In Search of Reciprocity Across a Standards Based Assessment Reform Network in Maine

Christopher A. Milliken

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By: Christopher A. Milliken

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Signed by the final examining committee:

Dr. David Pariser, PhD _____ Chair

Dr. Lorrie Blair, PhD _____ Examiner

Dr. David Pariser, PhD _____ Examiner

Dr. Juan Carlos Castro, PhD _____ Supervisor

Approved by _____
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

_____
Dean of Faculty

Date _____

ABSTRACT

The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative is a network of arts teachers and Maine Department of Education organizers who are fostering leadership in standards based learning and assessment. This study sought to answer the question: What is the reciprocal flow of ideas between a group of students, their teacher and the organizers of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative? To answer the question a case study employing ethnographic methods borrowed from Spradley's ethnographic interview process was used (1972). Three findings emerged: Standards based instruction and assessment requires that teachers qualify learning rather than quantify it, which requires major changes in classroom practices; the quantities of standards that are being developed at the state and national level are perhaps untenable; and the demands of creating a classroom community require and constrain teachers to employ sufficiency and efficiency that may be an obstacle to implementing standards based instruction.

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Dedication

To Dr. Shawn M. Caron, DVM, whose generosity of spirit and commitment to learning made this graduate school experience possible.

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Preface

This research is as much about perceptions as it is about facts. By perception I mean that which I attended to and that which I observed. What I have chosen to observe are the participatory conceptions that favor biological and cultural metaphors over other possibilities, when describing knowing, teaching and learning (Davis, et al. 2008). I center this investigation around one key definition for learning and teaching as the two are perceived through a lens of complexity. I am defining learning as experiences that are rich, focused and constrained by a teacher to fit the learners' needs and the conditions in which the learning is taking place. I see knowing, learning and teaching as components of a single act rather than as separate acts. I have not arrived at this definition and perception on my own. I am indebted to one text in particular, Engaging Minds, Changing Teaching in Complex Times (Davis, et al. 2008), as the theoretical frame in which I place this research. I chose this book for the following reasons: I am following in the academic tradition of my advisor, Dr. Juan Carlos Castro, whose own work employs complexity theories; and the theories and methods in this book helped me to articulate much of what I have been practicing in the classroom for the last 17 years; and finally, this theory is in keeping with the goals that the participants in this study have for themselves as they work toward improving arts education for all of Maine's children. In essence, complexity as a set of theories, was a good fit for this case study of the Maine Art Assessment Initiative

Chapter 1

Introduction

The mention of assessment in education often brings with it spirited opinions and discussions. The arts have quietly tried to remain separate from this discussion, but over the course of time have been pressed to provide data that demonstrate learner and program effectiveness. Beattie (1997) alludes to this measurement of effectiveness when defining assessment as "the method or process used for gathering information about people, programs, or objects for the purpose of making an evaluation" (p 2). Rather than evaluation, the emphasis in this research is placed on the classroom the environment and community in which the standards are set and the assessment takes place. The community at the center of this research is the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative, a group of teacher leaders and state level organizers who develop standards based learning and assessment activities and lead workshops for teachers across the State of Maine. This study looked for reciprocity across one segment of the MAAI network including student voices, the voice of their teacher and those of MAAI organizers. To look for reciprocity, ethnographic methods were borrowed and modified from Spradley (1997), to create a case study. The research process and data analysis was approached through complexity theories as they have been adapted for teachers (Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler, 2008). In the process of searching for reciprocity across the MAAI network 3 findings emerged:

- Students in this study revealed insights regarding instruction, the standards they had for their work and the assessment practices they employed in the classroom. This lead me to believe that 'qualifying data' on student learning in lieu of quantifying it in an effort to report

assessment outcomes, is perhaps the most important topic as well as a finding in this paper. The implication is that more data on student input is necessary to make standards effective.

- The vast quantity of standards that is being promoted in education became an issue for the teacher interviewed for this study. The exploration of standards based assessments and how they have come to populate assessment practices across the curriculum including the arts was an essential backdrop to this study and helped to ground this research finding. There are three implications: teachers will not fully implement plans that may change, too many standards are unsustainable and simple standards like those that were implemented in class I visited are learner friendly, learner implemented and in constant use.

- Efficiencies and sufficiencies are a vital part of the elementary school art education classroom. To stretch resources such as time, teacher energy and art materials teachers have to make critical decisions. The teacher who participated in this research illustrated through her classroom practice and though our interviews how limitations shape efficiencies and sufficiencies in art education.

These 3 findings represent the synthesis of the methodology, theory and data. What the reader will encounter in these pages is the careful and thoughtful understanding that assessment practices have the power to 'qualify' learning.

The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative

The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative (MAAI) is a network of teacher-leaders in the visual arts, music, dance and theater, who are developing standards-based curriculum and assessments and delivering professional development workshops. These teacher-leaders come from across the State of Maine at 36 sites. MAAI began in 2011 when the first 18 teacher leaders were selected from a pool of applicants. Another cohort of 18 leaders was added in the summer of 2012.

The initiative is organized by Argy Nestor, Visual and Performing Art Specialist at the Maine Department of Education, Catherine Ring, Executive Director of the New England Institute for Teacher Education and Rob Westerberg, Music Educator at York High School, York, Maine. MAAI originated in part from the fact that assessment has been driving the discussion in general education for the past 12 years in the State of Maine and across the USA.

Maine has recently adopted LD 1422, requiring all students to graduate by demonstrating competency in standards by 2018 (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html). With the adoption of the Common Core of Learning in the State and the soon to be released National Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts, demand for assessing learning in the arts has increased.

This study of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative is a contribution to the understanding of these substantial changes that are taking place on Maine's educational landscape within art education. This change is the drive toward standards-based assessment, with the desired result of learners who are more engaged in their learning and in the world in which they live. The work MAAI is doing to achieve this transformation in education is presented and analyzed here

through case study, employing ethnographic methods and framed in complexity theory (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2008).

Background / Positionality

I am a public school teacher. I have lived and worked in Maine for most of my teaching career and I am very close to the subject of inquiry I have taken up in this thesis. My background has informed my position in this study. My initial, preservice teacher training in the early 1990's emphasized planning for instruction including lessons, units and curriculum but was lighter on assessment. I was trained in Discipline-Based Art Education and I have been practicing most of its four tenets automatically in my classroom for the past five years without much regard for assessment in the visual arts. The first 15 years of my teaching career were spent as an elementary, bilingual classroom teacher. This has informed my understanding of assessment. Unlike most art teachers, I have had to assess students and be accountable for their learning in disciplines ranging from Math, Language Arts and Spanish.

My Lived Experience and Trends in School Assessment

From 1994, when I entered the teaching profession the pressures to assess were constant. In 1996 Maine adopted the Maine Learning Results which brought standards and standards based assessments to our schools for the first time (http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm). With this first wave of assessment reform measures, teachers were introduced to backwards instructional design similar to what is advocated today by McTighe & Tomlinson, (2005). We were taught to start with complex ideas, perspectives and knowledge, design

assessments that accessed these traits of learning and bodies of knowledge, and then create the lessons. Bloom's taxonomy was at the center of this theory-based process (Bloom, 1956). Just as this process started to gain traction and teachers were making progress with the Maine Learning Results, the Bush era education reforms and No Child Left Behind, (NCLB) brought sweeping reforms to this model of assessment that qualified student learning through rubrics.

NCLB confused matters because the reform measures substituted testing and numeric data for the qualitative reporting to which teachers were becoming accustomed. Adding to the confusion, NCLB continued to call this new data driven approach a standards-based system. Teachers were being evaluated on their students' standardized test scores so, the emphasis on higher level thinking was pushed aside and educators in language arts and math began to teach to the test. By my estimation and experience, the breadth of the curriculum began to shrink and more of the six-hour school day was being dedicated to what was considered the core subjects of math and language arts.

For all of this anecdotal history on assessment in Maine and the U.S.A., I was able to substantiate my conjectures through white papers to which I refer in the literature review (Hamilton, L. Stecher, B. Yuan, K. 2008; Mason, R. Steers, J. Bedford, D. McCabe, C. 2005). With the end of the Bush era and the rearranging of NCLB under the Obama administration, the emphasis has been on high standards of learning supported by a competitive funding structure entitled Race to the Top (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html) . Rather than a shift back towards standards and qualitative data on learning, today's assessment practices can be best described as embracing both quantitative and qualitative findings as necessary.

In Maine standards have been reintroduced, though testing has not been curtailed. Recently, the Maine legislature passed into law LD 1422 which requires all Maine students to graduate by demonstrating proficiency in standards, which signals a clear shift back toward constructivism and rubrics of the mid-1990s (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html).[1] Meanwhile, the legislature has allowed for charter schools in Maine and the Commissioner of Education has recently unveiled a system by which schools are graded on a letter grade system A-F. This report card is based mostly on test scores and graduation rates that are filed electronically and reported to the Maine Department of Education (MDOE). This all may seem like a digression, but the point to be made is this: assessment and data on student achievement continues to be paramount. Regardless of the politics of education, data and our capacity to track information is shaping how we see the world of education, measure our practices and gauge student and teacher success. To keep programs such as the arts contemporary and significant to general education, as well as maintain and expand arts funding in public schools, art teachers will most likely continue to be asked to provide evidence of student learning.

Rationale

At the heart of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative is an understanding of what it means to know, learn, and teach. Teacher-leaders in MAAI are providing examples of learner-centered teaching.[2] The learning that results from these changes in instruction and the tools of measurement used to provide evidence of this learning are being developed by these teacher-leaders. They are defining for a larger community what teaching is and how to measure learning

[1] See the definitions of terms section for more regarding constructivism

[2] See list of terms for an expanded definition of learner-centered teaching

by providing workshops on standards-based assessment practices. In doing so they are participating in professional conversations over time and nesting smaller individual practices in continuously larger scale groupings made up of their colleagues. These teacher leaders are establishing a common ground where their work will persist and constitute a change in Maine's art education practices. At this point MAAI is developing; two years into this initiative, the energy levels are very high among participants and their work is consistent and established enough to be observed.

A large part of this study involves finding where MAAI is situated in broader contexts of historical precedents of assessment practices and theoretical frames of professional development. This case study is a beginning contribution to situating MAAI on the continuum of elaborative changes in assessment practices that have taken place in general education and that continue to influence art education. Through thoughtful examination of the relationship of our assessment practices to knowing, teaching and learning, we can make critical decisions about their impact on art education. MAAI is trying to help teachers navigate the changes in standards-based assessment and instruction practices through professional development.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of this teacher-generated reform initiative by conducting interviews with a cross section of stakeholders and observing classroom practices. I wanted to determine if there was reciprocity across a segment of the MAAI network and if this reciprocity, or lack thereof, yielded any knowledge about the limits, limitations and

the potential of this organization. The reciprocity I refer to here is a sharing of ideas and language between and among a group of learners, their teacher and two initiative organizers who participate in the MAAI network. In addition, standards-based assessments played a large role in the stated goals of MAAI. By definition standard-based assessment means ways in which teachers qualify learning, that is describe it in words before, during and after the learning process. I realized early in the research while attending the MAAI summer institute, that to *qualify* learning rather than to quantify it required big shifts in teaching practices and attitudes toward assessment to be effective. I am returning to an outdated definition of the word *qualify*, which is to attribute a specified quality to something; describe something such as: *the student's learning has been qualified as a work of art that demonstrates the development of skills, the conveyance of ideas and the comprehension of artistic heritage and traditions as they apply to the student's world*. To qualify is to describe. To describe learning, rather than rank students one against another based on the average number of correct responses, means to put in words the qualities that the learner exemplifies through their work.

My primary intention has been to study a segment of the MAAI network from which I could yield information that could assist these people in their mission, "*to create an environment in Maine where assessment in arts education is an integral part of the work all arts educators do to deepen student learning in the arts"* (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html). By segment I mean one classroom of students, their art teacher and two organizers of the MAAI network. To bring focus to this study I proposed a question:

> -What is the reciprocal flow of ideas between the students, their teacher and the organizers of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative?

Theoretically there would be two obstacles to finding the answers to these questions. First, there is no unified or universally accepted definition of a complex system. A complex system is a system that learns (Davis et al., 2008). Second, if MAAI were indeed a complex system it would be self-organizing, self-maintaining and self-determining in a way that appears stable but is not static (Davis et al. p. 81). Because of this, MAAI would be flexible and adaptable, and this constant changing would make reciprocity hard to track.

Reciprocity is a concept that seems to be at the heart of education these days. 'Motivating the learner'; 'engaging the learner'; 'empowering the learner'; are phrases that are often used to evoke reciprocity between learners, teachers and administrators. Many schools in Maine, under the guidance of the State, have embraced and implemented Mass-Customized Learning (MCL) (Schwahn, C & McGarvey, B. 2011) to promote individualization of education through the use of technology. One of the objectives of MCL is that the student is crafting their own path through education, that they are akin to consumers, picking and choosing from tasks and knowledge bases to inform their education. This model does little for a reciprocal flow of ideas between mentors and mentees who work and study in a collaboration. I was looking for something that is very different from the Mass Customized Learning model. Instead I searched for standards-based assessments that encourage reciprocity through shared knowledge that is built and expanded upon in community. The ideal I had in mind was one where stakeholders in a given education system employ sound academic processes and democratic values to construct a system of learning that is viable (Meier, 2002). At the heart of such a system is reciprocity of ideas between all stakeholders. MAAI seemed to offer an environment where teachers were empowered to make changes in their own classroom practices and to learn from one another.

Was this empowerment and reciprocity of ideas flowing among and between students and MAAI organizers as well?

MAAI Today

Motivated by my understanding of the history and current trajectory of education that relies on data-driven findings, I became even more interested in arts assessment. The reading that I have done on arts assessment informed my research in both positive and negative ways. The practice of teaching, my perspective on assessment and the importance of the arts in relationship to the whole learner across disciplines have been broadened because of this literature review. This has been very positive. Going into the research, I did not know that this reading would raise my expectations for what I would find to an unrealistic level. What I thought the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative would be achieving since its inception two years ago was untenable. I expected to find standards-based, rubric-guided instruction with a continual feedback loop that included learner input. The segment of MAAI at which I conducted research was not engaged in this process at the level that I had come to expect. Adding to my confusion, I was already biased toward this teacher-led initiative, which I perceived as a grassroots organization, creating change from within the classroom rather from mandates from the top. Part of my reading list included text used by MAAI to prepare teacher leaders. The reading reinforced my zeal for MAAI and raised my hopes for a panacea for what I see as a testing epidemic in Maine's public schools, rather than tempering my expectations.

Simply put, my findings in this study included substantial reciprocity between the organizers and the teacher and reciprocity between the teacher and her students but little

reciprocity across the entire network. I arrived at this finding based on the strategic domains I established and the taxonomies I constructed within each of these domains. I will explain in detail what I mean by taxonomies and domains in the methodology section of this text. I have come to the conclusion that in order for this network of learning and teaching to be fully reciprocal there would need to be more time allocated to arts instruction, more student input and a greater emphasis placed on the arts both within the MAAI network and at the school site of inquiry.

Problems Posed by This Research

Professional development. The foremost problem, as I see it now, is how do teachers position themselves to make changes in their practice with regard to assessment in art education and how do they find agency in their practice to abide by coherence theories rather than settle for behavioral theories? [3] These are questions of professional development for which one set of answers can be found in complexity theories. Reciprocity between stakeholders in education, especially learners and teachers, is at the heart of this matter. Reciprocity in education is the sharing of qualities or descriptions of learning. It is not enough for a teacher to describe the learning; the learner must also have the capacity and agency to describe their progress and from these students' voices, teachers can reflect and grow professionally.

Whose standards are art teachers using? The Maine Learning Results (http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm), the proposed National Visual and Performing Arts

[3] I did not see these problems prior to conducting the research. Friends, family and colleagues would ask me what problem I was solving with my research. I always responded that I was just going to illustrate through text what I saw taking place in the MAAI network. They would respond that I needed to be solving a problem - a descriptive ethnography.

Standards (https://www1.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/arts-standards.html), the current National Visual and Performing Arts Standards form 1994 (http://www.arteducators.org/store/NAEA_Natl_Visual_Standards1.pdf), in some districts in the State there are still local standards and the Common Core of Learning (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/commoncore/), constitute the array of standards at play in Maine's schools. Districts and teachers are having to select which standards will inform their work. Moreover, these standards are more unifying guidelines than they are specific standards to be met. Teachers and school systems are supposed to design the curriculum content, scope and sequence. The idea is to provide flexibility in instruction and responsiveness to students' needs and community values. The level of achievement of any given standard can still be set pretty low. Take for example the Maine Learning Result B1.

Table 1. A Maine Learning Results Standard

B. Creation, Performance, and Expression - Visual Arts: Students create, express, and communicate through the art discipline.

B1 Media Skills

Performance Indicators & Descriptors			
Pre-K-2	**3-5**	**6-8**	**9-Diploma**
Students use basic *media, tools* and *techniques* to create original art works.	Students use a variety of *media, tools, techniques*, and *processes* to create original art works.	Students choose suitable *media, tools, techniques*, and *processes* to create original art works.	Students choose multiple suitable *media, tools, techniques*, and *processes* to create a variety of original art works.

The standard concerns the use and selection of art materials. In grades 6-8, students choose suitable media, tools, techniques and processes to create original works of art . The act of choosing media tools and techniques in and of itself is not a demanding task. A 7th grader who picks up a paint brush and several colors of tempera paint has probably met the standard at some basic level. If the student is asked to elaborate on why they chose these materials, a teacher has a much richer qualitative result and level of performance of this standard. The quality of the

standard is best defined by the teacher and the school district implementing the instruction and assessment associated with it.

How do teachers incorporate learner voices? Qualitative data such as learner voice is hard to manage and hard to report. Standards and rubrics in some measure try to qualify learning rather than quantify it, but these assessment measures still rely on the voices of institutions and teachers and do not reflect clearly what transpires with the learner. Cohesion theories help to create pathways of understanding to incorporate learner voice in the assessment process and justify its presence (Davis, et al. 2008).

Limitations.

The limitations of this study are confined to the participants in this particular segment of the MAAI network. I have not implied or stated in any way that this study reflects what has been happening at the remaining 35 schools in the MAAI network. The amount of data collected and the expediency with which the data was collected limits the generalizability of the findings both to this case and to the larger network of MAAI. This is a case study that examines one period of time, in one place, that today could be very different than the conditions I encountered in the early winter of 2012-2013. MAAI and its leadership team are constantly planning and revising the direction of the organization. Nonetheless, this case does highlight significant findings that can inform MAAI's practice and mission, serve as a potential model for future studies, and offers organizational insights for other professional development initiatives that are concerned with improving standards-based assessment.

Definitions

Used throughout this text are some terms that are significant to assessment practices. I have offered the reader a brief standard definition of each of these terms and most important, I have, when possible tied the term to complexity theories to succinctly make connections between standards-based assessment and the theoretical frame with which I am working.

Behavioral assessment practices. These operate on rewards and punishments. For example, the learner is rewarded for a high test score. The score is given by an authority figure, namely the teacher, but it could be the school district, state or other organization who administers tests. The control over learning is given to the instructor and the learner is in a subordinate position with less agency for their own learning.

Bloom's taxonomy. A theory that has been used to support rational, mechanical, step-by-step methods of instruction since the mid 1950's when the theory first came into classroom practice. The sequence of learning starts with basic knowledge and ends with creation at the highest level. When used sequentially, the taxonomy does not invite or allow for divergency and expansion of thought which are more reminiscent of play and growth (Davis et al., 2008).

Correspondence theories. Related to science, they rely on cause and effect. The predominant features include understanding the learner as an individual only. Learning happens in the head of the individual and the best ways to measure learning is through testing. Adjunct theories include behaviorism and mentalism. Behaviors are observable and changes in behavior are measurable. Mentalism is not seeable or measurable historically, but with MRI technologies neuroscience has been getting much closer to seeing activity in the brain. Digital technologies

are creating models of mentalism that mimic the process that is taking place in the brain but do not replicate it (Davis, et al. 2008).

Maine Arts Assessment Initiative. This is the site in this study which I refer to as a network. These arts teachers communicate online through email, chats and wikis and they share and post assessments in a depository of documents that is hosted and managed by the Maine Department of Education (http://mainelearning.net/resources/). The members of the network meet during a summer institute and develop workshops on assessment to present to peers; they also provide professional development workshop opportunities across the State of Maine. They operate as a network as well as teach in their local communities and participate their school cultures. I use the word network to refer to MAAI's organization. Network can be distinguished from community and culture. In this text I refer to towns as communities and schools as having cultures. I do not see MAAI as having a culture of its own for 3 reasons: first, it is only 2 years old, second participants do not have enough interaction to codify values and behaviors within the groups though they do share values around assessment practices and finally, participants are engaged primarily in the cultures of their schools the majority of the time.

Collaborative approaches to learning. These include a variety of strategies where learning and teaching are done in social settings rather than in isolation (Davis et al 2008). The MAAI network model is collaborative for example. Teachers are working with other teachers to promote professional development in standards-based assessment.

Coherence Theories. These progressive frames are characterized by individual understanding, social collectivity, cultural knowledge and environmental integrity . There is

vibrancy, a body of knowledge that refers to biological rather than mechanical metaphors. Vibrancy connotes that something is alive. Coherence emphasizes adaptation, evolution and fit. The learner continually revises learning to improve rather than find a match between questions and correct answers found in correspondence theories. Where correspondence theories operate on the premise of optimal efficiency that must be strived for as an end result, coherence theories operate on sufficiency and sustainability (Davis et al. 2008 pp. 98-101).

Constructivism. Constructivist teaching and learning at its most basic, emphasizes that the learner brings a personal perspective and body of knowledge to the learning experience. (Davis et al. 2008). When I write about learner voices I am invoking constructivism.

Qualitative methods of assessment. A system that places emphasis on gathering rich and thick descriptive information, such as that gleaned from teacher's anecdotal record, (Beattie, p. 85, 1997). The push toward standards and rubrics that measure proficiency at 4 different levels is a way to give qualitative feedback to learners in a manner that is manageable for a teacher with large numbers of students. Standards can be measured with numerical averages of test scores as well, but this not the definition of standards that MAAI is using.

