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Issues in Community Art Education
Developing a Profile of the Community Art Educator

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A Thesis
in
The Department
of
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ABSTRACT

Issues in Community Art Education Developing a Profile of the Community Art Educator

Janette Haggar

My thesis examines the unique role of the community art educator, the practice of teaching art in community settings, and how these relate to the particular skills needed to succeed as an community art educator. This thesis interviews four community art educators and describes their reasons for choosing this career. The goal of this thesis is to develop a descriptive profile of the community art educator.

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Chapter I

Introduction

My research finds its genesis in my teaching praxis as a community art educator. During the past fifteen years I have taught children's art classes for in-school enrichment programs, for preschool, and for art and cultural centers. I have also witnessed, within the field of art education, a growing interest in research of art taught in the community. Guided by my experience as an art educator, I interviewed three art educators who have chosen to work in non-formal as opposed to formal¹ school settings. In speaking about our individual experiences as community art educators, shared opinions, beliefs and concerns emerged that are particular to teaching art in the community.

My thesis examines the practice of teaching art in non-formal settings through the experience of art educators who have made their careers in this area. The aim of this research is to develop a descriptive profile of the community art educator by understanding the reasons why these art educators made their choice, how teaching in these settings differs from teaching art in school and what, in their educational and art backgrounds, prepared them for teaching in the community.

¹ Defined as officially sanctioned schooling. (Jarvis, 1987)

Chapter II

Supporting Research

Until recently, art taught in community settings has remained on the periphery of art education. Consequently, research concerning the practice of art education focuses, to a large degree, on art taught in schools. In order to situate community art education in its present day context, my literature review begins with the renewed interest in cultural services within the field of art education during the 1970s in North America.

In his essay, Ralph A. Smith (1975) discusses the emergent field of cultural services. Cultural services evolved in support of organizations that were becoming increasingly responsible for providing the public with artistic, aesthetic and cultural education. I found a tenuous link between art education and art taught in non-formal settings in Smith's discussion of "non-conventional delivery of cultural and educational services" through programs offered by museums, arts and recreational organizations (pg. 5). He comments on the increased employment opportunities for art educators in these areas. Smith suggests "the need to reconsider the nature of teacher preparation in art education and the kinds of research undertaken in the field" (pg. 5). In a 1973 article on this subject, Smith points out that,

Increasingly, students with aesthetic interests are finding opportunities for employment in the government, in state arts councils, in state department of public instruction, in museums, foundations and communications and in recreational and environmental organizations. (pg. 16)

Smith (1973) proposes an “alternative to conventional images of art education - an alternative which features the notions of cultural services and aesthetic welfare” (p. 16). He suggested that art education broaden its scope and build upon those programs in existence such as adult art education programs, community art centers and programs for older populations. This idea is supported by Hoffa (1979), who discusses dealing with problems faced by education in general and art education in particular. He states,

As art educators we stand between the educational establishment and the art world and though we have long been married to the schools, we have also enjoyed our long term love affair with the arts. At this time however, there is little support for the arts in many schools, and because I see no hope for change in the foreseeable future, I suggest that we cut the umbilical cord to the schools and that we apply the lessons we have learned from them to making a place for ourselves in the new and rapidly expanding art institution as well. (p. 8)

The cultural and economic climate, at this time, precipitated a surge of interest in the arts by the general public. To determine the place of art education in creative arts programming offered by community art centers, Kuhn (1979) advocated the opening up of the field of art education to possibilities outside of the school system. She puts forth the notion of collaboration between schools and community art agencies, stating,

People learn in lots of places in addition to schools, but professional educators and artist-educators have little opportunity to facilitate learning across the social gamut. What is needed is to broaden opportunities for the interaction among the arts and the community. (p. 46)

Fowler (1986) discusses the notion of schools and community arts agencies co-operating and the sharing resources to provide comprehensive arts

programming for students. According to Fowler, the non-conventional delivery of art education through community art centers and other agencies has been met with ambivalence by specialists in the field who view it as a threat to the democratic delivery of art education. He argues that schools alone are unable to provide in-depth learning about the arts. Further, he notes, reduced educational funding has forced teachers and students to look outside of the classroom for new learning opportunities provided by museums, galleries, arts and cultural organizations. Goodlad (1984) states,

To continue with the myth that schools alone can provide the education we need is to assure their continued insularity and probably their ultimate irrelevance. (p. 349)

In the face of continuing dissolution of art in schools, the field of art education could no longer deny its role in the community. Programs offered by community agencies fulfill the need for art education that is denied within with school system.

I believe that teaching art, founded on the theory and practice of art education, also has a place outside of the traditional school system. Recent interest of teaching art in non-formal settings has encouraged new research in this area. Community art education is establishing an important position within the field of art education and current studies support this claim.

A study conducted by Lara Lackey (1974), a Canadian community art educator, examines the place of art education in community recreation centers in

Vancouver, British Columbia. Lackey's research examines "the relationships between formal and non-formal art educational practice". (pg. 150) She suggests.

In art, non-formal education may be provided by disparate sponsors as art galleries, museums, senior citizen centers, hospitals, recreation centers, community art centers, continuing education programs, children's clubs, preschools, artists' organizations, arts councils, and art colleges, to provide a partial list. (p. 151)

Within her inquiry emerged many of the issues and topics, such as the notion of the de-schooling of art and the concept of the artist/teacher, that resonate in my own teaching practice. Lackey discusses the connection between art education and art taught in non-formal settings. Her findings affirm my experience and research of community art education within a Canadian context.

Art programs provided within the community are commonly described as leisure activities. Lackey (1974) explains the connection between art, education and leisure in these terms.

In common sense terms "education" occurs in schools, "leisure" is the opposite of work, and "art" fits within domains of play or recreation rather than work or education. These interrelated conventional understandings are reflected and perpetuated by the ways in which art education has been institutionalized in Western society, remaining a marginal school subject but embraced readily as part of non-school learning environments. (p. 117)

In her thesis, Elisa Crystal (1990) profiles four community organizations in Pasadena, California, that offer alternative arts programs in low income

neighbourhoods. She looks at how non-formal art programs are developed for this population and in what ways these programs support their communities.

Crystal proposes

a unique and central role for community arts centers and institutions based on the observation that such programs are taking on increasing significance as respondents to a number of interactive community needs. These include the lack or inadequacy of arts instruction in public and private school systems and a lessening of cultural opportunities that had been provided for in the past. (p. 1)

In her examination of art education taught in alternative educational settings, Crystal talks about the characteristics of art programs in community centers and the skills required of educators who teach in these settings. She also cites the reduction of educational spending in arts in the school system as resulting in an increased demand for arts education at the community level.

In the results of her descriptive study of community art teachers, Rowena Degge (1987) discovered some interesting findings. The purpose of her study was to determine

the professional preparation, perceptions about programs and students, career aspirations, instructional aims, and pedagogical practices of visual art and craft teachers in community education and leisure programs. (p. 165)

Degge's study reports the outcome of a survey involving 31 art and craft teachers in community programs. The findings indicated that 64.5% of the respondents held college degrees and 12.9% listed graduate degrees. More importantly, these degrees were in art, art education or education. Another

interesting discovery was in the area of professional motives and aspirations. Of those respondents with degrees, 58.1% expressed the desire to combine teaching with being a professional practicing artist.

In her essay, Degge argues that both adults and children are finding opportunities outside of the school system to study and practice art. She maintains that

As a field, art education does not embrace the non-school population and has virtually ignored public interest and participation in the arts. The ways cultural programming may influence aesthetic values and cultural policy, and thus attitudes about art and art education, have been ignored particularly in teaching pedagogy. Such disregard maintains the schism between school art education and the larger role of art in people's lives. (pg. 165)

Supported by studies affirming that art education indeed has a place within community settings, my research focus turned to art educators, like myself, who develop and teach art programs.

