns about the amount of planning, organization and preparation of materials required for art projects. Sometimes they are unsure of what types of materials to use and the quantities required. Messes have to be anticipated and this requires covering surfaces to minimize dealings with the janitor. As Josephine pointed out, "I feel guilty if I do create a disaster area." Krystle spoke of the caretaker "who has a bird because it's messy on the floor." Art-making requires time and teachers feel constrained by the demands made on them to cover material for other subjects therefore leaving little time for art (Bresler, 1995).

Priscilla expressed her concern about the loss of "control" she experiences when she teaches art because of the noise and excitement that ensues and the possible disturbance to other classes, "they're free and they're laughing and they go overboard." Krystle mentioned "the high noise level that goes with children having fun." In a study of in-service generalists' beliefs about art education, Liora Bresler (1995) noted that "art does not share in the school's primary values" of "structure, discipline and the following of rules" (1995, p. 33). She goes on to say:

> Equally unacceptable in school is the expression of unique feelings and emotions (and their manifestations: noise and chaos). The school aims to shape and mold these feelings (at least, their outward manifestations) rather than nurture and promote them. (1995, p. 33)

The noise and the messes that are part of art-making are concerns for some teachers who fear reprisal from teacher colleagues and the janitor.

Lack of knowledge and skills/Lack of confidence

All of the teachers commented on their lack of art knowledge and skills to successfully teach art. They teach art in the best way they know how in spite of their perceived deficiencies. Bresler's 1991 study with

Stake and Mabry of in-service generalist teachers, revealed similar findings related to teachers' limited backgrounds in art education:

> ...visual arts are taught by classroom teachers who may lack any formal background in the arts, or, at best, have taken one or two courses, which often were not considered relevant at the time and the content of which they have long forgotten. (Bresler, 1995, p. 32)

Molly commented on how she cannot teach art as a discipline because she doesn't have the necessary background of "art terms and theories" to teach art in a structured way. Designing projects around the formal elements of line or colour for example, would be too challenging. Krystle also commented on how she couldn't teach art as a discipline because she lacked the necessary training, skills, and interest. She is unsure of how to set up objectives for art. Priscilla wants to develop exciting lessons for her students but feels she is not a good enough "teacher of art" to succeed. Priscilla remarked that "teaching art is like pulling teeth" and added, "how can I inspire and pull out skills and talents from a child that [when] I don't feel I have them myself?"

Some teachers worry that their students might not like the projects they have assigned and some even avoid showing examples of their own work to their students in fear that their students may produce work superior to their own. Generally teachers relied on ideas from books, craft and art magazines and other teachers' bulletin boards. Bresler (1995) noted the use of similar resource material by the teachers she observed, "...they usually relied on a potpourri of popular magazines, in-service materials, and craft books purchased with their own money or borrowed from others" (p.32).

Evaluation

Added to a lack of confidence with respect to planning art projects, the teachers in this study also expressed concerns about their competencies related to evaluating their own students' work. Without a

sound knowledge base in art and art education they are unsure of what art criteria they should use in their assessments. For most, artless memories from the past, of having one's artwork evaluated as a "finished piece" and compared to others in the class, influenced their choice to make the situation different and, they hoped, better for their own students. All of these teachers chose to evaluate primarily for process rather than product stressing enthusiasm, involvement, enjoyment, ability to stay focused, as well as being able to talk about one's work as desirable goals. Those teachers whose underlying belief that self-expression defined children's art-making, found it difficult to establish evaluation criteria. In a few instances product was evaluated on how well instructions were followed or how much detail was included in the work. These findings were consistent with other studies of both pre-service and in-service generalists' criteria for evaluating artwork (Bresler, 1992; Grauer, 1995; Myers, 1992). As far back as thirty years, evaluation was an issue for teachers as evidenced in Eisner's (1971) paper that cited teachers' objections to evaluation as one of the myths/beliefs surrounding art education. He outlined their argument against evaluation as follows:

> The argument proceeds that the imposition of external criteria are not only inappropriate to the nature of artistic activity but that they generate anxieties in children that block pathways that must remain open for creative activity to result....What is being sought in art is a personal and authentic response not the production of predetermined forms to be measured and graded like eggs or cheese. (p. 13)

The teachers in this study mentioned that they would prefer to not have to evaluate their students' work because some students are simply more gifted than others, it creates pressure for children to compare themselves with others and it puts too much emphasis on the final product. All of these reasons cited echo the negative childhood experiences that these teachers shared previously. Eisner's argument for evaluation is that "children respect thoughtful evaluation and criticism because it testifies

to them that their teachers are taking them and their work seriously" (1971, p. 13). As well, Eisner (1971) believed that both product and process need to be evaluated:

> There are a variety of things that can be evaluated in the teaching of art. With respect to the product that the child produces one can appraise its creativity or ingenuity, one can evaluate its technical competency, and one can assess its aesthetic quality. With respect to the child, one can appraise his[her] apparent satisfaction with his[her] work, his[her] engagement in it, and the insight revealed by his[her] comments about his[her] own work and the work of others. (p. 13)

Eisner (1971) strongly opposed a dichotomy between product and process claiming that:

> They are like two sides of a coin. Processes can be improved by attending to the product and products improved by making inferences about the processes. To neglect one in favor of the other is to be pedagogically naïve. (p. 11)

The teacher participants' are not prepared to evaluate for product. They recognize their lack of knowledge in art and they continue to hold on to their negative memories of art-making from the past and want to provide a more positive experience for their own students.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Krystle was the only teacher to attend art education courses during her stay at university. The other teachers received minimum art education instruction in their educational methodology courses in Teachers' College. With the exception of Priscilla, all the teachers had been introduced at some point, to an interdisciplinary approach to integrate art with other disciplines but few carried on with this approach in their teaching.

