

Exploring How Teachers Apply Art Museum Professional Development to Their Practices

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Exploring How Teachers Apply Art Museum Professional Development to Their Practices  
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This doctoral dissertation investigated the art museum summer teacher workshop model of professional development with the intention to better understand how in-service generalist teachers and art specialist teachers apply their experiences and learning once they have returned to their classrooms. The usefulness of professional development programs experienced at the district level has often been questioned due to a lack of connection to actual classroom practice (Guskey, 2009). In contrast, the art museum summer institute model of professional development is considered more successful as it offers rich learning experiences and can provide more resources than school district-supported workshops (Charland, 2008). While some studies have investigated teachers learning art museum pedagogy (Hausman, 1966; Hsieh, 2008; Sandell and Zimmerman, 2017), they are all from the perspective of the museum educator. This study is positioned from the perspective of in-service generalist and art teachers and their framing of the curricular and pedagogical experience in museum summer institutes and their own classrooms. To investigate the phenomenon, I designed a comparative case study in which I acted as a participant-observer in two professional development art museum summer institute programs in 2018 and recruited a total of eight in-service teachers, whose use of the curricular materials in their classroom practices I followed over the 2018–2019 academic year. Concurrently I conducted an autoethnographic study of my own use of the curricular materials in my grade 6 classroom. To frame this study, I applied curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner's (1968/2008) approach to language to understand curricula, which also provided the interpretive framework to analyze the data along with his Five Value System (1966/2008). Participating generalist and art specialist educators in this study had distinct experiences at the summer institutes; the two groups approached the art museum curricula with different objectives and viewpoints. I found that the art museum was perceived as a safe space for art specialists; the generalist teachers readily incorporated works of art into their lessons yet avoided discussing the aesthetic qualities of the works;

standardized approaches to teaching limited what teachers could apply from their learning at the summer institutes; and that subtle power dynamics and tensions found in the participants' school environments affected their curricula and restricted their ability to select specific types of professional development. The findings of this study suggest that professional development designed by art museum educators for in-service teachers should aim to strengthen instruction of Visual Thinking Strategies, focus more on how teachers can tackle socially challenging topics, provide more instruction on how to incorporate aesthetics into a discussion, offer more follow-up with the in-service teachers once the program has completed, and consider other channels to provide professional development for in-service teachers who cannot attend art museum summer institute programs.

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# INTRODUCTION

## CONTEXT

The main objective of professional development for teachers most reported in the literature is to implement new curricula or address deficiencies in a teacher's skills (Ponder, Maher & Adams, 2010). Administrators, policy-makers, governments and other stakeholders involved in education believe that professional development for teachers will lead to improving student achievement (Desimone, 2009), and because accountability and student achievement are a preoccupation of parents, teachers, administrators, and policy-makers (Franco, 2011; Hourigan 2011; Westheimer, 2010), achievement is seen as a major end goal in professional development. In 2018, 18 billion dollars was spent on professional development programming for teachers in the United States, but research shows this has resulted in little improvement in student achievement (Horn & Goldstein, 2018).

In most cases, professional development programs at the school or district level — whether a lecture, training session, or workshop — are designed to generate student achievement or improve the teacher's practice. They are not seen as something that needs to inspire teachers or connect with their lives in any way. By simply focusing on student achievement, program developers and the school community overlook other factors such as interest, transferability to classroom practice, and support for implementation. This invites the question: What are the direct and indirect values (if any) that teachers find in these experiences? This research aimed to explore how in-service teachers drew upon the learning objectives from professional development programs and curricula and incorporated it into their classroom pedagogy.

The efficacy of professional development programs has been questioned, as the curriculum is often “disconnected from the work of teachers” (Ponder, Maher & Adams, 2010, p. 855) and teachers are

reluctant to dispose of familiar practices (Darity, 2008). Eisner (2000) suggested that “those who speak from podia,” those who offer workshops or training, have little knowledge of the realities of classroom teaching (p. 347). There is a disconnect between the content of the workshop and the practice of the teacher as teachers are rarely invited to propose the content of professional development workshops (Hunzicker, 2011). Educational researcher Jana Hunzicker (2011) claimed that effective professional development occurs only when teachers actively participate, discuss, and problem solve through activities. Without this engagement, teachers will not picture how the training connects to their classroom practices.

The museum summer institute model of professional development for teachers has been found to be effective, offering rich learning experiences, prolonged engagement with the curriculum, and the opportunity to build relationships with other educators depending upon the length of the program (Charland, 2008). As an illustration, Robin Grenier’s (2010) case study on museum-initiated professional development demonstrated that the teachers successfully connected the content to their practices due to opportunities to focus on personal interests and share learning experiences with like-minded peers during the institute. In addition, causal links were generated between participant experiences to enact change in their classrooms.

The museums that host the summer institutes are able to provide more resources than school district-supported workshops. Unlike school district-designed workshops, the art museum can provide opportunities to engage in authentic learning concentrating on art appreciation, art criticism, and studio classroom practices (Falk & Dierking, 2016). As an example, Summer Vision DC, which is a week-long museum-based art education professional learning community program, focuses on participants engaging in discussions and creating art. While there is no indication if the curricular materials from Summer Vision DC are intended for the participant’s classroom practice or how they are to be incorporated, research on the program such as data collected from an online survey completed by attendees months after completing the program has demonstrated numerous positive impacts for the attendees both professionally and personally, specifically in terms of advocating and developing leadership for the arts in their communities (Sandell & Zimmerman, 2017).



In sum, while there is a growing interest in advancing these professional development programs, we need more research on the direct and indirect values that generalist and art specialist teachers find in these experiences. While the art museum is a valuable resource, it is important to know how, and if, the pedagogical and curricular content of the art museum summer institute is applied once generalist and art specialist teachers return to their classrooms.

## **POSITIONALITY**

Throughout my career as a classroom teacher, I have participated in various models of professional development such as workshops at the school board level, lectures at national and international conferences, and week-long summer institutes. While the workshops, lectures, and summer institutes present thought-provoking, and occasionally novel approaches to pedagogy, I have applied only certain aspects of their curricula in my own classroom. Though I am hesitant to change my set curriculum, as are many teachers, I continue to seek out professional development outside of what is offered at the school board level.

The diversity of my experiences with professional development has influenced my perception of and attitude towards professional development. Many of the training sessions and workshops I attended at the school board level were poor quality due to their use of the lecture format or had little relevance to my art classroom practice. Yet, my experiences with professional development outside of the school board level have all been positive. As a consequence, I do approach the topic of professional development with apprehension.

## **STATEMENT OF INQUIRY**

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this comparative case study was to investigate the types of professional development programs designed for in-service teachers that occur within the art museum setting. I drew upon two professional development programs designed by different types of educators to understand how

art museum-initiated professional development for in-service teachers is enacted once they have returned to their classrooms. I was interested to know how in-service teachers drew upon the learning objectives from art museum professional development programming and curricula. In addition, I was interested in investigating what can be learned from the curricular materials that the in-service teachers incorporated into their teaching, whether they modified and incorporated it, or whether they omitted the training. In sum, the research study focused on the art museum curriculum as communicated between the art museum, the teacher, and the students.

I sought to explore this further guided by the following three questions:

1. Program design: What are the pedagogical and curricular qualities and characteristics of the art museum summer institute professional development program that support in-service generalist teachers and art specialists in their personal and professional development?
2. Professional development: What salient themes, patterns, or categories of the art museum curriculum do in-service generalist teachers and art specialists incorporate into, modify for, and omit from their classroom curriculum?
3. Curriculum Theory: How do the conversations in the art museum space enter in and are carried out in the classroom space? How does the dialogical relationship between the museum and art teacher contribute to the students' learning of art?

To address these questions, I focused on the following objectives:

- To explore how the art museum curriculum is communicated between the art museum, the art teacher, and the students once the participants have returned to their classrooms.
- To better understand the curricular and pedagogical changes that occur in a teacher's practice after completing the museum summer institute.
- To understand the qualities of the summer institute model that support the generalist and art specialist art teacher.

- To better understand how the generalist teacher and the art specialist shape the students' learning of art through the museums' curriculum.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Professional development is founded upon the belief that it is necessary for in-service teachers to regularly improve their ability to instruct and present curricula. The current dominant approach to professional development invites little from the teachers in terms of curiosity due to significant focus on professional development that centres on preparing students for standardized testing (Hourigan, 2011) or on improving student achievement (Desimone, 2009). In my opinion, this approach to professional development limits the experiences and possibilities for teachers to develop their practice and to grow as practitioners. And, although the museum summer institute model is viewed as promising (Charland, 2008), we must ask if it possesses qualities and characteristics that allow teachers to thrive professionally and personally.

The educational approach of the art museum is just one branch of art education. Museum educators design professional development opportunities for in-service teachers with the intention to instruct methodologies and approaches that are specific to museum art education (Falk & Dierking, 2016). These approaches to education and curricula differ significantly as classroom curricula focus on fixed objectives (Penner-Williams, 2010) and art museum curricula apply a constructivist approach to learning (Hein, 2012). These approaches are contradictory and may make learning in museum programs irrelevant to the classroom teacher.

If art museums are involved in education that is to be applied in the classroom space, how do they shape the student's learning of art and of aesthetics? Discussing a work of art can be an emancipatory experience (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005) and, more importantly for classroom teachers, it can promote critical thinking skills (Greene, Kisida & Bowen, 2014). Positioning the function of a work of art as either emancipation or skill development may affect its treatment in the classroom space. Museum studies

researcher Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000) asserted that art museums have the capacity to shape public opinion of art through their collections and programming. But education researchers Karolina Novak and Marianne Hulsbosch (2012) cautioned the use of prepackaged art museum kits in the classroom. In their view, certain museum kits support a specific authoritarian voice in discussing a work of art that guides the teacher and the students to a certain destination instead of supporting an open exploration and discussion of the work of art.

There are numerous studies that investigate teachers applying art museum pedagogy that focus on pre-service teachers — such as Tine Seligmann’s (2014) research that invited pre-service teachers to learn informal teaching techniques and Arlene Barry’s (2013) research about pre-service teachers’ use of art museums as valuable resources to link course content to contemporary issues. These studies are all from the perspective of the museum educator and focus on pre-service teachers’ experiences. My study instead investigates in-service teachers’ framing of the curricula and pedagogical experience in the museum summer institute and how it is carried into their classrooms.

Research concerning professional development specifically for in-service art specialist teachers is sparse at best. Art specialist teachers routinely participate in school or district workshops that are not art-based (Allison, 2013) and much research focuses on the necessity to advocate for specific professional development for art specialist teachers (Allison, 2013; Conway, Hibbard, Albert & Hourigan, 2005). Yet, in these examples, the research does not address the specific interests or requirements of the art specialist teacher. Therefore, one of the intentions of this research study was to provide insight into the preferred qualities and characteristics of professional development for the art specialist teacher.

## **LIMITATIONS**

One limitation in this study was related to the method of collecting data. The data was primarily collected from interviews with the nine participants. I did not observe the participants facilitate discussions with works of art within their physical classrooms; instead, I entrusted that their recounting of their teaching

was factual for my analysis. Additionally, participants may have had deeper reflections and deliberations concerning their pedagogy and the curricular materials, but they may not have voiced these in the interviews.

The other limitations are concerned with the various roles I undertook throughout this study. Firstly, research shows that the subjective lens of the researcher when conducting qualitative research and the inferences generated by the researcher can affect data collection and analysis (Goodrick, 2014). To address this, I incorporated reflection and included member checks of the data collected from the participants' interviews (see Given, 2008). Secondly, within this study, I undertook the role of a participant-observer to gain an in-depth understanding of the curricula and the experience of being in the art museum space. As a participant-observer, my observations in gallery spaces were limited to my subgroup, and as a consequence, I may have missed discussions that generated other insights or contradicted the data that I had collected. Thirdly, I incorporated a self-study of my classroom practice using autoethnography. Autoethnography centres on the researcher incorporating self-reflection and utilizing her own experiences in comparison with the participants' experiences to understand cultural, political, and social meanings of the phenomena under study (Hancock, 2017; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Although autoethnography has evolved as a research method to validate the researcher as a participant of a study (Hughes & Pennington, 2017); critiques of autoethnography question the ability of the researcher to be objective. Again, I presented to the best of my ability an authentic self and objective examination of my classroom practice.

## **TERMINOLOGY**

*Aesthetics*: The artistic choices, form, and content of a work of art and the viewer's experience with the work of art (Eisner, 1985/2005). It may also refer to one's experience with teaching as an act of beauty that is filled with experiences and emotional qualities (Huebner, 2008).

*Art museum*: A cultural institution that has historical ties to collecting artifacts and is a site for learning and disseminating knowledge (Zeller, 1989).

*Art specialist teacher*: A teacher who specifically teaches visual arts.

*Autoethnography*: A branch of social anthropology and a research method that concentrates on the researcher using self-observation and reflection “to contextualize or recontextualize empirical facts” (Altheide & Johnson, 2011, p. 584).

*Case study*: An inquiry method used to illuminate a phenomenon that applies thick descriptions to develop greater insight into that phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

*Coding*: The process of identifying ideas, concepts, and categories within the collected data (Benaquisto, 2012).

*Comparative case study*: Cases in a study are compared with each other to illuminate the qualities of a phenomenon (Campbell, 2012).

*Critical thinking*: The process of generating an informed judgment through objective analysis of the topic (Stevenson & Lindberg, n.d.).

*Curriculum*: The teaching and instruction that is to occur in the classroom with a set of purposes and objectives (Kelly, 2004).

*Curricular materials*: The objects supplied or developed by educators to be used in instruction.

*Dialogical discussion*: The process in which the viewer generates meaning-making through simultaneous dialogues, that is, between partners, with the work of art, and with one’s own thoughts (Wilson McKay & Monteverde, 2003).

*Embodied curriculum*: This type of curriculum focuses on the experiences of the individual (Christodoulou, 2010).

*Facilitator*: Describes a teacher who regards learning as an egalitarian process between teachers and students (Wallace, 2009).

*Formal curriculum*: A framework for the teacher to use that consists of the broad goals and strategies to be instructed to the students (Penner-Williams, 2010).

*Generalist teacher*: A teacher who teaches a variety of subjects to a group of students.

*Hidden curriculum*: This is concerned with the learning that students acquire that is not explicitly found in the formal or planned curriculum (Boostrom, 2010).

*In-service teacher*: A teacher who is currently working in a classroom teaching students.

*Intercoder agreement test*: This process requires two different raters to analyze the data with the researcher’s codes and provides additional credibility to a qualitative research study when open-ended questions have been employed in an interview (Craig, 1981).

*Participant-observer*: A role that allows the researcher to actively participate in their study, in its space and with its participating subjects, to gain an in-depth understanding of the space and the individuals under study (Hancock, 2017).

*Planned curriculum*: These are the specific documents used to structure the subject content that is to be taught (Murphy & Pushor, 2010).

*Professional development*: These are activities such as lectures and workshops that teachers participate in to acquire new skills or learning that is intended for their classroom practice (Ponder, Maher & Adams, 2010).

*Question guide:* A list of questions prepared in advance that are used in the interview.

*Semi-structured interview:* Both open-ended and specific questions form a bank of protocol questions that are used in an interview.

*Standardized testing:* Mandatory testing in schools used to verify accountability and student learning (Hourigan, 2011).

*Summer institute:* A model for professional development in which educators learn together for an extended period of time, such as a week, with focused workshops (Charland, 2006).

*Teacher:* A professional who has a pedagogical role (Wallace, 2009).

*Triangulation:* The process of using data from multiple sources to enhance the credibility of a case study (Yin, 2013).

*Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS):* A thinking routine conceived by Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen that utilizes guided questioning so the subject can build his or her own understanding (Mayer, 2005).

## **THESIS STRUCTURE**

The following paragraphs provide the reader an overview of each of the chapters.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

In this chapter, I begin with a brief historical review of educational programming pertaining to art museums in North America along with the methodologies used by museum educators to discuss a work of art and professional development programs for teachers. Afterwards, I present literature concerning the emergence of professional development for teachers, its effectiveness, and its relationship with current trends in education, especially art education. I conclude with a discussion of Curriculum Theory, specifically, I discuss curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner's (1968/2008) dialogic framework and his Value System as well as the characteristics of both dialogical and dialectical discussions, all of which were used as the framework for this dissertation.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

In this chapter, I describe the methodologies used for this comparative case study and the rationale for including an autoethnographic self-study into the research design. I provide the reader with a description of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) summer institute and

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's summer institute, Teaching from Works of Art. I go over a detailed summary of the daily curricular activities at each institute and give a description of each of the nine educators who participated in the study over the 2018–2019 academic year. Furthermore, I present the approaches applied for data collection and for the analysis and conclude with a brief discussion of the ethical considerations for this study.

#### **Chapter 4: Findings**

In this chapter, I discuss the major findings that emerged from the data with regards to the research questions that guided the study. The four significant themes include: art in the classroom, conversations, the museum summer institutes, and professional development. Within the chapter, I present data concerning Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), dynamics that impacted the participants' pedagogy, and the aesthetic experience. I conclude the chapter with an exploration of Huebner's approach to language and present how I applied his Value System to better understand how an art museum's curriculum is experienced and practised in the classroom.

#### **Chapter 5: Participant-Observer**

In this chapter, I explain the rationale for acting as a participant-observer at both VAST at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at Teaching from Works of Art at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. I discuss how the role provided me a unique opportunity to experience the two art museums' curricula and allowed me to acquire data from the perspective of both a classroom teacher and a researcher.

#### **Chapter 6: Discussion**

In this chapter, I discuss how I interacted with the curricular materials from the two art museum summer institutes into my grade 6 classrooms over the course of the 2018–2019 academic school year. This interaction is compared with the overarching themes that emerged along with Huebner's (1968/2008) approach to language and his Value System with the intention to develop other insights into the data collected from the participants.



## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

In this final chapter, I review the thesis and provide a summary of the significant features of each chapter. This is followed by a review of the major themes that materialized and that are of interest to myself as a researcher and as a classroom teacher. Afterwards, I discuss the implications of the study and provide suggestions concerning the following topics: professional development for teachers, Visual Thinking Strategies, the aesthetic experience, Curriculum Theory, and Huebner's Value System, followed by my final remarks.

# REVIEW OF LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this study was to address professional development for teachers and how the art museum can be a resource to support teachers in their personal and professional development. This study explored how the art museums' approach to learning was experienced by the participants and how (and if) the participants drew upon that learning in their classroom practices. As discussed in the introduction chapter, the first objective was to better understand the curricular and pedagogical changes that occurred in a teacher's practice after the museum summer institute. The second objective was to understand the qualities of the summer institute model that support the school teachers. And the third objective was to better understand how the art teacher shapes the students' learning of art through the museums' curricula.

This review of literature is structured to familiarize the reader with a brief summary of the historical development of art museums particularly in North America (Brown and Mairesse, 2018) along with an overview of the progression of teaching strategies utilized in the art museum space (Mayer, 2005), discussing in detail Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Yenawine, 2014). The chapter further addresses professional development for teachers — models and qualities, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and how it has affected professional development (Franco, 2011), along with other policies such as Race to the Top (RTTT) (Hourigan, 2011).<sup>1</sup> I will describe

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<sup>1</sup> The research study occurred in the United States, and all of the participants, excluding myself, taught in the United States, thus all were impacted by these laws in some way. While there are differences between the Canadian and American education systems, qualities of NCLB have impacted teaching in Canada (Westheimer, 2010). My own experience with standardized testing will be discussed in Chapter 5.

professional development for art teachers, specifically summer institutes provided by art museums (Charland, 2006).

In the final section, I discuss Curriculum Theory, as it was applied as the theoretical framework for this study. I selected Curriculum Theory as the focus of my research pertained to how the participants utilized the curriculum proposed at the two art museum summer institutes in their own classrooms. While there are various approaches to Curriculum Theory, I selected the theoretical framework of curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner. Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language in the classroom space, Language as Ready-to-Hand, Language as Happening of Truth, and Language as Thought of Thinkers will be discussed along with his Value System (1966/2008), which includes the technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical. I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion regarding dialogical and dialectical discussions found in the classroom spaces.

## **THE ART MUSEUM**

### **Historical Overview**

Most recently, museologists Karen Brown and François Mairesse (2018) questioned and addressed the role of the museum, especially the art museum, within contemporary society. Certain art museums, such as the Louvre, were established with the aim “to associate the museum with the nation and the constitution of a unified collective, if not of a universal memory” (Brown & Mairesse, 2018, p. 528). And others, in particular the art museums of the United States, were the “product of the industrial and commercial expansion” (Zeller, 1989, p. 11), relying upon the financial support and collections derived from the wealthy elite of the society (Panero, 2016; Zeller, 1989). As noted by museum expert Terry Zeller (1989), the traditional mission statements

of numerous art museums from the early twentieth century underlined the importance of providing education in order to “instruct the people as to what constitutes as good taste” along with expanding art collections (p. 32). Thus, at least initially, shaping public opinion about art through their collections and programming was the goal of many museums (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000). In addition, the art museum provides a social experience and a physical context in which to experience works of art (Falk & Dierking, 2016). While many art museums, especially in the United States, could be described as elitist at their formation, Zeller revealed that over time art museums adopted a more egalitarian approach, positioning themselves as a site for learning and disseminating knowledge.

### The Art Museums’ Role

Brown and Mairesse (2018) claimed that the present art museum is in state of tension, that is, between the traditional role of collecting and researching art objects versus actively engaging and commenting on complicated issues found in contemporary society. Museum researcher Emilie Sitzia (2018) stated that art museums should “be used in an emancipatory way” (p. 80) and transformed into places for mediation, communication, and listening. For this to be achieved, “the museum needs to let go of controlling the knowledge created by the visitors” (Sitzia, 2018, p. 80). Instead of exploring the assigned meaning or value of the art object created by society and the art museum, the viewer produces their own knowledge based on what they perceive from the art object (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005; Hubard, 2010). It has been suggested that the art museum’s contemporary obligation is to be responsive to social, political, and cultural issues and not only concerned with enlarging acquisitions (Cameron, 1971; Janes & Sandell, 2019). The art object in the art museum space should be a catalyst for personal reflection and learning.

This perception of the role of the art museum as a site for emancipation seems relatively new; its prevalence in recent literature shows it is a popular topic (Brown & Mairesse, 2018; Kraybill, 2014; Janes & Sandell, 2019; Panero, 2016). However, Janes and Sandell (2019) remind us that this idea has been around for a while. As early as the 1960s, people were advocating that the art museum be seen as a site to support social change. Janes and Sandell (2019) noted that the late visionary museum director Duncan Cameron questioned the function and responsibility of art museums in contemporary society with his thought-provoking article, “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum” (Cameron, 1971). Cameron asserted that it was essential for art museums to define their role as either a temple to exhibit art objects and reinforce elitist ideas or transform into a forum in which ideas are debated through art objects.

While thus far I have presented claims suggesting that art museums are involved with emancipation, it is important to not overlook other noteworthy points addressed by cultural critic James Panero (2016) and art historian Claire Bishop (2013). Panero (2016) argued that art museums are not truly concerned with this emancipatory role; instead, they are a complex industry, and their goal is to generate revenue through attendance. Attendance in art museums in the United States has increased from 22 million in 1962 to over 100 million in 2000. Panero suggested that this was achieved not through collections that represent the civic duties of an art museum, but through lavish renovations such as the one at The Whitney in New York. According to Panero, “At the present rate, the museum of the future will virtually be a museum without objects, as new non-collection spaces dwarf exhibition halls with the promise that no direct contact with the past will disturb your meal” (p. 19). Panero’s view is that newly established art museums are limiting the space for works of art in order to deliver on the public’s need for entertainment features, including restaurants, gift shops, auditoriums, and immense educational spaces.

To extend this viewpoint, Bishop (2013) wrote in her book *Radical Museology* that the contemporary art museum has moved away from its traditional elitism to become a “populist temple of leisure and entertainment” (p. 5). Similar to Panero (2016), Bishop cited tension between the value of art and the role of the art museum. Bishop claimed that newly constructed contemporary art museums are founded on stylish architectural designs that get more focus than the actual contents of the museum. Though she presented several examples of contemporary art museums that are concerned with generating discourse through the works of art — such as The Van Abbemuseum in the Netherlands — nonetheless, she expressed anxiety that the current establishment of private museums will diminish the social and political possibilities of the art museum.

### Early Art Museum Education

Early twentieth-century education programs at art museums in the United States aimed to educate both adults and children in schools (Sternberg, 1989). For example, the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston in 1907 provided education programs to public schools with the intention of enhancing the curriculum and encourage learning (Kraybill, 2014). Museum education programs for children shifted from a lecture format to a participatory design that included play, storytelling, creative writing, and hands-on activities. This was partially due to the influential work of John Dewey and his philosophy of experiential learning along with Edmund Feldman’s taxonomy of questions that suggested scaffolding a sequence of questions to stimulate higher levels of thinking (Sternberg, 1989). Frequently, professional development workshops or summer institutes were designed so teachers could learn about museum methodologies and apply them in their classrooms (Barry 2013; Falk & Dierking, 2016; Grigor, 2002; Hausman, 1966; Silverman, 1997). The

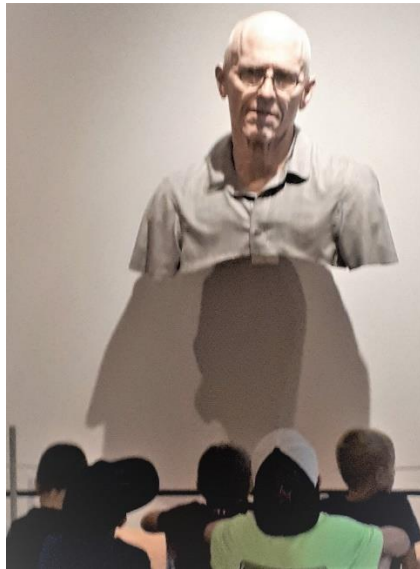
history, the qualities, and the challenges of teacher professional development programs designed by an art museum will be elaborated further upon in this chapter.

Art education professor Robert Ott (1989) noted that traditional methods of teaching in the museum centred on “understanding the ideas behind works of art” (p. 176), which emphasized reading symbols and acquiring subject-specific vocabulary. Similar to Discipline-Based Art Education, which emerged in schools in the mid to late 1980s, art criticism at this time focused not just on the formal qualities of the art but on artistic choices and the historical or cultural role of the art object (Berry, 1993). As of the late 1980s, approaches to criticism in the art museum shifted to concentrating on “discovering individual connections between their personal modes of thinking and the aesthetic values of mankind” (Ott, 1989, p. 177). While modern systematic approaches to art criticism, including describing, analyzing, and interpreting, are applied to teach observation and critical thinking (Ott, 1989), the foundation of contemporary approaches is recognizing the importance of the viewers’ perspective (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005). One of the more contemporary approaches suggests that the viewer does not simply look at a work of art but experiences the work of art (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005). For example, museum scholars Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee (2005) described a dialogical looking where the viewer explores a work of art in silence in order to develop a meaningful experience. Afterwards, the use of art-historical information can be added to deepen the experience, but it is not necessary.

### Field Trips

The field trip is perceived as “a great equalizer in terms of access to our cultural heritage” (Greene, Kisida & Bowen, 2014, p. 79). A field trip does not only present students with connections to history and culture, it enables students to foster meaningful experiences along with learning to express their viewpoints (Kraybill, 2014) (Fig 1). Researchers Jay Greene, Brian

Kisida, and Daniel Brown (2014) suggested that a visit to an art museum can develop more art knowledge and stronger critical thinking skills in students. In their 2014 study of students who attended a field trip to the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Greene, et al. (2014) found that eight weeks after students demonstrated more critical thinking skills, were more observant when looking at a work of art and were more tolerant of different viewpoints.



**Figure 1 Children on a fieldtrip at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, 2018**

While a field trip to an art museum may provide educational enrichment, due to financial pressures and standardized tests<sup>2</sup> (Kraybill, 2014), in the minds of many teachers the purpose of a field trip has shifted from educational enrichment to a form of a reward (Greene et al., 2014). Greene et al. (2014) observed in their research that veteran teachers selected field trips as a means to enhance the curricula while junior teachers selected field trips for student enjoyment.

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<sup>2</sup> Kraybill (2014) noted that even if funding is provided for a field trip to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, some teachers may feel that the trip is a loss of class time needed for standardized test preparation.



## Partnerships with Art Museums

It is not uncommon for an art museum to partner with a school to provide additional learning experiences. Examples of partnerships include students learning how to curate an exhibition (Wylder, Lerner & Ford, 2014) or museum educators entering the classroom to discuss works of art with the students (Bobick & Horby, 2013). For a partnership to be successful, it requires “clarity of purpose, process, and mutual outcomes” (Bobick & Hornby, 2013, p. 82). It is noted that when art museum educators and teachers collaborate as two groups of professionals, teachers become the learners and the museum educators become the teachers. This might be viewed as a negative relationship (Liu, 2000; Matthewson, 2003) or a positive relationship (Bobick & Hornby, 2013; Wylder, Lerner & Ford, 2014). For instance, museum education specialist Wan-Chen Liu’s (2000) study of museum-elementary school collaborations in British Columbia reported that the majority of the seventy-three museum educators surveyed believed that teachers required museum training to “effectively collaborate with art museum educators” (p. 79).<sup>3</sup> Art education scholar Donna Mathewson (2003) asserted that hierarchical relationships in which museum educators are dominant may inhibit classroom teachers’ willingness to engage in dialogues with museum educators due to feelings of inadequacy (p. 18), thus preventing opportunities that could promote authentic learning that is tailored to the needs of the students and supports the teacher.

Recent studies conducted by Vicki Thompson Wylder, Eileen Baumfeld Lerner, and Anissa Ford (2014) and Bryana Bobick and Jenny Horby (2013) suggest that equalitarian partnerships between educators are possible, though these are dependent upon a few factors.

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<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the majority of the museum educators surveyed felt that it was not necessary to have a teachers’ input regarding museum programming for schools (Liu, 2000).

Bobick and Horby advised that a project should not be imposed upon a teacher: museum educators should instead seek out the advice of teachers as they are more knowledgeable about their school's culture. And support should be provided throughout the partnership. Furthermore, at the end of the project, an open dialogue about the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership should be conducted between the museum educators and the teachers involved. Wylder et al. (2014) observed that the effectiveness of the partnership between the Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts and a class of gifted grade 5 students rested on the holistic design of the project and the flexibility of the museum interns. Students worked with museum interns to select works from the museum's permanent collection to curate an exhibition entitled *Elementary Reflections*. Throughout the project, continuous dialogue occurred between the teacher and the museum to organize several field trips to the museum, to discuss pedagogical concerns, and to support each other in the various spaces such as classroom and museum.

### Approaches to Teaching in the Art Museums

Independent scholar Melinda Mayer (2005) reviewed various theoretical frameworks of museum pedagogy in her article "Bridging the Theory-Practice Divide in Contemporary Art Museum Education." Mayer noted that prior to the 1970s, learning in the art museum concentrated on the object and provided the visitor with information relayed from curators and researchers. Due to developments in communication theory and educational psychology, museum educators sought to readjust education programs to incorporate a variety of interactive learning approaches devised by key researchers. John Falk and Lynn Dierking proposed their Contextual Model of Learning, which emphasizes that learning is not simply coupled with the art object; it also encompasses the space, the experience, and the group dynamics. Lisa Robert applied literary theory to demonstrate that learning is shaped by the interpretation of life experiences, and the museum provides just one

narrative. Scholars Sara Wilson McKay and Susana Monteverde (2003) suggested a dialogic model based upon Bakhtin's Theory of Heteroglossia, in which the viewer generates meaning-making through simultaneous dialogues: between partners, with the work of art, and with one's own thoughts. Museum educators have complemented dialogical discussions with non-verbal responses such as writing, drawing, and kinesthetic responses (Kraybill, 2014) as they can illicit other forms of insight (Irwin, 2008). On the other hand, Visual Thinking Strategies, a model conceived by Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen, uses guiding questioning, which allows the viewer to build on his or her understandings (Mayer, 2005).

In addition to the frameworks previously discussed, art museum education researcher Olga Hubbard (2015) recommended that museum educators should invite viewers to discuss their emotions when confronted with a work of art. In Hubbard's view, museum educators avoid discussing emotions, stating that "this position is grounded on dominant Cartesian notions of education, with their emphasis on the rational and the measurable, and their wariness of emotions and subjectivity in learning" (p. 83). Hubbard stressed that layering a discussion with emotions enables the viewer to generate a deeper viewing of the work of art and generates a personal connection. The importance of discussing an emotional response triggered by an art object was also noted in the research of Angie Zapata, Misha Fugit, and Daryl Moss (2017), who observed that when ESL high school students discussed photographs of the American social justice movement, they experienced feelings of confusion, frustration, and discomfort. By acknowledging these embodied responses, the teacher was able to direct the discussion to support the students' understanding.

As previously discussed, the method for discussing a work of art in the art museum has evolved from lecture format aiming to discuss the historical and formal qualities of the art object

(Sterberg, 1989) to methods focusing on uncovering the meaning behind the art object (Ott, 1989) and now to use of the art object to learn more about one's self and the viewpoints of others (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005). In her article, "Three Modes of Dialogue About Works of Art," Hubbard (2010) presented three predetermined approaches to dialogue when discussing an art object with students. Predetermined dialogue focuses on the students examining a work of art through a series of guided questions that enable the teacher to target specific goals. Whereas interpretive dialogue invites students to "construct their own meaning in response to an artwork" (Hubard, 2010, p. 42) through an ever-evolving process. Within interpretive dialogue, Hubbard identified thematic dialogue, in which students explore one idea with the art object, and open dialogue, which is founded on the principle that works of art are "multidimensional objects with layers of interrelated meaning that inform, compliment, or even contradict" (p. 43). While thematic dialogue enables connections between works of art, open dialogue requires students to take the lead in the discussion, making the direction of the discussion uncertain.

### Visible and Artful Thinking

Concerning their involvement with Project Zero from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, education researchers Ron Ritchart and David Perkins (2008) asserted that thinking needs to be noticeable, thus devising the term *Visible Thinking*. Ritchhart and Perkins (2008) remarked that "thinking happens mostly in our heads, invisible to others and even to ourselves. Effective thinkers make their thinking visible, meaning they externalize their thoughts through speaking, writing, drawing, or some other method" (p. 58). Visible Thinking focuses intentionally on a routine — a structured process to guide the students that enables them to scaffold ideas and encourages them to look beyond the surface of a topic with a sense of curiosity (Ritchart & Perkins, 2008). In addition, Visible Thinking is not simply presenting observations or listing

facts; instead, it is generating connections between prior knowledge and new learning (Tishman & Palmar, 2005). Methods such as speaking or drawing are only valid “if they reveal the learners’ unfolding ideas as they think through an issue, problem, or topic” (Ritchart & Perkins, 2008, p. 1). While there are over thirty routines developed out of Project Zero, one of the most popular is *See, Think, Wonder*. This routine asks students to state observations about an object, image, or event using three open-ended questions: “What do you see? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder?” (p. 59). It was observed that this specific routine promoted inquiry and curiosity among students (Ritchart & Perkins, 2008).

Artful Thinking, also developed out of Project Zero, is similar to Visible Thinking, but here, works of art are paired with specific routines to help students learn to deepen their thinking (Barahal, 2008). Education researcher Susan Barahal (2008) wrote that

“Using works of art is a good place to begin practising these thinking routines. Because most works of art are inherently provocative, they encourage viewers to make observations and ask questions, thereby engaging them in different types of thinking. For these reasons, exploring works of art can help broaden the ‘thinking repertoire’ of students and alert them to situations in which using different thinking modes can expand their understanding of a subject or issue (p. 299).”

As students discuss a work of art, the teacher draws from the Artful Thinking Palette, which is comprised of six thinking dispositions, including reasoning and exploring viewpoints. These are applied singularly, combined, or overlapped as students engage with a work of art. It is suggested that the Artful Thinking Palette can be applied in all subjects to help strengthen the students’ critical thinking. For example, a student may be asked to examine a photograph of a bridge in a

science class, not simply to introduce or illustrate a topic, but to better understand engineering (Barahal, 2008).

Another approach to stimulating dialogue is employing Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS). This approach will be discussed in-depth as it was incorporated into the Artful Thinking Palette and modelled to facilitate dialogical discussions at both art museum summer institutes in this study (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2 Teachers pairing writing with VTS at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, 2018**

Yenawine (2014) described VTS as a process to explore a visual image that begins with students silently looking at the image followed by the teacher asking three specific open-ended questions to direct the discussion: “What’s going on in the picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?” (p. 25). During the discussion, the educator leading the activity acts as a facilitator while students provide observations that are layered with evidence from

the visual image. Additional background information concerning the work of art is provided by the educator during the discussion in response to observations stated by the students<sup>4</sup>.

It is suggested that with VTS students generate more meaningful interpretations due to the open-ended nature of the discussions (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007; Wren & Haig, 2006), develop a stronger vocabulary, and learn to apply textual evidence to support answers (Walsh-Moorman, 2018). The goal is for students to “think, debate, and formulate their own ideas” (Yenawine, 2014, p. 173). It may seem that students are making random assertions in response to the first question in VTS, “What’s going on in this picture?”, however, Yenawine explains that due to the follow-up questions — “What do you see that makes you say that? And what more can we find?” — students are encouraged to deepen their thinking and provide evidence to support their statements.

Visual Thinking Strategies tend to promote critical thinking (Greene et al., 2014). Critical thinking is “the objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment” (Stevenson & Lindberg, 2010). Furthermore, critical thinking “evaluates the validity of propositions” through the use of various questions seeking evidence to support the claims presented, basing them in scientific reasoning to uncover a truth (Karson & Goodwin, 2011, p. 303). Hitchcock (2008) asserted that John Dewey, among other educational reformists, stressed the importance of students developing critical thinking skills to generate informed opinions. Some of the dispositions needed to be a critical thinker include: open-mindedness, self-confidence, and the ability to suspend judgments. Critical thinking draws upon numerous abilities, such as emotional abilities and imaginative abilities, but background knowledge of the topic is also

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that VTS is different from the Visual Thinking routine *See, Think, Wonder*. Unlike the *See, Think, Wonder* routine, VTS requires the layering of additional information to direct the discussion.

required to generate informed viewpoints (Hitchcock, 2018). Critical thinking ensures a discussion is not just a surface-level exploration of a topic or, in the case of this research study, a work of art.

Historian David Hitchcock (2018) reminds us in his article, “Critical Thinking,” that embedded in critical thinking are certain discourses that favour one sex or culture, and the discourses used in critical thinking favour reasoning abilities over subjective emotional abilities. He suggested that students may distance themselves from the object of inquiry as the dominant perception of a critical thinker is one who is neutral while contemplating ideas or viewpoints. MacKay and Monteverde (2003) cautioned against relying upon questioning techniques in an inquiry-based discussion as the multitude of opinions can quickly end with a singular interpretation. In their view, a dialogue is in constant motion and should always be changing and providing new insights. Though discussing a work of art may promote critical thinking (Greene et al. 2014), I believe it frequently only promotes one lens through which to view that work, potentially diminishing personal and meaningful connections that are said to enhance the experience (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005; Hubard, 2015) and end with generating a particular view of the work of art (MacKay & Monteverde, 2003). Therefore, learning may be diminished by the implication that the main benefit of looking at a work of art in the classroom is to develop critical thinking skills.

### Observations Concerning VTS

In discussions of VTS, a dominant observation has been that it was designed for learning in the art museum space and it may not function as well within the classroom space. Researchers Marva Cappello and Nancy Walker (2016) observed in their study that non-art specialist teachers were conflicted with utilizing VTS. The researchers reported,



“Teachers expressed concerns about using VTS in academic disciplines where there are understood correct answers. The VTS protocol was appropriated from museum education, where all students’ interpretations were valued as long as evidence was provided to justify their thinking. However, when used in the classroom for academic purposes, not all interpretations can be equally valued. Teachers found the need to redirect lessons and clarify misconceptions drawn from visual texts to meet lesson objectives” (p. 323).

In addition, teachers who applied VTS to discuss visual images in core disciplines questioned its usefulness in science, math, and social studies as these disciplines are grounded in presenting factual information. In support of Cappello and Walker (2016)’s findings, museum researchers Margaret Burchenal and Michele Grohe (2007) also noticed that generalist teachers were agitated with VTS during their study regarding a partnership between the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and five schools. While museum educators applied VTS with a work of art in the teachers’ classrooms, teachers would often interrupt the lessons asking for information concerning the artist, stylistic traits, or period. The researchers noted that certain teachers “felt that VTS did not challenge their students sufficiently” (p. 117) and it was unreasonable to allot twenty minutes to explore just one work of art.

Nonetheless, Yenawine (2014) has demonstrated that VTS can be applied to other disciplines. In his research, teachers readily applied VTS in other disciplines to generate greater interest in the content. Teachers enjoyed combining a visual image with the open-ended question format of VTS and as a result, believed that it encouraged students to venture deeper during discussions. Yenawine (2014) described successful ways that visual images were used with VTS in various disciplines such as science, math, social studies, and languages to understand new

material. Furthermore, studies conducted by other researchers concluded that VTS could readily be applied to the curricula of English language arts (Cappello, 2017), science (Connolly, Skinner & Harlow, 2019), and social studies (Kleeman, 2006) as the routine required students to engage in close observations and provided evidence to back claims. Moreover, VTS may carry into developing skills related to Common Core Standards, such as developing critical thinking (Yenawine, 2014). However, none of these studies mentioned whether teachers and students discussed the historical, contextual, or artistic qualities of the works of art.

According to Yenawine (2014) and Cappello (2017), the selected visual image is critical, as certain images may not spark interest in the students, thus creating a one-dimensional discussion (Cappello, 2017). In researcher Marva Cappello's view, "Simply adding images may not be enough to yield the many potential benefits that result from embedding visual texts into the curriculum; images must be carefully selected to serve instructional purposes" (p. 733).

In addition, when selecting a visual image, Cappello suggested that the teacher needs to consider the producer of the image along with the visual elements (formal aesthetic qualities) found in the visual image. This allows for a more complex discussion. The visual image should not just support the material under discussion; the additional information challenges students to generate connections between themselves, the work, and the artist's intent. By supplying this additional information, students learn how to apply visual arts language in a structured method instead of simply generating casual links. Teachers are sometimes afraid of providing too much information because the discussion will transform into a lecture (transmission learning) which is assumed to be negative (Bell, 2011). Art education researcher David Bell (2011) insisted that it is important for students to know facts about an art object; in his view, this factual knowledge better informs the subjective knowledge of the student. In Bell's research regarding pre-service teachers,

he observed significant benefits to presenting art-historical knowledge with the questioning strategies of VTS. Bell (2011) stated,

“Fully informed, however, melded strategies have the potential to inform a balance between scholarship and interactive/shared learning that can contribute to more fulsome and informed understandings of artworks. More satisfying appreciations have, in their turn, the potential to encourage greater confidence in the articulation and justification of individual response, and to favour dispositions for lifelong habits of engaging with the arts” (p. 222).

In sum, transmission learning of facts and conversational learning (dialogical) both inform each other. Bell asserted that the challenge of blending transmission and conversational learning while discussing works of art is that it demands more from teachers in that they must be familiar with background knowledge in art history.

Where is the “Art” in VTS?

Although Irwin (2008) did not say so directly, he implied that when teachers incorporate works of art into another discipline using VTS, the results are mediocre. Irwin proposed that VTS is favoured by teachers as they may not need the art vocabulary or aesthetic skills to interpret the work of art. Teachers lacking specific visual arts knowledge and strategies won’t easily be able to build upon students’ art responses in a discussion, and a teacher with little art background may be intimidated to discuss art (Walsh-Moorman, 2018). Campello and Walker (2016) found that using VTS to discuss a work of art, “required no prerequisite understanding of visual literacies or specific pedagogical knowledge” (p. 317) on the part of the teacher. But Yenawine (2014) emphasized that “anyone who tries to use VTS without the modest but essential experience with art finds it falls flat” (p. 41). In other words, background information is needed to get the most out of using VTS.

On the other hand, the aesthetic qualities of the visual image tend to be neglected when the goal of using the visual image is to develop a deeper understanding of other content (Connolly, Skinner, & Harlow, 2019; Kleeman, 2006). Irwin (2008) noted that when VTS is applied to discuss a visual image in another discipline, the focus is on observations and connections to historical context and not the aesthetic qualities of the visual image (Irwin, 2008). This is problematic because a work of art has more potential for enhancing student learning and experiences when the teacher discusses the aesthetic qualities and applies art vocabulary. But how important is discussing the aesthetic qualities of a work of art when it is used in a subject outside of the art class?

### The Importance of Discussing Aesthetics

At this point, I would like to further the discussion on the importance of discussing aesthetics. Art education scholar Kevin Tavin (2007) asserted that the teaching of aesthetics “affects art education through the teaching of a particular type of perception and inquiry. In this sense, it is about developing feelings and imagination, or learning to appreciate the sense of somehow being immersed in an artwork” (p. 43). An artist works with both form (containing the aesthetic properties) and content to create the structure of a work of art. The artist’s choices and treatment of the aesthetic contribute to the viewer’s experience with the work of art (Eisner, 1985/2005). Eisner (1985/2005) emphasized that aesthetics are not limited to the arts; they are a method that can be used to experience all disciplines and to make sense of the world. Eisner stated that “the absence of attention to the aesthetic in the school curriculum is an absence of opportunities to cultivate the sensibilities” (p. 103). Similarly, Huebner (2008) described the importance of aesthetics in education as teaching is not a mechanical act. It is filled with experiences and emotional qualities: the act of teaching is an act of beauty.

Tavin (2007) noted that discussions of aesthetics in the context of art education have mainly pertained to formal aesthetics and that is the elements and principles of art that can provide an aesthetic understanding. Tavin asserted, “in most cases, privileged artworks occupy centre stage as well as an elevated form of human experience; both often separated from real-life struggles and actions” (p. 42). In his view, when looking at a work of art, the aesthetic experience should also be driven by the social and political, removing any forms of feeling. To further this argument, academic Paul Duncum in his article “Nine Reasons for the Continuing Use of an Aesthetic Discourse in Art Education” expressed the importance of discussing aesthetics with students as it helps them to understand a range of sensory experiences. Contemporary culture, for example, popular culture, relies heavily upon aesthetic concepts to draw in the viewer, which Duncum described as “aesthetic manipulation” (p. 48). Students should be taught the skills to navigate these sensory experiences.

Discussions of aesthetics and having aesthetic experiences frequently occur in the art classroom. Education professors Marsha Sprague and Sandra Bryan (2001) observed that discussions of works of art in the art classroom predominately focus on exploring the technical qualities of a work of art, not the aesthetics ones. And, as reported in the research of Vicki Lind (2007), art teachers tend to move quickly through discussions of works of art due to limited class time. Lind noted that art teachers would restrict the time for reflection and readjust probing questions to “steer students toward a particular way of thinking” (p. 13). Thus, teachers might not even touch upon the aesthetic if not of interest to them. Milbrandt et al. (2015)’s exploratory survey detected a trend: visual art classrooms concentrate on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In other words, discussing the aesthetic qualities or experiences of a work of art may not even enter visual art classroom discussions.

The research work of Julie Wren, Edith Cowan, and Yvonne Haig (2006) demonstrated that by discussing the aesthetic qualities, student discussions are enhanced. Their exploratory research study focused on students aged eleven and twelve and noticed that the students had complex ideas but could not express themselves due to limited art vocabulary. They also observed that the teachers lacked the confidence to teach art content or instruct students on how to respond to a work of art. Wren et al. noticed that after students were provided instruction on methods used to discuss a work of art and taught some art vocabulary, they applied specific vocabulary words, generated deeper meanings, related the works of art to their own lives, and had a better understanding of the aesthetic elements in the works.

Researcher Christina Chin (2017) suggested that VTS needs to be coupled with aesthetic education to produce deeper learning. Even though both are rooted in constructivist theory, activate prior knowledge, and develop meaning from works of art, in her view the approaches and the methods for inquiry are different. VTS concentrates on the viewer developing meaningful connections with the art object, whereas aesthetics education invites the viewer to generate connections and learn about the art object, including the intention and artistic choices of the artist. Chin's pilot study examined pre-service teachers applying both VTS and aesthetics education in their classrooms. She observed,

“Based on their experience implementing VTS, student teachers noted that it took minimal effort and time to prepare for a VTS session. They stressed that all they were required to do was find an appropriate image . . . and put it up on-screen” (p. 70).

However, Chin found that the pre-service teachers found VTS discussions frustrating as they lacked an end goal. In general, the pre-service teachers found it easier to make connections with

their curricula using aesthetics education. Chin asserted that VTS and aesthetic education are complementary; however, aesthetics education provides a framework that can be applied in a classroom setting. Chin suggested teachers develop a fusion of VTS and aesthetics education that combines the students' generating meaningful connections along with the aesthetic qualities of the work to heighten the discussions. This will help students not lose sight that what they are studying is a work of art.

In this section, I provided the reader with an overview of the history of art museums and questions concerning the role of the art museum in contemporary society (Brown & Mairesse, 2018). I have also discussed the development of museum education programming and the various types of dialogue (Mayer, 2005, Hubard, 2010), particularly VTS (Yenawine, 2014). Although VTS is seen as a best practice routine to encourage meaningful connections with a visual image or a work of art, I demonstrated how it can be problematic when it is the only approach applied in the generalist's classroom (Irwin, 2008; Wren et al., 2006). As a result, I discussed research that shows that VTS should be paired with factual information (Bell, 2012) and aesthetics education (Chin, 2017) to enhance learning and provide teachers with specific links to their curricula.

The next section offers a review of professional development for teachers and art teachers and its relationship with current trends in education in the U.S., such as an increase in standardized testing due to the No Child Left Behind Act (Franco, 2011). The art museum as a site for teacher professional development will be explored along with concerns regarding the contrasting curricula found in the art museum versus the teachers' classroom. In addition, I present background information concerning the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.) and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.).

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Historical Overview**

Described as “in-service training” or “staff development,” professional development for classroom teachers in the United States has concentrated on increasing student learning and achievement (Ponder, Maher & Adams, 2010, p. 858). The efficiency movement of 1913 along with curriculum theorists Franklin Bobbitt’s development of objectives to structure schooling to be more effective (Eisner, 2000) made it necessary that additional training is provided to teachers. This necessity was first documented in the early 1920s with *The Denver Plan*, written by administrator Jesse H. Newton. The training focused on collaboration between teachers engaged in writing their own curricula. It was believed that curriculum development and the act of teaching were interwoven. In the 1930s, the Progressive Education Association (PEA) sponsored the Thirty School Study — a ten-year research study, in which thirty high schools were instructed to redesign the curricula in targeted areas, for example, applying experimental approaches to teaching, student testing, and staff development. Again, staff development centred on teachers creating their own classroom materials with colleagues (Ponder et al., 2010). The 1940s witnessed the Tyler rationale movement, which focused on teacher accountability and testing students. The Tyler rationale suggested that learning could be measured and ignored the students’ and teachers’ engagement with the curriculum (Eisner, 2000).

The view that teachers held expertise knowledge ended in the 1960s as a consequence of “the McCarthy era, the close of the Progressive Education Association in 1955, the cold war, and the launch of Sputnik” (Ponder et al. 2010, p. 857). The public was concerned that American schools and teachers were inadequate, and this led to educational reforms and curricula focusing



on academic subjects such as mathematics and science (Franco, 2010). In some instances, professional development was overseen by academics who established teacher institutes intending to instruct teachers on the reformed teaching materials, also designed by academics (Ponder, et al., 2010). This generated a power imbalance and devalued the voice of the teacher, implying that teachers are incapable of discussing the complexities of teaching (Dadds, 1997). It is not surprising that professional development focused on the technical elements of teaching (Labaree, 1992) as this type of professional development emphasized that teachers are accountable for student learning.<sup>5</sup> By directing the teacher's attention toward the technical qualities of teaching, the social, economic, and political qualities are undervalued and removed from the professional development discourse.

Teachers are required to complete additional hours of education to retain their teaching licence in most states in the United States. Qualifying forms of learning can be additional university courses, online courses, or professional development workshops at the school or district level. If a teacher seeks out a professional development workshop outside of what is offered at the school or district, administrators are required to verify it for it to be recognized as appropriate professional development. The additional hours of education required varies between states: Missouri requires thirty hours every four years, Idaho requires ninety hours every five years, Arkansas requires thirty-six hours each year, and Pennsylvania requires 180 hours every five years (The Art of Education, n.d.).

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<sup>5</sup> Prior to the 1980s, students were held accountable for their own learning and success. With the infusion of business ideologies in education during the 1990s, accountability was placed upon the teacher (Franco, 2011).

## Accountability and the No Child Left Behind Act

Since the 1990s, accountability has dominated schools, and “student achievement scores are the primary outcome measures used in accountability systems,” to demonstrate how the “school and district progress toward meeting some predefined state educational goal” (Franco, 2010, p. 9). In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was implemented to measure accountability with mandatory testing; Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) began to be used to measure progress in reading and math in grades 4 through 8. Critics have argued that this form of mandatory testing inadequately measures the learning of the student and invites the public to further critique the work of teachers (Franco, 2010; Hourigan 2011). Furthermore, it has led to a renewal of the Tyler rationale, a top-down curriculum tradition of learning in classrooms (McNeil, 2009), which establishes teachers — as perceived by the public and themselves — as technicians (Kelly, 2004). In order to motivate teachers, Race to the Top (RTTT) was initiated in November 2009. This program bestows grants to schools based upon the results of standardized tests (Hourigan, 2011). As a result, art instruction has been reduced to prepare students for the mandatory testing (Heilig, Cole & Aguilar, 2010). Although testing and standardization mandates have many drawbacks, these standards do provide rational benchmarks for curriculum planning and guidance to teachers (Eisner, 2000).

Within NCLB, strict guidelines were provided for professional development as it is speculated there is a link, which has yet to be proven, between the professional development of teachers and increasing student achievement. Some of the guidelines include: improve knowledge of teachers, develop methods to verify the effectiveness of the given professional development, and train teachers on technology that can be incorporated into the curriculum and improve their teaching (Conway, Hibbard & Albert, 2005; Hourigan, 2011). In order to better prepare students

for mandatory testing, and as a consequence of RTTT, professional development has tended to focus on core academic subjects such as math and language arts (Allison; 2013, Conway et al., 2005; Hourigan, 2011). But if the majority of professional development is designed for teachers of core subjects, where does this leave the visual arts teacher?