Pilot Project

In order to better define my thesis topic and method of research, I carried out a pilot project based on an extensive inquiry conducted by Project Co-Arts.² Initiated by the need to assess the educational priorities of community art centers,

² Project Co-Arts is a research initiative at Harvard Project Zero. Its purposes include the development of an evaluative frame through which the educational effectiveness of community art centers can be documented.

Phase 1 of this project engaged and supported the direction of my research on two levels. (Appendix 1) First, the area of study focused specifically on community centers as institutions for learning. Secondly, in adapting the research method used in this study, I met, through interview and questionnaire, with the directors, administrators and art teachers at the art centers in my community.

My initial focus, for this pilot project, centered on the possible role that art education has in the development and teaching of art programs in community centers. However, this research question proved problematic. At that point in my research, I had not determined who taught art in these centers and if the objectives of art education were considered in their teaching mandate. I modified my research question to read, "What are the educational priorities of the administrators and educators who develop and teach creative arts programs in the community?" This question allowed me to use the descriptive method of research employed by Project Co-Arts. Best (1970) defines this method as focusing on

Conditions or relationships that exist: practices that prevail: beliefs, points of views, or attitudes that are held: processes that are going on: effects that are being felt: or trends that are developing. (p. 46)

Three administrators and eight teachers at four community centers in the Montreal area agreed to participate in this study. I used the questionnaire designed by Project Co-Arts to collect the data. This example of 'forced choice' questionnaire presents the respondents with various categories of goals as

educational objectives. Included are several statements within each goal category as possible manifestations of the realization of those goals. This type of survey determined the educational priorities ranked important by administrators and educators in community centers. The questionnaire contains five main categories:

1. Learning about making and appreciating art.
2. Learning about oneself and one's interaction with others through art.
3. Professional development through art.
4. Multicultural learning through art.
5. Community development through art.

By using the same questionnaire on a similar sample population, I compared the results of my pilot project to those of Project Co-Arts and found they were consistent with the findings of the Project Co-Arts study. I was extremely encouraged to find that the educational goals of these local art centers were aligned with one another and shared a cohesive educational philosophy.

Because of my interest in developing a profile of the community art educator as a thesis topic, I included a sixth category in my questionnaire, that of Academic and Artistic Background. By asking these questions I hoped to determine if a relationship existed between the respondent's academic and artistic background. I added two sets of open-ended questions in this category: one for the administrators and one for the educators. I asked both groups to describe their role in the center, how long they had been working at this career and their background in the arts. The administrators were asked to describe their

settings. I also inquired as to what qualifications they would look for in an art teacher. From the educators, I was interested in their arts background and how it affected their teaching practice in non-formal settings. This category allowed the respondents to express their beliefs and concerns about teaching art in the community.

Of the eight teachers involved in this pilot project, five teachers had backgrounds in Art Education. On the average, they had taught in non-formal settings for twelve years. These two points alone indicated a high level of commitment and educational achievement. My findings are supported by a descriptive survey conducted by Degge (1987) that indicated a large number of community art educators hold university degrees in art and art education. However, it was in the written responses of the community art educators describing their professional and personal backgrounds in the arts and education that I found the genesis of my thesis topic.

Chapter III

Method

Design of Research

As a community art educator and an art education student, I have formed beliefs about the interaction between teaching art in non-formal settings and the field of art education. This research is designed to test those beliefs against the experience of other community art educators in similar situations; thus, the interview guide is designed to include questions on the already established themes based on my teaching praxis (Appendix 3). In this situation, Platt (1981) explains that,

personal and community knowledge are used as part of the information available to construct a conception of what the interview is meant to be about, and thus affect the content of what is said. (p. 77)

The topics that arose in the analysis of the interview transcripts were categorized under such headings as, de-schooling of art, characteristics of teaching in community settings, the artist/teacher model and skills particular to the community art teacher. The five headings form the basis of the discussion. This thesis examines the links between art education and these characteristics specific to teaching art in non-formal settings.

Respondents

To support the aim of this thesis in developing a profile of a community art educator, I asked three colleagues with extensive community teaching experience to participate in this inquiry. Researching peers and familiar settings has benefits and drawbacks. One of the benefits is the ease that familiarity brings to the interview procedure. I found my respondents quite willing to share their experiences as community art educators since they understood my personal involvement in this field. According to Hockey (1993),

a priori knowledge of the situation endows a social and psychological understanding which allows the researcher a degree of naturalness in interaction, a feature that fosters rapport with the informants. Insider researchers argue that subjects are less likely to conceal information from their like, as whatever the researcher writes about them is also true of the researcher. (p. 204)

The most obvious drawback is that certain issues may be taken for granted in that they are assumed and not dealt with as topics for analysis. Hockey states, “Researchers need to guard against assuming that their orientation is more shared or representative than it is.” (p. 206) This problem is avoided in the preparation for the interview and the design of the interview guide. The respondents are aware of the focus of the research and the interview follows a systematic form of questioning that is guided but allows for spontaneous discourse.

The data gathered for this research is based on the lived experiences of the respondents, in both personal and professional contexts, that influences their

pedagogical beliefs and practices. As defined by Kvale (1996), the research interview

is characterized by a methodological awareness of question forms, a focus on the dynamics of interaction between interviewer and interviewee and critical attention to what is said. (p. 52)

The small scope of this study is best suited for narrative analysis, where "what was said leads to a new story to be told, a story developing the themes of the original interview." (Kvale, p. 199) As part of the interview analysis, I looked for valid insights about teaching art in non-formal settings.

Specifically, this interview process is defined as focused. According to Cohen and Manion (1989), the focused interview is identified by the following four criteria. (p. 310).

1. The persons interviewed are known to have been involved in a particular situation.
2. By means of the techniques of content analyses, elements in the situation which the researcher deems significant have previously been researched.
3. Based on this analysis, the investigator constructs an interview guide. This identifies the major areas of inquiry and the hypotheses which determine the relevant data to be obtained in the interview.
4. The actual interview is focused on the subjective experiences of the persons who have been exposed to the situation. Their responses enable the researcher: (a) to test the validity of his hypotheses; and (b) to ascertain unanticipated responses to the situation, thus giving rise to further hypotheses.

The structure of the interviews is based on a design put forth by Seidman (1991). In this approach, questions are divided into two classifications. One level of questions explores the respondents' "experience in context through questions about themselves in light of the topic up to the present time" (p. 10). Questions concerning their background in art and education provide the framework of this section of the guide. The second level of questioning is a more specific investigation of their experience of teaching in non-formal settings. The material afforded in this part of the interview provides the content for analysis. According to Kvale (1996), "interviews are like conversations but have a specific purpose and structure". (p. 131)

My approach to this research falls within the interpretivist paradigm (Cohen and Manion, 1989). In this model both interactive and phenomenological perspectives are accommodated. McCutcheon and Jung (1990) state,

Interpretivists argue people construct meaning out of events and phenomena they encounter in their lives. Research problems seek to uncover and illuminate those meanings. (p. 149)

Interpretivists interviews are somewhat guided by the action researcher in that the researcher has several themes in mind beforehand and these themes typically concern the meaning people make of what has transpired. (p. 150.)

The interpretivist interview is guided by a general question and is conversational in tone.

Process

During my initial contact with the three respondents, I explained the nature of my research. They agreed to participate in the study and signed consent forms. (Appendix 2) I conducted the interviews at the convenience of the respondents and I provided them with the interview guide to review beforehand. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. I supplied the respondents with a copy of the transcript to re-examine. Additional comments, insights and clarifications were added at this point.