Quantitative assessment of learning. A system of measurement that requires that numbers of correct answers are averaged to give a percentage of correct answers out of a 100 point scale. Sometime these numbers are translated into letter grades. (Beattie, 1997, p.85) Quantitative measures tell us what may have been learned regarding the type of knowledge retained and the speed and condition under which the learner was able recall this information. They do not tell us much about why a learner is doing poorly, in essence, what went wrong nor

do they give any information about how the learner uses the knowledge gained through study. The perceived advantage of this type of assessment system is that the learner, the teacher, and the school can be evaluated and ranked in order of best to worst quickly with minimal effort on the part of administrators and governing bodies.

Standards-Based Teaching, Learning and Assessment. In this study there are two forms of standards in education. Both refer to the level of proficiency and the quality and quantity of learning. One is derived from external experts who dictate what the outcomes of learning should be, the other is teacher and learner generated and agreed upon. These standards are designed and conferred at the community level (Meier, 20. The Common Core of Learning as adopted and interpreted in Maine (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/commoncore/)and the National Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts (http://www.arteducators.org/store/NAEA_Natl_Visual_Standards1.pdf) are examples for the former. The work of MAAI's teacher leaders in their classrooms is an example of the latter, though they are highly informed by the expert models of standards.

Standardization. This refers to the act of making all learning the same through the specification of content and delivery methods. There is little regard for the perspective of the learner in the standardization process which is one of the greatest criticisms of the standards movement. This paper does not address standardization.

Chapter 2 Review of Literature

Introduction

The literature considered and consulted in this paper was selected to illustrate the rise of standards based teaching and assessment in public schools across the USA and to demonstrate how the field of art education has responded to these changes in general education. The history of assessment in art education in the USA is brief. Gruber and Hobbs, (2002) trace the development of assessment in art education from the turn of the 20th century and the rise of scientific approaches to assessment, (Gaitskell, 1958; Meier, 1966; Gaitskell & Hurwitz, 1970) followed by the child-centered and developmental theories of mid-century (Lowenfeld, 1952; Mcfee, 1961); in turn followed by an emphasis on structure and discipline (Bruner, 1963; Barkan 1962, 1963). Even in the 1980's when Discipline Based Art Education brought a more academic approach to art education, assessment was not significant (Gruber & Hobbs, 2002 p. 16). In 2002, when this brief history of assessment was written the authors pointed out that "Now with the call for accountability in all of education, including art education, assessment has come to the forefront with a vengeance. And art education has not done its homework (p. 17). " More than a decade has passed and art educators still have not addressed assessment in a unified or substantial manner.

The complex parameters of teaching art and measuring learning. Formal assessment in art education was widely believed to be unnecessary until recently. This was due in good measure to Viktor Lowenfeld's influence in child education (Bensur, 2008). Beliefs about art

centered around creativity May believed that creativity as an act could not be measured systematically because the act of creating must be observed in the moment. Interestingly, creative practices are what most public school art programs purport to emphasize. Other art practices such as design, the predisposed intention to create a final product, can be discussed and measured for success from the inception of the idea to the production of the material object. Though creativity is part of the design process, it is not central to the endeavor in the same way it is central to art. Beyond creative, studio experiences, Eisner (2002), related art appreciation to the transformation of consciousness. Finally, Armstrong (1994) saw art history as a discipline within art education with information that could be tested for comprehension. Only studio skills development focusing on craftsmanship and draftsmanship have a lengthy lineage in art education's history dating back to 1820's across North America (Chalmers, 2006). Though these skills are measurable through standards, they have fallen out of favor with the tandem rise of post-industrialism and conceptual art in the later part of the 20th century. There are various metrics to measure skills such as drawing in art education that fall into the realm of behavioral and empirical theories, but the most crucial and unique characteristics of the arts learning are not considered to be measurable. The conundrum that art teachers face is that they work with extremely limited amounts of time and have limited access to curricular resources to aid in assessment. When forced to choose between time for studio experiences and time to develop knowledge bases and assess the acquisition of those bases, most teachers choose the studio experience.

Assessment practices in studio art education are customarily conducted with checklists, point scales and rubrics, and when time permits, and it is age appropriate, community critiques

(Beattie, 1997). All of these assessment techniques measure products rather than process. Holistic assessments of learning such as portfolios allow for a measure of growth over time and or the growth within a given medium; this allows a dialogue to take place between process and product based on the evidence in the portfolio and the written or oral explanation given by the learner. The portfolio can then be assessed by the teacher as well as the learner (Beattie, 1997; Dorn, Sabol & Madeja, 2004;Volk, 2002; McTighe & Wiggins, 1998). Though portfolios have a rich tradition in the visual arts, using them as an assessment strategy is comparatively new (Beattie, 1997, p. 15). They are in part, or in whole the product of increased assessment demands across all disciplines; it is no coincidence that Dorn, Sabol and Madeja (2004) conducted their study on portfolio assessment practices at the same time that testing was becoming synonymous with assessment in the US .

The appraisal of student art rather than the evaluation. The 20th century in art education saw the rise of expression as the hallmark of students' work and emphasis was placed on studio-based experiences. This approach to art education was grounded in the following premises.

From the turn of the 20th century through the 1980's there was little regard for assessment in the discipline of art education. Leaders in the field of art education, namely Viktor Lowenfeld, Charles Gaitskell, June McFee and even Manuel Barkan who was influenced by Jerome Bruner, all endorsed, through research and publication, the appraisal of student work and process of students making art rather than the grading of the products they produced (Gruber & Hobbs, 2002). For 40 years appraisal of student work and progress in art class was sufficient. Guided by Lowenfeld's emphasis on topics such as child development in drawing, and his

approaches to appraising the expressive and creative progress students made elementary school art education did not concern itself with collecting dat or providing marks. The significance of self-identification though art and the awareness of student self-identification on the part of the teacher was central to art education and set it apart from other academic disciplines (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964, p. 28). In good measure, the discussion about how to educate in the visual arts, and what to measure was addressed by Lowenfeld and Brittain in the following passage:

> The different trends in art education today depend entirely on the different emphases used by educators in identifying with the different forces determining creative processes. Some art educators identify predominantly with aesthetic criteria, art media and their application, the elements of design and their organization; others identify completely with the individual who produces. While the one group of educators concentrates on the organization of the creative product and its design the other identifies with the individual and his psychological needs only. In art education these trends must not be separated. They must be closely integrated, for it is the individual who uses his media and his form of expression according to his personal experiences. Since these experiences change with the growth of the individual, self-identification is a dynamic science. It embraces the understanding of *social, intellectual, emotional* and *psychological* changes with the *creative needs* of the child. (p. 29)

What still has not been resolved is how do teachers and learners assess these social, intellectual, emotional and psychological changes? Do they need to be assessed or simply observed and qualified?.

The big shift toward assessment and measurable qualities in education. Starting in the 1980's, with *A Nation At Risk,* a report commissioned under the Reagan administration, a period of criticism and skepticism regarding public education in the United States began (Meier, 2000). "Educationists," those who work with the theory of education rather than content disciplines, were at the heart of the problem (p. 7, 2000). *A Nation At Risk* asked public education to be more rigorous, more disciplined, more centralized and more accountable through more tests and measures of learning. Art education would not be exempt. Part of the argument in *A Nation At Risk* was that social promotion and grade inflation affected all disciplines. Measures had to be taken to insure that learning standards were in place. High standards would remedy the ills of social promotion and grade inflation.

The concept of standards has often been attributed to Theodore Sizer (Meier, 2000). Sizer's book *Horace's Compromise* (1984) was a contemporary to the A Nation At Risk report, but Sizer took a positive approach to the perceived problems in public education and began the Coalition of Essential Schools that emphasized what was going well in education rather than what was wrong. One of Sizer's suggestions for school reform was centered on the learner taking more responsibility for their education. Another aspect of Sizer's plan involved clear feedback, continuously over time. The rise of standards began in part with these two shifts in education.

Parallel to changes in general education, art education experienced similar transformations. In what can be considered one of the great shifts in art education since Viktor Lowenfeld's children's developmental stages of drawing, Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) asked art teachers to change how they instructed, how they gave purpose and aesthetic

value to art. Rather than the focus on the learner's process, the development of creativity, intellectual understanding and the powers of personal expression (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964), DBAE broke art into four distinct and measurable disciplines: Art Criticism, Aesthetics, Art History and Art Production. These four separate disciplines in DBAE brought the experiential and the theoretical together, making art education truly academic for the first time (Lachapelle, 2000). DBAE has come under great scrutiny in the Art education for its lack of cultural plurality, its tendency toward a standardized curriculum and its disregard for the expressive tradition of art education and child development (Smith, 2000).[4] These perceived problems along with no clear transition from Lowenfeld's expressive approaches to more academically centered learning, kept DBAE from making substantial changes in the ways art teachers instructed, all the while the pressures to assess in public schools were mounting.

The rise of standards, rubrics and formative and summative assessment practices. If the 1980's ushered in the reforms for higher expectations in schools, the1990's were marked by the rise of rubrics, descriptive standards and formative and summative assessment practices in the State of Maine and across the U.S.A. (http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm). One of the perceived keys to more productive and long-lasting learning resided in checklists and rubrics that guided the learner to success. Checklists were just one of many ways for teachers to gauge the progress of learning and help students be aware of the necessary steps to success (Beattie, 1997). Checklists were also decidedly rational and incremental when produced by

[4] These criticisms are not the concern of this paper but these complications do come into play at this site of inquiry. In this research paper, DBAE is equated with a shift toward defining art education in ways that could be measured through assessment.

teachers but required coherence between the teacher and the learner and higher order thinking when produced by students. Checklists produced by the teacher are efficient; checklists produced by the student are sufficient and elaborative.

In 1996 the Maine legislature adopted the Maine Learning Results requiring all teachers, including art teachers, to use these standards to guide learning and assessment (http:// www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm) . In addition to using rubrics for assessment, teachers were asked to assess during the learning process, with formative assessment, to safeguard student success (Beattie, 1997). Formative assessment enabled teachers to gauge learning over time.

Not everyone, including art teachers, were supportive of the standards-based movement and its rubrics and checklists. Doug Boughton, in an address to the NAEA convention, decried the rise of the standards movement. Though nearly 20 years old, Boughton's address (and subsequent essay) continues to be important because it eloquently questions the hollowness of broad sweeping standards that are crafted to appease all and are open to unlimited interpretations. It also stands to remind us that there were no statistics on the effectiveness and viability of standards-based assessment systems then, nor now (Boughton,1996; Mason, Steers, , Bedford, McCabe, 2005). Simply put, we do not know what effect standards-based assessments have on learning (Mason et. al., 2005).

Boughton offered an alternative to the standards solution in curriculum design, implementation and assessment. He proffered that assessment could be best addressed by the use of benchmarks established at the local level by experts in the field of art. The interpretation of these benchmarks and the assessment of student work using these exemplars, he suggested should be carried out by a community of experts. Twenty years later, there has been little

progress toward reconciling the inherent problem of adopting broad, sweeping, generalized standards.

Today, the development of a revised National Visual and Performing Arts Standards is underway. These curriculum unifying standards are currently being piloted and were written by a coalition of stake holders including the American Alliance for Theatre Education, the Arts Education Partnership, the Educational Theatre Association, The College Board, the National Association for Music Education, the National Art Education Association, the National Dance Education Organization, the State Education Agency for Directors of Art Education and Young Audiences (http://nccas.wikispaces.com/About+Us). These revised national standards in the arts were devised in response to the Common Core of Learning that unifies Math and Language Arts standards across the United States on a voluntary basis.

Assessment in the art classroom now. As the depth and breadth of the general curriculum have shrunk with the demands to test discrete knowledge in language arts and math the time that schools allocate to the arts and humanities has decreased. One response to this may be the rise of interdisciplinary practices in art education. For example science and art are often integrated. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math create the acronym S.T.E.M. Like assessment empirical studies have become a focus for our education. In response art educators have taken up integrating art and science. An example was provided by Stockrocki (2005), who showed how clay and ceramic arts, physics and chemistry as well as geology are easily integrated. Integration of the arts into other disciplines has often resulted in projects-based

assessments where a summative assessment is based on a product the learner generates such as a poster, a model or a diorama, that they use in conjunction with an oral or written report.

The arts can be integrated with formative assessments as well. According to Stockrocki , "art educators need practical and accessible examples of formative assessments that translate at the classroom level" (2005, p.15). Typical formative assessment includes providing a pre-evaluation to gauge prior knowledge, embedding problem-solving. Then, there is self assessment of progress followed by self evaluation of both process and project (Coffey, 2003) . Stokrocki used this sequence for her integrated unit on clay and science for gifted middle school students. For summative assessments Stockrocki referred to Anne Davies' evaluation practices to discuss one thing that worked [successfully], one thing that did not work [a problem], and one thing to do differently [a solution] and to use Davies's categories of confirmation, consolidation, and integration of new knowledge to encourage students to evaluate their learning (Stockrocki p. 17, 2003). Integration of art and science also meant the integration of assessment strategies that were designed for other academic disciplines.

This awareness of classroom practices and the integration of disciplines as well as an emphasis on formative assessment were continuously mentioned by the participants in this case study and represent a central reciprocal theme. This trend reaches out beyond MAAI. Teachers in a cross section of disciplines are eager to learn how to incorporate the arts into their teaching. In a separate research project, classroom teachers at two middle schools in southern Maine expressed a clear and strong desire to incorporate art and art infused learning into their curriculum further linking interdisciplinary studies(Milliken, 2013).

Standards-based assessment and divergent theories. Donna Kay Beattie (2006) argued that the arts will run the risk of becoming irrelevant to schools, students and parents if they are left out of the list of standards by which an education is measured (p. 12) . The argument is made that teachers should get on board with standards-based teaching and assessment or run the risk of becoming obsolete. Beattie built a case for rich tasks, or tasks that ask learners to solve complex, multidimensional, real world problems through art. She offered a theoretical frame based in constructivism and cited Dewey, Vygotsky, Pinar, Freire and Sizer to support her case (p.14) . She stated,

> Generally speaking, SBA [Standards-Based Assessments] can be defined as assessment that is cumulative, originates in the school, requires significant involvement of teachers, school administrators, and communities of vested participants, and is applicable for high stakes testing because moderation processes are built in to make scores valid and reliable. (p. 12)

This positions Beattie clearly in favor of standards-based assessment. Her argument is framed in such a way to appeal to a broad range of assessment theorists operating from correspondence to coherence frames.

Strategies for visual arts assessment. Discipline-Based Art Education, with its four disciplines, offers traditional and behavioral approaches in arts assessment as possible measures of learning (Armstrong 1994). Learning in art history and art criticism as well as aesthetics has been measured though tests and essays in higher education, which could be done K-12 as well. Moving away from DBAE, art educators in higher education shifted research and instruction

interests to visual culture (Tavin & Hausman, 2007), multiculturalism (Hatton, 2003), social justice (Dewhurst, 2011) and post-modernism (Haynes, 1995). This shift in research interests questioned agency and power which naturally led to skepticism with regard to assessment and a standardized curriculum (Pinar, 2004). There is reason to believe that these rich and varied topics of inquiry in arts education and curriculum theory more often than not tacitly excluded the topic of assessment.

Holistic approaches to assessment such as portfolios and classroom critiques with student participation have continuously been in use among art educators.(Beattie, 1997; Dorn et al., 2004). These techniques are broad and open ended enough to meet the needs of a wide range of art teachers working from a variety of instructional models including Lowenfeld's process and expression centered art education, to DBAE and a newly emerging models, Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) (http://teachingforartisticbehavior.org/) or Visual Thinking Strategies (V.T.S.) (http://www.vtshome.org/). They encourage higher order thinking skills and they are standards friendly while too complex for standardization. Portfolios can be useful in both formative and summative assessments. They also adapt well to research and curriculum trends and learner and teacher interest over time. Finally, holistic methods of assessment such as portfolios can address multiple forms of learning within the visual arts including studio practice, art history, criticism and aesthetics or the social, intellectual, emotional and psychological and creative needs of the child. (Lowenfeld & Britton, 1964, p. 29)

Building a case for locally developed standards-based assessment. *Will Standards Save Public Education?* is a series of letters, in response to Deborah Meier's essay on the

challenges of standards-based teaching and learning and a passionate and informed call for education to be kept small and local, (Meier, 2000). Meier's voice in this conversation about standards finds strength and authenticity from her 30 plus years of service to the children of inner city schools in New York and Boston. She describes in equal measure her successes and failures. At the same time, the statistics regarding student success in her schools point to a program, philosophy and method of teaching that is meeting the needs of its constituents. Meier offers a community and learner centered vision for what standards can offer, where standards are developed and continuously shaped by the communities that the schools serve. Meier's model of standards-based assessment questions standardization in favor of diversity and plurality. Her standards may be more responsive, organic and sustainable in the communities for which they were designed and in contrast to push for standardization of standards based learning.

Conclusion

Standards are many things to a wide variety of educators. For Boughton standards were closely related to benchmarks and exemplars, while for Stockrocki standards involved student self reflection and were shared between disciplines such as science and art. Beattie cited problem-solving to be at the heart of standards-based assessment and Bensur drew a comparison between Lowenfeldian appraisal of student work as a developmental and creative standard with DBAE's behavioral approach to more assessment standards with traditional measures such as writing, testing and portfolio review. There are many ways to assess learning in art and many reasons to try to understand what how learners react, engage and transform their thinking in art classes.

The literature presented here has informed the following perspectives. The potential and processes for assessing learning in the visual arts classroom exists and is contingent upon understanding a variety of theories and models in art education to make informed choices for learning. No real data on a wide range of practices have been collected regarding assessment in the arts, nor are standards-based assessments supported as viable or preferred over other forms of assessments statistically and narratively. Standards-based assessments can be constructivist and learner-centered in ways that other assessment strategies are not. Empirical data is driving what programs get classroom time, human resources, durable and consumable materials and how schools are perceived by their communities in the State of Maine, but art education has not entered into the discussion of data, even if it is only to preserve arts programming (http://www.maine.gov/doe/schoolreportcards/). Finally, standards, when applied and processed on a small, community scale, have potential for informing and measuring learner progress and development (Meier, 2000; Eisner, 1985). This approach most likely can yield qualitative data that supports arts programs.

Theoretical Framework

Complexity is a collection of theories that when applied to education asks teachers and learners alike to continuously interrupt what they are doing, to pause and to make new associations between beliefs and lived experiences to reshape the ongoing practice of being mindful in an ever changing world (Davis et al. 2008). Arts classes, when instructed with intention, bring together through coherence an awareness to knowing/knowers, individuals/ collectives and selves/others. (pp. 98-99) . "Knowing emanates from cultural beings, shared interpretive systems and symbolic technologies in which we participate that bring forth worlds of significance" (p. 40). This way of knowing is shared by a collection of theories including coherence theory , constructivism , constructionism , cultural, critical and ecological theories (Davis et al. 2008) . These theories are in contrast to correspondence theories and behaviorism that seek to produce and measure learning through cause and effect. Coherence theories part ways with behavioral and mentalist theories' outcomes "precisely because they perceive the desire to predetermine the outcomes of learning as untenable" (p. 98). This means we are able to measure specific behaviors such as the sharing and repetition of knowledge, but we have no way of determining if that knowledge will ever really be put to use in the future, under various conditions and demands. For this reason coherence theories are a better fit, especially in the art classroom. Coherence theories start from the perspective of the learner, and take into consideration the previous knowledge and experiences the learner brings to the learning environment and learning community. In turn, further consideration is given to the immediate conditions of this environment and the demands the learner is facing as well as the agency and

facility the learner has at their disposal to meet these demands. In a complex model of education, knowing involves "interpretivist conceptions" such as transforming and revising thinking (Piaget,1963). "Knowing is not determined by teaching. Knowing is conditioned by and dependent on teaching," (Davis et al., 2008, pp. 167-168). Learning is rarely seen as complete or fully adequate; it is continually elaborating on what came before. At the same time, learners are not seen as incomplete or inadequate. All learners know what they need at any given moment and possess knowledge and experience to adequately help them meet these needs. Learning enlarges and challenges understandings and capacities to meet needs and demands rather that providing fixed solutions. The notion of errors on the part of the learner is minimized. Furthermore, the exploration of the web of understanding is more important than arriving upon a certain truth or fact (p.101). Teaching, it would follow, requires the focusing of learner perception and the development of a series of construals. A construal refers to a learning situation, a given body of knowledge or preconceived experience. The learner in turn partakes of the knowledge or experience and fits the experience into their known world. Teaching is a series of construals, such that at each prompt by the teacher a new set of construals is formed by each learner and across a collective of learners. The teacher in turn interprets what the learners have done, adjusts her or his planning and provides a new set of construals. All of this model of the learning process is attributed to the work of Jean Piaget (1936/1963) and when applied in a collective, to Lev Vygotsky (1986).

Change and school reform. Changes to instruction practices and assessments, the likes of what has been happening with the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative (MAAI), are akin to the

"interruption of assumptions (Davis et al., 2008, p.ix)" . Assessment in its various forms and standards-based teaching and learning practices are all centered on changing knowing, learning and teaching. MAAI is only one network of stakeholders among many who are engaged in making changes in education. The cases made for change in education are often based on global competition, economic prosperity, productivity, and lack-luster statistics from test results (Wagner, 2008). Other cases emphasize the need for creativity and innovation (Pink, 2005; Robinson, 2009) . Sometimes these cases are mandated by the passing of legislation ((http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html) and other times they are supported at the school administration level with the phrase 'best practices', meaning that expert knowledge or data validates a specific change (Marzano, Pickering, Pollock, 2001; Davies 2000; Stiggins, 2001; Wiggins and McTighe, 2005).

Complexity, when applied to education, takes a more holistic approach to change. It asks where the limits, limitations and potential lie within an organized structure that will allow for change to take place. This is a more organic, sustainable and biological model for change. This model asks one to consider the effects of change on a variety of scales, most importantly on the scale of the learner. Interestingly, I draw a connection between Davis' approach an organizing and holistic approach to change to what Lowenfeld was calling for when he stated, " Since these experiences change with the growth of the individual, self-identification is a dynamic science. It embraces the understanding of *social, intellectual, emotional* and *psychological* changes with the *creative needs* of the child," (p. 29).