Art education researcher Amanda Allison (2013) claimed,

“Teacher professional development is a chief concern of states, districts, and schools in the wake of high-stakes accountability measures such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The goals and practices of professional development are often disconnected, and this misalignment affects art teachers in unique ways. Art teachers are often ‘left behind,’ without the opportunity for content-specific professional development experiences” (p. 178).

While professional development maybe a “chief concern of NCLB” (Allison, 2013, p. 178), there is little interest in developing professional development specifically for art teachers. In-class art instruction time has decreased to prepare for state standardized tests that focus on core subjects (Allison, 2013; Heilig, Cole & Aguilar, 2010). Scholar Ryan Hourigan (2011) warned that due to RTTT, administrators will select professional development for core subjects to increase student achievement and ignore the needs of art teachers. Hourigan asserted that administrators may divert funding for teachers, in particular art teachers, wishing to attend state conferences to fund a talk given by “a math guru to increase test scores” (p. 63). To avoid art teachers “being left behind” (Allison, 2013, p.178), policy-makers have suggested that the districts provide professional development that is specifically for art teachers (Conway et al., 2005). Those who

design professional development programs for art teachers will have to understand the standards and goals stated in NCLB to generate content that is purposeful for art teachers (Allison, 2013).

So far, I have concentrated on discussing literature focusing on education reform policies in the United States as a result of where my research study took place, educational researcher Joel Westheimer (2010) observed that these reforms and policies such as NCLB have also impacted the Canadian education system. In his article, “No Child Left Thinking: Democracy at Risk in Canada's Schools,” Westheimer (2010) discussed how these U.S. policies have created a preoccupation with testing and accountability within provincial bodies mandating standardized testing. Similar to those in the United States, policies in Canada force teachers to allocate time to test preparation, requiring they focus on the instruction of facts over in-depth learning. Westheimer observed that,

“A broad curriculum continues to be taught in Canada, in-depth thinking, in particular, has been greatly circumscribed. Moreover, the culture of assessment that results from standardized testing in reading and math rapidly tends to spread to other subject areas as well” (p.6).

He cautioned that this focus on standardized testing would force Canadian teachers to focus on the instruction of facts and forego teaching that focused on critical thinking and developing the minds of the students.

## **Types of Professional Development**

While certain forms of professional development, such as lectures, are often viewed as ineffective (Gates, 2010), in-service teachers continue to seek out professional development due to a belief that it will expand their knowledge and further develop skills (Gates, 2010; Grenier,

2010; Guskey, 2002) or as a requirement to maintain their teacher's licence (Hill, 2009). Ponder et al. (2010) noted that professional development tends to be one of seven models that range from training to working with colleagues. Certain models emphasize the curriculum while others focus on the personal growth of the teacher. For example, the training model uses presentations, workshops, and other types of "receptive learning strategies" (p. 855) designed by an outside expert, and the study group model invites a group of teachers to review the curriculum. In contrast, the mentoring model pairs an experienced teacher with a novice teacher to mentor over the course of an academic year. In none of these models is the teacher's perspective overlooked. This is a good practice, as professional development needs to be authentic and relative (Hunzicker, 2011).

### Training and Lecture

The most popular model for professional development is the training model due to its efficiency in both time and cost (Ponder et al., 2010). These prepackaged training methods are often criticized as not always effective and are frequently not of interest to teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Often, presenters and designers are removed from classroom teaching and know very little of the realities of teaching. The late art education scholar Elliott Eisner (2000) asserted,

"The irony, of course, is that those who speak from podiums planted in conferences around the world often do not know the conditions under which the teachers they speak to work, the kinds of communities in which their schools reside, the aptitudes and interests of either the teachers or their students, or the resources that are, or are not, available. In other words, speakers know little about the concrete conditions within which the teacher works. What is assumed is that the wisdom owing from the golden tongues of

orators will penetrate the teacher's cortex and transform the teacher from a pedagogical mediocrity into a pedagogical expert" (p. 347).

To address this issue, researcher Adam Bayar (2014) sought to better understand the professional development needs of classroom teachers. To do this, Bayar conducted an exploratory survey of sixteen elementary teachers regarding the types of professional development they participated in over the academic year. Bayar specifically asked his participants what characteristics of the various qualities of professional development are necessary to support teachers. He concluded that the qualities were:

"1) A match to existing teacher needs, 2) a match to existing school needs, 3) teacher involvement in the design/planning of professional development activities, 4) active participation opportunities, 5) long-term engagement, and 6) high-quality instructors" (p. 324).

Ultimately, Bayar observed that the leading characteristic of poor-quality professional development was the use of the lecture method. Teachers were frustrated with presentations that focused on listening instead of active participation, that is, learning by doing. In fact, professional development workshops and presentations are only successful if there is active learning and teachers are provided with methods that they can adapt to their classroom practices (Bayer, 2014; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Along the same lines as the lecture method, the method of presenting a best practice is viewed as ineffective (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). A best practice is an instruction method or approach that has proven to be successful by the speaker. It has been observed that the best practice method ignores the diversity of school cultures and environments and as a result,

creates a myopic approach to teaching. The best practice method is most often used in workshops and does not transfer to classroom practice due to little or no follow-up support for teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Guskey, 2002). Guskey (2002) observed that teachers do not readily alter or discard old practices due to fears of failure and readily choose workshops that are the easiest or closely aligned with current practices. To incorporate a new practice, teachers are required to invest time and effort, which increases their workloads. Furthermore, in order for a new practice to be adopted, it requires a change in teachers' attitudes and beliefs (Guskey, 2009).

### Professional Development for Art Teachers

Art education researcher William Charland (2006) observed that art teachers are a distinct group of teachers with very specific needs. Charland outlined five types of professional development that art teachers participate in: district-level workshops, conferences, college courses, museum programming, and summer residential schools. Charland viewed the workshop as the bleakest form of professional development due to its use of the top-down approach to learning and lack of adequate and relevant content. The other types of professional development are only slightly better: Conferences are mainly for creating comradery among art teachers. College courses only attract art teachers who are highly self-motivated and can afford the tuition. And art museums tend to use their programming to introduce generalist teachers to the arts.<sup>6</sup> Charland concluded that the summer residential school is the ideal model for professional development because art teachers work together for an extended period of time with focused workshops,<sup>7</sup> thus forming a professional learning community (PLC).

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<sup>6</sup> A generalist teacher teaches multiple subjects at the elementary school level.

<sup>7</sup> Charland (2006) remarked that the assessment of the summer residential school model is limited to rating instructors, usefulness, or content, and little research has been conducted on how and if the art teachers use the learning in their classrooms.

A Professional Learning Community, as defined by researcher Shirley Hord (2009), consists of a group of professionals who are passionate about their own learning who meet as a group to acquire new knowledge and further support each other while participating in meaningful activities. It takes a constructivist approach in which learning is “the process of making sense of information and experiences” (Hord, 2009, p. 41). The benefits of forming a PLC are explored in the recent study conducted by Sandell and Zimmerman (2017), which studied a PLC that was initiated among museum-summer-institute-motivated art teachers; the group helped them reflect on and refine their personal and professional goals. Furthermore, Allison (2013) found that the benefits of a PLC at a summer institute provided art teachers with an alternative site for open dialogue and emotional support from like-minded peers. The school that an art teacher is employed at can be a hostile environment due to unsupportive administration, so peer support of this kind is highly valuable.

If art teachers require specialized professional development (Allison, 2013; Charland, 2006; Conway et al., 2005), how should it be designed? What do art teachers want? Little research has focused on inviting art teachers to describe the qualities or types of professional development they need. Researcher Carol Jeffer’s (1996) open-ended survey of 109 public school Kansas art teachers is relatively dated, nonetheless, it does provide insight into this topic. Jeffer reported that veteran art teachers (eighteen or more years of teaching) were interested in new trends, techniques, and how to use technology due to the desire to “stay fresh” (p. 111). Interestingly, the veteran art teachers rated their abilities to teach art criticism, art history, and aesthetics as low. Mid-level teachers (seven to seventeen years of teaching) wanted to learn methods to discuss art criticism. Another research survey conducted by Thomas Brewer (1999) focused on the preference of continuing education courses at the graduate level for in-service art teachers. The majority of the



141 respondents indicated a strong preference for studio courses and a moderate interest in art education, art criticism, art history, and aesthetics.

### The Financial Side

In discussions of the efficacy of professional development, we have to recognize that this is also a business (Hill, 2009), in which those who provide or select the professional development are not always held accountable (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). In 2008, American public schools spent 20 billion (Guskey & Yoon, 2009), districts spend up to 6 percent of the yearly budget on professional development (Horn & Goldstein, 2018), and it is unknown how much teachers individually invest in courses or workshops that they seek out (Hill, 2009).<sup>8</sup> For the most part, districts and administrators select the professional development workshops and activities for the teachers and little change is ever witnessed in the teachers or students from those workshops and activities (Horn & Goldstein, 2018; Guskey 2009). Guskey (2009) argued that those who design professional development programs tend “to rely on stories and anecdotes from dynamic leaders and committed teachers” (p. 227). But program designers must be provided with more trustworthy, verifiable, and comparative data to demonstrate the usefulness of set programs.

Horn and Goldstein (2018) suggested that teachers be provided with the autonomy to select professional development that is of interest to them, thus encouraging teachers to concentrate on areas of their practice that need improvement. Yet, as noted by professional development research Heather Hill (2009), most teachers can only afford to attend school district professional

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<sup>8</sup> Hill (2009) argued that teachers who are required to complete a certain amount of professional development hours for licensing, should be reimbursed for any workshops that they paid to attend. Conway et al.’s (2005) survey of 227 music teachers reported that the music teachers paid for their own professional development and only a few were partially reimbursed. Similar to Hill, the researchers questioned why teachers pay for professional development when it is required for licensing.

development, which tends to be limited and of poor quality. Hill (2009) commented that only a few teachers can attend “research-proven programs, which are often offered by university faculty or nationally recognized providers . . . while most teachers receive uninspired and often poor-quality professional development and related learning opportunities” (p. 470) at the school or district level. Hill concluded that due to various qualities of professional development, teachers “gamble” (p. 473) on selecting a professional development program in hopes that it will enhance learning.

Kraybill (2018) observed that even within art museums, the types of professional development varied. One factor contributing to the kinds of programs offered by museums was the level of demand for professional development programs, another factor was the operating budget of the art museum. Data compiled from her electronic survey of fifty-one art museums associated with the American Alliance of Museums indicated that a program was only developed if there was significant demand from teachers. Furthermore, the data revealed that budgets for professional development varied widely, ranging from \$1,000.00 to \$100,000.00, and the fees to attend a workshop ranged from \$0.00 to \$250.00. Budgets significantly influenced whether the art museum could hire additional support such as artists or guest lecturers to complement their professional development programming for teachers.

## **ART MUSEUM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Background Information Regarding the Summer Institutes**

The goal of this section is to familiarize the reader with the two art museums that were fundamental to this study, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Below, I have provided key historical and background information, mission

statements and information regarding the education departments, specifically their work with teachers.

### *Philadelphia Museum of Art*

The Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) was planned for the city of Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition in 1876 with the intention that the building would become a permanent space for the arts (Fig. 3). The landmark building, owned by the city of Philadelphia, was modelled after a Greek temple, and opened in 1928 at the western end of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The museum includes the Museum College of Art, Perelman Building, the Rodin Museum, the Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial, and the two great eighteenth-century houses in Fairmount Park, Mount Pleasant, and Cedar Grove. The collection contains more than 225,000 works of art that include European old masters, Persian and Chinese art, a collection of textiles and costumes, Pennsylvania Dutch folk art, and various period rooms such as a French Romanesque cloister. The museum is registered as a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation and in addition to admissions and membership fees, it is supported by endowments, state and federal grants, voluntary gifts, and private and corporate financial support (Philadelphia Museum of Art, [PMA], n.d.).

The PMA's mission maintains that the goal of the museum is to "preserve, enhance, interpret, and extend the reach of its great collections in particular" (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.) and to extend the scope of the visual arts to a diverse audience and generate lifelong learning. To achieve this, as early as the 1900s, the PMA had established an education program for the public. Currently, the museum's Teacher's Services, "develops experiences and resources to inspire and support teachers of all subject areas to use the museum's collections" (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.) Numerous professional development opportunities are provided to teachers throughout the year via half-day workshops and a week-long summer institute.

Additionally, Teacher's Services provides support for teachers to employ the visual arts in their teaching and learning within their classrooms and at the museum (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.).



**Figure 3 Philadelphia Museum of Art, (Harber, 2018)**

### *Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*

The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art was founded by philanthropist and art patron Alice Walton in 2005<sup>9</sup> and is located in rural Bentonville, Arkansas (Fig. 4). The museum's name is based upon the Crystal Springs, a natural spring that runs through the property (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). The building, designed by Israeli-born Canadian Moshe Safdie, consists of numerous pavilions "meant to seem like natural extensions of the surrounding landscapes" (Lewis, 2011, p. 55). Visitors have access to the vast forest that surrounds the museum. The collection focuses only on American artists from the seventeenth century to the present and has been described as "a textbook mounted on a wall" (p. 56). It features key works from artists at the height of their careers (Lewis, 2011). While the permanent collection continues to grow under strategic planning (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.), critics have

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<sup>9</sup> Due to Walmart's sponsorship, general admission to Crystal Bridges is free. According to the museum's website, Walmart is not connected to the education programming, strategic planning, or ownership of the permanent collection (Crystal Bridges, 2018).

commented that Walton has moved works of art from accessible locations to a more secluded area (Lewis, 2011). Nevertheless, other critiques commend the robustness of the collection and hold up Crystal Bridges as a unique art museum that celebrates American art and artists (Brettell, 2012). In fact, Crystal Bridges has been commended for its concern to intentional collect works of art from a variety of artists and to curate galleries that incorporate as many or even more works by African America artists and female artists than by white male artists (Kennicott, 2018).

The museum's mission states that its purpose is to "welcome all to celebrate the American spirit in a setting that unites the power of art with the beauty of nature" (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). The education programming focuses on lectures, performances, and classes along with a continuing education program for K–12 teachers.<sup>10</sup> Providing students with access to the museum is integral to the education program. The Willard and Pat Walker School Visit Program enabled "more than 50,000 schoolchildren to visit the museum each year" (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). This charitable program provides funding for costs associated with field trips such as transportation, substitution pay, and lunch for both students and teachers (Kraybill, 2014). Regarding the continuing education program for teachers, it includes half-day workshops and week-long summer institutes and is currently developing an online education program for students and teachers (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.).

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<sup>10</sup>Museum educators are purposefully trained regarding how to use the dialogical model and learn how to incorporate Visual Thinking Strategies and Artful Thinking routines. During training, museum educators are filmed during a practise presentation to their peers with the intention to learn from the feedback (Kraybill, 2014).



**Figure 4 Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, 2018**

### Museum-Initiated Teaching of Teachers

The art museum as a site for professional development is not a recent development. Artist and educator Arthur Lismer developed a summer institute for teachers at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1922. The goal of the program was to demonstrate new approaches to teaching art to generalist teachers. While the program attracted over 100 teachers, Lismer was criticized for demonstrating impractical art-making activities, and the program ended shortly afterwards (Grigor, 2002).<sup>11</sup> In 1966, the National Gallery in D.C. devised a rigorous program for teachers to develop curricula using works of art from the galleries with the intention that the lessons would be later taught in their classrooms (Hausman, 1966). Teachers participated in lectures concentrating on art history and aesthetics and completed written tests during the program. While art educator Jerome Hausman (1966) claimed that the program was a success, it is not reported if the teachers actually applied the curricula.

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<sup>11</sup> In 2016, the AGO partnered with the Canadian Society of Education Through the Arts (CSEA) to pilot a summer institute program for teachers.

In the mid-1980s, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts focused on disseminating Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) as the singular method for appreciation of art in classrooms across the United States of America (Greer & Rush, 1985). Summer institutes and year-long district programs focused on demonstrating systematic art activities, and teachers were encouraged to teach their colleagues DBAE. Art educator Ron Silverman (1997) described the three-week summer program as “rigorous” (p. 7). The curriculum focused on acquiring knowledge through lectures and course readings. While teachers found the program beneficial, it is reported that participants desired more hands-on lessons and less information (Silverman, 1997). Museum researcher Kevin Hsieh’s (2008) doctoral dissertation evaluated the Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) summer institute for teachers at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. His study demonstrated a disconnect between the educational goals of the museum educators and the needs of the teachers. He concluded that the program was beneficial for introducing teachers to the museum’s collection.

As noted by museum researchers John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2016), art museums in North America continue to develop and expand their education departments to include pre-service and in-service teacher training. The goal is to expose teachers to various teaching approaches that have been designed by museum educators. Through this exposure, teachers will have additional teaching tools for exploring works of art. Denise Stone’s (2013) study demonstrated how the museum setting encouraged a different style of teaching than what pre-service teachers experienced in a school classroom, one that focuses on “diplomacy, flexibility, and advocacy skills” (p. 19). Similar to Stone, educational researcher Nancy Barry (2013) demonstrated to pre-service teachers how works of art in the Midwestern University campus museum could be used to support other subjects such as mathematics. And the week-long Connecting Collections art

museum summer institute<sup>12</sup> in New York City concentrates on modelling object-based teaching strategies, such as questioning techniques, and providing information that can be applied in the classroom. In addition, teachers build confidence to discuss modern and contemporary works of art with the use of multi-modal activities to enhance discussions.

A more recent approach to museum-initiated professional development is the use of online learning. Museum educator Lisa Mazzola (2015) described how the Museum of Modern Art developed a free professional development Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to demonstrate how museum educators employ constructivist pedagogy. Over 60,000 teachers participated in the first session of the MOOC, thus demonstrating that teachers are turning to art museums seeking training. Mazzola observed that the vast majority of teachers who participated in the MOOC were, interestingly, not art teachers. Similarly, researcher Denise Stone (1992) found that the in-service teachers who attend art museum workshops were rarely art teachers — elementary generalist teachers participated most often. While Stone’s research is not recent, it revealed that art teachers were not the principal audience.

#### Value of the Art Museum Curricula

While both the art teacher and the art museum focus on exploring works of art, the approach to pedagogy and curricula varies (Newson & Silverman, 1978). Schools meant to present a formal curriculum in which specific knowledge and skills are taught through set objectives. This knowledge is intended to support societal values (Penner-Williams, 2010). In this sense, knowledge is fixed. Thus, the teacher for the most part follows a traditionalist approach to the

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<sup>12</sup> Connecting Connections is a partnership between four major art museums: Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney, and the Guggenheim. Educators visit each of the art museums during the institute. Vatsky (2018) stated that the *Connecting Collections* summer institute is intended for all teachers and not just for visual art teachers. Data regarding how many were art teachers from the 400 participants was not provided.



curriculum: focusing on set objectives that are evaluated (Pinar, 2010). Whereas art museum curriculum is rooted on a constructivist approach to learning (Hein, 2012), which accepts the view that knowledge is ever-changing (Penner-Williams, 2010). For example, Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005) asserted that inquiry-based learning enables viewers to develop their own interpretations and create meaning while exploring objects with the use of open-ended questions. And Margaret Burchenal and Michelle Grohe (2007) demonstrated that Visual Teaching Strategies builds critical thinking through dialogue that is situated in associating, comparing, observing, and interpreting.

Both museum educators and classroom teachers apply teaching strategies that are “the procedures, processes, activities, and tools used to assist in learning” (Miller, 2008, p. 962). Various strategies are used in schools, including student-orientated, direct instruction, constructivist, and inquiry-orientated strategies (Miller, 2008). With predominately constructivist strategies, learning is constructed through the student’s prior knowledge and experiences; these are the strategies commonly applied in art museums (Hein, 2012). Two frequently used strategies in classrooms and in art museums are the methods of scaffolding information to support learning with the use of visual and verbal prompts and modelling to describe parts of a task (Miller, 2008, Sternberg, 1989). Another method found in both schools and museums is the interactive-expository strategy that invites the student to engage in a Socratic dialogue. This involves an exchange of ideas through questioning and students’ responses and may incorporate additional background information along with visual aids to further develop the discussion (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005, Miller, 2008).

While professional development is designed to improve “teacher knowledge” (p.23) of teaching strategies used in the art museum, Kraybill (2018) asked what the specific goals were of providing professional development to teachers. Data from her survey of fifty-one art museums

suggested that the primary goal was to demonstrate connections between the museums' collections and the Common Core State Standards such as language arts and social studies. Other goals included presenting a studio workshop that linked with the collection or preparation for a field trip to the art museum. As reported by Kraybill, none of the respondents from the survey stated, "teaching an art-museum-based pedagogical practice" (p.28), such as VTS or Artful Thinking Routines, as a goal. Kraybill questioned, should professional development familiarize teachers with methods to develop an "intrinsic value of learning from works of art" (p. 28) or should art museums continue to align their teaching of works of art to Common Core State Standards?

### Defining Successful Professional Development

As previously stated, some of the characteristics of a successful professional development program are: encourages authentic dialogue (Charland, 2006), motivates teachers to reconsider their professional and personal goals (Sandell & Zimmerman, 2017), supports implementation (Guskey, 2002), and utilizes active learning (Bayar, 2014).

Although it has been reported that professional development programs designed by art museums have been successful, it should be noted that the success of a program is often measured by the number of participants (Hsieh, 2008; Mazzola, 2015; Vatsky, 2018) and not on whether the skills and tools learned were applied afterward in the teachers' classrooms. For instance, it was reported that over the past ten years over 400 teachers have participated in the Connecting Collections summer institute (Vatsky, 2018), but museum directors are not certain if the program has led to uptake of provided resources or lasting changes in participants' classrooms.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, it was reported that 60,000 individuals participated in the MOMA's first online MOOC about

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<sup>13</sup> While an older study, Stone (1992) reported that in-service teachers were unlikely to use resources from the art museum workshops in their classroom curricula.

museum teaching strategies; however, there was no indication if all 60,000 participants completed the online course, and we can't know how many applied any of the learning to their classroom practices (Mazzola, 2015).<sup>14</sup>

However, Sandell and Zimmerman's ongoing research work looks into other measures of success in these programs (2017). They have documented how Summer Vision D.C., an art museum summer institute in partnership with the National Art Education Association (NAEA), has successfully influenced art teachers to become leaders in their communities, pursue graduate studies, and publish articles focusing on their pedagogical practice among many other undertakings through data collected through their online survey and a focus group meeting along with discussions from program leaders. Sandell and Zimmerman contributed to the success and influence of the program by helping create a community among the participants and by offering continuous support following the professional development program.

### Art Teaching in the Classroom

Art education scholars Julian Vasquez Heilig, Heather Cole and Angélica Aguilar (2010) wrote of the evolution of art education taught in classrooms focusing on the progressive era pedagogy, arts as experience, and the more recent movements of accountability in their article, "From Dewey to No Child Left Behind: The Evolution and Devolution of Public Arts Education." Heilig et al. (2010) observed throughout art education's history the visual arts in school curricula were either elevated or diminished depending upon the viewpoints of policy-makers, administrators, the public, and teachers. For instance, prior to the 1900s, instruction in the visual

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<sup>14</sup> Researchers Karolina Novak and Marianne Hulsbosch (2013) suggested that studies need to be conducted on the usage of art museum curricula in a teacher's classroom. In their view, art museum curricular materials contain the authoritarian voice of the art museum and may influence how teachers discuss works of art with their students.

arts was limited to the upper classes for cultural refinement. As the middle class grew in the United States, policy-makers introduced the visual arts into public school curricula with the goal of cultural enrichment along with the opinion that the art was ideal for authentic learning and inquiry. Due to the Child Study Movement of the 1930's, teachers considered how art education could contribute to the students' learning in other subject areas. The economic boom of the 1950s provided administrators with increased funding for art education and the ability to hire specialized art teachers. However, after the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union in 1957, the visual arts in schools were significantly cut due to government and public concerns that students lacked math and science skills.

Currently, the United States standards for art education are structured around four categories of artistic processes: creating, presenting, responding, and connecting. When responding to works of art, students in elementary school are expected as early as grade 2 to generate comparisons between the work of art and themselves, speak to the aesthetic qualities of the work of art, and discuss the work's conveyed messages (National Core Arts Standards, 2020). The Common Core State Standards emphasize that art education can inform and support literacy and visual literacy<sup>15</sup> in language arts when reading texts (Wexler, 2014). On one hand, art education is concerned with creating and responding and, on the other hand, when used in another subject, it is concerned with developing literacy skills.

It has been shown that students who engage in quality art education are trained to look past preconceived ideas and encouraged to solve problems and to be innovative (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Art education scholars Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland (2008) attributed this to art teachers

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<sup>15</sup> Visual literacy is “the ability to ‘read,’ interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images” (Wileman, 1993, p.114).

applying types of thinking skills and methods that are not found in other subjects, such as reflective self-evaluation and persistence. It was reported that art teachers promote a type of thinking that is different than other subject teachers, who are encouraged to apply thinking skills and methods predominately to prepare for high-stakes testing. This would suggest that art education is vital for the comprehensive education of a student.

### Current Trends in Classroom Art Education

While the above research shows that art teachers and art education are vital to a well-rounded school curriculum, art programs are often deprioritized in curricula planning. Dedicated art teachers are uncommon in public elementary schools; schools instead rely on generalist teachers who may have no background in art education to teach students art (Heilig et al., 2010). Furthermore, as the populations in certain schools grow, art teachers with designated classrooms are frequently asked to travel between classrooms with their art materials, a practice known as art-on-a-cart (Nolte-Yupari,2019). Though working conditions for teachers teaching art-on-a-cart are challenging, administrators clearly see it as an “acceptable option for art education” (Nolte-Yupari, 2019, p. 19), demonstrating indifference for art education.

Another trend is the merging art of education with other disciplines. Eisner (2001) warned that using art to improve the content or learning of other subjects is perilous to the field of art education. Art teachers entered the profession not to become literacy or social studies teachers but to share the intrinsic value of art and the enjoyment one can get from art creation and the exploration of materials to produce objects. However, art teachers and generalist teachers are encouraged to merge it with the content of other subjects to enhance the overall curriculum, as in

STEAM<sup>16</sup> and Arts Integration<sup>17</sup> initiatives. Though these initiatives are often perceived in a positive light, educational researchers Edward Clapp and Raquel Jimenez (2016) questioned the validity of merging art with other disciplines, in particular STEAM. They noted in their research that most STEAM projects focused on simple art-making activities instead of inviting the students to be creative. Arts Integration was no better, as reported by researcher Lisa Lajevic (2013) in her case study of six elementary teachers. Although the participants in her study integrated art into their curriculum, Lajevic observed that art was used merely to add a visual component to a project done on another subject, such as illustrating an English language writing activity. Or art projects merely functioned as decorative pieces to enhance the atmosphere of the classroom. The participants rarely evaluated the art components. Lajevic concluded that the use of art in this program was narrow and demonstrated a limited understanding of arts integration.

Researchers Melody Milbrandt, Ryan Shin, Teresa Torres de Eça, and Kevin Hsieh (2015) conducted an international survey posted on the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) website from January to April 2013 regarding curricular standards and instruction of the visual arts. While the survey was small, it does provide a few insights into current trends regarding teaching art.<sup>18</sup> It was reported that most of the nations required a mandatory art course at the middle school level and the majority stated that ninety minutes (in two forty-five-minute blocks) were allotted each week for art instruction. The researchers observed that overall, art curricula have shifted from creating works of art to encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving. Even

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<sup>16</sup> STEAM is an acronym for science, technology, art, math in which specific content of each of the subjects is used in an overall project. The main criticism of STEAM is that the art is routinely reduced to decoration (Clapp & Jimenez, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Arts Integration aims to support curricular and student learning as students learn a topic through the arts and another subject (Lajevic, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Over seventeen nationalities were represented in the initial 211 responses. Researchers compiled the surveys from the countries with three or more survey participants to generate a list of twelve nations. There were twenty-six participants from Canada and twenty from the United States.

though the participants listed developing “empathy and appreciation for diverse viewpoints through looking and talking about art” (p. 151) as a goal, it was not a priority, like developing creativity and imagination. Interestingly, the development of artistic skills was viewed by the participants as the least important goal for the art class.

### Curricular Materials

Generalist teachers and art teachers today tend to use resources found on the internet for research or to complement lessons as they see their instructional potential (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011). These resources may come from cultural institutions such as art museum websites, or from social media websites such as YouTube or Pinterest. The credibility of such resources has been doubted as unlike textbooks, these sites may not have been designed by experts in the education field, and there is little quality control over the content (Chapman, Wright & Pascoe, 2018; Wang, 2016). Researcher Tingting Windy Wang (2016) with the aid of fifty-seven research participants<sup>19</sup> evaluated thirty-three online art websites using various criteria such as content richness and potential for learning. From the data, the top art websites included Google Art Project, Incredible Art Department, and ArtsEdge. It was also discovered that websites not affiliated with a cultural institution were developed by individuals with extensive backgrounds in art education.

The teacher’s ability to select high-quality resources among the volume of online resources has been questioned (Chapman, Wright & Pascoe, 2018; Jones & Cuthrell, 2011). Researchers Troy Jones and Kristen Cuthrell (2011) reported that teachers frequently used YouTube as a resource as it provided easy access to videos, which were used to catch the students’ attention at the start of a lesson or to complement the instruction. The challenge that teachers expressed in this

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<sup>19</sup> The research participants were not in-service teachers; however, they were junior and senior undergraduate art education students (Wang, 2016).

study was the difficulty they had selecting appropriate and credible material with educational value. Another popular social media site frequented by generalist teachers for art projects is Pinterest (Chapman et al., 2018). In their study of sixteen elementary teachers, researchers Stan Chapman, Peter Wright, and Robin Pascoe (2018) discovered that the less art knowledge their participants had, the more they frequented Pinterest. The participants expressed that Pinterest enabled quick access to images, gave them the ability to generate a folder of go-to activities, and provided them with confidence because the activity had been tested with an example of the final product. Chapman et al. (2018) questioned how employing Pinterest impacted art teaching in the classroom along with the participants' pedagogical choices. Art was viewed as simply an activity to do and not an activity for learning.

In this section of the chapter, I presented literature that discussed professional development (Ponder et al., 2010) and the current rise in accountability with NCLB and RTTT (Franco, 2010; Hourigan, 2011) and discussed research that found that administrators select professional development centred on core subjects such as math and language arts (Hourigan, 2011) and ignore the specialized needs of art teachers (Allison, 2013). In addition, I presented research that shows that prepackaged professional development workshops and best practice lectures are generally ineffective because teachers are asked to be passive listeners (Bayar, 2014), the content is often irrelevant (Eisner, 2000), and teachers are reluctant to alter their practices (Guskey, 2002).

Art museums in North American continue to develop professional development programs for teachers (Falk & Dierking, 2016), however, researchers question how well these programs can be applied to classroom practices as classroom and museum pedagogies differ significantly (Penner-Williams, 2010); because of this, researchers wonder whether art museums should align



their curricula to state standards or focus on instruction that demonstrates the intrinsic value of art objects (Kraybill, 2018).

Even though art education is seen as a key component in the National Core Standards, it continues to be marginalized in the classroom. Current trends suggest coupling art with other subjects (Clapp & Kumenez, 2016; Lajevic, 2013), for example, using art to teach literacy and visual literacy in language arts (Wexler, 2014), but the focus on core standards means the art itself tends to be deprioritized. Art specialists, on the other hand, place more importance on teaching critical thinking and problem-solving in the art classroom than on teaching techniques (Milbrant et al., 2015).

In the next section, I discuss Curriculum Theory — the theoretical framework used for this study, and certain types of curricula that surfaced during the analysis of the data. The renewal of Tylerism and considering curriculum as an experience will provide the reader with a contemporary context (Allen, 2010). Dwyane Huebner's (Huebner, 2008) dialogic framework and his Value System will be explained as it provides a structure to explore the art museum professional development curricula and how they implemented, modified, or omitted from the participants' classroom pedagogy.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this study, I sought to understand how teachers described and understood the curriculum proposed by art museum educators and discover how it impacted their teaching in their classrooms. Research on dialogic teaching demonstrates that talking is integral to learning (Lyle, 2008) and can generate meaningful experiences with works of art (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005; MacKay & Monteverde, 2003; Yenawine, 2014). And while the art classroom is an ideal space to focus on

diverse topics, art education researcher Mary Jane Zander (2004) remarked that “the standard curriculum leaves little room for creating dialogical relationships” (p. 51) in the art classroom. By framing the research within Curriculum Theory, I was able to address the following questions: How does the art museum summer institute curriculum create a space for interdisciplinary learning and dialogue? How does the curricular space enable teachers to create a dialogic pedagogy in their classrooms? In the following section, I expand upon Curriculum Theory and explore dialogic and dialectic learning to demonstrate how it is applied in the classroom setting.

## **Curriculum Theory**

Curriculum researcher Ann V. Kelly (2004) defined curriculum as the teaching and instruction that is supposed to occur in the classroom. While it may include a set of purposes and objectives, a curriculum needs to extend beyond just course content and focus on, and question, what knowledge is taught. This understanding of the curriculum diverges with the rationalistic Ralph W. Tyler Model of curriculum that has prevailed in schools in North America since the 1940s (Allen, 2010). Historically, Curriculum Theory centred on Ralph W. Tyler’s rationalistic approach that focused on students learning set objectives as a method for standardizing education. Tyler, trained as a scientist, felt that it was possible to “measure all activities and outcomes in education” (Allen, 2010, p. 197). In 1949, Tyler devised a curriculum model that focused on students meeting specific objectives with the use of set criteria (Allen, 2010). While this approach can provide insight into student learning, it enforced teacher accountability through the practice of testing. Furthermore, it ignored the tacit knowledge that students and teachers brought to the classroom (Pinar, 2010). The Tyler Model assumed that learning can be measured through organizing set objectives and applying quantitative methods to measure learning. Teachers instruct within a top-down model that directs which information students are to recall (Alexander, 2006).

The teacher is no longer invited to be a critical thinker, and this establishes teachers — as perceived by the public and themselves — as technicians (Kelly, 2004).

## Tylerism

Educational researcher Louise Allen (2010) noted that a revival of Tylerism is occurring in the educational sphere due to the perception that students have not been sufficiently trained for the workforce. Allen observed that “curriculum content is now determined more by high-stakes tests than by students’ needs and interests” (p. 197). Teachers are encountering increased standardization of the curriculum, most notably in the United States of America. State funding that is attached to student achievement and legislation such as the No Child Left Behind Act has encouraged teaching content that is linked directly to assessment (Allison, 2013). Teachers are trained to teach only a curriculum that can be tested (Allen, 2010). This radical form of Tylerism asserts control over content and further reduces teachers and curricula to trivial learning (Au, 2011).

This reductive role inspired curriculum theorists for decades to examine Curriculum Theory through various lenses, such as language (Huebner, 2008), political and social interactions (Giroux, 2012), and the autobiographical (Pinar, 2012). Pinar (2010) suggested that the goal of the curriculum should be to empower teachers to reflect and cultivate independence of mind and explains that Curriculum Theory is “the interdisciplinary study of the curriculum in its historical, political, racial, gendered, postmodern, autobiographical, religious, and international dimensions” (p. 267). By applying this approach to Curriculum Theory, teachers are invited to engage in reflection about their practice and to understand how it and themselves should be altered due to the ever-shifting tensions between social, economic, and political spheres.

Many forms of curricula are encountered by teachers in their school environments. The following curriculum types are relevant in this study:

1. Teacher-proof curricula are ones that are designed by experts, which minimize the teacher's control over the curriculum (Eryaman & Riedler, 2010).
2. Mindless curricula are those practices that provide classes with materials that deskill teachers and minimize reflection and inquiry by students (Schubert, 2010).
3. Embodied curricula focus on the experiences of individual students and aim to “become part of their lived experiences” (Christodoulou, 2010. p.331).
4. The hidden curriculum is concerned with what learning students acquire that is not explicitly found in the formal or planned curriculum (Boostrom, 2010).

In reaction to the renewed Tylerism, Allison (2013) remarked that professional development is concentrated on student achievement and not on cultivating the personal or professional development needs of the art teacher. Art teachers frequently attend workshops that have little relevance to their classrooms. Or, as Charland (2006) observed, art teachers receive instruction enforcing how the arts can foster learning in other subjects during workshops. However, when professional development is reimagined to develop engagement, dialogue, and reflection, it has the potential to be transformative for art teachers (Allison, 2013; Sandell & Zimmerman, 2017).

### **Curriculum as Conversation — Dwayne Huebner**

Dwayne Huebner has been attributed as the first American curriculum theorist to embrace European phenomenology to inquire into the “origin, being, and essence of learning” (Magrini, 2006, p. 12). He believed that Curriculum Theory was “rooted in the language use to talk about

educational activities” (Plantinga, 1985, p. 8). In challenging traditional understandings of curriculum, Huebner “would lay the path for contemporary studies” (Pinar, 1999, p. xxi) as many of his ideas would be taken up years later by other philosophers and contributed with reconceptualizing the curriculum field. Scholar Michael Apple (2010) stated that Huebner was interested in “thinking of stuff, of curriculum, classrooms, knowledge, teachers, and physical environments that educators create in which this all goes on” (p.98). Much of his work concerned itself with the role of language and its use in the act of teaching to reveal tensions and power dynamics (Magrini, 2006). Language was the entry to understanding the lived experiences of teachers because language defines one’s experiences and structures educational spaces. Huebner stressed the necessity for teachers to become aware of their utterances and how these utterances shaped their curricular actions (Plantinga, 1985).

Huebner (1966/2008) criticized the Tyler rationale as it confined the teacher and the student to a set curriculum with a language that focused on learning objectives and evaluation. Instead, Huebner (1963/2008) suggested curriculum as a form of conversation in which teachers and students need to intentionally internalize the words used in the conversation as the words used in a conversation come from another source. This engagement with language and conversation was considered a process allowing teachers and students to realize that they are continuously evolving in their learning and being in the world. Huebner (1963/2008) stressed that language is situated both socially and historically. Not knowing the historical or social meaning and significance behind words hinders learning between teachers and students. If the teacher accepts the language provided in curriculum documents designed by others, the language can lock the teacher into a language system that is not authentic or meaningful to the teacher. Huebner (1967/2008) asserted that learning could not be determined by set objectives or goals. Learning is something that an

individual enters into continuously. It is an ever-evolving process that happens within the individual and between individuals.

Huebner (1968/2008) described three uses of language in the classroom space:

1. Language as Ready-to-Hand, which focuses on language that directs the student.
2. Language as Happening of Truth, which focuses on moments when the teacher removes him or herself from instruction to reflect upon actions directly resulting from Language as Ready-to-Hand.
3. Language as Thought of Thinkers, which are moments when the teacher questions and assesses the use of certain words to rethink how to interact with students.

By considering these uses the teachers are better able to converse and listen to their students; Huebner felt that teaching was a mixture of teacher-directed instruction and reflective constructivist approach.

To further explore this dialogue between teachers and students, Huebner (1966/2008) suggested a Value System to examine curriculum and educational activities. His Five Values included: technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical. Huebner claimed that “educational activity in classrooms will be richer and more meaningful if all five categories are brought to bear” (p. 111). In sum, all of the values were required to create a balanced curriculum.

The technical value emphasizes a “means-end rationality that approaches an economic value” (Huebner, 1966/2008, p. 106). In the educational activity, the objectives students achieve through various activities help them function in the workforce. Teachers are trained to use specific resources or materials as a “source of control of this means-ends system” (p. 106). Huebner asserted that the technical value was important to ensure that students were acquiring necessary

skills to be successful in society. The technical value also acts as a type of quality control for the education system. However, he emphasized it should not be the sole value as it reduces teaching to a planned curriculum.

The political value pertains to how teachers, administrators, and politicians channelled power and control for their own means. Huebner (1966/2008) stated that “there is nothing evil or immoral about political rationality and valuing” (p. 108); it is only a problem when the singular goal is to generate personal prestige.

The scientific value was described as the activities that generated new knowledge for the students, as when the teacher continuously redesigns educational activities to expand the knowledge of the students. However, Huebner warned that if curricula centred on the scientific value, it would only motivate teachers to seek a best practice teaching formula.

The aesthetic value focuses on the “symbolic and aesthetic meanings” (Huebner, 1966/2008, p. 109) found in the educational activities. Huebner asserted that the aesthetic value was frequently overlooked in curricula due to limited knowledge by the teacher or because little value is placed on this by society. But “the educational activity is an act of beauty” (Blackburn, 2016)<sup>20</sup> that is “valued for its meanings that it reveals” (p. 110). The aesthetic value presents that teaching is not a mechanical activity; instead, it is involved with evoking the senses, the emotions, and the curiosities of both the teacher and the students.

The ethical value is concerned with the encounters between the teacher and the student during the educational activity. The activity is not centred on acquiring knowledge of ethics and not involved with directly changing the student’s behaviour. Instead, it is about equality in the

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<sup>20</sup> Beauty as defined as “the pleasure derived from the senses or from intellectual contemplation” (Blackburn, 2016).

relationships between the teacher and the students during the activity. The student is not to be perceived as an object or a vessel to be filled with knowledge, but as an equal co-creating knowledge in the classroom space.<sup>21</sup>

### Dialogic and Dialectic

To expand upon Huebner's (2008) approach to curriculum, I will draw upon the work of philosopher and scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (2010), who emphasized that within discourse, all words belong to either individuals — the persuasive discourse — or someone else — the authoritarian discourse. The authoritarian discourse is a voice that binds individuals to traditions and perceived universal truths. In contrast, the goal of the persuasive discourse is to reveal new ontologies as it is creative and productive. Bakhtin saw a continuous struggle between these two types of discourse — an attempt to incorporate more of one's own voice into speech and free one's voice from the authoritative discourse. The challenge is that each person's speech is filled with other people's words because as we listen, we internalize and absorb the words we hear until they become part of our own speech. As suggested by Huebner (1963/2008), teachers easily use words given to them and rarely reflect upon how the words shape their practices.

Similar to Huebner and Bakhtin, philosopher Rupert Wegerif (2008) claimed that during a dialogical dialogue, individuals respond to each other using words or utterances that reference historical and social contexts. Both Huebner and Bakhtin emphasized the necessity to explore the language employed in dialogue, and Wegerif (2008) asserted that learning derives from differences in the conversation. Wegerif maintained that talk-as-conversation is applied to avoid conflict and

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<sup>21</sup> While Huebner developed his value system for the schools, museum scholar Elizabeth Vallance (2006) suggested applying his value system of the political, scientific, technical, aesthetic, and ethical to understand the curricular choices of museum educators and how it impacted their programming.



keep the status quo within a group. The dialogic is “learning to learn and an ethic of openness to the other” (p. 359). While the dialogical acknowledges the differences, the dialectic directs the conversation to generate change. Wegerif claimed that through the dialectic “differences are contradictions leading to a movement of overcoming” (p. 359). Without this, dialogue intended to be meaningful will transform into a dialogue based on superficial relativism (Apple, 2010).

### Limitations of the Dialogical in the Classroom

According to researcher Alexander (2006), the dialogic approach enables students to critically explore ideas by using higher levels of cognitive thinking. Students have a greater potential to learn when they are engaged in and lead discussions while the teacher acts as a facilitator. Alexander organized classroom communication and discussions into five categories: teacher monologues, rote repetition of learning information, recitations to test students, discussions applying open-ended questions, and the dialogue approach of applying questions to develop new learning. While there are various approaches, few teachers apply the dialogical approach. As suggested by Zander (2004), the art classroom is the ideal space to conduct a dialogical discussion; however, most art classrooms follow the routine of teacher “initiates a question, students respond, and the teacher evaluates or gives feedback to their answers” (Zander, 2004, p. 51). Zander described issues of fear, loss of classroom control, and wasting class time as factors that contribute to avoiding a dialogical approach to classroom discussions. Furthermore, it is assumed that the dialogical approach is best suited for small groups of students, though researchers Martin Sedlacek and Klara Sedova (2017) discovered that the dialogic approach worked best in larger classes. They found that larger classes provided more student utterances thus increasing the quality of the talk. Furthermore, longer discussion time enabled more students to participate.

Since dialogic teaching is a collaborative process between the teacher and the student, it disorients traditional power dynamics (Lyle, 2008). Theorists Bernard Brogan and Walter Brogan (1995) discussed that the success of dialogic teaching depends on developing a positive and supportive relationship between the teacher and the students. In their view, the ideal lesson is a cycle in which students begin with knowing, then they develop a sense of uncertainty, which instills a curiosity that causes the student to question; this cycle is repeated once students have uncovered answers. This process creates spaces for conversations, new ideas, and knowledge creation with multiple voices and requires the teacher to become a listener (Lyle, 2008).

Researcher Sue Lyle (2008) asserted that often while teachers believe that they are engaging in dialogic teaching, they are in fact simply talking. She viewed teachers as barriers to dialogic talk due to the dominance of the monolithic discourse that prevails in classrooms. Teachers need to act as equal partners (Sedova & Sedlacek, 2017). Researchers Klara Sedova, Martin Sedlacek, and Roman Svaricek (2016) found that teachers have access to little professional development focusing on this form of teaching. In their study, they developed a professional development program in which teachers participated in four workshops over the course of a year. During the workshops, teachers were given tools and provided mentorship. The researchers noted as the teachers developed their skills and confidence, the students developed higher-order thinking skills and created “statements resulting from highly demanding through processes” (Sedova, Sedlacek, & Svaricek, 2016, p. 23).

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

### Historical Overview

I discussed bodies of literature that informed and framed this study. At the start of the chapter, I provided a historical context of the development of art museums, which changed from institutions that display cultural objects to spaces for education (Zeller, 1989). In addition, the role of the art museum in contemporary society shifted from concentrating on appreciating art objects to utilizing art objects for emancipation and social change (Janes & Sandell, 2019). This change can be further seen in the methodologies used by museum educators that moved from the lecture format (Sternberg, 1989) toward the idea that art objects should be experienced through the viewer's perspective (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005). With this, a number of methods for generating discussions while looking at works of art were developed by educational and museum education researchers such as the dialogical model (McKay & Monteverde, 2003), Artful Thinking (Barachal, 2008), and Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Yenawine, 2014).

#### Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) method was described in detail as it was predominately employed at both art museum summer institutes and was frequently referenced by the participants in this study. It should not be confused with the *See, Think, Wonder* routine developed by Protect Zero that does not require the layering of specific information to direct the discussion (Ritchart & Perkins, 2008). It has been observed with VTS that students create more meaningful interpretations of works of art due to the open nature of the questioning techniques (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007), which promote critical thinking skills as students are required to support statements with evidence from the work of art (Yenawine, 2014).

While many researchers have reported successes with VTS, such as Greene et al. (2014), others, such as Cappello and Walker (2016), have noted that when used by generalist teachers, it falls short. This is due to various factors, for example, students may overlook the artistic qualities

of the work of art (Campello, 2017) or contextual information (Bell, 2011). Or the work of art is paired with another subject and acts as a support instead of being used to explore the inherent qualities of the work of art to ground the discussion (Irwin, 2008). It has been suggested that discussions of works of art should include its aesthetic qualities as this contributes to the experience (Eisner 1985/2005) and enriches the discussions (Wren et al., 2006). However, to achieve this, it is necessary to teach students how to make use of art vocabulary when discussing a work of art.

### Professional Development

Further in the chapter, I discussed professional development and its intended purpose: to develop, change, and improve students' learning. Due to the Tyler movement, educators believed that learning could be measured through systematic testing. This led to an increase in training teachers and outside experts developing curricula, which was once the role of the teacher. Furthermore, due to the launching of Sputnik, the American government and the overall public advocated a return to a curriculum that focused on developing students' learning in core academic subjects such as math and science. Because of this professional development was overseen by academics and experts and aimed at training teachers to create curricula (Ponder et al., 2010) with a focus on the technical qualities of teaching (Labaree, 1992).

Due to recent government policies such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Franco, 2011) and Race to the Top (RTTT) (Hourigan, 2011), there is more concern with how professional development can be used to improve student achievement. Strict parameters have been implemented regarding the types of professional development teachers can take part in. These forms tend to focus on core academic subjects, and art teachers are often forced to attend professional development that has little value to their classroom practices (Allison, 2013).

Furthermore, to ensure that teachers are participating in professional development; they are required by state governments to complete several hours of professional development for licensure (The Art of Education, 2020).

While there are a variety of types of professional development, such as training teachers to focus on personal growth (Ponder et al., 2010), the professional development programs that teachers participate in rarely impact their classrooms (Guskey, 2002). Either teachers cannot easily implement the practices encountered (Guskey, 2002), the training is not relevant to their classrooms (Hunzicker, 2011) or the training is simply poor quality<sup>22</sup> (Hill, 2009). Thus, it is important to question the efficacy of professional development programs that are provided at the school and district levels (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Teachers frequently seek out high-quality professional development outside of what is offered at the school and district levels, often at universities or cultural institutions. The direct challenge barring teachers from attending high-quality professional development is funding. Since a limited number of teachers can receive funding, Hill (2009) claimed that only a few teachers can have access to high-quality professional development.

One site for professional development is the art museum. Here, teachers learn museum pedagogy and how to apply it to their own pedagogy (Grigor, 2002; Hausman, 1966; Silverman, 1997). When art museum education methods are modelled by museum educators, teachers are introduced to a constructivist approach to learning that may be unfamiliar to them (Hein, 2012).

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<sup>22</sup> As an example of a poor-quality professional development workshop, I had attended one regarding how to make more use of the Smart Board. Over fifty teachers were crowded into an elementary school classroom which resulted in teachers' sharing iPads. The presenter spent five hours demonstrating features of a specialized program, and we listened. In the end, the presentation was irrelevant as none of the teachers had the specialized program, and the school board had no intention of purchasing it for the teachers. However, we were encouraged to buy a personal subscription to use in our classrooms.

Furthermore, the methods used to discuss a work of art at a museum have been attributed to promoting critical thinking and visual literacy (Yenawine, 2014), which are viewed as key skills to support literacy skills (Wexler, 2014). While art museum professional development programs for teachers have been generally seen as successful because of the high number of interested participants (Vatsky, 2018), Stone (1992) found that little of what is instructed is actually used by teachers. Furthermore, Kraybill (2018) questioned why art museums align their education professional development programs with state standards instead of instructing teachers about museum methodologies.

### Art in the Classroom

I presented literature that discussed some developments in art teaching, whether by specialist art teachers or generalists, that are relevant to this study. First, I presented published evidence that discussing works of art in the elementary classroom can develop literacy skills (Wexler, 2014). Second, I spoke about the inclination to merge art with other disciplines, as in STEAM programs, to demonstrate the interconnection between subjects. However, these studies found that when art is paired with another subject, the art tends to be used solely as decoration (Clapp & Jimenez, 2016). Concerning art specialists teaching art, it was reported by Milbrandt et al. (2015) that instruction in the art classroom has shifted from creating works of art to encouraging students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers when making art. Champman et al. (2018) observed that generalist teachers and art teachers tend to use online resources for lesson planning, however, they rarely question the trustworthiness of the online resources or how these resources impact their pedagogy.

### Curriculum Theory

To frame this study, I applied Curriculum Theory to better understand how the participants enacted the two art museum summer institutes' curricula in their classrooms. As previously stated, at the basic level, the curriculum is the teaching and instruction used in a classroom, which includes a set of purposes and objectives. Because teachers now infrequently develop their own curricula, they have been relegated to the role of a technician (Kelly, 2004). Curriculum theorists such as Huebner (2008), Giroux (2012), and Pinar (2012) have suggested that we examine curricula from various standpoints in order to empower teachers.

To analyze the data, I selected Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language: Language as Ready-to-Hand, Language as Happening of Truth, and Language as Thought of Thinkers. I used these as layers to explore the participants' use of direct instruction and the curricula presented at the two summer institutes, and I discussed literature on them in this section. These layers allow researchers to gain insight into how and if their participants reflect and question their use of direct instruction in their classrooms. In addition, I discussed Huebner's (1966/2008) Value System, which I also use in this study and which includes the technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical values. This system can be used to understand how these values impact a participant's pedagogy. Earlier in the chapter, each of these values were discussed in detail to demonstrate that each is necessary to provide a richness to the curriculum. Huebner's approach to the curriculum provides a lens I can use to explore the participants' experiences at the art museum summer institutes and their experiences in their classrooms.

### Chapter 3: Methodology

In chapter 3, the methodology and procedures used in this comparative case study are discussed, along with how I incorporated autoethnography into the study as a participant-observer at both the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. To do

this, I provide descriptions of both the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) summer institute and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's summer institute: Teaching from Works of Art. I also summarize the daily activities at each of the summer institutes and describe the process I used to recruit my participants, including a description of each participant. The research design is outlined with regards to the methods for data collection along with the process for data analysis. I discuss the process of triangulation, in particular using NVivo's coding comparison query to generate a kappa intercoder agreement. I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion of ethical considerations applied in this study.



# METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the methodology employed in this comparative case study. I used a comparative case study to examine how several teachers enacted the curricula from two different art museum summer institutes into their pedagogy. It is important to state that while the two professional development programs were a component in this study, they were not the focus, nor was the intention to compare the two art museum summer institutes. The focus was on the teacher's experiences at the summer institutes and how these experiences factored into their classrooms. In the following sections, I describe the affordances and limitations of the comparative case study. Additionally, autoethnography is described as a method that was used by the researcher. I explain both the Philadelphia Museum of Arts and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's teacher summer institute professional development programs and provide a detailed account of the daily activities at each of the summer institutes. The reader will be provided with information regarding the recruitment process and contextual details of each of the participants in this study. I will also outline how the data was collected, and how I conducted the analysis.

### **Methodological Choice**

#### The Comparative Case Study

To conduct this study, I employed a qualitative comparative case study to collect the data from the participants. While comparative case studies can be applied in both qualitative and quantitative research (Bailey, 2010), in this qualitative study, it was employed to "capture the complexity of a real-life phenomenon" (Gillham, 2000, p. 6). In addition, the comparative case study was selected since it allowed me to explore multiple phenomena in several settings thus allowing for a possibility of greater understanding of the phenomena (Bishop, 2012).