Self-reflection is an essential component of this study. Based on my experience as a community art educator and conclusions drawn from my pilot project, certain issues, themes, and questions emerged that are particular to teaching art in non-formal settings. To identify the source of my interest in these topics, I included an autobiographical section as part of this inquiry. According to Seidman (1991),

An autobiographical section explaining the researchers' connections to their proposal research seems to be crucial for those interested in in-depth interviewing. (p. 25)

This section is divided into two parts. The first section is a brief auto-biographical account of my artistic, academic and professional background. The second section focuses on the issues that arose during an interview conducted between myself and a fellow graduate student where I became the respondent. This process helped me put into words, my personal observations of teaching art in non-formal settings.

Chapter IV

Experience and Insights of Three Community Art Educators

The following is a narrative account of the interviews with three community art educators. The respondents are identified by pseudonyms in accordance with our agreement for anonymity. Quotations from transcripts included in the thesis text are identified in italics. Each section is preceded by a brief description of the respondent's educational and artistic background.

Mary's Story

Interviewed May 11, 1999 at her home.

Since graduating with a BFA/Specialization in Art Education in the late 1980's, Mary has taught art for enrichment programs offered by public elementary schools in Montreal and Toronto.

When I started working part time, I realized that there weren't many jobs in the specialized teaching of art in public schools.

Even though art is a part of the standard curriculum in public elementary schools in Quebec, art taught by art specialists is virtually non-existent. To bring back or enrich art in the schools, agencies such as Home and School/Parent and Teacher Associations, offer extracurricular programs within the school walls. Though the system of administration may vary from school to school, enrichment and extra-curricular programs are often part of a child's pedagogical day. Outside

resource professionals are hired to conduct these classes. For example, Michelle D'Elia, coordinator for the Royal Vale Elementary Home and School Association, defines a supplemental curriculum as part of the compulsory curriculum that incorporates exposure to various areas of interest for the child, as well as improving skill development.

After graduating from university, Mary began teaching art during an extended day program in a Toronto elementary school. I asked her what, in her experience, helped her gain this position.

I was hired on the basis that I had an art education background. They wanted specialized people.

On returning to Montreal, Mary began to teach art for an enrichment program at a local elementary school and presently teaches art in several schools.

I began the interview by asking Mary about the benefits of teaching in this type of non-formal setting. She replied,

You can set up your own courses. Your time is flexible in the sense you can do other things between classes. You are your own boss.

The responsibility of developing a curriculum, in many non-formal settings, is left up to the educator which allows the educator to formulate a plan built on their strengths as artists. Drawing on her professional background in architecture and graphic design, Mary has developed art programs focused on drawing, painting, calligraphy and design art. Taking into consideration the objectives of

art education that she studied in university, Mary strives to teach her students about the historical, cultural and social influences of art as part of her course content. She states that this is the element that separates the teaching of art from the teaching of craft. Mary defines craft, in this context, as non-authentic, stereotypical art work based on holiday and other popular themes. The freedom of setting her own curriculum motivates Mary to research new techniques and materials. This on-going research helps her build new programs to offer as part of her teaching practice.

We talked about the benefits of teaching art in non-formal settings. Mary enjoys the flexibility of time. Her classes take place during lunch and after school which allows her to pursue other interests during the interim. Mary uses this time to do research and to continue her own academic and artistic pursuits. Mary feels that this characteristic of teaching in a non-formal setting is crucial in maintaining and promoting her teaching practice.

I asked her about the drawbacks of teaching in community settings.

I can tell you the drawbacks. Money. Security. I don't have a full time job. I have a part time job.

There are only a certain number of teaching hours a week in this type of teaching situation. Although she is fairly recompensed for her teaching time, Mary finds it difficult to make ends meet. There is also the question of job security. From her experience, Mary notes that the agencies who run enrichment programs are

generally supportive of the teaching staff. Teachers are provided with contracts. Support is provided in dealing with student management and discipline. However, depending on the commitment of the agencies that oversee these programs, holding on to a teaching position is, at times, tenuous.

Mary is a self-employed art educator. Teaching opportunities are generated through reference and self promotion. I asked her if her educational background prepared her for this role.

I think the university should address the entrepreneurial aspect of teaching in these settings. You really have to make your own jobs in this field and I don't think we were told that.

Mary points out that there are ample opportunities to teach in these settings. However, breaking into this field is difficult because art educators have not been given the entrepreneurial know-how to pursue employment in this area. Mary has developed her own promotional package which includes pamphlets, slides and articles that she presents to various school agencies. On the strength of this package, she generates new teaching opportunities. However, she finds it difficult to "sell herself". Mary suggests that skills, such as promotion, advertising and information on being self-employed, should be dealt with at the university level since more graduates are finding teaching opportunities outside of educational institution.

We talked about the attitude of the educational system towards the arts and the effects of government cutbacks in programs such as theater, music and art in public schools.

In many school they are letting art be that thing that you do on Friday. That forty-five minutes when you use glue and markers. The importance of art education is not there. It's not there at all.

Teaching of these subjects has been passed on to specialized educators, such as Mary, who work outside of, yet are linked to the school system. She talked about the irony of working within a system that does not recognize your teaching expertise even though you are providing an enriched curriculum to the student body. Mary says at times she regrets not pursuing the teaching certificate. On the other hand, she knows that there are few, if any, art teaching jobs in the public schools.

I asked Mary what qualifications she would look for if she was hiring a candidate to teach art in a community setting. First, she would have to see that the person was prepared to teach art and not craft, as in her definition. Mary would look for a strong personal commitment to the art of teaching and teaching art. In her words,

There's a love for it. A passion for your research, your teaching and your own art making.

Mary advises teachers entering the field of community art education to know the type of student that they want to teach. Mary suggests that this type of

research is essential in developing and promoting a successful educational arts program in a non-formal setting. I asked Mary to describe her aim, as a community art educator. She replied,

It's my job to educate people to what art can be.

Diane's Story

Interviewed May 30, 1999 at the community center where she teaches.

Diane came to teaching art in community centers through her experience in social work. While completing her BFA at University of Quebec in Montreal, Diane worked with children and adolescents with behavioural problems through various community organizations. Presently, she is developing and teaching art programs at two cultural/community centers in the Montreal area and is completing her Masters in Art Education.

I began the interview with asking how her background in social work prepared her to teach art in non-formal settings.

They (the organization where she worked) wanted to have art teaching in schools but in schools that had a clientele at risk or with behavioural problems. They wanted people that had experience working with special needs.

Diane first taught art at a local high school working with physically and intellectually challenged young people. She admits that working with this group was difficult and that most her training was done on the job. The communication and counseling skills she gained in social work helped Diane make the transition

into teaching. Diane found herself lucky to work with a woman trained as a performance artist and teacher; she modeled her teaching style after her mentor. Supported by her experience in social work and her background in fine arts, Diane has continued teaching art to children and adolescents in non-formal settings. As she puts it,

I don't think I would enjoy teaching as an art teacher in school full time with children. This is a personal thing. I sort of fell into teaching art. I'm doing something I really enjoy.

I asked Diane to describe how the context of the teaching settings - the type of administration, the facilities, nature of support - affected what she taught and how she taught it. Diane works at two cultural centers, and although there are some similarities in terms of populations served and physical space, the different values placed on children's and adolescents' art has a larger impact on her teaching process.

At one center, the administration is very open - very encouraging, very supportive. I'm not limited in terms of what I can do.

Diane is encouraged by this organization, to introduce the students to new ways of looking at and making art. This freedom to develop an art curriculum based on the interests of your students, your research and art making cultivates a stimulating learning environment. Diane has taken issues that are part of her academic research and introduced these topics to her adolescent students. Concerns such as racism and gender bias are approached through their art making. In this center she is encouraged to display her students' work. Here the art work is valued and the students gain so much from this validation. This

positive reinforcement has many repercussions within the class, the center and the community.