Scales of operation within schools. Sandwiched between knowledge and the teacher, the human scale in education begins with the individual learner and moves toward the classroom and the learner's relationship to and participation with a community of learners. The scale increases in size as the individual is expanded to be a member of a group or classroom community. Scale brings a new awareness to education that challenges assumptions about norms and normalizing of people and about developmental theories (Davis et al., 2008, pp. 44-47.). If knowing is a shared rather than individual act, and if learning takes place in community, this calls into question the entire practice of testing on some level, as an effective and valid measure of learning. It is a disruption to how we perceive assessment.

Scale plays a role in teaching as well. Teaching can be seen as an individual act carried out by one teacher or a collection of acts and activities carried out in community by teachers and learners together, in a school culture in a given building or across a network of teachers such as those participating in MAAI. Teaching has been and continues to be carried out mostly in isolation. Art teachers in particular have not shared approaches to the curriculum, instructional strategies or instructional outcomes with other members of their school cultures. MAAI is interrupting this assumption that teaching is a solitary act by developing teacher-leaders, sharing effective teaching and assessment strategies and connecting teachers through workshops and conference presentations.

Complexity theory allows one to see the interrelationship between systems of knowing, learning and teaching as a crucial, but often ignored, complete network operating on a variety of scales. At play in this research project are three scales that include students, a teacher and MAAI organizers at the state level. It is a hybrid of sorts. It bypasses the school as the largest scale of

human organization within education and reaches further out to the state level. On these three scales, the case study looks at nested structures of complex phenomena, (Castro, 2009, p. 34). In this instance the nested structures are classroom activities and corresponding assessments. These complex phenomena include interweaving of what students are doing and saying, how the teacher is planning and assessing, and how MAAI organizers are enabling and facilitating changes in arts instruction and standards-based assessment toward the goal of deeper learning in the arts. This series of actions embodies Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler's knowing, learning and teaching sequence of actions with the addition of a fourth action, "assessing" added to the looping sequence. Assessing/assessment completes an elaborative feedback loop that interrupts knowing, allows for adjustments in learning and shapes the perceptions of teaching, which in turn begins the cycle anew.

By applying complexity theories to my research findings I would determine if students, teachers and organizers of the MAAI network reciprocated ideas and if their voices were embedded in the assessment practices they shared. This flow of ideas through qualitative data would be a disruption to the assumptions of what schools do with regard to knowing, learning and teaching and how they transmit standards based practices between learners and teachers and across various school cultures.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Introduction

This chapter proceeds step by step using James P. Spradley's method for conducting ethnographic interviews and analyzing the data. Cognitive ethnography (D'Andrade,1995) collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2010), virtual ethnography (Hine, 2000) and ethnography in complex society (Spradley, 1979) were all consulted prior to designing this project. Spradley's ethnographic interview method was chosen because it could be adapted to fit this case study.

Ethnography by definition requires a lengthy amount of time in the field at the site of inquiry. Though this study uses an ethnographic method, the final product is a case study which can be defined as a smaller version of an ethnography. A case study is the observation of social phenomena located in a bounded system (Creswell, 2007); in this instance the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative. Within the bounded system of a particular situation, issue, a problem is addressed. A case study itself is not a methodology, but rather a choice of what to study (Stake, 2005). Because I have chosen a specific bounded situation and I have had a limited amount of time to conduct research, I define this study as a case using ethnographic methods.

The Site of Research: The MAAI as a Cultural Scene

According to James P. Spradley a cultural scene is a site of ethnographic inquiry in a contemporary, complex culture where cultural traits are shared by two or more people. (1979, p. 21). The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative is a cultural scene. The term 'cultural scene' was chosen because MAAI by all definitions does not qualify as a culture. MAAI is situated among

various school cultures and teacher-leaders in the network do not set themselves apart from their respective schools by adopting a contrasting set of values, customs and expressions in order to participate in MAAI. My understanding and description of MAAI places members of the cultural scene within specific school and community cultures. I make this distinction between schools because Maine is a local control state. This means each school district is its own organizing structure with separate curricula, code of conduct, grading system and philosophy of instruction. The ties the teacher leaders have with MAAI are secondary to the cultures in which they work.

The cultural scene in this case study is a composite from various sites. The primary site of this research was a segment of MAAI .[5] I gathered background information online, in the texts that MAAI used in the summer of 2012 to inform and train new teacher-leaders. I visited Lisa Marin's 6th grade classroom at Jonesport Elementary School in Jonesport, Maine where I informally observed Lisa and her students and conducted interviews. Finally, I interviewed two of the MAAI organizers Argy Nestor Visual and Performing Arts Specialist at the Maine, Department of Education and Catherine Ring, the Executive Director of the New England Institute for Teacher Education in the Fern Kelly Room of Ellsworth City Hall, Ellsworth, Maine.[6] My understanding of Lisa as a teacher comes not solely from the research interviews but from time spent in her classroom and with some of her students. I do not have the same environmental information for Catherine Ring, I have not been in her presence when she offers a

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[5] The entirety of the cultural scene is comprised of 36 teachers and the schools in which they work, three organizers, and a leadership team.

[6] Rob Westerberg, Choral Director at York High School in York, Maine and Director of the Portland Community Chorus is the third organizer of MAAI but was not a participant in this research project.

graduate level class to teachers. Nor have I been with Argy Nestor when she is fulfilling her duties as the Visual and Performing Arts Specialist, which include visiting various school arts functions, helping districts make decisions regarding arts curriculum and attending regional meetings of school superintendents each month. The fact that I did not actually observe Argy and Catherine in their respective professional roles defines one of the limits of this case study. I am concerned with their work as organizers of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative.

The Origins of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative

The location of a cultural scene like MAAI is more than a physical space. It involves elaborative growth over time. To fully understand where MAAI is situated, one must understand the brief history and the dimensions of this cultural scene. The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative grew out of an experience that was shared by Argy Nestor, Catherine Ring and Rob Westerberg at the New England Arts Assessment Institute in the spring of 2010. This professional development institute drew arts educators from across the USA who had been working on assessment strategies for learning in the arts. This experience in Vermont served as an inspiration for the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative that was organized around three themes, assessment, leadership and technology.[7] MAAI began in earnest in 2011 with a summer institute that trained eighteen arts educators from each of the 4 disciplines in art, music, visual arts theater and dance.[8] These teachers attended workshops on leadership, creativity, assessment and

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[7] I do not address technology in this investigation for 2 reasons: The need to narrowly focus the research and Maine has a 12 year history of imbedding technology in classroom practices rather than teaching technology directly. The use of technology is meant to be tacit and seamless.

[8] This case study focuses solely on the visual arts.

technology. Through this summer institute teachers developed skills and agency to become teacher-leaders in assessment.

The goal of MAAI is "to create an environment in Maine where assessment in arts education is an integral part of the work all arts educators do to deepen student learning in the arts," (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html) . The intended and ongoing outcomes over time have included the development and implementation of standards-based assessments for the visual and performing arts that are unique to the school communities where the teacher-leaders work, the building of capacity for the arts through identifying and informing stakeholders invested in arts programming, the organizing of Maine regional meetings and workshops to inform and engage educators and seek their input and participation. MAAI also plays a role in the bi-annual Maine State Arts Education Conference, where teacher leaders showcase practices in curriculum and assessment. All of these endeavors are supported by Argy Nestor's weekly communication with 1,188 members of the arts education list-serv. In addition to this weekly email, members make 800-1000 weekly visits to meartsed blog. Under the guidance of Argy, Catherine and Rob and their leadership team, the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative had set a full and ambitious agenda.

In the summer of 2012, MAAI held its second Summer Institute and invited another 20 arts educators to training workshops in phase 2 of the initiative. During this training session an online depository of curriculum and assessment activities was presented to the teacher-leaders

and new members of the initiative. The main goal for this institute was for new teacher leaders to develop their professional development workshops. [9]

A Case To Be Made from MAAI

A case study by definition looks at a single situation and can either be descriptive or explanatory (Creswell, 2007). In the case of this segment of MAAI network, a descriptive perspective was employed. I aimed to describe where reciprocity was or was not taking place across this segment of the MAAI network. As I began to document the process of gathering data, I realized approximately a quarter of my research, all the preliminary work, had been done online through the access of MAAI's public documents. I came to understand that on some level this was multi-sited research (Hine, 2000). I did not conduct online interviews, but I did conduct archival research online which substituted for a grand tour of the MAAI network through interviews. This archival research served as the fourth step in Spradley's research method which is to ask descriptive questions. The terms 'grand tour' and 'cultural scene' were derived from Spradley and McCurdy's model of ethnography for beginners that was also consulted to develop this investigation's methodology, (1975). The grand tour is intended to be the initial step to gathering data where participants would introduce me, the researcher, to the cultural scene or the site of inquiry. In this case, I conducted the grand tour on line through MAAI wikis, Argy Nestor's Blog posts, the Maine Department of Education website and materials posted on line for teacher-leader development. The online research allowed me to follow Spradley's method without conducting extensive interviews. The online research presented one obstacle. I did not

[9] I attended the 4-day institute and participated in workshops as my introduction the MAAI as an organization, though I did not gather any data at that time that I am reporting in this case study.

address my own bias and preconceptions through face-to-face interactions with interview participants. I developed a set of values regarding standards-based assessment based on what I read on line that MAAI was offering as support materials. As I prepared to enter the cultural scene and conduct the interviews with the participants, I came to believe that I would find students involved in the writing and interpreting standards, teachers creating lessons based on this collaborative approach to standards based instruction and rubrics that reflected both the defining of each the standards and the corresponding lessons.

The Ethnographic Interview as a Tool for Case Study

The developmental research sequence of an ethnographic interview has 12 steps according to Spradley (1979, p. 224) . I have outlined the sequence with a brief description and a detailed account of how I modified the interview process for this case to be responsive to my participants and to stay within the bounds of a case study.

1. Locating Informant/Participants

The participants in this study were selected on a volunteer basis. I began the process by contacting Argy Nestor, the Visual and Performing Arts Specialist at the Maine Department of Education, to see if she would allow me to study the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative. From this initial inquiry, I was invited to a conference call with Argy and Catherine Ring, another MAAI organizer, where it was decided that the research would move forward. Argy offered the names of three teacher-leaders who might entertain being interviewed and would allow me to visit their schools to interview students in one or more of their classes. Then she sent me a formal letter of invitation to conduct research from the Maine Department of Education. I in turn

sent an email to each of the 3 teachers asking if they wanted to participate in this study. At the same time, I wrote my application for research ethics approval and submitted the proposal for this project to my committee. In the meantime, Lisa Marin agreed to participate in the case study and so it was determined that I would be going to Jonesport, Maine.

2. Interviewing an Informant/Participant

The ethnographic interview requires that the participants provide all the explanations for what is taking place in a cultural scene (Spradley 1975). This includes the definition and description of the physical location of the scene and the account of what takes place in that location that is significant and helps to describe and define the culture being studied. In standard ethnographic interview form, I would have gathered this background information in my initial interviews. I chose a different method to develop this initial description of MAAI. To build this background information, what Spradley refers to as the "grand tour of the cultural scene (p. 62) ," I approached MAAI from four different positions. First, I read everything online at publicly accessible MAAI web addresses. Second, I read the materials presented for teacher-leader development at the summer institute, 2012. Third, I attended the Summer Institute per Argy Nestor's invitation, where I spent time with Lisa Marin and explained in person what my goals were in studying MAAI and what i wished to conduct for research with her and her students.. Finally, I visited Lisa's elementary level classroom for a school day to orient myself to the cultural scene and to meet the students with whom a focus group would be conducted.[10]

[10] Lisa teaches K-12 in a very small school district in a remote location on the coast of Maine.

3. Making an Ethnographic Record

An ethnographic record is the process by which the researcher collects and organizes the data from the cultural scene (Spradley, 1979, p. 69). The ethnographic record has changed substantially with the advent of digital technology. The process that I used in recording data and storing data was comprised of digital and traditional methods. All the interviews were recorded using Garage Band, a digital recording software program. The transcription of the interviews was done manually rather than through word to text software. As data was analyzed and arranged in various formats, files were saved electronically and printed and stored in notebooks as well. The printing served 2 purposes; it brought closure to various analysis activities and allowed me to work from notebooks and the computer screen simultaneously when I got to writing up the findings in the final stages of compiling the case study.

4. Initial Observations and Asking Descriptive Questions

From these preliminary experiences I gathered my first impressions of the MAAI network. Starting with online research where I discovered teacher-leaders, including Lisa, sharing resources and other materials for assessment and instruction. Next, I read thoroughly the journal articles that were listed as required reading for the summer institute. I eventually used these articles as the primary research sources, in lieu of interviews, to define the domains of the network. During the summer institute I was invited to introduce myself to the group and announce that I would be working in conjunction with Lisa to conduct this research. My initial impression of the group, the organizers and Lisa was that they were clearly focused on their

mission and that I was on the outside looking into MAAI. The initial visit to Lisa's classroom was the most revelatory of the preliminary experiences with MAAI. The first impressions forced me to confront my bias for an idealized standards-based teaching and learning environment. As a classroom teacher, and having spent the better part of 2 years looking at assessment practices in art education, I was prepared in my mind to find some specific standards-based teaching practice and learning experiences. What Lisa and her students presented was different from what I anticipated. I assumed that I would find something along the line of rubrics with criteria and standards being unpacked by learners and a focus on deeper enduring understandings (Wiggins and McTighe 2005). None of these formal or cultural characteristics of standards-based learning and assessment were evident at first glance. By formal I am referring to physical evidence such as rubrics and criteria and by cultural I am referring to how students are tacitly or explicitly empowered to make decisions and choices within the framework of the curriculum and classroom expectations. Only after conducting the interviews and processing the data, did I come to understand how standards were being utilized in Lisa's class. Lisa's approach was one of sufficiency. Standards were embedded in the values she imparted to her classroom community, but were rarely presented in formal documentation.[11]

[11] Lisa was comfortable and confident in her classroom practices (and rightly so) and I was left to suffer with my biases. I spent the next few months conducting the interviews for the research project and reviewing the literature to find an answer for what I had observed initially. The literature, that I thought would help me to see and interpret what I found, was actually creating this bias that kept me from the objectivity that I wished to bring to the project.

If the initial interactions with MAAI were remote, the site visits and interviews were far more candid and proximal. Lisa, Catherine and Argy were forthcoming with information regarding MAAI and the work and dedication they brought to the mission of the initiative. [12]

5. & 6. Analyzing Ethnographic Interviews and Making a Domain Analysis

The ethnographic interview model that Spradley designed asked for multiple iterations of question-asking over a period of time during separate visits. As I have mentioned, I conducted my first level of understanding of MAAI without interviews, using online materials, so I was bypassing the descriptive questions interviews.[13] At the stage of asking descriptive questions the outcomes from the data determine domains (1979 p. 92). Spradley discusses at this level the difference between ethnography and other social science research. The distinction is that the research question in ethnography is formed only after the researcher has entered the cultural scene (p. 93). I had already set out with a research question, that being, was there reciprocity of ideas between the members of this segment of MAAI? At this stage, I had to add the question, what values, ideas or acts do the members of this cultural scene share? I needed to know not just if there was reciprocity but *of what* was the reciprocity comprised? This led me to the determination of domains. Domains are defined at the most basic level as "cover terms" which are titles for groups of related terms (Spradley p. 100). Related terms emanate from participants' descriptions of the cultural scene. For example, one of the obvious domains that emerged for MAAI is assessment and standards. A related term for this domain, according to

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[12] I felt like a welcomed guest during the interviews and these participants eagerly answered questions in an open manner that required few if any clarifying followup inquiries on my part.

[13] Had I used interviews, I may have had less issues reconciling my biases with my findings.

participants, was the "Maine Learning Results," which are the State of Maine's education standards, adopted in 1994. Another was 'rubrics' or tools that are used to describe as well as measure assessments of leaning and most often require the learner to produce authentic materials to be assessed. The interrelatedness of cover terms and subsequent related terms is how ethnography builds a semantic map of a culture, or in this case a cultural scene.

Domains. A case study, employing ethnographic methods, may focus on one or more domains. I chose four from MAAI's literature which included the aforementioned *Standards and Assessment*, plus *Leadership, Teaching and Learning* and *Professional Development*. These domains came directly from reading MAAI's literature, the required readings that MAAI presented to new teacher-leaders and from my observations at the 2012 summer institute.

Asking Contrast Questions. According to Spradley " the contrast principle states that the meaning of a symbol can be discovered by finding out how it is different from other symbols, (1979, p. 157)." In addition to the domains that were chosen from MAAI's literature I selected two additional domains that I refer to as contrasting sets. These domains served to find the parameters of the MAAI network and their related terms established the outer limits of the organization. The cover terms for these domains were *Limits, Limitations and Potential* and *Deeper Learning in the Arts*. Deeper learning is at the heart of MAAI's mission statement which reads, *to create an environment in Maine where assessment in arts education is an integral part of the work all arts educators do to deepen student learning in the arts* (2013),

retrieved August 22, 2013 from (http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/vpa/assessment.html). I was surprised to find that there was no official definition of the phrase "deeper learning" or any attending literature to give this phrase meaning. It became apparent that this phrase was at the outer limit of MAAI. A second contrasting set was *Limits, Limitations and Potential*. This domain asked participants to define to what extent MAAI could grow, what might limit that growth and what MAAI could achieve within these parameters.

7. Asking Structural Questions - Where the interview process began

The second round of inquiries in this method of ethnographic interview involved structural questions. Structural questions are designed to gather terms related to the domain or cover term (Spradley, 1979 p. 60) . I designed interview questions to invite participants to share descriptive language about the cover terms. These questions were open-ended, and I allowed myself to reformulate the questions to match the situation in the field as the conversation between the participants and myself unfolded. This questioning technique was in keeping with Spradley and McCurdy's concept of descending structural questions (1975, p.69). In essence the interviewer keeps asking questions to get the participant to elaborate on their previous answer.

The questions asked and the information gathered was mostly about nonmaterial, abstract concepts related to MAAI. This presented a challenge to conducting research.. If the participants in this study coalesced around changes in assessment practices, actions were as important as concepts and theories. Spradley defined this distinction between ideas and actions as the "use principle." According to him, the use principle states that "the meaning of a symbol

can be discovered by asking how it is used rather than asking what it means," (1979, p. 156). An interesting relationship between the methodology I was using and the theories of complexity emerged at this point. According to Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler embodied knowledge (2008, p.53) appears tacitly. This embodied knowing, to my understanding, is essentially the same as Spradley's use principle. The difference lies in that Spradley was looking for predictable symbols in a cultural scene while Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler were looking to disrupt the tacit predictability of those symbols. Both acknowledge that knowing is enacted in action. With this consideration in mind, interview questions were structured so that they corresponded to the role of each of the participants in the MAAI network. In this way, their actions as well as thoughts might be explained . For example, when inquiring about Standards and Assessment, I asked Lisa's students, "How does your teacher know what you have learned in art?" But I asked Lisa Marin, "What does it mean to use standards to assess; how do you use them?" Finally, I asked Catherine and Argy, "please explain the words assessment and standards." With Catherine and Argy, the question was more theoretical because they were not actively involved in classroom practices. Interestingly, they answered the question with examples of actions from the field as outlined in Chapter 4.

The structural questions were followed at times by clarifying and contrasting questions which were designed to define what a related term to a domain might or might not mean to a participant and to shape, when possible, the outer limits of the domain's cover term as well. Take for example this sample of data: I asked Lisa, "What does deeper learning in the arts mean to you?" and she responded, "to get to that sweet spot in learning." Then I asked, "What do you mean by that sweet spot?" In this case Lisa was using an analogy and I had to get her to define

the analogy in more concrete terms, preferably her actions or the actions of her students. Her answer then reflected student engagement and focus.

Piloting the question-asking process. To prepare to take Spradley's method into the field, practice was necessary. Rehearsal took place with fellow graduate students in informal sessions and I conducted one interview session in my research methodology class. I asked structural and contrasting questions and recorded the data in the form of field notes as I went. The participants offered brief answers and the interviews were split evenly between my questions and their answers.

In the field, however, the MAAI participants revealed more information to each question than was at times necessary. The majority of the time adult participants answered so fully that no clarifying or contrasting questions were needed. The students in Lisa's class were a completely different case. They often supplied simple answers and when I asked clarifying or contrasting questions the students did not know how to answer. They found their simplified, immediate answers to be sufficient and were not accustomed to providing longer, protracted, detailed answers. I have attributed this to a lack of relationship with these young participants. I was not fully engaged in their community to have their trust. I also came to realize that I was invited to participate in the world of the adult participants. They had agency in the process. On the other hand, I was subjecting the students to interviews in which they had little agency, even though they chose at will to participate and had to have parent approval as well. Moreover the interviews were taking place in school, where traditionally students have had little to no agency

(McLaren, 1998). I considered the slight reticence of the students a significant deterrent to gathering data regarding the 4 domains. [14]

Step 8: Making a Taxonomic Analysis

After the interviews were conducted and transcribed, each transcript was sent to the participant who provided that data. Participants could alter answers, delete answers, withdraw their participation all together or sign off that they were comfortable with and in agreement with the data that they had provided. Once I had a record that the participants were apprised of their right to alter or remove the data that they provided, I moved into the first phase of analysis which was to develop taxonomies for the related terms under each domain. After a thorough read of the interview data, I discovered emerging themes such as agents or people who were actively engaged in the domain, places, or the sites where the domain was present, acts, or the actions that embodied the domain (the use principle), theories, or systems that are transferred to tacit and explicit beliefs or knowledge that supported actions within the domain and descriptors of the

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[14] Here enters a bias. Learner voice is extremely important to me as a teacher, and I believe it is fundamental to education reform and achieving deeper learning for all students. I wanted the students' voices to provide what I have come to know as a contrast. Either their words would reflect reciprocal values and practices regarding assessment, or they would not. Most importantly, I wanted the students to be heard in the professional circles for which this research was intended. The paucity of data that I was able to gather from Lisa's class made me realize I have a ways to go to develop the skills to interview students. I thought because I have been communicating with students for 20 years, that the interviews would be easy. Clearly, the skill of case study interviewing is not the same as teaching in a classroom environment. In teaching the relationship is one of on-going trust that builds over time; its a lot like ethnography. In hindsight, I needed to return to Spradley's descriptive questions and allow the students to take me on a grand tour of their learning and establish a trusting relationship. One site visit and one interview was not enough. Another insight into the challenges of conducting this research comes with the formality of getting written permission and release forms signed by the parents of the students and the assent forms signed by the kids. This made the interviews larger than life for the 6th graders. I compared the interview experience with the students in Jonesport to going into schools to observe pre-service teachers here in Montreal, something I have done continuously at Concordia University. When I go into these classrooms in Montreal, the students open up to me when I am just a new visitor in the class without any perceived agenda. I have come to believe that the hype of conducting research influenced the student participants. In the future, I need to establish a more natural relationship with students prior to gathering data.

cover term itself. I established *agents, places, actions, art, theories* and the *words related to the domain* as taxonomic categories. I compiled all of this information into tables. These 6 categories became the dimensions of contrast for each of the domains.