Educational researcher Malcolm Tight (2017) noted in his historical account of case study research that this form of qualitative research has roots in American sociology from the 1920s. It was used to support statistics in a quantitative study by providing detailed information to enhance the quantitative analysis. In order for the case study to develop into a method for qualitative research, scientific methods such as “devise common standards or approaches” (Tight, 2017, p. 10) are required. Tight (2017) noted that as early as 1948, sociology researcher Paul Foreman outlined procedures for collecting case study data that included personal documents, participant-observation, and third-party reports. As well, Foreman outlined how the data from a case study could support and illustrate hypothesis development and testing.

Currently, comparative case study is an inquiry method used to illuminate a phenomenon and develop a greater insight into that phenomenon (Yin, 2014) by using how and why questions (Bishop, 2012). To conduct a comparative case study, researchers Robert Yin (2014) and Michael Quinn Patton suggested that cases need to be a “bounded system” that is studied in a specific place and over a specific period of time (Patton, 2014, p. 259). In addition, it is necessary that the cases have similar features, that is, years, context, or organization (Bishop, 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). While the challenge of the comparative case study is the amount of data collected (Bishop, 2012), the advantage is that certain qualities of a phenomenon may only become noticeable when comparisons are made between cases (Campbell, 2012).

Comparative case study concentrates on exploring the context and features of a phenomenon with “thick descriptions” (Campbell, 2012, p. 175) as with all case studies. Thick descriptions in a comparative case study yield a richness, allowing researchers to compare the nuances of similarities and differences between the cases. Data may include interviews, participant observations, documentary data, and contextual information (Patton, 2014; Tollefson-Hall, 2013). “The analysis of the data is continuous and emergent,” says Tollefson-Hall (2013, p. 206), allowing for the researcher to make alterations during the study, such as developing new questions. The research design is the same between all cases so the researcher may employ a repetitive analysis of each case to compare cases and look for emergent themes and patterns

(Bishop, 2012). A case study is predominately presented in a narrative format supported by illustrative descriptions of key aspects of the case (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

### Approaches to Data Collection

The interview is the most common method for data collection in case studies (Manson, 2002). In-depth interview using semi-structured or unstructured questions allows the researcher to obtain viewpoints from the participant that can provide insight into a phenomenon (Given, 2008). By using an interview guide with preidentified open-ended questions, the researcher can focus the data collection with regards to the study's research questions. This further invites openings for the researcher to address follow-up questions that explore remarks expressed by the participant (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). The purpose of the interviews is to understand the participant's experiences and to contextualize those experiences within a framework (Given, 2008). Hancock and Algozzine (2017) suggest that interviews be conducted in a neutral space to increase the comfort of the participants, leading to "obtaining high-quality information" (p. 47). Interview data may consist of audio taping, written notes, and/or transcriptions of interviews (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). Aside from the interview, other data may include journals, visual images, and historical documents (Given, 2008).

Comparative case studies have been employed in educational settings in order to better understand a phenomenon by recognizing similarities or noticing differences between cases that bring about new questions. Within comparative case studies, the qualities of a phenomenon may be illuminated when cases are compared (Campbell, 2012), and there is ample precedent for using them to examine phenomena in arts education. For example, educational researcher Jaehan Bae (2020) employed a comparative case study design to explore the impact of the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), which is often viewed negatively, on visual art teacher preparation programs. The research design employed an online survey and follow-up interviews with ten university teacher participants and aimed to gain insight into the edTPA. Using a comparative case study, Bae was able to draw out specific repetitive phenomena, such as instructors intentionally applying specific language from the edTPA in order to familiarize teacher

candidates with the edTPA evaluation. If he were exploring a single case, this quality may have gone unnoticed.

As another example, in her doctoral thesis, *A Comparative Case Study of Teaching Art in Inclusive Classrooms in Turkey and the UK*, Munevver Meltem Yige (2016) compared inclusion policies for art education classes from two countries that are quite different from an economical, social, and political standpoint and showed that they have similar approaches to inclusion. Yige explored research the question “How effectively does art education facilitate inclusive education?” (p. i), and due to the structure of the comparative case study was able to see differences and glean significant similarities between the inclusion policies found in art classes in Turkey and the United Kingdom such as issues with funding.

### Researcher as Participant-Observer

To conduct the research, I acted as a participant-observer at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art professional development summer institute programs in July 2018. As suggested by researcher Catherine Johnson (2011), a case study is a complex insight into an event and often participant-observation is an important way to gain an in-depth understanding of the space and the individuals under study (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). And as noted by Yin (2014), a participant-observer provides an opportunity to gain access to a group and attain real insights into the programs, and observation allows the researcher to capture valuable data in a natural setting. Observation techniques can be obvious or concealed and involve direct or indirect engagement. They allow the researcher to experience the setting and make observations on the physicality of the environment and organization (Given, 2008). Participating in the two different summer institutes allowed me richer insight into professional development as each program had its own unique curricula. I believe that my participation helped to bridge the gap between myself as a researcher and the teacher participants and establish genuine connections with the participants. However, while taking on the role of participant-observer enabled me to be better informed about the curricula and activities presented when interviewing the participants in this study, there were additional reasons for my participation. Like many of the study’s participants, I intended to apply the

curricula to my own practice during the 2018–2019 academic school year, thus also focusing on a self-study employing autoethnography.

### Limitations and Credibility of the Case Study

Researcher Bill Gillham (2000) said that “case study research has only recently come into its own, *not* being part of the natural-sciences style positivist philosophy” (p. 2). While the comparative case study is often regarded as a method to provide rich data concerning the phenomenon under study, the use of case studies in general has been heavily criticized (Diefenbach, 2009; Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Firstly, the credibility of case studies relies heavily upon the concept of truth that is derived from interpretations of the data made by both the researcher and the participant(s) (Gillham, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Maxwell, 2012). These researchers argue that generating generalizations from a case study is impossible as the units are consequently small, and the data cannot easily be extrapolated onto a larger population (Johnson, 2011). According to Tight (2017), the case study may have only interest for its own sake and generalization of one case cannot contribute much to scientific knowledge (Diefenbach, 2009; Tight, 2017), as the research method provides only casual connections between variables. In this way, these methods are best suited for exploratory work (Johnson, 2011). However, as asserted by researcher Robert Stake (2000), this position is rooted in a scientific rationale, and the goal of the case study is to provide insights into phenomena that cannot be abstracted from quantitative research methods. Stake describes the importance of naturalistic generalizations that arrive from considering similarities in contexts and casual relationships.

To further this argument, while sample size tends to be small with a uniform participant group in a case study, generalizability is not the goal of the study (Given, 2008). Rather, the intent of the study is to “explore new phenomena and to capture individuals’ thoughts, feelings, or interpretations of meaning and processes” (Given, 2008, p. 828). Furthermore, the goal of the case study, as suggested by researchers Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman (2014), is to “construct practical knowledge that is responsive

to its environment” (p. 20). In this way, the case study invites the reader to construct connections (Stake, 2000). If the goal of the research is to seek a generalization, it misses the point of the inquiry and the learning that can be obtained from a case study (Tight, 2017).

Secondly, the case study is criticized for lacking precise design methods and rigour because it does not follow a specific set of scientific controls or procedures (Given, 2008; Tight 2017). The concern is that without protocols, researchers will conduct careless research that produces inaccurate findings or generates subjective conclusions (Diefenbach, 2009). According to Given (2008), case studies can “present only anecdotal findings” (p. 830). To address these concerns, Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested that researchers need to justify all components of their research design, such as the selection criteria for the participants. Components for evaluating a case study comprises credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and the procedures to evaluate consist of observation, triangulation, and member checks (Given, 2008, p. 830). Furthermore, participants add rigour to the data as they allow you to generate themes, and variances can generate unforeseen insight (Given, 2008).

Finally, the credibility of the case study is questioned due to the subjective lens of the researcher. Lawrence Leung (2015) claimed that it is impossible for the researcher to be completely removed from his or her epistemological assumptions. This claim assumes that the researcher cannot be objective and can influence the data collection or interpretation. To address this claim, qualitative researchers Joseph Maxwell (2012) and Robert Yin (2014) asserted that researchers simply need to be conscious of their positionality and learn how to use them productively in the research. When researchers acknowledge their positionality, they help secure validity and enable themselves to examine contradictions in the data (Tollefson-Hall, 2013). Gillam (2000) acknowledged that the researcher is not neutral and may have an influence on the phenomena that is under study. The goal is for the researcher to be aware of these influences. The process of triangulation is one method used to address the issue of credibility by providing data from various sources to support the researcher’s interpretation of the data (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

Researcher Delwyn Goodrick (2014) explained that there are a few limitations to the comparative case study. Firstly, when cases are selected primarily on how they will inform each other instead of considering cases that are dissimilar, the data will provide limited insight into the studied phenomenon. It is more challenging to select dissimilar cases as the researcher then needs to “possess strong synthesis skills and the capacity to integrate convergent and divergent evidence” (p. 10). Secondly, as a result of the descriptive nature of the comparative case study, there is an inability to “test causal propositions” (p. 13). Thirdly, researcher Andrew Bennett (2004) stated that “comparisons between cases are a powerful source of causal inferences but also a potential source of inferential errors” (p. 30). In this way, the researcher could reject variables that may be important to understanding the phenomenon. To overcome these limitations, Goodrick suggested that the researcher needs to “employ critical reasoning in making sense of the evidence” (p. 10) prior to generating a conclusion.

## Review of Research Questions

As previously stated, this research study utilizes a comparative case study design to collect data pertaining to the encounters and learning that the participants experienced at the Philadelphia Museum of Art or at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institutes in July 2018 and afterwards within their individual classrooms over the course of the 2018–2019 academic year. The objective was not to compare or assess the qualities of the two art museum summer institutes. To recap, the guiding research questions in this study are as follows:

Question 1 — Program design: What are the pedagogical and curricular qualities and characteristics of the art museum summer institute professional development program that support teachers in their personal and professional development?

Question 2 — Professional development: What salient themes, patterns, or categories of the art museum curriculum do teachers incorporate into, modify for, and/or omit from their classroom curriculum?

Question 3 — Curriculum Theory: How do the conversations in the art museum space enter and carry out in the classroom space? How does the dialogical relationship between the museum and teacher contribute to the students' learning of art?

### Incorporating Autoethnography

Ethnography is a branch of social anthropology that evolved from “positivist-empiricist notions of validity in research, which saw it as a scientific means of describing culture” to a process in which the researcher engages with a group as an insider to acquire insights into “the socially constructed reality” of the group (Granger, 2011, p. 27). Educational researchers Sherick Hughes and Julie Pennington (2017) noted that historically researchers have routinely utilized self-observation while researching a phenomenon. Self-observations, however, were not at the forefront of the research initially; little value had been placed upon the researcher’s personal reflections as this form of data was perceived as anecdotal (Hughes & Pennington, 2017) or mere storytelling (Altheide & Johnson, 2011, Granger, 2011). However, around the 1960s, autoethnography evolved as a research method to validate the researcher as a participant of a study (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). In support of autoethnography as a research method, David Altheide and John Johnson (2011) claimed that unlike empirical facts, autoethnography is “a disciplined way to interrogate one’s memory, to contextualize or recontextualize empirical facts” (p. 584). Furthermore, by incorporating the reflective voice of the researcher, the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participant is shifted, allowing the researcher to collect a greater breadth of information from participants and gain alternative insight into the study (Granger, 2011).

The objective of autoethnography is for the researcher to immerse herself within a group for an extended period of time with the goal of generating greater perceptions of the group under study. The focus is on “studying of the rules, norms, and acts of resistance associated with the cultural groups” (Hughes & Pennington, 2017, p. 11). While there are several branches of autoethnography, this study utilized analytic autoethnography with layered accounts. The layered accounts with the use of vignettes and introspective analyses enable “the reader to enter into the emergent experience of doing and writing research” (Anderson,



2006, p. 20). In addition, the researcher applied self-reflection and utilizes her own experiences in comparison with the participants' experiences to understand cultural, political, and social meanings of the phenomena under study (Hancock, 2017; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Methods for data collection in an autoethnography study may include reflective journaling, interviewing, and fieldwork (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Throughout this study, I was visible and a full member of the group — having partaken in the summer institutes with the participants. I contributed to the data collection as I applied the identical questions as given to the other participants in my interviews. Furthermore, my data was analyzed along with the data collected from the other participants in this study.

Critiques of autoethnography question the ability of the researcher to be objective in her writings and observations and demonstrate “to the reader, audience, or consumer why they should be trusted as faithful accounts of some phenomenon” (Altheide & Johnson, 2011, p. 584). Furthermore, critiques argue that the data is interpreted and reflected through the socially constructed lens of the researcher and her own experiences (Granger, 2011), and this can influence the research process (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). However, according to Hughes and Pennington (2017), acknowledging the subjective nature of autoethnography fosters dynamic openings for the researcher to reflect on conflicts between her observations and the participants' experiences. To enhance credibility, the researcher should present her authentic self, be vigilant of creating bias, and understand her role of privilege in the research study (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). To strengthen the validity of autoethnography, Altheide and Johnson (2011) asserted that, “similar to all forms of inquiry” (p. 584), the researcher adheres to a process, collects data, analyzes it, and interprets it and is supported by a specific theoretical framework along with evidence from academic journals.

In this section, the affordances, and limitations of the case study, along with autoethnography were discussed. It was noted that a comparative case study has the potential to provide rich data even though it has been criticized (Flyvbjerg, 2006). To complement the data collection, I discussed the role of the

researcher as a participant-observer utilizing autoethnography as a method to better understand social phenomena in a study, as suggested by Anderson (2006).

The following section aims to provide the reader with the specific criteria used to select the two summer art museum institutes. I will supply a brief description of both the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) summer institute and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's summer institute, Teaching from Works of Art, along with a portrayal of the daily activities at each of the summer institutes. Throughout the portrayal of the activities, I present observations with thick descriptions situated from the perspective of a participant-observer of the two programs. While I provide thick descriptions of the various activities, the objective of my study is not to compare the two art museum summer institutes, but to develop an understanding of how teachers incorporate their learning from a professional development program in the visual arts into their pedagogy.

## **MUSEUM PROGRAMS AND SETTING**

My objective was to explore how teachers enacted the curricula from an art museum summer institute program into their classrooms. There are many such programs throughout North America, but even though Canada has numerous art museums, only the Art Gallery of Ontario in partnership with the Canadian Society for Education Through Art (CSEA) had a summer institute program for educators.<sup>23</sup> I attended their pilot four-day summer institute in 2016, but it was not considered for this study as I was familiar with this institution. I intended to study my own grade 6 generalist teaching practice alongside the participants in the study, and I wanted to participate in a professional development program that would be of use and of personal interest. I sought to expand my research beyond the familiar and aimed to speak with teachers outside Canada. Researcher Geoffrey Walford (2001) maintained that researchers routinely “settle for

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<sup>23</sup> The four-day summer institute at the Art Gallery of Ontario ran for three years as it was well received by teachers. However, the Ontario Federation of Teachers launched a series of free professional development workshops for the summer of 2019. The CSEA/AGO could not compete thus resulting in the termination of the summer institute at the AGO (P. Vietgen, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

research sites to which they can easily gain convenient and ready access” (p. 151) and ignore the “implications of their particular choices” (p. 151). Therefore, seeking a professional development summer institute program further outside of my experience provided an additional challenge as I had to make my own connections with the art museums, and they had to be willing to host me. Because of this, I generated insight into the experience of a group of teachers teaching in the United States of America and was able to recognize how it differed from my own experiences of teaching in Canada. These observations will be further elaborated upon in chapter 5.

## **The Art Museum Summer Institutes**

The criteria for selecting the two art museum summer institutes for this study are as follows: 1) the institute length was five days, 2) diversity in approaches to the curriculum, and 3) claims that program would provide strategies that could be applied into the teachers’ classroom practice (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d., Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.). What follows is a description of the two summer institutes and an outline of the daily activities that the educators participated in during the two professional development programs.

### **Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST)**

Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) was the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s (PMA) summer institute program for teachers located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.<sup>24</sup> The VAST program evolved from a teacher-training program that was developed in 1982 (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2019).<sup>25</sup> Currently, it is a five-day program that occurs in early July. The curriculum is designed by museum educators and focuses on teachers learning new skills that could be applied to their practices. The itinerary

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<sup>24</sup> During the summer of 2002, I did an internship in the Education Department at the PMA. I do remember seeing groups of teachers walking through the galleries as part of VAST.

<sup>25</sup> In earlier years of the summer institute, the curriculum was developed in conjunction with temporary exhibitions. It was a two-week session that included all day excursions to either New York City or Washington, DC. Presently, the curriculum is developed by the museum educators and focuses on an overarching theme (S. Niepold, personal correspondence, July 27, 2018).

includes creative warm-up activities, hands-on workshops, sessions with gallery educators and scholars, and off-site field trips. By the end of the program, teachers will have “trained their minds to develop original ideas” (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.). The fee to attend VAST was \$260.00 (US dollars) for non-members, which included a daily light breakfast, art materials, transportation, entrance to cultural sites, and the fee for the program. Teachers were required to fill out an application form outlining their intentions for attending VAST as space was limited to sixty participants.<sup>26</sup> Scholarships to attend VAST were available for teachers who applied for the funding. In addition, teachers were able to earn 30 ACT 48,<sup>27</sup> New Jersey professional development hours, or two graduate credits (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.). In order to receive the two graduate credits, teachers were required to attend additional seminars on certain days of the program.

### Teaching from Works of Art

The second professional development program was Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art’s summer institute: Teaching from Works of Art located in Bentonville, Arkansas. The program was in its seventh year when I attended.<sup>28</sup> The week-long program occurs in mid-July and the curriculum is designed by the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art museum educators and theatre educators from Trike Theatre in Bentonville, Arkansas. The program focuses on introducing teachers of all disciplines to teaching from works of art and demonstrating methods to teach visual literacy. It is advertised that teachers would participate in gallery walks, lectures, and hands-on experiences. The goal of the program is for teachers to acquire skills that would allow them to generate “engaging and meaningful dialogue” in their classrooms (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). To attend the summer institute, teachers were required to complete an online application outlining their motives and what they wished to gain from attending the

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<sup>26</sup> At one point the PMA’s VAST summer institute hosted 80 participants. Currently it is limited to 60 participants in order to better manage the program (S. Niepold, personal correspondence, July 27, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> Act 48 of 1999 requires all Pennsylvania educators holding Pennsylvania public school certification to participate in 180 hours of professional education every five years (Government of Pennsylvania, n.d.).

<sup>28</sup> The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art opened in 2011 (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.).

summer institute. It was a competitive process as the summer institute was limited to twenty-five participants. Furthermore, each educator who was admitted received funding, which included “the sessions, all materials, light breakfast, and lunch, along with transportation (flight or mileage) and hotel accommodations” (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). Once accepted, participants paid a \$50.00 (USD) fee for the entire program,

### Obtaining Ethical Approval

I had contacted both the PMA and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art by email to inquire about the possibility of attending their programs and conducting research with their participants in February 2018. The education program directors of both museums agreed that I could participate as a participant-observer (Yin, 2014) and take part in all aspects of the summer institutes.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, I was allowed to solicit participants for my study from their programs. The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art placed the condition that results from my study were to be made available to them, and the PMA requested an executive summary of the results.

In order to conduct my research, I needed to obtain ethical approval to conduct my research, thus I submitted a Summary Protocol Form (SPF) to the Office of Research at Concordia University. Once I had obtained ethical approval, I emailed each of the education program directors a copy of the “Certification of Ethical Acceptability” from Concordia University (Appendix II) and the “Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants” (Appendix II) that I would use at the summer institutes to recruit participants. It was agreed upon by both education program directors that I would introduce myself at the start of the summer institutes to the educators. At that time, I would state my intentions, and only at the end of the program would I invite teachers to participate in the study.

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<sup>29</sup> I was required to complete the online application forms for both of the summer institutes. While I had gained approval to attend the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art’s summer institute through an email with the Museum Education Director, my online application had been rejected. Only after emailing the Museum Education Director concerning this decision, I was admitted into the program; however, without any funding.

In advance of attending the summer institutes, I communicated several times with the educator managers at both art museums either via email or Skype. Communication focused on describing the purpose of my study, my role as a participant-observer, and my aim to generate a bridge between the educators and myself.<sup>30</sup> I conducted a 20-minute Skype meeting in June with the manager of teacher services from the PMA in which we became familiar with each other. It eased my anxiety concerning attending VAST as a researcher. Due to timing, I was unable to organize a Skype meeting with the school programs and gallery teaching manager at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

During the two summer institutes, both the manager of teacher services at VAST and the school programs and gallery teaching manager at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art routinely checked in to inquire if my objectives were being met. After the summer institutes, I communicated with both the manager of teacher services and school programs and the gallery teaching manager concerning additional information regarding their programs and clarification on their teaching strategies. In all instances, I experienced respect and a genuine interest in my study.

## Summary of the Curricula and Activities

### Philadelphia Museum of Art Summer Institute

The PMA's VAST summer institute curricula focused on "socially engaged teaching and learning" (Philadelphia Museum of Art [PMA], n.d.). The week-long program included discussions in the galleries, lectures from invited guests, excursions, and hands-on art-making activities. When entering the classroom on the first day, it was overwhelming to see so many educators, several of whom knew one another from previous professional development programs at the PMA, chatting away over breakfast and designing nametags.

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<sup>30</sup> The manager of teacher services for the PMA sent additional information concerning the history of the VAST and a link to a previous study conducted by a doctoral candidate concerning VAST.

The sixty educators enrolled in the program were not all visual arts teachers. Among the educators were elementary generalist teachers, high school teachers (math, biology, engineering), ESL teachers, music teachers, social workers, early childcare educators, gallery educators, and a few retired teachers. The educators worked in a variety of school settings such as public schools, charter schools, private schools (co-ed and single-sex), inclusive education schools, and a Quaker school. Most educators were from the Philadelphia area, while only a few came from other states, as far away as California. The majority of the educators were white women and only a few were under the age of thirty. Several of the educators routinely attend VAST and for other educators, it was their first time attending a professional development program in an art museum. One educator informed me that this was her twenty-second year at VAST.

### *Day One: Getting to Know Each Other*

The first day of the program focused the educators becoming familiar with each other and identifying ways to address and discuss challenging topics with the use of works of art. Educators were led through a discussion on identity, gender, race, and discrimination by members of the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA). During this session, members of AORTA facilitated an activity in which we listed qualities needed for a supportive environment. This list became our *Collective Contract* for the summer institute. Afterwards we were invited to write responses on Post-it Notes to the various questions written on large white papers throughout the classroom (Fig. 5). Some of the questions included: What is your race? What is your age? What is your sexual orientation? To this question, one educator wrote, “None of your business.” Afterwards, we were invited to stand beside the question that affected us the most and share with the group. The educators who were under the age of thirty explained feeling out of place when they entered the room, and a group of women spoke of how it felt to be only four Black women within the all-white group. It was an intense moment; however, it opened up a space for us to feel comfortable with dialogue. Following additional icebreaker activities led by AORTA activities, two members from The Soapbox, a community print shop, and Zine Library, discussed the week-long project of creating a

collective Zine.<sup>31</sup> Each educator was invited to create a page for the collective Zine using a mixture of drawing and collage inspired by their experiences at VAST.



**Figure 5 Responses to “What is your age?”**

For the next session, the sixty educators were divided into three groups based upon their teaching backgrounds. Each group was led through the galleries to further discuss race and class divisions using works of art such as *A Lady and Her Children Relieving a Cottager* by William Redmore Bigg along with works from the Modern Times exhibit. Museum educators applied a variety of looking and writing activities based upon Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) and the Artful Thinking Palette to facilitate discussions. In the afternoon, educators learned of the importance of creating closing rituals and self-care by painting rocks that could be used for meditation. Once we had completed the activity, we were invited to walk around the classroom and write positive comments beside the painted rocks.

### *Day 2: Gallery Talks and Paper Cut-out Workshop*

On Tuesday, the morning began with a lecture given by Jonathan Wallis, a university professor who discussed social engaged art. We were invited to consider the resurgence of socially engaged art and the writings of Claire Bishop (2005) and Nicolas Bourriaud (2001) view of relational aesthetics. Furthermore, various contemporary artists such as Félix González-Torres, Suzanne Lacy, and Santiago

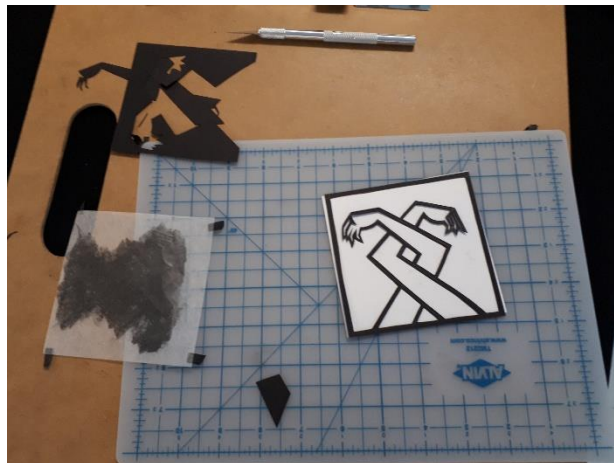
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<sup>31</sup> A Zine is a small-circulated publication of original work, usually reproduced by a photocopier.



Sierra were introduced, and there was a focus on direct participation, creative participation, and collaborative participation to generate socially engaged art. In the galleries, my group focused on addressing tough topics through multiple perspectives. Museum educators used a narrative technique with segments of historical and biographical information to discuss *Interior* (also known as *The Rape*) by Edgar Degas. Several of us discussed later how we walked from that discussion with a sense of unease. We reflected upon *Rain* by Vincent van Gogh starting with a discussion of our emotional reaction to the colours and subject matter followed by the use of different texts to understand multiple viewpoints on the painting and spoke about how mental illness is viewed in contemporary society.

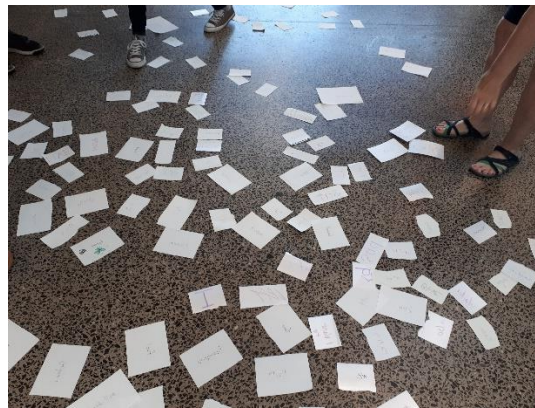
In the afternoon, my group participated in an art-making activity focused on paper cut-outs with artist Joe Boruchow (Fig. 6). During this workshop, I noticed how critical many middle school educators were of their own paper cut-outs. Educators were praising each other's designs; however, some were very negative concerning what they were capable of producing. It was as though they were feeling overwhelmed with needing to produce a paper cut-out and not allowing themselves to make mistakes. An elementary teacher had entered the classroom and informed me the next day that she could feel the tension in the classroom.



**Figure 6 Paper cut-out activity**

*Day 3: Excursion to Taller Puertorriqueño, El Corazón del Barrio, and Paper-Making Workshop*

Wednesday included an excursion to the Taller Puertorriqueño, El Corazón del Barrio in which educators learned about the community centre. Afterwards, we were divided into groups to participate in the different workshops. One workshop focused on spoken poetry and crafting individual poems from a collective word bank written by the educators (Fig. 7). Afterwards we were divided into various activities that included participating in a music/dance workshop and creating clay roses for an ongoing collective sculptural piece designed by Roberto Lugo, the artist in residence at the community centre (Fig. 8). While creating roses with other educators, a few teachers debated the benefits of charter schools compared to other schools. It became quite uncomfortable as a few teachers voiced strong opinions, and the discussion only ended because we had to leave the studio for lunch.



**Figure 7** Word bank and Julie's poem created from the collective word bank.





**Figure 8 Clay flowers for the collective sculpture.**

Once returning to the PMA, my group participated in a paper-making workshop with the People's Paper Co-op. The activity centred on exploring forgotten lived histories, in particular those of individuals who had been incarcerated. Laura,<sup>32</sup> a formerly incarcerated woman, spoke to us about the justice system and her work to assist other formerly incarcerated women re-enter society.<sup>33</sup> During the paper-making portion of the workshop, we sewed pages together to create journals. Afterwards, we were invited to reflect upon our teaching practices and write statements regarding changes we intended to implement into our teaching practices. We shredded the papers and transformed them into collective paper pulp that was used to produce new sheets of paper (Fig. 9). While the paper-making portion of the session was quite messy, several educators expressed how they would incorporate the learning from this session into their classrooms. I, along with other educators, remarked how powerful it was to shred the statements. Afterwards, we were encouraged to write letters to ourselves and add it to our individual stacks of paper. The session ended with the group standing in a semicircle; we were invited to voice a sentiment of gratitude concerning a moment that had occurred during the summer institute.

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<sup>32</sup> Laura is a pseudonym.

<sup>33</sup> Laura explained that state programs were insufficient and described the importance of the support coming from community groups such as the People's Paper Co-op.



**Figure 9 Paper-making activity**

#### *Day 4: Guest Speakers and Excursion to the Eastern State Penitentiary*

Thursday morning, Hazami Sayed and Megan Madison from Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture presented their public art installation, *An Immigrants' Alphabet*, in which high school students worked with photographer Wendy Ewald to articulate their experiences of immigration to the United States.

Afterwards, my group went to the Print Study Room at the Perelman Building to learn about messages in protest art. We were invited to work in pairs and select a print that spoke to us and analyze it. My partner and I selected *Jimin and His Blue Things* by Jeong Mee Yoon, which focused on gender socialization due to our own experiences with raising boys. Afterwards, we were invited to share our understandings of the prints with our peers in the room.

The final session of the day consisted of an excursion to the Eastern State Penitentiary to learn how the organization was engaging in public discussions through exhibitions pertaining to the current criminal justice system. During the lecture, the museum guides provided historical facts concerning the Eastern State Penitentiary and the judicial system from the 1900s along with a discussion of the disproportionate level of incarceration of Black men in the United States. Afterwards, in groups, we were encouraged to explore and discuss the contemporary art installations that had been mounted around the site. It was during this portion of the session that I experienced a confrontation with a teacher in my group about the justice system. She demanded to know my own views on capital punishment as I had remarked that not all victims can forgive

a brutal crime. After further explaining my viewpoint and supporting it with a story from a friend's childhood, the teacher became quiet and then we proceeded to leave the site as it was the end of the session. The teacher ignored my presence for the remainder of the summer institute.

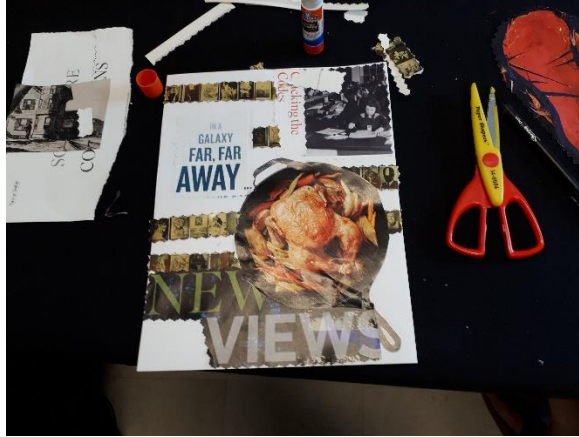
#### *Day 5: Lectures, Meditation, and Zine Workshop*

The Friday session commenced with a lecture by Paul Farber, artistic director, and co-founder of Monument Lab, who discussed critical pedagogies of public art and histories embedded in monuments. Following the lecture, my group entered the South Asian Art Galleries to learn about mindfulness with various works of art, in particular mandalas. A Hindu sculptural figure of Shiva Nataraja was utilized for a meditation and reflection activity. Afterwards, we created our own mandalas in response to discussing the Tibetan Mandala, *Satchakravarti Samvara*.

For the final session of the summer institute, educators worked on creating pages for the collective Zine that was to be mailed to all of the sixty participants (Fig. 10). Furthermore, we were asked to write a personal reflection regarding our week-long experience on a postcard. Later in the year, the postcards would be mailed as a reminder of our experiences at VAST. A raffle was conducted for a free year membership to the PMA along with a scholarship to next year's VAST. My name was drawn for the membership, and everyone in the room laughed. I declined the raffle prize. One educator at my table purchased a mindfulness colouring book and invited everyone in the summer institute to select a page that they could use in their practices when they needed a moment for mindful reflection.<sup>34</sup>

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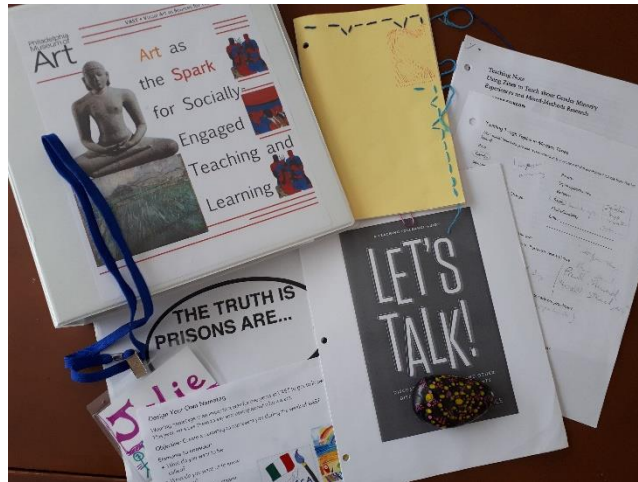
<sup>34</sup> The collective feeling in the room was that we had shared a journey. Several educators inquired if I would be attending next year's VAST and one educator offered to provide an accommodation for me in her house if I returned.



**Figure 10** Julie's Zine page in progress.

### *Curriculum Materials*

Various materials were given to each of the educators who attended VAST. Each educator was given a binder on the first day of VAST, which included the following materials: a schedule for the week, a contact list of all of the educators participating in the summer institute, several articles to supplement the lectures and hands-on sessions, and a list of works of art that were discussed in the various sessions (Fig. 11). During the week, museum educators provided additional handouts such as worksheets for an activity or a colour print of a work of art. On the final day, educators were given two posters of paintings that were from the PMA's permanent collection: Georgia O'Keeffe's *Red Hills and Bones* and Jacob Lawrence's *The Libraries Are Appreciated*.



**Figure 11** Curricular resources from VAST.

### Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Summer Institute

The curriculum for the week-long summer institute program at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Teaching from Works of Art, focused on introducing teachers to methods used to teach from works of art, and provided them with tools and skills they could use to develop dialogical discussions in their classrooms. The program included sessions in the galleries, workshops focusing on listening and improvisation with Trike Theatre, various team-building strategies, along with student demonstrations (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, n.d.). Teachers who participated in the program could receive thirty professional development hours.

It was quiet as educators entered the conference room on the first day of the program, as we were registering and eating breakfast. Similar to VAST, not all of the educators participating in the program were visual arts teachers. The twenty-five educators included among them visual arts middle school teachers, elementary school generalist teachers, high school teachers from various disciplines, pedagogical consultants, and gallery educators and were mainly middle-aged white women.<sup>35</sup> A majority of the

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<sup>35</sup>A group of three educators had previously attended a week-long summer institute at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art as a cohort for the National Art Education Association's Leaders of Tomorrow professional development program.

educators came from Arkansas; however, several educators came from Missouri, Idaho, Minnesota, and Maryland. A few of the educators had participated in the summer institute the previous summer, and three educators from Missouri were attending the summer institute in preparation for an educational partnership between Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and their elementary school.

### *Day One: Gallery Talks and What Is a Dialogical Discussion?*

The first day of the program concentrated on familiarizing educators with Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) and the Artful Thinking Program. After a few icebreaker games, educators were divided into two groups and were led into the galleries. A museum educator facilitated a discussion surrounding George Segal's *Depression Bread Line*. The discussion revolved around discussing the figures in the sculptural piece and followed a circular process: the museum educator posed an open-ended question, we would respond, she would provide additional information, and then she would pose another open-ended question to the group. The museum educator informed the group that this process was founded on a constructivist approach to learning. Afterwards, the group listened to a lecture given by a museum educator in front of Martin Johnson Heade's *The Gems of Brazil*. The lecture included biographical information, the history of the series of paintings, and a guided exploration based upon the tastes of the museum educator.

In the afternoon session, the museum educators presented the methodology and theory of VTS. They intentionally demonstrated two opposing methods for discussing a work of art in order to illustrate the possibilities of a dialogical discussion.<sup>36</sup> By applying features from VTS, viewers establish their own interpretations using the foundation questions: "What do you see?" "What do you think?" and "What do you wonder?" Museum educators stressed that the process activates prior knowledge and students become emotionally connected to the work of art, which in turn increases their understanding of themselves in the

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<sup>36</sup> In the group discussion, some educators stated that they preferred the lecture format as they enjoyed learning biographical and historical information regarding the artist and the painting.



world. Educators further demonstrated that this methodology supported state standards of other disciplines such as English language arts.<sup>37</sup>

The dialogical model that was taught focused on: 1) directing the conversation to include five predetermined facts that were central to the work of art; 2) learning how to listen to students' responses; 3) learning how to validate student responses; and 4) adding tidbits of information during the discussion without it transforming into a lecture. The goal of the discussion was to create a community among the students to share ideas and learn information. A few limitations of the dialogical model were presented. For example, the teacher's role as a facilitator requires a broad knowledge of the work of art; while the teacher can prepare the five facts to include in the discussion, they have little control over the direction of the conversation or that content is discussed by the students. With the dialogical model, the museum educators expressed that teachers need not be experts in visual arts to discuss a work of art, however, they do need to be flexible.<sup>38</sup>

The group was informed that on the final day of the summer institute, we would be facilitating a discussion with a work of art using the dialogical approach. This final task included working in a team, selecting, and researching a work of art, and facilitating a discussion among our peers in the galleries. The museum educators stressed that this final task was essential as it would allow us to have the real-life experience of facilitating a dialogical discussion with a work of art. The next session was a library orientation that encouraged us to draw upon the resources to research a work of art for the final task (Fig. 12). At the end of the day, we were invited to write on Post-it Notes and respond to three statements: 1) Something I learned today; 2) Something I want to learn more about; 3) A question I have. The Post-it Notes were placed on large white boards and would inform the next day's opening discussions.

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<sup>37</sup> This sparked a small discussion amongst the teachers around me concerning evaluation and the intensity of standardized exams.

<sup>38</sup> Most of the educators were unfamiliar with VTS and applying the questioning techniques of See, Think, Wonder. Throughout the summer institute, the museum and theatre educators emphasized the See, Think, Wonder questioning technique, one component of the Artful Thinking Pallet.



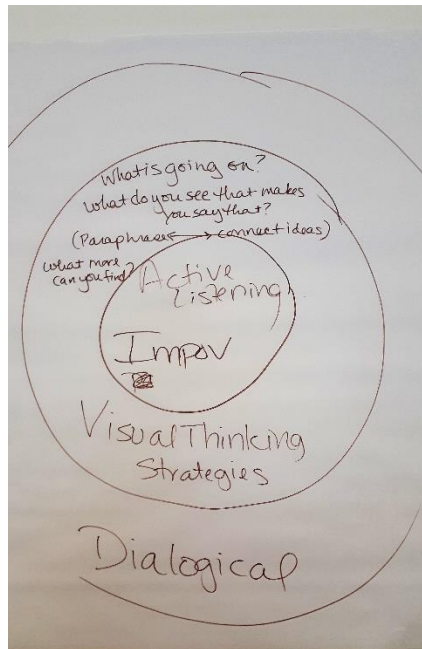
**Figure 12 Interior of the reference library at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art**

### *Day 2: Theatre Activities and Learning Improvisation*

For the second day of the summer institute, the group worked with theatre educators from Trike Theatre as the galleries were closed. Certain Post-it note statements from the previous day were addressed such as “How do you blend art into other disciplines?” And, “How do you integrate the dialogical method with standardized testing?” Several educators stated their preference for and enjoyment of the lecture format as opposed to the open-ended discussion. The museum educators expressed that it is possible to integrate art with other disciplines by utilizing VTS such as selecting a work of art as a starting point to discuss a topic or an idea. Furthermore, the National Standards stress that students develop critical thinking skills and the museum educators argued that the dialogical method is one process that develops the skill of critical thinking.

The morning session included various theatre activities and games that focused on movement increasing our listening skills. The theatre educators stressed that the goal of the theatre games was to create a supportive space that allowed for us to make mistakes. The activities allowed us to step out of our comfort zones, make mistakes, experience learning, and laugh together. The goal was to demonstrate how certain responses can have a negative impact on a discussion instead of generating open communication. We worked in small groups and then in larger groups for several of the activities. One of the games, Zip Zap

Zop is used so players learn “how to think and act quickly, speak clearly, develop listening skills, and response to mistakes with good sportsmanship” (Misiewicz, 2015, p.3). Other games such as Mirrors,<sup>39</sup> and May I Please Have Your Spot?<sup>40</sup> supported developing listening skills and learning to make mistakes and “addressed bodily/ kinesthetic and interpersonal intelligences” (Misiewicz, 2015, p.4). Theatre educators explained how activities would help with dialogical teaching (Fig. 13).



**Figure 13 Diagram explaining how theatre activities support dialogical teaching.**

The afternoon session focused on developing comfort with improvisation through an activity entitled Pass the Painting. Educators worked in small groups with reproductions from the permanent collection and were invited to quickly discuss the works of art. The rapid passing of the paintings between groups and discussing the unfamiliar paintings was to encourage quick thinking, responses, and improvisation. At the end of the session, we were invited to reflect upon our comfort with improvisation.

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<sup>39</sup> Mirrors is a silent activity that asks students to work in pairs and mirror each other’s actions. Students must work together and take on the roles of leader and follower (Misiewicz, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> May I Please Have Your Spot? is a silent activity that asks students to gather in a circle and switch places with each other by communicating only with eye contact and nodding of the head (Misiewicz, 2015).

Most educators stated that they enjoyed the activities and expressed that the activities could improve the listening skills among their students.

### *Day 3: Gallery Talks and Conducting Research*

For the first session on Wednesday, museum educators modelled the VTS strategy of See, Think, Wonder with various works of art in the galleries. The following works of art were used in the discussions: *Tobacco Sorters* by Thomas Hart Benton, *Man on a Bench* by Duane Hanson,<sup>41</sup> *Winter Scene in Brooklyn* by Francis Guy, *A Tight Fix — Bear Hunting*, *Early Winter [The Life of a Hunter: A Tight Fix]* by Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, and *Radiator Building-Night, New York* by Georgia O’Keeffe. With each of the works of art, we were first invited to explore the paintings in silence for 30 seconds. Afterwards, the museum educator would pose an open-ended question, someone would respond, then the museum educator would repeat the response and add on to it with another question (Fig. 14). This cycle continued throughout the looking experience, and at times the museum educator would provide bits of information. Our responses were termed “gifts” because it was these responses that moved and influenced the discussion. Through the discussions, the museum educator addressed poverty, aging, class systems, economics, and hunting and applied certain terms from the elements of art. The aesthetic qualities of the works of art were on the peripheral of the discussions.

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<sup>41</sup> While looking at the Hanson piece, several teachers became emotional as they were generating very personal connections to their lives. However, it was not spoken on how to deal when students become emotional.



**Figure 14 Educators participating in a dialogical discussion in the gallery.**

The afternoon session involved preparation for Friday’s presentations of facilitating a discussion with a work of art in one of the galleries with our peers. A worksheet was provided to assist with the research and preparation. The worksheet instructed us to identify the content that we wanted to explore and to jot down possible “gifts” that may be uttered by our peers. The goal was to prepare us to steer the conversation towards five predetermined facts that were central to the work of art and be prepared for twists in the conversation. After teams were formed but before we selected a work of art, we were asked to explore our designated gallery uninterrupted for ten minutes. Only after the exploration were teams to deliberate upon which work of art should be used in their presentation. In addition, it was suggested to use the library for contextual information in order to refine our interpretation of the selected work of art.

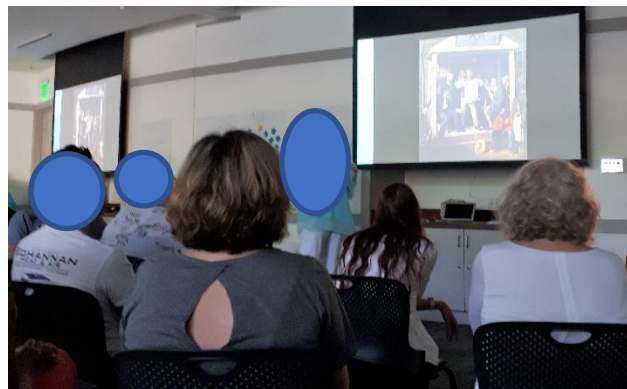
### **Challenges with Selecting a Work of Art**

My group consisted of seven educators from various backgrounds. Four educators in my group were visual arts specialists. I gravitated to Cobi Moules’s *Untitled (Yellowstone, Swan Lake)*, which focuses on gender identity, however, certain members of my team believed that the painting was too controversial for a middle school audience. Another team member spoke of Titus Kaphar’s work, *The Cost of Removal*, which questions and confronts American history and, again, it was deemed too controversial by some team

members.<sup>42</sup> In the end, my team separated into two groups: one selected a representational oil painting and the other selected a non-representational assemblage/sculptural piece. My team purposely selected *The Tower* by Robert Rauschenberg in order to experiment with the dialogical method using a non-figurative work of art. The remainder of the afternoon focused on planning and researching.

#### *Day 4: Modelling a Dialogical Discussion with a Tour Group and Research*

The Thursday morning sessions centred on observing the museum guides modelling and facilitating dialogical conversations. In the conference room, we participated in a discussion of Richard Caton Woodville’s *War News from Mexico*. Throughout the activity, the museum educator outlined the types of questions and strategies that generated specific responses. It was shown how to incorporate “gifts” to direct the discussion and how to include historical information that addressed social class structures (Fig. 15).



**Figure 15** Discussing in the classroom.

In the second session, educators followed a tour group consisting of children ages seven to ten from a camp to observe museum guides modelling and facilitating dialogical conversations with works of art in the museum’s permanent collection. The goal was to demonstrate the fundamentals of asking guiding questions, responding to “gifts,” and complementing the conversation with key bits of information.

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<sup>42</sup> Art and architect critic Philip Kennicott (2018) described Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art as the most “woke” art museum due to its intention to collect and exhibit works of art from a variety of American artists. In a recent survey conducted by Crystal Bridges, it was noticed that visitors preferred works other than traditional works of art (Kennicott, 2018).

## **The Gallery Tour**

The tour group first focused on the time-based portrait video *Johnny* by Susie J. Lee juxtaposed with Gilbert Stuart's oil painting *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)*. The works were used to discuss portraiture and compare the characteristics of the two men portrayed in the two portraits.

The second work of art was Fitzwilliam Tait's *a Tight Fix — Bear Hunting, Early Winter [The Life of a Hunter: A Tight Fix]*. The museum guide encouraged the children to generate a narrative with the painting. Throughout the discussion, the children supported their guesses and responses with evidence from the painting and the museum guide provided positive reinforcement along with historical information.

Dale Chihuly's *Azure Icicle Chandelier* was the third work of art of the tour. The children were invited to sit or lie down directly underneath the glass sculpture. With this piece, the museum guide focused on technique while the children were fixated on whether it would fall on them. The children's responses were varied and did not address the museum educator's questions.

The final work of the tour was Evan Penny's *Old Self: Portrait of the Artists He Will (Not) Be, Variation #2*. Here, the conversation focused on scale and proportion along with reflecting on who the man was and why an artist would create a portrait of his possible future self. At this point, it was evident that the children were exhausted from the tour as they were fidgety, which focused on visual and auditory learning.

## **Question and Answer Period with the Museum Guides**

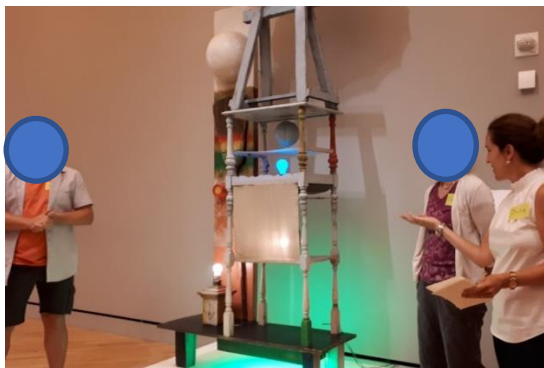
The third session of the day focused on unpacking and reflecting upon the teaching and learning witnessed in the tour groups with the museum guides. The museum educators informed us that the specific works of art were selected due to the ability to create a narrative from the subject matter, and they stressed that the museum guides and the children were creating knowledge together through unexpected insights from the children — new interpretations from their responses helped create new knowledge. The session

concluded with most of the educators praising the method, however, several art educators questioned whether the process was generating dialogue that extended past observation.

The final session of the day focused on researching and developing our discussion with our selected works of art. As my team was absorbed with researching Rauschenberg's *The Tower*, we repeatedly questioned the feasibility of conducting extensive research on one work of art given a teacher's already heavy workload, and we wondered about the necessity of such in-depth study.

### *Day 5: Peer Presentations in the Galleries*

For the final day of the summer institute, the educators were expected to first rehearse their presentations in the galleries and then facilitate their discussions with the group and museum educators. The rehearsal in the gallery evoked memories of observing my own students hastily and nervously preparing for their presentations. After my team's presentation, the head of museum education suggested that I affirm all responses with the use of positive paraphrasing (Fig. 16).<sup>43</sup> The majority of the teams used the VTS strategy of See, Think, Wonder through their discussions. Only one team incorporated writing down observations prior to entering their discussion about Vanessa German's *Artist Considers the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Implications of Psychosis as Public Health Crisis*. The discussion travelled in various directions; however, it never addressed the title or the artist's intent.



**Figure 16 Julie's group presenting in the gallery.**

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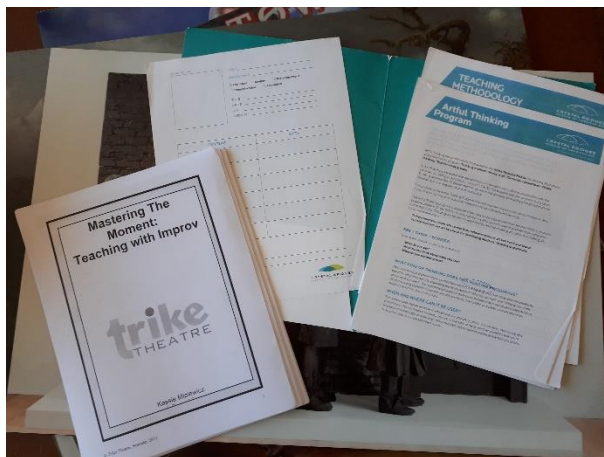
<sup>43</sup> Positive paraphrasing focuses on affirming the student's comment and rephrasing it to elicit further discussion.



In the final session of the summer institute, we were invited to unpack our experiences with facilitating a dialogical conversation. Several of the educators expressed relief and satisfaction that their presentations were successful. Certain educators explained that they initially felt intimidated at this professional development course due to a limited background in the visual arts, however, they now felt more at ease with discussing a work of art. It was suggested that the museum educators develop a part II that extended to learning how to incorporate works art into the core disciplines of a school's curricula. It was not questioned if the training provided sufficient time to learn the nuances of VTS.

### *Curriculum Materials*

Each educator was provided with a folder that contained: a schedule, an overview of the goals of the program along with biographical information about the museum and theatre educators, a copy of the worksheet, an article on teaching with theatre, a booklet about the theatre activities from the sessions, along with two documents outlining the Artful Thinking Program and teaching methodology (Fig. 17). Further, posters for Stuart's *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)* and William Trost Richard's *Along the Shore* were provided. An additional five posters were sent in December and were laminated on boards. The posters included: Martin Johnson Heade's *Cattleya Orchard, Two Hummingbirds and a Beetle*, Kerry James Marshalls's *Our Town*, Richard Caton Woodville's *War News from Mexico*, George Segal's *Depression Bread Line*, and Titus Kaphar's *The Cost of the Removal*. No additional curriculum documents were provided with the laminated posters.



**Figure 17** Curricular resources from Teaching from Works of Art.

In this section, I described both the Philadelphia Museum of Art's and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's summer institute programs designed for educators. I outlined the procedures taken to gain access to the summer institutes as a participant-observer and how I established a professional relationship with the staff at the two art museums. A detailed description of the activities I participated in at the two summer institutes was intertwined with my anecdotal observations.

In the following section, I explain the rationale behind my selection of participants for this study and why I include teachers from a variety of backgrounds. I also discuss my recruitment process and provide background information regarding the participants in this study.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

In my original research proposal, my intention was to recruit only high school visual arts teachers as I was interested in how they implemented the professional development curriculum into their pedagogy. This was rooted in my own background and experiences as a high school visual arts specialist in a STEM school. Furthermore, the goal of recruiting only high school visual art teachers was to generate connections and understandings between them and my own classroom practise. Prior to the summer institutes, I transferred to a grade 6 generalist position. Therefore, the parameters for selecting my participants

expanded to include elementary, middle school, and high school teachers as well as art specialists because I wanted to establish the research study as a comparative case study that included my classroom practice and with the goal to generate connections with the participants.<sup>44</sup>

The majority of the individuals who attended the summer institutes were not visual art teachers, and I was curious to learn how a non-art teacher would incorporate the curriculum from an art museum professional development program into their pedagogy. While there was a vast diversity of teaching backgrounds among the eighty-five educators who participated in the two summer institutes, the educators who approached me concerning the study were predominately generalist elementary school teachers. My criteria for selecting the participants in this study were as follows: participants must be a classroom teacher; participants must teach in a school setting; participants must have more than ten years of classroom teaching experience. I purposefully selected participants who were motivated to apply the proposed activities or methods in their classrooms, as suggested by Yin (2014).