Diane stated that the studio space is very important. A safe, clean working environment is a measure of a supportive administration. Studio equipment such as paper and printmaking equipment, kilns, dark room and good art supplies allows Diane to introduce her students to various art media. Other resources such as a slide projector, TV/VCR and art reproductions are available on site. The center-run art gallery is used as inspiration and motivation for her students.

In contrast, Diane describes the other center where she teaches.

They (the administration) do not take the children's department seriously. I know that they do not invest as much in the children's programs. We don't have a lot of supplies. You are very limited.

Ironically this center is known for its support of the arts and culture in the community. Diane's responsibilities involve designing and animating two hour workshops for children and adolescents based on multicultural themes. The workshops include schools and other groups. Although at times discouraged, Diane finds it creatively challenging to develop educational art activities with a limited amount of materials. The varying degree of administrative support from her two employees is a characteristic particular to teaching in non-formal settings. It demands a type of adaptability from the educator. Diane's broad experience working with different populations and social agencies has prepared her for these situations.

I asked Diane about the benefits and drawbacks she found in this type of teaching practice.

There's a sense of freedom in terms of hours. I can go home to do my own work.

Diane's teaching schedule allows her to pursue graduate studies in art education. Her interests in multicultural art education, feminist pedagogy and outsider art are underpinned by issues arising in her teaching and art practice. This marriage of theory and practice has benefited her both academically and artistically. Diane notices a resurgence in her art work. She finds that working with her students helps her understand her artistic process.

I find myself sometimes encouraging my students to go and do it, don't think about it too much. That's been a major block of mine. Thinking too much before I do. I think I am able to identify with them because I am able to identify my own process.

Diane notes that her students are young people who choose to attend art courses. They are, on the most part, highly motivated to learn about and practice art.

When asked about the drawbacks, Diane, like Mary, talks about the practical issues such as lack of job security and benefits. Her teaching load is dependent on student registration and the administration's efforts to promote these programs. Given the varying degrees of support, she finds this line of work precarious, though rewarding in other ways.

I asked Diane how she generated new teaching opportunities. Most of her work comes through referrals. She admits that she is not good at promoting her programs and would benefit from more small business skills. However, Diane is presently satisfied by the network of personal contacts that she has built up in the community and the teaching opportunities that this arrangement allows.

We talked about the professional and personal attributes that she would look for in hiring someone to teach art to young people in a community center. She mentioned particular skills such as ability to communicate, listen and understand in order to be able to connect with the student. Specifically, she would look for a patient yet energetic individual, who, she emphasizes, knows and respects young people.

I think those are the things that are very important when you work with people in general but especially with young people.

She recommends a strong arts background both in practice and theory. Diane describes this individual as *“an artist with good people and teaching skills.”*

I asked Diane what advice she would give art educators looking for opportunities in this field. She advised to first choose the population you want to teach. This choice will shape your teaching practice. Secondly, know your population through study and practical experience. Diane suggests volunteer work as a means to become familiar with your population. Often teaching opportunities will arise through these situations. As any self-employed person

knows, the initiative and motivation to seek new possibilities is solely up to the individual. As Diane puts it, *"That's the way you build your reputation."*

We ended the interview by talking about how art is perceived by society and how this attitude permeates the educational system.

I worry because art is not being valued as a real subject. It is considered less as a need for growth and development. You see that art teachers are not valued anymore in the school system because of the government cutbacks and educational policies. Money goes to technologies so we know that the arts are valued less.

Diane finds this attitude reflected by society on the whole towards artistic endeavors. She talked about her responsibility as an artist and teacher to advocate the importance of art and art making in the building and sustaining of the community. Diane sees her teaching practice as a way to bringing art to the adolescent population that is often marginalized within the community.

Carol's Story

Interviewed December 17, 1998, at her home.

Carol holds a Diploma in Education, a Bachelor Degree in Arts and a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She began teaching English and theater at the secondary level in 1976. In 1984, while studying for a degree in Fine Arts, she discovered that she missed teaching tremendously but not in the school system. Carol approached a community center and was employed to develop and teach an art program for teens.

From that I realized that that was a perfect setting for me as it allowed me to teach art even as I was discovering my own art.

Today, Carol is a successful practicing artist and art teacher. Her chosen population are adult learners in community and art centers. She continues to teach within the school system by conducting art-making workshops. Carol is a qualified curator and administrator of the arts having worked in galleries at all levels. She is now working as a director/curator of a professional gallery in a community center.

We talked about her roles as an artist and teacher, and how they temper her teaching practice. Carol said that teaching did not bring much to her art but her art brought much to her teaching. She went on to explain.

It is not a supportive situation to me as far as my creative process. Teaching in the community center is somewhat lower than to what I'm operating as an artist. Teaching at the graduate level would be more beneficial to my personal art-making because it is closer to my own technical ability.

Carol noted that her students do not view these classes as recreational or therapeutic. They take their art making seriously. Carol appreciates the opportunity to introduce people to clay sculpture who would otherwise not have access to this level of instruction. Carol's expertise brings much to her teaching in that it helps her to encourage her students to push their creative possibilities as she does herself. She explains,

You have to develop yourself, develop yourself as an artist remembering that what you are teaching is just the beginning of the idea - the tip of the iceberg. You have to remember that, and you have to keep attuned to what you are doing as an artist, especially if you teach.

I asked her if her art-making process and the underlying philosophy of her work came through in her teaching process. Carol describes herself as a humanist, and a figurative artist. She works in clay because she finds it the most flexible and interesting material. Carol's art work represents the human condition, the interaction between people with their environment and the effects of these relationships. She explains.

I am interested in understanding, expressing and giving voice to emotions, thoughts, feeling that are normally repressed. I do it with an ironic twist.

Personally, Carol believes that art is important to the well-being of the human psyche and the human spirit. This belief filters through both her artistic and teaching processes.

Fundamentally, my aim in teaching is to maintain an understanding and technical ability in rendering the figure which I think is central and essential to any other work you do. Ultimately, we are all searching about being human. So yes, my art and my teaching are interconnected.

After teaching for many years within the school system, it was interesting to hear Carol's comments vis-à-vis teaching art in schools and non-formal settings. I asked Carol about her views on how art is taught in schools.

The arts are often taught in a very throw-away manner. The emphasis is not put on technique, on ideas and on acquiring physical skills. The students see the tremendous cuts to programs like the arts in favour of things will give them, quote, jobs. What the students learn from that is that the arts are expendable They're not essential. There is no commitment to the arts by the education system.

Carol notes that the evaluation protocol put in place by the school board is not supportive of the nature of teaching art. She has noticed that in school

settings, the teacher is asked to teach a prescribed curriculum and evaluate the learning within a certain time frame. What often happens is that the teacher ends up in a position where she or he has to teach certain skills so that the student can apply them in an examination process but without any real conviction or application.

In the community center you get away from the evaluative process. The teacher can pace the teaching to the pace of the student learning. You don't go on to the next step until that student has mastered the one you have introduced. You can do that in a community center.

Carol finds that her teaching style has evolved after teaching in the community. The smaller student/teacher ratio and level of commitment enables Carol to gear her teaching to who her students are and what they need to know to pursue they own artistic vision.

Carol has chosen to work with adult students. I asked why she made this decision. She replied,

I'm focusing on adult art because I feel another problem of art making is that as we grow we give up art making because it is perceived as no longer an adult activity.

Her aim is to emphasize or re-introduce the art activity to adults because she believes it is not something that should stop or be limited to a particular developmental moment in one's life. This goal is linked to Carol's philosophical stance that artistic expression should be considered an essential human experience that is ever continuing.