After the data had been arranged to form taxonomies, I went back to the field to offer the adult members the opportunity to analyze the data by constructing one of the taxonomies themselves. In addition, I enlisted two peers in the graduate program to analyze the data. The findings from this member check and peer review revealed that the process was valid. There was little variance in the categorization of data among all those who were invited to construct taxonomies following the research procedures I set forth.

Step 9: Asking Contrasting Questions

Spradley's model of ethnographic interview asks the researcher to return to the field after developing taxonomies to ask contrasting questions to find the limits of the taxonomies. Here again, I altered the model substantially because the scope of this project and the case study process did not warrant a return to the field. In lieu of contrasting questions, I developed 2 domains with the cover terms *Limits, Limitations and Potential* of the MAAI network and *Deeper Learning in the Arts*. By asking participants to define the *Limits, Limitations and Potential* of MAAI, I was hoping to achieve two goals. First, participants would be defining the parameters of their organization and providing contrast to what the other 4 domains could and could not be to each of them. For example, *time* was considered a limiting factor. *Time* put into one domain such as assessment might affect available time for another domain such as

leadership. Finally, I asked participants to define the phrase *deeper learning in the arts* because this was a key phrase from MAAI's mission statement and preliminary research revealed that this term had no theoretical and unifying definition for the group. By asking participants to define the term, I believed that I would see how the participants related the term to MAAI in unique ways giving me insight to each individual perspective and again determining the limits of reciprocity.

10. Making a Componential Analysis

The development of a componential analysis is the systematic search for attributes or components of meaning (Spradley, 1979, p. 174) . In establishing the componential analysis I examined the data across all of the domains and each of taxonomies to determine to what degree the domain represented shared ideas or shared actions (Appendix). I compared members' answers as a form of contrast.

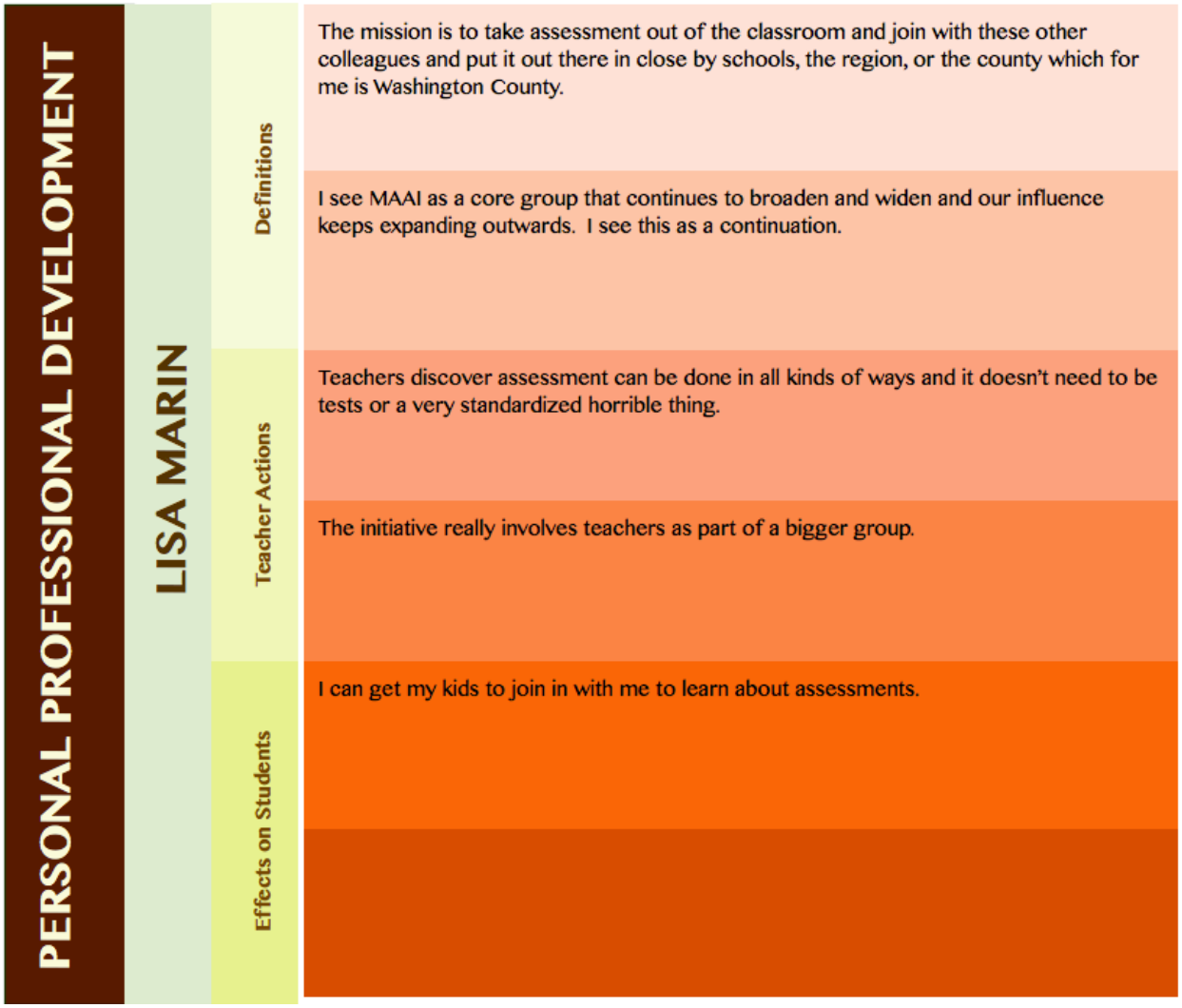
As I moved through Spradley's 12 steps, I found the need to improvise on his method more and more. With regard to a componential analysis, I did not have enough data or a long enough sequence of interviews spanning time to recreate Spradley's analysis process. Spradley was able to use contrasting questions about each domain and each related term over the course of many interviews to define his domains and related terms clearly. I had to rely on the whole text provided by the participants in one interview.

Expanding the Definition of a Componential Analysis. I added to the process of componential analysis tools that were not available to researchers in the social sciences in 1979 when Spradley's book was first published. Text aggregators such as Wordle (http://www.wordle.net/) and Taxedo (http://www.tagxedo.com/), that process texts for word frequency and prominence are simple contemporary tools for looking at data. These tools for text processing added a dimension of understanding to the componential analysis of each domain and when domains were combined the process could show unifying trends between domains quickly and accurately on a semantic level. The methodical reading and re-reading of text and organizing words, phrases, ideas and sentiments with paper and pencil brings a level of understanding that was passed by if the computer did all the work. Moreover, the data sample that I had was small enough to approach it manually. What I was able to do was take words that were trending as important because of their frequency in the text and then think about the definitions of these words as they were provided by participants interview responses. Only then did I settle on a word's relevance.

The Facsimile of a Componential Analysis. In lieu of using contrasting terms to structure this componential analysis, I used MAAI's metaphor of deeper learning as a way to show contrast. I created a visualization of going deeper through graphic organization (see Table below). At the top of the chart I used data from the participants that provided a definition of the cover term of each domain which is found at the far left of the chart. On the next level down I listed any teacher actions that were provided in the the data by the participant in relationship to the cover term for the domain. On the third level down, the deepest level, I listed the affects on students that were found in the data provided. I organized phrases that I carefully extracted from

the interview transcripts. In the extraction process I kept participant's words intact. If I thought taking the phrase out of context would damage the meaning I omitted it as a data selection.

Table 2 Lisa Marin's response to the Domain of *Professional Development*



11. Discovering Cultural Themes

Cultural themes as trends. Using the domains, taxonomies and componential analyses as points of reference, I began the process of looking for cultural themes within this segment of

the network. Cultural themes are, according to Spradley's method of language analysis, shared words, terms and phrases with agreed upon meanings. If I were able to identify common cultural themes would represent the reciprocal flow of ideas. MAAI, as I have come to understand it from this work with Lisa, her class, Argy and Catherine, derives much of what it practices from a wide range of theoretical frames. It is situated in physical geographical locations, in online locations and in the temporary collective spaces that are established by MAAI at various times during the year such as the workshops and summer institute. The four domains and two contrasting domains that have been discussed at various times throughout this text produced some specific and distinguishable trends which I have outlined here and which I will cover extensively in the findings.

The Domains bring to light five trends. *Assessment and Standards* are most likely interpreted culturally from school to school in different ways. MAAI's role is to encourage reflective practices through standards and assessments that are both recursive (grounding learning in past experience) and elaborative (taking sustainable next steps in learning).

Leadership is very important to the growth of the MAAI at this time and seems to serve many purposes for members of the network including collaborative efforts, professional development and collegiality.

The effects of MAAI on *Teaching and Learning* are not yet measurable. They appear in theoretical frames but less so in terms of classroom practice and interestingly enough did not

elicit any data with regard to student nor with the arts. Teaching and learning was the smallest, least defined and least connected domain.

Personal *Professional Development* is seen as a collaborative process, an exercise in community building and an opportunity for teachers to validate their practices and share their successes, in ways that are primarily collegial and secondarily pedagogical.

The discussion of *the arts* through specific examples is conspicuously missing from the transcript data. Admittedly I did not pursue data regarding arts practices but in a cultural scene such as MAAI, one might expect the use of specific examples of the arts to emerge in the interview transcripts.

12. The Case Study of What Has Been Transpiring in the MAAI Network

In the final step of Spradley's 12 step developmental research sequence for ethnography, the last task is to write a full account of the process that allows the reader to understand what I have observed, as described in the words of the participants. I have found that by using these 12 steps, with special regard to the interview process and the development of domains, taxonomies and a highly modified form of componential analysis, I have been able produce three short studies of this one case that provide understandings of what this segment of MAAI network was at the time of the interviews. With the aid of complexity theory I have encountered "knowing structures" formed coherently between Lisa, Argy and Catherine. Other knowing structures exist between Lisa and her 6th graders (Davis et al., p. 56). This study did not find that there was reciprocity across all three levels of participation from students to teacher to organizers.

Conclusion

In these 12 steps I have outlined how I used Spradley's method of ethnographic interview to construct this case study with three different interpretations. As I described each of the 12 steps, I took into consideration the values of conducting ethical research. I described how the research was gathered, how I considered the well-being of the participants, and techniques that I employed along the way to gather data and analyze it in a clear, reproducible and transparent manner. I offered examples from the research to illustrate the various functions of Spradley's method.

Chapter 4: One Case Study Framed 3 Ways

Introduction

In this chapter I am offering three ways to frame this case study,. These frames elaborate on the tacit and explicit theories at play in this cultural scene using the words and descriptions provided by the participants. I compare the frames to photographs. Frame 1 is a snapshot of what is happening in Lisa Marin's 6th grade class. It looks at data related specifically to Lisa Marin, her 6th grade class and the focus group interview I conducted with them. At the heart of this description is the students' voices. Their words, those of Lisa and a handful of observations from my field notes create a case about assessment, in which Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler's complexity of knowing, learning and teaching is illustrated. An emphasis on "raised awareness that falls into quiet unassuming and subtly conscious use, (Davis et al. p. 29)" and "constraints that enable students to be independent learners (p. 22)" builds a case for reciprocity between Lisa and her students using complexity theories and provides an understanding of how standards are at play.

Frame 2 is a group portrait of Argy Nestor, Catherine Ring and Lisa Marin. It is defined by data that Lisa, Argy and Catherine provided. In this scenario I employed the componential analysis of the data and some perceptions of this segment of MAAI are offered. I examined how the three participants constructed their definitions of four domains: *assessment and standards*, *personal professional development*, *leadership* and *teaching and learning*. Then I examined how each participant translated these definitions into teacher actions and the effect these actions have

upon learners. I found reciprocity between Lisa and her students and again reciprocity was present between Lisa and Argy and Catherine.

Frame 3 takes a panoramic view of MAAI through the lens created by the participants in this segment of the MAAI network. It draws upon word clouds to construct what might be happening in the MAAI network beyond Lisa, Catherine and Argy. This frame looks at the composite of domain definitions across this segment of the MAAI network and emerging trends in domain activity. This is the story of what MAAI has accomplished in this segment of the network in its two years of work. These findings are based solely on the data presented in this segment of the network and further research would need to be conducted to see if the findings are generalizable across all 36 sites participating in MAAI.

The rationale for presenting these three case study frames is based on an assessment, as well as qualitative research practice, known as triangulation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Triangulation is a commonly used approach in social science research for verification purposes. The belief is that if three methods of data analysis are used on one set of data and provide similar results then the findings of the research are reliable. Another approach to triangulation is to use three different sets of data on the same subject to see if similar results are produced during analysis. This process seemed appropriate given that triangulation plays a predominant role in institutional assessment practices. Education has borrowed the term triangulation to describe a holistic assessment scenario comprised of products of learning (such as tests, quizzes projects and reports), teacher observations and finally the learner's self-assessment and reflection on the learning process. In all three case frames I have identified trends and emerging ideas that relate

to complexity theories. Each of these scenarios offers a unique perspective on one set of data that provide MAAI and its members, as well as other arts educators with insights about classroom practices, professional organization and standards-based assessments in the field of arts education.

Frame One: A Description of Lisa Marin and her 6th Grade Class - A Snapshot

Introducing Lisa. Lisa Marin is a public school art teacher with 17 years of experience. Originally from the New York City area, Lisa has lived and raised her family in the eastern-most area of the Maine coast in Washington, County. She holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Maine at Machias and a graduate degree from the University of Southern Maine, where she completed a capstone experience in art education assessment practices. From this experience Lisa acquired an extensive understanding of assessment principles and methods. When asked about standards she first commented, "of whose standards and what type of standards?" She was speaking about everything from tests, to rubrics, to what a teacher and student decide is an appropriate challenge for that particular learner.

Lisa is adept at schooling and teaching and has a broad repertoire of arts activities, classroom community building techniques and clerical devises to define herself as a professional educator. Lisa is aware of the limits and limitations of her position as an art teacher in her school district and she conveyed clearly the challenges of teaching all grades K-12. These challenges included the lack of time that is available for both instruction and planning, not to mention assessment and the finite energy reserves she has to meet the needs of learners across the developmental spectrum in the course of a school day. Lisa is an active leader in her community.

She explained that she serves on a variety of committees both within her school district and her community at large. Not only was Lisa teaching multiple levels of art, but she was also the gifted and talented coordinator at the elementary school and a teachers' union representative. Lisa is goodnatured, responsive and collaborative. She is very respectful of the lines of communication in the two schools where she teaches.

Visiting Jonesport Elementary School. For this project I made three visits to Lisa's school community. First, I conducted a site visit to see Lisa teaching and meet the students with whom I would be conducting a focus group. The goal was to become familiar with the school culture and get a glimpse of the community at large. The second visit was solely for conducting the focus group and to interview Lisa. After completing this process, I decided to visit Lisa in her high school classroom as well, to interview some of her older students and to have a better understanding of Lisa's teaching experience K-12. The data that has been presented here comes solely from Lisa's elementary school classroom and follows the initial plan of research.

Lisa's K-8 art room was neatly organized and equipped with an LCD projector and a wireless internet connection. This was not one of those stereotypical art rooms with supplies, creations and collections flowing endlessly out of every corner of the room and covering every surface of each table. Lisa utilized all of the space efficiently and students were aware of classroom routines, and procedures. Because of limited instruction time, Lisa relayed that she felt obliged to organize materials herself rather than involve the aid of her students. She had developed efficiencies and strategies to keep track of 13 different grades and provide each with studio art experiences.

Lisa's Students. The 6th grade class that was interviewed for this project was comprised of 9 members. Both genders were represented equally in the group and a10th student was absent the day of the focus group. The students have art once a week. The community of learners was respectful and tightly knit. They knew each other well and shared conversation and demonstrated that they knew how to moderate one another's behavior through this discussion. Lisa knew her students well and there was mutual respect. These 6th graders wanted to participate in the focus group discussion, though they were upset by having to miss some of their recess.[15]

The Classroom Activities and Assessments. The two art activities that I observed in Lisa's class were centered on creativity and the development of skills for expression.. The instruction, assessment and standards in Lisa's classroom reminded me of "raised awareness that falls into quiet unassuming and subtly conscious use"(Davis et al 2008, p. 29) which is necessary in the classroom where a teacher must respond to the needs of the learners that become the focus of attention and perception.

In the first activity I witnessed, the 6th graders were creating landscape collages with birch tree trunk paintings as the foreground and a separate background with atmospheric skies and out of focus landforms created through watercolor wash and bleeding techniques. This lesson focused on painting skills and visual plane composition. The assignment had some prescriptive elements that were related to modernist elements of art and principle of design as

[15] I timed the focus group to insure that there was free time at the end allowing me to double the amount of recess that had been taken from the students.

well. The second art project involved students drawing their vision of the world one thousand years into the future completely from their imagination. This project was expanding the space of possibility for the students, (Davis et al., 2008, p. 20). Students were charged with imagining the infrastructure of their community including architecture, transportation and the distribution of goods and services such as food and entertainment. The students enjoyed this activity and we discussed it as the ice-breaker for the focus group. Revealed in their artwork was a mix of fantasy and the world as they knew it, an example of recursive elaboration of art and community (2008, p. 201). By recursive elaboration, I mean that the students were working from their own complete understanding of the world to add and create a new way of seeing it. This is a fundamental tenet of constructivist theories in education, (Piaget, 1936/1963).

Lisa presented these 2 activities with few study examples. The students were asked to imagine and create their solutions to the given art prompts. Skills, visual resources and expressions were developed organically from within each learner's imagination and collectively among the 10 members of the group.

The standards Lisa uses. I discussed standards with Lisa during our visits. I came to the understanding that she uses the principles of design and the elements of art as the center of her standards system. Her goal was to give each student a solid foundation in the elements of art and principles of design by the end of elementary school so as to help them to think formally about art and to prepare them for her high school curriculum. Discussion with the students as well as Lisa revealed that craftsmanship, skills development and time management were explicit standards for achievement as well. Including the Modernist principles, these standards were nested in developmental theories that were derived from rationalism (Davis et al. p. 161) .

Rationalism as an organizing structure for curriculum looks at a progression of steps, beginning with skills, concepts and knowledge building in complexity in a sequential order, something along the line of Bloom's Taxonomy, that results in expression and creation at its outer reaches.[16]

Assessment practices in Lisa's art room. Much of the assessment that I witnessed in the time I was in Lisa's room, especially the formative assessment, was tacit and intended to be fun. Students were not aware that she was assessing them nor that they were self-assessing, but they were. Given the very intimate group size of 10 students, Lisa provided formative assessment through individual conversations with students and impromptu group discussions about what students saw in the work of their peers. Checklists and reminders of the criteria for assignments were found on the whiteboard and examples, when given, were displayed from the internet through the LCD projector. Given the small size of the learning community and the informality that this brings, Lisa was able to convey the meaning and purpose of standards without copious amounts of forms such as printed rubrics and other academic standardizations, though she did use a standard, generic rubric that she modified to reflect the criteria of each assignment. These formal measures of standards found in the rubrics were eclipsed by the collective valuing of outcomes such as creativity and personal expression that were central to Lisa's methods of teaching art and that were offered as important standards by the students. It was sufficient and effective for Lisa to provide feedback on an individual basis. She did not need complex systems and devices of assessment nor did she need to dedicate time to them.

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[16] The updated version of Bloom's Taxonomy used by MAAI can be located here: http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/1105/

Technology and learning resources online. Lisa maximized her time by using the internet for teaching resources such as visual aids, exemplars (when employed) and lesson plan ideas. She commented that finding activities that were of interest and motivating to her students was important. Technology has offered Lisa new curriculum ideas and the potential for expanding art-related knowledge. She was using this vast array of knowledge found on the internet to remain child-centered and appeal to the developmental and community-specific needs of her learners, (Doddington & Hilton, 2007).

Classroom management and grading. One of the very first experiences I had in Lisa's classroom involved record keeping. Lisa explained to me that in 6th grade students are introduced to homework in all disciplines as part of their transition into middle school and as a long-term preparation for high school. She and the 6th graders began their class by recording the assignments in their agendas and submitting homework in the form of sketchbook assignments. There were discussions regarding responsibility and consequences for not keeping one's academic obligations. This simple act of teaching responsibility was mixed in with other behavioral expectations. Because this clerical activity was placed at the beginning of class, it set the tone and defined the rest of Lisa's lesson. The prevailing theory in class became behavioral (Davis, et al. p 92). The emphasis was on the student being able to identify and define the expected behavior with regard to homework to receive the external reward of a grade. These behavioral expectations superseded the constructivist, modernist and expressive outcomes of the art lesson that followed.

All of these observations and their subsequent ties to theories led me to wonder where standards-based assessment with rubrics, and the constructivist theories that underlie this methodology for instruction and assessment of learning were situated in Lisa's practice. In informal discussions and interviews with her about her graduate work, I found she had a formidable command of the language, concepts and processes of assessment, especially standards-based assessment. Her capstone experience to her master's degree at the University of Southern Maine had involved action research with high school students assisting in the design of criteria for projects and the subsequent assessment of art projects that emanated from these criteria. Yet, the formal employment of standards was less evident in what I observed in Lisa's elementary classroom.