Krystle came away from her two half-year courses in art education with the belief that one can teach art without having to be "an artist" and that there was more to art that just being able to draw well. She was taught how to introduce children to the elements of art and how to

integrate art with language arts and has carried through with this in her current teaching. Her art education courses also influenced her approach to teaching art where the emphasis is on process over product.

Josephine was also introduced to an interdisciplinary approach to integrate visual arts and language arts in Teachers' College but her response was quite different from Krystle's. Josephine found this approach too structured, too teacher-directed and missing the element of self-expression. Her current method of teaching art deviates from the interdisciplinary approach and embraces teaching for free-expression.

Priscilla's education methodology courses prepared her for teaching art by providing her with art ideas along with some information about teaching art to children and how to evaluate art. The only integration Priscilla noted was perhaps asking a child to draw a cell for science class and where the emphasis would be on neatness and being able to draw with a ruler. Priscilla teaches art based on "art ideas" that she picks up from magazines or other teachers.

Molly chose music and literature over art in Teachers' College. Consequently, her exposure to art education was minimal. During her practicum experiences in university, she observed the teaching approaches used by two mentoring teachers, one her advisor and the other her co-operating teacher. Her advisor introduced her to an interdisciplinary way of teaching subjects and her co-operating teacher modeled a more structured approach to teaching in general. Molly came away from her teacher training with a belief that somehow teaching could combine creativity and structure. This belief has carried into her way of teaching art which acknowledges both a structured/thematic approach and a more free, expressive approach.

All the teachers spoke of having taken professional development workshops in art. The responses related to their experiences varied. Priscilla sees these workshops as a way to get art ideas. Josephine finds the workshops which are usually given by other teachers and not

specialists, quite disappointing as they present project ideas which she views as too structured. Krystle, unlike the other two enjoys her workshops where she finds the emphasis on experience rather than product useful.

Many of the ideas that were presented to the teachers during their teaching training have impacted on their present beliefs concerning the teaching of art in both positive and negative ways.

APPROACHES TO TEACHING ART

When the teachers were asked to comment on the purpose/goals of art in their classrooms, they revealed a list of commonly shared beliefs that included: to participate in self-expression, to be free, to have fun, to relax from the routines, pressures and structure of the curriculum, to create, experiment and come up with exciting ideas, to share accomplishments and to enhance classroom learning and physical space. Bresler's (1992) study of in-service teachers revealed similar goals:

> ...they typically spoke of change of pace, promoting creativity and the uniqueness of the child, and the expression of self and imagination....Observations indicated clearly that they rarely drew students' attention to artistic ideas and concepts like form, repetition and variation. There was little *guidance* to explore and experiment with materials, even less with ideas and aesthetic qualities. (p. 403)

The teachers' approaches to including art in their classrooms were shaped by their beliefs about art and art education, which in turn were strongly influenced by their past experiences as students, their lack of knowledge and skills in art and lack of confidence in their own abilities as "makers of art." From her study of generalists, Bresler (1992) observed various approaches used by teachers to engage students in art-making experiences. These ways of teaching included *teaching art as a "free-expression/open-ended activity"* (p.403), using a more *teacher-directed approach, "integrating art into academics"* (p.407) and less common, *teaching art as a discipline* by teachers with art backgrounds. Bresler

(1994) had also later classified generalists' approaches to teaching art into three orientations: "*the rote, teacher-centered orientation, the open-ended student-centered orientation* and *higher-order cognitive orientation*" (pp.93-96). She described the goals of each orientation as follows:

> The first orientation is *imitative*, perpetuating the general academic curriculum in its goals and structures: the second is *complementary*, trying to compensate for teachers' perceptions of an imbalanced academic curriculum: the third is expansive, aiming to enhance the curriculum in ways that are advocated in the scholarly literature, and incorporate into it a variety of intelligences and modes of thinking. (1994, p. 90)

This study of in-service teachers gleaned similar findings related to Bresler's study. I identified three styles among my teacher participants which I labeled: *free art, structured art and interdisciplinary art.* These correspond respectively to Bresler's descriptions of how some generalists teach art using an open-ended approach, a more teacher-directed approach or an approach where they integrate art into their academics (Bresler, 1992, 1995). In my study, *free art* corresponds to Bresler's *student-centered orientation* and *structured art* into the *teacher-centered orientation. Interdisciplinary art* could fit into either/or, or a combination of the two orientations. I observed that some teachers even used more than one approach when teaching art and some altered their approaches for different age groups. As well, approaches to teaching art did not necessarily correspond to the approaches used by teachers to teach their other subjects.

Free-art

All of the teachers cited examples of teaching art as an open-ended activity. Josephine, the teacher with the least background in art and art education, was the only teacher who made exclusive use of this style of teaching art. She believes that the purpose of art is to free children from daily school pressures and structured curriculum. She described her art

lessons as "really off the wall" and proudly remarked "although other teachers cringe when I recount these lessons, I think the only word to describe them is delightful!" Her art lessons are rarely planned in advance as she prefers to simply suggest themes, holiday or other, provide materials (sometimes colour coordinated for seasonal projects) and have the children interpret in a totally free way.

Molly prefers to teach kindergarten children using an open-ended approach as she believes this is what "creating" is all about. She sets up a "craft table" where the children can make art on their own during "activity time." This free approach to art-making became part of Molly's curriculum after years of observing her own children, "they just do it, they're not inhibited, they just do whatever they want and they create really nice things." She believes that making art in this way is non-threatening because, "nobody's sitting there giving them guidelines saying you have to take that there, you have to cut it like this."