We talked about the adult students who attend her art classes. I asked her what level of instruction an adult learner looks for in a non-formal setting. She answered that, in her experience, she can identify four types of adult students who attend art classes in community/art centers. First, there is the student who always has been curious about art making. This individual has had a positive experience with art, usually as a child. Because of this experience, an interest has been fostered, about art and about their own creativity.

They are curious about it, they are intrigued by it and they have this nagging suspicion that perhaps they may have a creativity that they are not tapping.

This type of student looks to the community center as a place that is non-judgmental. They are looking for a place where they can try things out and explore the possibilities of their creativity. They could not approach a university because they do not have the art background nor the wish to commit to a full course of study.

The second kind of student Carol describes is one who loved art in school but because of life choices did not commit themselves to art making.

They know they have creativity and want to develop their skills but are either intimidated by or are not interested in the developed level of research at the university level.

This student looks to this type art program to re-connect. They want to continue something they may have started but had to stop.

The third level of student is one who has an on-going art process, someone who has already mastered skills in the medium. This type of student wants to develop these skills.

This student only wants to touch one material and to develop that skill as far as they can. They come to the course specifically looking for instruction in media so that they can develop their technique at their own pace.

The fourth type of student is one who cannot afford his/her own studio or equipment. These are usually printmakers and sculptors who need access to larger and more specifically equipped facilities. They are more interested in technical support than instruction.

I asked Carol if where she taught affected what she taught and how she taught. She replied that there was not much difference in terms of facilities and equipment in among community centers and high schools. The studio facilities in schools may vary but, generally, that most art programs concentrate on painting and drawing programs that do not require a large investment in equipment. She noticed that in many schools lack of funding has eliminated art activities such as clay sculpture, print and paper making. For the young and adult artist, the community/arts center may offer access to these art making processes. Most times, however, the community art teacher has to do more with less. Carol deals with this situation in this way.

You have to gear your teaching to allow the students their full creative potential and to take the material and push it with very limited equipment and facilities.

Carol adds that it is the teacher's responsibility to adapt and find new ways to teach the material without depending on expensive equipment while maintaining a high level of mastery in the material.

In a community/arts center you have to work out your own pedagogical approach to teaching, therefore Carol stresses that the teacher must be well versed in their subject matter.

To provide a successful arts program, you need to know your material intimately because you are entirely on your own.

The role of teacher/artist plays an important part in Carol's profile as a community art educator. She sees teaching art in non-formal settings as an out-growth of her studio practice. Carol opinion is that the artist teaching in the community must be dedicated to his/her own work and not to think of teaching as their entire profession. She states.

Teaching is part of their career as artists and fundamentally they must consider themselves as teaching artists. Artists that teach not teachers of art.

According to Carol, an art teacher who has not developed his/her own body of work as an artist is not the best teacher for a community context.

I asked Carol if she could identify any specific teaching skills that help make a successful community art educator. Carol explained that because students in this type of setting are generally from diverse backgrounds, the instructor is often presented with a range of skills, knowledge of the material,

interests and expectations. Therefore, the teacher must be intellectually and pedagogically flexible. Carol calls this type of teaching style improvisational.

The teacher can address problems or needs as they occur, at the level they occur and find creative and encouraging solutions for students individually.

Carol explains the difference between a student looking for art instruction in a non-formal setting from a student who has chosen art as a course elective in school. A student in a community center chooses to come to an art course because of some personal need whereas a student in school is often there to fill a course requirement. Students in community sites are looking for a more personal approach to instruction. The teacher must be able to communicate a love of the material and an openness to the student's ideas, in other words, someone who can teach the individual. In Carols' words,

The teacher who has a very fixed, determined idea of what art is should not teach in a community center.

I asked what advice she would give someone, like herself, starting out as community art educator. She recommends.

The very first thing is to be very clear about why you are teaching in a community center.

Carol considers teaching art in the community not so much a career choice but a vocation. She emphasizes that a community art educator should not cater to the recreational needs of the community but must be dedicated to promoting the arts in the community. As a community arts educator, Carol comes in close contact with administrators and political figures. She uses these contacts to advocate

support for the arts at its most grassroots level. Carol does not consider an individual with a recreation, or even an education degree, qualified for this job. She believes that one of the problems with teaching art is that it is taught by people who are not involved in the arts personally or professionally. Teaching art in the community means a commitment to developing an arts connection that is nurturing, developmental and educational.

Secondly, Carol advises that the teacher should clearly understand who their students are in terms of needs and expectations. In her practice, this connection between student artist and artist teacher guides her teaching process and determines her teaching style.

When I teach, the art I teach becomes based on who my students are and what they are.

I asked Carol to describe the skills and qualifications she would look for in a candidate to teach an art program in a community/arts center. She would first look for a person who is a qualified, experienced and an exhibiting artist. Also, she would look for an individual who is dedicated to the arts on a personal, academic and community level. Carol notes that a flexible attitude towards teaching art is essential. The ability to adapt and improvise when teaching in varied settings and to diverse populations is a necessary skill. Finally, Carol would look for a person who is able, not only to teach skills, but to encourage a student's creative expression. As an artist-teacher, Carol believes the connection between her art practice and her teaching is a model for her students.

I believe the success of my teaching in the community, in a large part, is due to the fact I allow the students to see my process. I allow the students to share in the way I find ideas, the way I develop them and what I'm trying to say.

I asked Carol if she could think of any entrepreneurial skills that could be helpful in this type of teaching practice. She states that the teacher needs educational and organizational skills but not necessarily administrative ones. At most centers teachers are asked to participate in recruiting, registration and in the assessment of programs. This involvement permits the teacher to advocate the art program in terms of budget, development and promotion. Carol sees this as part of the job of working in a community, in that, you become involved with that community.

Chapter V

My Experience as a Community Art Educator

My career as a community art educator resulted from the merging of my studio practice in ceramics with my interest in teaching art to children. In 1983, after completing the three year Ceramics Technology Degree at John Abbott CEGEP, I opened a pottery studio with a fellow graduate. To support myself in this fledgling business, I also began to teach children's clay classes at a local community center. I enjoyed teaching the children the skills of clay sculpture and about the rich history of clay and the human experience. I transferred my enthusiasm for working with clay into my teaching. The classes were a success and I was asked by the organization to develop and teach programs for children in other media. This motivated me to return to university to strengthen my background in other arts media and to learn about teaching art.

I continued teaching in non-formal settings as an under graduate in Art Education. I was able to apply what I was learning about children and art to my teaching practice. The study of pedagogical and developmental theory guided my teaching practice which, at this point, grew to include art classes, pre-school programs and special art-making workshops.

Many of my peers, at the university, expected to teach in schools and museums upon graduation. To them, teaching outside of these systems was something you did until you found 'real' work in a school. I was often surprised by this attitude. Discussion concerning the challenges of teaching art in the community was rare. I had been teaching outside of schools for several years at this point and I found the experience both challenging and rewarding. I began to search for the links between art education and my research on art taught outside of the school system. I also began to reflect on what it means to be a community art educator and to understand my commitment to teaching in non-formal settings.

My first teaching job has developed into a long term professional relationship with Dollard Recreart.³ Administrated by people who are involved with arts in the community, this organization promotes the importance of art as a means of personal, creative and professional development. My involvement with Recreart has grown beyond teaching art classes. Working closely with the directors, I am engaged in the development of new art programs, special workshops and a summer fine arts' camp for children. Included in these tasks are budget planning, public relations, registration, promotion and community outreach. In any non-formal teaching situation, the relationship between the host organization and the art educator determines the success of the programs. Over the years I have worked for other community organizations and schools that

³ Dollard Recreart is a registered non-profit organization providing art and cultural services for communities in West Island Montreal.

offered varying degrees of support. In my experience, the less successful programs were due to the lack of commitment within organization to the arts. In these cases, art is seen as a recreational activity and this viewpoint is reflected in the reluctance to provide proper facilities, funding and promotion of the arts. Those organizations that champion the arts understand the mutual benefits of working closely with their educators.