## **Recruitment**

### Recruiting from the PMA Summer Institute

To recruit the participants at the PMA's VAST summer institute, I addressed the sixty educators on the second day of the program. After reading the "Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants" (Appendix II), the teachers at my table asked a few questions about my research study. Over the course of the week, I participated in the discussions, struggled with certain art-making activities, and learned and reflected with my fellow teachers. I was concerned that I would not recruit any participants as no one had inquired about the study after my introduction on the first day of the summer institute. Furthermore, the group of sixty educators were divided into three subgroups, and it was a challenge to find the opportunity to interact with educators outside of my subgroup. To address this problem, on the Wednesday I decided to

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<sup>44</sup> All participant names mentioned are pseudonyms, selected by participants to protect their identity.

sit at another table in the classroom to meet other teachers; however, I was welcomed with lukewarm enthusiasm as the teachers had already formed bonds.

On the final day of the program, I addressed the educators in an informal manner during the morning announcements and described why this research project was important. Furthermore, the VAST educators endorsed the study, stating that it would enable them to gain greater insights into their programming: several museum educators stated that they looked forward to reading the results and described the research study as important. At my table, two teachers immediately filled out the Information and Consent Form. I had to decline other interested educators at my table as they were either early childhood educators, worked with special needs students, or were retired. During lunch, I sat at a table in the classroom waiting for educators to approach me concerning participating in the study, and by the end of the day, I had recruited six teachers: two elementary school generalists, three middle school art teachers, and one high school biology/history teacher. Each of the educators read and signed the Information and Consent Form (Appendix II). Once I started the data collection, the biology/history teacher left the study, and a middle school art teacher's data was disregarded as she preferred to respond via email with answers to the questions instead of an interview and her responses were not as in-depth as the participants that were interviewed.

#### Recruiting Educators from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Summer Institute

To recruit participants from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Teaching from Works of Art summer institute, I followed a similar routine. I read the Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants at the end of the first day to the twenty-five educators in the conference room, and the teachers at my table asked questions about the study. I participated in all of the activities and only on the final day of the program were participants recruited. One educator approached me Thursday morning inquiring if I had recruited any participants. When she heard that I had only recruited one participant, she took it upon herself to approach each educator and describe the importance of my study. She repeatedly checked in with me and indicated which educators I should approach as they would be ideal for my study.

At lunch on the Friday, I sat at a table in the outside courtyard and waited for educators to approach me concerning participating in the study. Similar to VAST, educators who worked in galleries, who were retired, or specialized in early childhood education were refused. In total, I recruited two elementary school generalist teachers, two middle school art teachers, and one high school history teacher. Each of the teachers read and signed the Information and Consent Form (Appendix II).

## **Description of the Participants<sup>45</sup>**

For myself, I have eighteen years of teaching experience as a visual arts specialist at a STEM high school in Montreal, Canada. I transferred to a grade 6 generalist position at an inner-city public elementary school for the 2018–2019 academic school year. I taught English language arts, mathematics, ethics, social studies, and art. Over the course of my teaching career, I have frequently attended professional development programs during the summer, and I have regularly attended and presented at education and art education conferences both nationally and internationally.

### **Participants from the PMA**

Colleen was in her twelfth year of teaching. She taught a variety of grades in both the public and private school systems in Pennsylvania. While she has been employed at her current private school for a few years, it was her first-year teaching grade 2 at that school. Colleen taught English, mathematics, and social studies. There was an arts specialist in the school that her students saw twice a week. Colleen stated that when she can, she integrates art into all of the subjects that she teaches. She has often participated in professional development during the summer months; however, this was the first time she attended a professional development program designed by an art museum. Colleen chose to participate in the week-long program despite the fact she had already met the required hours of professional development to meet her licence requirements.

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<sup>45</sup> See Table 1 for a summary of the participants in the study.

Mariah was in her thirty-fifth year of teaching and has taught at the same private school in Pennsylvania for her entire career. As a grade 6 generalist working in an elementary school, she taught English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and museum studies. Mariah had developed a museum studies course at her school in which students visit museums and study artifacts or art objects. Mariah was able to develop this course because her small class size is small, at only eight students. Mariah asserted that she weaves art into all of the subjects she teaches as art is essential to creativity. There was an arts specialist in Mariah's school, and she routinely paired up with this teacher to develop cross-curricular projects. Mariah regularly participated in the monthly workshops at the PMA during the school year, and she attends conferences and seeks out professional development during the summer months. This was her third time attending the VAST program.

Taylor was in her eighteenth year as a visual arts specialist at an African-centred school<sup>46</sup> in Pennsylvania and had taught there for her entire career. She teaches art-on-a-cart to twenty-one classes a week to students in kindergarten through to grade 8. Taylor described herself as both an art teacher and an artist. She has frequently worked with the museum professionals at the PMA, in particular with the Delphi Program in which a teacher and an artist collaborate to introduce art to the students. Taylor has participated in the monthly professional development workshops at the PMA; however, this was her first time attending the VAST program.

### *Participants from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art*

Chloe was in her twelfth year of teaching and has taught only at the elementary school level. As a grade 4 generalist, she taught English language arts, mathematics, and social studies at a public school in Missouri. There was an arts specialist on staff whom the students saw once a week. Chloe usually applied art herself only when students need to create a poster for social studies. Chloe does not seek out professional

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor stated that her school was an African-Centred model of schooling. As outlined by Madhubuti and Madhubuti (1994), the school focuses on legitimizing African stories of knowledge, reinforcing positive relationships between students and their families and community and promoting self-worth.

development outside of what is offered at her school, but she attended Crystal Bridges because of a partnership that she agreed to participate in. Chloe was thrilled to be working with the art museum professionals as they would be instructing her students and providing unique art-making projects.

Lily was in her twenty-third year of teaching as an elementary school generalist. She had taught a variety of grades in various public schools and at the time of the study worked at a STEM school in Arkansas teaching literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science to her grade 2 class. There was an art specialist and a music specialist at her school. Lily applied interdisciplinary learning in her classroom and stated that she brought art into all of the subjects that she taught. Regarding professional development, Lily's district required 35 hours of professional development a year. Lily routinely used her banked sick days to avoid professional development workshops provided by her district. She instead pursued professional development in the summer that was of interest to her and has attended other teacher summer institutes in various states. It was Lily's first time attending a program designed by an art museum.

Eloise has taught on and off since 1984 in various states. She holds a doctoral degree in education. At the time of study, she was teaching world history and social studies at the high school level (grades 8, 9, 10) at a private school in Arkansas. Her classes were year-long. Eloise stated that she used the visual arts in her classrooms, using artifacts or works of art to introduce a theme or topic. There was a visual art specialist and a theatre specialist at her school. She has attended professional development programs in various countries such as New Zealand. While Eloise has participated in numerous professional development programs, she selected this program because it had enough hours to satisfy the requirements of her teaching licence from Minnesota.

Hudson was a visual arts specialist teaching in Arkansas. She was in her fourteenth year of teaching and has taught kindergarten through grade 12. Hudson claimed that she fell into teaching after moving from California and pursuing a non-traditional teaching degree due to a shortage of teachers in Arkansas. At the time of the study, she was teaching kindergarten through grade 4 at a public elementary school for forty minutes each week through the entire year. Hudson travels to a middle school to teach grades 5 and 6, where

she teaches a new group of students every nine weeks. Hudson enjoys teaching drawing. In the schools that she teaches at, there are no other art specialists. She is required by her school to attend sixty hours of professional development a year, while the state only requires thirty hours. For several years, Hudson has attended the monthly Saturday morning teacher workshops at Crystal Bridges, and she participated in a summer institute designed by Crystal Bridges the previous year.

Scarlet has taught for twenty-two years with the majority of those years at the middle school level. She worked as a visual arts specialist teaching grades 6, 7, and 8 at a public school in Idaho at the time of study. Scarlet exposed her students to an assortment of mediums through studio projects and used technology such as iPads whenever possible. Scarlet has frequently attended art education conferences, such as the National Art Education Association Conference, throughout the school year, and she attends professional development opportunities during the summer months. She has attended several programs that were sponsored by the National Art Education Association.

Participant	Years Teaching	Location	Generalist	Art Specialist	Current School: Public	Current school: Private	Grade level for 2018-2019 academic year
Julie	18	Montreal, CAN	Yes		Yes		6
Colleen	12	Pennsylvania	Yes			Yes	2
Mariah	35	Pennsylvania	Yes			Yes	6
Taylor	18	Pennsylvania		Yes		Yes	k-8
Chloe	12	Missouri	Yes		Yes		4
Lily	23	Arkansas	Yes		Yes		2
Eloise	Unknown	Arkansas	Yes			Yes	8, 9, 10
Hudson	22	Arkansas		Yes	Yes		k-12
Scarlet	22	Idaho		Yes	Yes		6-7-8

**Table 1 Summary of Participants**



This section centred on describing the recruitment process that I employed at the two art museum summer institutes. I provided a description of each of the nine participants, including myself. These descriptions included years teaching, subjects taught, current teaching placements, and information regarding their participation in professional development programs.

In the next section, I present the research design and data collection that I employed in this study. I outline the content for each of the three semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the participants. I also discuss certain unforeseen challenges I experienced while conducting the interviews and review the benefits of my role as a participant-observer.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design and Data Collection**

As previously stated, I used a comparative case study method. Each participant formed a case, and in each case, I examined their classroom practices over the course of the 2018–2019 academic year. Afterwards, I examined how teachers incorporated the art museum summer institute professional development learning into their classroom practices. The purpose of studying several cases in an array of settings was to offer a greater breadth of data (Bishop, 2012). The goal of data collection was to 1) capture the qualities of the summer institute program that supported the participants' personal and professional development and how it is reflected their classroom practices; 2) note any themes, patterns, or categories in how the art museum curriculum appeared in the participants' classroom practices; 3) collect data on the types of curricular materials that are incorporated, modified, or omitted from uptake in the participants' classrooms; and 4) uncover how and if the conversation that occurred in the art museum space was carried out into the classroom by examining the cases through the lens of Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language — Ready-to-Hand, Happening of Truth, and Thought of Thinkers — along with his Five Values for assessing curricula.

## Data Collection: Interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants three times throughout the academic year following their participation in the summer institutes — in September, December, and April (2018–19). All of the participants were aware of the procedures. The participants were aware that their identities would remain confidential, and all participants selected a pseudonym. All interviews used an open-ended conversational form with a set of specific questions addressing the central research questions on professional development, program design, and Curriculum Theory. While Hancock (2017) stated that the weakness of using specific open-ended questions versus close-ended questions is that it limits the types of responses, the goal of the interview questions was to facilitate analysis and comparison (Yin, 2014). Prior to each interview, each participant was emailed the “Question Guide for the Teacher Interviews” (see Appendix I). The three “Question Guides for the Teacher Interviews” consisted of open-ended questions relating to the overarching theme of each interview. During the interviews, I used, as described by Yin (2014), Level 1 and Level 2 questions. Level 1 questions were open-ended questions while Level 2 focused on generating responses from a bank of protocol questions.

I emailed the participants the “Question Guides for the Teacher Interviews” a week in advance of each interview. This allowed the participants to reflect upon the questions prior to the interview. Several participants described reviewing the questions and were puzzled by certain terms, such as Art Appreciation, as they were not used in their state standards. Because they knew the questions in advance, Eloise was able to present examples of books that she draws from for her world history curriculum for the September Skype interview, and Taylor arranged to have examples on hand of the mandala prototypes that were used for a studio project during our March Skype Interview. As stated by researcher Bill Gillham (2000), providing questions in advance of an interview demonstrates the researcher’s genuine respect for the participants, which transfers into trust.

### *Different Aims for Each Interview*

Preceding each interview, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Art Education at Concordia University would interview me via Skype using the “Question Guide for the Teacher Interviews.” As suggested by Gillham (2000), conducting a practice interview allows the researcher to fine-tune the questions and develop insight into non-verbal cues and gestures of the participant. The objective of participating in the interview process was to reflect on the function of each of the questions, experience the interview process, reflect upon my own teaching practice, and to collect data on how I utilized the curriculum from the summer institutes. Because I recorded my interviews with the doctoral candidate, I was able to review video footage and gain insight into how I talk and my facial reactions. I noticed that I spoke too quickly and rarely ended sentences confidently.

The September interview focused on obtaining data concerning a few key things: 1) the participants’ teaching and professional development experiences; 2) their classroom curriculum and the resources that they used to develop their lessons; 3) the qualities of the summer institutes that they enjoyed; and 4) the characteristics of the summer institutes’ curriculum that they intended to incorporate into their pedagogy.

The December interview centred on gathering data on: 1) how the participants implemented the summer institutes’ curriculum; 2) the participants’ rationale for omitting features from the curriculum; and 3) the participants’ reflections upon changes (or lack of change) in their teaching practices.

The final interview in March concentrated on collecting data on: 1) how participants utilized works of art in their lessons; 2) the participants’ role in classroom discussions and their questioning techniques with regards to works of art; and 3) how and if the conversations that occurred in the art museum spaces entered into the participants’ classrooms<sup>47</sup>.

### *The Interview Process*

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<sup>47</sup> I had initially intended to conduct four interviews; however, I felt exhaustion from the participants. Instead I compiled a list of questions for a final third interview.

Initially, as I was unable to conduct face-to-face interviews, all interviews were to be conducted via Skype and were to be recorded. I believed that video conferencing would provide a similar richness to in-person interviews, as described by Gillham (2000).<sup>48</sup> Employing Skype became problematic, however, as several participants were unfamiliar with Skype and suggested video conferencing using other applications such as Facetime or Google Hangouts. Both Taylor and Scarlet suggested using Google Hangouts, however, I was uncomfortable with Google's and Facebook's user policies because our conversations would be recorded for their own data collection.<sup>49</sup> Other participants such as Chloe and Mariah preferred phone interviews. These interviews were more challenging as there were no visual cues to assist in the discussion. These phone interviews were conducted in my home. Several of the Skype interviews took place in my classroom or at Concordia University's library, however, at both locations, the internet connection would frequently drop the Skype connection. At times if a participant was unable to connect with Skype, which required both of us to improvise with a phone interview. I exchanged emails with the participants in order to organize a day and time for the interview.<sup>50</sup> Participants had the choice to schedule interviews after school hours or on weekends. By providing this flexibility, some participants invited me into their classrooms, thus I shared experiences with Colleen, Hudson, and Eloise when we compared our classroom spaces. Participants conducting their Skype interviews in their homes provided other openings, for example, Taylor showed me her sculptural pieces.<sup>51</sup>

During interviews, I noticed that I was reluctant to push participants to respond to questions when their answers were brief, as I knew that I risked alienating them. There also were several challenges that I experienced while conducting interviews in my classroom space. For example, occasionally colleagues would enter my classroom unannounced or my energy levels were low during interviews due to me teaching

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<sup>48</sup> Gillham (2000) claimed that face-to-face interviews provide more information due to visual cues and reactions between the participant and the researcher.

<sup>49</sup>To facilitate the challenges with technology and to aid my study, Taylor had a family member install Skype on her computer. Throughout the study, all of the participants would do similar acts to assist and support me.

<sup>50</sup> Some participants replied quickly to organize the interview while others only replied after a few weeks.

<sup>51</sup> Regarding Chloe's first phone interview, she had a colleague listen in on the conversation while sitting in her classroom. The next two phone interviews took place in her home.

all day. Conducting phone interviews in my own home was also sometimes problematic due to other unforeseen interruptions.

Immense flexibility was required between me and the participants to conduct the interviews as we were all in-service teachers. Interviews were sometimes cancelled last minute due to staff meetings and an overwhelming amount of work. In all instances, the participants and I uttered words of understanding and appreciation due to a shared understanding of the realities of teaching. For example, we had to postpone Mariah's March interview by an hour due to a staff meeting announced suddenly by her principal. Only at the end of the telephone interview did she reveal that she was using her cellphone while sitting in her car in the school's parking lot.

#### Data Collection: Visual Works

As suggested by Yin (2014), data should come from various sources, and Gillham (2000) claimed that physical artifacts can provide a rich insight into phenomena under study. Originally, I intended to include my field notes from the summer institutes and my reflections after each of the interviews in the data so I could assess if personal reactions or feelings could reveal additional insights or biases, as noted by Gillham (2000) and Yin (2016). I also sought to include the participants' notes or visual works from the institutes, the curricular materials from the summer institutes, transcripts from the interviews, and the participant lesson plans. In the end, the interview transcripts, my field notes and reflections, and the curricular materials from the summer institutes made up the majority of the data.

I invited participants to share lesson plans or provide visuals. Only Colleen and Taylor provided lesson plans. Eloise photographed her classroom, and Chloe provided photographs of the finished student works from her partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Taylor provided examples of student work from her Healing Box project and described visual journals that the students created inspired by the paper-making workshop. While the visual works provided to me were minimal, the transcripts

revealed the breadth of works of art from the art museum collections and online that participants used in their classrooms.

### Participant-Observer

Gillham (2000) noted that a participant-observer can lead to a better understanding of the people and the environment under observation. Participant-observation is a primarily interpretative descriptive informal analysis. To develop a trustworthy relationship with other participants, the researcher should identify that they are a researcher and explain the goal of the research. A challenge of participant-observer is the effect that the researcher's presence may have on the environment under study, thus the researcher should continuously critique their own position in the environment. I was self-conscious of my role as both a researcher and as a classroom teacher at the two summer institutes due to being a participant-observer in my own study. I felt that my role as a researcher created a barrier between the educators and myself. This barrier only dissipated when I began recounting my own classroom experiences. I began to create genuine connections with the educators that I spoke with.

In this section, I described how I collected data from both interviews with the participants and other data, for example, lesson plans and student work. I noted that each of the three semi-structured interviews provided insight into the participants' perceptions of their experiences at the summer institutes and the learning that was carried out into their classrooms. It was necessary to be adaptable when conducting interviews due to issues with Skype and poor internet connection. I also discussed me actively participating in the summer institutes as a participant-observer and how this generated genuine connections with the participants in this study.

In the next section, I will discuss the steps I took to analyze the data, including methods for coding the data. The credibility of the data will be reviewed alongside the use of an intercoder test. Furthermore, it will address the researcher's positionality and the ethics of conducting a qualitative research study.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

As noted by Bishop (2012), analyzing data from a comparative case study can be challenging due to the amount of data collected. To assist with coding the data, I selected to use the computer qualitative analysis software NVivo. What follows in this section is an outline of the steps taken to code the sets of interviews and the processes I undertook to ensure the credibility of the data.

### **Coding**

The coding process “refers to the steps the research takes to identify, arrange, and systemize the ideas, concepts, and categories uncovered in the data” (Benaquisto, 2012, p. 87). The first step to my data analysis was transcribing each set of interviews. After transcribing the interviews, participants were invited to verify the validity of the transcripts from their three interviews. Educational researchers Dawson Hancock and Bob Algozzine (2017) asserted that the data is strengthened by the validation of the participants. All of the participants agreed with the content of the transcripts, and I was then able to proceed with coding the data.

As suggested by researcher Lucia Benaquisto (2012), qualitative analysis software allows for the researcher to manage data sets, facilitates locating codes assigned in the data, and allows the researcher to centralize notes and comments. To assist with coding the data, I employed the computer qualitative analysis software NVivo. Prior to this study, my familiarity with qualitative software was minimal, and I relied upon YouTube videos to navigate the various features of NVivo. The software enabled me to review and compare the principal source of data, the transcripts, for salient themes in reference to the central research questions: 1) How did the pedagogical and curricular qualities of the summer institute that support the participants personally and professionally? 2) How did the participants incorporate, modify, and/or omit the art museum curricula into their practices; and 3) Were the conversations at the art museums were carried out within the classroom space, and if so, how?

While I had developed codes that identified the concepts from the central research questions such as Conversations in the Classroom, other codes emerged from the data (Benaquisto, 2012) such as the mention of field trips. With NVivo, I conducted various iterations of reviewing the transcripts with the twenty-seven

different codes that then produced the development of new questions, such as why participants had profound aesthetic experiences in the art museums with works of art and not within their classrooms.

I followed Yin's (2016) Five Phases of Analysis. In Phase 1, I looked at emerging themes and distinctive features. In Phase 2, data was coded using Level 1 open codes for concrete concepts such as program design and art in the classroom and then proceeded to use Level 2 codes, which focus on more abstract concepts such as control and time. During Phase 3, a repetitive analysis of each case was employed to compare cases and look for emergent themes and patterns (Bishop, 2012; Yin, 2016). Phase 4 focused on interpreting the data with the use of triangulation to address issues of credibility. During this phase, I also considered rival explanations while considering questions. For example, I questioned why the generalist teachers did not incorporate the studio activities from VAST; one explanation could be they lacked experience in making art, another was that it would be redundant for them to include a studio activity in their classroom practice due to already having a dedicated art teacher on staff. Phase 5 focused on generating conclusions with regards to the theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, each theme was connected with the objective of the research and the research questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017).

During all Phases, Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language — Ready-to-Hand, Happening of Truth, and Thought of Thinkers — guided the data analysis, along with Huebner's (1966/2008) Five Values system that focuses on looking at curriculum through various lenses. Using Huebner's use of language and his values system provided additional insight into the participants' use of the curriculum and supported the findings derived from the coding.

## **Credibility**

Qualitative researcher Andreas Riege (2003) stated that proving the validity — whether the data collected answer the research questions — and reliability — whether a study can be replicated and produce the same results — of a case study remains challenging due to the absence of a specific test that could be applied to the data. Similar to Yin (2014), the criteria provided by Riege (2003) for testing validity centres on the following: 1) credibility with the use of questions such as “how rich and meaningful or ‘thick’



are the descriptions?” (p. 7); 2) transferability such as the ability to link the findings to a prior theory; 3) dependability, which points to the design of the study and its connection to the research questions; and 4) confirmability, which refers to clarity of the procedures and methods of the study. To assure reliability, Riege (2003) suggested the following steps: 1) providing a full account of each of the phases of the study; 2) assuring “congruence between the research issues and features of the study design” (p. 82) while designing the research; 3) recording observations in detail; and 4) inviting others to review the research. All of these methods were applied throughout this study.

### Researcher Positionality

My role as a researcher was to better understand the summer museum institute model and how teachers draw upon the learning and integrate it into their classroom practise. Adrijana Biba Starman (2008) emphasized that selecting a particular case study rooted in the researcher’s experience and knowledge leads to a better research plan. I continually reflected upon my own position concerning professional development either through my field notes or through personal reflections after the participants’ interviews (Gillham, 2000). Researcher Stefanos Mantzoukas (2005) suggested practising reflexivity allows the researcher to continuously reflect upon and verify his or her beliefs and values during data collection and analysis. Therefore, throughout the study I kept a reflective journal documenting my experiences after each of the interviews. Acknowledging my own positionality as the researcher helped to ensure validity and objectivity while examining the data.

### Process of Triangulation

Triangulation enhances the credibility of a case study by utilizing data from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Riege, 2003; Yin, 2014). Tight (2017) maintained that in triangulation “a chain of evidence is designed with traceable reasons and arguments” (p. 55). In the process of triangulation, I first compared notes I had taken at the summer institutes, which included observation and personal reflections, with statements made by the participants in

order to verify our experiences. Secondly, I compared the transcripts of individual participants between the three interviews to verify if they repeated similar statements concerning their practice and their reflections on the summer institutes. Thirdly, I investigated whether visual data supplied by some participants, such as student artwork, supported their statements in the interviews. As a final verification, as suggested by Given (2008) and Yin (2014), I had each of the participants read their transcripts and verify their validity to ensure that what was written in the transcripts was the truth as they saw it.

### Intercoder Agreement

Conducting an intercoder agreement provides additional credibility to a qualitative research study when open-ended questions have been employed in an interview (Craig, 1981). An intercoder agreement test requires two different raters to analyze the data with the researcher's codes. Using an intercoder agreement test can present a level of agreement that adds validity to the researcher's interpretation of the data. The most frequently used score to measure an intercoder agreement is a generated kappa statistic. The kappa score can range from -1 to +1 and can be interpreted as follows: values of less than 0 indicate no agreement, values from 0.01 to 0.20 indicate no to slight agreement, 0.21–0.40 indicate fair agreement, 0.41–0.60 indicate moderate agreement, 0.61–0.80 indicate substantial agreement, and 0.81–1.00 indicate almost perfect agreement (McHugh, 2012).

As the majority of my data was drawn from open-ended questions, it was important to employ an intercoder agreement. I invited two doctoral candidates from the Department of Art Education at Concordia University to conduct the intercoder agreement. One coder had an extensive background as a visual arts teacher and was familiar with my study due to conducting the Skype interviews with me. The second coder had no background experience in classroom teaching at the elementary or high school levels and was slightly familiar with my study. Prior to the meeting, I emailed each of the coders a copy of my code book so they could familiarize themselves with the codes.

I experienced several challenges conducting the intercoder agreements. Both coders had no experience using qualitative analysis software. Therefore, I spent time training the coders on how to use the

software and discussing my research study, including explaining the research questions and describing each of the codes and how they were to be applied, work that took about four hours. Each coder worked independently. The coder with no elementary or high school classroom teaching background was unfamiliar with terms used by the participant in the interview, which was Chloe’s transcript from her December interview as it provided rich information and details with regards to the summer institute and her current practice.

NVivo’s coding comparison query was applied to check the level of agreement between the coders and myself. The results are displayed in the following two tables.

	Code	File	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	
1	Code	File	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing	Practicing

Table 2 Results from Inter-coder Agreement, Researcher A

**Table 3 Results from Intercoder Agreement, Researcher B**

The resulting kappa agreement was 0.63 suggesting a substantial agreement, thus demonstrating credibility in the coding structure.

## Ethical Considerations

Conducting this study required me to take seriously a number of ethical considerations and to ensure I had the appropriate permissions to conduct my research throughout the process. Firstly, I gained permission from the education program directors at both the PMA and at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art to be a participant-observer at both sites. As stated earlier in the chapter, I had emailed each of the education program directors a copy of the “Certification of Ethical Acceptability” from Concordia University (Appendix I). Furthermore, to demonstrate gratitude for access, I will provide each of the directors with an executive summary of the findings of this study along with a copy of the dissertation.

Secondly, the museum educators and educators participating at both summer institutes were informed of the purpose, nature, and importance of my research study at the start of the summer institutes.

Participants in this study were not coerced into participating in a study nor were they subjected to any type of psychological or physical harm. All of the participants were debriefed prior to the study and were provided with the “Information and Consent Form prior” (Appendix I) at the start of the study. All of the participants were provided with a pseudonym to protect their identities so that the information collected and reported would not present any harm or other negative consequences to them or their reputations. Furthermore, participants were provided with the knowledge that they could end the research project at any time, as suggested by Hancock and Algozzine (2017). In addition, all of the participants and the museum educators were treated with respect and integrity during all forms of communication throughout the study.

Finally, I took ethical considerations while reporting and disseminating the data. In writing my accounts and findings, I aimed to represent the art museums, the museum educators, and the participants in a professional and respectful manner. This is highly important as the data dissemination will occur in the publication of results through journal articles, conferences, and electronic mediums.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

At the start of this chapter, I discussed the qualitative comparative case study as the research method used to collect the data for this research study. I deliberated upon the qualities and limitations of the comparative case study as used in this research. I took care to note that the intention of this study was not to compare and analyze the professional development programs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; instead, the objective was to better understand how the various participants, whom each formed a case, utilized their learning in their classroom practices. The comparative case study enabled me to explore the phenomena in multiple settings as the participants lived in various states in the United States of America and taught in various kinds of educational institutions. In addition, due to employing interviews as the main method of data collection, I was able to collect thick descriptions of the participants’ experiences, which provided a rich account of the similarities and differences in their experiences. To complement the research, I acted as a participant-observer at each of the summer institutes.

By participating in the summer institutes, I was able to incorporate an autoethnographic component that enriched the research study.

Further in the chapter, I presented background information pertaining to the two art museum summer institutes. The summary of the week-long daily activities at VAST (Philadelphia Museum of Art) and at Teaching from Works of Art (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art) provided insight into the two different curricula. While VAST focused on a mixture of lectures, active participation, excursions, and studio activities. Teaching from Works of Art centred on instruction, theatre activities, and modelling Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) in the galleries. And both programs applied dialogical teaching. I also described the methods I used to recruit participants along with my specific criteria as well as pertinent background information concerning the participants in this study (see Table 1).

Lastly, I discussed the research design of this comparative case study. To collect the data, I interviewed each of the participants using either Skype or telephone three times over the course of the 2018–2019 academic year, asking a series of questions designed to reveal how they applied their learning from the summer institutes to their classroom practices. Each of the interviews followed a specific Question Guide consisting of open-ended questions. In my analysis, I followed Yin's (2016) Five Phases of Analysis to code the data and employed NVivo, a qualitative analysis software, to compile it. In addition, I reviewed the methods taken to ensure the credibility of my data, including investigating researcher positionality and by employing the process of triangulation and presented findings from an intercoder verification step I conducted with other researchers. I end the chapter with a brief discussion of the ethical considerations for this particular study.

In the next chapter, I present the findings of the various themes that emerged from the data. While the focus of the research was exploring how the participants enacted the art summer institutes curricula in their classrooms, other themes emerged, such constraints experienced due to teaching environments. In addition, I discuss the key findings in relation to Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language, that is Language as Ready-to-Hand, Language as Happening of Truth, and Language as Thought of Thinkers, and Huebner's

(1966/2008) Five Values system of evaluating curricula, including the technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical.

# FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 discussed the comparative case study as the methodological choice to investigate how teachers used their learning from a professional development summer institute designed by an art museum (Tight, 2017; Yin, 2014). In that chapter, I presented my role as a participant-observer at the summer institutes, incorporating my own classroom practice as a self-study using autoethnography (see Granger, 2011) and recounting the daily activities from both summer institutes along with the curricular materials and descriptions of each of the participants who formed the individual cases. Further in the chapter, I outlined the methods I used to collect the data, described the coding and analysis processes (Yin, 2016), and discussed applying Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language and his Five Values system (1966/2008).

This chapter is an in-depth description of the various themes that emerged from the data during the coding phases. The reader will learn how the participants incorporated the act of looking at works of art into their curriculum and how time available influenced this act of incorporation; however, many of the generalist teacher participants avoided discussing the aesthetic qualities of these works (Duncum, 2007; Eisner, 1985/2005; Huebner, 2008; Tavin, 2007). The data revealed that the main goal of discussing a work of art was to link it with a studio art project or to use the conversation as a springboard to another subject (Eisner, 2001). Institute participants described the preferred qualities of works of art for a dialogical discussion and provided resources to find the images. I observed that the participants found it challenging to incorporate works of art into their lessons.

This research is framed within Curriculum Theory in order to better understand how the participants applied the curriculum from the museums in their own pedagogies. As asserted by several scholars, there has been a renewal of the rationalistic Tyler Model of curriculum in the United States education system with the introduction of NCLB and RTTT (Allen, 2010; Franco, 2010; Hourigan 2011). In this study the



data revealed how these policies have caused the participants to view curriculum as something imposed upon them — contrasting with the summer institutes' view that it is something to engage with (Pinar, 2010). NCLB and RTTT have impacted the form and quality of the professional development that participants received at both the school and district level; for example, participants were forced to attend literacy workshops (Allison, 2013; Hourigan, 2011). The participants describe how these policies have directly affected their teaching and their abilities to participate in quality professional development (Guskey, 2002).

To analyze the data, I applied Huebner's (1966/2008) Five Values system, which includes: technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical values. Through these five lenses, I was able to gain greater insights into the curricular choices and daily experiences of the participants in this study. Research on dialogic teaching has been shown to be important to learning (Lyle, 2008). Furthermore, a dialogical discussion can generate meaningful experiences for both students and teachers with regards to works of art (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2005; MacKay & Monteverde, 2003; Yenawine, 2014). Art museum educators have modelled dialogical methods for exploring works of art with the use of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Yenawine, 2014) and the Artful Thinking Palette (Barahal, 2008), and the participants in this study applied these methods in their classrooms. Huebner was attentive to the use of language as, for him, if studied, language use could reveal subtle power dynamics and tensions found in school environments. With this in mind, I purposefully examined the data through Huebner's (1968/2008) three uses of language — Ready-to-Hand, Happening of Truth, and Thought of Thinkers — to explore the subtleties of the participants enacting, omitting, or modifying the dialogical methods for discussing works of art used by the museum educators.

#### Overview:

- Analysis of the various themes
- Discuss key findings with regards to Huebner's rationales and language
- Summary

# ART IN THE CLASSROOM

## Art Appreciation and Aesthetics

Standards are the specific criteria as outlined in the planned curriculum for all subjects (Murphy & Pushor, 2010). Vallance (2010) asserted “clear standards in art education are critical both for ensuring the quality of teaching and for maintaining art’s standing among the other disciplines” (p. 46). The National Arts Standards for the Visual Arts include four pillars: Creating, Producing, Responding, and Connecting (National Arts Standards, n.d.).<sup>52</sup> The Responding Standard emphasizes analyzing, interpreting the meaning, and applying criteria to evaluate the work of art. To meet the criteria outlined in the Responding Standard, all of the art specialists focused on the students acquiring information about art periods and biographical information pertaining to the artist to interpret the meaning of the works of art. With regards to analyzing the work, Hudson focused on the formal aesthetic qualities of drawings to discuss techniques, and Taylor drew upon social and political tensions. Scarlet intentionally made efforts to use works of art as an embodied or sensory experience. According to her, “the aesthetics of a piece are what drives the conversations” in her art classes; she hopes the experience will inspire empathy in her students. For example, Scarlet would ask students to imagine themselves within a painting to generate a sensory experience. All of the art specialists drew upon the aesthetics in discussions as described by Eisner (1985/2005) and Tavin (2007), knowing how important it is to understand how the aesthetic qualities contribute to the experience of the work of art.

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<sup>52</sup> As part of the Quebec Art Education program regarding the visual arts, three competencies are expected to be taught and evaluated at both the elementary and high school levels: to produce individual works in the visual arts, to produce media works in the visual arts, and to appreciate works of art, traditional, artistic objects, media images, personal productions, and those of classmates. Specific criteria for Art Appreciation includes: examining the content of a work of art, exploring sociocultural references, using subject specific language, and providing supporting evidence. In this context, the goal is for the students to be able to generate connections, make critical and aesthetic judgments, and share their viewpoints and experiences (Quebec Education Plan, n.d.). Within the Art Appreciation competency, teachers are expected to discuss with their students the aesthetic qualities from either a formal perspective (Eisner, 1985/2005), as an embodied experience (Huebner, 2008), a sensory experience (Duncum, 2007), or as laden with social and political tensions (Tavin, 2007).

In contrast, although all of the generalist participants<sup>53</sup> described using works of art in their classrooms, their lessons did not meet the criteria outlined in the Responding Standards for Visual Arts or touch upon the aesthetic qualities of the work of art<sup>54</sup>. Instead of analyzing, interpreting the meaning, and applying criteria to evaluate the works of art, the generalist participants focused on discussing only the subject and/or the content of the work of art. For instance, Colleen, Eloise, and Lily described interpreting the meaning of the work with their students with observations and the use of VTS. Only Mariah specifically stated that she encouraged her grade 6 students to have aesthetic experiences, predominately sensory ones, with her class. It was not discussed in the interviews if the generalist participants had reviewed the National Arts Standards or if they were aware of the specific criteria outlined in the Responding Standard, but it is important to note though that the generalist participants were not required to teach art as there was an art specialist employed at each of their schools.

The data revealed that discussing the aesthetic qualities of a work of art was not a concept that was familiar to most of the generalist participants. These educators mostly focused on the subject matter instead of exploring the aesthetic qualities because they were either uncomfortable discussing aesthetics as mentioned by Lily or believed that it was not necessary as stated by Eloise. Of the five generalists, only Mariah reported using the aesthetic qualities of a piece as an entry point to discuss works of art in her grade 6 class. Another generalist, Lily, claimed that discussing formal aesthetic qualities such as the “Elements of Art” would only confuse her grade 2 students as the goal was to discuss a specific topic. Though Lily admitted that due to a limited background in the visual arts, she was uncomfortable discussing formal aesthetic qualities. Eloise also stated that she had a limited background discussing aesthetics. When Eloise’s students referenced the aesthetics of an artifact or art object in her world history class, it was rarely

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<sup>53</sup> I have used the words *generalist* to reference a specific cluster of participants: Colleen, who taught grade 2; Mariah, who taught grade 6; Chloe, who taught grade 4; Lily, who taught grade 2; and Eloise, who taught world history and social studies at the high school level.

<sup>54</sup> One of the challenges with analyzing the participants’ use and discussions surrounding a work of art was that the analysis here was entirely based upon the descriptions uttered by the participants. I did not witness the discussions or view a recorded video; my analysis is based solely upon the information obtained from the transcripts from the participants’ interviews.

developed or elaborated on. Eloise said that in her class “it’s more about what’s really happening in the image or the history.” Thus, for her and most generalist teachers, discussing the content was the main reason for focusing on a work of art. This finding supports Walsh-Moorman (2018) who stated that teachers avoid discussing aesthetics due to a limited knowledge of art. This limited knowledge of aesthetics resulted in the generalist participants perceiving the aesthetic qualities as an insignificant component, relatively unimportant to discussing a work of art.

## Selecting Artworks

The generalist teachers incorporated art into their lessons as a springboard for the content of a social studies or language arts lesson. The generalist participants who taught at the elementary level in this study were not required to teach art. And, while art was taught by an art specialist employed at their schools, they all believed that it was important to use works of art in their classrooms. Eisner (2001) had suggested caution while incorporating art into other subjects as it diluted the potential of art education. For instance, Eloise incorporated *The American Flag of Faces*<sup>55</sup> into her world history course, Colleen showed paintings of Alaskan landscapes for a social studies unit, and Lily selected works of art based upon the ability “to get a really good conversation going on with the students.” In all instances, the works of art were used as a support to the content of the other subject and the artistic qualities of the paintings were overlooked. The art specialists, by contrast, used works of art to show techniques or for inspiration for a studio project. For example, Scarlet centred her studio projects around a featured artist, and Taylor and Hudson frequently used drawings or paintings to demonstrate techniques.

In discussions of how the participants developed their lessons, they described the resources they used to find the specific works of art. A surprising number of the participants, in particular the art specialists, used books from their own personal libraries. Furthermore, books were frequently cited as the foremost

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<sup>55</sup> *The American Flag of Faces* is an interactive digital exhibition in which the public can submit photographs to be included in the exhibition (Statue of Liberty Ellis Island Foundation, n.d.).

approach to looking at art with students, used more frequently than projecting the visual on a Smart Board or an Apple Television.

The second most used resources were online sources. Jones and Cuthrell (2011) stressed the importance of teachers selecting quality websites for classroom resources. While none of the participants discussed the trustworthiness of the websites, they mainly visited art museum websites such as the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA), the National Gallery, and used resources like Museum-Ed or ARTSEDGE. However, if their more trusted websites did not contain the visual that they were looking for, the next most frequent method to search for a work of art was through a random Google search. Another online resource that participants used were social media websites. Colleen used Pinterest for ideas, Hudson and Scarlet used YouTube to show techniques artist process, and Scarlet followed certain art teachers on Instagram. While Chapman et al. (2018) expressed the importance of teachers reflecting upon how the information gleaned from web sources impacts their teaching, none of the participants questioned their use because time constraints meant they had little choice but to use online sources.

### Types of Art Works

The works of art participants describe using in their classrooms were either realistic or semi-abstract, mostly paintings or photographs, and the subject matter focused on landscapes, portraits, and cityscapes. Colleen preferred discussing semi-abstract paintings with her grade 2 class as the students “could generate their own interpretations” while Hudson selected realist drawings to illustrate specific drawing techniques. The use of abstract works of art was briefly mentioned by only Scarlet to illustrate how she incorporated contemporary art into her studio classes. The participants often explained that works of art based were chosen based upon whether it “caught their eye” and had the ability to pique the interest of their students. In these discussions, the participants never spoke of the importance of selecting an image based upon the artists’ intent or the visual elements.

Certain artists were more frequently shown to students by the participants. Examples are Claude Monet and other Impressionist artists. Hudson had a “standard list” that she used yearly that included Frida

Kahlo, Claude Monet, and Georgia O’Keeffe. Scarlet intentionally kept away from certain artists, such as Diego Rivera, due to how they portrayed women. Certain participants purposely selected the work of artists from diverse backgrounds stating that these artists are underrepresented in education. This intentionality could be considered part what Boostrom (2010) defined as the hidden curriculum. The participants were consciously looking at works of art to teach students about dominant discourses in education. For example, Mariah purposefully showed the work of, in her own words, “Native Americans, as they are underrepresented in society” and Taylor stated that she focused on African American artists to empower her students as she taught at an African-centred school.<sup>56</sup>

## **The Curriculum**

### **Formal and Planned Curriculum**

While the formal curriculum “outlines the broad goals and strategies to reach them” (Penner-Williams, 2010, p. 376), the planned curriculum is “the documents that shape the content to be covered when teaching” (Murphy & Pushor, 2010, p. 657), also called the teacher-proof curriculum (Eryaman & Riedler, 2010). These two types of curriculum defined how much the participants allocated to incorporating works of art into their classrooms. As McNeil (2009) observed, the autonomy of the teacher to develop authentic learning is reduced when districts impose curricula. This was observed: Lily described her limitations with incorporating the museum curricular materials. She was required to follow the district’s curriculum map, which provided teachers with resources and other curricular materials based upon the Arkansas State Standards.<sup>57</sup> Despite being able to write her own lessons, Lily was constrained by her district’s desire to impose teacher-proof curriculum.

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<sup>56</sup> A few of the goals of an African-centred model of schooling outlined by Madhubuti and Madhubuti (1994) include: legitimizing African stories of knowledge, reinforcing positive relationships between students and their families and community, and promote self-worth.

<sup>57</sup> Lily mentioned that she was allowed to design her own lessons which provided some elements of autonomy.

Hudson and Scarlet also followed planned curricula, using their specific State Art Standards and the National Arts Standards in their art classes (National Arts Standards, n.d.). Scarlet expressed that she was “blessed” to be able to fashion her own program, saying that not all art teachers have the freedom to design their own art programs. When asked if she devoted an entire art period to the National State Standard of Responding, Scarlet said, “I didn’t feel like I could sacrifice my standards, my curriculum, for that.” Similar to Milbrandt et al.’s (2015) findings, focusing on responding to works of art is not as important as creating.

With regards to the formal curriculum, developing literacy skills is key to the Common Core State Standards (Wexler, 2014). These skills are evaluated with the use of standardized testing (Hourigan, 2011). Franco (2010) asserted that standardized testing would ultimately affect the art teachers’ ability to teach their own curricula. As an illustration, Hudson was expected to teach a literacy lesson once a month with her elementary students in her art class. For the lesson, she would read a book, typically the biography of an artist. Interestingly, it was the only time that Hudson devoted an entire lesson to looking at works of art. Consequently, standardized tests usually disrupted Hudson’s teaching as her art class time was used to moderate the tests. As a result, it affected her ability to complete her art program and added unwanted stress.

### Pressures of the Planned Curriculum

The pressures of the planned curriculum affected how much participants were able to incorporate their learning from the summer institutes into their curricula. This was highly noticeable for participants who had to learn a new curriculum for a grade level. For instance, Chloe had intended to incorporate more of the curricula from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute into her social studies lessons, however, she forfeited her plans due to the new Missouri math curricula and preparations for standardized testing in language arts and in math. Chloe felt that she would be “shortchanging her students” if she focused on art. On the other hand, Lily readily applied VTS modelled by the museum educators at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art because it “fell into place perfectly with the Five E Model that we use at our school” along with other activities that developed classroom routines. However, due the

demands of her district's curricula map, Lily was unable to devote time to conduct the in-depth research regarding the paintings that she used in discussions as suggested by the museum educators. Thus, as found by Guskey (2002), teachers readily incorporate material, but only if it can easily be adapted into their existing pedagogy.

Participants who taught in private or independent schools had more freedom with their curricula, affecting how much of the curricular materials from the summer institutes they were able to incorporate into their classrooms. This observation again gives credibility to Guskey's (2002) remark that with time and support, teachers will adopt new teaching practices. For example, while there was a yearly global school theme at Taylor's school, she was supported and encouraged to devise her own art curricula. With independence from a planned curriculum, Taylor remodelled a portion of her art curricula over the summer based on the VAST program, focusing on the idea of healing through art. The units she taught included: creating healing boxes and journals and creating mandalas. Also, due to this autonomy, Taylor viewed herself as an artist working within a school and not as a technician.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Mariah, who worked in a private school, had no planned curriculum that she needed to follow. She was encouraged to take risks in her teaching practice, enabling her to experiment with strategies from the Artful Thinking Palette modelled by museum educators at the VAST program in her grade 6 museum studies course and other subjects.

### The Hidden Curriculum

Several of the participants were conscious of incorporating learning that was outside of the planned curriculum, a type of hidden curriculum, that was believed to support the students' personal growth (Boostrom, 2010). Certain participants believed that the process of looking at and discussing a work of art would encourage students to learn about themselves and others. One theme that emerged was using works of art to develop empathy. For instance, Scarlet would invite her art students to imagine themselves within a painting with the goal that they better understand the place or people represented. Likewise, Colleen asked

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<sup>58</sup> Kelly (2004) had implied that due to standardization and testing, teachers were continuously being reduced to the role of a technician in that they are simply to repeat the planned curriculum without reflection.



her grade 2 students to reflect upon why an artist would paint a scene of Alaskan women cleaning fish; her goal was to generate an understanding of the work that people do. Mariah mentioned that viewing paintings allowed her students to learn about themselves and delve into “uncomfortable conversations.” Hence, looking and discussing works of art would create a positive personal change in the students.

Other ways that discussing works of art were used to support the students’ personal growth and the process was viewed as an opportunity to teach students various social skills. One skill that all the participants felt was honed through these lessons was, as stated by Lily, the ability to be polite and respectful when having a discussion. For Chloe, discussions helped her students to learn their “best manners.” The participants made it clear that during a discussion about a work of art, everyone in the class was entitled to their own opinion. As Mariah suggested, a discussion about a work of art encouraged a respectful and safe environment. This suggests that one of the goals of the hidden curriculum was that students learn to be respectful of a diversity of opinions.

The hidden curriculum can also be evoked by the policies governing the school. Both Colleen and Taylor declared that their schools’ mandates concentrated on developing the students’ character. Each of the teachers used moments discussing works of art to push the schools’ mandates. As an illustration, Colleen discussed Lawrence’s *The Libraries Are Appreciated* to develop her students’ social awareness and responsibility. Taylor intentionally selected works of art that would empower her students in an African-centred model school, focusing on legitimizing African stories of knowledge and promoting self-worth as proposed by Madhubuti and Madhubuti (1994).

## **Time**

The availability of time limited how the participants interacted with works of art in their classrooms. The participants repeatedly mentioned that spending too much time looking at a work of art resulted in time taken from a lesson that needed to be taught, suggesting that the planned curriculum and standardized testing had a grip on the participants. Similar to the conclusions drawn from Burchenal and

Grohe's (2007) study,<sup>59</sup> Eloise asserted that she could "only give up 15 minutes" each period to discuss works of art or artifacts in her world history course. Eloise had to abandon incorporating *Our Town* by Kerry James Marshall due to the amount of time needed to cover the objectives of the planned curriculum. If Eloise had more autonomy with the curriculum, would she have ventured featured more works of art and deeper discussions in her world history course?

Lind (2007) remarked as a result of limited class time, art specialists move quickly through discussions of art. In addition, Sprague and Bryan (2001) observed that discussions tended to focus on the technical qualities. In this study, the art specialists specified that they taught 45- or 50-minute blocks and/or semester schedule.<sup>60</sup> The art specialists mentioned that as a consequence of limited time, it was impossible to replicate the learning experiences of the art museum. The museum space provided endless time to deliberate whereas the art classroom space enforced very limited and controlled time. For example, Hudson asserted that her teaching schedule was not designed for developing meaningful conversations with her students. Taylor, who taught 45-minute art periods to over 500 students each week, further articulated this limitation and expressed frustration that she could only explore works of art at a surface level. In addition, Scarlet said that she had to decide what was more valuable to her students: looking at a work of art or producing an artwork in her 40-minute teaching periods. It follows then that it is impossible or very difficult to develop multilayered and enriching conversations in the art classroom as compared to the museum space due to the timetable and the students' requirement to complete a studio project.

### Time for Reviewing Materials for Summer Institutes

Even though two summer institutes provided numerous moments for active learning (see Bayar, 2014) the participants were still unable to fully implement the learning from the professional development program. It seemed that other factors, such as time to review the curricular materials, impeded the

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<sup>59</sup> Burchenal and Grohe's (2007) study of a partnership between the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and five elementary schools reported that the teachers felt it was excessive to allocate 20 minutes to looking at a work of art.

<sup>60</sup> The art specialist participants reported 45–50 minute instruction periods is comparable to the results reported by Milbrandt et. al., (2015).

participants' abilities to adjust their curricula. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) and Guskey (2002) all discussed the importance of time and support for teachers to reflect and adapt new material after completing a professional development workshop or program. Without this, teachers will continue to use familiar practices. Due to a lack of time and the pressure of teaching a new grade level, Colleen was unable to incorporate many of the ideas or projects from VAST. However, she did manage to spend time looking at more works of art in her classroom using VTS, which was modelled at the PMA. Chloe expressed that if she wanted to incorporate any of the materials from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, for example, the theatre games, into her grade 4 curricula, she would require an entire summer to plan. Although, similar to Colleen, Chloe frequently used VTS as modelled by the museum educators at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Thus, small adaptations were feasible, possibly because these kinds of changes were easily incorporated into their current practices.

Hudson, Eloise, and Scarlet all intended to use the poster resources<sup>61</sup> that they received in December via post from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, however, by the May interview they reported that these resources were not used. Again, it was due to a lack of the time to develop a lesson around the resources. It seemed that once the school year started, several participants were unable to consider adapting lessons from previous years to include the museum curricular materials. Interestingly, both Taylor and Mariah were successful in incorporating a variety of the curricular materials. This might be attributed to their work environments, which support curricular change.

### *Feelings of Regret*

Participants frequently voiced feelings of regret when they discussed not using the museum resources, along with a pledge to review them for the following school year. For instance, Colleen vowed that “after I get through this school year, I would love to go back into the binder . . . now that I know what I am teaching, what could I add?” Eloise stated that she had “big plans” to use the resources but ended up

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<sup>61</sup> The poster resources were not of works of art that were used in the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute.

“falling into my old ways” suggesting that it is more challenging to alter preferred and practised plans, in agreement with Guskey (2002). While Eloise was unable to include the theatre games in her world history classes, she frequently used the VTS questioning techniques and purposefully incorporated more visual images to support topics discussed in class. Unlike the theatre activities, the VTS routine aligned closely with Eloise’s repertoire of questioning techniques. Likewise, Eloise and Chloe asserted that they would review the material again at a later date and assess how to incorporate it.

In summary, I observed that the curriculum, whether formal or planned, affected to how a work of art was incorporated into a lesson, for example, it might be used to support the content of another subject. The implementation of a work of art was dependent upon how it could be used. Furthermore, it was clear that time impacted the participants’ ability to integrate the museums’ curriculum materials into their classroom practices.

In the following section, the reader will become familiar with various qualities regarding classroom discussions that emerged from the data. It was observed that a classroom discussion about works of art was used to develop observation skills and was suggested to help improve critical thinking (see Greene et al., 2014). Participants in this study were asked to describe what the purpose of discussions in their classrooms was, as well as what does do discussions look like, and what do they involve? Participants described various forms of classroom discussions and methods and questioning techniques, for example VTS to generate dialogue and the participants’ role in the classroom discussions. Furthermore, the data revealed the types of topics participants addressed or avoided in their classrooms.

## **CONVERSATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM**

The museum educators at the two summer institute programs modelled dialogical methods to discuss a work of art. Similar to McKay and Monteverde’s (2003) proposition, these programs taught that a dialogical discussion is concerned with concurrent and multiple dialogues between the viewers, the work of art, and with the self to generate meaning-making. In addition, art-historical information can be layered

with the discussion, as suggested by Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005). Through this dialogical discussion, the museum educators modelled how to incorporate the questioning techniques from the Artful Thinking Palette (Barahal, 2008) or VTS (Yenawine, 2014). While Kraybill (2018) had hinted that art museum educators are preoccupied with aligning programming with subjects taught in schools, for example language arts, in these two summer institutes, the museum educators aimed to demonstrate how to use works of art to generate insights and reflection. But while the museum educators were concerned with how works of art could spark discussions and insights, the participants used the dialogical discussions for other purposes.

## **Skill Development**

Repeatedly, participants expressed that looking at works of art provided students with opportunities to develop observation skills, and some participants believed that observation skills support building other skills such as critical thinking, as implied by Greene, et al. (2014). A number of participants believed that the process of incorporating an interpretive dialogue encouraged their students to think from the perspective of various viewpoints and allowed for the dialogue to flow in multiple directions. Chloe, Lily, and Colleen all felt that pairing the works of art with open-ended questions invited their students to support their answers with evidence from the works of art, thus encouraging critical thinking. Furthermore, they felt that looking at a work of art brought about a different set of observation and thinking skills. As an example, Lily enjoyed using interpretive dialogue and incorporated paintings into math and science lessons, using the questioning techniques from VTS: What do you see? What do you think? And what do you wonder? (Yenawine, 2014.)<sup>62</sup> Lily believed that by practising these “thinking routines” with paintings result in students developing a unique set of thinking dispositions, such as those proposed by Winner and Hetland (2007),

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<sup>62</sup> Participants used the phrase, “See, Think, Wonder” to reference the three questions used in the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Yenawine,2014).

including reflection, exploration, and observation. Interestingly, Lily attributed her students' success on standardized tests in literacy to these improved critical thinking skills.

Another example of skill development using VTS and dialogical discussions was described by Colleen. In her lesson on Plain Tribes, she noticed a difference between reading a text aloud to her students and engaging in a discussion about a painting. She reported that when she brought in VTS, her students progressed from describing simple details to asking questions and providing contextual information to support their responses. Colleen further noticed that her grade 2 students generated more observations and retained more information after discussions. In sum, she believed that discussing a painting about the Plain Tribes encouraged more critical thinking than when she read them a text that was discussed afterwards.