Krystle pointed out that when she first began teaching kindergarten she would focus on the holidays and supply her students with coloured appropriate materials and ask the children to create on their own:

> ...like Halloween—like would let them explore in kindergarten. I'd pick orange paint and the orange crepe paper and the black and let them do whatever they wanted with orange and black. Well I thought this is important and the kids liked it. They didn't have to create something [specific]. (Krystle, transcription, p.28)

These teachers are convinced that encouraging children to be totally free in their art-making allows them the best opportunity to be "creative" and "self-expressive." Unfortunately, with this approach teachers do not really "teach" art but rather they support another myth as outlined by Eisner (1971):

> Children develop best in art if left to their own resources provided they have plenty of art materials and emotional support from the teacher. (p. 7)

Teachers are reduced to being "dispensers of materials and a fountain of emotional support" (Eisner, 1971, p. 8). Children are not being taught skills, techniques or art appreciation but rather are invited to stretch their imaginations to make "something" on their own. This approach is appealing to teachers who have little background in art education and lack confidence in their own art teaching skills. This approach favours most kindergarten children who are easily motivated by art materials and who are more process-oriented. Reflecting on her own study of generalists, Bresler (1994) noted that the teachers who opted for an open-ended approach "saw their role as creating a noncritical, supportive ambience which acknowledged students' creativity, and constantly encouraged students to follow their own ideas and inclinations. Evaluation was supportive and positive" (p. 95). She also added that with this approach teachers do not provide their students "with opportunities to learn a set of skills and knowledges specific to the arts" (Bresler, 1995, p.30).

Structured art

Molly, Priscilla and Krystle all made use of teacher-directed art projects where instructions, samples and techniques were shown to give guidance to their students. Molly provides some "structured" activities for her kindergarten class students who cannot work comfortably with the open-ended method and need more direction. In her years as a grade six teacher, she made use of project ideas that consisted of step-by-step procedures where students did not have to "start from scratch" and where both teacher and some students appreciated the comfort of working with an already "thought-out" project "plan." Molly did not have to "teach" art but rather help her students follow step-by-step instructions to achieve a predetermined art product.

Priscilla has established a repertoire of "standby" project ideas that she uses repeatedly. Like Molly's structured lessons, some of Priscilla's

"standby" projects involve very specific directions to follow, a few allow a little more freedom of choice. Most of the project ideas come from magazines where instructions are provided. According to Priscilla, "they're quick and easy and you know exactly what they should look like..."

Krystle also makes use of step-by-step instructional teaching when she plans for holiday craft projects to decorate the classroom. Noting that the making of crafts limits self-expression, she stressed the importance of including crafts to provide "fun" experiences for her students.

Bresler's study found that most teacher-directed projects consisted of holiday crafts, "one-time activities" that seemed to focus more on children's various "abilities" as opposed to their ideas (Bresler, 1992). She added that those projects which didn't focus on holidays but were still teacher-directed, often excluded the study of art concepts, and the invitation to explore personal ideas, skills and personal aesthetics (1992). These activities were "procedure-oriented rather than intellectually or emotionally stimulating" (1994, p. 94).

Eisner (1971) noted that "many teachers do not know what they are after in art education and focus therefore on activities or projects" (p. 15). He added that teachers often have no idea of how to extend a project idea or build on it and instead choose to find a new project. This proved to be true of the teachers in this study. Because they lack knowledge in art theory and concepts, art projects tended to consist of isolated art events gleaned from magazines or craft books. Projects had no connection or continuity. Eisner (1971) concluded that this method of teaching trivializes an art program and also limits the amount of time a child has with a particular medium and consequently the necessary skills to successfully use the medium as a form of expression. According to Thompson (1997):

> When the subject is art, many classroom teachers do not know what to do or why they are doing it, or how to make it work. They lack both philosophies and practical bases for teaching art. (p. 19)

Interdisciplinary art

A third approach to include art in the curriculum, used by Priscilla and Krystle and mentioned by Molly, was to integrate art with other subjects.

In her role as an English teacher for grade seven and eight students, Priscilla incorporated art with drama by having her students create set designs and props. Drama themes serve as an inspiration for art project ideas which according to Priscilla, seem to have a more "laissez-faire kind of freedom" to them compared to "regular" art projects.

Krystle's interdisciplinary approach to teaching art involves integrating visual arts with language arts. Students are sometimes asked to draw a picture and write a story about their drawing or to respond to an assigned story by drawing their feelings, likes/dislikes or response to a character in the story.

Molly mentioned that if she were to teach older students one day, she could see herself using art as a form of "enhancement" to other subjects through thematic links.

A recent study conducted by Kowalchuk & Stone (2000) into teachers' attitudes about art education concluded that in-service teachers' attempts to integrate art often reduced art as a tool to support other subjects:

> Elementary teachers' willingness to include art in their curriculum is a positive outcome. Unfortunately, with limited time to research and plan rich cross-disciplinary connections, teachers often use art as no more than a vehicle for learning other subjects. Instead of exploration and discovery about art ideas, artists, and artworks, art education ends up providing the tools and materials for activities in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. (p. 38)

Thompson (1997) noted that classroom teachers used art in a way that was different from art specialists:

> Classroom teachers taught art to clarify, consolidate, and vivify other learning--to help children make sense of their experiences, especially those experiences they shared in school as they studied Greek mythology, or butterflies, or rainforests. (p. 15)

Bresler (1992) learned from her study that teachers often integrated art so as to reduce the loss of "academic time." She also concluded that what resulted from this integration was that art was used as a "vehicle"(p.407) for other subjects instead of being treated as a discipline on its own. The same could be concluded from this study. Priscilla's plays and special events provided a need for props. Molly 's proposed use of art as enhancement and Krystle's interdisciplinary approach both used art to support another discipline. In all these instances the integrity of art being taught as a discipline was lost.

With the exception of only one of the teachers, all of the participants in this study made use of two or more approaches in their teaching; they all included interdisciplinary and structured as two of their methods. The free art style which was the only approach used by Josephine and excluded from Priscilla's list, was commonly chosen by the teachers who taught kindergarten levels and who perceived art as part of play for this age group. It is interesting to note that these different approaches were seen by these teachers as serving different purposes. While young children could "play" with art, it was generally believed that art had to be a little more serious for older students. Through structured activities and integration, art could be "taught" or at least be connected thematically into the curriculum to meet the needs of older students.