I found that one the determining characteristics of teaching in non-formal settings is the student/parent/teacher relationship which is very different from that in the schools. Davis (1998) talks about this unique relationship.

Considering assessment within the field of community art centers that focus on education, it is important to recognize that in this context the student is the client. Student satisfaction, therefore, rates highly as a marker of overall educational effectiveness. If students at a center stop attending, it is the educational organization that goes under. For this reason as, knowledge of - their needs and wishes - counts as an important ingredient in the achievement of overall effectiveness. (p. 119)

An open and respectful rapport between the art educator and the student/client forms the foundation of a successful teaching practice in non-formal settings. In this context, there are certain expectations bound to this definition of the student/client. According to Langdon (1996), et al.,

Another way in which to define community art education is to view the role of the community as being the client needing a particular service and the art educator as being the provider of this service. In the this scenario, it is the art educator's responsibility to interpret the needs and demands of the client and transform them into a valued service. (pg. 41)

The paying student or the parent(s) have certain expectations and goals when registering for these classes. In my experience, the parents of my students are very interested in the educational component of the classes. They have definite values about the importance of art in their children's lives. Part of my teaching practice involves taking time to explain to the parents the goals, objectives and procedures of the art program. At the two settings where I teach, the parents are asked to evaluate the programs. This aids the organization in assessing the effectiveness of the programs to meet the needs of the students. The open communication between myself and the parents gives them the opportunity to be directly involved in their children's education. Parents often give feedback on the impact the classes have on their child's self-esteem, progress in school, special needs and interests. This dialogue is an important component in the assessment of my own teaching.

One of the drawbacks of teaching in community settings is the tenuous job security. Generally, working for a supportive host organization has the benefit of providing a more stable working environment. Presently, I teach in three such organizations - two community/art centers and an in-school enrichment art program. Each organization provides a work contract and some benefits to its part-time teaching staff. Unfortunately, this is not the case in all settings. When questioned about the disparity of commitment in non-formal settings, while being interviewed, I commented,

*I have worked in situations where the people did not care about the arts.
Twice this occurred in schools when I have taught extra-curricular*

activities. The administrators had high expectations but low support as far as materials, space, time and organization. I did the best I could with what little I had. However, in community art centers, the promotion of learning about and making art is central in their mandate.
(J. Haggar, taped interview, December 19, 1999)

One of the benefits of teaching in a non-formal setting is the student/teacher ratio which is often smaller than in schools, which permits a closer, more familiar relationship with the student. I can work closely with each child taking into consideration their interests and skill level. I believe that learning happens when it is relevant and linked to the lived experience of the student. Knowledge is not so much passed on as mediated through the teacher's and student's shared experience. This student centered method of teaching is defined as "connected" (Belenky et al. 1997, p. 214). Connected teaching allows the teacher to encourage independent thinking and problem solving by the students. This is accomplished more easily when dealing with a group of twelve students that is the average class size in non-formal settings. In this model, the viewpoints of the students are expressed in a non-judgmental and open forum. McFee (1961) describes this as a democratic classroom where the education objectives evolve from the ideals and needs of the student. This inclusive teaching method has become my model as it allows for the development of course objective based on the student's lived experience. Using this approach, I design art programs that are specific to each class as a whole by taking into account the individual needs of every student as I am not constrained by a set curriculum.

I have noticed that my students tend to stay with me over time. According to Davis (1998), this circumstance can serve as an indicator in assessing the teacher's performance and educational effectiveness of the art program. Teaching the same children over several years helps me track their developing skills and interests that, in turn, informs my teaching practice.

A community art educator is essentially a self-employed individual. Most community art educators teach at several different sites. Depending on the motivation and the energy of the educator, this could translate into a full-time teaching practice. As in any small business enterprise, it is up to the individual to protect themselves personally and financially. As part of the course load of the Ceramics Technology program, I was required to take a course in small business management which included accounting procedures, budget control, promotion and marketing of work. This knowledge has helped me immensely in maintaining the business side of my teaching practice in the community. In my experience, I have found that,

When you teach in school you become part of a much larger structure. Issues such as pay, pension, insurance, compensation and benefits are taken care of. In the community you have to find out the information for yourself. You have to know about insurance, taxes, the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating yourself - certain business and entrepreneurial considerations that would protect and benefit you in the long run. This information should be made available to those students interested in teaching in the community.

Teaching in community settings has also had a profound influence on my development as an artist. I began as a studio potter. Having to develop programs in other media gave me the opportunity to work with new art making materials. Now my studio work includes screen printing and assemblage. Working with other artists keeps me in touch with the local arts community. As part of the mandate at Dollard Recreart, the educators are required to participate in exhibitions in the center's gallery. As with most arts centers, Dollard Recreart hires professional artists as instructors. Davis (1994) states,

Some center directors admit that a background in education may be helpful for instructors of very young children. But most centers seem to prioritize the quality of the art work of the would-be instructors and portfolios when evaluating important ingredients in job applications. (p.12)

This is an important point to remember for art educators who wish to teach in community art centers.

The most important piece of advice I would give an art educator interested in teaching in non-formal settings would be to choose a population that you are interested in teaching. Teaching in non-formal settings is not restricted to children but also includes adult learners, the elderly, marginalized populations, adolescents and others. Get to know your student population through study, observation and volunteerism. Develop programs that are specifically geared to these groups.

Know your larger community. Familiarize yourself with the various organizations that serve these populations. Speak to the administrators to determine their goals and priorities. Present detailed proposals of your programs and be ready to defend them from an artistic and educational standpoint.

It is essential to continue your own research as an educator and as an artist. Much depends on the educator's motivation. Starting out in this field demands a lot of energy and confidence. A successful teaching practice in the community does not happen overnight. It may take years to develop. A high level of commitment and determination is required of the educator.

You have a mission. It's really important to you, not just the art making, but art should be a part of everybody's life. You want to try and make that happen. There is a passion to teach about art and art making.

I became an undergraduate in art education with the intent to learn more about how children develop and learn through art. My goal was to know and understand the population that I taught. I was fortunate in being able to directly apply the educational theory I learned in class to my teaching in the community. Needless to say, this strengthened my abilities as a teacher and advanced my teaching practice. My undergraduate studies included research into teaching in community sites, a topic that was rarely mentioned in the field of art education up to this point in time. When I realized how little study had been done concerning community based art education my research interest turned to this area. During my graduate studies, I have witnessed growing interest in the field of community

art education at the university level. This is very encouraging. It is my belief that community art education deserves a higher profile within the field of art education. My own research has confirmed this and has served to strengthen my own commitment as a community art educator.

Chapter VI

Emerging Issues

This study addresses several broad issues arising from my research of community art education and my art teaching practice in non-formal settings. As part of my analysis of the interview transcripts, I classified the responses to frame the discussion under these headings: the de-schooling of art; the teacher/artist model and the profile of a community art educator.