Although some generalist participants believed that VTS develops critical thinking skills, Eloise, who taught world history, attested that it simply developed observation skills. Eloise remarked that after using the VTS routine, her students were better at noticing details and providing textual evidence, as suggested by Walsh-Moorman (2018). Yet, to her frustration when using VTS, the students tended to offer simple observational statements instead of constructing connections. Eloise did not believe that VTS or looking at works of art improved critical thinking skills in her students, so consequently, Eloise preferred to focus on predetermined dialogue that contained specific questions to guide her students to reach specific objectives of her planned curriculum.

## **Conversations to Develop the Self**

Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005) asserted discussing a work of art could be a transformative experience. Several of the participants considered that discussing a work of art enabled their students to learn more about themselves. Students created meaningful and authentic connections with the works of art using interpretative dialogue as the foundation for the class discussion. As an illustration, Scarlet expressed that even though the main purpose of discussing a work of art is to develop observation skills, she hoped that develop empathy and understanding would also develop in her art students. Scarlet asks questions of

her students in these dialogues. For example: Can you imagine yourself as a character in the image? What do you think that character is feeling? Her goal is to draw out authentic and thoughtful responses that encourage an emotional response.<sup>63</sup> Similar to Hubard (2015), Scarlet believed that discussing an emotional response is just as valid as discussing the historical context of the work of art. When asked if employing the questions from VTS assisted with creating authentic and meaningful connections, Scarlet commented that her art students had developed stronger observation skills. She believed that student responses to the VTS questions did not necessarily indicate that meaningful connections were sparked by those specific questions.

Similar to Scarlet, Hudson wanted the conversations in her classroom to go beyond commentary on historical information. Hudson would tell her students, “You’re here in my class to grow as individuals.” Using open dialogue as described by Hubard (2010), Hudson hoped that her students would “relate to the painting at their own level.” To do this, Hudson stressed that unlike in a math class there were no right or wrong answers. By taking this attitude towards discussing a work of art she hoped to encourage her students to feel confident enough to express their opinions.<sup>64</sup> Even though the goal of the discussion was not uncovering an artist’s true intent, Hudson conceded that at the end of the discussion she usually “gave them some bit of real information regardless.” In spite of museum educators modelling how to layer information with student responses to produce a richer dialogical discussion, Hudson assumed that supplying information was counterintuitive to the open dialogue.

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<sup>63</sup> The questioning techniques that Scarlet used were similar to those of the Artful Thinking Palette (Barahal, 2008).

<sup>64</sup> Similarly, Lily preferred using works of art for discussions because her grade two students “understand that there are no right or wrong answers.” This encourages her students to participate more in discussions and develop their self-confidence.

## Qualities of a Class Discussion

### Participation

The principal trait of a high-quality discussion, according to the participants, was the level of engagement from the students. Engagement emerged in two different categories. Firstly, engagement concentrated on the students' level of participation. Participation level was based upon how well students spoke or actively listened. As described by Hudson, Eloise, and Chloe, active listening relied upon observing the student's facial expressions to evaluate interest. How the students who simply listened added to the discussion was not expanded upon. Erikson and Pinnegar (2010) cautioned against relying upon observation to judge if a student was learning. A student's response, in this case, facial expression, may not reveal the depth of the learning or the experience.

The second form of engagement concerned itself with the work of art. Participants described how certain works of art generated more interest than others. This suggests, as proposed by Yenawine (2014) and Cappello (2017), that the work of art they chose was critical for the discussion. Participants used mostly realistic or semi-abstract works. While several participants selected works based upon the subject or content, Mariah and Scarlet asserted that the work of art needed to be explored and analyzed beyond a surface level, for example discussing the aesthetic qualities. This supports Chin's (2017) proposition that to generate a high-quality discussion, students needed to draw upon the aesthetic qualities to produce deeper meanings. In this way, Mariah and Scarlet may have generated more complex discussions in their classrooms than those who simply focused upon the subject or content of the work of art. Interestingly, none of the participants described teaching or building art-specific vocabulary with their students, though as seen in the research of Wren et al. (2006), when students are provided language tools for the visual arts, it deepens the content of their discussions as well as the students' enjoyment and engagement.



## Evaluation

Despite the participants valuing the organic and unfolding nature of the classroom discussions and the self-awareness students developed, participants were aware that they were accountable to evaluate set objectives (Penner-Williams, 2010). Allen (2010) described an outcome of standardized testing and RTTT: evaluation has become a preoccupation in the teacher's classroom. While the participants of this study appreciated and valued the dialogical discussions, they revealed it was eventually used as a source for an evaluation. Surprisingly, participants imposed a top-down method for evaluation instead of embracing a dialogical format. For instance, Scarlet developed a rubric to evaluate a student's attentiveness and level of critical reflection. Scarlet admitted that it was a challenge to create the rubric due to the subjective nature of determining whether a student had indeed engaged in critical thinking. Scarlet's awareness supports Erikson and Pinnegar's (2010) view that it is impossible to fully understand the student's comprehension of a learning activity. Other art specialists, such as Taylor, evaluated discussions based upon whether a student could recite information from a previous class, further denoting a rationalistic method for evaluation.

Observation was a form of evaluation that was employed by several of the generalist teachers. And as previously discussed, observation does not necessarily measure the depth of a student's understanding or learning (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2010). For example, Eloise viewed class discussions as a means to produce a participation mark while both Chloe and Lily used class discussions to evaluate oral fluency to satisfy Core State Standards. This method of evaluating participation or literacy skills might ignore the reflective and insightful moments of the processes that occurred in the discussions.

## **Types of Talk**

### Idle Talk and Dialogical Discussions

As stated in the Review of Literature Chapter, when considering dialogical teaching the planned curriculum does not support it. Teachers presume that they are engaging in dialogical teaching, however,

in fact, they are having a class discussion that applies open-ended questions (Alexander, 2006; Lyle, 2008). When the participants used dialogical teaching with interpretive dialogue, they expressed that at times the lesson felt scripted. For some participants, this was due to strategically and intentionally using only the questions from VTS.<sup>65</sup> Thus moving dialogical discussion to generating a dialogue with the use of open-ended questions. My own view is that when some participants applied VTS it transformed the discussions into a type of idle talk (Huebner, 1968/2008).

As described by Huebner (1968/2008), idle talk involves mundane language that fills the spaces in a discussion between the teacher and the student. It does not invite the teacher or the students to question or engage in deep reflection. While it may seem that a dialogical discussion creates new knowledge, Apple (2010) asserted that it is just a cycle that involves listening and responding without moments of tension. A dialogical discussion can generate meaning, but it does not challenge the student's thinking. Instead, Wegerif (2008) prescribed teachers to use a dialectical model as it creates tension using contradictions in the discussion and encourages new knowledge that that comes from the experience of overcoming. Although Huebner does not present a dialogical discussion as dialectical, he writes about tensions in a conversation that could reveal new ways of thinking.

For example, Lily, Eloise, and Chloe explained that they enjoyed VTS as it created a routine to follow. The routine enabled a step-by-step process to look at a work of art and to meet the lesson's objectives. Lily described it as a "thinking routine" or as a type of formula, and Mariah recognized that because she habitually used it in class, her students could readily apply it independently while on field trips. Furthermore, the generalist participants appreciated that they could apply this structure with the other disciplines that they taught in diverse ways. The participants may have sparked their students' sense of

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<sup>65</sup> Due to the design of the research study, I was unable to observe participants engaging in discussions with their students in their school environments. It follows then that a significant limitation regarding analyzing the participants use of interpretive dialogue and dialogical teaching modelled by the museum educators was solely gleaned from the participants' descriptions during the three interviews.

curiosity with the work of art; however, its usefulness was limited to following strict objectives. Lily, Eloise, and Chole, never described moments when the discussions created moments of tension or revealed new learning that was not already desired by the participant. Zander (2004) had stated that teachers avoid dialogical discussions due to a fear of loss of control; it can be as though VTS is being used to control the dialogue. As an example, if the students in Eloise's world history class spoke of the aesthetic qualities of the work of art, she would intentionally redirect the discussion towards the intended objectives of the lesson. This also demonstrated the control that the planned curriculum had on Eloise's teaching as she frequently described in interviews wishing to be more open in her teaching.

In contrast, Colleen described using dialogical teaching, including interpretive dialogue, with her grade 2 students while looking at works of art. She stated that she asks them "to tell me what they see . . . and then go from there." As observed in her discussion of a lesson pertaining to Alaskan landscapes, Colleen frequently described moments when she asked her students to consider the artist's intent, how people lived in those remote areas, and create personal connections with the work of art. As prescribed by Cappello (2017), Colleen was asking about the artist's intent and using other questions to deepen the quality of the discussion. While Colleen was aware of her lesson's objectives, her discussions were focused on developing a sense of curiosity in her students and were encouraging them to be creative. However, similar to the other participants, Colleen never described moments of tension in the discussions. She only said that her students discovered new perspectives on a topic due to discussing a work of art.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Participants may not have these moments with their students; however, I believe that students were employing dialogical and dialectical dialogue within themselves. Participants were pulled between mindless curriculum as described by Schubert (2010) and trying to create a curriculum that was more embodied (Christodoulou, 2010). Participants described wishing to change their curricula; however, they expressed frustration with school environments, administration, and standardized testing.

## Open-Ended Dialogue

Another form of talk was open-ended dialogue in which the participants scaffolded student responses with additional information to support the learning (Miller, 2008; Sternberg, 1989). This method was modelled at both summer institutes to demonstrate a difference between teacher monologues, rote repetition of learning information, and a dialogical approach (Alexander, 2006). In applying a dialogical approach, students participate in a persuasive discourse that deepens the talk and reveals new ways of thinking. All of the participants asked open-ended questions to generate a discussion about a work of art; however, it was uncertain it was dialogical in nature, as outlined by Alexander (2006) and Lyle (2008), due to the limited details in their responses. For instance, Taylor viewed discussions as empowerment, something that challenged the authoritarian discourse, yet she described her talk as “storytelling with information,” thus suggesting teacher monologue, after which her students were encouraged to recite information from the previous class. It seemed that moments for deeper reflection and discussion readily occurred when Taylor was able to further discussions with students during moments when she spoke one on one with them.

When participants described applying open-ended dialogue in a dialogical discussion, it was to assist students in understanding another viewpoint. The discussions could be characterized as safe and were not about overcoming or addressing the authoritarian discourse (Bahktin, 2010; Wegerif, 2008). For instance, Scarlet and Mariah stated that their students frequently partook in an open-ended dialogue about works of art that encouraged students to have meaningful experiences and to develop empathy by understanding other viewpoints. Learning about other viewpoints and having meaningful experiences does not imply deliberation with challenging ideas. Mariah expressed, “You want them to have an experience so that later on they may not remember the information . . . but the experience makes them remember something and want to go forward.” It was never fully revealed in the interviews the characteristics of a meaningful experience with a work of art. Mariah and Scarlet mentioned that they invited students to have “uncomfortable conversations.” When some participants did express discussing challenging social issues,

it was avoided due to the school's culture. For example, Hudson who taught in northwest Arkansas asserted, "There's a lot of things that are very taboo . . . I do often have to be super, super careful" with regards to talking about racism. And both Lily and Colleen avoided discussing gender with their grade 2 students.

Sedlacek and Sedova (2017) claimed that teachers need substantial class time to engage in a dialogical discussion. The art specialists in this study expressed that due to limited class time, it was not possible to dive deep into a topic. Even though, as observed by Zander (2004), the visual art class is an ideal space to have dialogical discussions as the curriculum is not as fixed, it still requires time. Furthermore, as noted by Sprague and Bryan (2001), talk in the art class tends to focus on the technical. While the art specialists did not mention factors such as fear or loss of control, they did mention it took away from valuable class time. This valuable class time centred on providing the students with art-making experiences. As a consequence of 45–50 minutes blocks of instruction time, the art specialists were pressed to decide what was more valuable: working on a studio project or discussing a work of art?

## **Writing as a Support**

While talk was one method that the participants used to respond to works of art, they employed other methods, in particular writing. Irwin (2008) suggested that non-verbal responses such as writing, drawing, and kinesthetic responses can complement a dialogical discussion and can bring about different forms of insight and lived experiences, thus creating an embodied curriculum as expressed by Christodoulou (2010). During the VAST program at the PMA, museum educators modelled writing, reading additional texts, or drawing activities to respond to a work that engaged the senses or self-reflection. While Kraybill (2014) stated that a variety of non-verbal activities are used with students at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, none were modelled by museum educators in summer institute. And while it was modelled by museum educators at the PMA, it did not necessarily transfer into the participants' classrooms; participants never mentioned using forms of writing such as poetry, as modelled at VAST, or incorporating drawing in a discussion. Interestingly, none of the art specialists described using drawing as a way to respond to a work of art.

Although some participants used writing to make the students' thinking visible (see Ritchhart and Perkins, 2008), it was also employed as a method to verify if the students were on task and was removed from the experiences of the students. The classroom discussions that participants enjoyed transformed when they incorporated writing as a pragmatic method to monitor the students' learning. For instance, Lily's students would write a list of objects that they saw in a painting on their interactive notebooks before starting a discussion. While this enabled students to develop observational skills, it also enabled Lily to verify that all of her students were engaging with the work of art. In a similar manner, Scarlet's art students would write a short response in their sketchbooks after a mini class discussion exploring an artist's video. Students used digital tablets in class discussion to add meta-commentary with the use of online forms, surveys, and discussion boards. Again, this allowed Scarlet to verify if her students were participating.

Routinely the writing responses were transformed into formal essays that were evaluated. The objective was to confirm that students could transfer the learning that they gained from the discussion into a concrete form that could be evaluated. For example, Mariah's grade 6 students used personal journals to respond to a work of art and record qualities of the class discussion. Afterwards, students would polish their personal responses into a formal essay. Similarly, Taylor's art students would write an essay to summarize their learning from a class discussion. And Scarlet's art students would write a personal response to a work of art in the form of an essay. These exercises illuminate how the participants were preoccupied with demonstrating that learning had occurred in their classrooms, however, they ignore that a written response may not reveal the depth of the students' learning, as suggested by Erikson and Pinnegar (2010).

## **Questioning Techniques**

At the two summer institutes, the museum educators modelled various questioning techniques based upon the Artful Thinking Palette, focusing on the various dispositions, for example, exploring different viewpoints (Barahal, 2008) and incorporating the questioning techniques from VTS (Yenawine, 2014). In each instance, the museum educators would generate a discussion surrounding one work of art using interpretative dialogue that was layered with evidence cited by the teachers along with additional

information given by the museum educators. Connections were generated between works of art in the galleries based upon a theme or an idea. The goal of modelling these questioning techniques was to promote a culture of inquiry and to demonstrate how to develop questions that are not centred on straight recall.<sup>67</sup> Even though these methods were modelled, along with other non-verbal responses, they were not the preferred method of several of the participants.

### Compare and Contrast

One favourable questioning technique was to compare and contrast two works of art. Interestingly, this particular method was never modelled by the museum educators, and I question why it was so popular. Participants believed that through the process of comparing two works of art, students acquired new information and were developing their observation skills. For instance, Chloe remarked that her grade 2 students were able to observe differences between two portrait paintings of George Washington during a social studies lesson. When discussing the portraits, Lily's questioning focused on students noticing specific details so that they would generate connections between ideas. For example, she asked, "How can you tell that this is an important person?" Colleen also used this method during a social studies lesson on the Plain Tribes, encouraging the students to learn about the culture. Students were asked to observe differences in the clothing. While students in these two classrooms were seeking evidence to support their ideas, it was not clear how the students deliberated ideas, or that their thinking was not challenged with alternative views. Only Eloise in her world history class encouraged debate and discourse to challenge her students; however, this was due in part to the focus and design of the course. All participants asserted that their students were developing critical thinking skills when comparing works, but the depth of the critical thinking occurring can be questioned, as their discussions focused on straight recall and simple questions. Hitchcock (2018) reminds us that critical thinking is not a surface exploration. Although the participants believed that

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<sup>67</sup> Knight and Benson (2014) describe straight recall as questions that ask the student to repeat information that they may have learned in a previous lesson.

comparing the paintings evoked critical thinking skills, my own view is that it instead developed observation skills.

### Critical Thinking Questions

Several of the participants believed that their questioning techniques encouraged critical thinking. In these instances, the participants were inviting students to be open-minded, imaginative, and to validate statements with supporting evidence during discussions, as outlined by Hitchcock (2018). Students were encouraged to voice their opinions. To do this, all of the art specialists — Scarlet, Taylor, and Hudson — routinely asked students to deliberate the artist’s method and intention. Taylor stated that she employed “thought questions” in her art class, for example, “How do you think this particular mandala was done?” In this way, the discussions of the works of art were not just surface explorations; they invited students to be open-minded, an important element of critical thinking prescribed by Hitchcock (2018).

### **VTS: See, Think, Wonder**

#### The Process

The questioning techniques of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) were repeatedly modelled by museum educators, in particular at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. During visits to the galleries, museum educators would invite the teachers to explore a work in silence. This was followed by an open-ended question that began the cycle of responding, listening, and layering of information. In addition, participants who attended the summer institute at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art were told that the students’ responses were “gifts” and to build upon their responses.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, in communication with both museum educators from the PMA and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the focus of employing VTS is not to develop or instruct how to apply specific art vocabulary. Instead, it is organically

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<sup>68</sup> At the summer institute at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the word “gift” was utilized to describe the observations that students stated during discussions and the goal was for the teacher to apply the observations to further lead the discussion.



incorporated into the discussion when looking at the work of art. At these institutes, teachers were capable of discussing a work of art, even without extensive knowledge of art or of visual literacies.

As a result, VTS was readily incorporated into the participants' practices. The generalist participants incorporated them into social studies and language arts lessons. Chloe even mentioned that her colleague used VTS in his math class.<sup>69</sup> It is likely that participants used VTS readily because they were the easiest to adapt to align with their planned curricula. Similar to Chin's (2017) finding, VTS was believed to require minimal effort: an educator simply has to find an image. Interestingly, while museum educators at Crystal Bridges modelled and articulated the importance of researching background content, and the museum educators at the PMA demonstrated incorporating information, generalist participants did not admit to incorporating factual information into these lessons.

During interviews, generalist participants reported that they did not discuss encouraging students to apply or develop specific vocabulary or use aesthetics to interpret the works of art. Neither did the participants describe researching the historical background or key information regarding the work of art as proposed at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Eloise and Scarlet spoke about their intentions to develop lessons incorporating a specific work of art but neither ended up following through on this. While they both expressed that they lack the time to develop a lesson. As previously discussed, Lily and Eloise both asserted that discussing the aesthetics was not important; they were more concerned with drawing observations and connections to a historical context. This perhaps is related to Yenawine's (2014) statement that teachers need some background in the visual arts in order to fully use the visual image.

### Effectiveness of VTS

Repeatedly, the generalist participants praised the questioning routine of See, Think, Wonder as it provided them with structure. Lily described it as a "thinking routine," similar to a type of formula. Mariah

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<sup>69</sup> In addition, Lily claimed that she used See, Think, Wonder to explore math problems, and Mariah used it frequently in her grade 6 social studies course to look at maps.

recognized that due to habitually using it in class that her students could readily apply it independently while on field trips. Repeatedly, participants suggested that the more practise that their students had with the VTS structure, the better they and the students became at applying it in a discussion about a work of art or visual image. Furthermore, Colleen stated that the process encouraged her grade 2 students “to develop more than one-word answers,” after she asked students to cite evidence from the work of art to support their responses. And Mariah enjoyed the process as it encouraged her students to develop more curiosity.

Although the participants enjoyed the simplicity of VTS, they admitted it was not always effective and was dependent upon a few factors.

Firstly, the students’ willingness to engage was what determined the flow and depth of the discussion. Hudson remarked that VTS worked well with her elementary school art students, however, it was unsuccessful with her middle school art students. Hudson attributed this to her middle school students being too self-conscious and fearful of making mistakes. Like teachers with limited experience in the visual arts, students may be too intimidated to discuss art. To overcome this problem, Hudson would establish the visual content, provide information, and then invite her middle school students to offer their interpretations. This is similar to the method proposed by Bell (2011), which combined both transmission and conversational learning.

Secondly, while certain participants enjoyed the open-endedness of See, Think, Wonder, several of the generalist participants remarked that it was ineffective in their classes, indicating that they required more structured questioning techniques. Predetermined dialogue with structured questions as defined by Hubbard (2010) was favoured by participants who expressed the need to meet specific objectives from their planned curricula. For example, Eloise stated that the questioning techniques of See, Think, Wonder were too open-ended. She prepared additional questions to focus on key ideas. Depending upon Eloise’s knowledge of the work of art, she would prepare question prompts that she thought would get a better conversation going — she wanted to aid the students’ understanding of how the work of art supported the

topic under investigation.<sup>70</sup> Similar to Eloise, Lily appreciated the variety of comments that her grade 2 students voiced from a dialogical discussion using See, Think, Wonder; however, she would also devise additional questions that were rooted in advancing the specific content of the lesson. These findings reinforced Cappello and Walker's (2016) observation that teachers are conflicted about using VTS when they are obliged to present facts.

Thirdly, VTS was ineffective when used to explore the actual aesthetic qualities of the visual image in certain participants' classrooms. All of the generalist participants employed VTS in order to develop a deeper understanding of the content of another subject, for example, social studies. The intention was to use the image to drive observations and connections in a specific historical context. The work of art was not central to the lesson. For example, in Lily's Thanksgiving Unit, at the last minute, she could not find the work of art she intended to use and easily interchanged it with another work of art to spark the discussion. If participants understood how the aesthetic qualities enhance the richness of the dialogical discussions (see Wren et al., 2006), aesthetics might have been focused on to a greater degree.

## **Dynamics That Effect Discussions**

A number of factors that could either enhance or inhibit the flow of a dialogical discussion were observed by the participants. One factor was how the students were seated in the classroom. As stated by Colleen, participation in the discussion "depends weirdly enough on our seating . . . they tend to do a bit more when I gather them in a circle on our carpet space." This seating formation better enabled Colleen to show a work of art in a book or as a poster and engage her students. Because Taylor travelled between classes to teach art, she found it more effective to have her students stand in a circle at the start of each class to start her discussions. This minimized wasting class time on classroom management. Interestingly,

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<sup>70</sup> Interestingly, at the summer institute at Crystal Bridges it was modelled to have five predetermined ideas that were to be addressed with the work of art that were supported with factual information.

participants who were elementary teachers altered their seating more often, while those who taught middle school and high school had students remain at their desks for discussions about works of art.

Class dynamics also influenced participants' ability to conduct a dialogical discussion. Although Sedlacek and Sedova (2017) observed in their research that a large class provides more student voices that can contribute to generating more quality talk, Scarlet noted that with her smaller middle school art classes, she was able to generate other types of discussions that invited the students to look closer into a work of art. Participants found it more challenging to engage in a whole-class discussion in a class of thirty students because there are often several students with behavioural problems, particularly for Hudson and Eloise, whose classes have a number of such students. Little support was provided to the participants with these classes; hence, the participants adapted their teaching practice to accommodate the class dynamics. Scarlet tended to write a probing question and wait for students to respond in their digital notebooks in her larger art classes. And Hudson and Eloise both avoid discussions of certain topics to avoid unwanted anxiety.

## **Role of the Teacher**

Knight and Benson (2014) insisted that teachers are responsible for creating a culture of inquiry in their classrooms not just through the questions that are asked but how teachers perceive their role in the discussion. In the interviews, participants were asked to describe their role in a class discussion. Participants asserted that taking on the role of a facilitator or a guide was more favourable than taking on that of a teacher who directed the discussion. A facilitator was viewed as a teacher who introduced a topic and then guided discussions with probing questions, leading to an open-ended discussion rather than a dialogical approach. This finding is akin to Alexander's (2006) observation that teachers may think they are engaging in a dialogical discussion when they are really just applying open-ended questions.

Brogan and Brogan (1995) claimed that an egalitarian relationship between the teacher and the student is essential to a dialogical discussion. In this study, participants viewed the role of a facilitator or guide as one that contributed to a positive relationship between the teacher and their students, who view the

teacher as an equal in the discussions. As an example, Eloise considered teachers as active participants and as co-learners with their students. She, like all of the participants, described her role as a facilitator. Lectures or teacher-led monologue discussions as defined by Alexander (2006) were viewed negatively by participants. Lily expressed, “I hate being that kind of teacher” and Chloe expressed that “if I don’t do the teacher thing, and I listen more, more comes out.” In this sense, the participants were highly aware of the different approaches to instruction and how it affected their relationship with their students.

Huebner (1968/2008) claimed that teaching is a mixture of both teacher-directed instruction and a reflective constructivist approach. Teachers should not be seen as simply facilitators, as it downplays the expert knowledge of the teacher and transforms the teacher into a technician. While the participants described their roles as a facilitator during a discussion, they were aware of the importance of their role as a teacher and a source of knowledge on the subject matter. As an illustration, Mariah emphasized that she would “front-load information and then stand back” and both Scarlet and Hudson would provide background information concerning the artist or the work of art to direct the discussion. And while Taylor saw herself as a “facilitator,” she also applied teacher-directed instruction to provide information. It follows then, that there may be a tension between these two roles with several of the participants, but it was not addressed in the interviews why certain participants viewed teacher-directed instruction as negative.

## **Topics**

The PMA’s VAST program centred on the theme of socially engaged art, and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art modelled how to use VTS to generate meaningful discussions and provided visual resources that touched upon social issues. While the PMA’s program focused on other topics, for example, immigration, the prison system, and mental health, these were not brought into the participants’ classrooms. The ability of the participants to incorporate upon the social themes and resources was dependent upon the school environment, the grade level that the participant taught, and personal interest.

## Racism

A common topic tackled by a number of participants was racism<sup>71</sup>. Participants who attended the VAST program at the PMA were exposed to various lectures and community groups, for example, the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA), and the educators specifically looked at works of art in the museum's collection that evoked discussions about social dynamics and racism. For instance, they examined *A Lady and Her Children Relieving a Cottager* by William Redmore Bigg and were provided with a poster of Jacob Lawrence's *The Libraries Are Appreciated*, which addresses segregation of spaces. Participants who attended the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's *Teaching from Works of Art* explored a variety of works of art, some of which touched upon the U.S. history, for example, Richard Caton Woodville's *War News from Mexico*. Participants were also given various laminated posters, including Titus Kaphar's *The Cost of the Removal*, which deals with the 1831 Indian Removal Act.

The topic of racism was discussed when participants could incorporate it into the planned curriculum, such as during a lesson for Black History Month. Lily discussed racism through a yearly unit on the Underground Railroad. Although, she said, "I felt like I was really walking a fine line" due to her school environment. In contrast, Colleen, Mariah, and Taylor were encouraged by their school environments to discuss racism. With the use of Lawrence's, *The Libraries Are Appreciated*, Colleen was able to demonstrate to her grade 2 students the inequalities encountered by African Americans in all facets of their lives. Her students presented their learning at a school assembly celebrating the work of Martin Luther King. Colleen attributed the ease of discussing racism and Lawrence's painting to a school environment that is determined to develop the character of students by discussing challenging social issues in order for students to better understand each other. Taylor who worked in an African-centred school schooling was encouraged to discuss the history of African Americans and utilize it as a means to educate

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<sup>71</sup> The subject of racism focused on issues between Caucasian and African Americans and not between other groups of people. Only Mariah voiced intentionally discussing injustices experienced by the Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

and empower her students. And Mariah described using paintings done by Jacob Lawrence with her grade 6 students to discuss discrimination. Interestingly, neither Colleen, Mariah, nor Taylor used other resources, neither the AORTA's website nor *An Immigrants' Alphabet* provided from the PMA. Both Taylor and Colleen expressed that the content did not relate to their planned curricula, and Colleen believed that the resources supplied by the PMA were suited for an art teacher or a teacher of a higher grade.

### *Museum Resources*

Participants were given resources from both summer institutes that could be incorporated into a lesson that discussed racism. These were not frequently used as some of the participants felt that they were too controversial, specifically, the laminated poster of Kerry James Marshall's *Our Town*. Lily "loved" the painting, but she stated that, "I don't know if that's a discussion that I would be prepared to have with seven-year-old." By the same token, Hudson, who like Lily lived in Arkansas, avoided all of the laminated posters provided by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art that dealt with racism as she was tired of being "summoned into the principal's office." Hudson asserted that she "would love to use *Our Town*" and other poster resources but had to "choose her battles" as parents frequently complained to administration concerning topics taught in her classroom.

From the poster resources that Hudson received from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, she noted that she could use Martin Johnson Heade's *Cattleya Orchard, Two Hummingbirds and a Beetle* as "because I know that one looks totally safe." She attributed this silencing to living in a rural area in northwest Arkansas. She said that while showing the work done by a Black artist "wouldn't be so much trouble. The subject matter is usually a bit worse." While Hudson declared that she could not address certain topics through an art lesson, she voiced that she waited for "teachable moments" to address issues of race, religion, and/or nationality.

Interestingly, both Scarlet and Eloise wanted to use the *Our Town* painting and Scarlet wished to include Kaphar's *The Cost of the Removal*. Unlike the other participants, these works of art were not

included due to a lack of time to develop a lesson surrounding the paintings. In sum, the school environment and difficulty of discussing socially challenging topics affected the participants' ability to incorporate the resources from the art museums.

## Gender

In addition to their difficulties discussing issues of race, the participants indicated that they also avoided discussing gender. While gender was not directly discussed at either summer institute, I had asked about it during the interviews. This was due to the lukewarm reaction of my suggestion to using Cobi Moules's *Untitled (Yellowstone, Swan Lake)* for the group presentation at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. In the interviews, a few of the generalist teachers asserted that discussions of gender were not age-appropriate for their students. As an illustration, Colleen enjoyed the "tough" conversations at the PMA, but she felt that it was not suitable to discuss topics surrounding gender with her grade 2 students. She claimed that "my students don't have enough context or experience to be able to reflect or use it." Similarly, Taylor stated, "I couldn't have a discussion because they are too young. They are too immature for that type of discussion." It follows then that discussing racism is a topic for all grade levels while gender is only for older students. All of the participants also avoided using works of art that contained nudity or violence. Both Scarlet and Mariah voiced that they intentionally sought out works of art done by artists that were both male and female and from different ethnic backgrounds to show their students. Scarlet purposely selected works by women artists.

In summary, this section concentrated on the topic of conversation pertaining to motive and how it carried out in the participants' classrooms. It was noticed that certain qualities are preferred such as the teacher as a facilitator and qualities that affect the conversations such as class dynamics. While both art museums provided resources to tackle challenging social issues; these materials such as poster resources were avoided due to the climate of the school or the participants' own level of comfortability.



In the following section, I discuss the participants' thoughts about their experiences at the two summer institutes, which included the significance and unique characteristics of the art museum space, the positive relationships with museum educators and other educators, and their thoughts about partaking in the various activities that were challenging for them. Furthermore, this section focuses on the participants' post-museum experiences with regards to how they enacted, modified, or omitted the summer institutes' curricula when they returned to their classrooms.

## **MUSEUM SUMMER INSTITUTES**

### **The Art Museum Space**

The participants voiced during interviews that the art museums at both summer institutes were meaningful, "spectacular," and "beautiful" spaces. These feelings came from time in gallery spaces surrounded by works of art and the act of sharing these experiences with other educators. As an illustration, Lily claimed that the museum space "fed my soul this summer." And Hudson stated that "it's always my favourite being in the galleries." Hudson and Scarlet described the joy of being able to wander around the museum at their own pace after 3 p.m. It seemed that the participants were describing an aesthetic reaction due to encounters with the space and with the works of art. These aesthetic qualities of the space were affecting the participants' emotions and sensibilities, as perceived by Eisner (1985/2005). These experiences were highly prized by the participants because discussing works of art with other adults and looking at art was not an experience that they had on a regular basis. Most of the participants described their inability to visit art museums on a regular basis due to time, distance, or family life.<sup>72</sup> When participants visited an art museum, it was predominately in the form of a field trip with the goal to provide a meaningful learning experience to their students.

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<sup>72</sup> Only Hudson regularly attended the Saturday teacher workshops at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art each month. She did not mind that it was a two-hour drive to the art museum from her town.

Along with a sense of beauty, the participants described the museum space as a safe space for discussions. This was likely because the museum educators centred their professional development program on an embodied curriculum that encouraged the participants and the museum educators to reflect upon their lived experiences together. As a result, the museum educators' use of dialogical teaching encouraged the educators to generate authentic connections not only with the works of art but also with their peers. Participants described the conversations as sincere, frank, and candid. The sense of safety created by the museum educators stimulated conversations that they would not normally feel comfortable having in the staff room at their schools. It seemed that certain participants, in particular Lily, Scarlet, and Eloise were cautious about what they discuss with colleagues at their schools.<sup>73</sup> In addition, Hudson expressed that it was a pleasure to be with "like-minded people" because "the professional development at Crystal Bridges has been almost the *only* time that I've been able to interact with other art teachers." This suggests that art teachers continue to have teaching experiences that are unlike those of other teachers, confirming Allison's (2013) claim that art teachers are marginalized in schools and that study's emphasis on the importance for art teachers to connect with each other to allow for authentic dialogue.

In addition to being a safe space for discussions, the art museums also became a space for empowerment. Generalist teachers who rarely discussed art felt emboldened to engage in dialogue about works of art, and it became a space where educators could speak their minds about socially challenging topics. Taylor, who described herself as quiet, was inspired to speak up in the galleries during conversations pertaining to racism and how it was affecting African Americans in her community. In contrast to Panero's (2016) assertion that art museums are preoccupied with revenue, in this study the art museum was a catalyst for the participants to reflect, communicate, and listen.

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<sup>73</sup> During one interview with Eloise while discussing the poor-quality professional development selected by her administrator, a colleague had entered the shared office. At that moment, her response was not voiced with words but with a shake of her head and I quickly changed the direction of the discussion.

## Experiences with Peers and Museum Educators

The relationships between the participating educators and those between participants and museum professionals were significant to the participants learning and enjoyment of the summer institutes. Matthewson (2003) asserted that hierarchical relationships between museum educators and teachers limit the dialogue between the two, and following this recommendation, I observed at the studied institutes a mutual respect between the two groups of professionals. For instance, Mariah and Taylor emphasized that their positive experiences with the other educators and with the museum educators in the galleries helped them to grow professionally and personally. As previously stated, this was partially due to both summer institutes centring their curricula on dialogical teaching, which requires openness and fostering of equitable relationships. The museum educators never asserted authority or a claim on museum education. These dynamics meant both the museum educators and the participating educators were encouraged to actively participate in discussions together and to learn from each other.<sup>74</sup> The participants never expressed the presence of power dynamics as described in the research of Liu (2000).

Another factor that contributed to developing the participants' experience was the prolonged engagement that they had with each other. Similar to Charland's (2006) report on the preferred forms of professional development, in this study participants repeatedly expressed that the week-long summer institute allowed for more authentic connections and conversations than a workshop or similar program. During lunch and dinner, the participants were able to share their own classroom experiences, allowing them to develop and accept emotional support. Essentially, the participants described the characteristics of a professional learning community (PLC) as outlined by Hord (2009) in which the educators and museum educators learned together and supported each other emotionally.

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<sup>74</sup> During the first discussion at VAST pertaining to identity, one educator spoke with such openness that I was surprised that the educator was a museum educator. I believe that this expressed vulnerability established a space that enabled authentic dialogue between the educators and the museum educators.

While the participants appreciated the relationships that they formed at the summer institutes, very few participants continued these relationships once the summer institutes ended.<sup>75</sup> In the interviews participants suggested that each art museum should have created a Facebook page or an Instagram account so the educators could share classroom resources and ideas. Interestingly, a number of participants expressed that I was the only contact that they had maintained. Eloise mentioned that participation in this study was the motivation to use her learning from the summer institutes, giving her a better opportunity to reflect upon her teaching practices. These comments support Guskey's (2002) view regarding the importance of the follow-up and the need for support after a professional development program in order for techniques learned to become part of the teacher's teaching repertoire.

### Discussing Art

Horn and Goldstein (2018) wrote of the importance of providing teachers with the autonomy to select their own professional development. This allows teachers to focus on areas of their practice that need enrichment and those of actual interest rather than attending prepackaged workshops at a district professional development workshop. In this study, all of the participants had selected to attend the summer institutes which generated a genuine desire to learn. At VAST, the participants selected the professional development program with the desire to acquire knowledge to discuss socially challenging topics with the use of works of art using a mixture of lectures and active learning. At Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the participants acquired skills to facilitate dialogical teaching with a work of art that applied a training model of professional development.

While none of the participants who attended VAST commented on insecurities with discussing works of art, this insecurity was evident in the generalist participants who attended Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.<sup>76</sup> This was particularly due to the objective of the program, which was to learn how to

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<sup>75</sup> Only Scarlet had kept in contact with educators from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute; however, that was due to having worked with the educators in a previous week-long program.

<sup>76</sup> Both Mariah and Colleen, who attended VAST, mentioned the experience of watching museum educators facilitate conversations inspired and encouraged them to reconsider how to discuss works of art in their classrooms.

teach from works of art using a training model of professional development. While Ponder, et al. (2010) suggested that the training model is somewhat effective, all of the participants appreciated the structure and practice in the galleries. The generalist participants appreciated the training that led to the capstone activity of facilitating a dialogical discussion with a work of art with their peers. In the interviews, all of the generalist participants had expressed anxiety at the anticipation of this capstone activity. While Lily, Eloise, and Chloe all expressed ease with generating a discussion, the theme of fostering a comfort with art was prevalent. The generalists all voiced insecurities with discussing art, while none of the art specialists mentioned any insecurities.<sup>77</sup>

Irwin (2008) claimed that generalist teachers often have limited background knowledge in the visual arts, and it was true that the generalist participants in this study had a limited background in the visual arts, leading to insecurities with discussing art. Museum educators modelled dialogical teaching with a work of art; however, the focus of the training was not to develop an understanding of art vocabulary or aesthetics. For instance, Chloe expressed, “I’m not an artist. I don’t know anything. I’m not going to do well here.” It was stated by Eloise and Chloe that it was a challenge to present a work of art in front of a group of art teachers. Due to the active participation that Bayar (2014) suggested is key to quality professional development, Chloe, along with Lily and Eloise, found that presenting a work of art to their peers was a meaningful and successful moment. As a result of the capstone activity, Eloise expressed that her goal was to include more visuals in her world history class because “I’ve gotten more comfortable with art, even though I don’t know everything about the art. I’m not hesitant to use it.” Guskey (2009) emphasized in order for a teacher to incorporate the learning from a professional development activity, it needs to cause a change in the participants’ beliefs and attitudes. It follows then that the active participation of the capstone activity at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art inspired the generalist participants to incorporate works of art into their practices.

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<sup>77</sup> Although, this can be said about the subject that a teacher is unfamiliar with teaching and insecurities only lessen after developing a comfort with the subject content.

None of the arts specialists at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art voiced feelings of discomfort while discussing works of art or anxiety over presenting in the gallery spaces. Instead, discussing works of art was a familiar routine as it was frequently used to achieve the Responding and Connecting Standards for Art Education (National Arts Standards, n.d.). Scarlet stated that she enjoyed watching museum educators' model VTS at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, however, it was not new to her. In addition, Scarlet stated that it simply reaffirmed her teaching techniques. Hudson mentioned that it showed her the importance of slowing down and not talking so much during a discussion. Thus, while Hein (2012) implied that the constructivist methods used for discussing art in the art museum is removed from classroom teaching, in this study, museum discussions were not so different from how art specialists discuss works of art in their classrooms.

## **Post-Museum Experience**

As stated by Falk & Dierking (2013), art museum summer institutes are designed to introduce teachers to museum methodologies and resources that can be applied to the teacher's classroom. Over the course of the academic year (2018–2019) the participants were asked during the three interviews to describe the qualities of the two art museum curricula that they applied to, altered then applied to, or omitted from their practices. During the interviews in September, the participants spoke of looking to incorporate a significant number of the curricula; however, once the year progressed, participants encountered various challenges due to their planned curricula or to them having reconsidered the relevancy of what they learned.

### **Incorporating the Learning**

#### *Attentiveness to Discussions and Increasing Visual Images*

The need for attentiveness when facilitating a discussion that was meaningful within a standardized curriculum was frequently expressed as important by both the generalist and art specialist participants. The participants perceived that works of art can generate authentic and meaningful discussions and in turn bring about desired characteristics students, for example, empathy. Participants stated that they learned how to

slow down when discussing a work of art due to the active learning and dialogical teaching modelled by the museum educators. For instance, Mariah allowed for more time for her students to “wander” and explore the work of art before starting a discussion. Scarlet limited the number of works of art to enable her students to go “deeper into a work of art,” and Hudson avoided talking too much. While some participants were focused on developing authentic connections, others were preoccupied with literacy standards. Lily and Chloe noticed that when they were more attentive to the discussion, their students had the chance to build stronger oral language skills. This reinforces Wexler’s (2014) position that the benefit of discussing art is to improve literacy skills.

In this study, all of the generalist participants increased the number of works of art or visual images that they included in their lessons. This is perhaps because the generalist participants realized they did not need extensive background knowledge of the work of art to discuss it. As an example, Colleen indicated that the open-ended questioning techniques modelled by museum educators at the PMA afforded her a fresh approach. She believed that it was mandatory to provide background information on the artist or artwork before students looked at a work, but she recognized after the program that this is not the case. Furthermore, the generalist participants featured more work of arts within a lesson due to an increased confidence to discuss art. Open-ended questions allowed for the participants to discuss a work of art without needing to touch upon the aesthetic qualities or apply specific art vocabulary. These findings are similar to Chin’s (2017) study, where the pre-service teachers believed that a work of art could be discussed using VTS without extensive research into the work and without requiring substantial knowledge of art.

While the generalists were incorporating more works of art into their lessons, it could be questioned whether the dialogues they generated were concerned with the work of art itself or if they acted simply as a novel way to introduce a curriculum topic. Bell (2011) recommended that factual information be used to contextualize the work of art, causing more insightful dialogue, yet none of the generalist participants mentioned conducting research pertaining to works. Aside from Mariah, none of the generalist participants attempted to teach their students to apply art vocabulary or invited their students to discuss their emotional

reactions to a work. In addition, Lily and Eloise avoided discussing the aesthetic qualities. While the generalist participants were featuring more works of art, their focus was not on engaging with their intrinsic or aesthetic values. Kraybill (2018) had signalled that generalist teachers often only learn to discuss the work of art at a surface level and need more knowledge about how to discuss and value other qualities found in a work of art in order to facilitate more valuable classroom lessons about art itself.

### Using the Art Museums' Curricular Resources

The art museums had supplemented their programs with various curricula materials, such as laminated posters of works of art from their collections and/or a binder of printed resources.<sup>78</sup> The intention was for participants to have these resources to reference or apply in their classrooms. Guskey (2002) had asserted that teachers tend to apply those activities from professional development workshops that align most with their current practices. This was also true with the participants in this study. For instance, Lily, Chloe, and Eloise readily incorporated *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)* into their curricula as it could be applied to a social studies lesson. In contrast, Scarlet expressed that the same painting was a “beautiful classical piece,” but she had no intention of featuring it in her art class as it was irrelevant to her curriculum.

### *Poster Resources*

The laminated posters were the most employed resource as they could be easily used to facilitate a discussion. If the posters could not compliment the curricula, they were not used or displayed. The generalist participants would configure and adapt the posters to fit the topic under discussion. As an illustration, both Lily and Chloe had integrated *Along the Shore* by William Trost Richards into their STEM

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<sup>78</sup> As previously mentioned, participants reported lacking the time to review the summer institute resources. For instance, Chloe had intended to review the printed resources provided by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, however, she lacked the time once she returned to her fourth grade classroom. She shared that it was unlikely that she would review the material as it had been months since completing the program. This sentiment was echoed by several participants. Eloise stated, “I do feel disappointed because I know that as I get further away from the professional development, I’ll be less likely to put it into the classroom. It’ll start to fade.”



lessons. Lily used it to launch her unit on bodies of water for a science class, and Chloe used the same image to discuss tessellations in a math lesson.<sup>79</sup> The interchangeability of *Along the Shore* and its apparent usefulness in disparate units of study demonstrates that the inherent qualities of the painting were not important; the primary concern was how the subject matter of the painting could be paired with the science or math lesson. Lily and Chloe were both pleased with integrating the painting within the STEM subjects; however, the art was used as was a simple activity and not examined further. As noted by Clapp and Jimenez (2016), generalist teachers believe that they are integrating art with other subjects; however, it tends to be used as an add-on and only narrowly explored for its own sake.

The laminated posters were an ideal format for the elementary generalist participants as they could gather their students onto the carpet to look closely at them and then display them afterwards, however other participants found them impractical. Akin to Nolte-Yupari's (2019) observation regarding teaching art-on-a-cart, Taylor was unable to present any of the laminated posters as she found it too cumbersome to carry them and push her art cart. Hudson was also unable to use the posters; she lacked her own art classroom and travelled between two schools to maximize the number of classes she taught. Hudson stated that it would just add to her mental workload. Oddly, it was the art specialists rather than the generalists who could not use the poster resources because of how their teaching was structured.

Interestingly, none of the participants described displaying the posters to enhance their classroom environments. Instead, several participants described waiting for a time to show the work. Eloise would hide the posters, saying "I want them to be a surprise. I don't want the kids to get used to seeing them." Scarlet placed Kaphar's *The Cost of the Removal* behind her desk waiting for a moment to incorporate it into an art lesson. And while Hudson wished to incorporate the laminated posters from Crystal Bridges

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<sup>79</sup> Both Mariah and Colleen included *The Libraries Are Appreciated* poster to generate conversations and insights for their Black History Month Units.

Museum of American Art, she believed displaying them would cause too much controversy due their content, for example, Marshall's *Our Town*.

### *Printed Resources*

The printed resources were not readily integrated into the participants' curricula. In particular, the content of the VAST binder from the PMA's Socially Engaged Art summer institute was viewed as irrelevant and unsuitable. The binder contained journal articles that complemented the lectures, documents from AORTA on how to create an inclusive classroom, and a resource from Teaching Tolerance that included a web link for online curricular materials. Colleen described reviewing the resource binder, stating, "I would love to use it if I was either an art teacher or even just a higher grade level teacher with those topics." In this way, Colleen implies that the art classroom is a better space for discussing challenging social topics.<sup>80</sup> Interestingly though, Taylor, who was an art specialist, placed the binder in the staff room. She stated, "I've told everybody that I have so much information that can be utilized within the classroom." However, she found little use for the resources for her art class. Even though the participants enjoyed discussing the challenging social topics in the VAST program, they questioned the content of the resource binder and picked and chose what to enact or omit from the art museum's curriculum.<sup>81</sup>

### *Theatre Resources*

The theatre resource booklet from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute was predominately used at the start of the school year but was not used by all of the participants.<sup>82</sup> Lily, Chloe, and Eloise utilized the theatre activities in order to "build community" within their classrooms, similar to its use at the summer institute. These activities centred on the students supporting and respecting each other. The most popular theatre activity was the Zip Zap Zop. Both Chloe and Lily applied it at the

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<sup>80</sup> Zander (2004) had proposed this same thought regarding the art classroom: that it is the ideal space to discuss social issues.

<sup>81</sup> Mariah did not describe using the VAST's Resource Binder; however, she had stated wishing for more time to review it to familiarize herself better with the content and activities.

<sup>82</sup> Lily described the resource booklet as her "Bible." It was kept on her desk in order to reference the activities and acted as a reminder to use them.

start of the year as an icebreaker game and to demonstrate the importance of attentiveness to classmates during discussions. Hudson saw it as “fun” activity and “as a brain break” to develop observation skills in her students. Other participants such as Scarlet felt uncomfortable using the theatre activities in her art class. She questioned its usefulness and how it aligned with her curriculum. Eloise completely abandoned the theatre activities after attempting them in her world history class as it was impossible to get the students back on track. Over the course of the year, the theatre games were used less frequently as the participants had achieved their objectives with it or as stated by Hudson and Eloise, they simply took away time from teaching. This corresponds with Allen’s (2010) observation that teachers are preoccupied with fulfilling objectives outlined in their planned curricula.

### *Studio Activities*

Only the VAST summer institute incorporated hands-on art-making activities. While the participants were exposed to a variety of projects, for example painting a rock, paper cut-outs, creating a mandala, paper-making, assembling a journal, and collage with the collective Zine. However, these were not readily incorporated. Generalist participants found it challenging to incorporate it into their curricula. For instance, Colleen had the intention of exploring the paper-making activity, hoping to incorporate it into a STEAM fair project with the help of the science teacher, however this never materialized. Mariah described using drawing and collaborating with the art specialist on staff, however, she never mentioned incorporating the art-making projects introduced at VAST. Only Taylor had included the journal-making and mandala studio activities as they complemented her overarching theme of art as healing.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> It should be mentioned that while Taylor may not have included a variety of the studio activities, she had incorporated her overall experience from VAST into her students’ Healing Box studio project, which centred on art as healing.

## Partnerships with the Art Museums

### Working Directly with the Art Museum

During the interviews, several participants described previous and ongoing experiences with both the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art and with their local art museums in the form of a partnership.<sup>84</sup> Three distinct goals of these partnerships emerged from the interviews: 1) museum educator as a resource, 2) classroom experience, and 3) field trip.

The museum educator as a resource was described by Taylor and Mariah. Both participants intentionally sought out advice or help from museum educators. As a resource, the museum educators provided additional information or helped to organize specialized field trips to the PMA. Both Taylor and Mariah had developed these relationships due to frequent visits to the PMA with their students or participating in workshops hosted at the PMA. Unlike Matthewson's (2003) view that hierarchical power dynamics exist between museum educators and teachers, these relationships were described as positive and egalitarian. Neither participant uttered feelings of inadequacy when contacting the museum educators for support.

The second goal major goal of museum-educator partnerships was that museum educators would provide an additional learning experience in the participant's classroom. As suggested by Bobick and Horby (2013), in order for this partnership to be successful, it requires a clear understanding of the project from both the teacher and the museum educator, as well as flexibility from both. To illustrate, Chloe and her grade 4 cycle team were paired with a museum educator from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Chloe and the museum educator discussed the purpose of the partnership: the museum educator was to develop a cross-curricular art project that combined the Missouri social studies curriculum with the museum's collection. In addition, Chloe had voiced which works of art were appropriate for the new social studies curriculum. In order for the partnership to be successful, it required flexibility and dialogue between

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<sup>84</sup> All of the partnerships were funded through government grants or from a private donor.

both professionals. Chloe was pleased that her students had applied Visual Thinking Strategies while discussing works of art, learned facts concerning George Washington, and created a hands-on project with watercolour paints. Yet, while Chloe had not communicated it to the museum educator, in the interview she expressed mild dissatisfaction. The works of art of the city scenes of Boston that were selected and shown to the students by the museum educator were not from the correct period. This signified the museum educator's unclear understanding of the teacher's curricular needs. Chloe did not mention this observation to the museum educator as she felt that the museum educator had done "an overall good job," and she did not want to offend the museum educator, thus suggesting an imbalance in the partnership.

A third goal of a partnership was to provide opportunities for field trips. The intention of the field trip was to provide students with access to a cultural institution that they may not have the means to attend. As an example, Hudson had applied to The Willard and Pat Walker School Visit Program, which would enable her art students to visit Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art free of charge. Hudson described it as a "lottery" in that the number of applicants that are drawn matches the funds provided for that year. She expressed that she had been lucky as it was her third time "winning the lottery." Hudson applied to provide her art students who lived in a rural area of Arkansas an art museum experience — exposure to culture and works of art. Similar to Kraybill's (2014) assertion that discussing works of art in the museum provides an opportunity to express different viewpoints; Hudson believed it too to be an opportunity for them to learn how to express themselves.<sup>85</sup>

At times to enhance a field trip to the art museum, additional instruction was provided by the museum educators in the participant's classroom either before or after the field trip. The museum educators then have the opportunity to provide information that is different from what the teacher can provide. It is

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<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, Hudson had to cancel the field trip at the last minute. The school needed to host a flu shot clinic that had not been organized when Hudson had selected the date for the field trip. Her administration would not move the date for the flu shot clinic even though Hudson had booked the field trip months in advance. Hudson had even suggested taking only the students who already had the flu shot on the field trip; however, that proposal was dismissed by the administration.

also an opportunity to familiarize the students with the works of art that they will be seeing or have seen. As an example, Scarlet described a partnership between her school and local art museum in Idaho in which Scarlet's students met with museum educators three times to discuss art. The first part involved the museum educators visiting the school to introduce the students the works of art to be viewed at the art museum. The second part was the field trip to the art museum, including a guided tour led by museum docents. For the final part, the museum educators returned to Scarlet's classroom to conduct a reflection workshop concerning the works of art from the field trip.

Scarlet stated that the partnership was successful because the students learned museum etiquette, they became comfortable in the museum space, and viewed a variety of works of art. However, Scarlet noted that her students had a surface level of engagement with the works of art, unlike her experiences with the deep-looking activities at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. However, similar to Chloe, Scarlet articulated mild dissatisfaction with the collaboration in the interview. She says, "I would have preferred to work more directly with the museum educators, to have their experiences . . . with fewer works instead of such a quick overview." Scarlet expressed that she was uncertain of the willingness of the docents to alter their tours, and she felt uncomfortable asking them to do so during the field trip. It was not discussed in the interview why Scarlet was uncomfortable to express her feelings to the museum docents. As suggested by Matthewson (2003), perceived hierarchical power structures inhibit teachers from benefiting fully from programming devised by art museums. Interestingly, these hierarchical power structures were not evident during the summer institutes.

This section pertained to the participants reflecting upon their experiences at the summer institutes and discussing the activities from the two curricula that they incorporated or omitted. The physical environment of the art museums was significant in numerous ways as it provided a space for an aesthetic experience, well-being, empowerment, and growth. Following the professional development programs, the generalist teachers intentionally included more works of art in their lessons than they had before due to feeling less anxious to discuss a work of art. However, the generalist participants tended to focus on the

content instead of other characteristics. Regarding applying the resources and activities, these were used if they aligned with the participants existing curricula, which supports the observations presented by Guskey (2002). The art specialists found it challenging to use the laminated posters due to constraints imposed on their teaching environments. It was also revealed in the interviews that several of the participants continued professional relationships with the museum educators and participated in various partnerships with local art museums.