Summary

Teachers perceived art-making in their classrooms as an opportunity for their students to be self-expressive, to create, to experiment, to have fun and to relax from the pressures of the curriculum. There was no mention of teaching art skills and techniques, aesthetics, art appreciation or art history, although teachers were well aware that these components to art existed. Teaching art was a challenge for some who struggled with issues related to loss of classroom control, the logistics of organizing art lessons and the overall lack of confidence in "teaching" art as a "discipline."

Three general approaches surfaced as attempts to teach art. The *free-art* approach allowed students to be totally liberated in their art-making with little interference from the teacher. *Structured* art lessons provided step-by-step instructions. Ideas that came from books or magazines, provided recipe-like lessons for teachers to follow and then guide their students through the steps. The third approach *to integrate* art into the curriculum, usually done with language arts, provided themes for art projects and demanded no teaching of art as "art."

Teachers often considered more than one approach to teaching art to their students, dependent on the group they were teaching and the general purpose of the assignment. With limited background in art education, teachers tend to teach art as isolated projects which often lack continuity or linkage from one lesson to another; rarely is the technical, aesthetic or historical perspective presented. Some effort is made to integrate art with other subjects but often only to "support" or "enhance" another subject.

It cannot be expected that generalists will teach art in the manner of art specialists who have concentrated years of study in art education. However, we can help generalists prepare themselves better for teaching art if we examine their beliefs and attitudes about art and art education, their underlying needs and insecurities. Based on the findings that

surfaced from this cross-analysis, certain shared ways of thinking about art and art education emerged from the teachers' experiences of themselves as makers of art and as teachers of art. A closer examination of their commonly shared beliefs/experiences are significant to considering the implications for preparing professional development workshops in art education for in-service teachers. A more focused look at these beliefs and their implications will be presented in the next chapter.

PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

SUMMARY

I began this study with a concern about the marginalization of art in the elementary school and a felt-need to examine how art is taught by generalists and most importantly, their reasons for teaching art. This led me to pursue my inquiry into teachers' lifetime beliefs and attitudes about art and art education and the way in which these beliefs translated into classroom teaching. From the stories I gathered of the participants, I structured my findings and interpretations under two main perspectives, *teacher as art-maker* and *teacher as teacher of art.* It was made clear to me by this study that the teachers' experiences, both positive and negative as makers of art, impacted on their choice to pursue, or not, further studies in art education. Past experiential learning proved significant in influencing their current approaches to art education as well. The beliefs and attitudes expressed by the participant teachers hold strong implications for the design of successful teacher education programs. This chapter revisits the teachers' beliefs and attitudes and the resulting implications for teacher education. It concludes with an overview of the significance of this study and ideas for further research.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

Art-Making Concerns: Fear and Insecurity

The stories the teachers told of their fears and insecurities related to the making of art were unsettling, centering mostly on school experiences where there was lack of instruction and support from the teacher and where in later grades, their artwork was evaluated and

compared to others in the class. While early preschool experiences where art was part of play, proved non-threatening, the school experience contributed to a growing lack of confidence in the teachers' abilities as makers of art. They began to recognize that there were others with "talent" and eventually gave up on art, some teachers earlier than others. Eisner's (1998) reference to Dewey's definition of a "miseducative experience" clearly explains the negative learning experienced by these teachers:

> Miseducative experience arrests growth and/or develops dispositions toward a domain of human experience that limit or diminish the probability of growth in that area. More generally, experiences that result in phobias or anxieties, that prohibit the enjoyment or participation in wholesome human activities, that limit perception, that promote prejudice, or that diminish rationality--all of these experiences, because they limit growth are miseducational in character. (Eisner, 1998, p. 99)

Unlike other subjects where the product of one's efforts can often be concealed within the covers of a folder or notebook, art is visible and is intended to be seen by others. At a time when children become more self-conscious of what others think and begin to compare themselves with peers, it can be devastating to expose artwork that one doesn't feel good about. And it is very difficult to feel good about your art when you believe that you have not been adequately taught and where you are evaluated on whether you got it "right" even though you don't know what "right" is. Holt (1995) points out that:

> With the development of this wider awareness and the increasing socialization which attends it, the child becomes increasingly aware of viewpoints, standards and opinions that exist beyond itself, and of the gulf that exists between these phenomena and its own work. As a result, the child's response to image making is thrown into crisis. (p. 152)

If teachers are to feel good about teaching art, they must first feel good about making art. Teacher educators need to consider ways of presenting generalists with experiences that transform the way teachers see themselves as makers of art. As pointed out by Thompson (1997):

> Those who remember art as something occasional and expendable, a source of frustration and embarrassment or an intermittent respite, may continue to work under the influence of those experiences, unless their attitudes are transformed through teacher education. (p. 16)

Thompson continues by saying "...many who teach art methods courses for classroom teachers consider the task of dispelling apathy and anxiety to be a primary focus of instruction" (1997, p. 17). This could apply to the teaching of both in-service and pre-service teachers generalists because they both share similar anxieties associated with past artless experiences as "makers of art." As noted in this study, in-service generalists' anxieties related to past art-making experiences impacted on their choices to avoid formal training in art whenever possible. Insufficient formal training contributed to the teachers' feelings of insecurity when teaching art because they subsequently lacked the necessary skills and knowledge. It is critical that in-service training takes into consideration art-related anxieties that are symptomatic of generalists with little or no formal background in art and art education.

Teachers need to experience art-making in more positive ways than they were accustomed to in the past if they are to change their negative beliefs about themselves as makers of art. From the teachers' stories of artless experiences, I learned that evaluation, being compared to others, seeing others with talent and receiving little support from the teacher, all contributed to their lack of confidence with art. To rebuild their confidence, teachers can be introduced to studio experiences where the emphasis is less on talent associated with individual's graphic abilities and the need to conform or compete with others. Designing projects that focus less on realism and encourage more abstract, expressive responses to conceptual themes and even doing some group work, can provide non-threatening experiences where teachers begin to think differently about themselves as makers of art. Teacher educators need to be supportive, "tactful and considerate" (Thompson, 1997, p.17) when guiding teachers

through this process of experiential transformation and avoid criticisms that might impede growth or change.