Lisa expressed being in a state of flux with the selection of standards-based systems of assessment. When asked about the use of standards and assessment in her class during our interview she responded, "Which standards and whose standards are we talking about?" She cited possibilities such as the Maine Learning Results, the Common Core, the National Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts or simply the standards that are negotiated between the learner and the instructor in any given classroom at any given moment in time. Lisa was knowledgable and well-informed. At the same time, she was keeping an eye on all of these standards systems but not adopting any of them for her students until the path to selection and implementation had been made clear by officials higher in the chain of command at her district, the state and national levels. Based on our discussions and the assessment materials Lisa provided me, I came to understand her priorities for assessment as follows: keep assignment requirements clear for her learners, provide rubrics that were easy to understand and recall and

maintain compatibility with the grading system in place within her school. All of this was intended to minimize the interruption to art and studio experiences for her students. Standards included time on task, attention to detail and the expressive qualities in the students' art. The Modernist theory found in the elements of art and the principles of design structured her content and knowledge standards.[17]. Student input was tacit and continuous in her classes. Students were free to make comments and Lisa took advantage of teachable moments to draw the students into conversations.

Assessment and standards - A discussion with Lisa's 6th graders. Students in Lisa's art room, when asked how Lisa knew if they were being successful in art, responded in a variety of ways. Student responses echoed what Lisa emphasized as being important; namely. that they should use their time wisely, that students consider the elements of art and principles of design and that their work be original, creative and expressive. Student remarks included the following insights.

Raising self awareness of effort and mimicry, *Crystal* (pseudonym)[18]: responded, "It's in the specific details you use that makes the art look realistic. This helps out."

Clockwork (pseudonym):

"How much creativity you put in and how much fun you have working on each piece."

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[17] Modernist theory in the art classroom pair well with DBAE methods of instruction and assessment but I did not witness the use of DBAE in Lisa's instruction.

[18] Students selected their pseudonyms prior to the focus group.

“What do you mean by creativity?”, I inquired.

“If what you make looks odd or unique to you and it might be from something you have seen or it might come out of your head. The way that you draw something,” *Clockwork* responded.

“What do you mean by the way you draw?” I asked.

“How straight it can be. [Pause] Color, too,” *Clockwork* followed.

> “What do you mean by color?” I continued [Pause] [no response] “These follow up questions can be tricky,” I added, honoring that he was done or stuck.

Larry Bird (pseudonym) responded that creativity was important when he said:

> “How unique you make it and how much time you use on it.”

Aqua Marine (pseudonym) provided an answer that focused on behavioral objectives and expressive objectives in equal measure when she said:

> “The teacher knows if you use your time, when the teacher gives you time and you do it all neat, and you concentrate on it, she knows how you feel about art and about stuff about it.”

Ella (pseudonym) took into consideration craftsmanship with the response,

> “When you are concentrating on your artwork and you are trying to make it neat.”

Success was defined by time on task for *Kevin Durant* (pseudonym):

> "Your art teacher knows you are being successful when you take a lot of time on it, there's a lot of hard work into it, and you didn't draw it in 5 seconds, doing it really quick."

Finally *Joey's* (pseudonym) answer was situated firmly in the self expressive and emotional nature of learning with:

> "It kinda depends on attitude. If you're mad you might think of bad ideas if you are happy you might think of more creative ideas."

I had wondered if the students would use the words 'assess', 'assessment' or 'standards' in their responses as a potential link to MAAI's work and an indication of reciprocity, but no student participant offered a response that included these terms. These student responses were reciprocated in Lisa's responses to a corresponding question that I asked her. When I inquired, "What does it mean for you to assess using standards?" Lisa's answer was:

> "OK my feeling is people are talking about standards and a lot of times they mean a lot of different things. Standards can be anything from what you think students need to get out of their learning or it could be I am grading from a standards based system...Standards could mean I am using a rubric that is a number scale or letter scale, or it could be the Maine Learning Results."

Lisa's students were focused on Lisa's definition of standards being, "what you think students need to get out of their learning." Standards in this situation were local, child-centered and

recursive. Students knew the standards by heart. The standards were tools for learning. They were not the focus of learning.

When referring to the effects of standards on her elementary school students, including her 6th graders, Lisa generated these responses:

> "I encourage students to look at each other's work." These critiques informed student productivity and established other evaluative and assessment measures, though Lisa did not offer specific details in this interview.

Lisa went on to answer:

> "My students come up with criteria," and expressed a form of unpacking the standards and defining the standards with this response, (McTighe and Wiggins, 2010). To unpack a standard means to put an institutionalized standard in the student's own words to make the standard clear and to allow the learner to take ownership of it.

According to Lisa:

> "They (the students) understand that there is something that they need to be working toward, but there are multiple paths to get to that place. It doesn't have to be a cookie cutter kind of thing."
>
> Here Lisa emphasized creative and expressive outcomes and a clear path to differentiation for each learner. Lisa's response spoke of a holistic approach to standards (Beattie, 1997, p.17) taking into consideration both the student's understanding, development and perspective as well as the institution's requirements. The students in Lisa's 6th grade class on the other hand, had synthesized all of their classroom experiences with Lisa and they had come to tacitly value what her expectations were.

Their own expectations when developing the standards were not apparent. Yet, student input in assessment practices was clearly of importance to Lisa. The lack of student voice in the development of standards and their awareness of their own voice, which I deem to be a form of reciprocity between the teacher and the students, was a significant finding. The causes of this lack of reciprocity regarding student voice are outside the scope of this project and the data collected. [19]

The use of standards. When I began the focus group with Lisa's 6th graders we discussed their current assignment; to draw their community one thousand years in the future. In this preliminary discussion students offered insights that clearly echoed Lisa's position on standards and the open-ended nature of art instruction and learning in her class. Moreover the assignment demonstrated higher level thinking on the part of the students and provided evidence that there was reciprocity between Lisa's definition of standards and the students' thinking. Student responses were varied and enlightening.

When asked, "What's the purpose of the assignment? Why draw a picture of your community one thousand years from now?" *Crystal* (pseudonym) responded:

"It depends on what you do in the present will change what it will look like in the future."

[19] My personal hypotheses for this lack of reciprocity include the following: Children look to adults such as their parents for guidance and authoritative agency and the students in Lisa's class transferred this over to school and schooling as a process. Lisa's words were more important than their own. Schooling as we know it is mostly undemocratic, students follow the instructions of their teachers in most subjects, even if one teacher tries to extend agency to the students it is outside the cultural norms of the school and students do not have the skills, awareness and abilities to respond to choice and environments that encourage personal agency.

This response indicated to me that Crystal had thought about the assignment in terms of its significance to her life as well as the expected outcome of the assignment.

Aqua Marine (pseudonym) responded:

> "It also helps kids imagine what they want to do. So, if they want to, they can try to make any of this in the future."

Of all the descriptions of standards that Lisa provided, "what you think students need to get out of a lesson," stood out again. This child-centered definition seemed to be the most prevalent in the interview transcript. The students' responses regarding this "thousand years into the future" assignment supported this finding. Lisa clearly valued a close relationship with her students and standards that they shared and standards which were personalized.

Lisa generalized about what teachers' actions should be with regard to assessment and standards in the following passages:

> "Standards point teachers in the direction of looking at what somebody or group of people think is important learning for the arts in particular. Standards are anything that really forces teachers to think carefully about what's really important for kids to come away with and the many paths to get there."

Lisa's generalized statement in the interview and her classroom practice were very much in line with one another in this instance. This was substantiated by what Lisa's students had to say. I found that there was clear and purposeful reciprocity between the students and Lisa regarding lesson outcomes, criteria and purpose. There was however one discrepancy with regard to Lisa's

values and practice regarding student input and the democratic process for understanding lesson standards and evaluations and what the students valued and internalized. Students in essence only assimilated what Lisa expected of them in the data that I collected. I did not explicitly or tacitly see their voices or their input in the learning process. I arrived at this finding though observation in Lisa's classes combined with what Lisa's sixth graders said in the focus group. The students stated that in art class time on task, quality and effort and creativity were the standards by which they were being graded and demonstrated achievement. The interview with Lisa confirmed that she upheld these standards.

When the students in this study participated in a brief focus group much was revealed about instruction, the standards they had for their work and the assessment practices they employed in the classroom. This lead me to believe that 'qualifying data' on student learning in lieu of quantifying it in an effort to report assessment outcomes, is perhaps the most important topic as well as a finding in this paper.

Frame 2: The Reciprocity between Lisa Argy and Catherine, A Group Portrait

Modifying Spadley's methods of analysis. The purpose in conducting a componential analysis was to find generalized meaning through language patterns in a given cultural scene (Spradley, 1979, p. 172). For the purposes of this report I have chosen to analyze the 4 domains, *Assessment and Standards*, *Teaching and Learning, Leadership,* and *Personal Professional Development* that were described and defined through the interview process. As each domain is introduced I have inserted the table with data from the interviews a source of reference. These domains were selected from the main topics found in the MAAI teacher leader training literature. Each domain, with each participant's data in a table format has been presented here prior to the componential analysis.

Assessment and Standards

Table 3 Lisa Marin's data on *Assessment and Standard*

Table 4 Argy Nestor's data on *Assessment and Standards*

ASSESSMENT AND STANDARDS	ARGY NESTOR		
		Definitions	Assessment for me has 2 components, one, is for a teacher to reflect on what a teacher has done, and for a student to view where they have been and where they are at the present time.
			The standards are, in terms of the Maine Learning Results, a document that guides and helps teachers to determine what kids should learn and be able to do and to create that curriculum that meets the needs of their kids and their school and their community.
		Teacher Actions	Teachers determine curriculum based on student, school and community needs.
			Teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their practice on children's learning.
		Effects on Students	Students become metacognitive with regard their progress of learning and their progression through time and content.
			The Maine Learning Results (or National Standards) insure homogeneity of learning experience so that all learners have access to quality education.

Table 5 Catherine Ring's data on *Assessment and Standards*

The componential analysis of the domain *assessment and standards* revealed that Lisa, Argy and Catherine all valued reaching students and connecting with them in ways that enhanced and insured learning through standards-based assessment practices. To arrive at this finding I

structured participant responses into a framework that included the definition of the domain. I looked at teacher actions that would be carried out in that domain and the effects of these actions on students as reported by the participants. The graphic representation of the data is presented above and is based on MAAI's mission statement to provide deeper learning in the arts. By putting definitions at the top and the effects on the student at the bottom I was hoping to represent this deeper learning. The domain of *Standards and Assessment* reached all the way down to the student level but at times, not all domains, as described by participants, reached the student level. Imbedded here is a small representation of the graphic organization.

Argy Nestor is Visual and Performing Arts Specialist at the Maine Department of Education, (DOE). She was a classroom teacher for 26 years prior to her career at the Maine DOE and she has worked with standards since Maine adopted them and a local assessment system back in 1994, (http://www.maine.gov/education/standards.htm) .[20] Argy provided a definition of standards and one of assessment that reflected this rich knowledge base and commitment to standards-based learning. She stated:

> "Assessment for me has 2 components; one, is for a teacher to reflect on what a teacher has done, and for a student to view where they have been and where they are at the present time."
>
> and

[20] The local assessment system that was designed to compliment the Maine Learning Results was discontinued under the pressures to provide assessment data related to No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

> "The standards are, in terms of the Maine Learning Results, a document that guides and helps teachers to determine what kids should learn and be able to do and to create that curriculum that meets the needs of their kids and their school and their community."

Here Argy's responses defined assessment as two reflective practices and standards as a unifying document that serves as a common ground for all arts teachers in Maine. The Maine Learning Results were part and parcel of her lived experience as a teacher as well as an administrator. In addition, she has been actively involved with the development of National Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts and has followed the development of the Common Core of Learning. Argy summarized what teachers and students should get out of a standards-based assessment process. She spelled out knowledge and the application of that knowledge when she stated "what kids should know and be able to do."

Argy's answer was nested within Lisa's answer. In conjunction with Argy, Lisa explained that she considered the Maine Learning Results when she was planning for instruction. Lisa's definition of standards was actually more inclusive and varied; she began her definition of standards with the statement "whose standards?". Lisa related that she understood that changes were to come with regard to the Maine Learning Results and the probable adoption of the National Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts and the simultaneous adoption of the Common Core were around the corner. According to Lisa, both of these standard-based systems were poised to put new demands on classroom teachers. Lisa was waiting for these changes to transpire. With regard to Argy's definition of standards and assessment as tools for student self reflection, Lisa's students were, as I observed, self reflective when Lisa asked them to write

about the quality of the drawings they had completed for a homework assignment and in discussions with Lisa as a whole class and in 1 to 1 situations.

When referring to teacher actions with regard to the domain of *Assessment and Standards* Argy advocated for teacher control of curriculum content. Argy listed two discernible actions that teachers perform with regard to assessment and standards; "determining curriculum based on student, school and community needs" and "reflecting on the effectiveness of their practice on children's learning." Lisa's comment that standards are, at their simplest, what the student and teacher decide is the right course of action, reflected this valuing of local control to decide curriculum content and outcomes. Both Argy and Lisa described assessment as a tool for teachers to reflect on their own practices and make critical choices for their students.

Catherine Ring also saw assessment as a reflective tool for teachers and learners. Catherine's background in education includes being an art teacher in Vermont and an elementary school principal in Maine. She drew upon these experiences to inform her current position as Executive Director of the New England Institute for Teacher Education. Because she worked with in-service teachers, she was constantly responding to various school cultures that have adopted and interpreted standards-based education in a variety of ways. She stated, "To me assessment is about reflecting on what you have taught or what you have learned, summative forms of assessment and formative kinds of assessments." In this interview, Catherine provided an ample definition of standards that was less inclusive than Lisa's and more inclusive than Argy's. She stated, "Standards are really about having high expectations such as guidelines, targets, benchmarks, exemplars, the Common Core, the Maine Learning Results, or the National Standards." Catherine was inclusive of multiple systems of standards, a perspective that takes

into account that Maine, being a local control state, has no unified curriculum. Various school systems have unique combinations of assessment strategies and standards in place. When she teaches graduate level classes she has to respond to this kaleidoscope of approaches to standards and assessment.

All three participants reciprocated the idea that assessment is a reflective practice and that standards are meant to inform and focus the attention of the learner and the teacher. Moreover, this use of reflection to improve learning and instruction is akin to Davis, Sumara and Luce-Kapler's recursive and elaborative ways of knowing, learning and teaching (2008, pp. 201-202.).

Standards and the cohesion between teaching and learning. Another finding that emerged from this reciprocal understanding of *Assessment and Standards* lies in the relationship between teachers and students. Catherine and Argy in their definitions made clear distinctions between teacher reflection and assessment and student reflection and assessment through standards.

Lisa was less compartmentalized in her definitions. There was a blending between teacher reflection and student evaluation that was difficult to separate in her interview transcript. Lisa emphasized student input in setting standards and goals for learning but provided less evidence of students self assessing in the end. Lisa was aware of her limited time and the demands on teachers to account for student learning in a manner that at times excludes the learner from the process. Lisa explicitly stated that her elementary school was phasing in the use of standards for student progress reporting and she was conforming to the norms of her school culture. Grading systems and schedules are outside jurisdiction of the MAAI network and show a clear limitation

to the impact MAAI can have. Lisa took a tacit approach to her use of standards with her elementary age students, who are traditionally considered to be less metacognitive/self reflective from the perspective of developmental models such as Lowenfeld (1964) and Piaget (1936, 1963). Awareness of standards and assessment has, it appears, fallen into unassuming and subtly conscious use.

Argy saw the learner becoming self aware of their progress in learning through assessment and Catherine came the closest to putting the learner in charge of their own learning when she stated, "Assessment is not about taking tests," and "exemplars show students why they reached a certain level of a standard." Standards begin to focus the learner on where they are on a learning continuum rather than labeling the learner with regard to their achievement. This is a very different evaluation process from testing. Between Lisa, Argy and Catherine there was a reciprocal belief in the power of standards for teaching and learning in the visual arts classroom as a reflective tool shared by learners and teachers which values assessment as a recursive elaborative process.

Professional Development

Table 6 Lisa Marin's data on *Personal Professional Development*

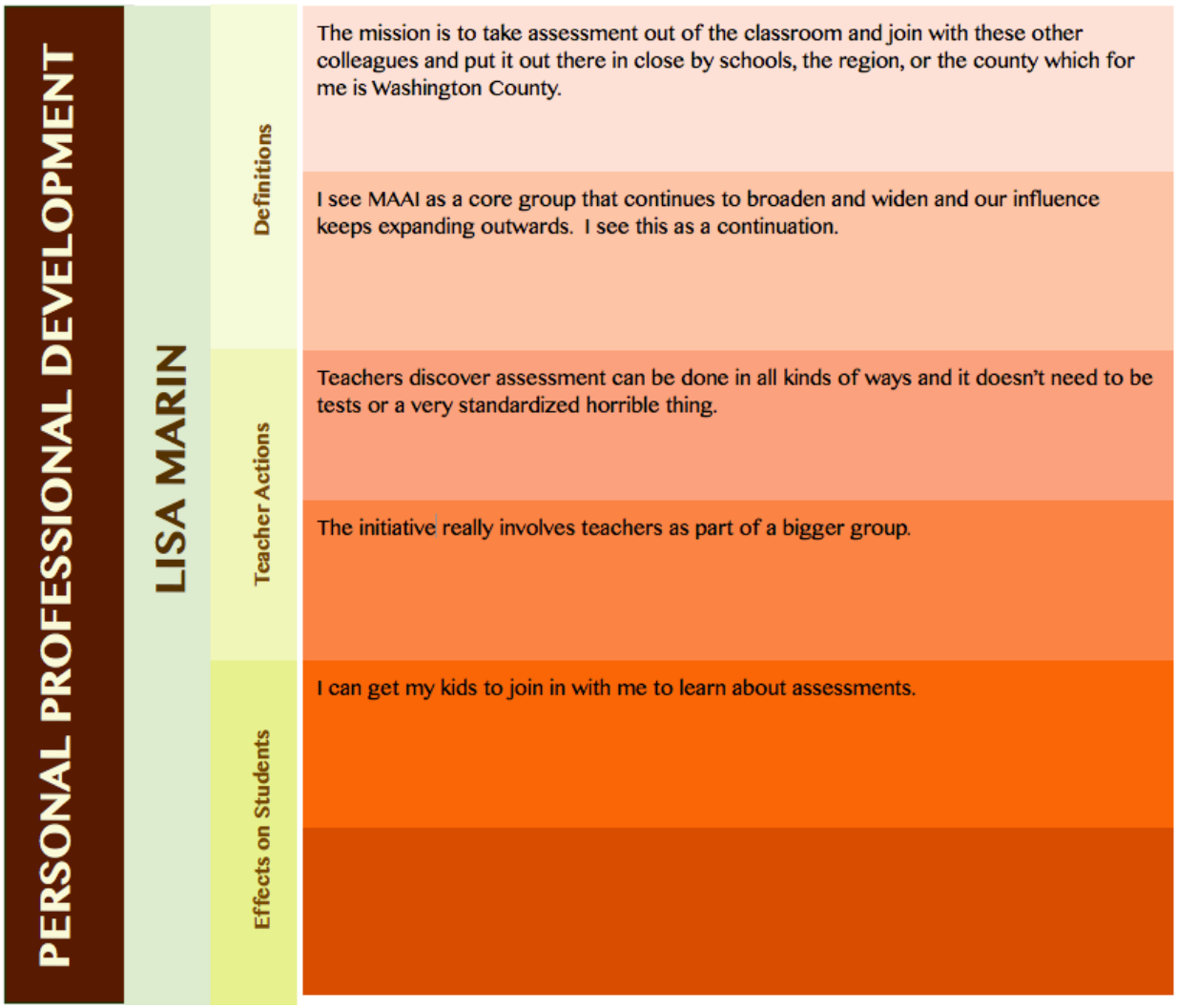
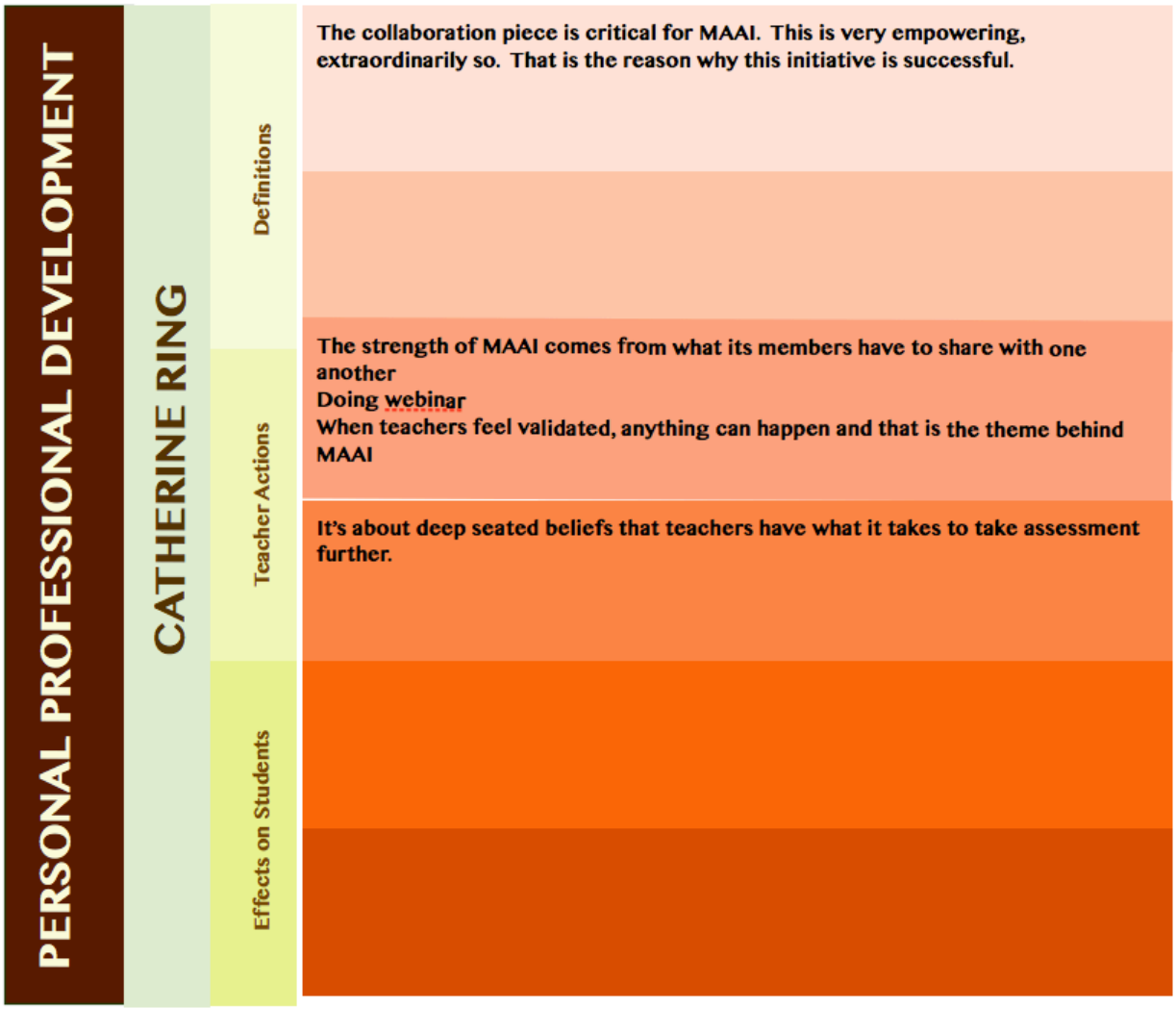


Table 7 Argy Nestor's data on *Personal Professional Development*

Table 8 Catherine Ring's data on *Personal Professional Development*



Interestingly, *Professional Development* was the domain that provided the smallest amount of data. Professional development was framed in the interview as an effect upon the participant rather than an outcome of the Maine Arts Assessment Initiative. I was asking how MAAI had impacted each participant's professional development. What appeared in the data is that the participants saw themselves as fully actualized professionals. There was little to no data with regard to how they had changed as individuals because of their involvement with MAAI. Lisa Marin provided broad dimensions in her description of professional development. She saw MAAI as an opportunity to work collectively and collaboratively with other teachers. She saw teachers having an opportunity to expand their assessment skills, methods and understandings of what arts assessment is. She also saw the initiative as an invitation to get her students involved in all aspects of the assessment process. Argy saw MAAI as an opportunity to develop her leadership skills and as a forum for teachers to collaborate and share. She stated, "Through collaboration the possibilities are endless." Catherine stated, "When teachers feel validated, anything can happen and that is the theme behind MAAI," and "The collaboration piece is critical for MAAI. This is very empowering, extraordinarily so. That is the reason why this initiative is successful." Reciprocally, professional development for these participants meant a community of collaborators but how MAAI impacted each of the participants was less clear.