The following section focuses on particular themes that emerged from the data regarding professional development. Specific themes included funding and power dynamics with administration. The participants reflected upon the preferred characteristics of professional development and described their recommendations with regards to the professional development that they had received at the two art museum summer institutes.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout this study, participants described their experiences of professional development within their schools and school districts and the professional development that they pursue during the summer months or on weekends. The majority of the participants sought out professional development to satisfy the professional development hours required to maintain their teacher licence (The Art of Education, n.d.). Yet largely the participants in this study had already completed the required number of professional development hours before attending the summer institutes.

### **Funding**

Hill (2009) observed that there were significant differences between professional development that was offered at the school or district level and those offered at a university or a large cultural institution. This notable difference in the quality and characteristics propelled the participants in this study to all seek funding to attend what they believed would be higher quality professional development. The ability for a participant to select a professional development course was dependent upon funding. All of the participants

relied upon grants or funding to attend professional development that was outside of what was provided by their schools or districts.

### Feeling Valued

The participants who attended Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute had applied for funding that covered the majority of their expenses: hotel, transportation, light breakfast and lunch, and the course fee. Repeatedly all of the participants stressed their appreciation that Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art had provided the financial assistance. As an illustration, Scarlet articulated that it made her feel “valued” because she was being “treated like a professional” and that “it is such a rarity in teaching.” These sentiments express that the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute was not just providing a professional development program; it was infusing value in what teachers do in the classroom.

Participants who attended the VAST program could apply for a scholarship that covered the fee for the course. Taylor was a recipient of the scholarship and expressed immense gratitude for this. Again, a feeling of being valued was generated by the scholarship. Consequently, Taylor used her experience as a teachable moment. During the first assembly of the academic year, she discussed her experience at VAST and informed the student community that she was provided with a scholarship. The goal was to demonstrate the importance of assisting others, pursuing an education, and that even teachers continue to learn once they have left university.<sup>86</sup>

### Challenges with Funding

Several of the participants participated in professional development in various states and other countries. They described relying upon their schools or districts for the funding in order to do this. However, it required some of the participants to negotiate, be assertive, and at times having “to beg and beg,” as

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<sup>86</sup> Midway into Taylor’s career, she had set up a small scholarship program for her art students to pursue additional art classes. She used the VAST scholarship to demonstrate that teachers can also benefit from scholarships.



Hudson describes. For example, to attend the National Art Education Association (NAEA) conference, Taylor had to insist to the administration, “You’re sending everybody else everywhere, and I don’t get a chance to go do anything professional.” She was able to attend the NAEA conference for four days, and her administration reimbursed her. In contrast, Eloise stated that she had control over her budget for professional development, but the amount was so little that it was impossible to attend out of state conferences. This was echoed by Lily who noted that it was sometimes “tricky” to receive funding for a conference as it was dependent upon how expensive it would be for the school. Mariah and Colleen had no issues with asking for funding to attend local professional development workshops.

## **Power Dynamics**

Another theme that emerged was the ability, or inability, for the participants to select professional development outside of what was offered by the school or district.<sup>87</sup> These limitations were set by the administrators or school districts. Participants used words such as “allowed” or “very fortunate” to depict the ability to select a workshop outside of in-service days, but participants had to go out of their way to do this. For example, Taylor was once able to craft her own professional development focused on receiving personalized tours at various museums in Philadelphia. However, in order to do this, she had to demonstrate to the administration that it was unfair that teachers of other disciplines created their own professional development. Taylor’s initiative led to a partnership with a local museum that lent her a cart of objects and teaching tools to use in her art classes. Only at Colleen’s private school were the teachers consulted on the types of the professional development workshops they should participate in; however, even here the administration would finalize the selection.

Hourigan (2011) noted that it was predominately the administration who select professional development workshops and show that selected professional development tends to focus on core subjects

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<sup>87</sup> The ability to select a professional development program was not dependent upon whether the participant taught in a private school, independent, or public school.

such as math and English. As expressed by Allison (2013), art teachers continue to receive poor-quality professional development due to NCLB Act. This feeling of being “left behind” (Allison, 2013, p. 178) was voiced by Hudson, who claimed, “I am usually forced into so much professional development that is not even art-related. Those are the ones where I have to twiddle my thumbs and wait for them to talk about how to evaluate reading at the third grade.” Hudson suggested the issue was related to lack of funding for specialized art workshops. This was voiced by the other specialists: because there is only a small number of specialists, they are often lumped together with all the teachers on the staff. Furthermore, Taylor asserted that “we shouldn’t be stuck in a building doing what everybody else is doing.” Taylor stated that due to the unique characteristics of the working conditions for art specialists, they require different forms of professional development. According to her, these forms included working in collaboration with artists and visiting institutions. In these unique spaces, she envisioned that art specialists would be able to discuss, share ideas, and assist each other.

It was not just the art teachers that expressed frustration. All of the participants described various degrees of frustration due to having to attend “meaningless professional development and having to sit way, way too long,” as expressed by Chloe. And Lily intentionally applied her banked sick days to avoid attending in-service days. She asked how many times could she possibly sit through another workshop on reading methods? Interestingly, the data revealed that several of the generalist participants also expressed annoyance with attending workshops focusing on reading or writing. In sum, while the participants described regularly encountering poor-quality professional development, professional development is a principal concern as a result of NCLB; it should be questioned why no one is held accountable or questions its validity, as suggested by Guskey and Yoon (2009).

## Characteristics of School or District Professional Development

### Counterproductive Experiences

The types of professional development that the participants received in-school and at the district level focused on learning new curricula, learning a new program for inputting grades, and learning about evaluation.<sup>88</sup> As all of the participants had over ten years of teaching experience, they voiced that the content of the in-school or district professional development was redundant. The participants expressed boredom as these programs focused on topics that they were already familiar with. Colleen noted that professional development tended to showcase strategies for teachers who just entered the profession. While most of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with school or district professional development, Colleen expressed pleasure. At her school, they were trying out unconventional forms of professional development, for example, a yoga workshop to help with mindfulness in the classroom. The yoga workshop was novel, so it generated interest, unlike the more typical workshops described by the other participants.

### Preferred Characteristics

Ponder et al. (2010) described various forms of teacher professional development varying from lecture format to focusing on personal growth. The participants mainly attended lecture- and workshop-based professional development, which was viewed by the participants as the least desirable model. As Eisner (2000) had asserted, professional development speakers know little of teaching and the daily work of teachers. As an illustration, Eloise expressed that poor professional development tends to “follow patterns that we don’t want to do to our students.” This included a lack of enthusiasm, patronizing behaviour, and long lectures supplemented by Power Point.

Twenty-four years ago, Jeffers (1996) reported that teachers wished to learn something new to “stay fresh” (p. 111) when attending professional development. In this study, the participants repeatedly stressed

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<sup>88</sup> All of the participants laughed when asked to describe poor quality professional development and seemed to enjoy venting their experiences with it. Yet, when asked to describe the characteristics of quality professional development, a seriousness was observed in their voices, possibly indicating that they wanted their opinions to be heard.

that professional development should provide new ideas to reinvigorate their practices. Chloe remarked that they should not just “provide meaningless activities.” Characteristics of a quality professional development listed by participants included: genuine connections to the curriculum found in classrooms; forms that were applicable to classroom practices; and those that provided not just simple hands-on skills but required teachers to be creative. The art specialists would ideally like to discover new techniques or a trick that could be applied in their art classrooms.

## **Participant Recommendations for Summer Institutes**

While the summer institutes had provided the participants with learning experiences that they were able to enact in their classrooms, several participants stated that they had wanted training in other areas. Although VTS provided a structure for discussions, all of the participants from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute would have appreciated other methods and more specific skills to discuss a work of art. It was felt that there were other ways to create more authentic meaning between the work of art and the student. Another suggestion from Chloe, Scarlet, and Hudson was that institutes should teach skills or tips on how to use works of art to navigate or lead conversations that focused on racism. Scarlet, who was well-versed in VTS and other strategies, yearned to learn methods to generate more dialogical conversations with works of art that brought about empathy and understanding in her middle school art students.

The generalist participants also expressed that they would like to learn how to better incorporate works of art into the subjects that they teach. It seemed that while they were using works of art to spark discussions, they were lacking something that could help them expand the understanding of the topic under discussion.<sup>89</sup> This brings to mind Yenawine’s (2014) assertion that if teachers use VTS without some background in art, it remains flat.

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<sup>89</sup> This draws upon Kraybill (2018), who wonders if art museums should focus on aligning their collections with a teacher’s curricula or present methods to learn from a work of art that focus on the experience with a work of art.

In summary, this section of the chapter centred on the participants reflecting upon professional development that they had participated in both at the school and/or district level along with ones that they have sought out. Funding and their administrators' control over it contributed to the participants' ability to attend professional development of their choice. Participants were invited to discuss the qualities and characteristics of professional development, and that included both positive and negative remarks. In addition, the participants voiced their opinions about and provided recommendations for the art museum summer institutes that they had attended.

The following section of this chapter examines the data in reference to Huebner's use of language and his Five Values (Huebner, 1966/1999). As previously stated, Huebner viewed language as an integral component to understanding curriculum and how it is enacted in the teacher's classroom. Furthermore, Huebner's Five Values — technical, scientific, political, aesthetic, and ethical — assist us the view the data from another perspective.

## **Applying Huebner's Approach to Understanding Curricula**

### **Curricula and Language**

As I discussed in chapter 3, Huebner (1968/2008) described three uses of language in the classroom space: 1) Language as Ready-to-Hand, which focuses on language that directs the student. 2) Language as Happening of Truth, which focuses on moments when the teacher removes him or herself from instruction to reflect upon actions directly resulting from Language as Ready-to-Hand. And 3) Language as Thought of Thinkers, which are moments when the teacher questions and assesses the use of certain words to rethink how to interact with students.

#### **Language as Ready-To-Hand**

During interviews, all of the participants described various instances of direct instruction that occurred in their classrooms as a result of the curricula they experienced at one of the two summer institutes. This was particularly evident when participants explained how they incorporated works of art into their

pedagogy. The language focused on explaining the experience in a step-by-step manner. Participants would: 1) describe the instructions they provided to the students to follow when they look at the work of art; 2) provide the types of questions to be asked; 3) state the learning objectives; and 4) describe how the work of art supported the learning of a skill or another subject, for example, social studies. Participants never reflected on how their direct instruction was affecting how students looked at works of art or how they incorporated it into their lessons.

### *Categories of Language*

From the analysis, the language that the participants used could be classified into three categories: descriptive, expressive, or regret. When participants used descriptive language, they focused on the tasks of the learning activity. As an example, the VTS strategy was repeatedly described as a “routine.” The dialogical model that embraced improvisation modelled by the museum educators at both summer institutes transformed into a type of formula for direct instruction. Using this VTS routine reduced the work of art to an object that lost its intrinsic value. In my view, the work of art in the classroom space could have been a piece of wallpaper given how it was used by most participants. Interestingly, when participants described seeing works of art in the gallery spaces, they used more dynamic language, for example, Lily claimed that “it fed my soul.”

The second category, expressive language, was applied when participants spoke of moments when the unexpected occurred with works of art or with instruction linked to the direct instruction. In some instances, this was linked with feelings about finding a “perfect” work of art for a lesson. For example, Lily sought a painting to incorporate into a Thanksgiving lesson. In the interview, she described feeling frustrated when she could not find a painting and then expressed relief and joy when she uncovered *Freedom from Want* by Norman Rockwell, which worked seamlessly with the lesson. In another example, Colleen was surprised that her students “loved looking at the landscape (paintings) of Alaska” and decided from their reaction to apply more works of art into her lessons. Regarding instruction, while Taylor used descriptive language to explain how her students had to “cut and trace accurately” the healing boxes, she

employed expressive language to describe the purpose of the project, which was about healing. It should be noted that the expressive language used to describe the direct instruction was not always positive, as noticed with Hudson. While she expressed moments of happiness regarding her students, she frequently used negative language as a result of her teaching environment. Interestingly, when the participants described their experiences with direct instruction in the gallery settings at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, it was always positive.

The third category, regret, was frequently used when participants described their inability to use the curricula resources or activities. Regret was linked with feelings of failure and was often associated with lack of time to incorporate the materials. As a case in point, Eloise voiced that she was “mad” with herself that she never got around to using certain laminated poster resources such as *The Cost of the Removal* by Titus Kaphar. Chloe, Colleen, and Scarlet expressed that if they had additional time to review the curricula materials, they would have incorporated them into their lessons.

### Language as Happening of Truth

Language as Happening of Truth emphasized moments when the participant reflected upon, questioned, and assessed the use of words or language in their instructions. This reflection occurred at various points in the interviews when the participants considered how they incorporated the summer institute curricula into their practices. As stated previously in the chapter, Guskey (2002) observed that teachers have difficulty adapting new learning into their classroom practices. This tension was evident as the participants reflected on their classroom practices. For instance, certain participants questioned if students gained critical thinking skills while using the VTS strategies and the importance of learning factual information concerning the work of art. Eloise observed that the VTS strategies generated better observation skills in her world history students. However, she questioned if it was generating critical thinking. This same concern resulted in Eloise revising her direct instruction, which had incorporated qualities from the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art curricula and returning to her familiar predetermined questioning techniques.

### *Using Works of Art*

When participants incorporated works of art into their direct instruction, the generalist participants did not question how the aesthetics contributed to the subject matter. Discussing the aesthetic qualities was not the focus of the curricula at the two summer institutes: museum educators would incorporate it in the discussions in reaction to a comment. It seemed that none of the generalist participants, except for Mariah, acquired an understanding of how an artist works with both forms, the aesthetic and the content, both of which contribute to the viewers' experience of the work of art, as described by Eisner (1985/2005). Therefore, it is not surprising that the aesthetic qualities were ignored by Lily and Eloise; they believed it would derail their direct instruction. In contrast, the art specialists who were well-versed in aesthetics used it frequently in their direct instruction. However, they still questioned how to make seeing a work of art more meaningful an experience.

It was acknowledged by the generalist participants that works of art improved the direct instruction, though none of them reflected on why it improved. The generalist participants did not reflect upon why a work of art shown in the classroom sparked the interest of their students. Neither did any of the participants reflect on the necessity of providing factual information regarding the work of art as modelled by the museum educators. Furthermore, the participants did not question how not researching the work of art or the artist impacted their discussions with their students.

### *Teacher's Role in a Discussion*

When participants reflected upon their roles during a discussion with their students, they realized they already had a set idea of their role due to attending the summer institutes. They stated that it altered their approaches. Eloise, Lily, and Mariah found that they were more attentive and listening more to their students. Both Hudson and Scarlet considered different ways to lead a discussion without providing their own opinions, which encouraged their students to take more control over the discussions in their art classes.



### *School Environment*

As participants reflected on how they had incorporated the museum curricula into their direct instruction, they described moments where they avoided it. This was due to a feeling of unease of using some activities, for example, the theatre activities from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, or due to the content being difficult or controversial to use, such as resource binder from VAST. Several participants commented that their curricular choices were affected by the school environment. Some of these factors included: teaching art-on-a-cart, forty-five-minute periods, large or small class sizes, student behaviours, and support or little support from administration. All of these had either a positive or negative impact on their direct instruction. For instance, Scarlet observed that the class size determined how she navigated a discussion about a work of art. In Mariah's class of eight students permitted her to more easily visit museums to have class discussions.

Regarding student dynamics, Eloise noted that the history classes that had more students with behavioural issues impeded opportunities to have formal debates. This was also voiced by Scarlet and Hudson: inclusion policies affected how they approached teaching a lesson. The participants overwhelmingly felt that it was difficult for them to consider solutions, in part because these solutions would require conflict with parents or administration.

### Language as Thought of Thinkers

Language as Thought of Thinkers was when participants reflected upon the direct instruction, either at the summer institutes or in their classrooms, and described it as a poetic experience. With regards to Huebner's (1968/2008) Language as Thought of Thinkers direct instruction develops wonder in both the teacher and the student. It is a transformative process that can invoke revelation as a result of an event or a happening.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> The challenge with analyzing Language as Happening of Truth and Language as Thought of Thinkers is that it can also be a thought that may not have been voiced by the participants. Therefore, what is present could be assembled from the participants transcripts.

Instances of Language as Thought of Thinkers mostly occurred when participants reflected on their experiences at the summer institutes and less in their classrooms. The experiences within the galleries with the educators and museum educators were described as poetic moments. These poetic moments came about due to the dialogical teaching and discussions that invited the participants to experience a work of art from various viewpoints that also invited private contemplation. As an illustration, Mariah observed that “people kind of entered into things and it sparked something different in everyone.” Taylor described that it was “extremely emotional.” By witnessing the museum educator’s direct instruction, it demonstrated to her “how I should teach to the students by the way of the heart.” For participants at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute, Lily voiced that she got to “talk about art in a way that I never talked about before.” Furthermore, when the participants extended themselves out of their comfort zones, it created these “aha moments,” as described by Mariah when she encountered theatre activities.

Once participants returned to their classrooms, these poetic experiences were not as evident. Participants provided little description concerning how they and their students experienced moments of wonder, spontaneity, or beauty. Participants mostly only described moments when their students acquired new knowledge due to their direct instruction. The participants had poetic experiences in the gallery spaces and the museum curricula provided them with a process to think of works of art differently, but it did not transfer into their classrooms. Although the participants expressed wishing for their students to have meaningful and authentic discussions with the use of works of art, they were unable to recreate their experiences in the galleries.

## **Huebner’s Value System**

For this study, I chose to employ Huebner’s (1966/2008) Value System to further explore the data. Huebner’s Five Values for assessing curricula — technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical — provided me another way to examine the data. Huebner argued that all Five Values are required for a curriculum to be effective and that that one value is not more significant than another. Investigating these

values helped to reveal the effectiveness of the art museums' summer institute curricula as experienced by the participants and how that transferred into the participants' pedagogy.

### The Technical Value

The technical value concentrates on students achieving particular learning and skills through various activities, for example, learning how to do simple mathematical calculations. By gaining these skills, students will better be able to participate in a future workforce. While Huebner (1966/2008) asserted that the technical value was important as it ensured that the students were acquiring necessary skills, he emphasized it should not be the sole value considered important. A focus on the technical value reduces teaching to a planned curriculum and focusing only on the technical in the classroom does not allow for other forms of learning or deviation from the planned curricula. In this study, the technical value was a focus of participants, revealed by moments when participants describe the activities from the two summer institutes and how they applied them into their pedagogy. Participants applied these activities in order to reinforce their planned curricula and to contribute to skill development, despite the summer institutes' focus on blending personal growth with learning about works of art and facilitating a dialogical conversation.<sup>91</sup>

### *To Gain New Ideas*

The participants primarily viewed the professional development at the summer institutes as an opportunity to acquire new activities or skills that could be instantly applied to their pedagogy. During the summer institutes, participants were exposed to a variety of socially challenging topics, art-making activities, and a variety of works of art at VAST. In addition, at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, they participated in a variety of theatre activities and observed museum educators facilitating numerous dialogical discussions with works of art. At both summer institutes, the art museum educators demonstrated how the various activities could encourage questioning and encouraged educators to develop their own

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<sup>91</sup> While the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute centred on learning how to facilitate a dialogical discussion with the use of VTS, it was never approached as a skill but as a method to generate authentic and personal connections with the works of art.

interpretations of works of art, similar to Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005). Furthermore, the museum educators suggested that the educators be more flexible and spontaneous in their teaching, for example by using the theatre activities or engaging in a dialogical discussion with a work of art.

Regardless, all of the participants selected which activities from the summer institute curricula they would like to incorporate into their teaching primarily for their technical qualities and their ability to develop students' hard skills. Whereas the constructivist approach of VTS was used to generate meaningful and authentic discussions in the gallery spaces, in the classroom, participants applied it to develop skills in observation, critical thinking, and communication. Even though these qualities are associated with VTS (Yenawine, 2014), the participants rarely spoke of their students generating meaningful connections with the works of art. The generalist participants believed that VTS was a skill that could be developed within the students that would assist learning in other subjects. For instance, Lily used VTS to show her grade 2 students how to support a statement with evidence. She believed that her grade 2 students acquiring this skill through VTS should translate to them achieving high reading scores on a state reading exam. Other participants, such as Scarlet and Hudson, applied VTS in their art classes in hopes that their students would develop stronger observation skills. Scarlet anticipated that using VTS would help her students developing better drawing skills. Certain activities, for example, Zip Zap Zop was also used to develop particular social skills in the students. Other activities, for example, studio projects at VAST, were for the most part excluded from participants' lessons. Skill development is important, but not all of the participants expressed how these skills contributed to the other values described by Huebner.

### *Using Works of Art*

The focus on the technical value was further witnessed when participants discussed using works of art in their lessons. Works of art were used by generalist participants in activities with specific learning objectives that were intended to complement another discipline. In these cases, the work of art was used for skill development or to present an element from the participant's planned curricula. For instance, both Chloe and Lily incorporated *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)* into a social studies lesson

where the main objective was to present historical information. The value of *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)* resided in its ability to be a visual resource for a social studies lesson and not as a work of art. By focusing on using works of art for the technical value, teachers separate the studied piece from its own aesthetic and the artist's intent.

### The Political Value

The political value pertains to how teachers, administrators, and politicians channel power and control for their own means. This value provides insight into the inner workings of the school. Hourigan (2011) observed that professional development is routinely selected by the administrator: it is they who determine if a teacher will receive funds to participate in professional development outside of the school. In this study, the political value emerged in two distinct themes: professional development and the value of art in the schools.

### *Participants' Relationship with Administration*

Regarding the theme of professional development, several participants described power dynamics between themselves and their administrators. Participants voiced frustration in that they needed to request permission from the administration to attend many types of professional development. It was not discussed if this was due to a lack of trust on the part of the administrator, a need to assert authority over the participant or simply a lack of money in the budget. With the exception of Colleen's school, in which teachers were consulted on professional development, participants had little influence on what was selected for them to participate in.

The political value was further witnessed in funding. If a participant sought out professional development themselves, they had to persevere to find the monies. As an example, Hudson and Eloise both used the word "allowed" to describe their experiences in requesting funding from their administrators. To bypass this power struggle, the majority of the participants relied upon government or private funding or

grants through organizations to attend their chosen professional development, which they pursued outside of school hours.

### *Why Participants Sought Out Learning*

The participants stated that their motivation for seeking out professional development was either to meet the requirements of their teaching licences or to improve classroom practice. All participants, except for Chloe, had already completed the necessary hours for their licencing.<sup>92</sup> Most participants asserted that goal of attending professional development was not to elevate their status in their schools, rather it was a desire to bring something back to their classrooms and to their students. For instance, Mariah had attended a week-long summer institute in Mississippi to learn about the Civil Rights Movement. Eloise had travelled to New Zealand through the Walton Foundation to further her understanding of competency-based learning. Scarlet had attended several art museum summer institutes in order to reconsider her pedagogy, and Hudson attended monthly workshops at Crystal Bridges. Lily had travelled to Texas to study inquiry-based learning for her science classes, and Taylor attended monthly workshops at the PMA. None of the reasons the participants gave for seeking out professional development were self-centred. Instead, they described how they wished it would help their students.<sup>93</sup>

### *Perception of Art Education in the School*

The political value emerged in how art was perceived within the participants' schools. Art was valued in how much time and/or space was allocated for it. All of the art specialists expressed frustration and stress with their teaching schedules because their class time was very limited or because they were compelled to move between classrooms or schools to teach. As mentioned previously in this chapter, Scarlet had to consider what was more valuable: discussing a work of art or producing a work of art. In addition, Hudson's art classes were cancelled to accommodate mandatory English language arts and math exams,

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<sup>92</sup> Chloe was not required to complete professional development hours as she had acquired her teacher's licence years prior to the new policies in place in the State of Missouri.

<sup>93</sup> While several of the participants had traveled to various locations, I believe it was not the main incentive. They each spent a minimum of five days in a classroom or museum setting learning various approaches to pedagogy.

which she had to supervise. Concerning space, Taylor was required to give up her art classroom due to increased enrolment; she was then forced to teach art-on-a-cart, which limited her ability to teach. Hudson shuffled between two schools, though Scarlet had her own classroom. The challenges that the art specialists experienced imply an indifference to art and its overall worth in the curriculum. None of the participants ever mentioned discussing these challenges with their administrators.

The incorporation of a field trip to an art museum represented the importance of art interpreted by the participants and the administration. The art specialists regarded attending an art museum with their students as an integral part of their curricula. All of the art specialists applied for grants for this reason, and if a grant was not obtained, the art specialists were unable to go on the field trip. This implies that school funds were never set aside for field trips to art museums and that administration had little regard for such trips. As mentioned above in Hudson's account, the administration forced her to cancel the field trip to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art without suggesting or helping her to reschedule it.

Whereas the art specialists valued the art museum field trip, the generalist participants rarely or never took their students to art museums prior to attending the art museum summer institutes. For instance, Chloe's students had only visited Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art due to her partnership, otherwise, she explained, her field trips were something "fun." Mariah was the exception as she had developed a museum studies program in which her grade 6 students routinely visited a variety of museums. However, she was only able to develop this program and get its funding because her administration was unusually supportive.

A final observation pertaining to the value of the art was elucidated in the types of professional development that were offered in-school and at the district level. Routinely, the art specialists were placed in workshops that were not related to their discipline. Interestingly, the generalist participants never mentioned attending art education professional development in their schools. For the most part, the last learning experience in art education for the generalist participants was a singular course in their

undergraduate studies. The interest by generalist participants in seeking out the art museum summer institutes demonstrated their desire to include more art in their curricula.

### The Scientific Value

The scientific value is described as the activities that the teacher continuously redesigns to generate new knowledge for the students. Huebner warned that if the curriculum centred only on the scientific value, it would motivate teachers to seek a best practice teaching formula. The scientific value differs from the technical value as it centres on producing new knowledge. It is not driven by the goal of acquiring skills that can be evaluated. The goals are to seek maximum change with the students and to have them attain information.

The two summer institute professional development programs produced new knowledge and made changes in several of the participants. The change was not just gaining an understanding of how to discuss a work of art; Lily, Eloise, Collen, Hudson, and Taylor all expressed they experienced much personal growth. This was due to either engaging in conversations in the galleries with peers and museum educators or being challenged to step out of their comfort zones, for example during the capstone activity at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Even though the participants had these profound experiences, it often did not translate into their pedagogy.

### *Developing Content Knowledge and the Self*

Participants anticipated that their learning from the summer institutes and the activities they took part in would nurture the production of new knowledge in their students, in particular when they looked at works of art. In the galleries, the participants learned how a work of art could be used to discuss various viewpoints and to develop a better understanding of themselves, as described by Burnham and Kai-Ke (2005).

However, most of the generalist participants incorporated the works of art to develop student understanding of the content of the subject under discussion. The knowledge focused on learning new



content and exploring social issues, for example, racism and developing a better understanding of the Civil Rights Movement. Evaluation came into play in some form following these lessons for the generalist participants. In contrast, Mariah, Colleen, and the art specialists voiced a desire to use works of art to inspire a change in their students' understanding of themselves and of others. In sum, the type of knowledge derived was dependent upon the intention of the participant.

### *VTS: A Best Practice*

The dialogical teaching that was modelled by the museum educators at the two summer institutes were altered by the participants when they applied it to their classrooms to create a best practice. The museum educators applied VTS and the Artful Thinking Palette to generate openings in the discussions and did not prescribe any of them as a set routine. Once they returned to their classrooms, several of the participants adapted what they experienced into a step-by-step routine. For example, Lily and Eloise described that the more their students “practised” VTS, the more the routine became familiar. And Mariah noticed that when her students visited a museum, she no longer had to direct them through a conversation about art. On the other hand, some participants found that the VTS routine was too procedural. For instance, Scarlet added additional questions when engaging with a work of art with her students. She felt these generated a more personal reaction. For example, she asked students to place themselves in the role of one of the individuals in the painting.

### The Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value focuses on the “symbolic and aesthetic meanings” found in the educational activities (Huebner, [1966/2008], p. 109). It is the teacher who carries the qualities of beauty and truth and symbolic meaning through the curriculum. This value refers to the things that evoke a sensory and emotional experience. Without this, the curriculum becomes a mechanical activity. In this study, the aesthetic value was prominently experienced in the gallery spaces. However, was limited within the classrooms.

## *Gallery Spaces*

The participants described having emotional reactions whenever they were in the gallery spaces. This was due in part to the aesthetic qualities of the spaces along with viewing works of art that provoked their senses. The dialogical teaching and the discussions invited the participants to engage in reflection with peers.<sup>94</sup> Although, the museum educators never directly invited educators to discuss their emotional responses, it organically emerged in the discussions. Furthermore, the thoughtfulness of the museum educators validated the importance of the educators' opinions. As an illustration, Hudson appreciated the openness and the freedom to express one's opinion. Taylor experienced beauty in the "aha" moments with educators while discussing racism with the use of works of art; she explained that this "generated personal growth" for her.

Once the participants returned to their classroom spaces, these aesthetic moments were not evident as the participants rarely cited sensory or emotional experiences in the classroom or even described their teaching as an experience that drew about something more than a mechanic reaction. Repeatedly, participants described lessons that were crafted to target curriculum standards, stating that time to engage in deep reflection with their students was limited. The work of art was used to be studied, taken apart, and compared with another work of art. Furthermore, the generalist participants avoided discussing the aesthetic qualities of the art. Exploration using VTS was surface level and not necessarily centred on an experience with the work of art, although, some participants believed that their students were having an aesthetic experience. For instance, Colleen expressed that her students experienced an "aha" moment when discussing *The Libraries Are Appreciated*: her students developed an understanding that racism was prevalent in all aspects of life prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Although, it was not stated directly in the interview if the discussion with her students addressed contemporary issues of racism. While the content of the work deepened knowledge and awareness, it seems it might not have stimulated an aesthetic reaction.

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<sup>94</sup> At the PMA, the conversations in the galleries and in other spaces brought about significant self-reflection due to discussing challenging social topics. However, one educator had informed me that they "were preaching to the choir" when engaging with the educators who attended VAST because the group was quite homogeneous and liberal-minded.

A failure to translate aesthetic experiences to the classroom likely prevented an aesthetic experience similar to what the participants had experienced in the galleries.<sup>95</sup>

## The Ethical Value

The final value, the ethical, focuses on the encounters between the teacher and the student. Here the student is not perceived to be a vessel to be filled with knowledge but as an equal in co-creating knowledge in the classroom space.

Within the school, participants viewed themselves as working alongside their students during discussions about works of art. Participants insisted they were learning from their students, but examples of these moments were not provided. Participants described themselves as facilitators or explained that they merely provided guidance during discussions about works of art. Specifically, the role of “teacher as lecturer” was frowned upon. To establish this equitable relationship, participants expressed nurturing their classroom environments with ideas of respect. As Hudson stressed, “everyone’s entitled to express their opinion and you just have to be respectful of that.” Moments where the participants were not equal with their students were witnessed when participants describe moments of accountability and evaluation.

With regards to the two summer institutes, the participants all noted positive encounters with the museum educators. Museum educators were perceived to be mindful of the various abilities of the participants during the theatre activities and with the conversations in the galleries. Repeatedly, participants described their relationships with the museum educators as respectful. Yet, the participants described their relationships with museum educators outside of the summer institutes as unequal. For instance, Chloe allocated all the decisions for the student workshops to the museum educator and Scarlet was unable to voice her preferences during an art field trip. However, it was the participants who made most of these choices.

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<sup>95</sup> Although, it is questionable if a projected image on a screen in a classroom can create the same reaction as a work of art in a gallery space.

## Summary

To summarize this chapter, I focused on analyzing the data for salient themes between all of the participants from the two summer art institutes. The intention was not to generate a comparison between the two professional development programs but instead to gain an understanding of how teachers, both generalist and art specialists, incorporate, modify, and/or omit a curriculum designed by an art museum. While the two art museums provided learning experiences that were thought-provoking, modelled dialogical teaching, encouraged skill development, and provided curricular resources, the transferability of the learning was determined by personal choices and external influences.

At the start of this chapter, I discussed how the data revealed the manners in which the participants incorporated art into their pedagogy along with the various constraints that they experienced, for example, a rigid planned curriculum and standardized testing. Participants who worked in private schools had more freedom with the curriculum that they taught. But with all participants, a type of hidden curriculum was revealed as participants described using discussions as an opportunity to teach social skills and develop their students' sense of self.

The generalist participants selected works of art based on how these could be applied to launch a lesson for another subject. Certain participants restricted the works of art that they showed as a result of the school environment that they worked in. The aesthetic qualities of a piece or developing an art vocabulary were not incorporated into these discussions, however, participants noted that including a work of art in the lesson added to the students' learning. Art specialists, on the other hand, focused on the aesthetic qualities of a work, techniques, and the artist's intent during discussions. To seek out images or resources, participants used personal libraries or online resources, for example, museum websites and YouTube. None of the participants questioned the credibility of the information presented on the online sources.

Discussions about a work of art were thought to increase critical thinking skills, observation skills, oral fluency, and develop an understanding of other viewpoints. The qualities of a successful dialogical

discussion included active participation from the students. That included students simply listening and the teacher acting as a facilitator. To verify if students were engaged, several participants paired writing with the discussion, for example, a formal essay, to evaluate the students. The lack of time for a dialogical discussion impacted what most participants could do. For instance, due to short teaching periods, the art specialists limited the talk in their classes.

The participants frequently referenced using VTS to direct a discussion with a work of art. While the participants used VTS, they did not mention if they conducted research pertaining to the work of art and layered the information into the discussion with their students, as modelled by the museum educators. A few participants believed that VTS was improving critical thinking skills, others felt that it was sampling improving observation skills. None of the participants uttered needing further training with VTS. Furthermore, in this chapter, I questioned if the participants were engaging in a dialogical discussion or simply applying open-ended questions, as several referenced VTS as a structured routine for a class discussion. Interestingly, while it was not modelled at the two summer art institutes, participants frequently compare and contrast two works of art during a discussion.

With regards to the two art museum summer institutes, the data revealed themes of space, curricula materials, and partnerships. Participants highly valued the physical space of the art museums along with the emotional and supportive spaces created by the museum educators and the other educators in the programs. Galleries became a safe space for discussions that participants would not engage in at their schools with other staff members. It was observed that while the participants enacted various activities in the museum space, these were not readily applied to their pedagogy. Curricula materials that easily aligned with the participants' pedagogy were adapted instead, for example using VTS and certain theatre activities. Poster resources were used by the generalist participants and printed resources were used by neither generalists nor specialists due to a lack of time to review them, or they omitted based upon pertinence.

It was remarked by some participants that they had an ongoing partnership the PMA, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, or with a local museum. These partnerships focused on providing the

participants' students with a classroom experience, a field trip with additional support, or the museum educator was a resource that the participant contacted for assistance. Interestingly, power dynamics emerged during some of these partnerships yet, in the summer institutes, there was none.

While participants were required to attend professional development to satisfy the requirements of their licences; the majority of the participants had already met the requirements and were seeking out professional development for their own interest. The two art museum summer institutes were selected as it was of interest to the participants and they believed that it would complement their classroom practices.

As participants discussed professional development, two topics emerged: funding and characteristics. The ability to attend a non-school or district sponsored professional development depended upon the willingness of the administrator to provide monies or the ability to secure a grant from another source. When participants received grants for the art museums, it made them feel valuable. Regarding the stated characteristics, participants remarked that professional development needs to be applicable, provide active learning, and afford new ideas. Both the generalists and the art specialists' participants voiced frustration with attending trivial workshops or lectures. It appeared that the topics of the professional development were redundant and were not of interest to the participants who all had more than ten years of teaching experience. Pertaining to the art museum summer institutes, it was suggested that the curriculum focused more on demonstrating more approaches regarding how to discuss a work of art and shown how to incorporate works of art with other subjects.

Within this chapter, I discussed exploring the data through Huebner's three uses of language in the classroom space. Language as Ready-to-Hand was frequently used in the direct instruction of works of art or referenced the summer institutes curricula and three categories emerged: descriptive, expressive, and regret. Descriptive language was utilized when participants explained how they discussed a work of art with their students. Participants used expressive language when uttering surprise or frustration when depicting using works of art in their classroom. Regret was expressed when participants could not incorporate more of the art museums' curricula into their pedagogy. Language as Happening of Truth

occurred when participants reflected on the summer institutes curricula and their own teaching. Certain participants questioned their use of VTS in their direct instruction and if it actually generated critical thinking. Concerning discussing aesthetics while using the work of art for a social studies or language arts lesson, several generalist participants thought that it was not necessary and would “derail” the discussion. In addition, participants reflected on their roles in a class discussion and considered how their school environment supported their teaching. Language as Thought of Thinkers was viewed when participants described poetic moments that they experienced with the curricula. These moments were predominately recounted at the summer institutes and were rarely mentioned while the participant was teaching in their own classroom.

Furthermore, I applied Huebner’s Value System: technical, political, scientific, aesthetic, and ethical to further explore the data. The technical value was detected in several instances e.g., the participants applied to the summer institutes with the intention of learning new skills. The various activities enacted at the summer institutes were utilized if it was thought to be applicable to build a skill in their students. Furthermore, the technical value was noticed when a work of art was included in a lesson as a support. The political value emerged as participants described frustrations with their administrations to acquire funding to attend non-school or district sponsored professional development and was identified in relation to how art was valued in the participant’s school. The scientific value, in that it produces new knowledge and maximizes change, was most noticeable within the summer institutes. Several participants described their experience as personal growth. While participants wished to use works of art to develop the self, as experienced in the galleries, once returning to their classrooms, they were used to support the content knowledge of another subject. Furthermore, several of the generalists transformed VTS into a type of best practice. The aesthetical value surfaced in the gallery spaces due to the environment and the dialogical discussions with the works of art. However, these aesthetic experiences were not evident in the participants’ classrooms as lessons needed to be crafted to satisfy curriculum standards. And the ethical value was expressed in the importance of developing an egalitarian and respectful classroom space. As a result of

employing Huebner's Value System, it demonstrated how certain values such as the technical are more frequent in all of the participants' curricula than for instance the aesthetic value.

In the following chapter I outline my experiences as a participant-observer at the two art museum summer institutes. I describe forming connections with the educators and discuss participating in the various activities through the lens of a teacher and as an observer in the two professional development programs.



# Participant-Observer

## INTRODUCTION

A comparative case study design was used for this research to better understand how teachers incorporate professional development into their classrooms, in particular the curriculum presented at an art museum summer institute. The purpose was not to assess the qualities of the two art museum summer institutes' curricula but to explore the pedagogical and curricular qualities and characteristics that supported teachers in their personal and professional development. In this chapter, the reader will learn of my own experiences as a participant-observer at the two summer institutes.

I acted as a participant-observer at both VAST at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at Teaching from Works of Art at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art to further my understanding of the two professional development programs. Gillham (2000) asserted that although participant-observation is mostly used as a descriptive informal and primarily interpretive analysis, it is able to provide insight into the group and the environment under investigation. Furthermore, taking on the role of a participant-observer allows the researcher access to the group (Yin, 2014) and facilitates capturing valuable data in a natural setting (Given, 2008). At the two summer institutes, I was visible and a full member of the group, which allowed for richer insight as each program had its own unique approach to curriculum.

As a participant, I allowed myself to establish genuine connections with the participating educators and museum educators, allowing me to bridge the gap between myself as a researcher and the participants in this study. Moreover, participation in the summer institutes allowed for an informed understanding of the curricula and activities which deepened discussions with the participants during interviews.

As suggested by Hughes and Pennington (2017), it is important for the researcher to present an authentic self. Admittedly, this was a challenge for me because for seventeen years I have worked in an academic high school, a very unforgiving environment, and as a consequence, I have developed a critical view of myself and my abilities as a teacher. When I attempted to apply the curricula and was unsuccessful,

I became highly self-conscious, but discussing my own successes and disappointments with the participants and with my colleagues at the elementary school alleviated some of these self-imposed pressures. Through this, I acknowledged the subjective nature of autoethnography, and, to the best of my abilities, I presented my authentic self.

## **EXPERIENCE AT SUMMER INSTITUTES**

Throughout my career, I have often sought out and participated in professional development programs during the summer. Unlike the participants in this study, I was not required to complete a specific number of hours of professional development for licensure. Instead, I pursued professional development to enhance my teaching and for the opportunity to travel. When selecting the summer institutes for this study, I intentionally selected professional development programs that were of interest and that would complement my art education background. At the time I was considering the summer institutes, I was teaching visual arts at a high school and wanted to focus on development in the visual arts. Horn and Goldstein (2018) suggested that teachers should select professional development in areas of their teaching that require improvement. When I transferred to an elementary school generalist position, logically I should have attended a summer institute that focused on the core subjects of language arts and mathematics as I had little background in teaching these subjects. Although once I was at the two summer institutes, it was apparent that a fair number of the educators were not art specialists: the two professional development programs provided learning that I would be able to apply to several of the subjects that I taught.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art's VAST and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's Teaching from Works of Art summer institutes were significantly different. These differences pertained not just to the curricula. The PMA was located in an urban area and attracted educators predominately from the Philadelphia area who travelled daily to the summer institute, whereas the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art was situated in a rural area and attracted educators who were not local to Bentonville, AK, and who required accommodations. This meant that educators at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American

Art were generally more social with one another, for example, we would walk in the surrounding forest or dine together. Another distinct difference was the number of participants: sixty participants at the PMA versus twenty-five at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. While the sizes of the programs might have affected the level of intimacy possible, in both cases, the educators formed smaller groups for activities and discussions in the galleries. Therefore, I had opportunities to speak to a majority of the educators during both summer institutes.

It is important to articulate that it was exhausting to attend each of the two summer institutes for two consecutive weeks. Each demanded me to be fully present and engage with the activities and participants. As a researcher, I wrote more notes than I would have if I were attending as an educator only, out of fear that I would miss important data for my research. I was more energized during VAST because it was exciting to start my summer vacation with a trip to Philadelphia and because I was able to engage in a week of discussion on socially challenging issues. I left to attend the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art summer institute somewhat half-heartedly. Yet, the experience of travelling to Bentonville, AK, and viewing the extensive collection at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art transformed into a once in a lifetime experience.<sup>96</sup>

## **VAST (Philadelphia Museum of Art)**

### **Experience as a Participant**

As stated in chapter 3, the VAST summer institute theme was “Socially Engaged Teaching and Learning.” It consisted of a mixture of discussions in the galleries, lectures from invited guests, excursions, and hands-on art-making sessions. I have participated in a number of other professional development programs designed by art museum educators, and here I was expecting a similar experience. Yet, the experience at VAST was unique for a variety of reasons.

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<sup>96</sup> Due to the proximity of Philadelphia to Montreal, there is a greater possibility of me attending VAST and/or the PMA again compared to professional development program at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

## *A Safe Space for Dialogue*

The overarching goal of the professional development program was to generate a safe and respectful space for educators to express their views while discussing challenging social issues.<sup>97</sup> As an illustration, the first session focused on establishing an inclusive space through a variety of activities facilitated by the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA). It was during the first session that several women stated the obvious lack of diversity among the sixty educators: the majority of us were middle-aged white women. This type of dialogue would not have occurred if we had not participated in the various activities or if a safe space had not been established.

Creating this safe space for discussions was not something done in a singular event or activity. To generate this environment, we were encouraged to be reflective and recognize our emotions and reactions. Each day, the museum educators modelled these qualities by revealing their own emotions and provided encouragement by expressing their gratitude for our willingness to engage in discussions concerning socially challenging topics. For myself, the most reflective and emotional day included the paper-making workshop. After we listened to Laura describe her experiences with the justice system and her work with People's Paper Co-op, we wrote statements explaining those changes we desired for our school environments and shared these statements with the group as a form of emancipation. My statement described my own experiences with the berating of female teachers at my high school. The statements were then shredded and combined into a collective pulp to form the new sheets of paper. We also wrote a letter to ourselves focusing on the positive aspects of teaching. These letters were then embedded into the sheet of paper that each educator formed. At the end of this workshop, we stood in a circle and each voiced something that we were thankful for. At the end of this workshop, I became overwhelmed with emotions and hugged Laura and thanked her before leaving the classroom.

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<sup>97</sup> While it may be assumed that spaces reserved for professional development are a safe space for discussions; this was the first time I have attended a professional development in which the focus was to create this space.

### *Lecture and Gallery Sessions*

While Bayar (2014) commented that poor professional development focuses on lectures, at this institute the high calibre of the lectures helped the program participants trust in the educators and added richness to the professional development. At VAST, the guest lecture sessions created an academic environment, similar to a university classroom, that presented us with contemporary artists, inviting us to think on presented topics and discuss works of art using approaches that could be applied in our classrooms. I enjoyed these sessions, as the did other educators I spoke to, as they provided new information about and approaches to socially engaged artistic practices as well as insight into the vibrant community arts scene in Philadelphia. Though several of the educators I spoke to resided in the Philadelphia area, they were unaware of many of the community groups presented at VAST, such as Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture and of community projects such as the Monument Lab.

The gallery sessions provided a variety of methods to explore of works of art, some of which were new to me and others were reminiscent of activities I had used earlier in my teaching career. Active participation was encouraged and provided an opportunity to test out writing or drawing responses. Most of the activities in the galleries could be easily incorporated into my grade 6 classroom, however I readily disregarded a few. For instance, we were provided a number of texts that helped us gain insight into *Rain* by Vincent van Gogh, many of which discussed mental illness, however the texts provided were too challenging for middle school students. Further, the discussion surrounding *Interior* (also known as *The Rape*) by Edgar Degas generated an uncomfortable discussion in the gallery space concerning consent and rape, which might not have been suited to a grade school classroom. Instead, these discussions provided us openings to consider how to address various socially challenging topics in our own lives, including those that may affect our students.

### *Art-Making Activities*

The art-making activities that ended each day provided a release from all of the emotions generated from the discussions such as painting a self-care rock for mediation. Whereas the rock painting, journal-making, paper-making, and clay atelier at the Taller Puertorriqueño, El Corazón del Barrio, generated a relaxing environment, the paper cut-out workshop with artist Joe Boruchow caused stress. I was surprised that the educators around me, particularly the art specialists, were frustrated at this activity: they made a number of negative, self-critical comments concerning their abilities and the finished product. In contrast to many other educators, I experienced little stress with the workshop. I may have entered the workshop with a different mindset; instead of worrying about the end product, I was more concerned about cutting my hand with the X-Acto knife. As mentioned in chapter 3, an elementary teacher had told me she sensed tension when she came into the classroom to collect her binder after participating in a different workshop.

### Experience as an Observer

My experience with VAST was unlike my experience in other professional development programs I attended. I experienced more anxiety attending as a researcher and not just a classroom teacher than I normally would because I was required to recruit participants for my study. Throughout the week, I wrote notes, observations, and reflections while also considering how to apply my learning to the autoethnographic portion of this research study. It was exhausting, and at times I wished that I could have experienced VAST as a teacher.

As an observer, I concentrated on noting how the professional development program at VAST provided active learning (Bayar, 2014; Guskey & Yoon, 2009); how the educators reacted to the lectures along with the constructivist learning approaches (see Hein, 2012); and how the museum educators interacted with the educators (see Liu, 2000). The VAST program concentrated on a participatory design that provided numerous opportunities for the educators to engage in active learning through discussions, drawing, writing activities, or art-making. As previously stated, educators reacted positively to the lectures and those who had attended VAST in previous years were pleased that Professor Jonathan Wallis was returning to lecture on socially engaged art. During gallery sessions, I witnessed all of the educators in my group engage in the

discussions and participate in the assigned activities. Frequently the only reason educators became distracted was when one wanted to use their cellphone to capture a photograph of a work of art that was under discussion.

I observed no hierarchies between the museum educators and the attending educators (see Liu, 2000). The museum educators encouraged dialogue and requested feedback, both in writing and verbally. In my experience with other professional development workshops, facilitators rarely invite discourse or ask educators to provide them with feedback. Instead, the museum educators at VAST came off as passionate about the program and seemed to have a genuine desire to improve it.

### *Recruitment*

On my second day at VAST, I read the “Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants” (Appendix II) and afterwards felt that the educators were hesitant to speak with me. I found this peculiar as I had mentioned my positionality to those sitting at my table during the first day of the summer institute and they reacted with interest. Yet, as the days progressed and I shared my own teaching experiences, the distance disappeared. Occasionally, educators with whom I had spoken little would speak to me and utter comments or complaints about the program. For example, when I was in line for a coffee in the PMA’s classroom, a participant stated that the program and food were not as good as in previous years. A frequent comment was that the program was “preaching to the choir,” a suggestion that the program needed to focus more on generating change (see Wegerif, 2008)<sup>98</sup>.

## **Teaching from Works of Art (Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art)**

### Experience as a Participant

As previously mentioned, having completed a week-long summer institute at the PMA, there was little chance to refocus before the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art’s Teaching from Works of Art, as

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<sup>98</sup> I never quite knew how to react to these comments because I had to gain access to the program and did not want to participate in negative conversations.

it occurred the following week. The summer institute focused on theatre activities, teaching us about Visual Thinking Strategies and allowing us to acquire skills to facilitate a dialogical discussion with a work of art. The objective of this summer institute was to instruct educators to learn about the museum's methodology with the intention of applying it in their own classrooms (see Kraybill, 2018).

### *Feelings of Discomfort*

Unlike other professional development programs, I felt somewhat unwilling to participate in the program's theatre activities. In fact, it was a bit of a shock to me that a portion of the program centred on theatre activities as the online description provided no indication of this. While I understood that the objective of theatre activities was to gain experience in risk-taking, encourage improvisation, and create an inclusive environment, I was uncomfortable. I was not alone: several educators confided in me that they felt awkward with the activities. Nonetheless, we all acknowledged that the theatre activities generated a friendlier social environment.

Certain educators deliberated on how these theatre activities could be applied in their own classrooms. The art specialists commented that these activities were suited for a theatre class or an elementary classroom, and the elementary educators with whom I spoke with voiced that they could use these activities as ice breakers. However, as a high school art specialist, I knew that I would feel silly inviting my thirty-six students to stand in a circle and pass an imaginary energy ball. However, once I moved to teaching grade 6 at an elementary school, I was able to apply the theatre activities more readily, including the Zip Zap activity.

### *Feelings of Enjoyment*

As a participant, I immensely enjoyed the sessions in the galleries. I found listening to a museum educator describe the process she uses Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to facilitate a dialogical discussion very useful. The process was not new, as I have used these strategies with my students in the past, however, I realized during the museum educator's explanation of her process that I tended to focus on the structure



of the work of art instead of inviting the students to generate a personal connection with it (see Burnham and Kai-Kee, 2005). The importance of inviting viewers to discuss a work of art from a personal perspective was witnessed during our third day in the galleries. While discussing *Man on a Bench* by Duane Hanson, several of the educators became emotional as they reflected on the sculpture of the elderly man and how it related to their own lives. Although we all supported the educator who became emotional, the facilitator did not address how to mentor a student who becomes emotional or expresses feelings of discomfort during a lesson.

The variety of works of art and the physical space at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art contributed significantly to my overall positive experience as a participant. The robustness of the collection and the calibre of the works of art surpassed my expectation. It was refreshing to experience a variety of works of art, in particular the contemporary pieces. Like the other educators, I was taken by the uniqueness of the design of the building. Natural light spilled into the corridors between galleries, and every window looked out onto the surrounding forest. It is one of the few art museums that I have been to where I experienced a sense of calmness.<sup>99</sup>

### *Capstone Activity*

One of the most unique aspects of this summer institute was the capstone activity in which the educators facilitated a discussion using a work of art in the gallery with each other and in front of the museum educators. My enthusiasm was lukewarm as it felt too much like a university assignment. My group, which consisted of me and two other art specialists, had similar views of the capstone activity. Because we were familiar with VTS and had extensive experience discussing a work of art in front of our students, my group decided to challenge ourselves by selecting the abstract assemblage *The Tower* by

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<sup>99</sup> Although, this sense of calmness may have changed if the galleries were filled with a larger number of visitors.

Robert Rauschenberg. We felt that choosing an abstract work of art would limit what we could do with VTS and therefore challenge our skills.

While researching background information concerning *The Tower* with our cellphones and tablets,<sup>100</sup> we discussed the significant amount of work a teacher was required to do to facilitate a discussion with a single work of art. We concluded that this amount of work would most likely minimize the number of works of art we could discuss in a classroom. We questioned whether using VTS in our teaching would create deeper meaning or inspire greater insight, furthering the classroom discussion beyond statements supported with observations. We asked one of the museum guides how we could best elevate the discussion using debate, for example by including current social issues, and she informed us to avoid this approach.

Kraybill (2014) stated that museum educators at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art employ a variety of non-verbal responses such as writing, drawing, and kinesthetic responses to complement a dialogical discussion while students visit the art museum. Interestingly, museum educators never modelled non-verbal responses nor did they suggest these responses be included as an option for the capstone presentations. As a result, we never considered using non-verbal responses.

Experience as an Observer<sup>101</sup>

### *Understanding Context*

Prior to attending the summer institute, I read extensively on Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, particularly on the design of the art museum as well as Alice Walton's collection process, which Lewis (2011) criticized for removing prized works of art from accessible art museums located in cities. This

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<sup>100</sup> The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's library resources were not used for the research for our capstone presentation. Yet, we spent an extensive amount of time with the work of art in the gallery space trying to generate an understanding of the piece while we rehearsed our discussion.

<sup>101</sup> Similar to VAST, as an observer at Teaching from Works of Art, I concentrated on noting how the professional development program provided active learning (Bayar, 2014; Guskey & Yoon, 2009); how the educators reacted to the activities (Bayar, 2014) along with constructivist learning approaches; and how the museum educators interacted with the educators (Liu, 2000).

extensive reading meant that I adopted a negative opinion of the art museum before having visited. Yet, after speaking with the educators, I realized the significance of this art museum to the American people and to the area. The collection recognizes the artistic contributions of American artists, a point of pride among several of the art educators. An older educator who was a resident of Bentonville described how the formation of the art museum was encouraging economic and artistic growth in the area; the new housing developments and fashionable restaurants that I drove past each day while commuting to the art museum were evidence of this. And while many question the business practices of Walmart as a company (Norman, 2004), the local store is essential to the livelihood of Bentonville residents, and Alice Walton, heiress to the Walton fortune, is highly revered by the educators I spoke with for founding the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Because of this, I avoided engaging in any negative-seeming dialogue concerning Walmart Inc. and their involvement with the museum.