A good example of an undertaking developed for in-service teachers to learn about art through supportive hands-on experiences, was the Concordia University's Summer Institute (from 1989-92). For the first two years of the Institute, I worked as an instructor; in the last two years I was the co-ordinator. Each summer for four consecutive years, a six-day program (three credit course) was fashioned to help teachers learn about making and responding to art and ways they could integrate art into their classroom curriculum. The goal of the Institute was to introduce teachers to the elementary visual arts program set up by the Quebec Ministry of Education which emphasized the use of motivation, exploration, expression, response and evaluation. Hands-on activities were carefully designed to be non-threatening to provide positive learning experiences for the teachers. In 1992 the group of teacher educators chose to focus on the concept of "integration" and set up project ideas and themes that would build one upon the other throughout the weekly program. Art-making projects were not viewed as isolated experiences but rather were seen as part of larger "whole" on the theme of "creation, self and others." The emphasis on integration was designed to help teachers learn through their participation, how art could be an integral part of their curriculum. Thematic project ideas were conceived that would help teachers freely express themselves within a non-competitive framework and still learn techniques related to making and responding to art. A museum visit was organized to make a connection to the themes presented and teachers were introduced to various games/response activities as ways to connect viewing and making.

In response to a group kinesthetic experience re-enacting a "crowded situation," participants individually created collaged self-portrait pieces using coloured papers and magazine cutouts.

Figs. 13-15:
"Crowded situation" self-portrait collages

Another self-portrait piece that made use of ready-mades was the shadowbox assemblage where teachers were asked to assemble images and objects that said something about themselves.

Figs. 16 &17:
Shadowbox assemblages/self-portraits

In both instances participants did not feel they had to conform to a "model/sample" or compete with one another. Each piece was unique and demonstrated a freedom of expression within a thematic framework.

Teachers were also introduced to ways in which they could weave art into their curriculum. A motivational installation was created to show how language arts, sound, science and art objects from various countries on the theme of "birds" could inspire an interdisciplinary project-based approach. Following the motivation, participants created exotic birds from paper bags which finally became part of the final "creation" mural that they constructed as a group.

Figs. 18-21: Motivation installation on the theme of birds

Fig. 22: Exotic bird creations

Figs. 23 & 24: Creation murals

The teachers who participated in the Institute reported having learned a great deal about art and art education in a supportive and non-competitive environment. The Institute helped teachers see that they could have positive experiences making art even though they were not "artists."

Art-Teaching Concerns: Lack of Confidence and Knowledge

The teachers' comments about teaching art, stressed lack of confidence and lack of art skills and knowledge as main concerns. With very little formal training, the teachers chose ways to incorporate art activities without really having to teach "art." *Free art* allowed children to create on their own with very little interference from the teacher while *structured art* which was very teacher directed, usually made use of step-by-step procedures to achieve a desired outcome. *Interdisciplinary art* which usually followed a theme initiated by another subject, often used art as a tool. In all instances the integrity of art as a discipline was lost.

Overall, art was viewed as anti-intellectual. The belief that art was mainly about "making" ignored thinking about art as a body of knowledge and a way of knowing. Using art, connections can be made to

other subjects through an exploration of conceptual and subject matter themes. As well, a constructivist approach (Prawat, 1992; Simpson, 1996) to teaching art attends to different learning styles and encourages children to be active learners in constructing their own knowledge about art (Simpson, 1996). As Simpson (1996) points out "teaching" art encourages the linkage of ideas:

> Teaching children about the meaning of art and artists is making connections and linking ideas about art to their personal worlds and, often, to other academic subjects through verbal and visual expression. (p. 54)

Unfortunately, to teach in a way where these linkages can be made, requires background knowledge in art; many generalists have only had one semester in art education at best and very few have experienced professional development workshops like the Summer Institute. The question that remains is how can the quality of art instruction be improved upon, given that generalists have limited exposure to art and art education and feel so insecure about their abilities to teach art? Changes to professional development courses that attend to generalists' needs as well as redefining the generalist's role in the teaching of art are possible solutions to remedy the situation.

Changes to professional development courses

To better prepare generalists to teach art, in-service teacher training courses need to address some of the underlying issues and concerns that have been expressed by this study and others (Bresler, 1992, 1995; Galbraith, 1991; Grauer, 1995; Smith-Shank, 1993, 1995; Thompson, 1997) that center on teachers' lack of confidence, and lack of knowledge and skills related to art and art-making. Based on these findings, in-service training should provide opportunities for teachers to "re-experience" art-making in more positive/supportive environments while acquiring the necessary subject matter skills, and techniques.

Added to this, teachers need to learn how to respond to works of art and the visual world in general. Expressed concerns about the logistics related to the teaching of art, the fears of loss of classroom control and uncertainties about evaluating for art, need to be addressed as well as a pedagogy specific to teaching art. An essential added component to teacher training would include teacher reflection where prior beliefs about art and art education could be examined and challenged within a more supportive and informed context (Fensterrmacher, 1979; Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996). Prawat's reference to Posner et al. (1982) cited their list of three criteria that need to be met to bring about change in people's beliefs:

> First, individuals must be dissatisfied with their existing beliefs in some way; second, they must find the alternatives both intelligible and useful in extending their understanding to new situations; third, they must figure out some way to connect the new beliefs with their earlier conceptions. (cited in Prawat, 1992, p.357)

Clearly, the teachers in this study did not feel competent in their abilities to teach art and recognized a need to be more knowledgeable in art and art education. Prior experiences influenced their beliefs about themselves as makers of art and how they chose to teach art in their classrooms. According to Richardson (1996):

> Beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experiences and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs. (p. 104)....
>
> Studies of the origins of teachers' beliefs indicate that many different life experiences contribute to the formation of strong and enduring beliefs about teaching and learning. Within a constructivist learning and teaching framework, these beliefs should be surfaced and acknowledged during the teacher education program if the program is to make a difference in the deep structure of knowledge and beliefs held by the students. (p. 106)

Richardson (1996) maintains that helping in-service teachers change their beliefs might be easier than pre-service because in-service teachers have gained "practical knowledge" and are in the position to make

connections between their beliefs and classroom practices. Participants in my study were clearly able to make connections between their beliefs which were influenced by past experiences, and their current methods of teaching of art. In-service teacher training can build on these reflections and provide positive, supportive and informative learning environments where teachers may begin to develop a new set of beliefs about themselves as confident makers and teachers of art.

Redefining the generalist's role in the teaching of art

Given that in-service teacher training courses can help transform teachers' beliefs about the importance of art in the curriculum and gain knowledge about the teaching of art, there is no guarantee that teachers will implement the approaches/ideas espoused through their training. As Kowalchuk and Stone (2000) point out:

> Elementary teachers have little time in the school day for the kind of thought needed to construct meaningful art learning experiences for students, and correspondingly, their ideas and beliefs about art and its place in the curriculum lose out to other more pressing concerns. (p. 38)

To reduce the likelihood of having art marginalized by teachers who feel the demands of creating meaningful art experiences too formidable, a possible solution would be to support partnerships in education. Instead of expecting individual teachers to be solely responsible for the design and teaching of art in their classrooms, they can work in collaboration with other teachers to design interdisciplinary thematic projects where the expertise of individual teachers can be utilized. In this way, a teacher on staff who has more background knowledge in art and art education or a hired art specialist can act as a resource person, one who is knowledgeable in art skills, techniques and theories about children's graphic development. By working together, teachers can become apprentices in areas that they feel they are less competent in. This does not support the view that art specialists take over all of the art teaching

but rather work with the generalists to act as a resource and a partner in collaboration. As well, this initiative does not suggest that generalists not take advantage of professional development opportunities for advancing their knowledge in art and art education. Baker (1991) supports the idea of integrating art specialists within elementary schools as "master resource teachers and subject matter specialists" (p.24), partners in education with elementary generalists. He defines their possible role as "resource people who teach in tandem with general classroom educators for extended times and/or with in-depth units of integrated study..." (p. 24). In a study of classroom teachers' approaches to teaching art, Nelson (1996) also recommended that art teachers and generalists work collaboratively towards designing interdisciplinary instruction.

Simpson (1996) points out the use of TI (theme immersion) teams in some U.S. elementary and middle schools where art educators work alongside elementary teachers to develop integrated units of learning. Art is used "to reinforce knowledge gained through reading, writing, questioning, movement, music, dramatization, and work across disciplines to weave a cohesive thread of understanding" (Simpson, 1996, p. 57). Art is used as a "learning" tool (Simpson) and has far-reaching benefits when it is a part of an interdisciplinary curriculum:

> Beyond acquisition of skills and reinforcement of ideas, art can often be the link to more imaginative interpretations of ideas; the concrete "seeing" of patterns; the visual symbolic message necessary to cement a concept or to push it toward deeper meaning. (1996, p. 57)

Constructivist curriculum models often make use of thematically integrated units where teachers worked collaboratively to design lessons that meet the interests and needs of their students. The Reggio Emilia preschools of northern Italy, support a model of schooling that embraces a collaborative approach to planning and teaching. Each school employs an art specialist known as an *atelierista* to work with other teachers and

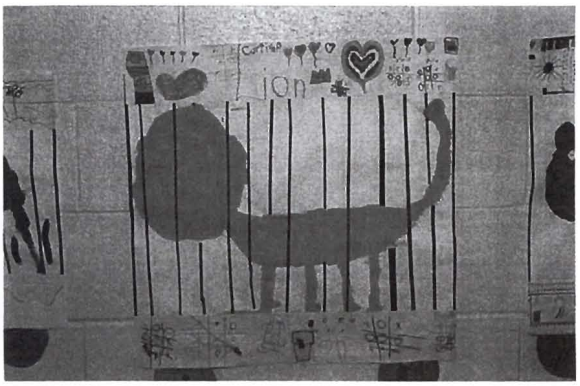
curriculum specialists to develop projects that take their direction from the childrens' interests. Art is valued as a subject to explore and as a symbolic language used by children in their everyday learning experiences. As Fraser (2000) points out:

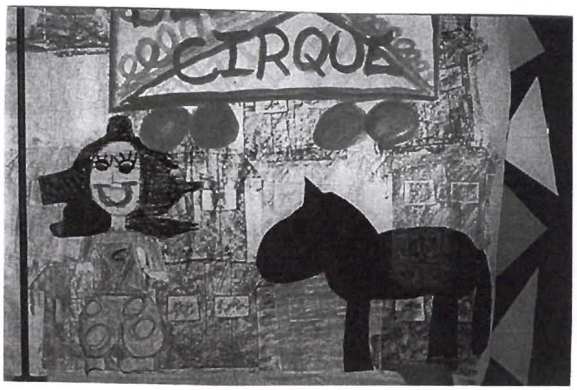
> In Reggio Emilia art has a broader purpose beyond sensory exploration and self-expression and becomes a tool for learning, a means of communicating ideas and one of the hundred languages children use in representing their ideas. (p. 148)

Katz and Chard (2000) support the "Project Approach" which aims "...to complement and enhance what children learn through other parts of their curriculum" (p. 12). They note that with this approach "...children's ideas, questions, theories, predictions, and interests are major determinants of the experiences provided and the work accomplished" (2000, p. 5). Not unlike the Reggio Emilia method, the Project Approach supports a constructivist emergent curriculum and advocates the integration of various "subject" areas.