Teaching and Learning

Table 9 Lisa Marin's data on *Teaching and Learning*

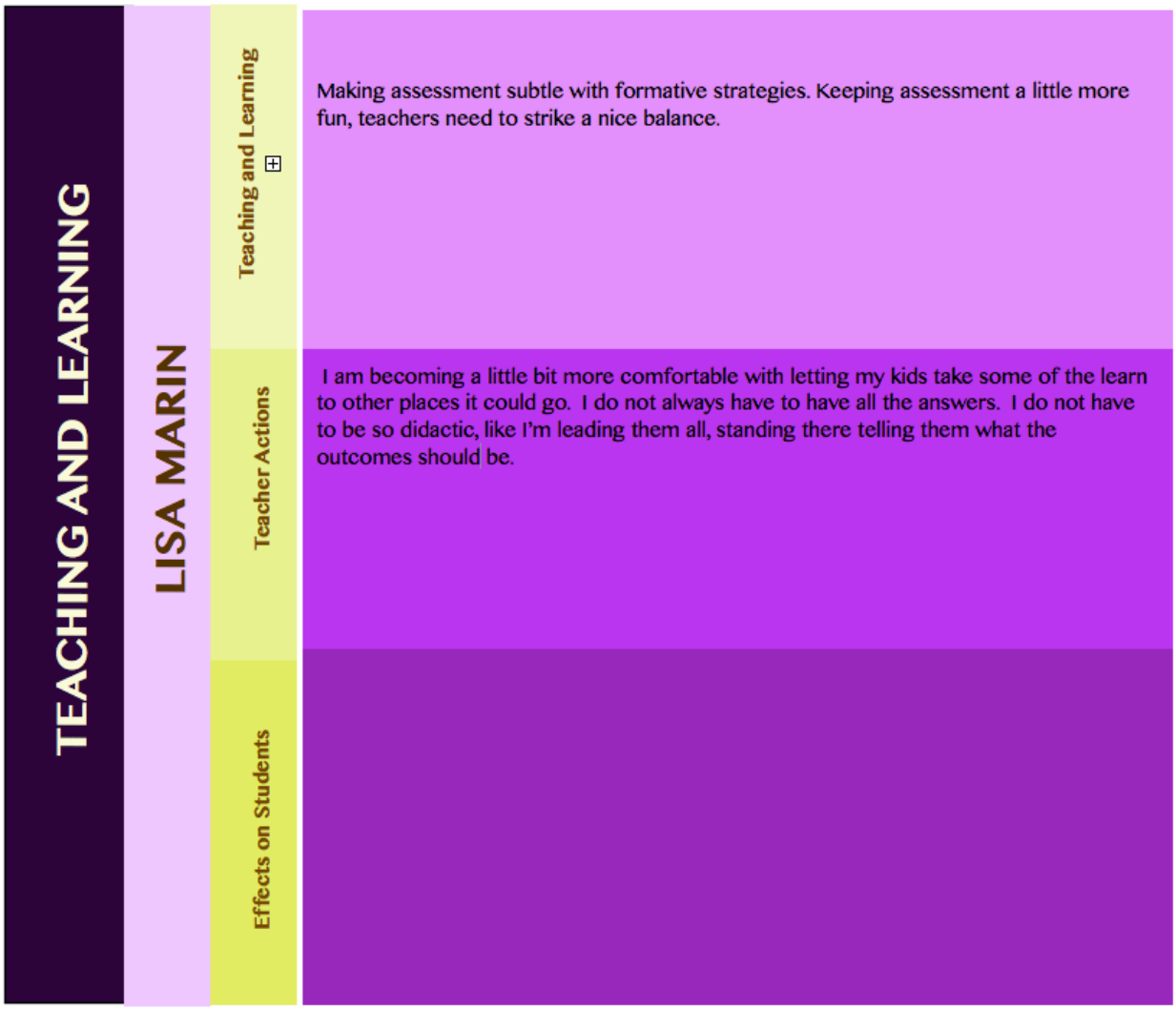
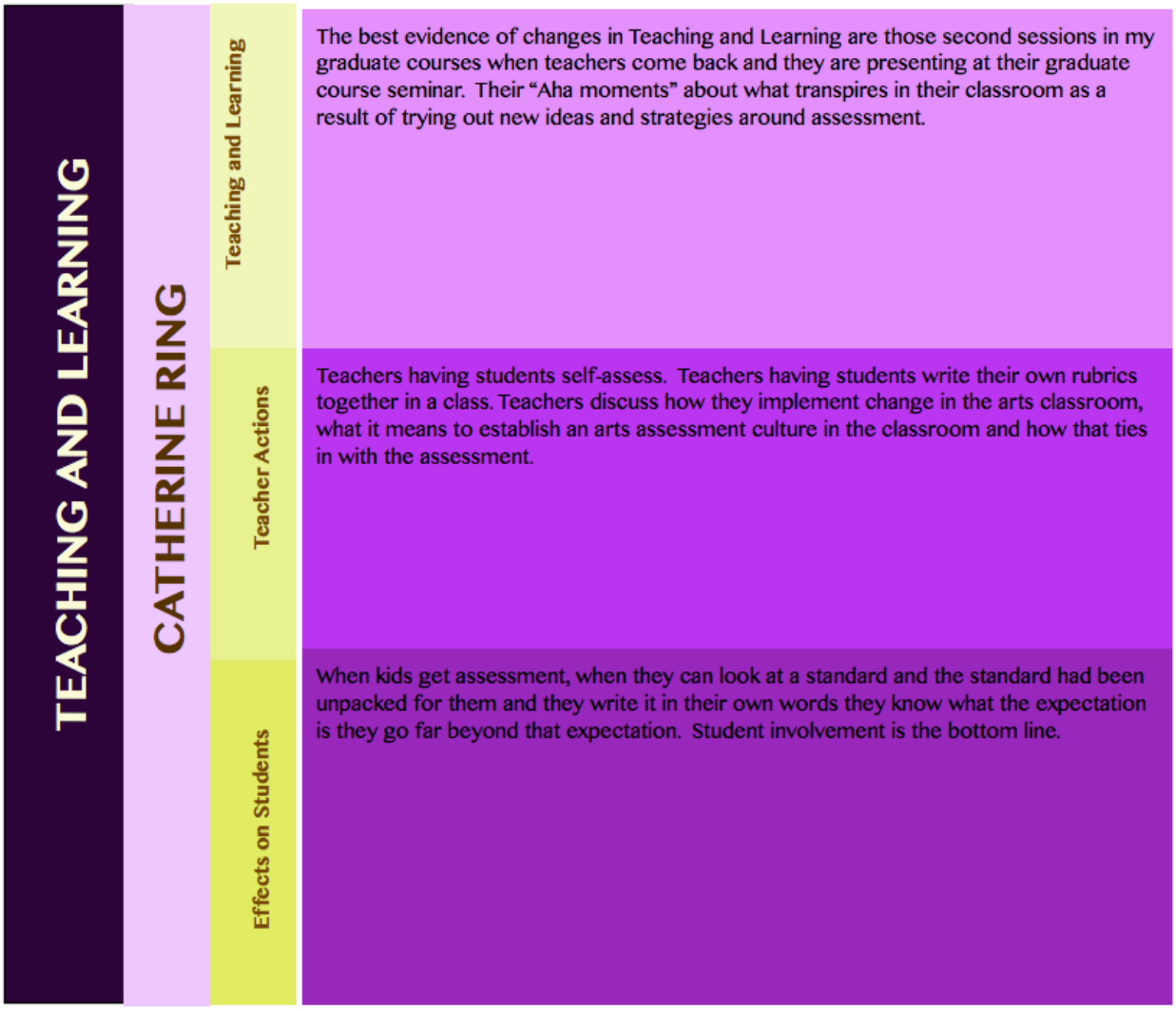


Table 10 Argy Nestor's data on *Teaching and Learning*

Table 11 Catherine Ring's data on *Teaching and Learning*



With the domain of *Teaching and Learning* the data sample was small as well, and only Catherine provided data related to students in the classroom. She stated,

> "When kids get assessment, when they can look at a standard and the standard had been unpacked for them and they write it in their own words, they know what the expectation is, they go far beyond that expectation. Student involvement is the bottom line."

Of course, Lisa worked with teaching and learning every day, but when associating the term with MAAI she discussed her actions but did not focus on the learning outcomes as they affect students or were presented by them. Interestingly, Lisa looked to less rigidity and formality in assessment when she offered phrases such as,

> "Making assessment subtle with formative strategies.... Keeping assessment a little more fun... teachers need to strike a nice balance."

Argy was extremely candid with regard to teaching and learning. She stated,

> "We are just beginning to see how it [MAAI] is changing the way teachers are teaching because we are starting to get that feedback. The verdict is out on how it is impacting student learning. We need to figure out how to measure that."

She acknowledged that MAAI had no metrics or measures in place for determining effects on students. In the end, I found there was little reciprocity among these three participants in these interviews with regard to the question, "How have standards-based assessments affected teaching and learning?"

Leadership

Table 12 Lisa Marin's data on *Leadership*

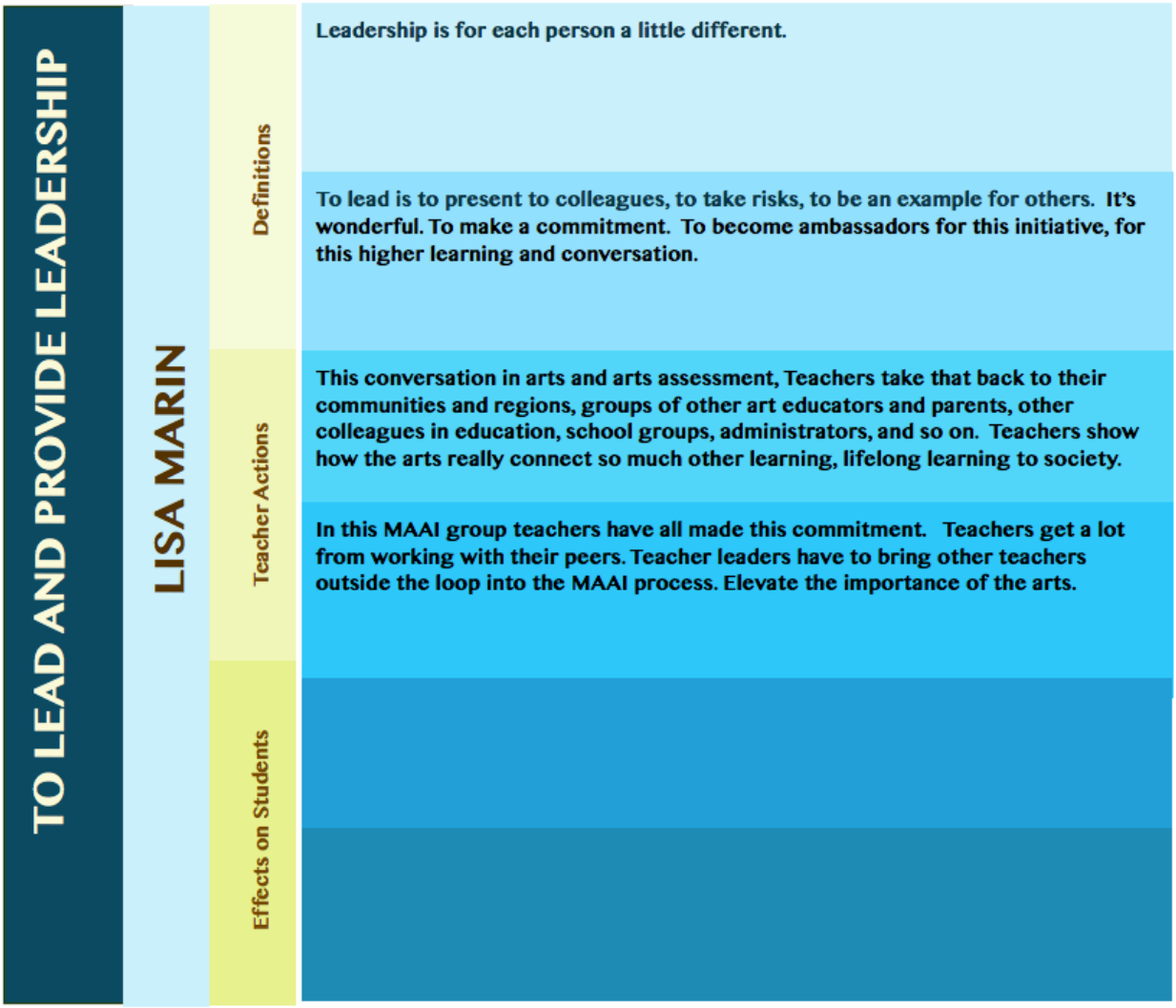


Table 13 Argy Nestor's data on *Leadership*

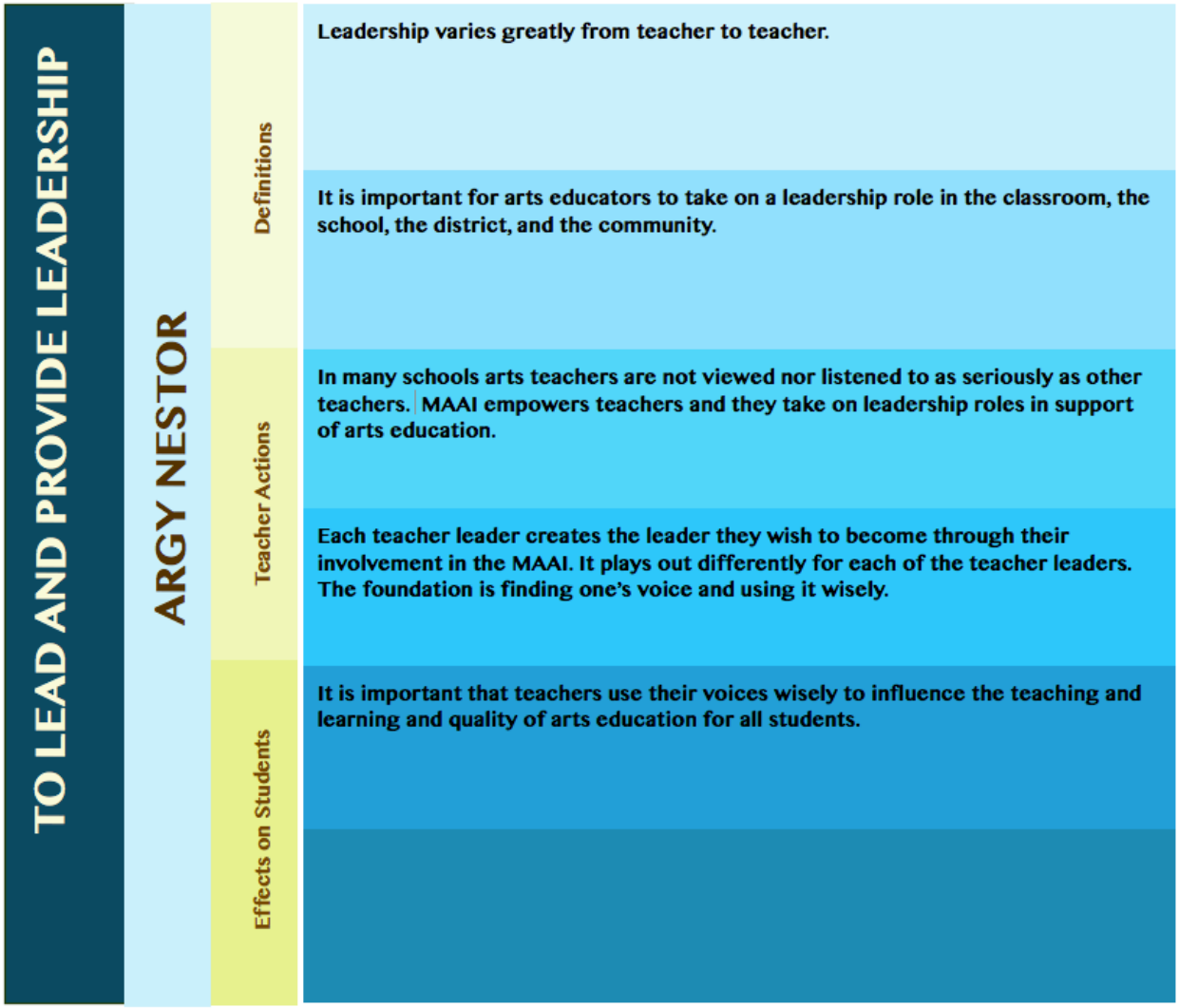
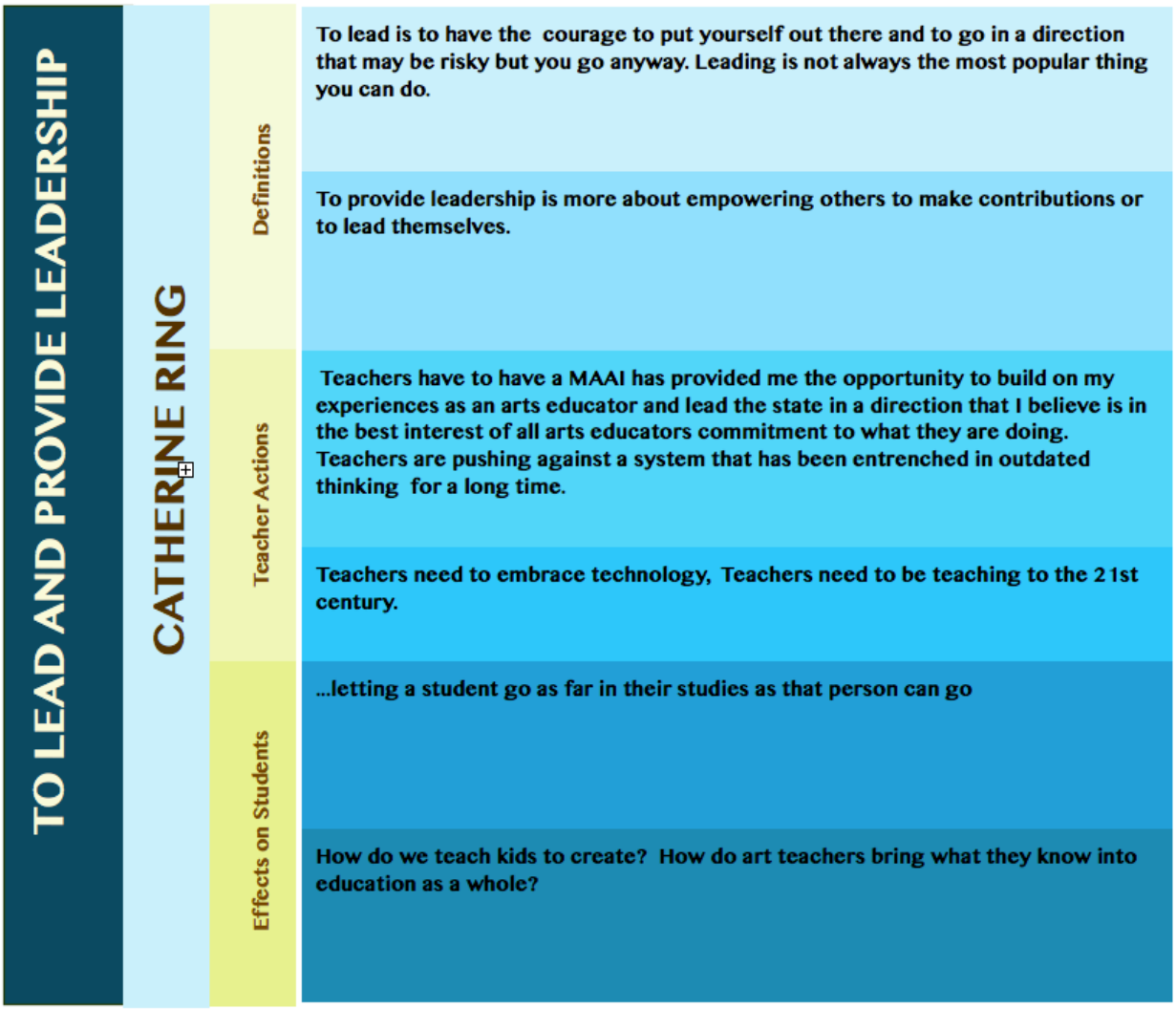


Table 14 Catherine Ring's data on *Leadership*



Leadership was the domain and taxonomy that provided the largest set of data. Lisa provided a collection of remarks on leadership including:

> "To lead is to present to colleagues, to take risks, to be an example for others. It's wonderful. It is about making a commitment, to become ambassadors for this initiative for this higher learning and conversation."