### *Learning VTS*

During the gallery sessions, I noticed that the participating educators were focused on learning how to employ the three open-ended questions used in VTS: What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder? This focus wavered by day three of the summer institute as the educators became a bit bored after repeating the same process of discussing a work of art in the galleries using VTS multiple times in preparing for our capstone presentations. As an illustration, I noticed a group of educators lagging behind in one of the galleries, taking photographs of themselves in entertaining positions in front of certain works. These educators happily showed these to me, and for the remaining days of the summer institute, they tried to get me to join in their antics.

I was surprised that several participating educators were nervous to present during the capstone activity. I suspect this was because the combination of applying an unfamiliar method and presenting in front of peers, museum educators, and the head of the education department was somewhat daunting. Throughout all of the presentations, educators enacted the questions used in VTS and provided bits of background information. However, I noticed that the discussions rarely touched upon the aesthetic qualities

of the works of art. Several of the educators expressed satisfaction with their presentations and mentioned they enjoyed practising a discussion in a safe space. In addition, they stated that it was unique to other forms of professional development that they had participated in. Throughout the presentations the head of the education department provided feedback, suggesting a form of quality control of what we had learned.

### *Recruitment*

Unlike at the PMA, when I read the “Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants” (Appendix II) on the first day of the Crystal Bridges summer institute, the other educators were keen to speak with me. Several educators inquired about my research and one even provided the contact of a friend who had completed a similar doctoral research study focusing on professional development for music teachers. Another educator who had a doctoral degree in education offered pertinent advice. And one educator took it upon herself to encourage everyone to participate in my study.

### *Being a Canadian*

The fact that I am Canadian impacted the content of the discussions and interactions that I had with the educators at the Crystal Bridges summer institute. Educators invited me to discuss political, social, and educational issues from the perspective of a Canadian. During discussions pertaining to political and social topics, I was continuously reminded how fortunate Canadians are to have universal healthcare and more social services than most Americans. Some of the educators informed me that there are significant social differences between northwest Arkansas and the rest of Arkansas and asked for my opinion on Bentonville. One educator at Crystal Bridges asked me daily to speak French because she had travelled to Paris and had learned a bit of French in high school. Several educators at both summer institutes remarked that they had travelled to Montreal or stated that they wished that they could visit the city.

Concerning education, several educators were shocked to learn that the CEGEP system in Quebec provided access to career programs for little cost compared to their colleagues. I learned a significant amount about the dynamics of charter schools, the public school system, and Quaker schools from the

perspective of my fellow educators. Furthermore, we compared classroom sizes, discussed difficulties with administration and standardized testing, and shared teaching ideas. Through this, we realized that we experienced many of the same challenges as teachers, even though we taught in different districts, states, or countries.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I explained the rationale behind me attending the two art museum summer institutes as a participant-observer in order to incorporate my learning into my classroom as a self-study practice while employing autoethnography. By taking on the role of a participant-observer, I was able to participate fully in all of the activities and to capture valuable data that was reflected upon through two different lenses: as classroom teacher and as researcher. While both professional development programs concentrated on dialogical discussions with works of art, the curricula varied significantly.

In the following chapter, I discuss in detail the qualities of the museum summer institutes' curricular materials that were incorporated, modified, or omitted into my grade 6 classroom practice. Furthermore, I describe my experience as an elementary school generalist teacher in relation to the various themes, such as the planned curriculum that emerged in analysis of the data obtained from the participants. I will also delve into my own use of language in the classroom space as described by Huebner (1968/1999): Language as Ready-to-Hand, Language as Happening of Truth, and Language as Thought of Thinkers, along with exploring Huebner's (1966/1999) Value System to examine the curriculum and educational activities that I enacted in my classroom.

# DISCUSSION

## INTRODUCTION

On account of my background as a school teacher, I incorporated a self-study of my classroom practice into the research design with the use of autoethnography, focusing on how I applied the curricular materials and my learning from the two art museum summer institutes in my grade 6 classrooms over the course of the 2018–2019 academic school year. Hancock’s (2017) and Hughes and Pennington’s (2017) approaches to autoethnography guided my process: I concentrated on self-reflection and focused on my own classroom experiences in comparison with that of the participants. Layered accounts were employed to generate additional insights into how we all approached the learning from the art museum summer institutes. By incorporating my reflective voice, the hierarchical nature of the relationship between me and the participants shifted, providing alternative insights during the study (Granger, 2011).

Data collection for autoethnography research has been criticized for bias as the data is constructed through the perspective of the researcher (Granger, 2011), and this can influence the research process (Hancock, 2017). In response to this critique, I intentionally collected data from a variety of sources, as suggested by Yin (2014). For example, I kept a reflective journal throughout the two summer institutes, participated in three Skype interviews myself using the same question guides used in the interviews with the participants, and I kept a reflective journal of my classroom practices. My data was analyzed alongside the data collected from the other participants, allowing me to reflect upon my observations in conjunction with the participants’ experiences to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. The analysis and my interpretation were supported by a specific theoretical framework, in this case, Huebner’s approach to Curriculum Theory, along with evidence from academic journals, as suggested by Hughes and Pennington (2017).

Throughout this chapter, I present the data that I collected on my classroom experiences and discuss the themes that emerged from the data collected from the participants in this study.<sup>102</sup> The chapter ends with an exploration of my classroom practice applying Huebner's (2008) approach to language and his Value System.

## **CLASSROOM PRACTICE**

### **Art Appreciation and Aesthetics**

My use of art in the classroom as an elementary school generalist tended to be significantly different from the other generalist participants in this study. This was likely due to my visual arts background and the fact that the generalist participants in this study were not required to teach art in their classrooms as they had access to art specialists on staff. One notable difference pertained to discussing aesthetics: when I discussed a work of art during an art lesson, I frequently focused on the formal aesthetic qualities and aesthetics as an experience, as did art specialists Scarlet and Taylor. Yet, similar to most of the generalist participants, when I held discussions involving a photograph during a social studies lesson or a work of art during an ethics lesson, I tended to overlook the aesthetic qualities or encourage an emotional response. In these lessons, I used the works of art to draw out specific content or factual information and not for its aesthetic qualities. This observation supports Irwin (2008) who stated that when teachers discuss a visual image in another discipline, the focus is on observations and connections to historical context and rarely upon the aesthetic qualities.

Another significant difference between how I applied learnings from the art institutes and how other generalists did centred on our approach to arts integration. Again, this was likely due to my experience as an arts specialist. The transition to an elementary was challenging and in order to succeed, I infused

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<sup>102</sup> Instead of rewriting each theme from the findings chapter, I decided to condense certain themes and speak more on themes that demonstrated unique similarities or differences.

every subject with the visual arts.<sup>103</sup> La Jevic (2013) argued that when elementary school teachers use art to aid teaching another subject, they often use it as decoration or for visual effect. For example, Mariah included map-drawing activities in her grade 6 social studies lessons, and Chloe's grade 4 students routinely illustrated ELA assignments. During interviews, I questioned whether this was arts integration, and both teachers stated it was. However, when I integrate art into other subjects, I ensure the art is always the focus and that other subjects are secondary in the project. For instance, for a math project that focused on scale, I invited students to design a piece of furniture based upon an architectural structure of their choice or to repurpose an item of clothing using measurements and show it during a class fashion show. Within each of these projects, I ensured the aesthetic qualities were at the forefront of the lesson, making use of my knowledge and background in art education.

## Selecting Works of Art

Other differences and similarities between the participants' use of art and my own were observed in the process of selecting a work of art for a lesson, the types of works of art used in a lesson, and the time allotted for discussion of a work. Similar to the participants, in my lessons I selected works that were either realistic or semi-abstract, most of which paintings or photographs. Even though I had discussed *The Tower* by Rauschenberg at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, I did not incorporate that work or any other sculptural pieces into my teaching. I believe this was because of my own interest in and experience with teaching 2D works of art.

When searching for a work of art, I applied similar strategies to Hudson and Colleen, for example using Google to search for a contemporary artist; however, when I was seeking a specific artist, like art specialists Scarlet and Hudson, I searched for works by artists I had on a personalized standard list. Interestingly, after my interviews with Scarlet, I intentionally sought out certain artists that she referenced,

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<sup>103</sup> While my art budget was \$100.00 for the year, whenever I approached the administration with a specific arts integration project for ELA or mathematics that would require additional art supplies, I was always given the additional funds.



such as Titus Kaphar, and applied their works in my lessons. Yenawine (2014) and Cappello (2017) asserted that the visual image was critical to a dialogical discussion. Similar to all of the participants, I selected works of art that caught my eye and those I believed would spark interest in my students. Although this technique may seem rudimentary, we all knew which works would interest our students the most due to our experiences and tacit knowledge.

## **The Curriculum**

### **Formal and Planned Curriculum**

As a visual art specialist, I was expected to develop curricula for both my grade 9 and grade 11 courses that drew upon three competencies of the Quebec Art Education program: to produce individual works in the visual arts, to produce media works in the visual arts, and to appreciate works of art (QEP, 2017). However, as an elementary school generalist, I was expected to learn the planned curricula of six subjects: mathematics for grade 5, mathematics for grade 6, English language arts (ELA), social studies, ethics, and visual arts, which amounted to fourteen different competencies that varied significantly. Unlike Lily who was expected to follow a district map, I was provided with no resources or direction regarding how to teach these subjects. Taylor and Mariah, who worked in private schools, also had a great deal of freedom in their classrooms. For me, only the mathematics curricula for grade 5 and grade 6 were defined by a workbook and a supplemental workbook. It seemed that the only expectation was that I prepare my grade 6 students for the ministry's standardized exams in mathematics and ELA.

### **Pressures of the Planned Curriculum**

Eisner (2000) stated that curriculum standards provide rational benchmarks for curriculum planning and guidance to teachers. However, once standardized testing becomes a preoccupation of the planned curriculum, as noted by Westheimer (2010) and Hourigan (2011), it burdens the teacher. Like Hudson, Lily, and Chloe, I found that the pressures the standardized exams set by the Ministry of Quebec for ELA and mathematics affected my teaching practice. The ELA exam required students to complete numerous writing

tasks within two weeks, and the mathematics exam consisted of seven exams to be completed in five days. I was informed that I was to prepare fun activities that required little energy, such as an art activity, when the students were not writing the exams.<sup>104</sup> While none of the participants discussed how student achievement on standardized exams impacted their classrooms or schools, Hourigan (2011) stressed that many schools in the United States are dependant on achievement-based grants bestowed by policies such as Race to the Top (RTTT). Instead, the results from the standardized exams that my students wrote were incorporated into their overall final term mark and tended to only affect their perceptions of themselves.<sup>105</sup>

Throughout the year, I utilized Visual Thinking Strategies in my ELA classes for skill development, focusing on teaching students how to deconstruct and analyze a picture book for the ministry's standardized ELA exam. Similar to Lily and Chloe, I relied on a step-by-step process and focused on the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) questions — What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder? — to direct the analysis. When I applied VTS to another subject such as social studies, I repeated the same step-by-step process, and like Mariah, I noticed that over time my students were able to follow the routine on their own.

## **Time**

Both Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) and Guskey (2002) explained that it is necessary to give teachers adequate time to reflect upon new material from a professional development workshop, otherwise teachers will disregard it. Reviewing the summer institute curricula was challenging as I lacked the time to develop the materials from the programs, something that several of the participants from both

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<sup>104</sup> I was informed by my colleagues that the Ministry exams provided an inaccurate view of the students at the elementary school as it only evaluated mathematic abilities and reading and writing skills and not the whole student.<sup>104</sup> Out of my class of twenty-eight students, the majority were English Second Language students, several were on Individual Education Plans, and others had difficulties with socializing or had behavioural issues that impeded their abilities to work with classmates.

<sup>105</sup> It was only after attending the ELA exam marking centre session for the grade 6 collective exams in June 2019 that I realized that it was absurd to have spent so much time preparing for the exams. Grade 6 teachers from across the school board evaluated the exams over the course of two days through a blind marking system. 1/3 of my students failed with a mark between 20% and 40%. After demanding that the ELA consultants review the exams, all of my students ended up passing, most with a 70%. Once the exams were calculated in the students' final term marks, they only altered their grades by small percentage.

summer institutes also stressed. I only applied the simplest activities such as using VTS to facilitate a discussion or one of the worksheets from VAST. Similar to the participants I experienced feelings of regret due to not incorporating more of the summer institute curricula. As an illustration, I developed a visual arts project where my students were instructed to design a city. Ideally, I would have incorporated a lesson on monuments that drew upon discussions from VAST; however, there was not adequate time to develop a quality lesson.

One noticeable difference between me and some of the other generalist participants was the amount of classroom time we were able to spend discussing a work of art. Eloise taught several sections of world history and social studies at the high school level, where the generalist participants and I instructed the same group of students throughout the day and therefore had more flexibility in our elementary classroom timetables and more time to discuss a work of art. The art specialists experienced their own challenges, including balancing studio activities with discussions or losing time travelling between classrooms, which limited the time available for discussions. It seemed that myself and the other generalist participants had more freedom than the art specialists to engage in lengthy discussions about works of art.

## **CONVERSATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM**

### **Skill Development**

Several of the participants mentioned that they intentionally applied VTS and discussed works of art as a method for skill development such as increasing observation skills and critical thinking skills. Without realizing it, I had actually been enacting this with the works of art. As an illustration, I intentionally applied VTS for skill development and preparation for the standardized exam in English language arts.<sup>106</sup> I

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<sup>106</sup> As a result of limited time to research the visual image, possibly I was not adequately applying VTS. I never conducted extensive research on the visual image as suggested by Bell (2011) or discussed the artist's intent when the visual image was used in a lesson other than art or delve into deep reflection considering the importance of the image as noted by Cappello (2017).

applied it to instruct the students how to read the illustrations and so they learn how to support their responses with evidence from the visual image. Colleen and Lily employed these strategies as well.

Although Lily, Chloe, and Colleen asserted that their students were developing critical thinking skills with the use of VTS, I felt that my students were just learning to support their observations. Like Eloise, I questioned if VTS developed critical thinking. Instead, I noticed that in-depth dialogue tended to come from other types of questions, such as “What would it feel like to be standing inside the painting?” Furthermore, while Walsh-Moorman (2018) claimed that VTS helps students develop a stronger vocabulary, I found that my students’ vocabulary remained unchanged. In order to build students’ vocabulary, I might have created a specific word bank for each lesson that students were invited to use; however, I find this strategy to be in conflict with the open-ended nature of VTS.

### Conversations to Develop the Self

Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005) asserted that discussing a work of art could be an experience in which the individuals learn more about themselves during the dialogical discussion. Several of the participants agreed with this view. For example, Scarlet felt that discussing a work of art could help a student to develop their empathy. In contrast, I viewed works of art as entry points to understanding or learning about a social, political, or cultural issue. I attribute this attitude to my university art education teacher training during the late 1990s, where I was instructed on Discipline-Based Art Education, as described by Berry (1993), which concentrates on discussions about the formal qualities, the artistic choices and the historical or cultural role of art objects. Only as a result of seeking out and attending professional development lectures such as the National Art Education Association Convention did I recently add to my lessons questions that encouraged students to discuss their own experiences with the work of art, as suggested by Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005), or to discuss their emotional reactions, as proposed by Hubard (2015).

## **Qualities of a Class Discussion**

### Participation

In my interviews, I described a high-quality class discussion in which students responded to questions and asked questions. The discussions did not always advance into the dialectical as the students were cautious with their exchanges. Due to the students' relationships with each other, I avoided encouraging students to challenge each other.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps encouraging students to challenge one another would have resulted in greater change within the students, as described by Wegerif (2008), but instead, I was satisfied with moments when students challenged me, and I was required to consider a viewpoint from the perspective of a twelve-year-old.

The qualities that I appreciated were not voiced by any of the participants. For example, students becoming emotional or feeling provoked when they were participating in a discussion about a work of art. Instead, participants were concerned with the following things: whether participation in a discussion encouraged students to engage in reflection, whether students could recite information (as stated by Taylor), or whether they were able to develop an understanding of others (as stated by Colleen and Mariah). The participants also explained that they felt their students should participate in discussions in a respectful manner, including raising their hands before speaking. Although I did encourage students to raise their hands and be respectful, it was not what I most valued.

### *Facial Expressions*

After interviewing Eloise and Hudson about student engagement, I realized that I rely upon the facial expressions of the quiet students to determine their engagement. While on the one hand it sometimes seems absurd to me to evaluate engagement based on the interest a face exerts, Gillham (2008) asserted that non-verbal cues and gestures are vital to understanding and interpreting an interaction, even if an individual is not speaking. I recognized that I readily use my students' facial expressions to help gauge their emotions and redirect a discussion accordingly. For instance, when discussing the biography of Keith Haring, several students from conservative backgrounds would roll their eyes when I mentioned that he was gay. Taking

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<sup>107</sup> This will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

this cue, I proceeded with a discussion about Canadian laws and basic human rights, meaning non-verbal cues from the students were changing the course of my classroom discussion.

### *Evaluation*

During my interviews, most of the participants noted that they created a type of evaluation, such as a rubric, to evaluate a classroom discussion. This was not surprising, as accountability is a foremost concern for most teachers due to regulations such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top (Franco, 2011; Hourigan, 2011). I would invite the students to write a summary that included their own viewpoint, in an informal, non-essay format, following a discussion, as did Taylor and Scarlet. This report was marked for my students' report cards.

Unlike Chloe and Lily, who used the class discussions to evaluate oral fluency and Eloise who used it to produce a participation mark for her students, as an art specialist, I never provided marks pertaining to the discussions themselves. Yet, at the elementary level, I noticed several of my colleagues employing a variety of checklists to evaluate a student's ability to express themselves and the quality of a student's participation. I brought up these practices to my administration, and they readily discouraged it as using observation as a method for evaluation, as it is too subjective. This view supports Erickson and Pinnegar's (2010) proposition that observation can not necessarily measure the depth of a students' understanding or learning. However, the administration was more concerned about the difficulty I would have in supporting my subjective checklists if questioned by a parent or guardian.

## **Types of Talk**

### Idle Talk and Dialogical Discussions

I compared how I applied talk during classroom discussions with the methods employed by my participants. I noticed that I applied idle talk, as defined by Huebner (1968/2008), predominately when I used the mathematics and social studies workbooks. The talk was a cycle, similar to Apple (2010)'s description, where talk is described as relying on listening and responding to questions without moments

of reflection. The language that I employed in mathematics and social studies did not invite me or my students to question or reflect. Eryaman and Riedler (2010) stressed that a teacher-proof curriculum minimizes the teacher's control and reduces the teacher to a type of technician. In response, I found myself intentionally supplementing the social studies workbook with material to challenge the viewpoints of the authors. As an example, one unit in the social studies workbook concentrated on the formation of Hydro Quebec and the importance of the development of the various power stations. Since the authors failed to reference the relocation of various peoples or provide visual images of the environmental impact of flooding acres of land, I spent time with my students debating and discussing these issues with the use of photographs and videos.

Concerning VTS, Yenawine (2014) asserted that the process invites students to “think, debate, and formulate their own ideas,” (p. 173) through the use of a thinking routine. When students apply this routine of answering three specific open-ended questions, they uncover a more meaningful interpretation of the visual image (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007). Like Lily, Eloise, Mariah, and Chloe, when I applied VTS in discussing an image, it became a routine: my students learned to follow a step-by-step approach in their future interpretations. As an example, during preparation for the ministry standardized exams in ELA, I applied VTS to instruct students on how to decipher illustrations in a picture book. As a result, the talk became less dialogical in nature. Even though the students learned to support their answers with textual evidence from the visual image, talk transformed into a type of idle talk, void of meaning.

As a result of focusing on the specific questions from VTS, I never discussed the artists' intent when using an image in my ELA, social studies, or ethics lessons. Cappello (2017) claimed that discussing the artist's intent deepens the discussions, and this was observed with Colleen. To her grade 2 students, she posed the question, “Why would an artist paint an image of Alaskan women cleaning fish?” Considering the artist's intent shifted Colleen's students' discussion from an analysis to an empathetic experience as students described the challenges that the women encountered. Even though my students deliberated with various degrees of emotions about challenging social issues and developed an understanding of views

different from their own, it was always a detached experience. Perhaps incorporating questions concerning why a photograph was taken or inviting my students to reflect on the artist's intent would have generated a more empathetic experience, as witnessed in Collen's classroom, than the analytical one that took place in mine.

## Open-Ended Dialogue

When considering dialogue in my classroom space, I predominately used a mixture of the forms of dialogue outlined by Hubbard (2010), such as predetermined dialogue and thematic dialogue, along with teacher monologue (Alexander, 2006). I tended to avoid interpretative dialogue simply because I prefer more structure. I engaged in a discussion about works of art or used visual images in a lesson to support the content and target specific goals. Interpretative dialogue worked best when students were clustered in groups of four to discuss a work of art. Similar to Eloise's approach, my students took charge of their group's discussion while I circulated the classroom asking each group to provide a summary of their discussion. Afterward, each group shared their summary with the class.

Class size and class dynamics were the most significant challenges experienced while using open-ended dialogue. Sedlacek and Sedova (2017) asserted that a dialogical discussion works best with a large class, but I found the opposite in my class of twenty-eight students. Several of my students were on Individualized Education Plans. Students in my classroom frequently had behavioural issues, difficulties with socialization, and several students had limited abilities to express themselves in English. Hudson, Scarlet, and Eloise all expressed similar challenges with class size and dynamics, which prevented them from engaging in class discussions with all of the students.

## Questioning Techniques

### Compare and Contrast

At both summer art institutes the museum educators would elicit a discussion with one work of art at a time using a thematic dialogue. The method of juxtaposing two works of art to compare and contrast



never occurred in the gallery sessions at either art museum summer institute; however, I, like Colleen, Lily, and Chloe, all used this method in our elementary classrooms. Whereas the other participants routinely used comparative techniques with works of art, I applied it only when looking at photographs in social studies, ELA, or ethics lessons. I never brought these techniques to art lessons as my objectives were to discuss the aesthetic qualities of a piece and focus on the artist's intent, whereas when I applied them to photographs in another subject, I used them to draw out historical information or create connections with the topic under discussion.

Chloe, as well as some other participants, suggested that juxtaposing two works of art helped her students to develop their observation skills, but this was not my objective. Instead, like Lily, Colleen, and Eloise, my goal was to help students acquire new information by comparing the images. The questions I directed my students encouraged them to examine specific details in a photograph and make comments and observations using evidence found in the photographs. As an illustration, for a social studies lesson, students compared a photograph of a classroom from 1960s with our own classroom. Students debated if student life had changed and provided evidence from the photograph to support their statements. The objective was to encourage debate and not a surface exploration of the photograph. Eloise employed similar techniques and had similar goals.

### Critical Thinking Questions

Several participants believed that posing questions while comparing two works of art developed critical thinking skills in their students. The objective of the exercise was to generate some personal or meaningful connections with the works of art, as proposed by Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005) and Hubard (2015). However, the participants were concerned with developing meaning with the end goal of uncovering a truth through objective reasoning, as defined by Karson and Goodwin (2011). When considering my own use of photo comparisons in ELA, social studies, or ethics classes, I had a similar objective: to draw out specific information and generate an interpretation. But, when I discussed a work of

art, such as a painting, in an art lesson, I was more engaged with the aspects of critical thinking as defined by Hitchcock (2018), applying questions that evoked open-mindedness and imagination. How a work of art is positioned in a lesson brings about different qualities of critical thinking.

## **VTS: See, Think, Wonder**

### The Process

Prior to attending either art museum summer institute, my exposure to VTS (2014) and the Artful Thinking Palette (Barahal, 2008) was minimal. My only exposure came from attending various sessions at the National Art Education Association Convention over the past few years. Otherwise, these methods were never presented in either professional development workshops developed by my school board or in my graduate classes. After observing the museum educators modelling the processes and actively participating in the discussions, I realized I could improve my teaching practice. For example, I realized the importance of listening more attentively to student responses instead of rushing through the discussion. This observation was also expressed by Hudson and Scarlet.

Another observation with the process of VTS is that neither I nor any of the participants conducted extensive research on the visual images or works of art. Most of the generalist participants, including Lily, Chloe, Eloise, and Colleen along with Hudson, applied VTS as a quick method to discuss a visual image or a work of art. It required minimal effort to launch into a topic. Bell (2012) and Cappello (2017) asserted that research was vital to avoid generating a one-dimensional discussion as it provides students with factual information that they can apply to their interpretations. I observed that when I supplied factual information to discussions about works of art that I was familiar with, there was a change in the discussion, as described in the next section.

### Effectiveness of VTS

Similar to the generalist participants who attended the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, I readily applied VTS to various subjects such as ELA, social studies, and ethics, and to my art lessons. I

observed that students were more attentive when a lesson started with a photograph, and I posed the first question, “What do you see?” As I asked each of the questions, I witnessed greater interest in the content and more curiosity. This observation supports Yenawine’s (2014) assertion that VTS encourages students to delve into a discussion on a visual with the support of the questions.

Despite the fact that VTS is said to develop critical thinking (Greene et al., 2014) and it supports meaning-making (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007), it is a type of discussion that can create frustration in the teacher or deflate the student. I experienced this in my classroom, not due to my students not learning specific facts, as witnessed in Burchenal and Grohe’s (2007) study concerning annoyance experienced by generalist teachers with VTS. Instead, I appreciated that the strategies encouraged discussions to wander. However, I found it frustrating that the question, “What do you see that makes you say that?” could often generate random and off-topic ideas that waylaid the conversation, even when they were supported with evidence from the visual image. I observed that when I provided information about a work of art with which I was highly familiar, as suggested by Bell (2012), it deflated some of my students, causing them to stop participating in the discussion. The discussion instead frequently became a type of guessing game in which the students were interested in uncovering the correct meaning of the work of art instead of generating a personal connection with the piece and deriving their own meaning, and I found it challenging to redirect the discussion without dismissing the students’ statements. None of my participants describe these frustrations, except for Eloise, who stated that VTS had not helped to develop critical thinking skills in her students. Instead, Lily, Chloe, Colleen, Mariah, and Hudson all commended that VTS allowed them to incorporate art to supplement their lessons.

### *Supporting Vocabulary Development*

It has been stated that students develop a stronger vocabulary when applying VTS (Wren, Cowan & Haig, 2006; Walsh-Moorman, 2018). However, none of generalist participants or the art specialists mentioned whether their students developed a stronger vocabulary due to utilizing VTS. For myself, vocabulary development was also not evident, and I do not imagine that VTS alone can increase student

vocabulary.<sup>108</sup> It is possible that by listening to one other during a discussion, students can acquire new words, but as discussed in Wren, Cowan & Haig's (2006) exploratory research study, students must first be taught art vocabulary in the classroom to apply it to a discussion concerning a work of art.

## **Writing as a Support**

Irwin (2008) and Kraybill (2014) suggested applying a variety of non-verbal methods to assist students in responding to a work of art during a dialogical discussion. As previously stated, while these methods were modelled at VAST, none of the participants described including them in their classroom practices nor did the visual art specialists describe using drawing as a type of response.

I have routinely applied non-verbal methods such as drawing or writing as a way to respond to a work of art throughout my teaching career. I asked my grade 6 students to write down their observations or respond to a question about a work of art prior to discussing it. Although these methods are not deemed Visible Thinking as defined by Tishman and Palmar (2005), they enabled my students to ground their thinking prior to the discussion that enabled them to build upon their ideas and develop curiosity as noted by Ritchart and Perkins (2008). Furthermore, like Lily and Scarlet's use of writing exercises, assigning non-verbal responses enabled me to verify if students were on task or if they required additional support.

## **Dynamics That Affect Discussions**

I noticed that my classroom management skills and the individual behaviours of my students affected whether a dialogical discussion would be successful. This observation was also made by several of the participants who employed a variety of classroom management strategies, such as Colleen's strategy of having her grade 2 students sit in a circle on a carpet, or Taylor's, who began each class with her art

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<sup>108</sup> In my experience, displaying a word bank and encouraging students to apply the specific words increases vocabulary. In sum, students need to be instructed.

students standing in a circle. Unlike Colleen and Taylor, I found it impossible to gather my twenty-eight students in a circle to discuss a work of art.

## Class Size

While Sedlacek and Sedova (2017) claimed that a large class of students enhances a dialogical discussion, this was not the case for me, Scarlet, Eloise, or Hudson. In a larger class, there is a greater possibility of students who require more attention due to behavioural problems. I adapted my approach so dialogical discussions with works of art would sometimes occur as large class discussions and sometimes happen between smaller groups. Even with smaller groups, I carefully selected the groups keeping in mind possible personality clashes so I could avoid heated arguments. Arguments arose whenever a student intentionally made a comment, they knew would annoy another student that they do not like. Even though I reiterated the importance of listening to all students and speaking to one another with respect, several students still approached my desk and informed me that they could not work with a particular student. The argument was never about the work of art.

## Role of the Teacher as a Facilitator

During interviews with the participants, I found it interesting that most referred to their role as a facilitator during a discussion. This role was viewed as an approach to create an egalitarian classroom. In my own interview, I referenced my role as a teacher and dismissed the idea that I was a facilitator. It seemed that my participants, including Chloe and Lily, thought that taking on a teacher's role, instead of that of a facilitator, was an inferior or negative way to lead a discussion. It is possible that this negative association with the role of teacher comes from the move away from teacher monologue, as defined by Alexander (2006), as an effective teaching method. The facilitator and the teacher have different approaches to a discussion. The facilitator allows students the freedom to wander in a discussion, and a teacher applies moments of direct instruction during a discussion to control the students and to achieve set objectives. Similar to Mariah and Taylor, I believed it was important to balance both teacher-directed instruction and

a reflective constructivist approach, as suggested by Huebner (1968/2008). Taking on the role of a facilitator detaches the expert knowledge of the teacher. Furthermore, Irwin (2008) proposed that VTS is favoured by teachers as it does not require knowledge of art vocabulary or aesthetic skills to interpret the work of art. Thus, if a teacher acts as a facilitator during a discussion with a work of art, it may lessen the requirement for the teacher to conduct research of the work of art under discussion.

## Topics

The topics that the participants approached with their students and the topics that I discussed in my classroom were dependent upon the social and cultural dynamics of our schools. On account of the multiculturalism of the elementary school that I worked in and the cosmopolitan nature of Montreal, I had more freedom to speak on a variety of topics that many participants. While there were moments when certain topics such as gay marriage caused discomfort in certain students, I never considered avoiding due to fear of backlash from parents, as Hudson did. I experienced a supportive school environment, brought about by both my colleagues and, most importantly, administration. Furthermore, embedded in the Quebec Education Plan, students are required to gain “an understanding of how all individuals are equal in terms of right and dignity” and to “reflect on aspects of certain social realities and subjects” (QEP, 2017).<sup>109</sup> Therefore, I was also supported by the government curriculum.

## *Racism*

While I have always consciously selected a range of artists of various backgrounds, like Mariah, Taylor, and Scarlet. But like Hudson, I never taught a Black History Month unit as part of my high school art program. These discussions on racism entered during random moments in the art classroom due to a current event or theme concerning a particular artist. Yet, at the elementary level, I noticed that my colleagues each devised a Black History Month unit for the planned curriculum, similar to Colleen and

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<sup>109</sup> It is important to note that while the curriculum outlined by the Quebec government focuses on equality, in 2019 the Coalition Avenir Québec government passed the Quebec Bill 21, described as “an Act respecting the laicity of the State, which denies Quebec public servants such as teachers to wear religious symbols or clothing while at their place of employment.”

Lily. Instead of creating a Black History Month unit, I chose to intentionally discuss racism, empowerment, and respect throughout the school year. Similar to Scarlet, I selected works of art from a variety of artists to avoid presenting a traditional Western Canon of art. However, reflecting upon my choices and comparing them with the practices of Colleen and Mariah, who both used Lawrence's *The Libraries Are Appreciated* to launch discussions on discrimination, I realized I could have done more with the work of art than simply conducting a small discussion regarding the content of the work and displaying it beside the classroom door.<sup>110</sup>

### *Gender*

Several participants mentioned they avoided discussing gender with their classes. This was peculiar because participants who had attended VAST in Philadelphia spent time discussing gender with the community group AORTA<sup>111</sup> and were all provided with resources. Taylor and Colleen considered it not age-appropriate and stated that the content did not relate to their planned curricula, whereas I was mandated by the Quebec Government to discuss a variety of topics centring on identity and sexuality. Colleen expressed that the gender-related resources supplied by the PMA were more suited for an art teacher, yet I had only applied them in ELA and ethics lessons.

## **MUSEUM RESOURCES**

Throughout the two summer institutes, I noted the activities and works of art I anticipated incorporating into my grade 6 curricula. I had intentions to dive deep into the socially engaged topics and activities presented at VAST and apply VTS from Teaching from Works of Art at the start of the academic year. However, upon entering my new classroom in August, I was confronted with no curricular resources

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<sup>110</sup> The participants who described discussing racism mentioned that their lessons pertained to African Americans. Only Mariah focused on Indigenous peoples. I focused on the various cultural groups represented in my classroom (fourteen different nationalities in a class of twenty-eight students). In sum, we all discussed what we felt was relevant to our teaching environments.

<sup>111</sup> AORTA is the acronym for the community group: Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance.

for any of the subjects that I was to teach — no art supplies, not even a functioning projector for the smartboard. I had a blackboard but no chalk. Due to the lack of resources, I decided to introduce just a few theatre activities and some VTS in September, as they were easily incorporated in my curricula. I only began to consider incorporating several of the resources from the summer institutes curricula mid-November.

### Creating an Inclusive Classroom

The most influential take away from VAST pertained to creating an inclusive environment as we had done on the first day of the summer art institute. To achieve this, I modified the *Collective Contract* activity presented by AORTA. Instead of writing ten sentences for the contract, I invited my students to select and vote upon five words that would become our contract. These included: Respect, Communication, Organization, Silence, Care.<sup>112</sup> The words were displayed above one of the blackboards in the classroom and in moments when chaos erupted, I would point to one of the words and ask the students if we (myself included) were breaking the contract. This routine refocused and grounded the class and me (Fig. 18).



**Figure 18: Collective contract above the blackboard**

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<sup>112</sup> Each of the students who presented the words had to explain why it was important. Respect referenced concern for each other and the materials in the classroom. Communication included listening, speaking clearly, and understanding each other when needing space from each other. Organization was important to avoid chaos. One student stated silence, which made everyone laugh. He explained that it was necessary to help us focus. And I asked to include care because we needed to care about each other, ourselves, and place care into the work that we created.



## Writing and Studio Activities

At VAST, a variety of writing activities were modelled by the museum educators to respond to works of art, and at *Taller Puertorriqueño*, El Corazón del Barrio, the community educators introduced us to a spoken poetry activity. I intended to use these two activities for a poetry unit during the month of February as I felt the unique activities would have piqued the interest of my students. However, the poetry unit was never realized because I had accepted a student-teacher, and without my knowledge, she had spent the previous two months preparing a poetry unit as part of her preparation at the university. And while I had explained the various poetry activities to her, she had no interest in modifying her unit. Interestingly, none of the generalist participants who attended VAST described incorporating any of the writing activities into their ELA lessons.

I applied none of the studio activities from the VAST curriculum in any of the subjects that I taught. For the most part, the studio activities required materials that were not readily available. Colleen had incorporated the paper-making into a science unit, but I could not consider this as my art budget was only \$100 for the year. I also had wanted to allow my students to create journals, similar to Taylor, and possibly paint self-care rocks, as they liked the one I had on my desk, but I was not able to move forward with these projects due to my limited budget. And due to my own dislike of collage, I avoided creating a collective Zine with my students.

## Theatre Activities

The Teaching from Works of Art curriculum at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art focused on theatre activities to provide the educators with tools and skills to develop dialogical discussions with works of art in their classrooms. Bayar (2014) proposed that to increase the likelihood that professional development will be implemented into a teacher's classroom, it needs to have active participation and high-quality instructors. Even though the program had these qualities, I was hesitant to use the theatre activities. Firstly, I had lukewarm enthusiasm for the theatre activities during the summer institute. Secondly, after

reviewing the handout, the theatre activities seemed more appropriate for a lower elementary class, a view that was also shared by Scarlet. Guskey (2009) claimed that in order for a new practice to be adopted, it requires a change in the teachers' attitude. I felt obliged to attempt them as a result of conducting this study, otherwise, I would not have considered the theatre activities.

While the theatre activities appeared straightforward, and I had enacted them during the summer institute, they were very demanding. Similar to Lily and Chloe, I attempted to apply them as an icebreaker for students to help them become more comfortable with each other at the start of the school year. My students were unable to focus the first time I introduced the Zip Zap Zop activity. Even if I worked with a small group of five students while the rest of the class was working on an assignment, they were not interested. Implementing the Zip Zap Zop activity was a failure, as Eloise also found, and neither one of us attempted any of the other theatre activities. Hudson and Lily, on the other hand, easily incorporated the Zip Zap Zop activity as a method to improve observation, and Lily and Chloe were able to use other theatre activities as brain breaks.

### Poster Resources

Both summer institutes provided laminated posters, the PMA provided a resource binder, and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art provided a booklet of all of the theatre activities, some of which participants, including me, used in their classrooms.

My use of the laminated posters differed from the other participants. The laminated posters were an ideal format for my fellow elementary generalist participants as they could gather their students to look closely at them; however, I could not do this due to the size of my class. Several of the participants only used a poster if it could be incorporated into their already-planned curricula, supporting Guskey's (2002) observation that teachers readily adopt materials only if they align with their existing curriculum. For instance, Lily and Chloe readily discussed Stuart's *George Washington (The Constable-Hamilton Portrait)*

in a social studies lesson. While Scarlet appreciated the classical painting, she had little use for it in her art class. I also had little use for it and it remained untouched.

Hudson, Eloise, and Scarlet stated that they intended to use the poster resources but never displayed them due to a lack of time to develop a lesson. In contrast, I displayed them immediately to decorate my classroom and did not feel a lesson needed to incorporate them. Hudson expressed that it was impossible to display the posters such as Titus Kaphar's *The Cost of the Removal* due to fear of negative comments from students or colleagues, whereas my colleagues loved the "social justice" aspect of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's posters. Several of my students pointed out their favourite posters throughout the year.<sup>113</sup>

### *Printed Resources*

Once I gained more understanding of the grade 6 curricula, I returned to the VAST resource binder and incorporated lessons from the Teachingtolerance.org website for both English language arts and ethics lessons. In the interviews with Colleen and Taylor, I was surprised that they found the resource not applicable to their classrooms as it provided a wealth of thought-provoking lessons geared to all grade levels in all subjects. Concerning the booklet of theatre activities, I skimmed through while considering which ones were age-appropriate for grade 6. In contrast, Lily described it as her "Bible," and it remained on her desk as a reference tool that she repeatedly applied in her grade 2 classroom.

## **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ART MUSEUMS**

### Relationships at the Summer Institutes

I appreciated the positive and caring rapport that the museum educators provided at both art museum summer institutes, and this was comparable to all of the participants' experiences. The museum

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<sup>113</sup> Interesting though, similar to all of the participants I never referenced any of the works of art that were discussed in the galleries at either summer institute.

educators were open, sincere, and appreciative. To help develop an equitable relationship, the museum educators participated in all aspects of the two professional development programs and learned alongside the educators. In addition, due to the prolonged engagement, barriers that may have existed disappeared as educators and museum educators interacted. After an emotional discussion about racism, I had joined a smaller group of four to further unpack the *Interior* (also known as *The Rape*) by Degas as the rest of the group proceeded to the next gallery, something Taylor also did. Within this group, we were a mixture of teachers and museum educators discussing our emotions. Therefore, even though the museum educators were in the role of an instructor, it was never the hierarchical relationship that shows up in Liu's (2000) research.

Like all of the participants, I enjoyed the relationships that I developed at the two art museum summer institutes, yet I only remained in contact with the museum staff I reached out to for the study and with the participants. And once I completed my interviews with the participants, the communication and sharing of our classroom practices ended. If a Facebook page or another social media platform had been set up, I am unsure of how long it would have generated interest, and most participants felt the same way.

### Experiences with Museum Educator

Prior to my transfer to the elementary school, when I was an art specialist, I routinely partnered with art museums or art galleries in Montreal. I developed these partnerships so I would have help with providing classroom experiences, and planning field trips, and other participants described similar goals. Unlike Taylor and Mariah, I had never intentionally sought out advice or help from museum educators. Only recently had I reached out to the museum educators at the PMA for advice on resources that I could apply in an undergraduate class that I was teaching. However, as a generalist elementary teacher, I have yet to work directly with an art museum educator.

While speaking with Chloe and Scarlet, I realized that they, like me, considered the instruction provided by museum educators different than the teaching they did in the classroom. For example, museum

educators from the Canadian Centre for Architecture worked with my grade 9 art students to measure the temperatures of the various spaces in the high school, and afterward, they designed new functions for each space based upon its temperature. Unlike Chloe and Scarlet, who were cautious to voice their concerns and opinions concerning the curriculum presented by the museum educators, I have always been vocal (see Matthewson, 2003).<sup>114</sup> Yet, unlike Chloe and Scarlet their partnerships were funded by private donors and grants, the partnerships that I have participated in were never funded by a private donor. Although it was not said in the interviews, funding from private donors may influence whether a teacher is comfortable or able to voice their opinion.

As a visual art specialist, I planned a field trip to an art museum for my art students every semester.<sup>115</sup> Hudson, who also planned such field trips, expressed that visiting an art museum was an opportunity for students to express themselves, and Scarlet viewed it as an opportunity for students to learn how to behave appropriately in a museum. From my perspective, the objective was to provide my students with the experience of seeing and discussing works of art in a gallery space, as well as meeting and participating in discussions with museum educators. As an educator, I also enjoyed these experiences as I learned new information about the artists. I have never experienced hierarchical dynamics during a gallery tour with a museum educator. This is most likely due to developing positive relationships with several of the museum educators from the various cultural institutions over the course of my career.

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<sup>114</sup> For instance, in a partnership with a local art museum in 2018, my students were selected with several other schools in Montreal to create a work of art that was to be displayed in the art museum's education gallery. I was denied when I inquired about extending the deadline as my students required more time to produce a work of art. Only after several emails and learning of the unique challenges that the museum educator had with the project, were we able to agree upon a new deadline. Yet, if considering a hierarchal imbalance (Matthewson, 2003) or developing an understanding (Bobick & Horby, 2013), it is important to note that we were not given any additional art supplies. Furthermore, I was required to write a lesson plan for their online platform if I wanted my students' work to be displayed.

<sup>115</sup> Interestingly the cycle team at my elementary school debated locations for the end-of-year field trip. We had briefly considered an art museum as an option; however, we all agreed that it would not be a fun enough option to act as a reward for our students' hard work. This example supports Greene et al.'s (2014) observation that teachers select field trips as rewards rather than for educational enrichment.

I have had to cancel several field trips due to colleagues' complaints to the administration that it took away valuable time from their classes, a complaint shared by Hudson. For several years, restrictions were placed on field trips, and any teacher who wished to plan a trip found it impossible to organize. For instance, one restriction required an entire level of 180 students to participate in the field trip even if they were not enrolled in the course. It was nearly impossible for any art museum in Montreal to accommodate such a large group. Teachers also had the choice to refuse to chaperone a field trip, which meant that getting enough support to organize a field trip required tactful negotiation skills. It seemed that my colleagues and the administration, similar to Hudson's, could not see the value of a field trip to an art museum.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Since 2005, I have routinely sought out professional development during my summer months as an art specialist teacher. Obtaining professional development hours was not required for my Quebec licensure, though it was required of some other program participants for their state licensures. I was also not obligated by my school board to participate in additional professional development hours, though other participants, such as Hudson, were. Like all of the participants<sup>116</sup> in this study, I sought out professional development to acquire something new and to further develop my classroom practice, which confirms Guskey's (2002) findings regarding the rationale for teachers seeking professional development. My school board rarely, if ever, focused on the unique needs of the art teacher, as Allison (2013) discusses. Instead, I routinely found myself in ELA workshops, similar to Hudson and Taylor's experiences.

### Desired Characteristics

Elliott Eisner (2000) asserted that the majority of individuals who speak at professional development workshops or at conferences have little understanding of actual classroom practices of teachers. Supporting this view, all of the participants and myself described in our interviews attending

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<sup>116</sup> The majority of the participants had already completed the required hours for their licensure.

professional development lectures or training that was disconnected from the realities of our classrooms. I was not surprised that my participants often described their frustrations with this. For example, Lily intentionally used her banked sick days to skip in-service days. I would have used my sick days too, however, if a teacher in my school missed in-service training without a medical note, his or her pay was docked, and they would often experience harassment from the administration.

During interviews, the participants and I would exchange ideas concerning the desired characteristics of a professional development workshop. All the participants and I described the characteristics of quality professional development that Bayar (2014) outlined, such as matching the needs of the teacher, active participation, and high-quality instructors. Interestingly, none of us mentioned Bayar's (2004) suggestion that teachers design and plan their own professional development activities and long-term engagement, such as with a PLC, though Colleen did mention a committee at her school. Most other teachers, such as Eloise, stated that the administration selected the activities for them. Perhaps it never occurred to any of us that we could design our own professional development plans as we never had been asked.

## Funding

Like all of the participants, I relied upon funding to attend professional development outside of what was offered by my school board, though the majority of the funding that I have received over the years has been provided by my school board. Unlike all of the participants, I was fortunate that my school board provided various forms of funding for professional development: I can access funds to attend a course, continue university studies, and attend out of province conferences.<sup>117</sup> Similar to Eloise and Scarlet, I have also relied upon grants and sponsorship from private organizations to attend more “boutique” types of professional development, as described by Hill (2009), when I found local professional development of

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<sup>117</sup> Only teachers employed with a regular 100% contract post could apply for funding. Teachers were allocated \$350 for a non-credited course, \$200.00 per university course, and \$1,500.00 every three years to attend a conference.

limited or poor quality. Eloise, Taylor, Lily, Hudson, and I all described funding the professional development ourselves as the funding never quite covered the actual cost. As Hill (2009) explains, teachers often spend their own monies on professional development. Our willingness to do just that further demonstrates the value that the participants and myself placed upon professional development.

### Power Dynamics

The theme of power dynamics arose during most of my interviews except for those with Mariah and Colleen. Power dynamics emerged when a participant had to request an administrator give them a three-day leave to attend a professional development conference; participants frequently faced the refusal of a request to miss an in-service professional day. As an elementary generalist teacher, I was required by administration to attend additional professional development workshops: three math training workshops, one on sexual education, and two on mental health education due to my participation in a research study. Often, conversations with administration about professional development brought about ways for them to assert their power.

## **INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS**

### Teacher Connection

I participated in the two summer institutes and integrated that experience into my research study, making myself a participant-observer. This was so I was able to gain insights into the programs and to establish genuine connections with the educators so I could recruit them to participate in my study (Yin, 2014). In this sense, my role as a participant-observer was hierarchical because I arrived at the summer institutes as a graduate student to conduct research. Because of this, it was not surprising that Chloe invited a colleague to listen in on our first interview. Authentic connections began to develop between the participants and me after the first interviews as we shared many common experiences. We often discussed details of our work environments, including lesson planning and frustration with administration. For example, Taylor and I shared a mutual frustration with evaluation, noting that students are often more



concerned with their final marks than with art-making itself. In this way, my position as an in-service classroom teacher allowed for sincerity and openness during interviews, as I had awareness of the daily challenges experienced by teachers.

Furthermore, I believe that engaging in a self-study of my practice with the use of autoethnography fostered openings and genuine reflection that supported developing relationships with the participants. In interviews, I described my successes and failures with the various art museum summer institute activities, allowing myself to be vulnerable. This transformed the interviews into a safe space where the participants and I could discuss issues that we were not comfortable sharing with colleagues. I became a confidant for Hudson and Eloise who felt they were unable to express their frustrations with their colleagues or administration. Without the integration of autoethnography, I may have remained a distant and neutral researcher during the interviews, garnering less insight and leading to less robust data. Though the use of autoethnography here may leave the comparative case study open to criticism, I was always cautious to remain conscious of my positionality, as proposed by Maxwell (2012) and Yin (2014).

## Influence

Bayar (2014) claimed that long-term engagement is required after teachers participate in a professional development program for this program to be implemented into the teacher's practice. As a result of checking-in with the participants throughout the 2018–2019 academic year, I was supporting the usage of the two art museums' curricula and indirectly providing this long-term engagement as the interviews with the participants caused reflection on the materials and on their practices. Still, this long-term engagement was not a guarantee that participants would integrate all of the materials; their willingness to do this depended on several factors, including time, planned curriculum, and school environment. For instance, Lily, Chloe, and Hudson were able to successfully integrate the theatre activities into their classrooms, in particular, *Zip Zap Zop*, explaining that it enhanced their students' learning. For example, Hudson claimed that it helped with developing observation skills in her art students. Whereas Eloise,

Scarlet, and I avoided applying the theatre activities either due to it being unsuccessful or questioning usefulness. Interestingly, we discussed, reflected, and deliberated on them during the interviews.

Throughout the interview process, I gained insight into the participants' different approaches to pedagogy, and it influenced my approach to teaching. Although this was not a professional learning community (PLC) as described by Hord (2009), the interviews with the participants provided me with new knowledge and support. For instance, because Taylor described the positive impact of using healing boxes with her art students, I developed an ethics unit involving boxes. Hudson expressed that she never directly evaluated her students' works of art, instead inviting them to discuss the works focusing on how they used the project's criteria. She explained that she felt the final project itself cannot demonstrate all of the learning that occurred. In turn, I applied this approach to several of the art projects in my classroom. Also, without my discussions with Mariah and Lily, I also would not have considered the importance of devising a Black History Month unit or considered the freedom that I had to tackle difficult topics without fears of backlash from the school community.

## **HUEBNER'S APPROACH TO CURRICULUM THEORY**

### **Curricula and Language**

Huebner (2008) developed categories to explore how a teacher applies and reflects upon the language used in the classroom and how it directs the curriculum. To recap, Huebner (1968/2008) outlined three uses of language in the classroom space:

1. Language as Ready-to-Hand, which focuses on language that directs the student.
2. Language as Happening of Truth, which focuses on moments when the teacher removes him or herself from instruction to reflect upon actions directly resulting from Language as Ready-to-Hand.
3. Language as Thought of Thinkers, which are moments when the teacher questions and assesses the use of certain words to rethink how to interact with students.

## Language as Ready-to-Hand

The analysis of Language as Ready-to-Hand focused on moments when direct instruction was referenced along with how it helped the student to understand the world. During my interviews, I realized that the language that I was using to describe classroom activities is not reflective in nature. Similar to Taylor and Chloe, I described activities in a step-by-step manner and never considered how the direct instruction influenced the students' learning. However, unlike Scarlet and Hudson, I rarely stated specific objectives that supported student learning such as developing observation skills. Even though I was I understood the pedagogical qualities of certain activities such as creating a class contract or using VTS to draw out information from a photograph in a social studies lesson, I saw most of the activities simply as things to do. In sum, it was apparent from the analysis of my interviews that I saw the experience at the art museum summer institutes as an opportunity to acquire new activities or skills for the classroom.

### *Categories of Language*

The language used to describe direct instruction was classified into three categories: descriptive, expressive, or regretful. As previously stated, I described the activities during interviews without considering the pedagogical qualities of the activities.<sup>118</sup> Similar to Lily and Chloe, I used VTS to explore a work of art, transforming it into a routine that could be easily applied to several subjects. Furthermore, when I described my intention to integrate works of art from the summer institutes, such as *Our Town* by Kerry James Marshall, I referred to the work as an object to be used for a discussion and not as a piece the students should derive personal meaning from. Eloise, who intended to use *Our Town* in an existing unit, described her proposed plan in a similar manner; we did not initially see works of art, as used in the classroom, as the source of a meaningful experience for students, as cited by Burnham and Kai-Kee (2005).

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<sup>118</sup> I described other art activities such as an artist research project or a field trip was described in a monotonous manner without stating goals. I attended to these projects or a field trip as something to do but never questioned why it was done.

Participants applied expressive language when describing moments when the unexpected occurred with works of art or with the instruction. I tended to apply it when depicting one of my favourite lessons, such as an architecture lesson. Expressive language was used to communicate the enjoyment I got from witnessing students' enthusiasm during a studio project. Taylor also employed expressive language to describe a project about healing.

In the interviews, I expressed regret about my inability to integrate an activity or work of art that I had participated in or seen at one of the art museums. Unlike Eloise, who linked her feelings with failure, I simply felt disappointment. I perceived it as a missed opportunity. For example, I continuously referenced a desire to integrate a discussion on monuments from my experiences at VAST; however, I lacked the time to develop it into a lesson. Seeing it as a missed opportunity reinforces the rigidity of the planned curriculum. Similar to Cloe, Colleen, and Scarlet, I expressed that if I had additional time to study the material and build a lesson, I would have incorporated it into my classroom practice. On top of this, instead of questioning why there is not sufficient time in the school day to plan lessons, the participants and I tended to blame our own time management skills.

## Language as Thought of Thinkers

### *Identity*

Language as Thought of Thinkers came up in interviews when the participants and myself reflected upon our direct instruction and attempted to rethink instruction with our students. These reflections centred on the art museum curricular materials, however, commentary extended beyond just these lessons and resources. Participants' reflections centred on a few things: the usefulness of VTS, whether or not to discuss the aesthetic qualities of a work of art, their role in a discussion, the school environment, and class dynamics. When I reflected upon my use of direct instruction, I expressed frustration and tension. Guskey (2002) did find that teachers experience challenges adapting after learning from a professional development

workshop due to increased uncertainty, however, I believe my challenges were related to my new identity as an elementary teacher.

In my interviews, I deliberated upon the act of teaching and how the teaching and projects impacted my students, if they did at all. In my previous role as an art specialist teaching in an enriched science and math high school, this was less of a concern. I attribute this to knowing that colleagues, administration, students, and parents generally felt that my art classes were supposed to be the “fun” class, so, in my mind, my teaching had little impact on my students. However, at the elementary level, I routinely questioned how my teaching impacted the students academically and socially, because there my colleagues continually emphasized how the little gestures and moments in our classrooms can influence a student. Therefore, similar to the participants, my school environment shaped my approach and curricular choices.