The De-Schooling of Art

In questioning my respondents about their motivation for choosing a profession as a community art educator, I detected an overriding theme. In their conversations is the general feeling of the devaluation of the arts by society in general and education in particular. As Oddleifson (1994) states,

Art educators are also labouring under intolerable conditions, not the least of which is the general attitude that what they teach is irrelevant.
(p. 448)

This is not a recent observation. Fowler (1986) suggests, "It may well be that the lack of adequate resources inside schools causes art teachers to look outside in the first place." (pg. 6)

Mark Abley writes, in a recent article for the Montreal Gazette that, in theory, Quebec's new school curriculum should promote arts education. In reality, however, generalist teacher preparation barely touches on the training in the arts which includes music, drama and the visual arts. Hiring a specialist in these areas is not an option in many public schools. Abley states,

An arts program is only as good as the staff teaching it. And staffing remains the job of a principal, whose budget comes from a school board. If a school has not money to pay a qualified music (art, drama) teacher, all the fine words in the curriculum may not add up to much. ("Curriculum Reform," 2000)

As we enter the 21st. century, arts education as part of the core curriculum in the public school system is deteriorating to the point of non-existence, available to those students enrolled in the private school sector. Art education in formal settings is becoming more exclusive. However, literature suggests that the de-schooling of art is suspect in the minds of many art educators who view the teaching of art outside of school walls as a threat to arts education. (Davis, 1994; May, 1994; Crystal, 1990; Fowler, 1986; Smith, 1980) I suggest the opposite is true. Much of our understanding of the world takes place outside of the educational system and occurs at all times of our life. Historically, most art taught outside of schools (other than museum education) is found through community agencies. In effect, community art education democratizes arts education in allowing more levels of society to engage in an inclusive learning milieu.

Art taught outside of school is not limited to community centers. Recently there has been a shift in focus to a more encompassing perspective of community art education. Diane's experience teaching troubled adolescents reveals another side of community art education.

I've worked with kids on the street. I've taught in drop-in centers.

Art taught in non-formal settings reaches marginalized populations by working with the student within their community wherever that may exist. Many social agencies offer art programs as part of their mandate. It is here that community art education moves away from leisure and into a wider sphere of available arts instruction and involvement. Davis (1994) states,

Many students, as well as the artists that work with them, feel disenfranchised from the institution of school. For the disenfranchised, the "outsider" status of the community art education offers a powerful educational alternative. (p. 14)

Some art educators argue that the teaching of art should not take place in the school in the first place. In Carol's words,

I found that I missed teaching tremendously but not in the school system where I don't believe that creative processes lend themselves easily to the evaluation process that they use in schools. In a school setting, one of the most detrimental things I find to the art process is the exams. What often happens is the teacher ends up teaching one skill that the student can apply to the exam but without any real conviction - without any real application of this skill to the child's artistic development.

What situates the non-formal setting apart from schools is the non-competitive nature of teaching and the opportunity to develop curriculum relevant to the students' interests, skills and intentions. These two attributes assist in addressing the needs of a wider population.

As part of teacher preparation in the Department of Art Education at Concordia University, students have been performing their teaching practicum in various community sites in the Montreal area. These sites include women's shelters, elderly hospices, drop-in centers for adolescents, community centers and alternative schools. Art programs, historically provided through leisure and recreational agencies, are moving towards a deeper involvement with the community. Being able to teach art in these venues is opening up new and challenging possibilities for art educators outside of the school system.

The Teacher/Artist Model

Being a teacher/artist is one of the characteristics that describe the profile of a community art educator. In seeking employment as an art educator, especially in art and cultural centers, maintaining a studio practice is an asset. As a person involved in the hiring process for the organization where she teaches, Carol states,

First I would look for a qualified, experience and exhibiting artist in their field - who is dedicated to the arts. A person coming straight out of an educational degree, to me, is not the best - who has had no personal development of their own body of work as an artist is not the best teacher in a community context.

Why is being an artist so important for teaching art in non-formal settings? In their studies of community art centers, Crystal (1990) and Davis (1994) discuss

the reasons the artist/teacher model is preferred in non-formal settings. Crystal discovered that

The Centers are strongly committed to hiring professional artists to teach their programs, offering a number of persuasive reasons such as: a high level of knowledge and expertise, flexibility and imagination in developing class content, and a passion and commitment to the arts which in turn inspires their students. (p. 57)

Degge (1987) found that 74% of the community art educators she surveyed were practicing artists. Teaching a subject in which you are personally engaged engenders a higher level of commitment and caring. Included in this factor are smaller student/teacher ratios which, in turn, promotes a richer learning environment

What caught my interest in my interviews was how the interaction with the students affects the educator's studio practice. In conversation with Diane, she commented on how the students helped her to loosen up and approach her art making in a more relaxed process. Her students helped her to take more risks in her work.

I have had similar experiences in my teaching practice. In learning about different art making skills to introduce to my students, I began to incorporate some these techniques into my own work. Working with children and being buoyed by their curiosity, sense of play and imagination is an antidote to the self-imposed structure one often encounters as an adult artist. However, Carol finds the effect of teaching art on her own art making has its drawbacks. She explains.

I can't separate myself as an artist from myself as a teacher which is, in a way, detrimental. I will walk into class, fresh from starting or developing an idea in my studio. I will share that idea with my students and they will run with it. Then, I go back to my studio and look at my work and go "O.K., it's been done" and I lose the (artistic) process.

Day (1986), however, finds the model of artist/teacher problematic on many levels. He states that the characteristics often attached to the artist/teacher, such as strong commitment to the arts, strong individualism and non-conformity, are often at odds with the priorities of the educational system. He questions the role of the artist/teacher. Does this model put teaching in a position of second priority? Day believes that the "focus on the artist limits the development of the teacher as a professional educator" (p. 41). I suggest that a new definition of this model is needed. I suggest an art educator/artist model. This educator balances the role of artist and educator and uses the interaction between the two to enhance and evolve both interests. Supported by the studies of Davis, (1994); Lackey, (1994); Degge, (1987) and my own research, this model already exists in community art education.

Profile of a Community Art Educator

What attributes, characteristics, and backgrounds define a community art educator? As in any definition, we search for generalities that emerge from experience, beliefs and opinions. Looking at my three respondents, we see three different backgrounds that preceded the teaching of art in non-formal settings.

Carol came from a teaching background with a strong dedication to the arts. Diane came to her art teaching practice via social work. Mary began as a graphic artist and, prompted by her love of teaching children, returned to university to become an art educator. All three educators have chosen to teach in community settings. Their motivation to teach in non-formal settings was born out of a variety of personal circumstances.

Shared Characteristics

What shared characteristics do these educators have that would help define a community based art educator? First they all share the strong belief that art is integral to day to day living. This opinion is confirmed through their commitment to their studio practice, their teaching and their advocacy of the arts in the community. Carol states,

You need to be someone who is dedicated to promoting the arts in the community - who is dedicated to maintaining a connection with the student and their art at a level that is nurturing, that is developmental and that is educational.

The model of art educator/artist is used in defining this aspect of the community art educator. Involvement in the arts personally, professionally and academically is an elemental criteria for teaching art in the community.

Personal Skills

What personal skills and attributes are common among the three respondents? From Carol's point of view,

The teacher has to be intellectually and pedagogically flexible.

Diane looks at the type of personality best suited for teaching in community settings. She states,

I know I am an outgoing person. I know that I am a communicator. I know how to listen. I am an animator, counselor - a wide variety of different things.

In Mary's experience she found,

You have to be flexible in your approach to teaching. You are your own boss. You have to be self-motivated.

The art of 'improvisational teaching', as described by Carol in her interview, is a skill essential to teaching at non-formal sites. The ability to adapt to different situations, populations and administrations is indispensable in this type of teaching practice. Each site is unique, demanding of the art educator different skills, roles, approaches and rationales. Non-formal settings require that educators meet their students' individual needs. A more personalized, connected approach to teaching is advocated. Carol concurs,

You have to be someone who can teach the person. So, if you are someone who has a very fixed, a very determined idea of what art is then you shouldn't be teaching in the community. You don't belong in a place where you have to be open and inclusive.

The most useful abilities needed for educators to succeed in community art education would include the capacity to appreciate other values and belief systems, personal flexibility, empathy and a willingness to adapt to varying teaching situations.

Entrepreneurial Skills

Self-motivation is a requirement for anybody who is self-employed. To enjoy a successful career as an art teacher in non-formal sites one must be able to promote one's skills in teaching and in art making. Understanding the administrative structure of the site, knowing the needs, intentions and skills of the student population and being able to promote a cohesive educational curriculum to generate employment are the main tasks of the community art educator. Mary felt her traditional art education background did not prepare her for this role.

Leaving school and not feeling equipped. You have to know what you are doing when you are looking for teaching opportunities outside of the school system. You have to sell yourself.

All three respondents remarked that prior knowledge of self-promotion and small business techniques would have helped them at the outset of their teaching practice. Most of their skills in this area were acquired 'on the job'. What the respondents did agree on was that a community based art educator must be dynamic, organized, and have the incentive to jointly pursue their art and teaching practice.

Chapter VII

Conclusion

The aim of thesis is to investigate the practice of teaching art in non-formal settings and to define the role of community art educator through personal experiences - my own and other fellow community art educators. By understanding the reasons why these art educators made this career choice, how teaching in non-formal settings is defined and what, in their experience, prepared them for teaching in the community.

The overall reason for their motivation to teach in non-formal settings, evolves from the notion of the “de-schooling of art” and the increasing availability for arts education through community agencies. Mary decided to confront this need by teaching programs that are part of the school curriculum but remain outside of the school system. Based on her experience as an educator within the school system and as a practicing artist-teacher, Carol believes that art education does not have a place in the schools. Carol’s work with adult artists sets forth a different rationale for community art education and that needs to be addressed in art teacher preparation that is, in the most part, child and adolescent centered. Diane came to teaching children and adolescents outside of the school system through her social work. Working with marginalized populations is a distinguishing characteristic of community art education. This meeting of social work and art education is another area of interest open to further inquiry.

The academic, artistic and teaching experience of the respondents helps form a framework that defines what community art education is and who community art educators are. How can this information be translated into guiding teacher preparation for community art educators? One of the complaints made by the respondents was the lack of information, both theoretical and practical, at the university level to prepare them to work in the community. Most of the skills were gained 'on the job'. This concern has been addressed by the Department of Art Education, Concordia University. Community Art Education is an undergraduate program that prepares students to teach in the community. As part of this teacher-training program, the students are required to participate in teaching internships in various non-formal settings. This allows the student the opportunity to make an educated choice as to where and who they would like to teach and opens up the possibilities of teaching art outside of school walls.

The Concordia Community Art Education Research Group⁴, has investigated, over the past four years, some of the issues that define community art education. Paul Langdon, Director, in his definition of community art education, (1996) states,

To define community art education is to consider the community as being the site, both physical and philosophical, art as being the content and practice and education as being the agency and process. (p. 41)

⁴ The Community Art Education Research Group, (Department of Art Education, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.) consists of a group of teachers, researchers and graduate students who have interest and expertise in community art education. Their purpose is to define community art education and to examine the particular needs and issues related to it.

In response to the need for research of the evolving field of community art education, my thesis seeks to clarify issues, voice concerns and specify themes particular to this area of interest. Speaking with other community art educators and searching out relevant literature has strengthened my belief that community art education has an important place within the field of art education that demands further research. In response to the need for research in the evolving field of community art education, my thesis seeks to clarify issues, voice concerns and specify themes particular to this area. Speaking with other community art educators and searching out relevant literature has strengthened my belief that community art education has an important place within the field of art education that demands further research.

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APPENDIX

Project Co-Arts

Project Zero's Project Co-Arts was supported by the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Alexander Julian Foundation for Aesthetic Understanding and Appreciation, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Project Co-Arts began in 1991 and completed its work in 1996.

At the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, Bill Strickland not only offers inner city teenagers apprentice-style training in photography and ceramics, but also helps them apply and get into college. At Plaza de la Raza in East Los Angeles, Gema Sandoval teaches students traditional Mexican art forms like ballet folklórico (folk dance) and migajón (sculpture) to help them build self-esteem and develop a keener understanding of their cultural identity. At MollyOlga Neighborhood Art Classes in Buffalo, Molly Bethel and Olga Lownie offer free painting and drawing classes so that students of all ages can acquire visual arts skills, regardless of their income. Across the country, hundreds of community art centers like these--many in economically disadvantaged communities--are using arts education to attain goals that range from professional training to better cross-cultural understanding.

Project Co-Arts has developed a framework that will enable community art centers and other educational institutions to document and assess for themselves their educational effectiveness, whatever their mission may be. Based on rigorous study of hundreds of community art centers around the country, this framework is designed to help administrators make thoughtful decisions as they attempt to offer quality education, often on a shoestring budget. The Co-Arts Assessment Plan guides educators in an ongoing process of self-examination through "assessment forums" and documents the process with an "organizational processfolio," which may include material like tape-recorded interviews, correspondence with parents, memos from staff members, tabulations of enrollment in individual classes, and student work.

To formulate this self-assessment tool, Co-Arts researchers made numerous site visits and analyzed results from questionnaires and phone interviews completed by hundreds of centers around the country. They have written thirty sketches and six detailed portraits of educationally effective community art centers.

In the second phase of the project, Co-Arts worked with selected community art centers around the country to implement and test the assessment plan and determine how organizational processfolios could best be incorporated. The group was committed to sharing the results of this work with in-school educators and funders of arts programs. Co-Arts also received a training grant to help The Network, a research laboratory in Andover, Massachusetts, investigate whether the assessment plan could be used in a non-arts setting. The Network adapted the plan to evaluate and document the work of PRISM, a bilingual program that promotes language acquisition through inquiry-based science learning.

Project Co-Arts maintained a clearinghouse for resources and information regarding the inspirational field of out-of-school, community-based arts education. It produced a database with information about more than 500 U.S. community art centers, files of materials from more than 300 of these centers, and a library of relevant books and articles.

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by Janette Haggart as part of her Master's thesis under the supervision of Professor Paul Langdon, Department of Art Education and the Concordia University Community Art Research Team.

A. Purpose - I have been informed that the purpose of this research is to investigate the nature and practice of community art education.

B. Procedure - Upon agreement, I will receive a list of possible topics and questions pertinent to the subject matter. I will be interviewed by Ms. Haggart at my convenience. The audio-tapes will be transcribed and a copy of the transcription will be returned to me for review and clarification.

C. Conditions of Participation

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from participating at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that the participation in this study is confidential - the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand the purpose of this study and know that there is no hidden motive of which I have not been informed.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

WITNESS SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part 1 - Background

1. How many years have you been teaching in community settings?
2. Describe your first teaching position in a non-formal setting?
 - What were the circumstances of finding this position?
 - What were your first impressions of this type of teaching experience?
 - What motivated you to continue teaching in these circumstances?
3. Describe your present teaching position (s)?
4. What is your artistic/academic background?
 - What, in your background (academic and artistic), prepared you to teach in non-formal settings?
 - What were the strong points?
 - What was lacking?
5. Describe your professional expertise/interest in the arts.

Part 2 - Opinions and Attitudes

1. Describe how the context of a non-formal setting (clientele, administration, nature of the setting, physical space etc.) affect the content and methodology of your teaching practice.
2. What are the benefits of teaching art in a non-formal settings?
3. What are the drawbacks of teaching art in non-formal settings?
4. Do you think that there are any personal characteristics that help make a successful community art educator?
5. Do you think certain entrepreneurial and organizational skills are necessary to succeed as a community art educator? If so, describe these skills.
6. How does your artistic background influence your teaching method?
Describe your art making process and the underlying philosophy of your work.
Is this process/philosophy reflected in your teaching method? If so, in what manner?
7. If you were in the position for hiring a candidate to teach art in a community setting, what are the qualifications you would look for?
8. What advice would you give to someone interested in teaching art in non-formal settings?