Catherine offered among many statements:

> "To provide leadership is more about empowering others to make contributions or to lead themselves," and "To lead is to have the courage to put yourself out there and to go in a direction that may be risky but you go anyway. Leading is not always the most popular thing you can do."

Catherine's statement about empowering others touched closely upon coherence theory (Davis et. al., 2008 p. 166) in that leadership is not about imposing one's will on others but facilitating the agency of everyone. This perspective valued participatory conceptions of leadership over individual leaders within a hierarchy of agency.

Argy provided broad dimensions of leadership in her answer. She contributes these observations:

> "Leadership varies greatly from teacher to teacher." "It is important for arts educators to take on a leadership role in the classroom, the school, the district, and the community." "In many schools arts teachers are not viewed nor listened to as seriously as other teachers. MAAI empowers teachers and they take on leadership roles in support of arts education." "Each teacher leader creates the leader they wish to become through their involvement in the MAAI." "The foundation is finding one's voice. It is important that

> teachers use their voices wisely to influence the teaching and learning and the quality of arts education for all students."

Argy's words spoke of agency, independence and the interdependence of the various arts teachers and programs in multiple schools across the State of Maine. Argy is known for using metaphors such as "a single bracelet does not jingle" and "the sum of us is smarter that any one of us." Significant reciprocity between participants' responses was found in the collective action of art teachers as they work together as peers to represent and elaborate on classroom practices that promoted learning in and through the arts. Argy, Catherine and Lisa found encouragement from peers and the courage to represent the arts that emanates from this community.

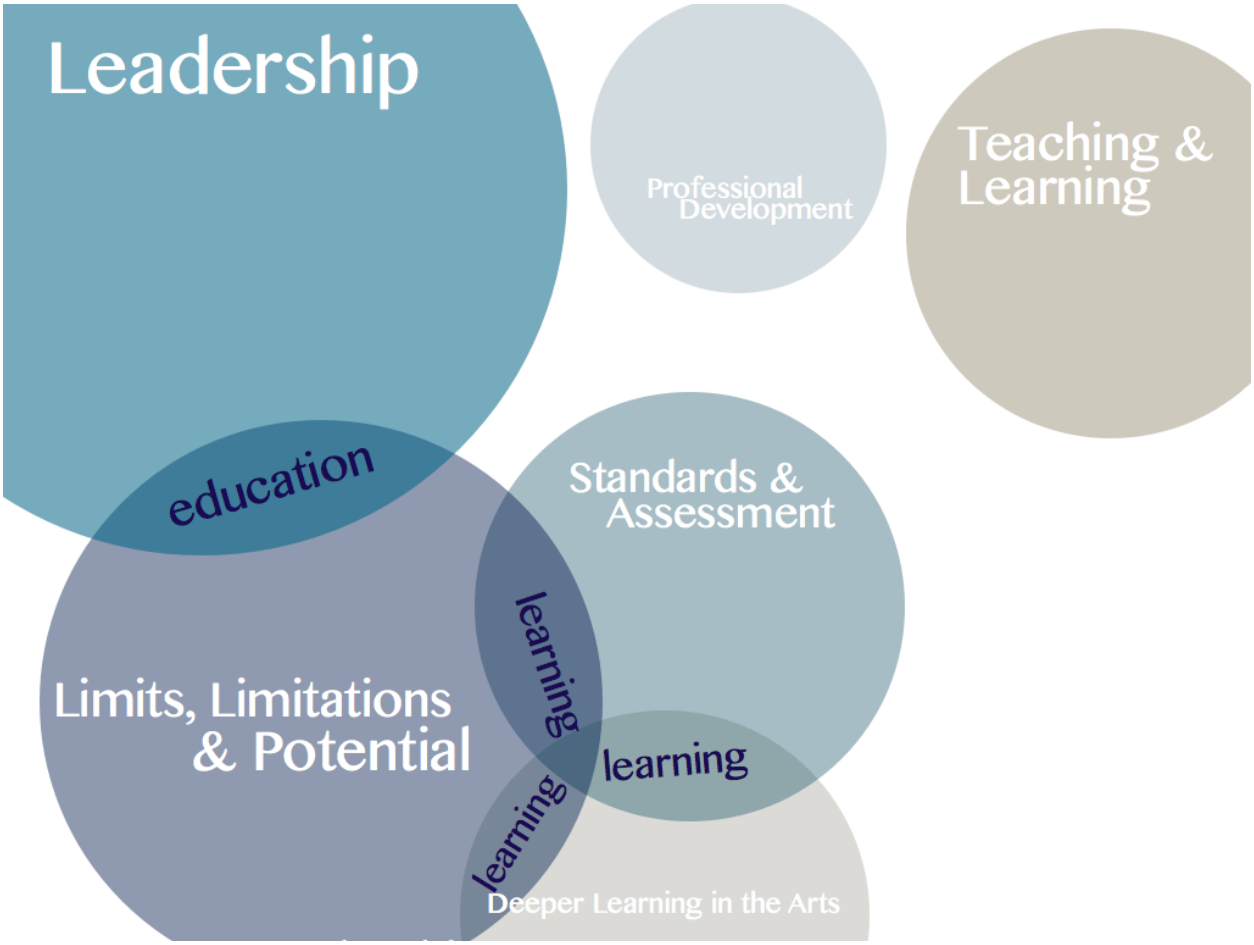
This componential analysis shows where these three adult participants in this segment of the MAAI network share reciprocal ideas and where they are clearly independent of one another. Their histories, to some extent, and their current roles shed light on their perspectives as well.

Frame 3: Using Word Clouds to Search for Domains and Taxonomies

A quick review of the 3 frames. In Frame 1, a snapshot of Lisa and her class was constructed from the interview data and my observations during visits to her school. From this perspective we saw reciprocity between the teacher and her students and the theories that were at play in Lisa's instruction and assessment. In Frame 2, the four domains of *Assessment and Standards*, *Teaching and Learning, Professional Development* and *Leadership* were analyzed. The examples of reciprocity across this segment of the MAAI network with regard to the four domains was confirmed in most cases, drawing connections between the students, Lisa, Argy and Catherine's responses.

In Frame 3 I have provided 2 views of this segment of the MAAI network. First looked at the amount of data each domain provided then I looked at the data from all 3 participants related to each of the 6 domains. This collective aggregate of terms provided a panoramic image of what was happening at this particular segment of the MAAI network. Each domain was broken down into a collection of taxonomies. These taxonomies were labeled: *Agents, Acts, Places, Arts*, *Theories* and *Domain-related terminology*. These categories did not define the cover terms of each domain or provide a semantic analysis of speech and language patterns amongst these members of the MAAI network. Instead, I wanted to look at the shape, scale and proportion of each domain when it was divided into these 6 taxonomies. To achieve this I created 7 graphic representations of the prevalent terms being used by the participants in this study.

Illustration 1 The scale of data provided on each domain



The proportions of each circle represent the size of the data sample for each domain. Leadership provided the largest data sample. Professional development provided the smallest sample.

The Scale of the 6 Domains. Here in Illustration1 I was looking at the combined data offerings from all three participants. With the analysis of these domains and taxonomies on a larger scale I began to see not only patterns of thoughts, ideas and actions of individual participants, but I began to see the quantity and quality of data being offered in each of the domains. I could compare to one domain to another in a collective manner. This I represented in

circles of various diameters that were proportional to the amount of data that was offered by all three participants with regard to each domain. The quantity of data came from the entirety of the transcripts. First, I arranged the 6 domain circles. I overlapped them and labeled the overlapping sections with key words that were shared between the various domains. The term education connected the domains of leadership and limits limitations and potential, while *Standards & Assessment, Deeper Learning in the Arts* and *Limits, Limitations and Potential* shared the term learning. By analyzing individual words in a very small sample, I was representing the smallest units of data possible in any type of study.

I arrived at Leadership as being very important to Argy, Catherine and Lisa because of the quantity of data that the participants offered, but also the quality of the data as seen in the taxonomy of terms, which I will describe subsequently. Interestingly, 2 of the 4 domains central to MAAI, as were identified in their literature, namely, *Teaching and Learning* and *Professional Development* provided small quantities of data that did not populate the taxonomic structures. *Limits, Limitations and Potential*, and *Deeper Learning in the Art*s were interrelated with *Standards and Assessment*. I arrived at this connection by using software such as Tagxedo (http://www.tagxedo.com/) , Wordle, (http://www.wordle.net/) and Tag Crowd (http://tagcrowd.com/) that analyze the frequency of words in a text and then shows scales of font size to represent the quantitative significance of words in relationship to the other words in the visualized text. Of course the frequency of a word's use is not always a reliable measure of its significance in the text. To address this I took the predominant words from the word clouds and examined them in the context of the original text to see exactly what was being said by the participants before assuming that the words would have exceptional meaning for MAAI. I

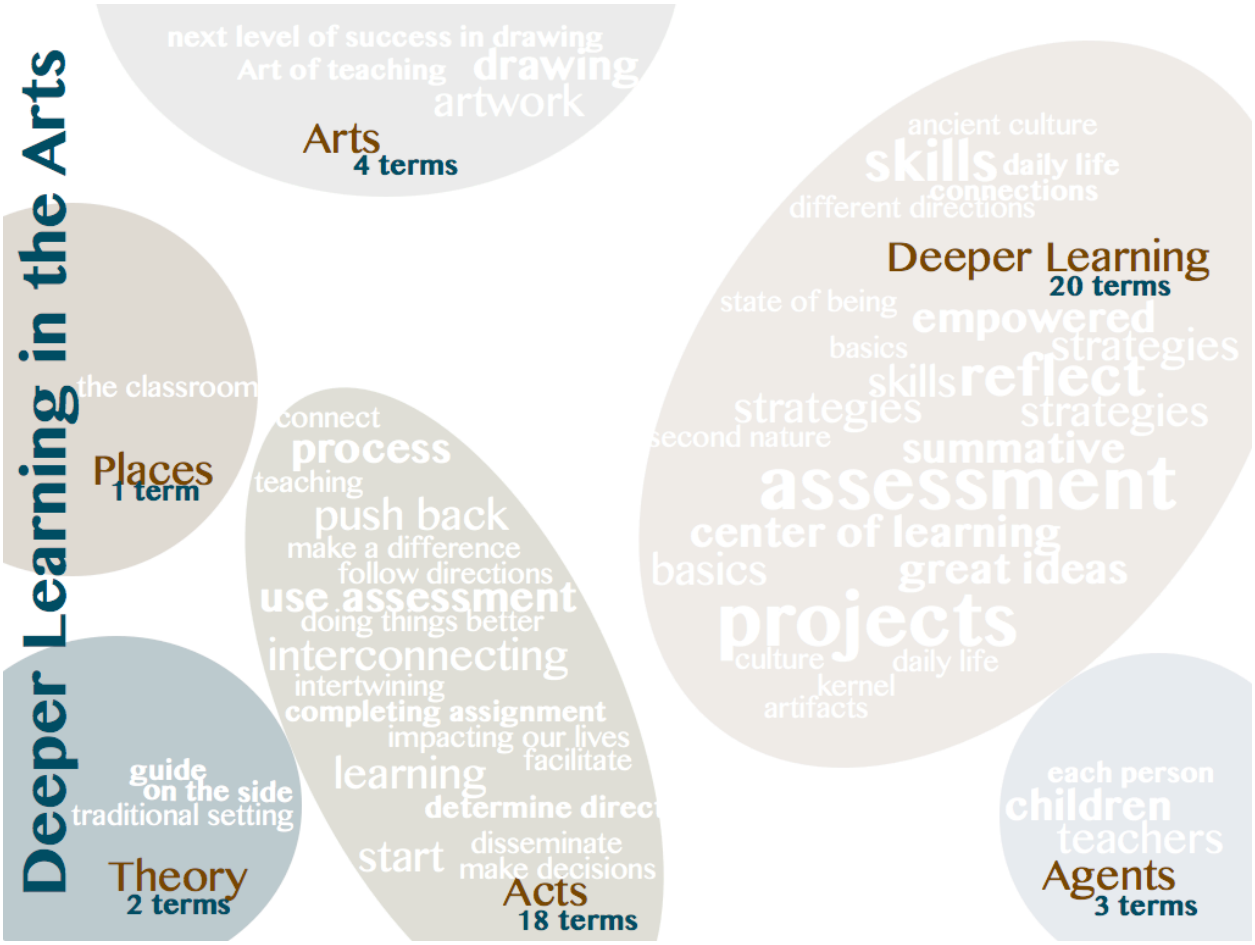
looked to see if the word was represented in definitions and theory, teacher actions and effects on students. I used the same measure that I used in the componential analysis to see how deeply embedded the word was in the participant's language.

Visualizations of domains and taxonomies. After providing the overview of each of the domains together though circles of various sizes, I organized the data by domain and creating 6 ovals, one for each taxonomic category. I took the words from the taxonomies and placed them in the corresponding ovals and based the font size on the significance in the text. The larger the word, the more prevalent it was in the text and more significant to the participants' answers to the interview questions. As I said before the terms on these graphics are aggregates of input from all three participants. I have provided the taxonomy of each domain. They are represented in figures 2 through 7 on the following pages. I have arranged them in ascending order. The domain with the smallest amount of data is first and the domain with the greatest amount of data last.

Illustration 2 Professional Development

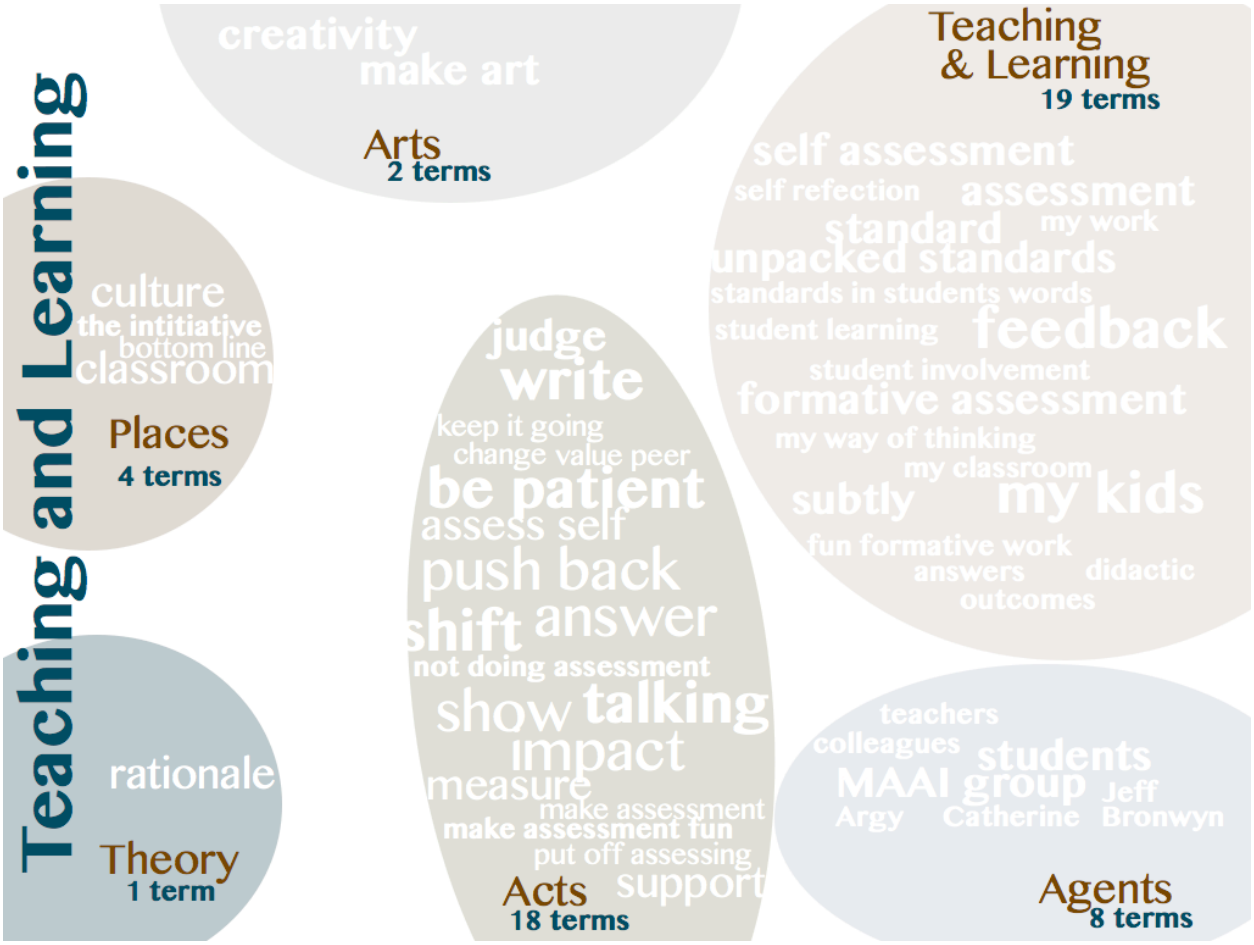
The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Illustration 3 Deeper Learning in the Arts



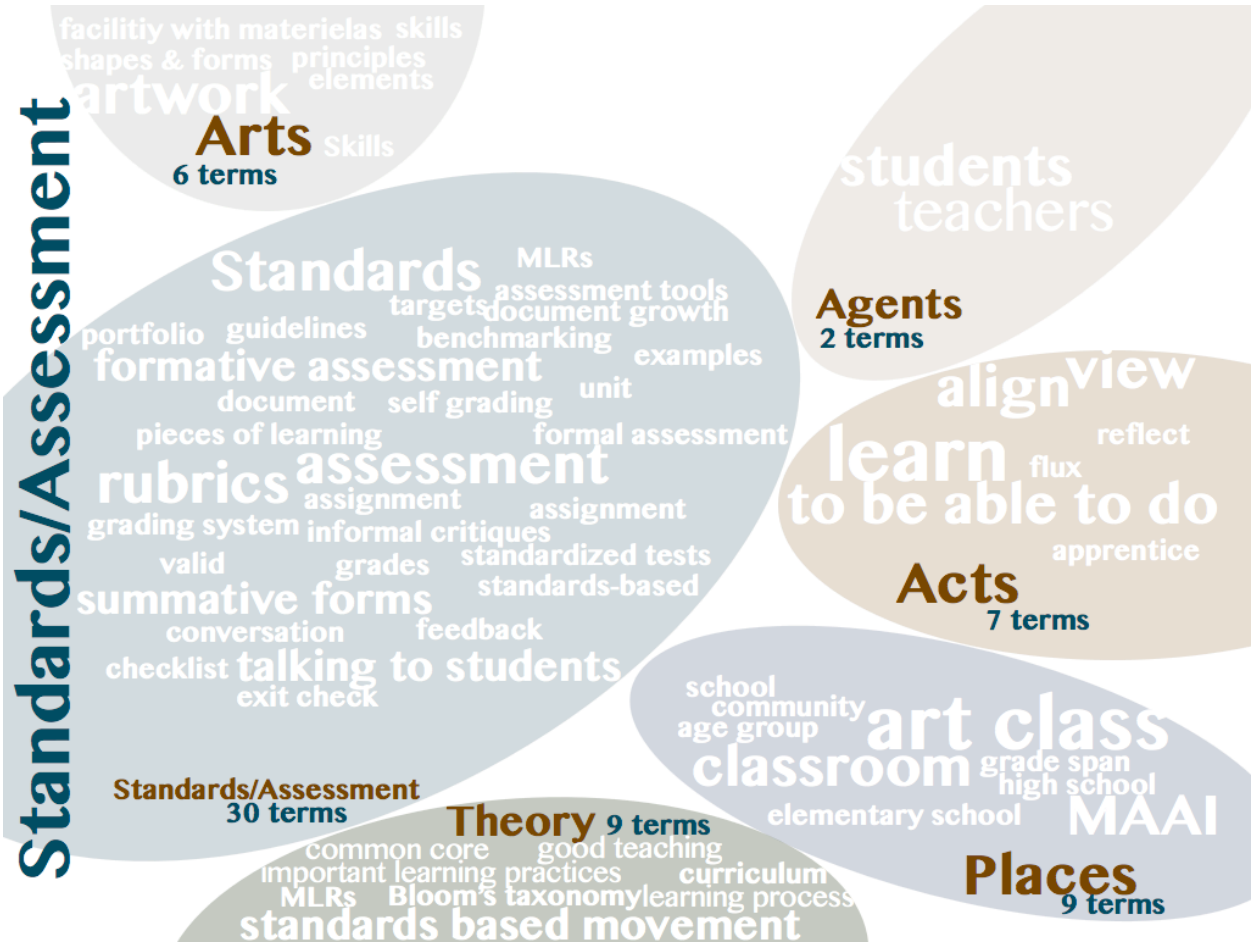
The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Illustration 4 Teaching and Learning