### Language as Happening of Truth

Huebner’s (1968/2008) Language as Happening of Truth was perceived when the participants and I reflected on the use of direct instruction and expressed the instruction as a poetic experience either at the summer institute or with our students. Language of Happening of Truth was predominately observed when participants recounted aesthetic experiences with works of art in the gallery spaces or expressed their emotions with fellow educators. In my own interviews, I rarely spoke of poetic experiences at the summer institutes. This was perhaps because I was conducting the interviews in my classroom via Skype following a day of teaching, which minimalized my ability to be fully present to mull over my experiences at the summer institutes.

However, in my journal, I wrote of poetic moments in the galleries. For example, at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, I was part of a small group of educators who wandered off with a museum educator to deliberate on the usefulness of VTS instead of returning directly to the classroom for lunch. We stumbled upon “*Untitled*” (L.A.), 1991, and as a group, we unpacked our interpretations of the installation with the knowledge provided by the museum educator. At VAST, I recorded my emotional

reactions to the socially challenging topics that were discussed each day and noted it was the supportive and sensitive interconnection between educators and museum educators that enabled such discussions to proceed. Even though I experienced a conflict with another educator at the Eastern State Penitentiary concerning the content presented in an installation, I found it a poetic experience as it caused deep reflection afterward.

Somewhat similar to the participants, once returning to my classroom, these poetic experiences were minimal. I believe that this was a result of using several compulsory workbooks that guided the direct instruction in my classroom. There was little room to plan learning that diverges from the workbooks. This observation supports Kelly (2004) who asserted that curricular materials designed by experts remove the teacher as a critical thinker.

The most notable moments of visible wonder and spontaneity in my elementary classroom occurred during open-ended art projects. Students were invited to be creative and explore their imaginations with various materials.<sup>119</sup> This emphasis on wonder runs counter to Milbrandt et al.'s (2015) exploratory survey in which respondents stated that they prioritized critical thinking and problem-solving over creating poetic experiences that embraced creativity and imagination in their art courses. Interestingly, the participants and I all wished to have more poetic and meaningful moments in our classrooms.

## **Huebner's Value System**

### Technical

Huebner (1966/2008) defined the technical value as instruction that sought to develop skills within the student. The learning activities were designed with a means to an end with set objectives that could be evaluated. Huebner stressed that schools serve a technical function to ensure that students obtain skills to enter the workforce, however, this should not be their only function.

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<sup>119</sup> These art projects had no connection with the curricula presented at the art museum summer institutes.

### *To Gain New Ideas*

Like all of the participants, I thought of the professional development courses at the art museum summer institutes as an opportunity to learn new activities or approaches to discussing works of art. It never occurred to me that these approaches might diverge from the training and best practice methods that I was accustomed to (see Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, Ponder et al., 2010). It was apparent that the curriculum at VAST was not concerned simply with training; instead, it aimed to provide educators with an opportunity to engage in dialogue on socially challenging topics that are prevalent in society. And even though *Teaching from Works of Art* focused on training, it centred on methods to generate meaning-making with works of art. Although all of the participants appreciated the dialogues that occurred in the galleries that centred on creating new knowledge, several participants, such as Scarlet, Colleen, and me, expressed a wish to acquire specific training, including learning methods to navigate socially challenging topics or how to approach tension that may arise in a dialogical discussion.

My analysis of the technical value concentrated on moments when the participants and I depicted educational activities from the art museum summer institutes as a means to an end that could be evaluated. Most notable was how VTS was practised by me and the participants. Yenawine (2014) asserted that VTS was a process to generate meaningful and authentic discussions. Instead, Lily, Colleen, Hudson, and I applied it as a pragmatic method or routine to enter a discussion on a specific topic with the use of a work of art or a photograph in lessons. For example, similar to Lily, I perceived VTS as an optimal routine students could use to deconstruct an illustration on a storybook in order to prepare them for the standardized exams in ELA.<sup>120</sup>

### *Using Works of Art*

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<sup>120</sup> A colleague and an administrator voiced that my students were better prepared for the standardized exams because I was using VTS and my art education background in various ELA lessons. These remarks support Winner and Hetland's (2008) claim that teachers are encouraged to apply thinking skills used in the art class to prepare for high stakes testing as there is a quality in the instruction in the art class that is not evident in the instruction in other subjects.

While Eisner (2001) stressed that incorporating art to enhance the content or learning of another subject was precarious,<sup>121</sup> it was evident that the generalist participants and I regularly incorporated works of art or visual images to reinforce material in another subject as we presumed that it increased student interest. The works of art and the visual images performed a technical function in the lessons: to initiate a discussion. Only Mariah referenced the aesthetic qualities of works used in this way, whereas the other generalist participants and I directed our discussion according to the specific information that could be gleaned from the work of art or visual image. As an illustration, whenever I selected a photograph for an ELA, social studies, or ethics lesson, I never contemplated the aesthetic qualities or the artist's intent, as suggested by Wren et al. (2006). Rather, I chose a work based upon its subject matter and content. Akin to Eloise, Lily, and Hudson, I treated a photograph as a tool to increase my students' observation skills with the underlying objective of aiding them with the ministry's standardized exams. If teachers generally consider a work of art or a photograph as a support with a technical function, without discussing aesthetic qualities or embodied reactions, this might affect the students' perception of the role of works of art in society.

## Political

The political value is concerned with how teachers, administrators, and politicians exert power and control for their own means. In my analysis, I focused on moments when the participants or myself conveyed moments of power or control in reference to professional development, how art educational activities were perceived in the school, and relationships with administration.

### *Relationship with Administration*

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<sup>121</sup> Eisner (2001) argued that merging art with other disciplines could diminish the intrinsic value of art, that is, the enjoyment from art creation and the exploration of materials. This study did not look at works of art used to support the content of another subject.



While several of the participants expressed power and control dynamics between themselves and their administration, I experienced none at the elementary school. The administration encouraged teachers to seek out and participate in professional development. Unlike my experiences as a visual art specialist, my administrator took a keen interest in the conferences that I attended. Furthermore, the administrator invited us to suggest the types of professional development that would be beneficial for us (see Horn & Goldstein, 2018). This invitation demonstrated that the teachers' perspective and voice were valued and required, something Colleen also found.

## School Board Professional Development

### *Power and Control*

Hudson, Lily, Eloise, Hudson, Taylor, and Chloe all experienced issues of control over the types of professional development that were selected for them by their administration and/or districts. In some ways, my experiences were similar as I have unwillingly participated in numerous lectures and training sessions, as described by Eisner (2000), in which the presenter knew little about the working environment of the classroom teacher. The participants and I all experienced frustration, annoyance, and withdrawal concerning the professional development that we had to endure at the district or board level, which rarely referenced our pedagogy. In reflecting upon this, I wonder: what are the consequences of a teacher repeatedly participating in a non-useful activity that is supposed to invigorate one's teaching practice?

Like all of the participants, I sought out funding to attend professional development from my school board. Funding was determined by firm guidelines set out by the board, which were tricky to navigate. For example, it was simpler to participate in a conference as an attendee rather than a presenter, as a teacher needed to submit one request form for approval from the board, whereas if you were to present at the same conference, you would be required to compose a formal letter to the director of the school board to request permission. And, even if funding was secured, the administration was given the authority to deny the opportunity. Whenever my funding was denied, I often sought out funding from other sources, such as a

scholarship from a private organization or a grant from Concordia University, as did the other participants. Or occasionally, similar to Taylor and Eloise, when I was unable to secure the funding, I did not attend or present at the conference.

### *Perception of Art Education in the School*

Heilig et al. (2010) addressed how politics, economic influences, and events in society can affect the value placed upon art education in the public school system. Notably, the analysis of the political value revealed how art was perceived in the participants' work environments. The amount of time devoted to teaching art education can denote its perceived value in the students' learning. It was frequently mentioned by art specialists Scarlet, Hudson, and Taylor that they lack time with each class, teaching multiple classes in limited periods. Unlike all of the other generalist participants in this study, I was required to teach art as part of the grade 6 curriculum, presumably because of a reluctance of behalf of the administration to provide funding to hire specialized art teachers. Furthermore, I was provided with only \$100.00 for art supplies compared to \$700.00 for ELA resources.

Concerning the value of professional development in the visual arts, I observed that the art specialists were placed in workshops that were not related to their discipline. The generalist teachers also never spoke about attending an art education professional development in-service training at their schools. During the 2018–2019 academic year, as an elementary generalist, I was required to participate in numerous in-service professional development programs, such as:

1. A half-day lecture on diversified curriculum.
2. Three lectures on new approaches to mathematics.
3. An online lecture concerning the new sexual education curricula.
4. Two training sessions on inclusive education in conjunction with a research study that my colleagues and I were participating in.

5. Three workshops related to STEAM education due to my role as a member of the school's STEAM Committee.

From the 10 days of professional development, I incorporated only one mathematics game into my curriculum and reflected on how my class environment influenced the mental health of my students. Similar to all of the participants, I was not offered any professional development in art education. Furthermore, supporting Clapp and Jimenez's (2016) observation, the STEAM education training sessions presented simple art-making add-ons and neglected to demonstrate how art was integral to the STEAM acronym.

### Scientific

The scientific value was observed when the participants or myself described an educational activity that was intended to produce new knowledge and maximize change in our students.<sup>122</sup> To generate this new knowledge, the majority of the participants relied upon discussing works of art. It was noticed that the type of new knowledge generated was dependent upon the role and the participant's intention with the work of art in the lesson. For example, Lily, Eloise, and Chloe focused on increasing content knowledge whereas Mariah, Colleen, and the art specialists focused on fostering awareness in their students' understandings of themselves and of others. I noted in my own class that for my students to assemble ideas and form new knowledge of a topic, they often needed me to present specific questions, otherwise the responses would contain little reflection.

Concerning Wegerif's (2008) assertion that learning is derived from differences in opinions and viewpoints in the conversation, I, like all of the participants, engaged predominately in talk-as-conversation.

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<sup>122</sup> Concerning the scientific value in relation to the art museum summer institutes, I observed that all of the participants from VAST as well as Lily and Chloe from Teaching from Works of Art expressed that learning is a profound experience that produces new knowledge. However, Scarlett and Hudson, who both attended Teaching from Works of Art, experienced less change than the generalist participants due to their familiarity and comfort with discussing works of art. Similar to Scarlett and Hudson, I experienced little change at Teaching from Works of Art due to my art educational background, however, I recognize the impact that VAST had on my teaching practice.

Discussions were concerned with providing the tools students needed to generate new ideas without generating discomfort or conflict. As an illustration, Hudson and Lily explained that they found discussions about racism tricky to navigate. Instead, they chose to avoid disrupting the authoritarian discourse (see Bahktin, 2010). Similarly, when conflict arose in my classroom concerning religious or cultural differences, I asserted the authoritarian voice of the teacher instead of engaging in a discussion with my students. For instance, I never permitted my students to discuss their views concerning gay marriage; instead, I bypassed and redirected the discussion to focus on individual rights and freedoms. Similar to Hudson, I was aware that engaging in a discussion that focused on ingrained religious views could cause too much provocation, even in my liberal-minded school environment. In the end, I wished to not be summoned to the principal's office because of a parental complaint.

### *VTS: A Best Practice*

Although VTS was modelled by the museum educators at the two summer institutes as a process to develop meaningful encounters with works of art and foster new knowledge, it was applied by Lily, Chloe, Mariah instead as a best practice and was believed to promote critical thinking. I also applied it as a best practice as I found that it encouraged students who were normally silent or indifferent to share their ideas. As I noticed the results of this teaching strategy, I readily applied it to most of the subjects that I taught. It transformed from a method to evoke meaningful discussions into a tool used to initiate a discussion. Similar to Eloise, I questioned how deeply my students were engaged in critical thinking (see Hitchcock, 2018) without the background knowledge required to generate informed viewpoints. My students never conducted research on the topic prior to the discussion, and I provided only minimal information. My students never questioned whether the information came from a biased perspective.

### Aesthetic

Huebner's (1966/2008) aesthetic value occurs when:

1. The activity is concerned with creating balance of wholeness in the person.

2. The activity is valued for the meaning that it reveals, or it demonstrates beauty.
3. The activity is not a routine, and it evokes a sensory/ emotional experience.

From my analysis, several of the participants encountered an aesthetic experience in the galleries while discussing works of art. The act of participating in dialogical discussions with others meant new meanings could emerge from works of art, evoking an emotional response and allowing participants to consider other viewpoints. In contrast, my aesthetic experiences were mostly not triggered by the works of art but by the studio activities and lectures. While I appreciated encountering new works of art, such as “*Untitled*” (L.A.), 1991 by Félix González-Torres, the act of manipulating art materials, walking in a space such as Eastern State Penitentiary or listening to a guest allowed for greater personal reflection, in agreement with Huebner’s preposition that the aesthetic is concerned with creating balance within the individual.

Similar to several of the participants, I found these aesthetic experiences to be minimal once I returned to the classroom. I suspect this was because I had to use particular workbooks or curricular materials to meet specific curriculum standards. The discussion activities presented in the workbooks focused on learning information and not on questioning or deep reflection. Furthermore, comparable to Lily, Eloise, and Chloe, when I complimented a social studies or ELA lesson with a photograph, using it to start a discussion, the ensuing discussion tended to be a surface-level exploration and not a deep aesthetic experience.

I did notice that the aesthetic value was prevalent in my classroom whenever my students were engaged in a hands-on art-making project. These art projects were always open-ended and encouraged the students to develop a deeper awareness of the topic under discussion, and in these moments, the students experimented with not just the aesthetic qualities of the work (see Eisner, 1985/2005) but with the aesthetic qualities, including the emotional as outlined by Huebner (1966/2008).

## Ethical

The ethical value is experienced when students are viewed as equals in the classroom. The interviews made it clear that the participants and I experienced the ethical value both within the summer

institutes and within our classrooms. I, like all of the participants, engaged in positive and supportive encounters with all of the museum educators. Even after the conclusion of the summer institutes, my engagement with the museum educators at both the PMA and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art through numerous emails was considerate and egalitarian, never suggesting a hierarchy. The museum educators never made me feel as if I needed to have museum training in order to conduct my research on professional development in the art museum setting (see Liu, 2000).

In the classroom space, all of the participants, including myself, were conscious of creating an equitable environment that was founded upon respect and democracy. To establish this environment in my classroom, my students and I created a classroom contract that was visible throughout the school year. While none of the other participants had guidelines that were visible, they spoke about how and when their students followed the rules. For example, both Lily and Chloe emphasized to their students the importance of raising their hands to speak and Hudson stressed the importance of listening to each other. In these instances, the goal was to enforce the ethical value and ensure all individuals in the classroom were equal. Furthermore, to establish this equitable classroom, many participants asserted that the teacher's role in a discussion should be that of a facilitator. For example, Lily, Chloe, and Hudson claimed that "teacher as lecturer" was counteractive to this equitable environment. However, Mariah and I felt that it was important for a teacher to embrace that role because it is necessary to present information.

Many may assume that creating a caring and nurturing classroom environment is an undeniable cornerstone to schooling. Yet, those of my students who attended schools outside of North America often recount classroom environments that are founded on control and power. As an illustration, one student described needing permission to sip water from a water bottle on her desk and another student recounted being hit with a ruler on a regular basis.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, I discussed the rationale for incorporating a self-study of my classroom practice over the course of the 2018–2019 academic school year with the use of autoethnography. By juxtaposing my experiences of incorporating, modifying, or omitting the curricula from the art museum curricula with those of the other participants, I fostered new insights into the themes that had materialized during the analysis of the data. I found that the participants' experiences were quite similar to my own. These insights and understandings of the challenges may not have arrived if I had not incorporated a self-study. The process of analysis and deep reflection concerning my use of language and my attempt to objectively understand my own pedagogy using Huebner's (1968/2008) Value System generated a better understanding of the participants' experiences with the curriculum and their teaching environments.

In the final chapter, I summarize this research project concentrating on pertinent observations and insights uncovered. Afterward, I discuss the implications concerning professional development for teachers and the art museum summer institute model, VTS, the aesthetic experience, language as a process to understand pedagogy, and Huebner's (1966/2008) Value System as an approach to understanding the curricula that teachers dwell in. This is followed by my suggestions regarding professional development and by what means the art museum can develop into a more advantageous resource and partner for teachers.

# Conclusion

## INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the purpose and motivation of this research study to explore professional development for in-service teachers is reviewed. This is followed by a summary of the literature review, a description of the methodology and connections made during the analysis and findings. I provide a brief overview of my experiences as a participant-observer and of the discussion. Afterwards, I address several implications and suggestions that spotlight the following areas:

- **Professional Development for Teachers:** This section focuses on specific qualities and characteristics of the art museum summer institutes that supported the educators and lists areas of the program design that could be modified or strengthened.
- **Visual Thinking Strategies:** This section summarizes key observations of the participants' use of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) along with recommendations to strengthen the process to discuss a work of art and advance it from a surface-level exploration in the classroom.
- **The Aesthetic Experience:** It was observed that the aesthetic experience and interaction with works of art varied significantly between the gallery space and the teachers' classrooms. It is recommended that teachers develop a stronger familiarity with the visual arts for these experiences to carry into their classrooms.
- **Curriculum Theory:** This section focuses on the ways in which language is used to understand practice and discusses how reflecting upon the language can reveal subtle power dynamics and tensions found in school environments.
- **Huebner's Value System:** As a result of analyzing the data through Huebner's (1966/2008) Value System, subtleties emerged regarding the intricate nature of schooling



and the how the art museum summer institutes' curricula were communicated through the participant's pedagogy.

This is followed by my personal reflections on the research study, in particular my experiences as a participant-observer at the art museum summer institutes and the self-study of my classroom practice. I end the chapter discussing future research pertaining to professional development for teachers.

## **SUMMARY OF STUDY**

### **Background**

The purpose of this study was to explore the efficacy of the summer institute model of professional development for teachers and explore how teachers manipulated the presented curricula afterwards in their classroom practices. The main objectives of this study were to:

1. To explore the curricular and pedagogical changes that occurred in the participant's classroom after attending the museum summer institute.
2. To better understand how the participants shape their students' learning of art through the museums' curricula.
3. To consider how the art museum can be a resource to support teachers in their personal and professional development.

While there are studies that discuss professional development for teachers, they are mostly from the perspective of the museum educator. This study is unique as it focuses on the perspective of the in-service teacher. The research invited teachers to engage in discussion about their pedagogy and curriculum and resulted in insights into tensions between domains of influence such as the social, cultural, economic, and political.

### Literature Review

The review of literature was structured in three sections in order to contextualize this study. In the first section of the chapter, I provided an overview of the development of art museum education programming, in particular the art museum as a site for professional development. I discussed various types of teaching strategies utilized in the art museum space (see Mayer, 2005) and in detail VTS (Yenawine, 2014) as it was modelled at both art museum summer institutes. Although VTS is viewed as a process that encourages meaningful connections with a visual image or a work of art, it has been suggested that teachers practise pairing VTS with factual information (Bell, 2012) and with an examination of the aesthetic qualities of the work of art to further enhance the dialogue (Chin, 2017).

In the second section of the chapter, I presented bodies of literature that discussed professional development for teachers and art teachers (Allison, 2013, Charland 2006) as well as the effectiveness of such programming (Bayar, 2014, Guskey, 2002, Hourigan, 2011) and its relationship with current trends in education (Clapp & Kumenez, 2016; Franco, 2011; La Jevic, 2013), in particular art education (Milbrant et al., 2015).

In the final section, I contextualized Curriculum Theory in reference to the renewal of Tylerism in the education system in North America and reviewed the importance of validating the teacher's experience with the curriculum (Allen, 2010). Further along in the chapter, I discussed curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner's (1968/2008) dialogic framework and his Value System that provided a structure to explore the curricula presented at the art museum professional development programs and how it was implemented, modified, or omitted from the participants' classroom pedagogy. As a result of the participants' exposure and active participation in dialogical discussions at the two art museum summer institutes, I concluded the chapter with a brief discussion concerning dialogical and dialectical discussions that are facilitated by teachers (Alexander, 2006; Wegerif, 2008) along with the barriers (Sedova & Sedlacek, 2017; Zander, 2004).

## Methods

Comparative case study was used for this research project, and in the methodology section I discussed its affordances and limitations (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I further discussed the rationale for acting as a participant-observer (see Given, 2008) at the two art museum summer institutes along with my intention to incorporate a self-study of my classroom practice with the use of autoethnography (see Hughes & Pennington, 2017) during the 2018–2019 academic year. I emphasized that the focus of the comparative case study was not to examine or compare the two art museum summer institute professional development programs.

I discussed the specific criteria used to select the art museum summer institutes and provided a brief description of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching (VAST) summer institute and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's summer institute, Teaching from Works of Art, along with a detailed summary of the daily curricular activities. I outlined the recruitment process, supplied a description of each of the nine participants along with the research design, which focused on myself conducting a series of interviews over the course of the 2018–2019 academic year with each of the participants. The interviews became the main source for the data collection as few participants submitted examples of lesson plans or other forms of textual data.

## Analysis

Numerous steps were taken to analyze the data. Yin's (2016) Five Phases of Analysis was applied to code the data and the qualitative computer program NVivo was used to compile the data. To enhance the credibility of the data, I applied a chain of evidence with the process of triangulation (see Tight, 2017) and invited the participants to verify the validity of their transcripts (see Given, 2010; Yin, 2013). In addition, I conducted an intercoder agreement (see Craig, 1981) with the resulting kappa agreement as 0.63, indicating strong credibility to the coding structure.

Ethical considerations were taken for conducting this study. For example, I gained permission to be a participant-observer from the education program directors at both sites and the museum educators and

educators participating at both summer institutes were informed of the purpose, nature, and importance of my research study at the start of the summer institutes.

## Findings

This chapter featured in-depth description of the various themes that emerged from the data. Some of the overarching themes included: art in the classroom, conversations in the classroom, the museum summer institutes, and professional development. Within these overarching themes, it was noticed how the participants incorporated works of art into their lessons, the qualities and characteristics of the dialogue, the significance of the museum space, and the preferred characteristics of professional development. It seemed that participants viewed their classroom curricula as something imposed upon them — contrasting with the summer institute's view that it is something to engage in (see Pinar, 2010).

A portion of this chapter concentrated on how the participants engaged in dialogue in their classroom spaces. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) (Yenawine, 2014) was frequently referenced as it had been modelled by museum educators at both art museums. When applied in the classroom space, VTS transformed into a step-by-step process. Even though a dialogical discussion was viewed as the ideal form of talk in the classroom space, success was determined by several factors such as the dynamics of the classroom. Participants never described engaging in a dialectical discussion (see Wegerif, 2008) and several participants addressed challenging social issues due to the school's culture or the participant's views.

Concerning the findings on professional development, it emerged that the art museum space contributed to an aesthetic experience and promoted well-being, empowerment, and growth in the participants. This contrasted significantly with the professional development that the participants described within their schools or at the district level. Whereas certain participants embraced curricular materials as they were easily incorporated (see Guskey, 2002), other participants encountered challenges due to constraints imposed by their teaching environments. Furthermore, I observed that power dynamics and

funding affected the participants' ability to select a professional development workshop that was outside the parameters of what was offered by the school or district.

At the end of the chapter, I presented my findings concerning how I applied Huebner's approach to language and his Value System to better understand how participants experienced curricula. It was observed that Language as Ready-to-Hand that was voiced by the participants could be grouped into three categories: descriptive, expressive, and regret. Language as Happening of Truth revealed participants questioning VTS (see Yenawine, 2014) and its ability to generate critical thinking and showed that several participants felt that discussing aesthetics in a social studies or language arts lesson was not necessary. Language as Thought of Thinkers was witnessed predominately when participants recounted poetic moments at the summer institutes unlike in their own classrooms. In addition to examining the data through Huebner's (1966/2008) Value System, the interviews revealed differences in experiences between those at the summer institutes and within the participants' classroom and the frequency that each value was detected. Most notable, the aesthetic value that dominated in the art museum space rarely entered the participant's classroom.

### Participant-Observer

I acted as a participant-observer at both VAST at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and at Teaching from Works of Art at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art aiming to further my understanding of the two professional development programs. By taking on the role of a participant-observer, I was able to fully participate in all of the activities and capture valuable data that was reflected upon through two different lenses: that of a classroom teacher and as a researcher. Due to the difference in curricula at the two summer art museum institutes, each program felt unique from the perspective of a participant and also as an observer. Due to being immersed in the summer institutes, it fostered a greater knowledge of the curricula and activities which enhanced the discussions with the participants during interviews.

### Discussion

The discussion chapter presented how I enacted the curricular materials from the two art museum summer institutes into my grade 6 classroom over the course of the 2018–2019 academic school year. Themes that emerged from looking at Huebner’s (1968/2008) approach to language and Value System that emerged from the interviews with the participants were compared with the data collected during my autoethnographic self-study. This juxtaposition of the layered accounts cultivated new insights into how we all approached pedagogy.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Presumably, teachers will continue to participate in professional development as it is perceived as a means to increase student learning and achievement (Ponder, Maher & Adams, 2010), and it is a requirement for teachers in the United States to maintain licensure (Hill, 2009). With this in mind, in the subsequent sections, I expand upon the implications of my findings and analysis and provide suggestions concerning professional development programming, VTS, the relevance of an aesthetic experience, and the necessity to reflect upon pedagogy, in particular the use of language and the validity Huebner’s Value System to understand and address the curriculum.

### **Professional Development**

#### **Program Design**

The overall design of the summer institute programs was important to the enjoyment of the participants and to their personal growth. Qualities that made the programs effective included their fostering of a nurturing environment, their encouragement of active participation during the various sessions, and offering a variety of activities. When the program design contained an unexpected element such as the educators facilitating a discussion with a work of art, it generated excitement due to participants’ unfamiliarity with the activity and concept. Furthermore, both the dialogical space established by the museum educators and the art museums’ physical space allowed for discussion and reflection. I suggest future professional development programs look to these qualities instead of relying upon traditional approaches (Bayar, 2014).

Even though the participants described the art museum summer institute experience as a moment for their personal growth, it was ultimately regarded as an opportunity to gain skills. There were numerous opportunities for the participants to discuss socially challenging topics, and they were exposed to a variety of activities and works of art; for the most part, the participants integrated the activities that could be easily incorporated into their existing pedagogy. This was not due to disinterest of the topics or activities presented but external factors such as lack of time, constraints of the planned curricula or the political climate of the school.

Hence, I suggest that within the professional program several opportunities in the form of short sessions be provided allowing teachers and museum educators to reflect upon the content of the various sessions and consider how it contributes to their own learning and how (or if) it can be applied in the classroom space. These sessions would provide the educators with a safe platform to discuss how certain works of art or topics that are perceived as controversial might be taken up more easily in the classroom space with the support of the museum educators. The act of writing a lesson plan moves the abstract idea to something concrete.

Within these sessions the discussions would pertain to what can (or cannot) be gleaned from activities and resources and incorporated into their existing planned curricula. While teachers created lesson plans at summer art museum summer institutes (Hausman, 1966; Silverman, 1997), no research has been done to see if teachers enacted these lessons. It would be interesting if museum educators administered an optional session for teachers to create a lesson to be taught in the fall and the museum educators actually followed up afterwards to provide the teachers with additional support or resources.

Regarding support once the art museum summer institute has completed, I advise that museum educators incorporate into their design a platform that provides help for educators after the completion of the program. It should not just come in the form of a social media platform to exchange ideas. It should be authentic support from the museum educators to assist the educators and provide the extra nudge to

encourage them to proceed from considering incorporating their learning to actively applying it. One way to achieve this would be an online question and answer session with museum educators designed to develop tailored solutions to apply to teachers' practices.

Although the professional development programs were conducted in the art museum space, it was curious that a significant number of educators were not art specialist teachers. As Charland (2006) expressed, art specialist teachers require a unique type of professional development that matches their specific skillsets. In this study, I found that art specialist participants were familiar with VTS, something they can pick up from art-making workshops. Therefore, if art museums wish to support art specialist teachers, a specialized professional development summer institute could be designed that centres on the specific needs of art specialists.

### Museum Pedagogies

Researchers question the effectiveness of museum pedagogies in the classroom space, as the two styles of education differ significantly (Penner-Williams, 2010). In this study, it was observed that the participants were keen to learn the dialogical methods used by the museum educators as it was new to them and unique when compared to techniques used in their classrooms, and indeed Kraybill (2018) cautioned art museums against aligning their curricula to the state standards used by teachers. The participants in this study enjoyed learning a dialogical process that focused on the intrinsic value of art objects, and several participants found it successful in their classrooms even though they tended to neglect the preparatory research steps on the works. This tendency indicates that the art museum educators need to concentrate on the necessity of teachers conducting research on the work of art. Furthermore, providing teachers with more exposure to the Artful Thinking Palette (Barahal, 2008) and other non-verbal responses to works of art would help to expand their understanding of how to incorporate a work of art into a lesson for its intrinsic value. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that educators, in particular generalist teachers, are familiar with discussing the formal aesthetic qualities of a work of art or even with discussing an aesthetic reaction. In this study, discussing the aesthetic was not viewed as important by the generalist participants. Thus, it is important for museum educators to allocate time to reviewing specific art vocabulary and demonstrate how it enhances a dialogue with a work of art.



## Funding

Both the PMA and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art are large cultural institutes that are able to provide a form of high-quality professional development. Due to the continuous poor-quality professional development that the participants received at the district level or at their schools, they all sought out quality professional development, but the ability to attend the art museum summer institutes depended upon the ability to secure funding. It can be assumed that without the funding, most of the participants would not have attended the programs, thus it is a barrier for other teachers who may wish to attend these two art museum summer institutes. While it may not be possible to extend the funding that is already provided, educators could be informed of other avenues of governmental funding from administrators or museum educators.

At the end of the day, professional development is a multi-billion dollar industry (Horn & Goldstein, 2018) and those who design professional development training or workshops need to be accountable for what they present (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). There may be benchmarks for quality professional development outlined by NCLB, as stated by Allison (2013), however, these are clearly not being met as witnessed in participants in this study voicing repeatedly participating in poor-quality professional development. Instead of enforcing teachers to dedicate numerous in-service days for workshops that may have little relevance in the classroom, administrators should change their approach. They should focus on sending a rotating group of teachers from a school or district to a professional development program of their choice and invite them to demonstrate their learning to their colleagues. Furthermore, districts and administrators could encourage teachers to network with other teachers from other schools in the district or at local organizations to craft more personalized learning experiences. Simply recognizing that most teachers enjoy learning, that this is why they entered the profession, before mandating ineffective development programs will go a long way.

Visual Thinking Strategies:

The curricula at both art museum summer institutes centred on dialogical teaching. Within the galleries, the method was modelled by museum educators to help educators generate authentic connections with the works of art. Once the participants returned to their classrooms, these methods transformed into a routine for a surface-level exploration of a work, used to gather evidence that avoided discussing the aesthetic qualities of the works of art or visual images. Even though several participants had specific training in VTS, they omitted conducting research concerning the works of art before presenting them in their classrooms. While research finds it is important to contextualize a discussed work (Bell, 2011), along with incorporating the aesthetic qualities to enhance the discussions (Campello & Walker, 2016), these were not seen as points of concern. I am not certain whether the participants would have experienced more in-depth classroom discussions if they had included more contextual information or discussed the aesthetic qualities of the art during the lesson; the participants sensed that their students were gaining from the discussions, however, gains tended not to be art related. Using VTS allowed for teacher participants with a limited art background a “free pass” from having to acquire specific visual art pedagogical knowledge.

I propose that if VTS is taught at a professional development program for teachers, and dialogical teaching is demonstrated, that the program educators demonstrate to participating educators how incorporating specific art pedagogical knowledge supports the discussion. That way when a teacher uses a work of art with VTS to support a discussion on a topic in another subject, the work of art becomes more than just a diagram to be analyzed. Furthermore, although participants had specific training and observed museum educators' model VTS; it cannot be expected that they acquired all the necessary tools. Therefore, I suggest follow-up sessions specifically on VTS be provided.

VTS is thought to provide an opportunity for students to generate more meaningful interpretations (Burchenal & Grohe, 2007; Yenawine, 2014), and several of the participants stressed that it supported critical thinking skills. Interestingly, Yenawine (2014) never asserted that VTS was centred on developing critical thinking skills; instead, it is meant to encourage a dialogical discourse among students. Therefore, a better understanding of the technique is needed to bridge the disconnect between VTS that invites students

to “think, debate, and formulate their own ideas” (Yenawine, 2014, p. 173) and the form of VTS that is used by teachers.

## Aesthetics

Throughout this study, participants spoke of aesthetic experiences either with the works of art, through discussions, or with the physical spaces, and these were significant to their overall experiences at both art museum summer institutes. Yet these aesthetic experiences were not prevalent in the participants’ classrooms. Furthermore, most of the generalist participants felt discussions of aesthetic qualities or experiences were irrelevant.

### *The Work of Art*

Aesthetic experiences with the work of art in the gallery space were significantly different than the participants’ experiences in their classrooms. This was partially because aesthetic experiences in the art museum were influenced by qualities that cannot be recreated in the classroom space, such as experiencing the actual the work of art. However, more significant in my view was how the works of art were used in each setting. The museum educators used works of art to evoke both sensory and emotional responses, whereas in the classroom spaces the works of art became objects to support a discussion.

It is possible for teachers to evoke an aesthetic experience with a work of art in their classrooms when it is projected on a smartboard or printed on a poster (Wren et al., 2006). Wren (2006) explains that teachers and students need to be provided with specific visual arts language to be able to express themselves. In this study, the generalist participants had limited experience with visual arts language, and it affected their relationships with the works of art. Therefore, I suggest that museum educators allocate time to train educators on language that is specific to the visual arts and demonstrate how discussing aesthetic qualities and acknowledging emotional reactions can enhance the discussion. I am not advocating that art education return to a systematic approach of discussing works of art, such as DBAE (see Ott, 1989), however,

developing and understanding of visual arts language and what can be drawn from the experience with the work of art is important in art education. Instead of the work of art being a stationary object to examine, it can become an object to travel within to unravel meaning.

### *Experience*

Tavin (2007) explained that in order to achieve an aesthetic experience, discussions need to surpass a focus on the formal aesthetic qualities and emotional responses and centre more on the political or social meanings that could be drawn from the work of art. A decade later at both art museum summer institutes, museum educators modelled and engaged in discussions with the educators that never centred on the formal aesthetic qualities. I observed that emotional responses were intentionally addressed and embedded within the social and political dialogue to generate deeper understandings of and personal connections with the works of art. I recommend that museum educators continue to discuss and develop ways to build upon the emotional response as several participants described a desire to generate these forms of connections with works of art with their students.

While it seems that the aesthetic experience has focused on in the art museum space, Milbrandt et al. (2015) detected a trend in the visual art classroom space where the curricula focused on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This is concerning because emphasizing these structured approaches reduces aesthetic experience. Without the aesthetic experience that draws upon our sensibilities and emotions, what does the work of art become? I believe that it is vital that art specialists do not lose sight of the aesthetic experience and advocate for it otherwise studio art classes may become obsolete in favour of STEAM, which many believe is an approach better suited for the twenty-first century.

### *Teaching as an Act of Beauty*

Huebner (2008) considered that in teaching, aesthetics is an act of beauty that is filled with experiences and emotional qualities. Once the participants returned to their classrooms, the aesthetic

experience that Huebner described was minimal. It was observed that the planned curricula and the schools' environment pressed the participants to adopt a technical approach. Aesthetics is not simply concerned with art; it is rooted in humanistic qualities that are imperative to learning. It is important that teachers view teaching not as a routine and are encouraged to embrace aesthetics, otherwise teaching will continue to embrace the Tyler rationale and further ignore the students' and teachers' engagement with the curriculum.

### Curriculum Theory to Understand Practice

Huebner's (1966/2008) theory of "curriculum as conversation" was used to frame this study. Huebner's position encouraged teachers to be reflective, attentive to language, and question the imposed curriculum designed by experts. Within this framework, I used language as the entry point to understand the lived experiences of the participants.

Although this comparative case study was small regarding the number of participants, the data revealed tensions and power dynamics that the participants encountered in their professional lives. The participants used specific language to describe certain contemporary qualities concerning the act of teaching, including: feeling their teaching is evolving into a routine, feelings of regret when unable to achieve goals, and finding their role to be that of a facilitator. Most of these qualities derived directly from the effects of the constraints of the curricula, standardized testing, and the structure of schools, such as course scheduling. Poetic moments, which I would describe as the essence of learning, occurred rarely in the classrooms, whereas these were key to the learning at the art museum summer institutes. Fundamental and complex adjustments in the architecture of education are called in order for poetic moments to enter the classroom space.

The act of reflection allowed the participants to consider how their pedagogy evolved after attending the art museum summer institutes. Additionally, the act of reflection revealed numerous tensions that the participants experienced. Rarely did the participants address these tensions either due to power

dynamics between them and administration or simply because the issue was too vast for the participant to enact change. While reflection can help us enter into an in-depth discussion, the discussion tends to remain dialogical if the teacher lacks the supportive environment needed to encourage a dialectical discussion. Furthermore, it is understandable that several participants never engaged in dialectical discussions with their students as it was not encouraged within their schools or districts.

Conversations that occurred in the art museum spaces were rarely carried out in a similar way in the classroom space, so students are learning art only at a modest level. Participants incorporated the questioning techniques modelled by museum educators from the PMA but did not incorporate the socially challenging topics addressed in the art museum program. The training of VTS from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art was incorporated into several classroom practices; however, none of the participants described researching the works of art that were used in the classrooms, as the students were simply exposed to works of art to support another subject. As previously discussed, this was due to a limited knowledge of visual art, adequate time to engage with the art museums' curricula, and other factors such as the school environment. For the dialogical relationship and the curricula to have a more significant impact, additional support on the part of the museum educators is necessary, and teachers who have little experience with the visual arts should acquire a better understanding of art education<sup>123</sup>.

### Huebner's Value System

Huebner (1966/2008) described his Value System, featuring the technical, scientific, political, aesthetic, and ethical values as specific structures to understand curricula. As a result of applying Huebner's Value System, I found that certain values are dominant in the school environment, for example, the technical.

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<sup>123</sup> All of the generalist participants only completed one art education course during their university studies.

Huebner (2008) stated that one of the goals of learning is students developing skills, but this should not be the sole focus of the curriculum. In this study, there was extensive data on the technical value, an account of the importance placed upon it in modern curricula. While the scientific value — which is concerned with producing new knowledge — surfaced frequently in the interviews, the technical value repeatedly monopolized the participants' time. The emphasis on the technical value supports the rhetoric that schools are simple structures used to produce a workforce. Much research has shown the negative effects of emphasizing the technical value (Hourigan, 2011; Westheimer, 2010), however, it will continue to prevail in the curriculum as long as teachers, students, administrators, and parents continue to accept it as the core value of the curriculum.

The analysis of the political value exposed the power dynamics between teachers and administrators and the value of art education in the curriculum. Historical events such as the McCarthy era (Ponder et al., 2010), the perception that teachers are inadequate (Franco, 2011), the reduction of the teacher's capability to develop curricula (Franco, 2011), and government policies (Hourigan, 2011) have all contributed to the development of these power dynamics. Most of the participants had to seek permission from their administrators to attend professional development workshops or to receive funding, thus creating tension and an uncomfortable relationship. Teachers and administrators are professionals, and them working together as equals is what creates healthy learning environments for their students and healthy work environments for themselves. A complete alternation of mindsets needs to occur for the power dynamics to disappear.

The political value pertaining to art education was demonstrated in this study. It manifested in the treatment of the art specialists and in the tendency for administrators to avoid selecting in-service training in art education for their staff. Again, for change to occur, several elements in modern schooling and education need to be addressed. Firstly, as most generalist teachers are expected to teach visual arts (Heilig et al., 2010), more emphasis and importance needs to be placed upon the quality art education courses for generalist pre-service teachers at the university level. Better preparation would provide pre-service teachers

with more knowledge and skills in art education. Secondly, while organizations such as the NAEA have advocated for art education in schools, the attitudes of policy-makers, administrators, and parents — their tendency to devalue art — have not changed. It is not acceptable that art specialist teachers are shuffled between schools, their classrooms reduced to art-on-a-cart, or that they are forced to teach an extraordinary number of students. In my view, it is not a question of why art education is not valued in the curricula, it is more a question of why it is feared. If talking about works of art can be an emancipatory experience, what are students and teachers being liberated from?

The aesthetic value was at the core of the curricula at both of the art museum summer institutes. The sensory and emotional qualities of the aesthetic value were central to the participants' learning and contributed to their overall experiences. While the art museums' physical spaces contributed to it, it was also witnessed repeatedly in the pedagogy. The lack of the aesthetic value in the participants' daily teaching suggested that there was little time to have poetic moments or that the planned curriculum did not encourage these moments.

The ethical value was predominately discussed by the participants concerning ways that they crafted an equitable teaching environment for their students. The teachers and the students were equal in the learning environment as they were seen as co-creating and learning together. While Huebner (1966/2008) discussed the ethical value in terms of the act of teaching between the teacher and the student, I would extend that it needs to incorporate the relationships between teachers and their colleagues and administrators. The participants were concerned with creating classroom environments that supported equality, the ability to express opinions, and respect, however, most of the participants never spoke about these qualities outside of the context of their classrooms. By extending the ethical value outside of the act of teaching, we can examine how teachers and administrators are working together and the quality and characteristics of their relationships.

## **Future Directions**



While this study focused on the in-service teachers' framing of the curricula and pedagogical experiences in the art museum summer institute and how it carried into their classrooms, other topics surfaced that are of interest for future research. In the section below, I propose three avenues for future research.

Firstly, the generalist participants gained immensely both professionally and personally from their experiences at the art museum summer institutes, but it seemed that the art specialist participants gained little with regards to the art museum pedagogy and methodologies. For specialists, the emersion in the art museum space was strikingly important as it became a safe space to discuss practice and obstacles that are unique to art specialist teachers. How then can art museums further themselves as valuable resources and provide learning experiences tailored to the needs of in-service art specialist teachers? And what are the necessary qualities and characteristics of these learning experiences?

Secondly, the process of discussing works of art with the use of VTS transformed into a routine to draw out information with supportive evidence from the work of art. By ignoring the inherent artistic and aesthetic qualities of the work of art, the works of art became objects to be examined to develop critical thinking skills. Most of the participants used works of art to support another subject or topic, yet due to the institutes, participants believed that discussing a work of art had the power to be a transformative experience. Research is required on the following topics: the use of VTS; the pitfalls of the focus on developing critical thinking skills while discussing works of art; how discussing the aesthetic qualities of art can enhance the dialogical discussion; and what are the qualities of an authentic and meaningful experience with a work of art.

Lastly, further research on professional development for in-service art specialist teachers is required. This study predominantly revealed qualities and characteristics from the perspective of the in-service generalist teacher due to the limited participation of art specialist teachers. As observed by Milbrandt et al. (2015) visual art curricula in schools are stretching in various directions. These new directions, along with other approaches, may or may not be supported with adequate professional

development. While the art specialists in this study offered insight, more discussion with a greater number of art specialist teachers is necessary to develop significant conclusions that address and foster the uniqueness of teaching visual art.

## **Final Remarks**

At the start of this dissertation journey, I was concerned with the ways in which the art museum summer institute model of professional development contributed to the development of classroom pedagogy due to having participated in numerous forms of mediocre professional development delivered through my school board. Research is unpredictable and while the data revealed qualities and characteristics of the art museum curricula that were integrated, adjusted, or omitted in the participants' classroom practices, it also accentuated the unique experiences and challenges that the participants encountered in their professional lives.

During the last months of writing this dissertation, the Coronavirus pandemic erupted, causing a multitude of readjustments, particularly in teaching. While I was busy writing and homeschooling my children, my teacher colleagues were transforming and adapting the curricula from their classroom spaces into a distance learning experience with the use of a variety of online platforms. This was accomplished with the aid of a patchwork of online professional development webinars in the form of lectures selected by their administrators. No doubt it was a taxing experience, and the practice of distance learning will increase along with professional development that supports it. I hope that those who create these online learning opportunities include the voice of the teacher and embrace other forms of experiential learning instead of falling upon traditional models of professional development. As witnessed in this research study, professional development can be inspiring and connect with the lives of teachers.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I:

### Question Guides for the Teacher Interviews

September Interview



#### QUESTION GUIDE FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS- SEPTEMBER 2018

##### Introduction

We are going to take about 20-30 minutes for this interview. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, just say “pass.” The interview is confidential, meaning I will not identify you when sharing the results.

I will now turn on the recorder for the Skype interview. Please think of your pseudonym (made up name) and use it to introduce yourself when I tell you. [ turn on the recorder]

Hello, today is \_\_\_\_\_. Please introduce yourself with your pseudonym.  
Thank you.

##### Background

1. How long have you been a high school art teacher?
2. What type of high school do you teach at? How long have you been there?
3. Have you always taught art? If not, what were the other subjects?
4. What grade level(s) do you presently teach?
5. How often do you take your students to an art museum?
6. What types activities do you select for your students to do at the art museum?
7. How often do you visit an art museum?

##### Classroom Practices

8. What is your favourite topics to teach in the art classroom? What are your least favourite topics to teach?
9. How do you develop your curriculum for your class(es)? Is there a set curriculum or do you change it yearly?

10. How do you primarily teach art appreciation? (e.g.- Is it linked to a studio project or is it taught separately)?
11. How do you go about developing an art appreciation lesson plan?
12. What types of activities do you usually do to teach the lesson (e.g.- lecture with a PowerPoint, reading activity, watching a video, class discussion)?
13. What resources do you use the most to find the content for your lessons?
14. How do you evaluate the learning from an art appreciation lesson?
15. How often have you used a lesson plan from an art museum website?

### **Professional Development**

16. How often do you participate in professional development?
17. How would you describe previous professional development that you have received?
18. Do you seek out professional development at local, regional, or national conferences? If yes, what are the kinds of activities you participate in?
19. What have you applied from past professional development experiences into your classroom practice? Can you provide an example?
20. Have you participated in other professional development programs designed by an art museum?

### **Summer Institute**

21. What motivated you to participate in this summer institute?
22. What were you expecting to have learned?
23. What were some of your favourite moments during the summer institute?
24. What do you think was the value of attending the summer institute?
25. What are some of the characteristics of the professional development program that you think will support you in your personal and professional development?
26. What are the curricular materials do you think you will be using in your classroom?
27. Will there be curricular materials that you will be omitting? If yes, which ones?



## QUESTION GUIDE FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS—DECEMBER 2018

### Introduction

We are going to take about 45-60 minutes for this interview. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, just say, “pass.” The interview is confidential, meaning I will not identify you when sharing the results unless you wish to be identified.

I will now turn on the recorder for the Skype interview. Please use your pseudonym (made-up name) and use it to introduce yourself when I tell you. [turn on the recorder]

Hello, today is \_\_\_\_\_. Please introduce yourself with your pseudonym. Thank you.

### Curriculum Development

28. At the start of the school year, what aspects of the museum curriculum were you planning on integrating into your classroom practice?
29. Please describe the activities that you have used with your students.
30. Why did you select these activities?
31. Can you describe any alterations that you made to the activities?
32. Which activities did you omit?
33. Can you further explain why you omitted these activities?
34. How did you evaluate the learning from the activities?
35. Are there any activities that you are planning on using in the remainder of the school year?
36. Do you feel that the museum curriculum has helped you to generate new knowledge for the students or is helping you to create a best teaching practice?
37. By attending the summer institute, did it inspire you to rethink the curriculum that you have previously taught?

### Reflection on Summer Institute

38. Have you noticed any changes in how you approach teaching art since the summer institute?
39. If yes, please describe how your learning in the museum space has blended into your teaching in your classroom space.
40. Can you think of any qualities of the program that have supported you as an art teacher both personally and professionally?
41. Have you kept in contact with other teachers in the program?

- a. If yes, how have they supported you in your teaching? And how do you keep in contact?
- b. If not, why have you not kept in touch?



## QUESTION GUIDE FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS—MARCH 2019

### Introduction

We are going to take about 30-45 minutes for this interview. If there are any questions you do not want to answer, just say, “pass.” The interview is confidential, meaning I will not identify you when sharing the results unless you wish to be identified.

I will now turn on the recorder for the Skype interview. Please use your pseudonym (made-up name) and use it to introduce yourself when I tell you. [turn on the recorder]

Hello, today is \_\_\_\_\_. Please introduce yourself with your pseudonym. Thank you.

### Starting Discussions with Works of Art

1. What are the types of works of art that you tend to show your students?
2. How do you select the works of art?
3. Which artists do you tend to focus on during lessons?
4. Is there the work of an artist that you avoid using in your lessons?
5. What do you focus on when looking at the work of art (e.g., historical, social, political, economic, aesthetic)?
6. Have you added new artists or types of works of art since the summer institute?
7. What types of resources do you tend to use to help you create your lessons (e.g., online resources, museum websites, Pinterest)?
8. Have you displayed any resources from the summer institute in your classroom?

### Dialogue in the Classroom Space

9. For yourself, what does a meaningful classroom discussion/dialogue look like?
10. What is your role during class discussions?
11. How do you lead a discussion with your students while looking at a work of art?
12. What are the types of words or prompts that you use to direct your students during a discussion?
13. What are the types questions that you ask your students?
14. What types of questions do your students ask you when discussing a work of art?
15. Do you ever feel that you are working together with your students to co-creating of new knowledge?



16. Do your students sometimes engage in a debate while discussing a work of art? If yes, how does this unfold? If not, would you like to see more debates in your classroom?
17. Have your questioning techniques changed since attending the summer institute?
18. What tools or strategies from the summer museum curriculum did you use to teach your students to engage in dialogue?
19. With the dialogical approach to looking at art, are you able to meet the curriculum objectives?
20. Do the social dynamics of the school or the grade level you teach, stop you from addressing artworks or topics that you would like to?

### **Museum Dialogue Entering the Classroom Space**

21. What were some of the most memorable conversations that you had at the summer institute?
22. How have these conversations entered and carried out in your classroom space?
23. Do you think that these conversations contributed to your students' learning of art?
24. Do you feel that the museum curricular materials enable you to create a type of teaching that supports and encourages discussions, debate, and reflection in your classroom?
25. Do you find that you are using the artworks or artists or themes used by the museum? If yes, can you give some examples?

### **Professional Development**

26. Have you participated in a professional development activity since the summer institute?
27. What do you think was a direct value of attending the summer institute?
28. What was an indirect value that you had due to the experience?
29. Will you participate in other professional development programs designed by an art museum?

## **APPENDIX II:**

### **Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants**



#### **Verbal Script for Recruiting Participants**

Hi, my name is Julie Etheridge. I am a doctoral student at Concordia University, and I am doing a research study on how high school art teachers apply their learning from an art museum professional development program into their classroom practices. This research will help to better understand the discussions and activities of the program and how teachers use, modify, or omit them in their classroom practices.

I will be participating in the museum program to better understand the museum curriculum and see how I can also use the discussions and activities in my own art classroom. Only at the end of the week will I invite teachers to participate in my study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you agree, you will be asked to be interviewed four times over the course of the academic year—September, January, April, and June via Skype. I will not identify you or use any information that would make it possible for anyone to identify you in any presentation or written reports about this study. There are no expected risks to you for helping me with this study.

If you would like to participate, do let me know at the end of this week. We can schedule a time for me to meet with you to give you more information. If you need more time to decide if you would like to participate, you may also email me with your decision after the summer institute has ended.

Do you have any questions for me at this time?

If you have any more questions about this process or if you need to contact me about participation, you can speak with me at the end of the week.

## Information and Consent Form



### INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

**Study Title:** Exploring how Art Teachers Apply Art Museum Professional Development into their Practices

**Researcher:** Julie Etheridge

**Researcher's Contact Information:** Email: etheridgejulie@hotmail.com

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Juan Carlos Castro

**Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:** Tel. (514) 848-2424 ext. 4787

Email: JuanCarlos.Castro@concordia.ca

**Source of funding for the study:** Fine Arts Travel Award

You are being invited to participate in the research study: *Exploring how Art Teachers Apply Art Museum Professional Development into their Practices*. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to better understand how high school art teachers apply their learning from an art museum professional development program into their classroom practices throughout the course of an academic year. This research is my dissertation study.

#### B. PROCEDURES

You will be asked to participate in four semi-structured interviews over the course of the 2018-2019 academic year- September, December, April, and June. You will be invited to provide copies of your notes, visual works from the summer institute along with any lesson plans that you use during the school year.

In total, participating in this study will take require you to participate in 3 interviews via Skype.

#### C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

Potential benefits include learning more about your classroom professional practice and how you have applied the learning from the art museum summer institute.

#### D. CONFIDENTIALITY

I will gather the following information as part of this research: notes or visual works from the institutes produced by you, lesson plans used in your classroom that relate to the professional development museum program, and Skype recordings of interviews conducted with each teacher participant that will last between 30 and 90 minutes.

I will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. I will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be confidential. That means that only the researcher will know your identity. You will be invited to create a pseudonym or if you like, I can create one for you. I will protect the information by storing it only on the researchers personal computer that is password protected.

I will protect your identity by asking you to choose a pseudonym.

I intend to publish the results of the research in my dissertation, at conference presentations and published articles for art education research journals. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results.

I will destroy the information five years at the end of my study once I have defended my dissertation.

In participating in the study, you wish to: remain confidential or select a pseudonym:

\_\_\_\_\_ be given a pseudonym selected by the researcher.

## **F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you do not want me to use your information, you must tell the researcher before June 1, 2020.

There are no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate, stopping in the middle, or asking me not to use your information.

## **G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION**

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or [oor.ethics@concordia.ca](mailto:oor.ethics@concordia.ca).

## Certification of Ethical Acceptability



### CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

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Name of Applicant: Julie Etheridge  
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education  
Agency: N/A  
Title of Project: Exploring how Art Teachers Apply Art Museum  
Professional Development into their Practices  
Certification Number: 30009675  
Valid From: May 17, 2018 To: May 16, 2019

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Pfaus".

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