If the integrity of art as a discipline is to survive, teachers should be encouraged to utilize available support and resources that colleagues/curriculum specialists can offer through partnerships and collaboration on interdisciplinary projects. When I interviewed Krystle and asked her to cite her most worthwhile art teaching experience she spoke about her school's circus project which invited participation from all grades to approach the theme of circus. From a variety of disciplinary perspectives, teachers worked collaboratively and with the assistance and expertise of a resident teacher (who happened to be an art specialist), they designed lesson units that dealt with the theme of circus on many levels. Children of all grades were inspired and motivated by stories of the circus and by viewing the art of both visual and performing artists. Each class took on a different project and at the end, all classes came together for a parade and talent show. The outcome of the children's efforts on the theme of circus included researching and writing

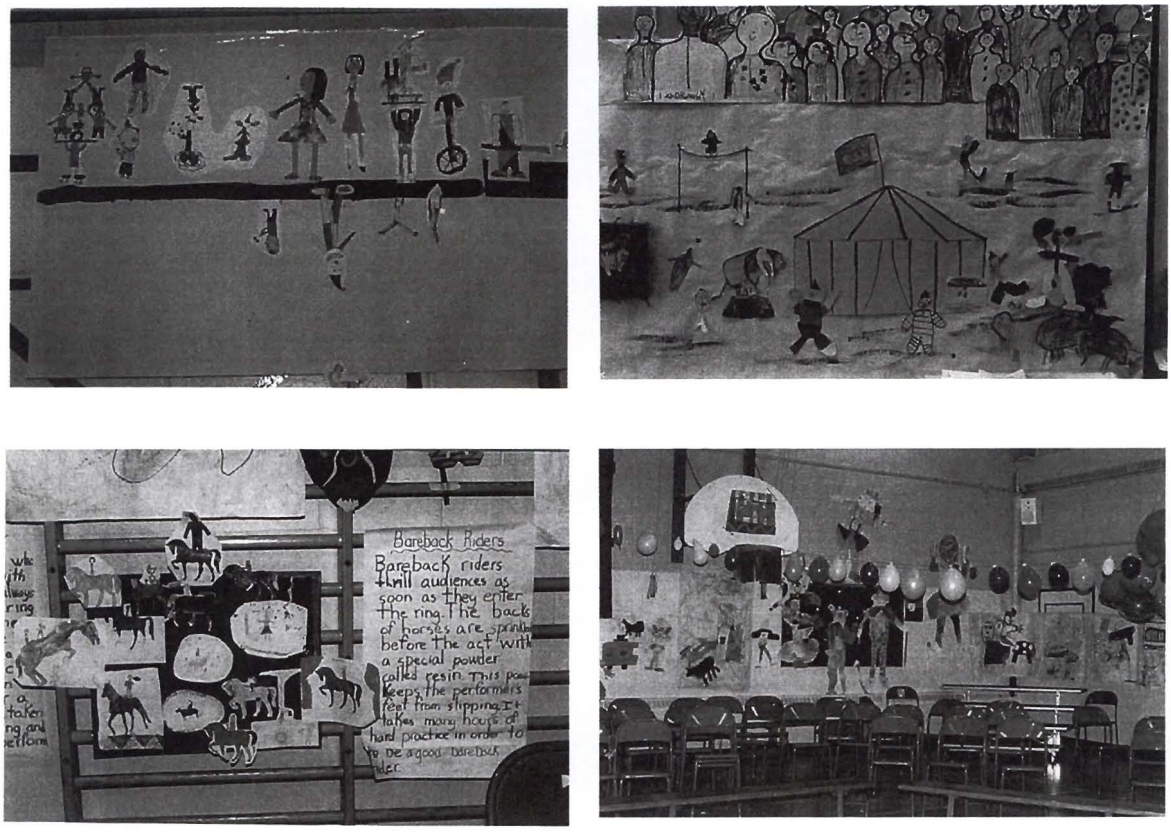
about the history of circus acts for social studies, creating paintings, murals, collages and masks, singing and making instruments for music, and learning about movement related to balance and juggling in physical education. Through their collaborative efforts, teachers collectively put together a unit that demonstrated the interconnectedness of various disciplines. This way of working together that offers support and assistance from colleagues with different areas of expertise, has strong implications for the teaching of art where teachers may feel they lack knowledge, skills and ideas.





Figs. 25-28: Circus acts

Figs. 29-32: Circus clowns



Figs. 33-36: Additional projects on the theme of circus

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research into generalists' beliefs about art and art education builds upon previous studies of both pre-service and in-service generalists' beliefs about the same. The studies of pre-service teachers looked at beliefs about art and art education at the beginning and at the end of art methodology courses. The in-service teacher studies generally focused on beliefs related to approaches to teaching art. My study made connections to both the pre-service and in-service studies by looking at generalists' lifetime beliefs about art and art education and their influence on personal current approaches to teaching art. It makes the link between beliefs and practice.

Some studies of pre-service generalists chose to examine student teachers' beliefs prior and post methodology coursework in art education to see if course content could affect change in beliefs. Galbraith (1991), Grauer (1995) and Kowalchuk and Stone (2000) all noted a change in student-teachers' beliefs over the course of their studies in art education to a more subject-centered orientation. For Galbraith and Kowalchuk this was a change from a more child-centered approach. Other studies by Myers (1992) and Smith-Shank (1992b) concluded that some beliefs persisted even after methodology courses. Myers (1992) noted that preconceptions about talent, training and instruction remained unchanged for some. Results from Smith-Shank's study (1992b) concluded that many pre-service teachers still felt insecure about their abilities to teach art.

Many of the pre-service teachers' expressed beliefs and experiences in these studies that related to lack of confidence, knowledge and skills to teach art were found in my study as well. The fact that many in-service teachers' beliefs resemble those of pre-service teachers suggests that many beliefs remain unchanged even after many years of teaching. This study identified the actual beliefs held by the generalists and how these beliefs impacted on their approaches to teaching art. Many of their approaches and attitudes towards the teaching of art paralleled findings by Kowalchuk and Stone (2000) and Stake, Bresler and Mabry (1991) that stress the difficulties teachers have with teaching art as a discipline and the ways in which they work around their lack of knowledge in art.

Few studies have examined teachers' beliefs from the dual perspective of maker and teacher of art. Life history research enabled me to trace the roots of their teaching beliefs to prior experiences as makers of art. Studying the lives of "experienced" teachers revealed the approaches actually being used in classrooms while studies of pre-service teachers only demonstrate how neophytes envision the ways they plan to teach art. The added experience of teaching in schools and the

pressures to conform to institutional expectations have their own set of influences on shaping how teachers prioritize what and how they will teach various subjects. This, coupled with teachers' lack of confidence and knowledge about art, contribute to the marginalization of art in the elementary classroom.

By inviting teachers to share their life stories from a multitude of perspectives, I was able to follow the threads of experience that created their tapestry of beliefs about art and the teaching of art. The concerns and issues expressed by the teacher participants helped to identify areas that need to be addressed in teacher education programs. The similarities between the pre-service beliefs and in-service beliefs suggest that addressing these concerns in teacher education programs might benefit both groups of teachers. This study points to the ways art is taught in the schools when prior beliefs are not challenged or altered and when teachers are not adequately prepared to teach art.

FURTHER RESEARCH

While doing a study of this sort many new questions and issues arise along the way. For example, the issue of women's lives (versus teachers' lives) comes up as a result of sampling. As well, there is the question of "truth value" of autobiographical studies involving memory resulting from the use of this methodology. What follows is a look at some areas that are key in terms of their implications for future research in the area of teacher study and life history.

As I had noted in a previous chapter, when I had first proposed to carry out this study, my focus was not aimed at the lives of women teachers. However, given the fact that I was working primarily with elementary school teachers, there was a greater likelihood that my participants would be women. What resulted is that four women teachers, all in their forties and with seven to twenty-six years teaching experience volunteered to participate; my final sample became a women's

only group. Although this group of participants represented a small sampling of women very close in age, and with similar cultural and educational backgrounds, the outcome of this study was nonetheless significant as it provided a very detailed look at the source of teachers' beliefs and their influence on the teaching of art. While there has of course been a great deal of work already on women teachers' lives (Acker, 1994; Miller, 1996; O'Reilly Scanlon, 2001; Rumin, 1998), to name a few, as a result of this study, I have come across new questions that relate to women teachers and their experiences with art. For example, how have past experiences influenced the distinction that is made between craft and art? Why did Krystle, for example, refer to her own art-making as "more of a crafty-type of thing than actual art?" and regard herself as not being "creative." To what extent is teachers' reticence to come forward as artists linked to their reticence to come forward as specialists in other areas? Are there gender differences in the way men and women elementary teachers describe their artful and artless experiences and approach art education in general?

Other issues related to methodology come to mind. How could a study of this sort be set up as self-study? How might the teachers who were involved in this study undertake the kind of work that Hamilton (1998), Mitchell and Weber (1999) suggest as well as others, to study one's own teaching practice? How different might a self-study look from a study done by an outside researcher such as myself? I am reminded of Priscilla who claimed that teaching art was like "pulling teeth." How might a self-study reveal the source of Priscilla's pain when viewed in the context of her "teaching self"?

This study also raises possibilities for future work in the area of memory work and life history. Drawing upon recent research in the area of memory and self-study (Mitchell & Weber, 1999; O'Reilly Scanlon, 2001), it would interesting to explore the notion of truth in autobiographical accounts from memory and the influence of childhood

memories upon adult practices in the classroom. What might the teachers have learned about themselves as "teachers of art" had they been asked to re-examine and re-write their written accounts of "artful" and "artless" experiences attending to details that might have been overlooked or mis-represented?

Finally, my visit to Molly's house sparked my interest in the use of visual evidence. As I had mentioned in chapter three, I had not originally planned to photograph artwork to include in this study. However as Molly began to tell me about the art that adorned her walls, I could see the significance of including a visual record of these art pieces. Studying what people chose to hang on their walls or lock away in boxes for safekeeping can be as revealing of people's beliefs and values as the stories they tell. The work of Jon Prosser (1998) and others on the uses of visual evidence and material artifacts suggests to me the significance of incorporating visual ethnographic approaches in studies of this sort.

CONCLUSION

As previously noted, several studies have looked at the art beliefs of pre-service teachers usually within the context of university methodology courses. Very few studies have focused on experienced teachers' beliefs about art and art education, the source of these beliefs and how these beliefs have shaped their approaches to teaching art. The themes that emerged supported many of the findings from previous studies of both pre-service and in-service teachers and hold strong implications for teacher education research and professional development planning. Life-history research, because it is a lengthy process, limits the number of participants that can be studied. A repertoire of stories and shared meanings could develop from additional life-history studies. More teacher studies of this sort could attend to differences in beliefs as they relate to gender, age, experience, social, cultural and geographical backgrounds. Because art methodology

content changes over time, longitudinal studies that follow pre-service teachers into their teaching careers could trace the strength and weaknesses of various teacher-training methods. For the same reasons, follow-up studies of in-service professional development programs would provide researchers and teacher educators insight into teachers' issues and concerns related to implementing what they have learned.

Changes to teacher education programs that attend to the needs and insecurities generalists experience as makers and teachers of art and that consider the influence of pre-existing beliefs are essential if the quality of art education in the elementary schools is to improve. Continued research into the beliefs of generalists and the influence of these beliefs on the teaching of art can inform teacher educators of ways they can provide worthwhile learning experiences for teachers and help them recognize the importance and contributory effect that visual arts education can provide on the overall curriculum. If teachers can be provided with worthwhile and informative learning experiences in art, maybe they will eventually cease to carry on the tradition of teaching art only on Friday afternoons and as a reward for good behaviour.

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