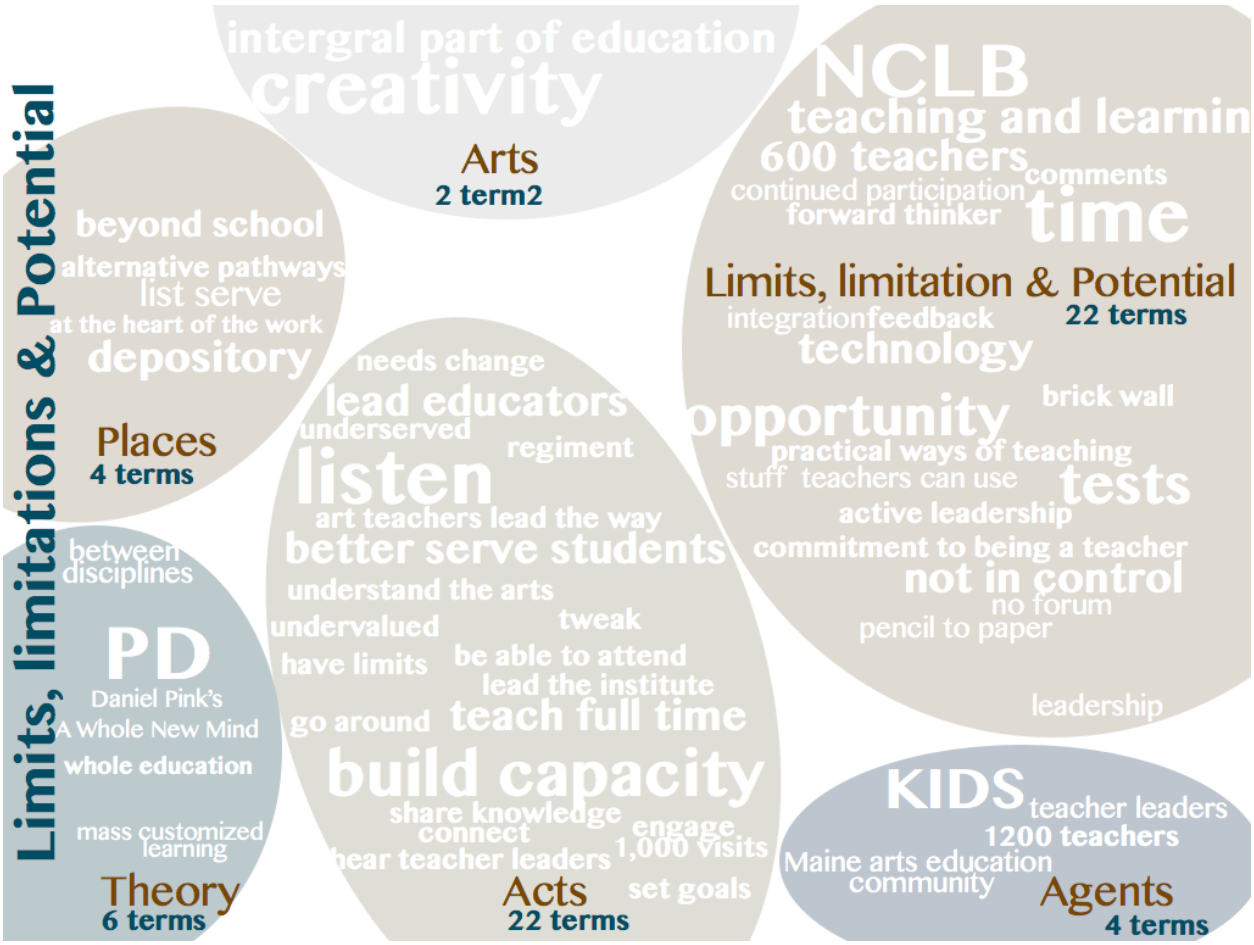
The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Illustration 5 Standards and Assessment



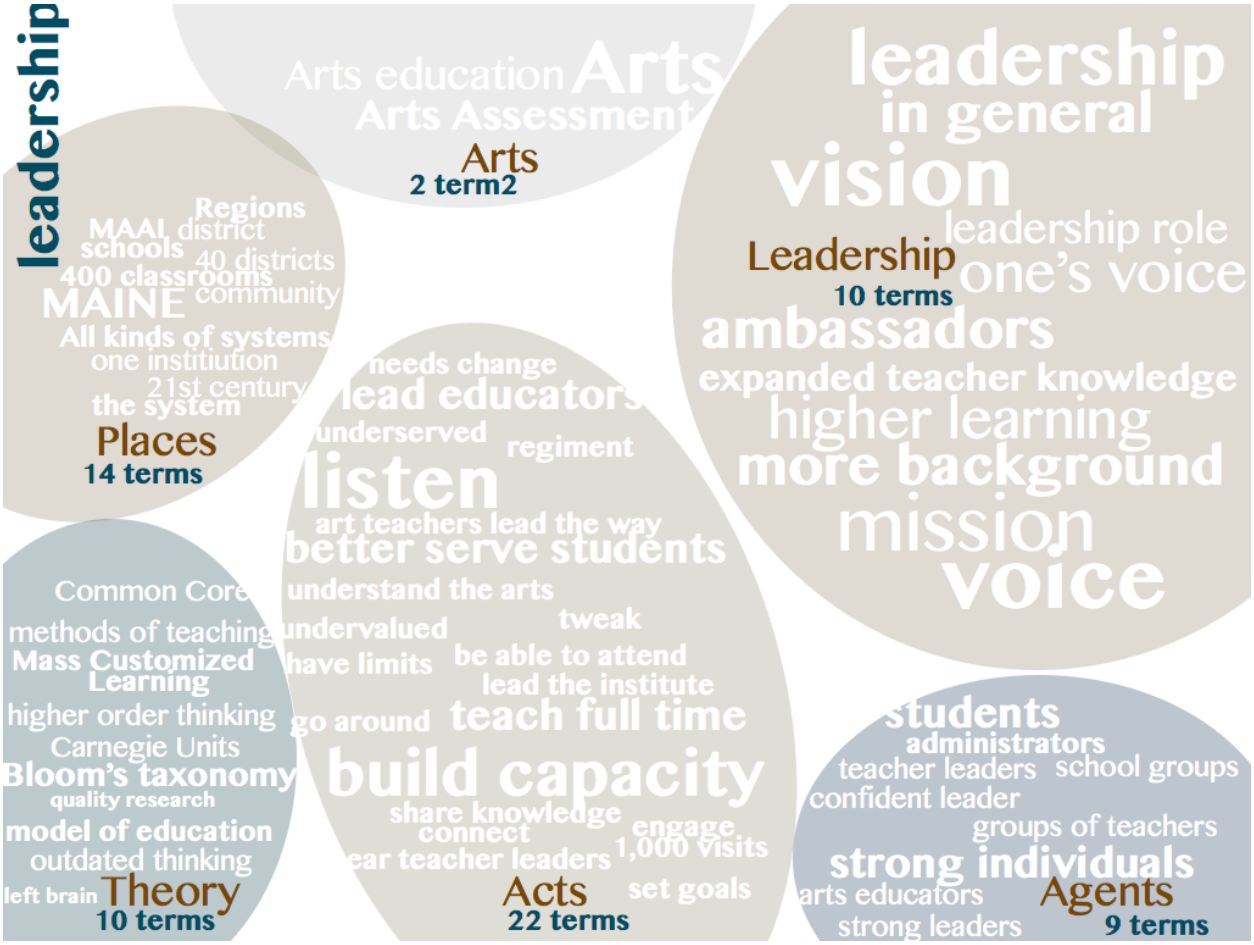
The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Illustration 6 Limits, Limitations & Potential



The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Illustration 7 Leadership



The title of the domain is located to the right of the graphic and runs vertically. The Domain data is broken down into taxonomies that are titled in brown. The white type in each oval is the data that falls into the taxonomic category. The size of the white type indicates the importance and prevalence in the interview transcripts from all 3 adult participants.

Finding Meaning in Word Clouds. Looking across these six graphic representations of the domains of MAAI and the 6 taxonomic structures some trends, suggestions and possibilities emerge. First and foremost is the possibility that MAAI has invested much of its energy into

developing its teacher leaders and leadership. The taxonomy of this domain is the most highly populated with concepts especially terms that are related to theories. The presence of theory may indicate more formal thought and deeper organizational considerations on the part of the participants. Comparatively the domain of *Teaching and Learning* only had 1 term related to theory and *Deeper Learning in the Arts* had 2 terms. These 2 domains had the least data that trended toward reciprocity between the participants as well.

Leadership and *Limits, Limitations and Potential* generated twenty-two actions each, which showed many possibilities for participant agency and engagement. The final trend that I will bring awareness to is the ubiquitous omission of arts-related terms across all 6 domains and a significant amount of vocabulary that pertains to standards and assessments. This lack of arts related terms and an emphasis on assessment I have addressed at length in the findings.

Conclusion

The difference between reciprocity and consensus. These 3 Frames have presented the research data on 3 scales. In Frame 1 Lisa's efforts as an individual teacher were paired with those of her 6th graders showing reciprocity between them through shared understandings of class expectations and tacitly embedded standards. Frame 2 moved to a different scale with data from Lisa, Argy and Catherine being compared to find reciprocity on three levels in the definition of the domains, the actions of teachers and the effects upon students. In Frame 3 the data moved into the realm of the collective where words were taken out of context and examined in taxonomic categories that provide insights to emerging trends in this segment of the MAAI

network. Reciprocity seemed to be represented at all three scales across the very small data sample with which I was working.

Many of the characteristics of coherence are at play in the data. Certainly there is a vibrancy and a body of knowledge at play between Lisa, Argy and Catherine who share and amplify one another's definitions of *standards and assessment* and *leadership.* There is clear reciprocity here.

Lisa shared how she adapted standards-based assessments to fit between her role in MAAI and the demands of her work within the culture of Jonesport Elementary School. Her practice reflected the sufficiency and adequacy necessary to be sustainable (Davis et al. 2008). In the analysis of the taxonomies we see accounts of how agents and ideas arise and persist. *Leadership* and *Standards and Assessment* are two domains that demonstrate a high level of interest, knowledge and energy though the interview data. *Teaching and Learning* and *Professional Development* are domains that are less populated with data from the 3 participants and show less reciprocity. This leaves the domain of *Deeper Learning in the Arts* to be considered.

Perhaps reciprocity is not the only hallmark of an effective network such as MAAI. As the analysis of Frame 3 comes to a close, I would like consider this statement:

> Groups of people as a collective can be known as a knowing agent. Consensus is often a bad idea in intelligent co-activity. It can demand compromise which can lead to the lowest common denominator solutions that avoid offense rather than prompt novelty and successful solutions. Some disagreement forces people to be explicit. Groups in which people are allowed considerable autonomy, the opportunity to specialize, and obsess and the freedom to change their minds tend to be smarter - and more flexible and adaptive than in groups where roles are rigid and specified. (Davis, et al., 2008, p. 67).

Considering the data, especially the data in the componential analysis of *Deeper Learning in the Arts,* Table 10*,* autonomy of thought is evident. So is creative, metaphoric and artistic language that is so conspicuous in its absence in other five domains.

Table 15

The Componential Analysis of Deeper Learning in the Arts

DEEPER LEARNING IN THE ARTS	MAAI'S GOAL		
		ARGY	Deeper learning in the Arts varies from teacher to teacher and classroom to classroom depending on where teachers are and the training they had to become a teacher. The growth for teachers and learners is when the kids realize that looking at their assessments and their art work moves them to a different place. That is measurable. Part of going deeper is the reflection and assessment piece. In a traditional setting teachers disseminate information, kids follow directions and complete assignments. The shift that is taking place moves the teacher to the guide on the side. They help facilitate student learning so the student is empowered to make decisions and determine their direction.
		CATHERINE	Think in terms of flow. The learner gets so deep into a medium that techniques and strategies are just second nature, and flow allows the deepening of the learner's soul through getting to that place where he or she feels masterful at creating something. MAAI wishes that everyone will reach that state. And for teachers this is about the art of teaching. All the things that go into the process, how does the teacher connect, what things does the teacher need to do better, the reflective, ongoing piece. Skills and strategies become second nature in teaching. The mastery of teaching is using those skills to reach a child, to teach a child successfully, to make a difference in their lives.
		LISA	Deeper learning means one adds layer upon layer. Deeper learning is like a cake and the further one goes down in this cake, the more one is going to get to the good stuff the sweet stuff. Deeper learning means impacting one's life. Art is an interconnected, It's a never ending kind of thing. If one stops and thinks about ancient cultures, art is what defines them. It is how we learn about culture. We wouldn't know about many cultures if they didn't leave behind some of these artifacts. We're calling it art, they may not have called it art, they would have thought of it as an everyday kind of occurrence. Art is so intertwined in our lives. I can't imagine it not being there.

In this final domain, Lisa, Argy and Catherine offered very different perspectives on what *Deeper Learning in the Arts* means. Argy emphasized standards and assessment and a reflective

process which led to deeper learning in the arts, while Catherine focused attention upon the learner and how the learner experiences deeper learning in terms of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Finally, Lisa provides a seamless and holistic approach to deeper learning that is in keeping with other data samples that she has offered. Her definition of deeper learning centers around layering. She then moves into art history and deeper learning as continuum over time and across a person's life.

Chapter 5 Conclusions, Implications & Recommendations

Introduction

This case study grew out of a desire on my part to give agency to learner voices as one way to look at standards based assessments. I did not find the presence of student voice at the levels of agency that would demonstrate the reciprocity for which I was looking. This was in part because of my methods of research and in part because student voice is not an established domain in the MAAI practices at this time. The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative did offer an abundant source of opportunities to learn about standards based assessment, teacher-led reforms and professional development in arts education.

Implications

When the students in this study participated in a brief focus group much was revealed about instruction, the standards they had for their work and the assessment practices they employed in the classroom. This led me to believe that 'qualifying data' on student learning in lieu of quantifying it in an effort to report assessment outcomes, was perhaps the most important topic as well as a finding in this paper. This finding implies that as educators and reformers we are missing the most abundant sources of data and feedback if we do not include learner voices and understandings that arise in knowledge shared by classroom communities.

The vast quantity of standards that are being promoted in education became an issue for the teacher interviewed for this study. To have agency over standards and the standards based assessment movement teachers need to understand the theoretical and historical underpinnings

from which this movement has grown. When they implement standards based practices in the classroom they need to be in community with other teachers.

The standards that Lisa and her students shared and understood were sufficient for learning. Efficiencies and sufficiencies are a vital part of the elementary school art education classroom. To stretch resources such as time, physical energy and art materials, teachers have to make critical decisions.

Recommendations

Be aware of the standards that students employ in the art room. The assessment of learning in art may be possible if the right theories and methods are employed. Teaching is not about what a teacher does; it is about what happens to the learner (Davis et al. p. 158). To acquire this understanding of what happens in any given learning situation, teachers assess. The challenge to assessing art education lies in the beliefs, conceptions and methods of assessment that are rooted in a variety of standards. Take for example some data from this study. When asked what it meant to "learn deeply in the arts," Lisa's students offered three responses:

Crystal: To dig deep into it is to really focus. To think of something that no one else can think of that is really unique.

Aqua Marine: To dig your mind in to the artwork and really pay attention. To know you care about this artwork so you want to dig deep into it. So you can get a good grade on it or if you are not getting graded on it you can just do it for the fun of it.

Kevin Durant: To know more about the line types and how to use them correctly and if you want to use them in the type of mood your picture sets.

Here three standards emerge: creativity, time on task, and the elements of art and principles of design. In this case the standards came from Lisa, but students bring standards to class from other places as well.

MAAI may be able to use data, such as these students voices to measure the progress they are making toward the mission of deeper learning in the arts. For this to happen the domain of *Learning and Teaching* will need to move from a centralized structure, to a decentralized structure (Davis et al 2008). The centralized structure here relies heavily on teacher direction. A decentralized structure would balance student voices with the teacher's leadership. Argy often describes this shift as "the teacher moving from "the sage on the stage to the guide on the side." Giving agency to the learner to be central to the learning process requires that the learner have a voice in what is taught and how the learning takes place and is measured. The theoretical implications of this shift are often in conflict with many of the behavioral theories that are central to schools, schooling and assessment practices. Aqua Marine's reference to "getting a good grade" is an example of the prevalence of behavioral theories. She is implying that the external reward of a grade is what motivates her to go deeper into the arts. The grade is her standard. One of the purposes of using standards is to deemphasize grades and promote learner engagement with content. When teachers gather data on student responses to instruction they begin to craft images of what is really going on in their classrooms. This crafting of images is a good analogy to the Davis' construals (2008) or interpretations that learners make as they associate and assimilate information during class (Piaget, 1936, 1963).

***Deeper Learning in the Arts* may mean discord at times.** From Lisa's, Argy's and Catherine's very diverse definitions of *Deeper Learning in the Arts*, I came to understand that there is currently a plurality of voices and ideas active in this segment of MAAI. The recommendation is to foster and continuously look to that plurality of ideas as a standard of success and an indication of an organization that is active and growing. The plurality of voices that are listened to in equal measure and given fair consideration and agency signal vibrancy and active growth within MAAI. Plurality is difficult to maintain in a network. It requires common ground and deep trust between members. For Catherine, Argy and Lisa there was little consensus regarding the domain of *Deeper Learning in the Arts*. One of the characteristics of people who demonstrate a high level of creativity is the comfort of seeing things as gray rather than black and white and the disposition to hold conflicting ideas in equal regard (Robinson, 2009). If MAAI continues to foster plurality it may maintain the intelligent co-activity it demonstrated in this study.

Let assessment serve the Arts. Argy, Catherine and Lisa discussed developing leaders who would have the courage and agency to promote art education in Maine. This courage might be expressed through a plurality of ideas within the MAAI network too. I suggest that one way to develop the agency that results in sustained courage is through authenticity. In Frame 3 the taxonomies revealed that standards-based assessment was ubiquitous across all taxonomic categories but the arts and arts related terms barely populated the taxonomic category created specifically for them. Authenticity means that art teachers speak with voices as artists and arts historians, aesthetes and critics and place the arts at the center of the discussion. Assessment should be serving the arts through reflection and research. Assessment is one of many tools at

the disposal of arts educators. I would advocate for continually placing the assessment in service to the arts.

Conclusion

This case study is only a glimpse of what is happening in the MAAI. Since this project began, another summer institute has been held and new teachers have joined MAAI. Today there are over 50 teachers participating in this network. There are opportunities for more case studies to be conducted and more student voices to be included in the data. The purpose of this investigation was to document and reflect on the effects of this teacher-led reform initiative by having conversations with a cross section of The Maine Arts Assessment Initiative network. I wanted to determine if there was reciprocity across a segment of the MAAI network and if this reciprocity, or lack thereof yielded, any knowledge about the limits, limitations and the potential of this organization. The reciprocity I refer to was a sharing of acts, ideas and language between the participants in this study. In addition, I was interested in the benefits of standards based assessments. By definition standard based assessment meant ways teachers qualified learning, that is described it in words. These words would be generated both by the learner and the teacher in an ideal setting. I realized that to qualify learning rather than to quantify it required big shifts in teaching practices and attitudes toward assessment to be effective. I did find reciprocity between the 6th graders at Jonesport Elementary School and their teacher, Lisa Marin. Reciprocity resided between Lisa Marin and Argy Nestor and Catherine Ring as well. One question remained, How do learners' voices find their way into the network on a larger scale and with more agency so that reciprocity extends across the entire network?

Future Directions

This project has inspired me to continue research on how learner voices provide crucial information regarding the evaluation and assessment of learning. One of the outcomes of MAAI is shared lesson, unit and assessment practices, which is something not addressed in this study. o share a lesson, a unit or an assessment without the student data and student reflection dehumanizes the documents. This breaks the cohesion between the written product and the process by which that document takes on a life in the classroom. This idea of embedding the voices of learners and teachers in the documentation of units, lessons and lesson is related to cohesion theories which recognize knowledge and knowing as shared and participatory acts (Davis, et al. 2008). This small research project, this single interview with one set of 6th graders has motivated me to continue the dialogue with the learners in the art room community that I have the responsibility and privilege to organize.

I now know that by including the voices of learners, teachers potentially give agency to the learners in their care. By communicating this learner knowledge and voice in conjunction with the documentation of a lesson plan or an assessment strategy, teachers like myself begin to build a stronger web of understanding within our profession. Those who wish to implement a shared lesson or assessment strategy can use this web learner insights and information to revise and implement the lesson to fit their particular school culture. Under these different conditions, the lesson or assessment strategy will evolve over time in a continuous cycle of knowing, learning, teaching and *assessing*. This is the future in my classroom which I hope share with others.

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Appendix 1: Interview questions

Interview questions for MAAI organizers:

1. Explain the terms assessment and standards.

2. What does it mean to lead or provide leadership?

3. How has MAAI impacted your professional development as an organizer?

4. What are the MAAI network limits/limitations and potential?

5. How has MAAI changed teaching and students learning?

6. What does the phrase deeper learning in the arts mean to you?

Interview questions for the teacher participant:

1. Explain the terms assessment and standards.

2. What does it mean to lead or provide leadership?

3. How has MAAI impacted your professional development?

4. What are the MAAI network limits/limitations? and potential?

5. How has MAAI changed your teaching and students learning?

6. Explain the differences between classes where you use standards based rubrics and classes where you teach art in more traditional ways.

7. What does deeper learning in the arts mean?

Student questions

1. Tell me a little bit about your art....

2. How does one learn in the art class? What does one learn?

3. Why is art important to learn? Or is it important?

4. How does a teacher know if you are being successful in art?

5. what does the phrase “deeper learning in the arts” mean to you?

Appendix 2: Ethics Approval

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Mr. Chris Milliken

Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education

Agency: N/A

Title of Project: Illustrating Maine's Art Assessment Initiative

Certification Number: 30000161

Valid From: October 30, 2012 to: October 29, 2013

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Dr. James Pfaus, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee