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Testing Times for the Arts

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Abstract

This article draws on recent research that sought to find substantive evidence that participation in quality Arts experiences can enhance students' academic motivation, engagement and achievement (Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, Liem & Sudmalis, 2013). Here we examine "dispositions" (Perkins, Jay & Tishman, 1993) that comprise high-quality critical and creative thinking in Arts classrooms. In doing so, we find many similarities between our research and that of Eisner's (2002) contentions in *The arts and the creation of mind*. While Eisner (2002) continually argued that the Arts teach flexibility, learning to attend to relationships, expression, the ability to shift direction and imagination, we also found that quality Arts participation affords students opportunities to play with ideas and actions, to establish collaborative relationships with peers and teacher and move in and out of unknown spaces. These

"untestable" skills align to the creative, flexible, resilient and forward-thinking citizens so prized by governments and private sectors worldwide (Florida, 2002). We argue that the kinds of thinking and knowing developed in the Arts are important in and of themselves not in terms of the benefits they offer other areas of the curriculum.

Keywords

Arts education, Creativity, Teaching frameworks, Arts classrooms

Introduction

Arts education in many Western countries finds itself in a tenuous situation (Burnard & White, 2008). The Arts promote creativity, self-expression and imagination which some maintain are frivolous "extras" in an already over-crowded curriculum (Gibson & Ewing, 2011). This situation has been exacerbated in Australia by the current focus on high-stakes testing such as NaPLAN (the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) and the introduction of the MySchool website.[1] National, standardised tests in literacy and numeracy but not the Arts (even though the Arts have been included as part of the new national curriculum) has resulted in less arts in many Australian schools (Ewing, 2010; Gibson, 2012).

Current arts curriculum

After a long and sometimes difficult gestation (Anderson 2014), the Australian National curriculum was released in 2014. In the Australian Curriculum, the Arts is a learning area that draws together related but distinct art forms. While these art forms have close relationships and are often used in interrelated ways, each involves different approaches to arts practices and critical and creative thinking that reflect distinct bodies of knowledge, understanding and skills. The curriculum examines past, current and emerging arts practices in each art form across a range of cultures and places (ACARA 2014: n.p.).

In terms of the Arts, there is an assumption that all students will study the five Arts subjects of dance, drama, media arts, music and visual arts from Kindergarten (Reception) to Year 8 for a minimum of 2 hours per week. These art strands can be taught separately although

[1] MySchool enables parents/educators to search the profiles of almost 9,500 Australian schools to locate statistical and contextual information about the resources and performance of schools.

given the reduced time allocation, integrated arts experiences are encouraged. In Years 9 and 10, students are able to specialise in one or more arts subjects. Unfortunately at the time of writing this article, the new National Curriculum was reviewed by Ken Wiltshire and Kevin Donnelly on behalf of the Australian Government with the recommendation that:

> The core content of all five strands should be reduced …Two of the arts strands should be mandatory … music and visual arts. The other three strands would be elective subjects and schools would choose which to offer according to their resources … and school context (p. 219).

As a result, schools are continuing to use their existing syllabi. In New South Wales, this means that in primary schools, students spend 6% - 10% (approximately 1.5 to 2.5 hours per week) engaged in the Creative Arts i.e. dance, drama, music and visual arts. In secondary schools, music and visual arts both have mandatory 100 hour courses while in Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12) students may enrol in elective arts courses which include dance, drama, music, photographic and digital media, visual arts and visual design.

The role of arts education in academic motivation, engagement and achievement

Arts advocates worldwide have argued that the Arts are critical because they develop unique ways of thinking and knowing (Eisner, 2002; Hetland, Winner, Veenema & Sheridan, 2007). To this end, we sought through rigorous and robust research to find substantive evidence that participation in quality arts experience does, in fact lead to improved academic and non-academic outcomes. The following article draws on the findings from a recent Australian research project conducted over a three-year period by the University of Sydney in partnership with Australia's largest Arts agency, the Australia Council for the Arts (OzCo) and funded through the Australian Research Council (ARC). *The role of arts education in academic motivation, engagement and achievemen*t (AEMEA) was a sequential mixed-methods research project designed to explore the relationships that exist between arts education and the academic and non-academic outcomes of students. The project included both quantitative and qualitative

strands. The first study collected longitudinal data over two years, applying Martin's (2010; 2009) *Motivation and Engagement Scale* (MES), a tool validated through extensive prior research and which was adapted to arts education classrooms. Longitudinal survey and achievement data was collected from fifteen schools in New South Wales and Canberra, Australia which included primary and secondary classes and schools from the government and non-government sector. This was to ensure the sample was representative. This study addressed two research questions:

1. What is the link between arts participation and academic and non-academic outcomes beyond socio-demographics and prior achievement?
2. What is the relative salience of specific forms of arts participation across three domains – school, home and community?

Methodology

The results for the longitudinal casual ordering study (key findings can be found in Martin et al, 2013) were used to determine classrooms where positive correlations between academic and non-academic outcomes and high levels of participation in the Arts were present. It was anticipated that further in-depth exploration of these classrooms using a situated case study approach (Lincoln & Guba, 1994) would yield valuable insights into exemplary arts education processes and practices. The results from the longitudinal study were therefore used to select nine arts classrooms from five arts areas: dance, drama, media studies, music and visual arts. The researchers intended to explore these diverse arts domains as a basis for comparison (Stake, 2006) to determine divergence in practice and process and also to examine whether certain common characteristics can be found in high performing arts classrooms.

The qualitative case study research addressed three research questions:

1. What specific learning and motivation processes are involved in effective arts-based education?
2. What aspects of these processes are transferable to other academic processes and contexts?
3. What classroom practices contribute to high and low engagement in the arts and how can this inform pedagogy more broadly?

Multiple data sources were selected to allow for different perspectives and for the application of diverse analytic methods to explore the data applying Ellingson's (2011, 2009) concept of crystallization. These sources encompassed description, exposition, first-person accounts, live action, reflective accounts of action and classroom artefacts. Inter-rater reliability tests were conducted between all researchers on a sample of data prior to the case study analysis.

Table 1. Data sources and rationale, linking data collected to research questions

Data sources	**Purpose**
Teachers Three semi-structured interview schedules, that cover teacher background, beliefs, professional development and lifelong learning, classroom strategies, school attitudes to the Arts, reflections on research and selected moments from classroom observations.	Gain insights into the influences on teacher practice and what drives their decision-making.
Curriculum documents provided by teachers that outline class objectives, assessment tasks and learning outcomes	Provide insights into rationale behind classroom practice. Map content to teacher practices (understand intention) and student understanding
Students Small group semi-structured interview schedule that covers how they define motivation, engagement and achievement, how this manifests in the arts classroom, their views on arts learning transfer to other areas of learning, their future intentions in regards to arts learning	Gain insights into the processes in arts classrooms and what practices motivate and engage them.
Students' self-reflections filmed in situ based on stimulus questions that relate directly to their classroom practice. iPods were distributed to students in class.	Elicit highly contextualised responses to practices and processes
Teachers and students Three classroom observation schedules, each based on a dimension (categories and sub-categories) from the	To map the processes in the classroom to the categories and sub-categories of the *QTF* and to note processes that are

Quality Teaching Framework used by the public school system in New South Wales. Dimensions are: quality learning environment, intellectual quality and significance	significant and that fall outside of the framework. To understand how the framework is enacted in these arts classrooms

The collected data was analysed with the aid of NVivo, which facilitated complex querying across the large dataset. NVivo also enabled direct coding of audio-visual data alongside transcripts and annotations. This approach was chosen for two key reasons: to analyse the real-time data captured on film rather than a mediated rendering of that data such as through annotations and transcripts and to capture the context, tone and "voices" of the students. The analysis took both a deductive and inductive approach. To interpret this extensive dataset (see Table 2 for details), we mapped these themes to the three dimensions of the *New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework (QTF)*: Intellectual Quality, Quality Learning Environment and Significance (Ladwig & Gore, 2006). The *QTF* is the pedagogical model for NSW public schools, which account for 70% of schools in that state (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013), as such the framework has an influential role in defining quality teaching.[2] A significant outcome of this approach was the insights it gave into how the *QTF* captured and also how it failed to capture key practices and processes that were present in these classrooms. In some instances, we were able to refer to terms used within the framework although we also found it necessary to code inductively to emergent themes, some of which confirmed prior research on significant processes such as imaginative discovery (Eisner, 2002; Winner & Hetland, 2007; Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland & Palmer, 2009), were not captured in the *QTF*. The 3 dimensions that comprise the *QT*F provide the structure for the themes discussed in this article. These themes are only a fraction of those identified during this research project

[2] This is based on the Productive Pedagogies approach that has been widely used throughout Australia and North America.

but they do represent many of the processes most commonly noted in the data from the school case studies and as such provide evidence of the richness of quality arts learning experiences.

Table 2. Data collected over fieldwork period in addition to curriculum documents

School[3]	Class	Subject	Participants	Teacher interviews	Focus groups	Observed classes (filmed)	Student Reflections (iPod)
Ashmore HS	11	Drama	1 teacher 15 students	3	1	3	67
Bellevue PS	5/6	Vis Arts	1 teacher 23 students	3	1	3	67
Croydon GS	11	Drama	2 teachers 25 students	6	2	8	179
Northern GS	9	Drama	1 teacher 17 students	3	2	3	171
Northern GS	9	Film	1 teacher 15 students	3	2	4	34
Northern GS	10	Music	1 teacher 12 students	3	1	4	77
St Mary's	11 &12	Dance	1 teacher 12 students	3	2	4	70
TOTAL			**124**		**11**	**29**	**665, av 45 secs each**

Research findings

This section details what Perkins and colleagues (1993) have termed "dispositions" that is, high-quality critical and creative thinking observed in the case study classrooms. In doing so, we found many similarities between our research and the contentions put forward by Elliot Eisner (2002) in *The arts and the creation of mind.* While Eisner continually argued that the Arts teach flexibility, learning to attend to relationships, expression, the ability to shift direction and imagination, we also found that quality Arts participation affords students an opportunity to play with ideas and actions, to establish collaborative relationships with their peers and teacher, and move in and out of unknown spaces. The classes we witnessed in our research

[3] All school names in this article are pseudonyms as are all names of teachers and students to ensure anonymity.

encouraged abstract thinking and set challenges and achieved gains for students from a wide range of academic abilities.

Intellectual Quality

The following emerged as critical in terms of effective arts learning within the *Intellectual Quality* dimension, identified in the *QTF* as deep knowledge, deep understanding, problematic knowledge, higher order thinking, meta-language and substantive communication. This section examines how "intellectual quality" was enacted in the practices of the arts classrooms focusing on two processes: utilising the imagination and learning the aesthetics of craft. Each was in evidence in the case study classrooms and the frequency and intensity in which they appeared warrants discussion.

Utilising the imagination

One important feature of quality arts learning experiences is that they provide not only permission but encouragement to use one's imagination (Eisner, 2002). The capacity to think imaginatively was integral to the intellectual development of the students within these arts classes. In all of the classrooms visited as part of this research, arts educators and their students acknowledged that these were places in which the emphasis was on experimentation, exploration and discovery; settings that required them to use their imagination as a source of content for their arts-making. For example, Alice Child, the secondary drama teacher at Croydon Grammar explained "… their interest is sparked … I keep talking about sparks and igniting things but something gets their imagination going and gets them energetic and excited."

Observing one of Harriet Smith's visual arts classes provided us with further insights into how primary children's imaginations were engaged through direct, sensory experience. The Year 5/6 class had visited the Sydney Fish Market and had observed a range of different fish and spoken at length with the fishmongers about their catch. On entering the art room the

following day, the students were confronted with these same fish arranged on large trays around the room. Revisiting their previous day's experience at the fish market, Harriet encouraged her class to closely observe, carefully touch and even smell the fish thus engaging their senses and thereby their imaginations. According to Eisner (2003) "the senses feed imagination, and imagination provides content for representation … the arts, when well taught, are fundamental in refining sensibility and cultivating the capacity to think imaginatively" (p. 343).

Figure 1. The day's catch. Fish brought back to the artroom following an excursion to the Sydney Fish Market

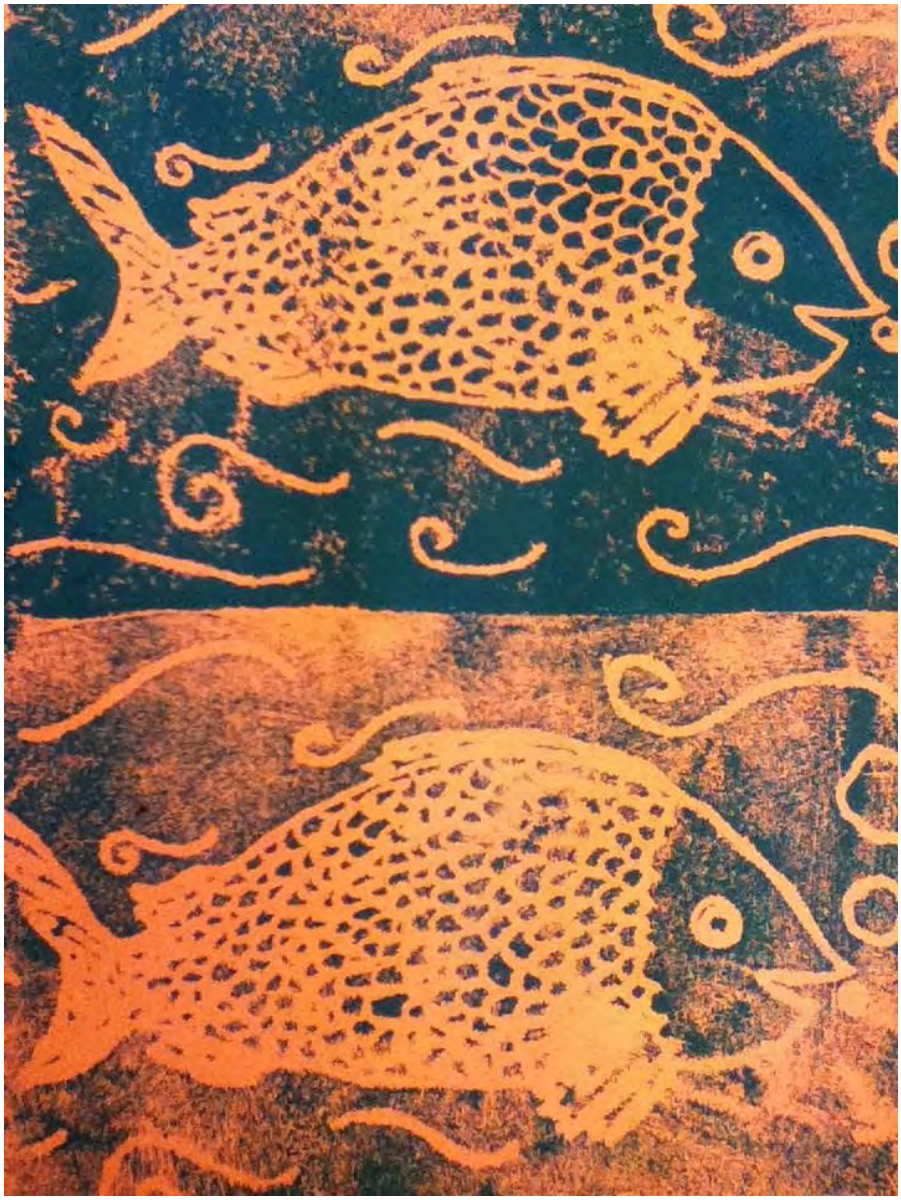

Figure 2. Student printmaking of barramundi scales

Tasks that required exploration and discovery in the observed classes encompassed individual work (visual arts and music) and group work (dance, drama and film). Many students contrasted arts learning as distinct from other forms of learning because the processes centred on "being creative" and "using the imagination". The dance students, for example, said they were motivated by the opportunity to "express themselves." One of the dance students commented:

> What motivates me in dance is its fun and its different from everything else and allows me to express myself in different ways and when I get bored of talking, I get to dance and I can still get what I want to say out there. (Caterina, 17 years)

Learning the aesthetics of craft

The Arts make possible a certain quality of experience that we call aesthetic. Eisner (2003) argues that "aesthetic forms of experience are memorable" (p. 344) as evidenced by the significance of cultural events in the lives of many people. The value of these experiences are often intrinsic and in the context of education cannot be readily tested in systems focussed on test scores (Eisner, 2002). Despite this "the aesthetics of craft"; an understanding of the art form both technically and expressively emerged as a key theme within the *Intellectual Quality* dimension. It was clear that a body of knowledge was developed and cultivated in each of these arts classrooms and this enabled the deep and sustained appreciation of the students.

In her interview, Delia Levinson, the dance teacher at St Mary's wove an appreciation of the aesthetics of dance into many of her responses, clearly demonstrating her knowledge of anatomy, physiology and choreography: "I can connect with that more scientific aspect of the discipline and the aesthetics". Yet the beauty and expressiveness within the form was also central to her appreciation: "I love it when the legs are fully extended and you've got technique and the body's awake and the lines of ballet …" Likewise as a professional musician, the Northern Grammar music teacher, Jim Jackson acknowledged musicianship as a craft, a craft that he identified as being "intellectual." He explained, "I need to know my craft and I need to share that passion and interest and knowledge." That he succeeded in doing this was apparent in the classroom observations and in our discussions with students. The students spoke at length about the need to understand the craft of music, indeed a vital component of their work was examining existing canons of classical and contemporary music in ways that encouraged them to strengthen their craft and expand their knowledge of theory. In this way the students reflected on the relationship between their own practice as artists and the traditions and achievements of the masters they studied, thereby mapping their own artistic trajectories within this bigger landscape.

The dynamics of the relationship between the learner and materials, tools and instruments is at the core of artistic work and learning. Each material and art form imposes its own possibilities and limits and students are required to call upon different conceptions and skills (Eisner, 2002) in order to develop their artistry. Effective art teachers make judicious choice of materials to support the learning of their students. This purposeful selection was observed across the arts classrooms and ranged from film excerpts that were carefully selected to support key concepts and ideas to art materials that encouraged experimentation and exploration.

Quality Learning Environment

A q*uality learning environment* has its own independent effect on the quality of work students are able to achieve and is strongly linked "to the authenticity of the artistic processes in which the students are engaged" (Seidel et al, 2009). The quantitative phase of this research sought to identify those arts classrooms where there was a high correlation between arts participation and levels of academic motivation, engagement and achievement. It was not surprising to discover that in our discussions with both the arts teachers and their students that there were numerous references to engagement and what it looked like in the learning environment.

Engagement in the arts classroom

In discussing motivation and engagement, Martin et al (2013) note that these dispositions should be conceptualised as students' energy and drive to learn, work effectively, and achieve to their potential at school and the behaviours that follow from this energy and drive. Motivation and engagement thus play a part in students' interest and enjoyment of school and learning and therefore underpins students' achievement (Martin, 2005, 2010; Meece, Wigfield & Eccles, 1990; Pintrick & De Groot, 1990).

Seidel et al (2009) maintain that engagement is both a necessary condition for and a strong indicator of high quality arts learning. Likewise Winner and Hetland (2007) argue that the disposition to engage and persist requires students to learn to embrace problems of interest, to develop focus and to work with them deeply over a sustained period of time. Clearly the roots of focused engagement were varied across the arts classrooms we visited. In the Year 9 film class at Northern Grammar School, the students were quiet and attentive as they viewed excerpts taken from the opening scenes of four classic Western films while the Year 5/6 visual arts class at Bellevue Public School, asked probing questions and then actively experimented with the printing process in order to recreate a barramundi. In both instances, there was an intensity and immediacy to become involved in the artistic processes themselves.

Figure 3. Year 5/6 students experiment with printmaking

Melinda Perez, Head of Drama at Northern Grammar School affirmed the teacher's role in engaging the students in the creative process. Notes taken from one observation reveal "Melinda's role as a roaming expert was instrumental to maintaining a positive learning environment in such a student-centred process, particularly in monitoring and lifting motivation and engagement levels." Engagement with artworks provides opportunities for

open communication often involving important thoughts and feelings. In order for this to be effective, relationships need to be fostered between the stakeholders. As Melinda confirms "It is all about relationships. It's about saying the right word of encouragement to the student at the right time and that takes time … so getting to know them [is] the most important thing I [can] do to improve their engagement".

Students also identified their engagement with the Arts as having an impact on their attitudes to other classes. As one film student volunteered:

> Well for me personally on days that I do have film I really do especially look forward to going to school and it in a way brings my mood up which helps me concentrate because I'm looking forward to getting to film which is always helpful and a good thing (Boyd, 16 years).

Realising relationships

How the arts teachers conceive of and practice their craft is contingent upon a number of factors including the prompts, cues and scaffolding they use to enable the student to succeed. Arts teaching has been described by Keith Sawyer as "scripted teaching" or "disciplined improvisation" (2004) since there is a balance of preparedness and spontaneity that is non-existent in other classrooms. This disposition was clearly present in the relationships we observed in the classroom and in our discussions with teachers and students. Harmonious relationships were generally characterised by trust and transparency between all parties. Our field notes from Northern Grammar confirm "the rapport between the teacher and students and also between the students in this class is considerable. This was not by chance. The teacher, Melinda Perez put relationship building at the centre of her practice." Not surprisingly, Melinda's students confirmed her role of the teacher in directing and encouraging their efforts. "She just directs us in the way … to motivate and keep us in line. To just give us a push, yeah, so we can just move and do stuff, use our brains and be creative." (Frank and Grant, 16 years)

A number of strategies were evident that challenged normative patterns of teacher/ student relationships. To take *proxemics* as an example, the typical spatial patterns of

teacher/student interactions (teacher in front, students watching teacher; teacher above, students looking up to teacher) were repeatedly disrupted as teachers' roamed, listened and sat at the sidelines as students took control of the space. This supported and emphasised student ownership of their own learning. We were keen to learn what the teachers brought to these relationships? Alice Child, the drama teacher at Croydon Grammar explained:

> Personal qualities I bring – I'm genuine and kind and try to get the kids to have experiences that will make them feel better about themselves and the world they live in.

During our site visits, we often noticed that the cultivation of a strong rapport with students was essential if students were to feel comfortable to express themselves and liberate their emotions and their imaginations within a group situation. In field notes, we recorded that: "Melinda has an easy rapport with the students – they are relaxed in her presence, are not hesitant in asking questions and are not in a hurry to get away when the bell goes. She doesn't need to raise her voice to get attention. When she starts speaking, even softly, students pay attention; those noticing first telling others to hush."

The teachers further regarded positive relationships as integral to creating a safe environment where students have "the right to fail." This emerged as an important theme with progress in the Arts often regarded as evolving out of failure. Anna Conway, the film teacher at Northern Grammar said that "big errors" need to be made safely and learnt from and these "become part of a person's toolkit for surviving in the real world".

As a primary visual arts specialist, Harriet Smith identified a safe classroom as one that encompasses strong positive support for quality student learning experiences. She maintained that "we've got a very open relationship and I think they feel safe in here. And they feel safe to say what they think about something … So, they have a voice."

The "art" space

The environment in which effective arts learning occurs has both physical and social aspects.

Elements of the physical environment include the actual space in which the learning takes place and the temporal dimension – that is the time that is allocated to the learning experience. In all cases, there was a designated arts "space" at the school and in many ways, this indicated the value that was attributed to the Arts. Thus the physical environment and the resources that accompanied it were prominent aspects of our site visits. While detailed accounts of all the settings for arts teaching is beyond the capacity of this article, a few descriptions will indicate the variations in the physical spaces that existed. We will discuss how the physical spaces supported the development of dispositions valued in these arts classrooms.

The arts classes at Northern Grammar are perhaps the most comprehensively resourced of the case studies. The school has a performing arts centre complex with a fully equipped 250-seat theatre, a drama studio, dance studio, various rehearsal spaces and offices for drama and film teaching staff. The teaching spaces have excellent IT facilities. In contrast the drama space at the Ashmore High Public School is modest. There is a large, dark room with basic facilities such as a small lighting rig and interactive whiteboard. Although the drama room is part of a larger block in the school, it is a self-contained space holding a distinct identity when contrasted with the surrounding classrooms. Despite differences in the scale and resources, both these spaces are functional and aesthetic environments that provide an invitation to and inspiration for students to express themselves freely and creatively.

From our first introduction we noted the fluidity and openness of these spaces. The staffroom door was usually open and our interviews with the teachers were marked by the coming and going of students as well as the occasional parent assisting with a forth-coming production. The spaces, including hallways, appeared to be in constant use both in breaks as well as during class.

The value of this space for student learning was acknowledged by both teachers and students. A student from Croydon Grammar articulated what we had observed on a number of

occasions when she said “like being comfortable in a space that you know is like your full bubble” (Nadia, 16 years old).

At Ashmore High, Croydon Grammar and Northern Grammar, the physical space changes according to the activity as this often seems to differentiate subjects such as drama from other academic, desk-bound subjects. The structural fluidity and open nature of these spaces is known to its community of learners and is reflected in their use. We observed the use of, and easy transition between the multiple drama spaces within a lesson at Croydon Grammar. How and when the spaces were used was informed by the structure and purpose of the work. Each space held immediate and imagined identities as they were sites for discursive out-of-role work as well as performative in-role work. The boundaries delineating these multiple spaces had fluid entry and exit points for teachers as well. This was true of lesson parameters more broadly in a number of instances.

Teachers often talk about space as “the third teacher” (Seidel, 2009, p. 43) since it is considered one of the most powerful pedagogical elements. They did not only refer to the physical aspects of their learning spaces but also attributed qualities to these spaces. For example, as part of establishing and maintaining a positive learning environment Harriet Smith asks her students to leave their negative thoughts at the door and to “bring only positive things into the artroom”. While Melinda Perez, the drama teacher at Northern Grammar values what she terms “reactionary teaching”:

> I value walking into a space very open to the elements, so yes you have your scope and sequence of the journey and the learning and understanding outcomes that you’re leading towards, but there’s so many ways to get there.

Melinda often worked on the periphery, literally and metaphorically, watching as the students claimed the space and only stepping into their space when their motivation flagged or sense of direction faltered. People referred to the ideal physical space in which arts learning should occur. Drama teacher Sasha Johansson said:

> I suppose the ideal would be – I mean the physical space that there's open light – I'm not into the black box spaces so much. I like the possibility of an open light space. A private space for exploring with the students as well. Where you're not going to be interrupted and you can kind of delve into things and people are free to express themselves.

Quality was also seen as linked to the authenticity of the space and this was clearly evident in the dance studio. iPod data and focus group discussions with these students suggested that the dance classroom provided an alternative learning space. One that catered for physically embodied creative opportunities as opposed to seated non-physical experiences common in other academic subjects. Within this environment, proxemics was key with the teacher using space to involve students in exploring the physicality of their dance moves as they moved in and out of spaces continually; performance space, personal space and different individual and group space.

Figure 4. Dance students explore the use of space

Significance

The *NSW QTF* defines significance as "pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful and important to students" (Ladwig & Gore, 2006, p. 39), this is achieved through drawing on

connections with prior knowledge and identities, on contexts outside of the classroom and on multiple perspectives.

Collaboration

In an environment where students are learning to think and behave like artists (Bruner 1960) the arts classroom does not usually resemble life in so-called academic classrooms. Students are encouraged to express feelings, to share their work, to consider other's ideas, to engage in constructive critique and reflect on both processes and products. Yet each material and each art form imposes its own possibilities and constraints both on individual and group work. Whether solo or collective, arts learning experiences always involve others (Seidel et al 2009). This was especially noted in the drama classrooms we visited.

The drama teachers and students we spoke with emphasised the many benefits associated with collaboration. At Ashmore High, reinforcing the social nature of drama was the emphasis of collective learning practices. We observed that these collaborative practices existed in both whole class and small group contexts and were used in 3 key ways: i) collaborative processes of creation; ii) collaborative responsibility of creation; iii) collaborative response to creation. Sasha Johansson, the drama teacher at Ashmore described some of the collaborative practices she incorporated into her teaching practice citing "drama requires students to work in and out of multiple collaborative arrangements: simultaneously, consecutively and/or independently. These forms vary in form, nature (role, out-of-role) and size. They are not static, they may be seasonal."

In observing Melinda Perez, the Head of Drama at Northern Grammar School, our field notes detailed: "Through peer learning and collaboration, Melinda structured a learning environment that was student-driven and inquiry-based emphasising understanding over

transmission." Moreover Alice Child, the drama teacher at Croydon High spoke of the values – the life skills associated with working with others in the drama context. She argued:

> It's just having those moments of communicating with other people, learning how to work with other people. That collaboration is so important in life. Skills in knowing when its time to assert yourself and when its time to let somebody else take the lead.

Although these examples have been drawn from the drama classrooms within the project, it should be noted that Rogoff's (1990, 1994) notion of "a community of learners" was in evidence in many of the arts classrooms, studios and rehearsal halls we visited. The classroom milieu could easily be termed a "community of practice" (Eisner 2002). Teachers within these quality arts classrooms encouraged co-operation, autonomy and community by creating environments that were collaborative and purposeful.

Open communication

The themes of communication and open dialogue emerged frequently from our interviews but were also evident in our observations across the arts classrooms. It was clear to us that communication in high quality arts settings is multifaceted – among students, between teachers and students, among teachers and through works of art. All work of art is ultimately about communicating thoughts and feelings through image, sound or movement. According to Eisner (2002):

> Work in the arts … provides students with the challenge of talking about what they have seen, gives them opportunities, permission, and encouragement to use language in a way free from the strictures of literal description. This freedom is a way to liberate their emotions and their imagination. (p. 89)

Visual arts teacher, Harriet Smith used her communication skills as a storyteller – her use of narrative to connect to her Year 5/6 students. Stories are carefully woven into each art lesson to find connections between and among students. In her interview, Harriet responds to this effective teaching strategy:

> I don't think you can, you can't teach in isolation can you? It's like the Aboriginal, the wonderful Aboriginal art. Their art is about stories. The first thing is the story … I tell them stories because I truly believe children love stories.

Even at the primary level, Harriet's students were encouraged to question, suggest alternatives, engage in constructive critique and reflect on the process of their arts-making. While this occurred throughout the art lesson, adequate time was always allocated at the end of the session for students to talk about their artworks with their peers. We noted that these conversations were honest, respectful and free of negative comments.

Feedback and critique were key components of many of the arts classrooms. At Northern Grammar, the Year 10 music students reflected positively on the opportunity to hear and analyse each other's assignment primarily because it helped them advance their own music knowledge. One student spoke of his personal stake in deeply analysing the piece of music:

> I found that this assignment was quite helpful in understanding the piece more, and in how I could possibly play it better. I actually took notice of different signs saying where it should go fast, or should be played sweetly or if it should be played with feeling, different chords and progressions that I should take note of it I should emphasise them or subtle them out a little bit (Jason, 18 years old).

Dialogue in the arts classroom was often verbal but in some instances it was communicated more visually as was the case in the dance classes at St Mary's. In focus group discussions, these students offered poetic explanations as to the power of dance to communicate beyond words. For example, one student offered the following observation:

> Instead of saying something to someone, you can express it through movements and they understand … its like that difference of speaking – its like people who know different languages can talk to different people, whereas people who can dance can talk through dance (Zoe, 16 years).

The effective use of non-verbal communication was not restricted to the students within the dance classroom. Teachers in the other arts spoke of reading body language; decoding the non-verbal communication of their students as much as the verbal and documented communication. Dale Mitchell, a drama teacher at Croydon Grammar discussed how this was evidenced within his drama classroom. He said:

> They rejoice in their creative experience so they'll often want to talk to you about what's happening or you'll see them talking to other people about it so there's a Communication that you observe … body language is possibly the biggest giveaway. You see it in their face and also in their physicality.

In each arts setting, we heard conversations about the importance and value that was placed on open communication in order to create and sustain a community of practice. A place where the student's "voice" was acknowledged and dialogue between teacher and student lead to quality arts learning experiences

Conclusion

It is clear that the Arts encourage unique ways of thinking and knowing. They develop dispositions that ultimately lead to high-quality critical and creative thinking. In this article we have discussed the findings of recent research concerned with quality arts pedagogy. We were particularly concerned with exploring what Perkins et al (1993) termed "thinking dispositions", that is the enculturation of students into certain ways of thinking. Through our research, we gained access to a diverse collection of arts classrooms and this allowed us to identify specific processes that exemplify effective arts pedagogy. We applied three dimensions based on the *NSW Quality Teaching Framework* to explore our findings. These are intellectual quality: understanding the thinking dispositions that were developed in the case study classrooms. Quality learning environment: the conditions under which these dispositions were encouraged. Significance: the value and relationship of these dispositions to the world beyond the context of school.

In doing this we argue that the case for the Arts should not be made on an instrumental basis since it devalues what actually occurs in the arts classroom:

> At a time when standardization is bleeding our schools and classrooms of their distinctive vitalities, the need for the arts and for artistry in what we do has never been more important (Eisner 2003, p. 344).

It is time to justify the Arts in terms of their core benefits. We need to acknowledge that the kinds of thinking and knowing developed by the Arts are important in and of

themselves. In order to achieve this, we need to find out what the Arts actually teach and what arts students actually learn. Rather than anecdotal accounts, now is the time to engage in robust and rigorous research that makes the case for the "untestable" skills and modes of thinking the Arts teach!

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concerns creativity and creative teaching; art as research/ research as art particularly the connection between clothes and memory. She is passionate about the central and critical role the Arts can play in life-long learning.

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Visual culture and art making in tertiary art schools: A 'snapshot' from Hong Kong and New Zealand

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Abstract

This paper provides a 'snapshot' of a small-scale qualitative research project that investigated the influences of contemporary visual culture on the art making processes and artworks of a sample of visual arts students at tertiary art institutions in Hong Kong and New Zealand. The Hong Kong-born researcher, artist and tertiary art teacher, domiciled in New Zealand, was a participant-researcher. The research was motivated by a paradigm shift that is occurring in visual arts education from its traditional 'fine arts' associations to 'visual culture art education' (VCAE). Understanding was sought from the participants about the impact of visual surroundings on their art making and whether visual culture informed the teaching programs at their art institutions. The research was informed by an interpretive arts-based paradigm, underpinned by the interconnected roles of artist, researcher and teacher. The findings, presented as participants' 'voices' and visual images, showed a greater emphasis on teaching and learning about traditional fine arts compared with visual culture. This suggests that professional practice could be expanded to include the broadened domain of images found in visual culture and daily visual experiences, especially since tertiary art students now live in an image-saturated era and globalized world.

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Key words

Visual arts, visual culture, visual culture art education (VCAE)

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Introduction

This paper examines the influences of contemporary visual culture on the art making processes and artworks of eight tertiary visual arts students, four in Hong Kong and four in New Zealand, with two at each of four tertiary institutions. The researcher participated as an artist/teacher/researcher. The study was motivated by a paradigm shift that has occurred in visual arts education, from its traditional 'fine arts' associations to 'visual culture art education' (VCAE), in which there is a new emphasis on the ways meaning is made through the visual and the expanding domain of study within visual arts (Dikovitskaya, 2005; Duncum, 2003, 2009; Freedman, 2003; Tavin & Hausman, 2004). As well as seeking understanding of whether visual culture, including visual surroundings, impacted on these students, the research investigated whether it informed their teaching programs (Hung, 2014).

This small-scale study was positioned within a qualitative interpretive arts-based paradigm informed by the researcher's interest in the interconnecting roles of art practice, research and teaching. The findings, presented as participants' and researcher 'voices' and the 'visual', illustrated that there was less emphasis placed on teaching and learning about visual culture than on traditional fine arts. Given that tertiary art students live in an image-saturated era (Leavy, 2009), this points to extending skills in visual literacy, and for professional practice aimed at a broadened domain of images found in visual culture and in the daily visual experiences of students living in a fast-moving globalized world.

Background to the research

Locating the researcher

Wing-Tai (Bobby) Hung moved with his family from Hong Kong to New Zealand in 1988 when he was three years old. He adopted the name 'Bobby' which is how he and his art are known.

Although Hung's family regularly returns to Hong Kong his schooling and tertiary education were in New Zealand.

At secondary school, where images and art making from Western fine arts traditions were emphasized, Hung was not encouraged to explore ideas about his identity, cultural milieu or personal interests. Nonetheless, he developed an interest in graphic design, graffiti, street art and illustration and subsequently attended a tertiary art school. There, he developed as a painter and was taught a range of theoretical ideas related to art history and contemporary art practices, albeit within a European modernist paradigm.

During subsequent study for a Postgraduate Diploma in Education Hung's perceptions and misconceptions about visual arts education were challenged. His lecturer, Jill Smith, an experienced tertiary teacher educator and researcher in visual arts education introduced him to socio-cultural perspectives, diverse pedagogies and a wide range of theories informing how visual arts education was shaped in the past, what influences it today, and the direction it has taken towards visual culture art education. He was also inspired by the notion that visual arts education research can be conceptualized, conducted and reported in ways that do not rely on text alone. Smith became his supervisor for the research reported in this paper.

Shared perspectives between researcher and supervisor

A key idea Hung gained from Smith (2011, p. 14) during postgraduate studies was that "teachers are cultural workers." This phrase resonated with him, particularly for understanding cultural diversity and the contexts in which artefacts of differing ethnic and cultural peoples are created, used and viewed. This theoretical position underpins his current teaching in a tertiary art and design institution and, with the inclusion of 'visual culture', is being used to develop further pedagogical knowledge and understanding of the influences in his own art making and that of others. It also

led him and Smith to speculate on how, or whether, visual culture art education (VCAE) had a role in tertiary art institutions in his country of birth and in New Zealand.

The notion of cultural context, together with Smith's introduction to arts-based research practices which are not reliant on text-based large-scale quantitative studies, inspired and shaped a topic which would potentially be pertinent in both countries. Although Lau (2013, p. 67) reports that art-based enquiry is "not a major concern in Hong Kong, China or Taiwan," Smith's interest in a/r/tography, the theoretical framework that influenced the re-presentation of her doctoral (text-presented) research (Smith, 2007) in an (image/text) exhibition (Smith, 2009), encouraged Hung to explore less traditional approaches that validate the visual arts as a researching tool.

Previously, Hung considered his art making and teaching to be separate, but having gained knowledge of a/r/tography he could see how each can inform the other. Irwin and de Cosson (2004, p. 27) suggest that when the roles of artist/researcher/teacher are integrated together "knowing (theory), doing (praxis) and making (poesis) will inform our understanding of ideas and practices." Smith (2009, p. 265) articulates her approach to A/R/T as "art practice, research and teaching which interconnect in an ever-continuing cycle." As a participant in the research, this integration gave Hung a voice throughout the study, rather than just gathering and reporting the findings. Photographic and video documentation employed throughout the research enabled the study and portrayal of the social life of the participants, and revealed what text cannot.

Purpose of the research

In the twenty-first century students live in an image-saturated era, thus an investigation of the participants and their visual landscapes in Hong Kong and New Zealand offered an opportunity for understanding the extent to which the participants' cultural milieu impacted on their art making processes and artworks. A further aim was to review the institutions' teaching programs to

determine how and whether students were supported towards understanding visual culture. It was hoped that the research would offer self-reflection for Hung, his research participants, and the art education community (Hung, 2014).

The research question

The overarching question was, "How are understandings of contemporary visual culture reflected in students' art making at differing tertiary art institutions located in their cultural milieu of New Zealand and Hong Kong?" To assist in answering this question participants were asked to define the terms 'cultural milieu' and 'visual culture'; what types of visual culture, if any, influenced their art making; whether globalization and digital media were influences; and what part visual culture played in the teaching programs at their institutions. Hung also wanted to ascertain how, or whether, the influence of visual culture was similar or different for tertiary art students living in Hong Kong and New Zealand.

How the research was framed

A review of the literature

Underpinning this research was a body of literature on ways in which 'visual culture' and 'visual culture art education' (VCAE) are defined and debated. Duncum (2001, p. 103), a leading exponent of VCAE, claims that "everyday life is visual culture" and includes cultural experience, embodied visual memories, and visual lived experiences. The contention is that VCAE has moved away from the exclusive study of traditional arts and art history towards the study of everyday images, objects, sites and artifacts that are not limited to the context of educational institutions (Congdon, Hicks, Bolin & Blandy, 2008; Efland, 2005; Mitchell, 2011); the claim by Illeris and Arvedsen (2011) that study of visual phenomena and events offers ways in which to challenge personal and other's

preconceptions of how images are viewed that inform our understanding of the world; and Tavin's (2009) concern to challenge and change the viewing habits of our daily visual experiences.

This century has witnessed further changes and challenges to visual arts education with the influence of globalization (Dikovitskaya, 2005; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009; Sweeny, 2004), the shift to visual modes of communication, and accelerating developments in technologies (Rusted, 2007; Wilson, 2008). The reality is that students of all ages now live in an image-saturated era, surrounded by a range of visual forms that have the power to influence and construct individual's beliefs, values, ideas and identity (Eisenhauer, 2006; Grushka, 2007; Richardson, 2006; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009).

Most theorists agree that 'visuality', the examination of relationships between individuals, images and society, has a strong focus on the creation of knowledge through the act of looking (Mitchell, 2011; Richardson, 2006). Duncum (2006) refers to visuality as a way of understanding how we view and use images in society, the conditions in which we look, and how others look at us. Others stress the importance of developing analytical skills, critically examining everyday images (Bigelow & Petersen, 2002; Darts, 2006), and connecting everyday visual forms encountered outside the classroom with students in the classroom (Bolin, 1996; Walker, 2006). Theorists suggest that visual arts educators need to develop pedagogies that teach students critical ways of looking and making new meaning of their cultural milieu and the visual landscape that surrounds them (Sturken & Wright, 2009). Grushka (2007) argues that within students' cultural milieu forms such as music, films, advertisements and video are all 'habitus' for youth in constructing who they are. Pertinent to this research, Freedman (2003) and Heise (2004) suggest that students can often create stories inspired by their habitus - personal experiences of their culture, identity, environment, surroundings and understanding of their social world.

The research settings and participants

For this small-scale qualitative study two tertiary art institutions in Hong Kong (HK 1 and HK 2) and two in New Zealand (NZ 1 and NZ 2) were purposively selected by Smith for differences between and within them, thus offering some comparison. The head of each institution was approached and generously gave ethical consent for Hung to conduct the research at their setting. The eight art students were recruited through a flyer circulated at their institutions, inviting them to voluntarily participate in the research. Each selected a pseudonym to protect their identity. Six students were studying in their final undergraduate year, while at NZ 2 the volunteers were in the postgraduate program. Information on each participant's ethnicity and cultural background was unknown to Hung until they had consented to participate. An unforeseen outcome was that the recruitment flyer, which described the research and included an image of Hung with one of his artworks, attracted six participants of Asian ethnicity, four in Hong Kong and two in New Zealand.

The educational contexts

Prior to the fieldwork, Hung reviewed the art programs of the four tertiary art institutions published on their websites. This created the educational context and provided a snapshot of each. From the mission statements for overall programs, papers offered, and expectations for students, it was evident that each institution had a unique approach, as well as aspects in common such as the study of Western art. The programs at HK 1 and HK 2 gave emphasis to Chinese culture, and NZ 1 offered a course on Māori culture. While each institution focused on conceptual, theoretical, practical, historical, and contemporary contexts within the visual arts, no references to 'visual culture' and 'cultural milieu' were located in this analysis of programs. Hung's aim was to ascertain connections between what programs purported to do and how their aims were manifested through the art making and artworks of participants. Each program's overview informed the

questions asked during interviews and observations, and offered understanding for Hung of how he could view the participants' artworks according to their context.

How the research was enacted

Methodology and methods: Crossing the boundaries through a/r/tography

Hung used both traditional qualitative research and arts-based methodologies, the latter providing opportunity to conduct, interpret, and (re)present the research through creative and artistic forms that satisfy the rigors of the academy. Data was collected in both countries, during which time Hung interviewed, observed, and talked informally with participants in their studio environments, and ventured with them into their surroundings/cultural milieu. The methods were trialed by Hung prior to the fieldwork to ensure their trustworthiness. Each was inter-connected and included visual documentation, thus integrating the visual and textual through a qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2003). Advocates of arts-based research claim that the power of images assists researchers by revealing the hidden and unknown, and supports the ability to complement text, reveal what text cannot, and reach a broader audience beyond the research community (Leavy, 2009; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009; Weber, 2008). Hung's visual methods featured photographic and video recordings for which consent was granted by participants. Care was taken to ensure that they and their institutions were not identified and participants were given opportunity to edit their interview transcripts and raw video footage before these reached the public (Sindling, Gray & Nisker, 2008).

Data analysis

Wolcott's (1994) 'D-A-I' method of data analysis was used as the framework. This began with 'description' of what the participants said, followed by 'analysis' to determine similarities and differences between them and their institutions. 'Interpretation' of how the data was understood to

create meaning was then used to draw final conclusions. Analysis began as soon as data collection commenced (Silverman, 2001), thus enabling interpretation of data during the research rather than at the end (Creswell, 2003). Key comments were used verbatim to express participants' 'voices'.

Photographic and video documentation enabled cross-checking between what the participants did and said to ensure authenticity and validity. Hung's goal was "…not to 'decode' or 'translate' visual data into verbal data per se, but rather to build a bridge between the visual and the verbal" (Collier & Collier, 1996, p. 169). He theorized and identified patterns that emerged, integrating both text and image. This provided opportunity to express his and the participants' voices in the final conclusions (Rose, 2007). Artful (re)presentation of data was created through nine digital 4-6 minute videos featuring each individual contextualized in their cultural milieu, art making processes, tertiary institution, and influences of visual culture reflected in their artworks. From the videos Hung gained an even richer sense of understanding (Irwin, Spinggay & Kind, 2008; Punch, 2009).

What the research revealed

What were the participants' understandings of their 'cultural milieu'?

The data showed that participants, including Hung, connected primarily with their studio and institutional environments. Most said they did not critically engage with their broader cultural milieu – their environment, neighbourhood or social surroundings in Hong Kong or New Zealand. All four participants in Hong Kong were Chinese, Hong Kong-born, females in their early twenties. Cleo (HK 1) and Felice (HK 2) were not aware of the term 'cultural milieu'. Although Emily (HK 1) said "I have no idea", she was engaged with a project about an aspect of her neighbourhood through observing a neighbour in order to examine the norm of the family structure

in Chinese society. Angela (HK 2) aptly described this term as the characteristics or style of an environment, place or society.

The four New Zealand participants defined their understandings of 'cultural milieu' as the characteristics of an individual's landscape, environment and surroundings. Laura (NZ 1) described this as a "cooking pot of different cultures," with reference to a place that has many different cultures of people. Ah Yee (NZ 2) explained cultural milieu as a "cultural template or a set of conditioning" which suggested that local people are embedded with a set of beliefs, understanding, general knowledge and customs of a place in which these are normal to those people and may only be strange to outsiders. Her explanation aligned with Howell's (2003) interpretation of 'culture', as a set of systems, customs and beliefs that are relative to the actions and thoughts of the people that use or give meaning to them.

The Hong Kong participants noted the significant presence of man-made visual culture in their environment, describing their city as very small, filled with shopping malls and housing, heavily populated, fast paced, and with an absence of nature in the visual landscape. Similarly, New Zealand participants believed their city was dominated by billboards, shops and architecture, though they noted the abundance of physical spaces, parks, trees, and nature. While there was certainly less visual saturation of media in New Zealand, compared with Hong Kong, there was little data to suggest that participants were critically engaging with what they saw in their environments and social surroundings. Marie (NZ 1) believed her environment did not influence her at all and Laura (NZ 1), who was unsure, explained that it might have subconsciously affected her art making.

Hung concluded that participants' surroundings were used merely as a point of reference for subject matter. Emily's exploration into the family structure in Chinese society was the only instance which used her visual experience to inform a social issue. This sense of critical thinking

is connected to Sturken and Cartwright's claim (2009) that daily visual experience can be used to challenge an individual's own, as well as others' preconceptions. Other participants professed to have little interest, feeling or need for critical analysis towards their visual surroundings. This confirmed how deeply embedded visual images, media, sites, and artefacts are in our environments; that viewing habits are not challenged and the visual information that saturates our daily lives, experiences and understanding of the social world, is passively accepted. This finding aligned with Duncum's (2002) claim that our daily visual experiences and encounters are so familiar they are left undisputed.

How did the participants define 'visual culture'?

Each art student articulated varying nuances of the term 'visual culture'. These included the visual images, objects, and places that people see in their environment and surroundings. Emily's (HK 1) interpretation of visual culture was anything that was visually man made, designed or fabricated, for example CD shops and food packaging, television, and architecture. This understanding aligned with Kuru's (2010) and Smith's (2003) lists of visual culture examples that include clothing, buildings and photographs. Both Felice (HK 2) and Cleo (HK 1) explained visual culture as a particular style that is designed or created to appeal to certain people. They cited advertising posters made specifically to attract locals or a type of fashion that is worn by the youth population. Angela (HK 2) described it as the "visual attraction" of a place, district or community.

New Zealand participants, Laura and Marie (NZ 1), considered visual culture to be all the images that one is surrounded by in the environment. Steve (NZ 2) referred to this term as the people or a culture of people who live in or use the visual information around them, while Ah Yee (NZ 2) suggested that visual culture is a set of recognizable images or features of images that relate, represent, or identify certain people, places or origins. She considered New Zealand to be a

place that had a range of Māori-influenced images. The participants acknowledged the relationship between an individual and a visual image, site or artefact. This relationship between the viewer and the environment is the fundamental framework that underpins the intention behind VCAE (Illeris & Arvedsen, 2011).

There was no significant difference between the definitions of visual culture found in both countries. Six art students, four in New Zealand and two in Hong Kong, named types of visual culture that were prevalent in their city, most commonly billboards, advertisements, architecture and posters. Unlike the Hong Kong students unfamiliarity with the term 'cultural milieu', interpretations of visual culture by all participants aligned with the extensive array of arguments and justifications made by key advocates of VCAE (Duncum, 2013; Tavin, 2009). This finding surprised Hung, given that understandings about visual culture did not feature in any of the tertiary art programs. Nonetheless, there was some confusion about the extent of what is defined as visual culture, and how broad this list can be.

Were globalization and digital media an influence on participants' art making?

Data was sought on whether the increasing shift to visual modes of communication and accelerating developments in technologies (Rusted, 2007; Wilson, 2008) informed participants' art making processes and artworks. An unexpected finding was that very few used digital media as a primary mode for art making, despite the use of digital technology in their social lives. It did, however, play a small part in their processes. Cleo created paintings that merged her photographs from Europe with her imaginary Chinese-styled landscapes. Emily used photographs of her next door neighbour and transferred these on to cement to represent her neighbor's captivity in her home, an anonymous concrete high-rise apartment.

New Zealand participants, Steve and Ah Yee, used Photoshop as a tool to inform their art works. Ah Yee created digital inkjet-printed artworks that layered Chinese characters on top of each other by editing those images on this computer program. Her rationale was to explore the idea of instantaneous mass reproduction, ultimately painting over the digital prints with Chinese and Japanese inks to develop more intricate layering. Steve used Photoshop differently. He began with photography to document his daily experiences, visual landscape and mundane objects, then created digital collages on Photoshop. His aim was to explore visual elements, such as scale and composition, to create rough mock-ups before painting these images on canvas. This idea of creating his own realities by manipulating images from his environment related to Freedman's (2003) and Sweeny's (2004) claims that when an image is taken or used out of context then the boundaries of reality are blurred and forged representations of reality can be created.

An alternative form of digital media that participants in both countries engaged with was an 'app' on the iPhone called 'Instagram'. Felice and Angela (HK 2), and Marie (NZ 1), used this as a photo-sharing application where users contribute images and short videos to the wider digital community. Images that are posted operate as a daily visual diary that document and present ways in which people are actively living, participating, and viewing by showing their understanding of the world, themselves, and their artwork (Wilson, 2008). As well as people following them on Instagram, participants can follow others who may include friends, artists, celebrities, and fan pages.

This interaction with digital media technologies, and the temporality of the internet, reflected the "community of self-controlled shared experiences" in which individuals move from being consumers to "prosumers" (Duncum, 2013, p. 15). Individuals create their own content-driven media that continues to filter into the saturated and globalized visual world. Hung found little evidence of such interaction in the tertiary art institutions in Hong Kong and New Zealand,

despite Duncum's (2013) argument that visual arts educators need to engage and support these types of digital sites of visual culture to enhance the students' critical understanding of knowledge, rather than their pre-packaged ideas and views. From the data it was evident that while six participants used digital media within a participatory community, and as a tool for art making processes, it was not used as a platform for art production that responds to the critical engagement of visual culture.

Did visual culture influence the participants' art making?

The data showed that visual culture did play a significant role for six participants' art making while three were not influenced at all. However, four participants believed visual culture did not influence them in any way, two were unsure, and the other three considered that it did affect their art making. Three of the four who believed that visual culture did not influence them had given contradictory responses during their interviews by listing influences in their art making that fell under the visual culture category as defined by the literature. At the same time, when they were asked if visual culture had influenced them, they replied "no". Hung concluded that if the participants had a clearer understanding of how visual culture is defined they would suggest that they had been influenced by it. Without their understanding of the parameters of visual culture, he ascertained that these six participants were influenced by a range of images, sites, and artefacts found in visual culture as well as other forms of knowledge and information traditionally found in fine arts institutions. The type of visual culture that influenced the six participants' art making was different from the list of visual culture that was described in their surroundings of Hong Kong and New Zealand.

Emily (HK 1) said she was influenced by everyday life, events, people and CD shops. She used a broad range of processes including painting, photography, collage, video and transfers,

combining traditional media and everyday materials such as cheese, cement and leaves. She explored her understanding of personal emotion, family structure in Chinese society, and the natural order of life. In the images below, Emily painted on packaging and printed on cement and on bread.

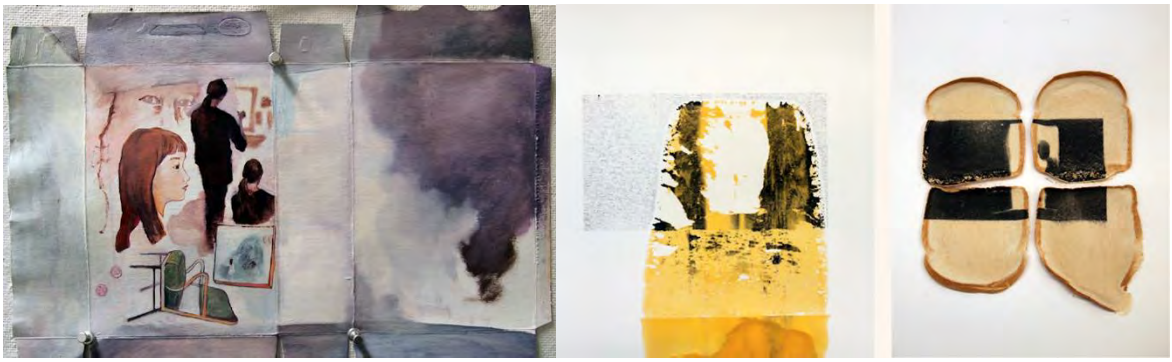

Figure 1. Emily (HK 1), 'The study of change'

Cleo (HK 1) spoke of the influence of poems, songs, and literature which she used to help her create illustrations, prints and paintings that related to time and space, memories, the meaning of life and her experiences while staying in Europe. The images below illustrate Cleo's interest in traditional Chinese art and her technique of painting over photographs.

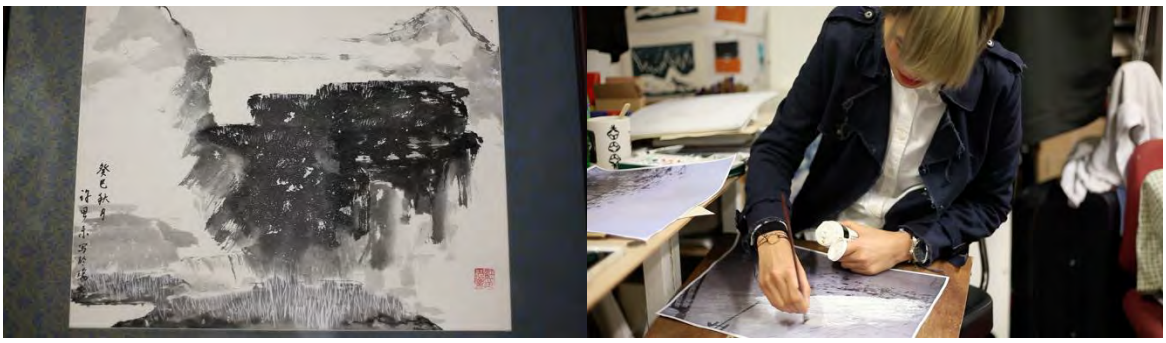

Figure 2. Cleo (HK 1), 'My utopia'

Angela (HK 2) listed influences on her art making as being English and Chinese literature, books, music, paintings and magazines. She used these to inspire paintings, drawings and performance that dealt with ideas related to emotion, body movement, relationships between

herself and others, and the visualisation of her personal thoughts. The images below show Angela in her studio and a detail of one of her drawings.

Figure 3. Angela (HK 2), 'Searching within myself'

Felice (HK 2) said she was influenced by the internet, galleries, museums and a range of artist models. She created work primarily through jewellery in various metals, ceramics and photography. Her ideas explored daily life and experiences, and most recently the theme of loneliness and being homesick, the latter arising from participating in an exchange program in the United Kingdom for a semester. The images below show Felice creating ceramic plates and metal forks for her jewellery.

Figure 4. Felice (HK 2), 'Homesick for Hong Kong'

Laura (NZ 1) was born in England and moved to New Zealand when she was fifteen years old. Now in her early twenties, her interest is in text books and essays which were reflected in her exploration through line, shape, and disruption of the textual language. Her recent works were created primarily through stitching cotton onto braille paper and, in some cases, mixed media with

acrylic paint. The images below illustrate Laura stitching on braille paper, and her hand-painted text on doors.

Figure 5. Laura (NZ 1), 'Reading the illegible'

Marie (NZ 1), a Chinese female born and raised in Malaysia, moved to New Zealand to study. Now in her early twenties, Marie explained that she drew influence from textiles, patterns, colours, memories, experiences from travels, and from artist models. Marie hand printed on sheets of coloured photo-proofing paper to create abstract patterns, colour and line, making her final work as installations. The images below illustrate Marie's technique of creating layers with diverse media, and her cut-outs of transparent film.

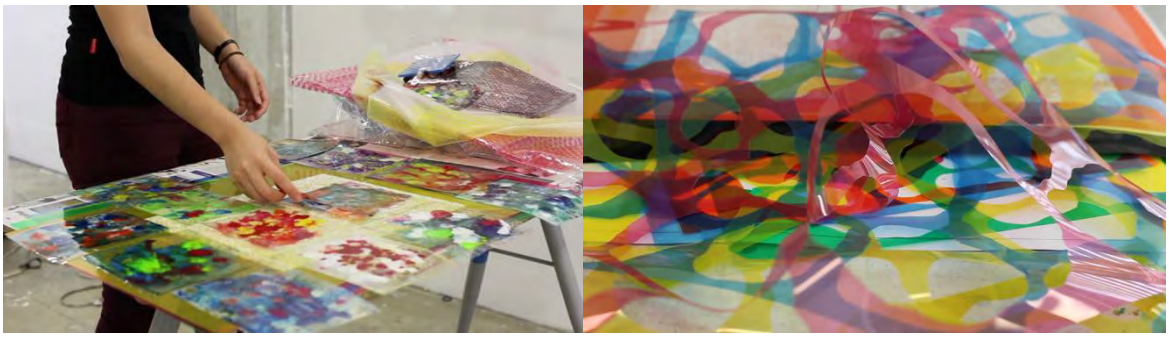

Figure 6. Marie (NZ 1), 'Layers and overlaps'

Steve (NZ 2), a New Zealand Pakeha/Māori in his early forties, was interested in film, photography, design, commercial art, sign writing and artist models. He used his daily visual experiences as a process to create oil paintings to document his memories, nostalgia, family, people

he had met, and things he had seen. The images below show Steve working on a painting of his son and on another work of a screenshot from a film.

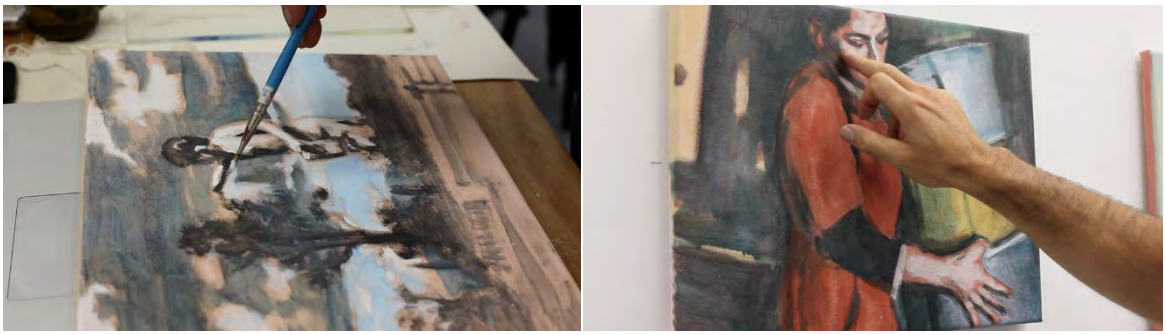

Figure 7. Steve (NZ 2), 'Recording the mundane'

Ah Yee (NZ 2), a female in her fifties, was born and raised in Hong Kong. She completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the same institution in New Zealand where she is currently studying for her Masters. Ah Yee, who was drawn to Chinese and Western artist models that were primarily painters, was interested in their philosophies and processes. This informed her creation of large 'zen like' ink paintings that explored "bodily gesture, ghosts, depletion of life and recording of time". The images below show Ah Yee painting in her studio and with one of her digital paintings

Figure 8. Ah Yee (NZ 2), 'Traces of the ghost image'

Hung, himself a Chinese, Hong Kong-born male, in his late twenties is interested in graffiti, film, artist models, tattoos, and illustration. From these influences he creates abstract illustrative and typographical graffiti pieces with aerosol and acrylic paint, both outdoors on a large scale, and indoors on canvas.

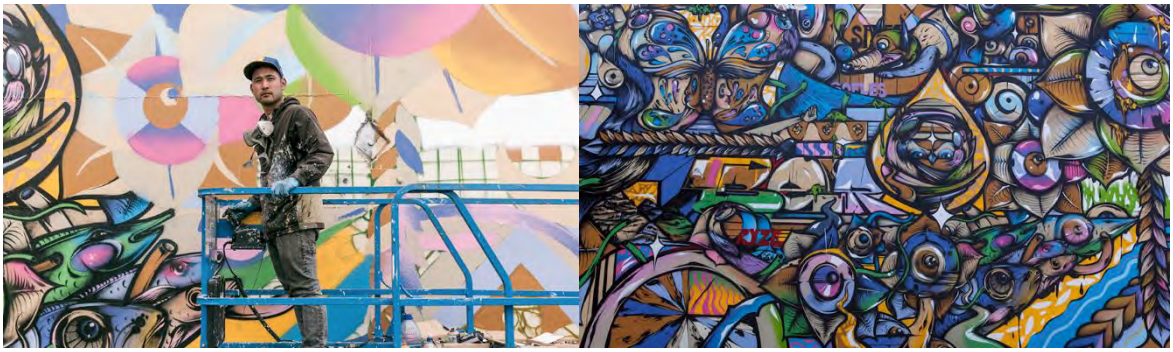

Figure 9. Bobby (researcher), 'The city as my canvas'

Each participant was influenced by visual culture in different ways but there were similarities between their approaches to certain themes, ideas and processes. Cleo, Angela, Ah Yee, Steve and Hung continued to paint while other participants worked with different media, albeit within the traditions of the fine arts. All four New Zealand participants and Felice (HK 2) used 'artist models' as a point of reference. This was not unexpected for New Zealand participants since the concept of studying established practices of artists is central to the secondary school art curriculum for senior students. The data showed that the use of artist models informed participants' decisions about selection of media and ideas.

Hung's assumption, before the research began, was that participants in Hong Kong would be more influenced by visual culture and their visual environment than those in New Zealand. The data showed, however, that there was an equal range of influences of different types of visual culture on their art making. While participants in both countries were not particularly interested in their visual surroundings, the saturation of visual culture in their environments pointed to a lack of awareness of how to make meaning, or interpret the visual overload. Mitchell (2002) and Efland (2005) state that distinctions between 'high art' and 'low art' should no longer take precedence or be differentiated. This suggests the need to broaden the domain of study beyond the traditional

institutional parameters to help students engage with everyday images, sites and artefacts that foster habits of critical thinking.

How did the teaching programs support students' understanding of visual culture?

All four institutions placed importance on accommodating the development of their students' art making needs. At HK 1, the program emphasized learning about the art of China, although students were able to study both Eastern and Western art. Emily and Cleo said they did not experience any teaching about visual culture. At HK 2, there was a similar emphasis on Eastern and Western art, with opportunities for cross-disciplinary study and hybrid practices without needing to major in one pathway. While Felice and Angela suggested there was a possibility that their institution taught visual culture, there was no data which supported learning or teaching about the types of visual culture they engaged with. Rather, there was focus on the development of students' thinking and ideas along with the support of a range of different general education courses. Angela studied Mandarin, computer science and philosophy and Felice studied languages in English, Chinese and Putonghua.

NZ 1 was the only institution that made mention of 'visual arts culture'. Laura said that while 'visual culture,' per se, was not taught within their program she had opportunity in a theory course to learn about art images from different visual arts cultures. During discussions with her lecturer, she was encouraged to "look so we can see things differently" in relation to images, objects and places on the street, though this did not take place in an actual course devoted to the conditions of looking (Duncum, 2006; Tavin, 2009). Marie's response was that her lecturers suggested that students should visit galleries and exhibitions. At NZ 2, the only postgraduate program in this research, Ah Yee and Steve engaged in critiques with groups of peers and one-on-

one critiques with their supervisors, but visual culture, as explored in this research, did not feature in these discussions.

From the data, Hung concluded that the art programs at each institution did not specifically support learning and teaching about visual culture. Prescriptions aligned with the education of historical and contemporary fine arts images. Each institution remained located within a visual arts paradigm focused primarily on art production, art criticism, art history and contemporary art within a mode of learning and teaching that resembled discipline-based art education (Smith, 2003). Efland's (2005) and Marriner's (2006) views that VCAE, which can support students in the creation of knowledge that parallels the traditions of fine arts with contemporary visual culture, was absent. This suggested that institutions could well move beyond the parameters of fine arts to help students engage with different visual forms found outside the traditional learning environment in order to encourage them to be critical observers. By doing so, tertiary students can challenge their discourses, assumptions and beliefs, or they will continue to passively accept the information that surrounds them (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005).

Conclusions and future possibilities

Although six of the nine participants from Hong Kong and New Zealand were influenced by visual culture they were not engaged with it as a point of departure for critical, social, historical, cultural or political change, but rather as visual reference for personal themes and ideas in their art making. The influences of traditional fine arts teaching programs in both countries, within a modernist paradigm, outweighed a direction towards postmodern conceptions. What Hung's findings present for visual arts educators in the tertiary (and secondary school) sectors is that the current emphasis on Western fine arts practice and theories may not serve to adequately help students become critically engaged with the contemporary world in which they live. Nor might this help students

become critical citizens in society and challenge beliefs, perceptions and understandings that are generated in the present image-saturated era. As the literature suggests, art institutions provide ideal sites for promoting the teaching and learning of visual cultural forms that are not normally categorized within Western art (Illeris & Arvedsen, 2011).

Hung believes that the results from this small-scale study, and the literature which informed it, offer perspectives on how art educators and institutions could be placed at the forefront of change towards a visual culture art education paradigm. This could include providing opportunities and encouragement for tertiary art students to:

- respond to, and understand, the range of different types of visual culture they engage with on a daily basis;
- use visual culture they engage with as a springboard for developing a deeper understanding of critical, social, historical, cultural, and political issues, perspectives and viewpoints;
- use visual culture they engage with as a springboard for developing a deeper understanding of critical, social, historical, cultural, and political issues, perspectives and viewpoints;
- learn how to develop critical habits of thinking for themselves, rather than passively accepting information;
- respond to visual culture with art production that is relevant to the types of visual forms they engage with, so they are not limited or bound to the traditions of fine arts;
- develop skills in visual literacy so they can critically engage in the many different ways of 'looking' at and deciphering visual images, sites, and artifacts that are found in their daily visual experiences and cultural milieu;

- respond to new online communities of sites where knowledge and information is shared, created, engaged with and learned about in different ways that extend beyond the classroom environment.

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Wing-Tai (Bobby) Hung is the Senior Academic Leader in the Certificate in Design and Visual Arts at Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. He has lectured in both Contemporary arts and Graphic Design for three years and most recently was been awarded his Master of Education with first class honors under the supervision of Jill Smith. Born in Hong Kong and raised in New Zealand, Bobby's research interests include the influence of contemporary visual culture in relation to art making with a focus in the tertiary sector. Alongside art education he is a practicing artist within the field of visual arts by creating paintings in both the public domain and studio. Since completing his Masters he has applied the methodological perspectives of

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Internalizing the ephemeral – Impact of process dramas on teachers' beliefs about drama education

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Abstract

This article draws on the findings of a case study that looked at the impact of an in-service professional development course conducted at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore on the beliefs of three teachers. Specifically, the case study investigated the change, if any, of teachers' beliefs about teaching and about drama education. The study also analyzed aspects of the course that has the greatest impact on changing teachers' beliefs. For this article, the discussion will focus on literature and findings surrounding the investigation of the course's impact on teachers' beliefs about drama education. Interview data from the three teachers were transcribed, coded and triangulated for emerging themes for each teacher and between the three teachers.

The course aims to introduce teachers to and equip them with the conceptual and practical understanding of how to use drama effectively for delivery of curriculum. Findings included teachers reported that their beliefs about drama education had changed. They indicated that they began the course with a belief that drama is merely performance, a 'product'. At the end, they believe in the potential of learning through the drama 'process'. More notably, the teachers cited that the process dramas they experienced were significant aspects of the course.

The analysis of the interview data suggested that their experiences of the process dramas had a comparatively greater impact on their change in beliefs about drama education compared to other aspects of the course. These experiences were critical incidences (Dhamotharan, 1992;

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Webster & Mertova, 2007) which contributed to the change. Their experiences - ephemeral as they were and deeply personal - were internalized as the teachers experienced what it is like to be engaged as learners. This suggests that perhaps process dramas ought to be part of a professional development that aims to introduce teachers to the use of drama for learning purposes.

Key words

Teacher change, teacher beliefs, teacher professional development, process drama, drama education

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Educational change and teacher beliefs

An inherent supposition of any professional development programme is that it is designed to change teachers' practice which would ultimately improve students' learning and outcomes. The curricular reforms in education systems around the world give rise to a need to look at ways of helping teachers to keep pace with the changes. Richardson and Placier's review of the literature in teacher change theories and models (2001) found that many educational reforms call for a change towards constructivist teaching and teaching for understanding which, they concluded, require deep belief changes on the part of the teachers. This is similarly echoed by Deng and Gopinathan (1999, 2001) who also highlighted the need for belief change in Singapore teachers in response to reforms in Singapore education.

In drama education, Heathcote's practice in teacher education is similarly founded on the premise that "we are all rooted in the rich soil of our beliefs" (cited in Wagner, 1999, p. 226) and she believed that it is essential to help teachers come to know "why they are doing what they are doing." (p. 226). In Singapore, there are few studies on teachers and change (except for WettaSinghe, 2002; Salleh, 2003 and Goh, 2005). This area is still relatively untapped in the field of drama education. In the context of growing interest of drama education in the region in recent years, it seems pertinent to investigate the relationship between drama education, teacher change and teacher professional development in South East Asian education systems.

For this article, I will first be sharing the background, the research methodology, and the data collection and analysis of the case study from which this article drew on. Secondly, I will briefly outline the literature on the nature of beliefs and teachers' beliefs, features of an effective professional development and the impact of professional development on teacher beliefs. Then I will compare this with existing literature within

drama education on teacher beliefs and professional development. Next, the more dominant paradigms of drama education in Singapore is discussed and compared with the paradigm that the teachers were exposed to in the in-service professional development. Finally, I will discuss the specific findings with regards to teachers' beliefs about drama education and propose the implications for teacher professional development, especially in the context of burgeoning interest in drama education in South-East Asian education systems.

Growing interest in drama education in Singapore

In recent years, there seems to be a growing interest from the primary and secondary schools in the use of drama to enhance students' learning in other curricular subjects and for their holistic development. This is an interesting phenomenon as drama is offered as a subject in a few secondary schools and pre-university institutions in Singapore. Since formal drama education has not been extensive within Singapore's formal time-tabled curriculum, most teachers would not have had experiences of studying it as a discipline and experiencing it as a way of learning both as a student and perhaps during their preservice programmes.

This phenomenon raises a consideration for pre-service and in-service teacher educators. The prevalent form of drama education in Singapore exists mostly in the co-curricular programmes[1] where the teachers in charge of them are unlikely to have been schooled in the theories and practices of drama education. Their beliefs about and practices of drama education might be different from the pedagogical beliefs and

[1] Co-curricular programmes in Singapore are encouraged for Primary school pupils (from 7 to 12 year olds) and compulsory for Secondary school students (from 13 to 16 year olds). They are outside of the timetabled time and students can choose one from the many that schools offer. A large number of schools have Drama clubs where students are usually exposed to the art form through watching performances and being involved in school productions. Schools are free to plan their co-curricular programmes and the teachers in charge of them need not be teachers with experiences in drama or drama education.

practices from countries with more established drama curriculum where there are more clearly articulated progression of learning, learning outcomes, and connections to other learnings in other areas which are based on robust practice-informed research and scholarship (For e.g. Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and some Nordic countries.)

With such growing interest from schools, it is not surprising that there is a strong demand for in-service professional development. This will invariably bring Singapore teachers in contact with established practices from other parts of the world. How would this impact their beliefs? What are the implications for teacher professional development?

About the case study

The case study investigated whether teachers' beliefs about drama education changed as a result of them learning about drama education during the Advanced Post-Graduate Diploma in Drama and Drama Education (APGD), in in-service course offered by the National Institute of Education in Singapore. The teachers voluntarily signed up for the part-time course, completing seven modules of study from January 2003 to October 2004 (over a span of 21 months) before obtaining the diploma. The data collection for the case study was completed in 2005, after the teachers have completed the course. While teaching full-time I transcribed, coded, analysed and reported the findings for a Masters Dissertation that was examined and, thankfully, passed in 2009. Admittedly, there is time lapse between the data collection, analysis and reporting of the findings for the original study and for this article. Perhaps the readers might still find some ideas relevant.

The three teachers interviewed for the case study - Haida, Megan and Molly[2] - are experienced English Language and Literature in English teachers who have been teaching between 6 to 18 years at the time of the study. They were also the teachers in charge of their schools' Drama club and have varied experiences in managing drama programmes and competitions in their schools, at times training their students for performances as well. The teachers took some different modules for the diploma but all three of them took the modules *Learning through Drama* and *Process Drama in the Curriculum* which were taught by the same lecturer, hence sharing some common learning experiences.

The data for the entire case study consisted of (i) a survey on teachers' schooling, teaching, experiences of drama and drama education, and reasons for signing up for the course; (ii) transcribed semi-structured interviews before a lesson observation; (iii) their lesson plans where they used drama for learning in their own classrooms; (iv) field notes on the lessons observed and; (v) transcription of teachers' response to the video of their lessons. For the interviews, the teachers were asked aspects of the APGD that the teachers felt had impacted on their beliefs about drama education and their changes in beliefs about drama education. They were also asked for their experiences of significant moments of the programme, their own schooling experiences and their experiences as teachers.

For this article, I am drawing primarily from the interview data and teachers' responses to their own lessons which were coded, analyzed and triangulated for patterns within each teacher, and between the teachers. The analysis focused on what teachers said about the course and their beliefs about drama education.

[2] Pseudonyms are used.

The teachers' beliefs were analysed from teachers' recount of critical incidents (Dhamotharan, 1992; Webster & Mertova, 2007) so that inference can be made about their beliefs (Dhamotharan, 1992). Those incidences that reflected 'good or bad practice' (Dhamotharan, 1992, p. 306) that the participants had experienced in their past as students and teachers, during and after the in-service course are especially significant. As Webster and Mertova (2007) explained, critical events are usually 'change experiences' (p. 75) where the people recounting the events have difficulty integrating their beliefs with the reality of their experiences, and memories of these events help them to adapt strategies to apply to new situations (p. 71). Hence, critical incidents, or what the teachers report as significant anecdotes, can reflect both teachers' beliefs (past and present) and their changes in beliefs. These were triangulated from the data. In addition, such reported incidences can reveal aspects of the programme that have significantly impacted the teachers' beliefs.

Nature of beliefs and teachers' beliefs

Van Fleet (1979, cited in Pajares, 1992, p. 316), proposed that beliefs are shaped by three overlapping components: *enculturation*, *education* and *schooling*. Essentially, he claims that a person's beliefs are shaped by social and cultural norms he/she is in, how he/she learns to behave according to what is expected of him/her and what he/she is taught in schools.

Some key findings from Pajares' (1992, pp. 324-325) synthesis of the nature of beliefs that are of relevance are:

1. Beliefs are formed early in life, resisting changes and contradictions by reason, time, schooling or experience.

2. Beliefs shape how we look at tasks and decide how to interpret, plan, and make decisions for such tasks; hence beliefs affect our behaviour and how we process information.
3. Beliefs shaped earlier in life are more difficult to change.
4. Beliefs about teaching are well established by the time a student gets to college.

This suggests that teachers' beliefs, especially those about the nature of teaching and learning, and related beliefs like the nature of knowledge, subject matter and students are shaped early in their personal lives before their actual professional experiences of teaching. This may be extended to include teachers' beliefs about drama education based on their personal experiences during their schooling and adult life. The types of drama experiences they have would shape their beliefs about drama education and, by extension, their practice.

If these beliefs are resistant to change, what would be required of a professional development programme to impact teachers' beliefs about drama education?

Features of effective professional development programs

Professional development programmes, school-based or otherwise, often adopt a multi-pronged approach in engaging and equipping teachers with innovative practices. Some of the features that have been suggested by the literature that would have a positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices are (i) analogue experiences that provide teachers with similar learning experiences that they need to facilitate for their students (Borko & Putam, 1995; Morocco & Solomon, 1999); (ii) strong content focus (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Kwang, 2001; and Desimone, Porter, Garet, Kwang & Birman, 2002); (iii) active learning where teachers are engaged in the

analysis of teaching and learning (Franke, Carpenter, Fennema, Ansell & Behrend, 1998; Nelson,1999; Morocco & Solomon, 1999; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Kwang, 2001; and Desimone, Porter, Garet, Kwang & Birman, 2002); (iv) dialogue amongst teachers (Richardson 1990, 1994; Guskey 1995, 2003; Morocco & Solomon, 1999; Wilson & Berne, 1999; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Kwang, 2001; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Kwang & Birman, 2002) and (v) long term support and feedback (Borko & Putam, 1995; Guskey, 1986, 1995, 2002) by instructors.

Hence, during the interview teachers were asked to report on aspects of the APGD that they felt were significant. This will suggest aspects of the course that had a greater impact on their beliefs.

Impact of professional development on beliefs

In the literature on professional development, an underlying aspiration is for consistency between teachers' new beliefs and practices as it indicates a successful uptake of the innovation introduced and that the change will be sustainable. However, studies found inconsistencies between teachers' beliefs, and between their beliefs and practices (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991; Richardson & Anders, 1994; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Levin & Wadmany, 2006) which might indicate a change process (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell & Lloyd, 1991; Richardson & Anders, 1994; Levin & Wadmany, 2006).

Borko et. al., (1992) and Richardson (1992) noted that some teachers prefer picking up strategies that can be immediately applied rather than reflect on their beliefs and develop a different practice. A possible explanation comes from Joram's (2007) study which found that practicing teachers believe that knowledge of effective practices,

especially their own, are localized and not easily generalized to other contexts. They are also likely to dismiss new practices suggested by research, especially those foreign to their beliefs about teaching and learning. Therefore, if teachers do not understand the rationale of the new approach they could view these strategies as additions to their 'bag of tricks' (p.134) rather than integrate the conceptual beliefs of these strategies into their beliefs about teaching and learning.

Furthermore, if the professional development programme requires teachers to look at teaching and learning quite differently (Borko & Putam, 1995) with theoretical assumptions of the new material and strategies too discrepant from the teachers existing beliefs (Samuels & Price, 1992), then teachers may not be able to change their practice to engage students differently and meaningfully because the teachers could not agree with the 'basic assumptions about learning and the learner' (Samuels & Price, 1992, p. 213).

These studies suggest that in evaluating professional development, one of the criteria is to ascertain the change of teachers' beliefs as this will likely suggest a change process, and perhaps indicate how they may change their practices – either relate to students differently using the new approach, or using strategies without relating to students differently.

Professional development and beliefs in Drama Education

In his discussion of the efficacy of a professional development programme, Prior (2005) reflected that perhaps the teachers' practice of drama as pedagogy was influenced by their beliefs about teaching, and their beliefs about drama education which were based on their childhood experiences. He found that the teachers had incomplete understanding of drama education. He also noted that teachers tended to

copy techniques and ideas (p. 79). However, this might be in part due to the initial stage of the change process where teachers are attempting to change their practices as they may believe it is worthwhile to do so. Prior (2005) found that the professional development programme was still successful as it encouraged the beginnings of a shift in teachers' pedagogical beliefs (p. 80).

Chou's (2004) study finds that the theoretical aspect of drama pedagogy is challenging for those learning to apply drama. Her analysis of published literature in drama education (Chou, 2006) indicated that the practical aspects of teaching drama are more emphasized by drama educators than the theoretical underpinnings. She demonstrated the commonalities between the wider field of education and drama education as (i) child/student/learner-centred, (ii) action-prioritized (learning through active participation) and (iii) knowledge-constructed (constructivism and social-constructivism) because '[u]nderstanding the similar nature of educational claims made by these (two) fields can assist in strengthening teacher beliefs' (p. 120).

However, such an analysis made the assumption that beliefs about knowledge as subjectively constructed by learners, is shared by all teachers who are learning to use drama as pedagogy for learning. Wouldn't the teachers who do not share such beliefs find the theoretical aspects of drama pedagogy even more challenging?

Till this point, I have discussed the nature of beliefs and teacher beliefs, features of an effective professional development and the possible impact of professional development on beliefs. Comparing these to the literature within drama education, it is not clear which features of a professional development programme for using drama as pedagogy has an impact or more significant impact on teachers' beliefs and practice. Also, it is found that the published literature on drama education assumed that the readers have similar conceptual understanding and beliefs about how students learn.

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Distinguishing the threads of drama education in Singapore

To have a general sense of teachers' beliefs about drama education in Singapore, it is useful to look at the more dominant forms of drama education more commonly found in schools. In *Drama and the Curriculum*, O'Toole, Stinson and Moore (2009) unravelled the diverse though inter-connected purposes of Drama in the school's curriculum into four paradigms. For the purpose of this article they are summarized as:

1. linguistic/communicative (developing language through drama) – drama is used as a medium through which students are developed for language competencies (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and appreciation of literature. This includes the related movement of Speech and Drama where students are trained to speak better. Furthermore, Drama is also used in English for Second- and Other- language learning.
2. expressive/developmental (growing through drama) – drama is used as an instrument to develop students personally and socially. This includes emotional development, self-expression and self-esteem, creative imagination, social understanding and cooperation and self-confidence in public.
3. social/pedagogical (learning through drama) – drama is used as a medium for students to learn the content and skills of other subjects in the formal curriculum.
4. aesthetic/cognitive (learning the art form of drama) – where drama is studied as an art form in its own right and this is realised through the dimensions of appreciating, performing and making drama.

The most dominant forms of drama education that exist across almost all Singapore schools in one way or another are (i) study of drama as literary text, (ii) training students for a variety of speech / debate / story-telling competitions and (iii) training students in co-curricular activities for the purposes of performances and competitions. As a former British colony, English Literature is studied as a subject for all lower secondary students and for some upper secondary students. Subsumed as a component of English Literature, Drama is studied or appreciated (Hunter, 2001) primarily as texts. For some schools, part of their study of the selected texts may involve dramatizing them so that it would 'enrich' their experience of literature.

In recent decades, the government's focus on speaking good English for economic purposes has stimulated the development of more speech competitions which is commonly associated with drama because a common criterion of excellence in (English) drama is about speaking well. In 2000, the National Speak Good English Movement was launched by then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong (SGEM, 2007a) to encourage Singaporeans to speak grammatically correct English so that we can be understood internationally. This national movement has cascaded into the school system as most schools' English language department began to focus on the explicit teaching of oracy and regularly held school-based story-telling, speech and debate competitions or sent students for national competitions such as Plain English Speaking Awards (PESA) that has been partially organized by the Ministry of Education since 1987 (SGEM, 2007b). The focus is on training students to speak well in the competitions.

For most schools, drama is also one of the co-curricular activities where the students are usually trained by external facilitators, mostly theatre practitioners, for assembly performances, internal or external arts festivals, or annual/bi-annual drama

competitions (Hunter, 2001; Tan, 2003) both intra- and inter-school. Some performance platforms, such as the biennial Singapore Youth Festival (SYF) organized by Ministry of Education, are events that most secondary schools actively participate in.

From the description above, the dominant paradigm seems to be linguistic/communicative. These forms of drama programmes may involve students performing dramatic material and students may be more involved as actors and stage crew. As part of the Literature and/or English programmes students may also write scripts and perform them. Hence, these forms of drama may sit, very uneasily I might add, in the aesthetic/cognitive paradigm as the students are, at the very least, "performing" drama. However, there are misgivings about the extent to which the students are systematically taught to appreciate and make their own drama.

These forms have a strong impact on teachers' and students' beliefs about drama education. The high profile inter-school national drama and speech competitions and performances may shape beliefs that emphasize a focus on students' mastery of speech and performance. This treats knowledge of texts and stagecraft as fixed, and positions the teacher/instructor as the one with all the knowledge and skills while the students receive and practice them. Students may also be assessed for their mastery of knowledge of texts and skills in speech and "acting".

The growing interest of using drama for learning (the social/pedagogical paradigm) other subjects requires teachers to relate to students quite differently. This paradigm has a different set of conceptual beliefs of the learners and how they learn. This suggests a need to consider how professional development can be designed to effect the desired change in teachers.

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APGD: Exposing teachers to a different way of learning through Drama

The APGD exposed the participants the social/pedagogical paradigm of drama education which is representative of contemporary practice in Western educational development with its praxis underpinned by social-constructivist theories such as those by Bruner and Vygotsky (O'Toole, 1992; Nicholson, 2000; Edmiston & Wilhelm, 1998; Wagner, 1995, 1998a, 1998b; Chou, 2006; O'Toole & O'Mara, 2007; O'Toole, Stinson & Moore, 2009) whose theories of spontaneous play, and the relationship between thought, language and learning has informed educators of how students learn during drama. This treats knowledge as subjective, constructed by the learner through their experiences and positions the teacher as a facilitator who structures the learning experience for the students for them to make meaningful connections with the curriculum inherent in the drama. This positioning of knowledge, teacher, students and how they relate to each other is in contrast with the dominant form of drama education in Singapore. The emphasis is to improve students' learning and thinking (qualities in) rather than only their mastery (qualities of) of the dramatic art.

This contrast between the dominant paradigm of drama education in Singapore and the paradigm espoused by the course thus form the background for this study. Assuming that the teachers' beliefs about drama education have been shaped by the dominant paradigms, what would be the impact of the course on their beliefs?

In 2002, the APGD was introduced at Singapore's NIE. The course was made up of seven modules. The content of each module was a combination of practical experiences of drama education facilitated by the lecturers and discussion of assigned course readings. The teachers had to demonstrate their learning through critical essays, lesson plans, practical tasks of teaching a segment of a lesson they designed or through

devising and presenting a performance. Of the seven, four were core and essential modules. Of these four, three (*Learning through Drama: Theory and Practice*, *Process Drama in the Curriculum* and *Theatre in Education: Theory and Practice*) have conceptual beliefs of the social/pedagogical paradigm inherent in the course readings, while process dramas were an essential practical experience offered in the first two modules. The process dramas were facilitated by an experienced practitioner and were mostly published[3] process dramas.

What is Process Drama?

Process drama is distinctive genre of drama education that sits within the social/pedagogical paradigm. It is described as (i) non teacher-dominated, (ii) involving ***all*** the students ***all*** the time, for the purpose of (iii) solving problems, employing higher-order thinking processes (Stinson & Freebody, 2006, p. 29) and students' personal growth. The dramas, transient and 'ephemeral' (Stinson & Freebody, 2006, p. 29), are for the internal audience made up of the participant group and are not intended to be performed for an external audience. The teacher (/facilitator) structures the experience by drawing on the participants' input and knowledge and the entire group collectively manipulates dramatic elements for the drama to unfold for them meaningfully in a processual manner (O'Toole, 1992). As a relatively new term in drama education, Stinson and Freebody (2006) warned that process drama may be misconstrued as merely a series of improvisational role-play, participative strategies or 'activities'. However, process drama is a powerful way to transform learning as the participants

[3] Published process dramas are not scripts, but are lesson exemplars written and refined by practitioners/researchers of the form. An experienced teacher/facilitator who believes in and practice co-creating learning experiences with and for learners would be able to draw out the most from them.

takes ownership of the learning and uncovers the curriculum facilitated by an experienced practitioner.

Teachers were exposed to examples of good practices by participating as learners in various process dramas (analogue experiences) in two modules – *Learning Through Drama* and *Process Drama in the Curriculum.* Furthermore, these two modules were supplemented by required theoretical and practical readings that support such practices. The teachers also had a dialogue about the readings and their embodied experiences in class, relating them to how they can similarly create such learning experiences for their students.

In Singapore, this form of drama education is the most undeveloped as there is yet long term developmental programmes for students to learn about other content subjects through drama. The inclusion of 'practical drama' is intermittent, and more often than not, depends on motivated English and/or Literature teachers with some exposure to drama (Hunter, 2001). Many teachers who use such practical drama in the classroom tended to tap into their existing beliefs about drama education, and hence practices in the classroom may be dramatization of texts as part of their learning of literature and the staging of performances for intra- and inter-school competitions. These practices reflect their beliefs about the knowledge, role of the teacher and students in the learning of drama. Essentially, the knowledge of text and stagecraft is fixed, the teacher or the instructor/director has the knowledge to disseminate to the students who have to remember and practice the content of literature and the skills of 'acting' and speaking'; and students are assessed for the mastery of knowledge and quality of their speech and acting rather than the quality of learning and thinking. However, the teachers who are using such forms of practical drama in the classroom

believe that they are using drama as a pedagogical tool to enhance students' learning in English and Literature in English.

Against the predominance of the linguistic/communicative paradigm, the teachers who signed up for the in-service course were introduced to the socio/pedagogical paradigm of drama education for the first time. Hence, the case study took the opportunity to investigate the impact of such an exposure on three teachers' beliefs about drama education.

Finding 1: Teachers reported a change in their beliefs about Drama Education

The teachers interviewed – Haida, Megan and Molly- were experienced teachers who were also in-charge of their schools' Drama clubs. All three of them indicated that the APGD had changed their beliefs about drama education and hence agreed to be part of the research.

From product to process – a shift in their beliefs about Drama Education

All three teachers' interviews suggested a shift in their beliefs about drama education to encompass the social/pedagogical paradigm where students learn about the curriculum content and skills through drama.

Megan responded that she has more faith in students benefiting from drama though she was "very, very skeptical" about it before the course. She also revealed that she used to view drama as "end **products**. What you get out of the plays you put up, performances and stuff". When asked whether her beliefs about drama education have changed, she replied that there was "a great fundamental shift, to greatly appreciate that the **process** is of such great benefit (to the students)".

Haida said that before APGD, she saw drama and theatre only as **products** in the form of performances. After, she "realize(d) that there is a long **process** (and) that there's such a thing as drama in education."

Molly similarly said her initial understanding of drama and theatre was of "stage work, stage directions and scripting" and that those who studied drama were "just preparing for a career in acting". The course made her realized that there were drama conventions like "tableau" and she can "infuse drama into some many other subjects and make the other subjects so much more meaningful."

Finding 2: Process Drama had a significant impact

The interviews across the three teachers were triangulated for the frequency and details of their recall which indicated four main factors that the teachers reported to be significant in impacting their beliefs about drama education. They are (i) the teachers' experiences of process dramas, (ii) their personal engagement with the experience, (iii) learning strategies that they could apply, and (iv) areas of the course that they were interested in.

Two of teachers' responses to their experiences of process dramas were the most richly described, carefully clarified and elaborated upon amongst the other factors and mostly with strong positive emotions as demonstrated in the tone of voice. This may suggest that process drama has a comparatively greater impact than the other factors in changing their beliefs about drama education.

What did the teachers say about the process dramas?

Haida exclaimed "I love Process Drama" and Megan could remember "every single experiential process drama". They recalled, with relish, significant details of their

experiences particularly *First Fleet* (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002), *The Seal Wife* (O'Neill, 1994), *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Taylor, 2000).

Haida enjoyed *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Taylor, 2000) as she could "see things from a different perspective" and "thoroughly enjoyed" *The Seal Wife* as

> it's very dramatic. I remember (for an episode) working with [4]Wee Kit and one other person and we used sound and everything was in slow motion and theatrical. The image was very strong to me especially (the part) where we said goodbye to the seal wife, who had to say goodbye to the family and I think that the whole sequence was so wonderful.

During the process drama, she felt that she "was actually the character" and experienced a "sense of community" during the folk dance. While in role and "voicing" her opinion to the Seal Wife, she could see the relevance of the drama as she "can be your father, your mother, your friend who has done something". The experience of which, to Haida, was "very empowering". The deep sense of connection with character and community had a great impact on Haida and led her to formulate the connection between being in role in the dramatic fiction and a deep learning experience in drama.

Similarly, in recalling her experiences in the process dramas, Megan felt "being touched in the soul" as:

> I think part of the whole drama course is that it's very much to do with Art, and Art is about being touched in the soul. I think that did happen in this course a number of times.

Based on these experiences, Megan also believed that process drama had an impact on her teaching as she believed that the process drama "brings about many outcomes". While recalling them, she would often make the connection between her experiences as a participant, to possibilities in her practice, for example, "how does this

[4] A fellow course-mate. Her name had been changed.

benefit my students" and indeed, in her interviews she would extrapolate possible learning and writing tasks for her students based on her experiences of the process dramas.

For instance, her experience of *First Fleet* (O'Toole & Dunn, 2002) made a significant impact on Megan. She recalled a specific moment in the drama, where the class had finished writing a letter to their loved ones back home.

> I think she (the lecturer) would walk around and we talked louder and we read from the letter and when she walked away, our voices will go softer. That whole experience was so magical and so like "Wow! You know I could do this with my kids. They get to write, which is always a good skill and they have to read aloud and it's just so meaningful. I mean the moment we started doing that drama I was thinking – this is so Singapore! You know this is about the migrants and I thought it would be so easy to translate that here.

Her experience made such an impact on her that she modified the lesson and facilitated the drama with the students from her Drama Club at the beach and the English teachers in her school in an enclosed room.

For both of them, it was evident that they have retained their meaningful understanding of process drama. For Haida, *The Seal Wife* impacted her on a personal level as it led her to think about the voicing of suppressed feelings. Megan reflected on Singapore's historical status as a migrant nation through *First Fleet* and how students, like her, could be very "introspective" during drama. Amongst the teachers, she was more articulate about how she extrapolated her own learning experiences in the process dramas to her professional development as she connected her deep learning to the possible benefits for her students' learning. She thought of possible writing and reading tasks that can arise out of the drama and modified an existing process drama for her students. However, she also reflected that students' deep learning during process dramas needs to be properly guided by the teacher.

During their recollection of their experiences of process dramas, Megan and Haida were visibly more enthusiastic compared to the rest of the interview. The tone of their voice, body language and zeal in offering these as critical incidents suggested a strong physical and emotional reaction as they remembered their experiences. Furthermore, Haida's and Megan's recall suggest that they made cognitive/emotional connections to the curriculum inherent within the process dramas intended for them as participants (e.g., seeing things from different perspectives); and intended for them as teachers (e.g., experiencing how students can learn differently, and relating to the reading/speaking/writing tasks suitable for their students).

In comparison Molly did not immediately talk about process drama with the same enthusiasm and with as much details. Her emphasis, when she was asked about her significant experiences in the course, was that she found that the drama conventions in the two modules were very useful 'strategies' that she can use in her classroom. It was found that perhaps her prior beliefs about professional development as picking up strategies for immediate application may have impacted how she viewed her experiences.

Discussion of findings

The findings echoed Prior's (2005) where a professional development programme that introduces drama education to teachers was successful in encouraging the beginning of a shift in teachers' beliefs. What was found in this research is that the teachers' beliefs about drama education have indeed changed. This finding is even more significant in the context of the literature which tells us that adults' beliefs are difficult and even resistant to change, and in Singapore's context where the dominant paradigm of drama education is different to what was introduced to the teachers. Indeed, the

animated recount of emotive and descriptive details of the process dramas attest to the impact that their experiences had on their beliefs about drama education. Process drama may have provided the 'critical incidences' (Dhamotharan, 1992; Webster & Mertova, 2007) that have changed the teachers' beliefs about drama from merely 'product' and 'performance' to include the learning 'process' possible via their experiences. In designing professional development, perhaps process drama ought to be an important feature especially when introducing teachers to the pedagogical potential of drama education.

In professional development, experiences of process drama is also the analogue experiences (experiencing new ways of learning as learners/participants) which Borko and Putam (1995) and Morocco and Solomon (1999) suggested is an essential component of a professional development programme that can impact teachers' beliefs and practices. From the interviews, it was clear that Megan and Haida were so inspired that they wanted to re-create such experiences for their own students. Their experiences of process dramas were facilitated by an experienced practitioner using published process dramas that are exemplars of reflective and theoretically-grounded practice by practitioner/researchers. This suggest that quality experiences of process drama - skilful facilitation of well-planned lessons – is essential so that the participants can work collectively to uncover and unfold the drama (and curriculum) meaningfully for themselves, just like how their students would. In fact, Megan's interview transcript strongly suggested that she may have experienced professional metaxis (Simons, 2002) as she often related her own experiences to what her students could learn through drama – the curriculum intended for the teachers in the APGD.

On the other hand, Molly's relatively subdued response to process drama and her emphasis on the dramatic conventions used as part of the dramas as useful discrete

strategies provided an interesting counterpoint. She reported on how she has incorporated drama conventions in her English and English Literature lessons, using them as discrete and separate strategies instead of viewing process dramas as an encompassing experience. Perhaps it was due to her belief about professional development as picking up strategies for immediate application. Nonetheless, her response is also indicative of a change process which is present in all three teachers.

Interestingly, there is a lack of reference to the theoretical terms and concepts in the interview data and when teachers reflect on their classroom practice of drama. The APGD did provide teachers with reading material of theoretical and practical nature, and there were frequent dialogue sessions where teachers discussed the readings, and related their practical experiences of process dramas to the readings and what they can do for their students in practice. Though these features of an effective professional development were present, the interview data showed that the teachers did not use much of the new terms or theoretical constructs introduced during the course, and did not highlight the readings as significant. Furthermore, when asked for what they understood by how students learn through the drama 'process', all three teachers could not articulate the theoretical stance nor extrapolate their own interpretation.

There are a few possible reasons. Perhaps the underlying beliefs of how students construct their own learning and how teachers should facilitate their learning, which is assumed in the reading material and in their practical experiences, may indeed be too different from their own beliefs (Samuels & Price, 1992) for the teachers to make meaningful connections with. This echoed Chou's (2004) findings that the theoretical aspects might indeed be too challenging for teachers to understand as it assumed different beliefs about how students learn. Also, the readings themselves may have

emphasized more on the practical aspects of teaching drama (Chou, 2006) rather than the theoretical concepts behind drama as pedagogy.

Though the teachers' have reported a change in their beliefs about drama education, it falls outside the scope of the original case study and this article to examine whether the belief change did impact teachers' practices, and if so, the extent of change. Even so, the findings are encouraging as it indicates that quality experiences of process dramas had a significant impact on teachers' beliefs such that they were undergoing a change process and were motivated to apply their learning after the course. Perhaps future research can examine the impact of belief change on teachers' practices.

In the context of educational change, tightening budgets and a growing interest in drama education across most education systems in this part of the world, Guskey's (1995) words remind us that 'policy makers, funding agencies, and the general public all want to know if professional development programs really make a difference.' (p. 2). In addition, these stakeholders are also interested in not just effective but also time- and cost-efficient professional development that can effect significant and sustainable change in teachers' classroom practices. A tall order indeed.

Perhaps it is appropriate; even necessary, to consider the following questions and sub-questions that future research can look into:

1. How do we design effective professional development for drama education?
    a. What are the guiding principles?
    b. What are the features?
    c. What is the "optimal mix" (Guskey, 1995)?
    d. Would the program design be the same for all teachers with different experiences of drama education?

e. Would the programmes be time- and cost-effective?

2. How do we evaluate the effectiveness of professional development for drama education?

a. What are the factors to consider?

b. Who would want to know?

Implications of the findings

Fundamental to the praxis of any good teacher is the ability to surface and know where the students came from, what they believe their world to be, and lead them to uncover, question, negotiate, add to and apply what they have learned as they work with their peers. Perhaps the same should apply to professional development programmes.

It seems, from the growing field of research in drama education, there is still room for attention on the theoretical and practical approaches of effective pre-service and in-service teacher preparation and professional development. Perhaps most of such programmes exist in or are adopted from education systems (such as Australia, Canada and United Kingdom) where drama may be part of the formal curriculum. By extension, there may be the assumption that teachers who were schooled in such contexts will have had the practical experiences of, share similar beliefs about, and understood the conceptual underpinnings of the paradigms of drama education that they were being apprenticed into (Lortie, 1975).

This notion may need to be reviewed as the interest in drama education grows in as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and other countries where the socially- and culturally-specific beliefs of what is education, drama education, ‘good’ drama and ‘good’ practices of drama for learning may be quite different.

As Nicholson (2005) noted, recurring pedagogic practices of drama are globally exchanged and locally re-interpreted as embodied experiences. Hence, in designing effective in-service professional development in these countries, there may be a need to consider the beliefs of the teachers who were encultured and socialized differently, as this would impact how they interpret their experiences of drama education and translate their learning into their classroom practices.

The findings from the study certainly suggest that the embodied, internalized and ephemeral experiences of process drama, a genre that exemplifies the social-constructivist approach to learning that is characteristic of drama education, had a significant impact on teachers' beliefs about drama education. It is hoped that future research can look at the design of professional development that can effectively and efficiently transfer the conceptual and practical aspects of drama education to more teachers in our region.

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Senior Secondary Art Appreciation and Criticism and Students with Intellectual Disabilities: A Perfect Marriage or Not?

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Abstract

In 2009, the Education Bureau published the first senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum supplementary guide for students with intellectual disabilities in Hong Kong. Before that, there were no formal senior Visual Arts curricula for teachers in either type of school. The introduction of art appreciation and criticism to teachers is highlighted particularly in the Guide. It emphasises art appreciation and criticism as being one of the major components of the curriculum, in addition to art making. However, teaching art appreciation and criticism to students with intellectual disabilities in the Hong Kong educational context is considered ambitious and challenging. The aim of this paper is critically to examine the fundamental underpinnings of the new curriculum in terms of its theoretical and pragmatic implications for teachers and students with intellectual

disabilities as set out in the supplementary guide. The author adopts contemporary concepts of teaching art appreciation and criticism as the theoretical and methodological analysis framework to argue and respond to the above-mentioned underpinnings. This paper finally concludes with some constructive insights that urge policy-makers to reflect on such issues.

Key words

Art appreciation and criticism, senior secondary, students with intellectual disabilities

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Introduction

In 2009, the Education Bureau (EDB), formerly the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), introduced the first senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in Hong Kong (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). The Visual Arts curriculum is compulsory for junior (Forms 1 – 3) secondary students only. Senior (Forms 4 – 6) secondary students may take Visual Arts as one of the electives only if their school offers Visual Arts. Previously, there were no official or centralised curricula, syllabuses or directions for the teaching of Visual Arts to students with ID in either type of school. The introduction of art appreciation and criticism to teachers is highlighted in particular in the Visual Arts curriculum. It emphasises art appreciation and criticism as being one of the major components of the curriculum, in addition to art making.

The EDB published the Visual Arts Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6) (VA Curriculum Guide) in 2007 and the Visual Arts Curriculum and Assessment Supplementary Guide (Secondary 4 – 6) for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (Supplementary Guide) in 2009, explicating the rationale, framework, approaches, strategies and assessment procedures for use with students (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007; 2009). The Visual Arts Curriculum Guide is written for the context of mainstream secondary teaching, while the Supplementary Guide is intended particularly for students with all grades of ID. One point worthy of note here is the emphasis on teaching art appreciation and criticism in both guides, a practice which was originally unknown in special schools. However, since the promulgation of the new curriculum there have been very few scholarly papers which have discussed the teaching of art appreciation and criticism to senior secondary students with ID (e.g., Tam, 2013; Tam, Lau & So, 2011). The majority of the available literature focuses on developing teaching methods for art appreciation and criticism in the general educational context;

very few studies have considered the implementation of art appreciation and criticism in the ID student context. The relationship between art appreciation and criticism and students with ID is thus an undiscovered area. This represents a gap in our understanding.

According to the EDB (2014), there have been no professional development programmes related to teaching art appreciation and criticism offered to teachers of students with ID until now, although the EDB claims that the Supplementary Guide does provide a framework for teachers for reference when they are designing the relevant curricula (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2009). In this context, teaching art appreciation and criticism to students with ID in the Hong Kong educational context is considered challenging. The aim of this paper is critically to examine the fundamental underpinnings of the new curriculum set out in the Supplementary Guide in terms of its theoretical and pragmatic implications for teachers of and students with ID. This fundamental underpinning will be explored in two essential questions: 1) what are the philosophical underpinnings of teaching art appreciation and criticism to students with intellectual disabilities? 2) What are the key issues and challenges concerning students with intellectual disabilities in the learning of art appreciation and criticism? The author adopts contemporary concepts of teaching art appreciation and criticism as the theoretical and methodological analysis framework to argue and respond to the above-mentioned questions. An examination of the evolution of curricula in terms of their aims, rationales, structures, focuses, approaches and assessment procedures will provide insights into the corresponding changes in pedagogical considerations. This paper finally concludes with some constructive insights that urge policy-makers to reflect on such issues.

Problems with Teaching Art Appreciation and Criticism to Students with ID

According to the EDB (2014), there are 514 secondary schools and 60 special schools in Hong Kong. The special schools are diverse, including schools for children with visual impairment, schools for children with hearing impairment, schools for children with physical disability, hospital schools and schools for social development, and schools for children with ID (Education Bureau, 2014). Students with ID are classified in three grades, namely the mild, moderate, and severe/profound grades (Education Bureau, 2014). In general, students of all kinds have the right to study in ordinary schools, though most students with ID are placed in special schools. Some severe / profound-graded ID students who have both multiple physical disabilities and ID are allocated to residential schools to receive special care and education (Legislative Council Panel on Education, 2014). Obviously, the needs of the ID students in these three grades are very different. Students with ID are allocated to special schools that correspond to their level of ID. Even so, the variation among students within the same special school or within the same class can be huge. Within the same class, it is possible for one student to have a mental age several years older or younger than his or her classmates. It is evident that to implement a new Visual Arts curriculum specifically suited to the diverse needs of students with ID is a difficult task.

To serve the aim of inclusion, the EDB announced that students with special educational needs could be educated under a single curriculum framework designed for all students (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). This policy sanctioned the use of the same curriculum for both mainstream students and those with ID. Nevertheless, the phrase ‘under a single curriculum framework’ does not mean that students with and without ID use the same curriculum. Differentiation is an important concept in the education of students with special educational needs. Since this is the case, the two curricula need to be more or less the same. In this sense, the decision to establish a senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum for students with ID that is almost identical to the mainstream version may have been based on idealistic motives. This raises a question about

theories of inclusion or integrated education, and although the EDB has claimed that the system of placing students with special educational needs in ordinary schools in Hong Kong is a kind of integrated education, it is clear that it is not inclusive education in the local context. Particularly in recent years, the EDB has emphasized a Whole School Approach to support students with special educational needs (Education Bureau, 2014).

Although the Visual Arts curriculum does not provide a full description of the diverse needs of students with ID in learning Visual Arts in either mainstream or special schools, it does highlight the importance of inclusion and is regarded as a framework for the curriculum (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). Therefore, it is assumed that the curriculum is written for and can be applied with students with all grades of ID in both school contexts. One assumption of the curriculum is that students with ID can derive the same benefits from art appreciation and criticism as mainstream students. The author of this paper questions whether this is a philosophically sound approach to addressing the multitude of concerns inherent in the special education system in Hong Kong.

Contemporary Perspectives on Art Appreciation and Criticism in the Educational Context

In art education, there is very little literature on the philosophy behind and the teaching strategies for teaching art appreciation and criticism for students with ID, compared to teaching it to students in the mainstream school context. References to teaching practice could only be found in the guidelines published in different countries. For instance, one of the practical guidelines is the Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Mild General Learning Disabilities published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2015) in Ireland, which describes the rationale for teaching Visual Arts and provides curriculum examples for teachers nationally. Unlike the movement of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) developed by scholars like Eisner (1988)

and Smith (2000) in the 1980s and 90s, and which became an influential idea, practical teaching model, and standard for art teaching in the US, there are no standard or influential teaching approaches to teaching art appreciation and criticism to students with ID. Obviously, this topic is an important but un-investigated research area.

Contemporary notions of teaching art appreciation and criticism focus on inquiry into the meaning of artworks – art interpretation. From a postmodern view, artworks are socio-culturally constructed works in which artists use visual forms, symbolic systems and metaphors to depict their perspectives on the world and to understand the society and culture (Freedman, 2003). Viewers use their life experiences to connect with, interpret and respond to the artworks; thus, to interpret artworks is to connect and respond (Parsons, 1992). Anderson (1993) regards art appreciation and criticism as talking or writing about art. Responding to an artwork can take different forms, such as visual, written and linguistic forms, and these forms can be transferrable and universal (Lau, 2013). Although these forms have different attributes, they can be interlinked with no contradiction when interpreting artworks. Artists use visual languages to express their ideas and viewers uses oral or verbal languages to express their opinions on the artwork. Both are thus trying to express their feelings and thoughts, but using different forms of expression. In this sense, art interpretation can be carried out in different ways without necessarily causing any problems.

Another aspect of art interpretation and criticism emphasises the difference between modernist and postmodernist views of art appreciation and criticism. In the former view, art interpretation is context-free and is not concerned with the socio-cultural meaning hidden behind the artwork (Parsons, 1992). Art interpretation consists solely of descriptions of the visual quality and visual effect of the artwork, and of forms of artistic expression such as artistic style, visual elements and design principles. In the latter view, by contrast, art can only be understood within

its socio-cultural contexts and relationships and cannot be explicated without taking these contexts into account (Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996). This method of art interpretation largely relies on verbal language, because viewers need to use verbal language to discuss the relationship between art and culture (Barrett, 2003; Sullivan, 2005). Another perspective on art appreciation and criticism is concerned with the analytical skills used in art interpretation. Although, as mentioned above, the interpretation of art can take different forms, sophisticated analytical skills play an important role in it. These analytical skills include both rational and emotional aspects, which in the field of education can enhance students' abilities in thinking, organising and presenting the meanings of artworks (Tucker, 2002). From a cognitive perspective, when we interpret an artwork, we will combine our subjective experience and intellectual analysis to create the meaning of the artwork and the artwork will reflect our life experiences at the same time (Parsons, 1992).

Art educators have developed various methods of inquiry, and these methods have been widely recognised and practised by secondary school teachers. Most of the discussions in secondary school art interpretation involve talking about art in a classroom setting (Cotner, 2010; Soep & Cotner, 1999) and developing a practical model for teaching art appreciation and criticism (Hickman, 2005). Although the teaching of art appreciation and criticism in schools has been discussed for the last two decades, whether or not school art appreciation and criticism should be based on the practices of professional critics is still debatable. Some argue that professional practice can provide guidelines and expert views for students to follow, and this is all too important, particularly for a beginner who is learning how to respond to artworks (e.g., Leshnoff, 1995). Some challenge the view that professional practices should be used in the school context and are afraid that this kind of practice will limit the development of students' critical thinking and will not help them broaden their understanding of art appreciation and criticism (e.g., Beach & Freedman, 1992). In the Hong Kong educational context mainstream secondary teachers are most

familiar with Feldman's (1992) and Anderson's (1997) models of art appreciation and criticism. Nevertheless, some art educators criticise these models on the basis that they neither cultivate students' independent thinking nor help them to understand everyday culture (e.g., Barrett, 1994; Freedman, 2003). Their models have, however, become the conventional model used in secondary schools (Tam, 2007). In particular, Feldman's aesthetics scanning model of art appreciation and criticism was put on the recommended reading list in the Visual Arts Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6) (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007).

In terms of the practice of teaching art appreciation and criticism in the secondary school context, Feldman (1994) suggests four essential steps to guide students in interpreting art: 1) description; 2) analysis; 3) interpretation, and 4) judgment. According to Feldman (1992), description refers to immediately recognising and describing the content and subject matter of the artwork which are obviously perceived. An example of the suggested question to be provided for students to answer is: "What do you see in the artwork?" Analysis refers to the formal analysis of the visual elements and design principles used in the artwork, such as composition, techniques and colours. Teachers may ask students about the form of the artwork. For example, "Can you identify five visual elements that appear in the painting?" Interpretation is the most important step of all in Feldman's model. It requires viewers to explicate the meaning of the artwork, the socio-cultural context of the artwork, the artistic phenomenon, and the motif of the creator based on the available evidence. It involves cognitive skills, logical thinking and personal experience, which are projected onto the artwork in order to interpret the feelings and intentions behind the artwork. One example of the type of question proposed for students is: "What clues do you see that support your ideas"? Finally, judgment refers to evaluating the overall strengths or merit of the artwork. An example of the type of question that may be posed is: "Do you think this is an important artwork, so that

museums should collect it for some reason"? In addition to description, analysis, interpretation and judgment, Barrett (2000) highlights the fact that students' higher order thinking skills can be stimulated through art appreciation and criticism. According to him, there are no right or wrong art interpretations in the art educational context, but there can be good or bad interpretations.

In addition to the fact that description, analysis and evaluation are required, art interpretation may be considered to be even more difficult as higher order thinking skills are needed to organise and connect relevant data to make a final interpretation of the artwork (Barrett, 2000). Since there is insufficient evidence supporting the capability of art appreciation and criticism to develop higher order thinking skills in students with ID, it is uncertain whether such students would be able to engage in higher order thinking in art appreciation and criticism, especially the moderate and severe/profound grade students.

The Main Contents of Both Guides

In Hong Kong, the new special school curriculum is based on the idea of "one curriculum framework for all" proposed by the EMB (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2005, p. 67). This idea was derived from the concept of inclusive education. According to the corresponding action plan EMB published in 2005, all students, including those with special educational needs, are entitled to be educated under the same curriculum framework in the name of inclusion. The document offers guidelines on how to adapt the curriculum to suit the different learning needs and capabilities of students. Under this framework, the new senior secondary curriculum for students with ID states that it is specifically designed to cater for the differences among students (Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau, 2005).

The Visual Arts curriculum at the senior secondary level largely focused on teaching subject knowledge and modes of artistic expression. Although the objectives for both the cognitive and

psychomotor domains of learning were specified in the curriculum, aspects of teaching Visual Arts to students with special needs were excluded. The teaching of art appreciation and criticism was also a concern and mentioned in the curriculum. However, no connection between the teaching of Visual Arts for mainstream students and for students with ID was indicated in the curriculum. It appeared therefore that the curriculum was designed for students in mainstream senior schools rather than for special schools. Indeed, the Supplementary Guide (Curriculum Development Council, 2009) and the VA Curriculum Guide (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007) are very similar (see Table 1).

The Supplementary Guide consists of six major chapters, namely Chapter 1 Introduction, Chapter 2 Curriculum Framework, Chapter 3 Curriculum Planning, Chapter 4 Learning and Teaching, Chapter 5 Assessment, and Chapter 6 Learning and Teaching Resources. The majority of the directives in the Supplementary Guide are taken from its mainstream counterpart: there are only two pages containing different new instructions and ideas regarding the needs of students with ID. For instance, both curricula are described as a "flexible, coherent and diversified senior secondary curriculum aimed at catering for students with varied interests, needs and abilities" (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007, p. i; Curriculum Development Council, 2009, p. i). In the section containing the rationale behind the curriculum, the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide argues that the Visual Arts curriculum can enhance comprehensive individual development, cultivate cognitive abilities, promote individual and social values, strengthen general learning abilities, foster aesthetic potential and enrich various aspects of everyday life; however, similar statements are made in the Supplementary Guide without considering the specific context of ID students.

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Table 1 *A Comparison of the Two Different Curriculum Guides*

	Visual Arts Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6)	**The Visual Arts Curriculum and Assessment Supplementary Guide for Students with Intellectual Disabilities**
Year published	2007	2009
Rationale for studying Visual Arts	● contribute to the quality of life through the power of aesthetic experiences ● contribute to the development of cognitive abilities ● develop individual and social values ● ensure greater coherence within the curriculum as a whole and serve to strengthen students' learning through the cross-curricular links between art and the other KLAs ● nurture and develop the aesthetic potential of young people and enable them to participate in the fast-growing creative industries of Hong Kong ● develop skills and abilities through studying art and applied them in many aspects of daily-life and work	● enhance comprehensive individual development ● cultivate cognitive abilities ● promote individual and social values ● strengthen general learning abilities ● foster aesthetic potential ● aid different aspects of everyday life
Aims and objectives	● enrich students' arts experience ● strengthen their abilities to appreciate and create ● develop perceptual abilities and skills ● enhance cultural and cross-cultural understanding ● cultivate personal refinement, values and attitudes ● acquire a foundation for pursuing education and career opportunities in the art and creative industries	● enrich students' arts experience ● strengthen their abilities to appreciate and create ● develop perceptual abilities and skills ● enhance cultural and cross-cultural understanding ● cultivate personal refinement, values and attitudes ● prepare for employment and education in the creative industry
Learning targets	● develop creativity and imagination ● develop skills and processes ● cultivate critical responses	● develop creativity and imagination ● develop skills and processes ● cultivate critical responses

	• understanding Arts in context	• understanding Arts in context
Assessment guiding principles/ criteria	• alignment with the learning objectives • catering for learner diversity • tracking progress over time • timely and encouraging feedback • making reference to the school's context • making reference to current progress in learning • feedback from peers and from the students • appropriate use of assessment information to provide feedback	• alignment with the learning objectives • catering for learner diversity • tracking progress over time • timely and encouraging feedback • making reference to the school's context • making reference to current progress in learning • feedback from peers and from the students • appropriate use of assessment information to provide feedback

The rationale and the aims presented in the Supplementary Guide and mainstream VA Curriculum Guide are identical. Regarding the framework of the curriculum, there are four key learning targets on which learning activities should be based to facilitate the achievement of the aims of the curriculum. These are: 1) developing creativity and imagination; 2) developing skills and processes; 3) cultivating critical responses, and 4) understanding arts in context (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007). The learning activities are organised into two domains called Visual Arts Appreciation and Criticism in Context and Visual Arts Making, respectively. The former encompasses an assortment of processes through which students participate in the critical appreciation of any kind of artwork, art form or artistic phenomenon. The latter refers to the creation of any artwork, whether tangible or conceptual, that should be informed by time spent engaging in Visual Arts Appreciation and Criticism in Context. Five ways of responding to artworks were suggested for Art Appreciation and Criticism: "literal description, comprehensive feeling, formal analysis, interpretation of meanings, and value judgment" (Curriculum Development Council, 2009, p. 16). This approach is overall similar to Feldman's (1992) aesthetic scanning method, mentioned earlier in this paper,

for teaching art criticism in the mainstream secondary school context, a method which involves the following four steps or stages: description, formal analysis, interpretation and judgment.

As discussed previously, teachers in Hong Kong mainstream secondary schools are already familiar with using Feldman's model to teach art appreciation and criticism. Undoubtedly, the model does provide a fundamental framework for teaching art appreciation and criticism, but the target students are mainstream secondary students. Therefore, it is doubtful whether teachers in special schools could use the model to teach students with ID with the same effectiveness as in mainstream schools. Unfortunately, no research studies have yet attempted to explore this issue. Besides, both guides defined assessment as an important and fundamental element of classroom instruction which should be used to gather evidence about students' learning (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007; Curriculum Development Council, 2009).

In assessment, the rationale for studying Visual Arts, aims and objectives, and learning targets are also the assessment tools. Both guides make particular mention of research portfolios as a school-based assessment method. Both guides also state that students can provide evidence of progress in learning over time based on the spirit of self-directed learning, recording their reflections, any improvements, and any important achievements (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority , 2007; Curriculum Development Council, 2009). Another assessment method suggested in both guides is critical studies. Mainstream students and students with ID are encouraged to pursue their own themes to conduct research on the topic (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007; Curriculum Development Council, 2009). The mainstream VA Curriculum Guide contains some guiding principles for both internal and public assessments (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority,

2007), but since students with ID are not required to sit for public examinations, the Supplementary Guide only includes guidelines for internal assessment (Curriculum Development Council, 2009).

Critical Analysis of the Supplementary Guide

The Supplementary Guide does contain some potential benefits. Firstly, it demonstrates a vision and future direction for teachers in teaching art appreciation and criticism in both the mainstream secondary school and the special school contexts. It confirms the important position of art education as being a part of general education and of equal importance to other learning areas. The Guide promotes the ideal concept of inclusion. Under the concept of one education for all, every student should have the opportunity to receive art education, particularly in special schools. Secondly, teaching art appreciation and criticism should be conducted by well-trained professional art teachers who have knowledge of aesthetics and education. In the long run, the role of art teachers is becoming more important and is thus being promoted. Thirdly, the Supplementary Guide offers a framework for teachers to develop their school-based art curricula based on the needs of their students. For example, the flexibility of the assessment methods provides various opportunities for students to improve their learning. Next, the guide emphasises the fact that in one way art appreciation and criticism celebrates and speaks for our culture; therefore, it can enhance and cultivate students' aesthetic sense and appreciation of our life. Finally, it is believed that the EDB has made every effort to incorporate some principles of inclusion in the curriculum for special schools. In the past, with a legacy of segregation deeply entrenched in the education system, the aims of special education were limited predominantly to the teaching of skills students needed to cope with everyday life needs (Li, Tse & Lian, 2009). The introduction of this curriculum is a step towards offering an improved Visual Arts education to students with ID, since previously they did not have any Visual Arts Curriculum guidelines at all.

Nevertheless, the Supplementary Guide contains three weaknesses and disadvantages with regard to the interests of students with special needs. Firstly, the major flaw lies in the fact that most of it is copied from the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide. When comparing the content and structure of the two guides, they are to all intents and purposes the same. The interests of teachers from special schools are hardly addressed. One significant example is that one of the curriculum aims in the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide is "to enhance cultural and cross-cultural understanding through exploration of the art of diverse cultures" (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007, p. 4). However, the same aim in the Supplementary Guide is worded as follows: "to enhance students' cultural and cross-cultural understanding and appreciation by understanding multi-cultural arts and the expression methods of classical, modern, Chinese and foreign arts" (Curriculum Development Council, 2009, p. 9). In essence, the central idea is identical, but the wording of the latter is verbose and less comprehensible. Similar modifications appear throughout the Supplementary Guide. This issue is related to the fundamental underpinnings of the new senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum for students with ID and its implementation.

While the Supplementary Guide does include some different input, the inclusion of only two pages of original and relevant insights is hardly satisfactory. Thirdly, it is necessary to inform teachers how the content of the curriculum can be taught and how it is relevant and conducive to the learning of students with special needs (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). Kui, Cheng and Tam (2008) identified four major learning obstacles they encounter in the local context, namely a limited attention span, communication difficulties, memory deficiencies and clumsiness in fine and gross motor skills. The Supplementary Guide should offer suggestions for tackling these particular problems in order to support effective planning and implementation in special schools. In addition to proposing ways in which the current Supplementary Guide might be

improved, it is essential to identify the cause of the problem in the first place. Ultimately, teaching senior art appreciation and criticism in the special school context is challenging. For instance, one learning focus in the Supplementary Guide suggests that teachers use the art appreciation and criticism method to teach students with ID to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate artworks; they are also required to provide justifications and demonstrate their views on the artwork in a written format (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). Because of the varying challenges ID students are dealing with, not every student with ID is able to use the written format to interpret artwork. There should be any other alternatives, the oral format for example. Besides, it is unlikely that students with severe/profound-graded ID would be able to think about the socio-cultural aspect and meaning of an artwork. This discussion raises the essential question of whether it is appropriate for teachers to use this art appreciation and criticism method to teach students with ID. The above-mentioned three issues are discussed further below.

The Difficulty of Implementing the New Senior Secondary Visual Arts Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in line with its Philosophical Underpinnings

The new curriculum provides senior secondary teachers who teach in special schools with an idea of some principles for reference. However, methodically speaking, it is only through a systematic and holistic examination of the theoretical and practical issues associated with the new curriculum that meaningful conclusions about how effective it is or might be can be drawn. As stated above, the new senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum for students with ID is for the most part copied from the mainstream curriculum, and this has been done on the basis of the theory and ideology of inclusion. If the supplementary guide is no more than a replica of the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide, then why would teachers not simply use the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide? That would seem to be a better manifestation of inclusion. From a theoretical and

philosophical perspective, does the idea of inclusion imply following the mainstream curriculum without taking into account the differences between the students?

From an educational policy perspective, the EDB has failed to explicate how teachers should implement the curriculum in the real-life context of a special school. There are several reasons, therefore, why the official documentation is difficult to translate into practice for students with ID. It is important to note that the Supplementary Guide is only problematic in the context of special schools; as discussed previously, the variation among students with ID is large, and even if they study in the same special schools. Thus the Supplementary Guide that is largely copied from the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide cannot help their teachers in any way to address their diverse needs and conditions. Although a few paragraphs in the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide are dedicated to explaining how to cater for this kind of learner diversity, the classroom situations and interactions in mainstream and special schools are so different in terms of students' abilities, attitudes, motivation and discipline that neither of the guides could be made to work effectively in a special school.

Theories of Inclusion

The entire issue of ID is discussed only briefly in the Supplementary Guide. The author doubts that this integrated approach is a manifestation of inclusive education. According to Booth (1996), the term "inclusive education" usually refers to one of two processes: "the process of increasing the participation of pupils within the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools and the process of decreasing exclusionary pressures" (p. 34). His definition of inclusive education opposes the use of special schools, since they constitute a form of exclusion from mainstream schools. In a broader sense, however, Vlachou (2004) examines the concept of inclusion and identifies five levels of schooling at which the obstacles of learning and participation exclusion can be removed

or minimised. These are known as the intentional, structural, curricular, pedagogical and evaluative levels of schooling. As suggested by Vlachou (2004), the rationale behind a curriculum reflects the conceptual framework of the level of school education. However, the fact that the Visual Arts curriculum for these students with ID is essentially a duplicate of the one for mainstream school students is, at both the intentional and curricular levels, only a partial manifestation of the philosophy of inclusive education. This so-called "integrated approach" complies with the principle of "one curriculum framework for all" proposed by the EDB which allows students with ID to achieve their potential and enhance personal development so they are able to contribute to the community (Hong Kong Education and Manpower Bureau, 2005, p. 67).

Since students with ID who study in special schools are not required to participate in the public assessment programme leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, their learning progress is assessed internally. According to the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide, internal assessment refers to "the assessment practices that teachers and schools employ as part of the ongoing learning and teaching process during the three years of senior secondary studies" (Curriculum Development Council and Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, 2007, p. 47). The guide suggests that internal assessment needs to be more formative in nature and focus more on the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning. In this respect, the assessment practice for students with ID is congruent with Vlachou's (2004) inclusion-related assertion that "evaluation is (or better should be) an educational medium through which educators can secure information they can use to enhance the quality of their work" (p. 17). Based on this analysis, it appears that the VA Curriculum Guide displays the principle of inclusion in three out of the five levels of schooling Vlachou has proposed (2004). Although he explicitly states that all five levels of schooling should be taken into account for successful inclusion, this is unrealistic within the Hong Kong educational context.

A Question Related to Teaching Art Appreciation and Criticism

Art appreciation and criticism is the new learning focus in the new senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum in Hong Kong. According to Danto (1981), the meaning of art is socially and culturally constructed by its context. In other words, to interpret art is to connect the social relationships between artworks, artists and viewers, as well as to convey its socio-cultural meaning. In the teaching context, the activity of art interpretation involves and plays a role in investigating the symbols, metaphors, structure and meaning of art in context (Barrett, 2000). Barrett (2003) has suggested that when students learn art criticism in the school context, they need to employ higher order thinking skills to interpret the meanings of artworks. However, teaching ID students such abstract and complex concepts could be a very challenging endeavour. Some scholars argue that they are not necessarily abstract or complex, and that a simple verbal expression such as "I like this picture", or even a smile, can be considered a form of art appreciation and criticism (e.g., Tam, Lau & So, 2011).

Responding to an artwork, however, should be more than that, and this makes art interpretation more difficult and complex. For instance, one teaching example offered in the Supplementary Guide suggests that teachers use the art appreciation and criticism method to teach students with ID to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate the Marilyn Monroe print created by Andy Warhol (Curriculum Development Council, 2009). This example is borrowed directly from the VA Curriculum Guide. In this example, students are required to make a critical analysis of, provide justifications for and give the socio-cultural context of the artwork and Pop Art, as well as demonstrate their views on the artwork in a written format. Although students with varying degrees of ID can respond to this in many ways depending on their levels, to make a critical analysis and provide the socio-cultural context of the artwork requires the use of higher order thinking skills

that may be beyond the capabilities of severe/profound-graded, and even of some mild-graded ID students. Compared to description, analysis and evaluation, interpretation is the most difficult aspect of interpreting an artwork, because students not only have to employ higher order thinking skills, they also need to synthesise all the data they have observed and analysed and make a logical explanation of the artwork. Therefore, students with ID might find that to describe, analyse and evaluate an artwork is easier than to interpret it. The examples given in the Supplementary Guide need to be revised in accordance with the diverse levels of ID students.

The Supplementary Guide suggests that teachers consult certain chapters from the basic education curriculum guide in order to enable them to adopt an integrated approach. However, the relevant indications are relatively brief and insufficient. Moreover, the Supplementary Guide does not explain why on some occasions teachers should refer to the mainstream VA Curriculum Guide and on other occasions they should stick to the basic education curriculum guide. This in turn gives rise to the question of what it is that differentiates the new senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum from the Visual Arts curriculum in basic education for students from Primary 1 to Secondary 3 (equivalent to Grades 1 to 9). The answer is unknown. Whether teachers and students with ID feel comfortable with the new method of art appreciation and criticism, which relies heavily their being able to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate an artwork in the form of verbal and written presentations in the special educational context, is doubtful.

Concluding Remarks

Over the last two decades in Hong Kong, the author has not seen any growing importance being attached to research into the senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum for students with ID. Although the Supplementary Guide attempts to analyse and validate the concept of the one-curriculum framework, little is known at present about the underlying conceptual framework and

working method of the curriculum for students with ID. The validity of the conceptual framework of the curriculum needs to be established, confirmed, and modified through the use of empirical evidence before it is implemented. The policy of teaching of art making together with art appreciation and criticism is the major concern. Besides, it should be noted that the curriculum framework and Supplementary Guide make few attempts to establish a relationship between the one-curriculum framework and classroom practice. While there is a strong assumption of a link between the ideology of inclusion and the integrated approach adopted, little empirical evidence has been found to support the practicality of such an approach. No research findings are yet available internationally concerning the teaching of art appreciation and criticism to students with ID. Owing to the absence of any literature on this subject, the theoretical view has not been sufficiently supported by direct research to clarify which approaches should actually be adopted in teaching art appreciation and criticism. There is no empirical evidence available on how best to teach art appreciation and criticism to students with ID. Future research is therefore required.

One important question that should be mentioned here is whether teaching art appreciation and criticism in the context of students with ID is similar to teaching it in the mainstream student context. It will be a great challenge to use the contemporary approach to teaching art appreciation and criticism to teach students with ID. Students in the mainstream schools are required to respond to art in written form; however, the use of written form might be difficult for students with ID. Therefore, it is suggested that other forms of expression, such as verbal language and body language, could be used in teaching art appreciation and criticism to them. Indeed, students with ID can feel free to describe, analyse and evaluate artworks based on their feelings, emotions and logical thinking. They can also use various skills and different types of knowledge to interpret artworks. When they are attempting to interpret a work of art, teachers should lead them to reach a balance between emotional expression and higher-order logical thinking skills. Some scholars

claim that description, analysis and evaluation may be easier for students with ID to handle, but the extent to which students with ID might be able to articulate art interpretation is unknown. Although students with ID can still try to interpret art, without actually making an interpretation, for some students with moderate-graded or severe/profound-graded ID who have difficulties in making interpretations, teachers might temporarily omit the most difficult part – interpretation - and put the initial focus of the learning on description, analysis and evaluation. This would, however, affect the completeness of the art inquiry method and it is doubtful whether such a type of 'art interpretation' that does not actually include any interpretation can still be classed as art interpretation.

In the development of the new senior secondary Visual Arts curriculum in Hong Kong, the different contexts for learning and teaching at senior secondary level have not been given careful consideration. Practical guidance on the application of the curriculum in daily practice is not provided. The curriculum appears to support the ideology of a one-curriculum framework, but this may conflict with actual practice in special schools. Without adequate practical guidelines and examples to follow, teachers in special schools may be unable to make the curriculum work in their classrooms. The Supplementary Guide presents the framework from an ideological point of view, without specifying in enough detail how the ideas are meant to be applied in practice; as a result, teachers may have difficulty implementing the curriculum.

Therefore, the Supplementary Guide is regarded more as a philosophical platform than as a practical guide for teachers teaching ID students to take reference from, being full of assumptions and ideals that are impossible to implement in the real educational context. These assumptions also drive the argument that current art education policy is inadequate, as it does not serve the needs of ID students in the real world context. With reference to the previous discussions, the needs of ID students in Senior Secondary Art Appreciation and Criticism are diverse, and involve the difficulty

of actually implementing the New Senior Secondary Visual Arts Curriculum for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in line with its philosophical underpinnings, the theory of inclusion, and the question of whether to teach art appreciation and criticism to these students at all. Policy-makers are urged to reflect on such issues. Firstly, the EDB should revise the Supplementary Guide to make it a curriculum framework which mainly describes and explains the philosophy and rationale behind teaching art appreciation and criticism to senior high students with ID. Secondly, the EDB should provide a real practical guidelines and examples for teachers in special schools. In addition, the absence of a clear theoretical basis to support the curriculum presents a great challenge. Therefore, comprehensive research into both the ideology of inclusion and the practical application of this ideology is required. The final proposal put forward in this paper is that the relationship between the one-curriculum framework and the teaching methods used to apply it should be viewed as being of both theoretical and practical importance.

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Exploring the Affective Impact of War Photographs on Students' Moral and Intellectual Development

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Abstract

This paper proposes a new way to explore the affective impact of war photographs on students' moral and intellectual development. I use two unique cases of students to illustrate the strong personal involvement in students' selection and interpretation of war photographs. One student seems to suggest a viewer's position as moral rescuer and the other a viewer's position as suffering victim. The paper is based on the findings from a piece of action research conducted among students on a general education course in the USA. The research was conceived as a response to Susan Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others* and James Nachtwey's war photography from an art education perspective. A multicultural art education approach with social reconstruction as the goal was adopted for the research. The findings confirm the hypothesis that

war photographs have a direct influence on the judgments formulated by students about the world. War photography engages students emotionally and activates their affective memories, which, in turn, help to construct their "moral constitutions" regarding war and humanitarian issues. Art education can play a unique role in creating "reverential conditions" in which students can study war photography and think more deeply not only about the distant suffering but also about their own moral stances.

Key words

James Nachtwey, Susan Sontag, war photography, affective memory, multicultural art education

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Introduction

As art teachers, or teachers who are interested in exploring the educational value of war photography, how can we transform students' valuable personal and cultural backgrounds into meaningful learning experiences? How can we enable students to understand more clearly how they and their fellow students are being socially and culturally constructed, and to see the wider options or life choices available to them? This paper presents a new and meaningful perspective on using war photographs in an educational context. The findings discussed originate from two unexpected but unique cases in my research study. The aim of the original research was to increase students' awareness of war and critical social issues by getting them to respond to James Nachtwey's war photographs in the context of a 'humanitarian' visual culture course. Two out of a total of 69 students read the war photographs in a very special and personal way. One of these seems to suggest a viewer's position as moral rescuer and the other a viewer's position as suffering victim. I have come to realize that war photographs can have a direct bearing on the judgments formulated by students about the world, and that they develop moral values and intellectual inquiry based on their emotional responses to such images.

This paper documents what I learned from these two special cases. My original study was a small-scale research conducted in 2010-2011 at The Ohio State University. The research was conceived as a response to Susan Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others* and James Nachtwey's war photography from an art education perspective. A multicultural art education approach with social reconstruction as the goal was adopted for the research. The broader aim of the research was to explore the educational value of using war photography in art education and how visual arts might contribute to the development of a general education course at tertiary level.

In the following paragraphs, I first provide the research background and introduce the focus of the discussion. This includes: 1) exploring the affective impact of war photographs based on

the discussion generated from Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*; 2) constructing a 'humanitarian' visual culture curriculum as an art education response to Nachtwey's 'invitation' to respond to his war photographs, and 3) discussing the educational value of creating a viewer's position on war photographs among students on a multicultural art education course. I then outline the research design. In the 'Findings and Discussions' section, I discuss how the students' life experiences had played a critical role in shaping their perspectives on war and humanitarian issues. I explore how one student took a moral stance as rescuer when confronted by a humanitarian issue, whereas another student tried to make sense of war through the eyes of a victim. I suggest that war photographs engage students emotionally and activate their affective memories. These memories, in turn, help to construct students' understanding of distant suffering. In conclusion, I reflect upon the most effective ways in which art education can be used to elicit constructive responses to distant suffering.

Research Background and Discussion Focus

Susan Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*

Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others* is about war and how images of war affect our perception of reality. To Sontag (2003), this book is also an inquiry into "how people can take in the suffering of others", in the process asking the question: "How are we constituted as moral beings?" (C-Span, 2003). Sliwinski (2006) notes that *Regarding the Pain of Others* is considered important to the field of visual culture as it "directs our attention away from the act of taking a picture […] to focus on the affective impact on the audience who views the image" (p. 89).

Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others* has generated discussion among scholars regarding the nature of encountering images of atrocity. One of the critical discussions is structured around the idea of a persistent split between being affected and being able to think and

understand (Butler, 2005; Sliwinski, 2006). Sliwinski (2006) interprets this split as a widespread effect of encountering an image of an atrocity that leaves viewers "horrified, enraged, even momentarily immobilized" (p. 89). Nevertheless, the effect of creating critical discussions around this kind of imagery in an education setting has been proved to be positive, as shown by the research undertaken by Gil-Glazer (2015). Gil-Glazer's work focuses on photography and difficult knowledge. She refers to photographs that address disturbing topics such as "violence, suffering and pain, extreme sexuality and gender identity, as well as discrimination and infringement upon democratic rights" (Gil-Glazer, 2015, p. 262). Another critical discussion generated by Sontag's (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others* is structured around whether the "affective transitivity" of photography has its political uses (Butler, 2005). Butler (2005) notes that "[f]or photographs to communicate effectively, they must have a transitive function: they must act on viewers in ways that bear directly on the judgments that viewers formulate about the world" (p. 823). My research, with its particular focus on the war photographs of James Nachtwey, adds to the small collection of art education studies on war photography. My intention was to explore the affective impact of war photographs on students' moral and intellectual development.

James Nachtwey's War Photography

> Photographers go to the extreme edges of human experience to show people what's going on. Sometimes they put their lives on the line, because they believe your opinions and your influence matter. They aim their pictures at your best instincts, generosity, a sense of right and wrong, the ability and the willingness to identify with others, the refusal to accept the unacceptable. (Nachtwey, 2007)

Nachtwey is one of the most highly respected contemporary photojournalists. The value of Nachtwey's photography is highlighted and validated by the numerous prizes and awards he

has received. Nachtwey (2007) positions himself as a war photographer who uses this particular medium to evoke humanity. Nachtwey has dedicated his life to using documentary photography to speak up for people who suffer from war and social injustices, in the hope that his viewers will have the capability to bring about positive changes to the situation. My research was a response to Nachtwey's 'invitation'. My goal was to construct a visual culture curriculum that maximized the positive educational value of Nachtwey's war photography in order to cultivate care ethics that might help to promote humanitarian education.

Creating a Viewer's Position on War Photographs in the Context of Multicultural Art Education

My research was situated in the context of a general education course entitled *Ethnic Arts: A Means of Intercultural Communication.* Prior to my research, I had taught the course for 5 years. The original course designers, Stuhr and Ballengee-Morris, are advocates of multicultural art education with social reconstruction as a goal. Pursuing this form of art education means to "challenge the dominant power and knowledge structures that tend to create socio-cultural inequities" (Stuhr, 1994, p. 171) and to "question the dominant ideology and provide hope for establishing a more democratic society" (Stuhr, 1994, p. 171). Stuhr and Ballengee-Morris co-designed the course to explore the intersection between visual culture and identity construction (see Appendix for course outline). Their original course examines how visual culture (re)produces socio-cultural inequities, and asks students to reflect on how their belief systems under the influence of visual culture may be helping to perpetuate social injustice. One of the key goals was to challenge the students' own biases and increase their "multicultural competencies". Below is an abbreviated version of the course rationale:

> This course has been constructed to confront and address the issues raised through the exploration of visual culture in the hope of challenging our biases and discriminatory practices within our society, which hinders democracy and social justice. This course provides opportunities for students to focus and communicate their learning and development to increase their multicultural competencies as national and world citizens.

Having based the design of my new course on the original course rationale, I set out to explore the intersection between visual culture and identity construction, with a specific focus on how war photography constructs students' identities as co-spectators of distant suffering. I used Nachtwey's war photography as a form of visual culture to cultivate students' awareness of critical issues at a global level.

Research Design

My research, entitled *Humanitarian Visual Culture Curriculum: An Action Research Study,* was situated in the *Ethnic Arts: A Means of Intercultural Communication* (Autumn 2010, 24 students; Winter 2011, 23 students, and Spring 2011, 22 students) course. The course consisted of twenty 2.5-hour lessons spread over ten weeks; meetings were held twice a week. I divided the course into three sections. In each section, I used one overarching theme to help the students organize their learning experiences, and one central question designed to encourage them to become aware of how they felt about their learning experiences. Section I covered six lessons. The overarching theme was "A world of difference", and the central question was "Who am I in the 21st century?" Section II also covered six lessons. The overarching theme was "Visibility and representation" and the central question was "What do I see in the context of war, violence and peace?" Section III covered eight lessons, including the arrangement of meeting individual students to prepare them to work on the final assignment. The overarching theme was "Humanity, human rights and

humanitarianism" and the central question was "Where do I stand in the context of humanitarian dilemmas?"

The course had three main assignments. The due dates were Lesson 6, Lesson 12 and Lesson 20. The overall goal of all three assignments was to help students develop a humanitarian perspective from the standpoint of being a global citizen. The aim of the first assignment was to help the students formulate their world views as individuals living in this shared, globalized society. The aim of the second assignment was to develop the students' critical perspectives so they would be able to analyse visual culture in a way that addressed the concepts of war, violence and peace. The aim of the final assignment was to help the students consolidate what they had learned and further establish the students' standpoints as co-spectators of distant suffering. For the final assignment, the students were asked to write a 5-7 page, double-spaced paper describing, analysing and interpreting one war photograph by Nachtwey. In addition, they were asked to present their papers in class. The findings discussed in this paper were generated from the final assignment.

Findings and Discussions

The findings indicate that students' personal experiences play a critical role in constructing their understanding of war and humanitarian issues. Among the 69 students (Autumn 2010, 24 students; Winter 2011, 23 students, and Spring 2011, 22 students), Ryan and Jay stood out as unique cases for comparison. In their final assignments, Ryan saw himself as a moral rescuer in the face of world hunger whereas Jay identified himself as a suffering victim kept in a refugee camp. In the following paragraphs, I discuss how war photography can be used to explore the ethical issues related to human experiences. The discussion is subdivided into three aspects, as follows: 1) How war photography engages students emotionally and activates their affective memories; 2) How

affective memory helps to construct students' understanding of distant suffering, and 3) How students' personal backgrounds structure their 'constitutions' as co-spectators of distant suffering.

War Photography Engages Students Emotionally and Activates their Affective Memories

The findings indicate that war photography engages students emotionally and activates their affective memory (a term that will be discussed later) as a result of the transitive function of photography. Retrospectively, I made one major change in each of the quarters (Autumn 2010, Winter 2011 and Spring 2011) with the aim of improving the teaching and learning outcomes. In Autumn 2010, I revised the assignment design after the mid-term test in response to students' requests, since a majority stated that they would prefer to have a clearer set of assignment guidelines. Hence, a series of three concrete steps was formulated:

1. Select one war photograph by James Nachtwey;
2. Explore the ethical issues related to the human experience shown in Nachtwey's photograph, and
3. Reflect upon the research finding.

In both Steps 2 and 3, I divided the task into three sub-steps (see Table 1).

Table 1 *Assignment Design for James Nachtwey's War Photography Paper*

Step	Description of the task
One	Select one war photograph by James Nachtwey
Two	Explore the ethical issues related to the human experience shown in Nachtwey's photograph ● Explore the contextual issues that are reflected in the image shown in the photograph ● Identify one key stakeholder who was responsible for/related to/suffered from the event ● Investigate the ethical disposition that lay behind the stakeholder's moral and/or political action
Three	Reflect upon the research finding ● Create a standpoint relating to this humanitarian dilemma ● Write up the paper with these course concepts in mind: 1. Who am I in the context of the 21st Century? 2. What do I see in the context of war, violence and peace?

3. Where do I stand in the context of humanitarian dilemmas?

- Themes for consideration:
  1. Humans/Humanity
  2. Human Rights/Human Wrongs
  3. (War) Conflict/Consequences
  4. Humanitarian Acts/Obstacles to Humanitarian Behaviour
  5. Bystander (Witness)/Accomplice
  6. Rejecting Violence/Non-violence/Quietism
  7. Civilian /Combatant
  8. National Interests/Universal Values
  9. Patriotic/Unpatriotic
  10. Glory & Heroism/Wounded & Traumatized

The students' works were diverse; some were unique. No generalizations could easily be made. A few students chose not to follow the guidelines, coming up instead with some interesting interpretations of the photographs selected. These revealed a strong personal emotional involvement, with some examples, such as Ryan's *The Darfur Effect* and Jay's *Different Ethnicity, But Human*, independently confirming the affective impact of war photographs on students.

Ryan sees the grains of survival. As a way of preparing the students to work on the paper, I scheduled a 20-30 minute meeting with each of them individually, during which we discussed their proposals. The proposal addressed five items: 1) the student's choice of photograph; 2) a potential topic; 3) a tentative thesis statement; 4) the purpose of the research, and 5) a list of references.

Ryan chose an image entitled *Grains of Survival*. It is a photograph from a photo essay entitled *The Tragedy of Sudan* (Nachtwey, 2004a). The photo essay was published as *Time* magazine's cover story. The description of the image is as follows: "Darfurian women attempt to salvage grain that has fallen from bags dropped by a World Food Program Plane" (Nachtwey, 2004b). (James Nachtwey Studio refused permission to reproduce this photograph.)

During our meeting, Ryan recalled his rewarding experience of meeting Nick Clooney in his high school years. Nick Clooney, the father of actor and director George Clooney, is active in

publicizing the situation in Darfur. As a result of this incident, Ryan developed an understanding that he himself could become actively involved with humanitarian issues.

Jay sees the deportees meeting in a refugee camp. Jay comes from a very different background. I was impressed by Jay when we met for the individual meeting because he was carrying a copy of *Inferno* (Nachtwey, 1999) with him. *Inferno* is a major publication of Nachtwey's work, documenting crimes against humanity during the 1990s. Weighing 9.8 pounds and measuring approximately 15 x 11 inches, the book is both heavy and difficult to carry. Jay chose to borrow *Inferno* (Nachtwey, 1999) from the library when all the other students looked up Nachtwey's photographs online.

Jay is an international student from South Korea. During a previous assignment, I was particularly struck by his opinions on war. As a member of a family suffering from the legacy of the Korean War, Jay regards the conflict as fighting between relatives and friends. Jay believes that he may be conscripted into the military to fight against his will.

In the term paper, Jay chose a photograph depicting Kosovar deportees. The photo was taken in Albania during the Kosovo War in 1999. The description of the photograph is as follows: "Albania, 1999 – Kosovar deportees meeting in a refugee camp" (Nachtwey, n.d.). (James Nachtwey Studio refused permission to reproduce this photograph.)

Affective Memory Helps to Construct Students' Understanding of Distant Suffering

Owing to the transitive function of this medium, the interpretation of war photography activates the affective memory. In return, the affective memory helps to construct the way students develop their emotional, intellectual and/or moral responses to distant suffering. I have adopted the term "affective memory" from a renowned acting theorist, Constantin Stanislavski (1863–1938), whose work has been studied in order to develop methods for applying empathy in other fields (Goodwin

& Deady, 2013). Stanislavski developed a system based on fifteen components; by asking actors to use their own life experiences to imagine what the life of their character might be like, the aim was to help immerse themselves in a particular role. Affective memory is one of the key components of the system.

Affective memory consists of sense memory and emotion memory, both of which run parallel to one another (Stanislavski, 1936; cited in Goodwin & Deady, 2012, p. 130). In essence, both memories process the "imagining" nature of recall (Goodwin & Deady, 2012), as memory is "an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude toward a whole active mass of past experience" (Le Doux, 2002 cited in Blair, 2008, p.74; cited in Goodwin & Deady, 2012, p. 130). I noticed that affective memory helped to construct Ryan's and Jay's responses to Nachtwey's photographs: Ryan took a moral stance as rescuer in the face of a humanitarian issue, whereas Jay tried to make sense of war through the eyes of a victim.

Ryan takes a moral stance as rescuer in the face of world hunger. Ryan entitled his paper *The Darfur Effect.* He chose to look at the Darfur issue in the context of world hunger. Speaking of his own transformative experience, Ryan believed that the average citizen can make a difference when it comes to humanitarian issues. His thesis statement was:

> James Nachtwey's image of Darfur victims goes beyond illustrations of the Sudanese's constant struggle for food and shelter. It also demonstrates the importance of raising awareness of the genocide as well as transforming my perspective on the way I view critical issues in life.

In *The Darfur Effect*, Ryan reflected on how he was enlightened, and how he enlightened others, on the severity of the Darfur situation. Five elements emerged in his reflection: 1) identifying himself as an American; 2) engaging with concepts of human rights; 3) holding

Christian values; 4) regarding George Clooney as a role model, and 5) responding to the call from Nick Clooney.

Ryan wrote:

> As an American, I have a hard time trying to put myself in the shoes of these poor Sudanese citizens who fight every day to survive because I cannot fathom how terrifying and stressful it must be.

In addition, Ryan believes in human rights. He wrote, 'As human beings, every individual should be treated equally and nobody should have to worry about when he or she will eat their next meal'. He derived these concepts from two sources, *The Office of the High Commission for Human Rights* and *The World Book*.

Ryan was forthright about his personal beliefs grounded in Christian values:

> I have always been taught to help those less fortunate than me. In this case, the people of Darfur need us more now than they ever had. Growing up as a Christian, the Golden Rule has always been relevant in my life. The Golden Rule states that one should treat others as one would like others to treat him or herself. I believe this rule is the backbone to the concept of human rights.

He also regarded George Clooney as a role model:

> George Clooney is a great role model for people to follow in taking a stand for Darfur. In addition to speaking to the United Nations, George Clooney has spoken on Oprah, spoke at a rally in Washington D.C, and even made a documentary advocating action from the United States.

Even more importantly, Ryan treasured his rewarding experience of meeting Nick Clooney. Ryan expressed in detail how he had developed an understanding of himself as an active participant in a humanitarian issue:

> George Clooney's father, Nick Clooney, is also very active in speaking out about Darfur. In fact, he came to my high school and spoke on the issue. He has been to Darfur and has seen first-hand how awful it is. He showed us pictures that he took and was very instrumental in making us realize we as high school students can make a difference. After Nick Clooney came to my school, I called my congressman and left him a message saying he needs to fight for Darfur in Congress. I did this three days in a row and it made me feel like I made a difference. I know I did not do much, but the intention was influential because lots of the students from my school called our congressman. In 2006, Representative Boehner was assigned a grade of D based on voting records according to "The Genocide Intervention Network--Darfur Scores". However, the following year, after I, along with my classmates, called, he improved his score to a C. I realize that this may just be coincidental, but Nick Clooney emailed our school and thanked us for helping make a difference in Darfur. This experience proved to me that I, [the name of the student], can make a difference.

Ryan believes that the average citizen can make a difference. He elaborated on this view by giving concrete examples:

> Whether it is donating money, collecting money to donate, passing out flyers to educate others, or just creating a stand and informing others on the issue, one person can make a difference.

It was because of this rewarding experience that Ryan recognized there was a "leader" in him. He emphasized how important it is to be informed. Being informed has enabled him to become a leader:

> Learning about the Darfur issue not only has made me passionate about helping the citizens being mistreated, but it also has helped me take a strong stance on the issue. Before

> becoming informed on the situation in Darfur, I would have defined myself as a person who is a follower. I did not like creating controversy and I did not say anything when I disagreed with someone. The story of Darfur made me sympathize with those affected and I really wanted to do something to help them. While some of my friends thought I was being extreme when I called my congressman, I disregarded their comments because I felt like it is the least I could do to try and help the situation. I became passionate on the issue and began telling my immediate and extended family about the issue along with friends from other schools. For the first time in my life, I was passionate about an issue and I stood up for what I believed. Through this process, I changed from a boy to a young man. I became the initiator instead of the follower. I now try to empower others by making them realize that they can make a difference.

Jay makes sense of war through exploring the idea of victimization. Jay chose a photograph depicting Kosovar deportees meeting in a refugee camp. He wrote:

> During that time, Albanians, who were the majority population in Kosovo, were sent to a refugee camp. The picture was taken in the refugee camp. In the picture, two men facing the camera are standing beyond the barbed wire fence. They are looking in opposite directions. On the other side of the fence, there is another person who is facing the two men. He is holding hands with a man on the other side. […] Through this picture, it seems that war is not just about killing people. It is a complicated thing. It is difficult to understand rationally. Sometimes it is dealing with people's emotional pain, not only physical pain that can be easily revealed through the images.

I believe Jay's unique perspective on war caused him to read *Inferno* (Nachtwey, 1999) very carefully. He wrote:

> When I read the book published by James Nachtwey entitled *Inferno*, I saw some pictures from Kosovo. And I realized that war was mostly about survivors, not just about massive destruction or casualties. As shown in Nachtwey's photo, the war is not only about casualties of people but it is for people who have survived. […] So this photo is different from other war photographs that I have seen. It is not about cruelty or the destruction of war. It touches the human senses.

Jay made an emotional connection with the images shown in Nachtwey's photograph. The Kosovar deportees reminded Jay of the pain that his family has endured since the end of the Korean War:

> However, it is interesting that this picture reminds me of things back in Korea. Korea is a place where the cold war is still going on. Even though I have never experienced war, I have a better sense than many others who do not have any experience with war. I heard about war a lot due to the environment I was in. This picture especially reminded me of a story that I had forgotten. The media usually focus on the brutal things about war. The media do not focus on families or survivors in war. The story has been vague. The story that I heard from my father is about my uncle whom I never meet. I did not hear this story until I got into high school. No one knows about my uncle except my father's siblings. Due to the South Korean government's policy, my family had to cancel my uncle's official record in order to be able to go abroad freely. This story started at the beginning of the Korean War. It has been tearing my family apart for about 60 years. Unfortunately, my uncle was unable to cross the border between North Korea and South Korea during the war. My family does not know whether he is alive or not. The only thing that we can do is register with the government for possible reunions. My family has not yet had a chance to reunite with my uncle. We just keep trying without knowing whether he is alive or not. It

> seems to me that my story is very similar to those people shown in the picture. Men were separated from one another because of war.

Jay entitled his paper *Different Ethnicity, But Human.* In the rest of the paper, he used the Kosovo War as an example to make sense of war, relying on six academic sources to develop his moral and intellectual inquiry. Two (*Inferno* (Nachtwey, 1999) and *Ethnic Cleansing in 20th-Century Europe* (Vardy & Tooley, 2003)) relate to background information on the Kosovo War, while three (*Is Milosevic game plan on schedule?* (Brown, 1999), *Images of War: Content Analysis of the Photo Coverage of the War in Kosovo* (Nikolaev, 2009), and *The Kosovo War: A Recapitulation* (Webber, 2009)) relate to the conflict's political aspects. The last source (*Narratives of Victims and Villains in Kosovo* (Zdravkovic-Zonta, 2009) touches on the concept of victimization.

For Jay, war is a way for a few elite people to gain advantages. Believing that war can never be fully understood by survivors, especially not those who also happen to be the victims of war, Jay used his paper to explore extensively the idea of victimization. He addressed how Albanians and Serbians kept using their pasts to make sense of their present, to deny others and to justify their own violence. In the conclusion, he wrote:

> In many different ways, the Kosovo War had done many things that war could do for people. However, it is important to know that the survivors are the people who need to be cared for. It seems that people are focusing more on the casualties. It can be seen based on how the media work. They are more likely to focus on the number of casualties but not on the survivors. And also, it is heartbreaking that people do not understand why the war has happened. It is not just about discrimination. It is also about politics that give power to some elite people. War is often initiated by people who have taken power inside politics. It seems that people are being used. Only a few elite people get advantages from the war

because they can control people with their powers including controlling history or the media.

Students' Personal Background Structures their "Constitutions" as Co-spectators of Distant Suffering

The ways in which Ryan and Jay constructed their perspectives on war and humanitarian issues were influenced by their personal and cultural experiences. For example, Ryan's account seems to suggest a viewer's position as a moral rescuer. He utilizes his rewarding transformative humanitarian experience in high school as a point of reference. He recalls how he actively participated in the Darfur issue. He responds to the image of starving Darfurians through the lens of world hunger. Identifying himself as an American who empathizes with human rights concepts and Christian values, and who respects George and Nick Clooney as role models, Ryan positions himself as a moral rescuer who believes that the average citizen can make a difference when it comes to humanitarian issues.

On the other hand, Jay seems to position himself as a suffering victim. He utilizes the enduring pain of sixty years of family separation as a point of reference. He looks at the image of Kosovar deportees through the lens of the manipulative powers of the elite. Identifying himself as a Korean, whose country bears the legacy of the Korean War, Jay is constantly reminded that he may be conscripted to fight his own relatives and friends against his will. Through his paper, Jay tries to make sense of war by addressing the long history of human brutality, the biased news coverage created by the media, and the voices of suffering war victims.

The difference between Ryan's and Jay's responses echoes what Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001) believe: that culture "makes up what we do and what we value" (p. 7) and our personal, cultural experiences indeed "confine possibilities of understanding and action"

(Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001, p. 7). In that sense, the multicultural art education approach provides a relevant point of reference. As mentioned in the rationale for the *Ethnic Arts: A Means of Intercultural Communication* course, one of the key goals was to challenge students' own biases and increase their "multicultural competencies". According to Ballengee-Morris and Stuhr (2001), the learning activities of multicultural art education with social reconstruction as a goal centre on enabling students to look at the ways in which their own culture, as well as that of others, has helped to make them what they are from a critical perspective, and in addition to help them to understand that what has been socially learned can also be unlearned. Teachers can initiate learning experiences that enable students to gain multiple outlooks on how one constructs one's own perspective on war and humanitarian issues and how that construction is influenced by personal background. Hence, students are empowered to see "broader possibilities for ways of thinking about life and death and the choices for action available to [them]" (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001, p. 7).

Conclusion

This paper has proposed a new and meaningful way to explore the affective impact of war photographs on students' moral and intellectual development. I used two unique cases of students to illustrate the strong personal involvement in students' selection and interpretation of war photographs. The findings confirm the hypothesis that war photographs can have a direct bearing on the judgments formulated by students about the world. An investigative process based on course work in the context of a 'humanitarian' visual culture curriculum such as this one can be relevant to students' lives. The actual process of selecting the photos means that the war photography engages the students emotionally and activates their affective memories. The affective memories, in turn, help to construct the students' understanding of distant suffering while

they are engaged in interpreting the photos. The findings revealed that war photographs can be a valuable educational tool that helps students understand more deeply their moral "constitutions" relating to war and humanitarian issues. They are able to develop moral values and intellectual inquiry based on their emotional responses to such images. In the light of the aspirations of multicultural art education, with its emphasis on social reconstruction as the main goal, I suggest art teachers can initiate meaningful learning experiences of/for life for students by drawing their attention to the suffering going on in the world. The students will come to understand more clearly how they and their fellow students are socially and culturally constructed, and to see the wider options or life choices available to them. Art education can thus play a unique role in creating "reverential conditions" in which students can study war photography, and encourage them to strive for a more just and equitable society.

In retrospect, this research study can be said to be beneficial in two ways. First, as a teacher-researcher as well as an international PhD student, I had the opportunity to implement a general education course that was designed to promote the ideal educational goal of the multicultural art education with social reconstruction as the goal. Second, I had access to a sample of undergraduate non-major students from a wide variety of backgrounds and life experiences, since The Ohio State University is one of the largest universities in the United States of America that hosts students from all over the world. Nevertheless, these two advantages also make me cautious about the important limitations of this paper. First, the findings are limited to two unique cases from a small-scale research study. It is therefore impossible to generalize the results. Second, and more importantly, the paper is based on research conducted with students studying within a multi-party, predominately Christian democracy, and primarily inspired by studies rooted in the multi-party democratic system of the United States of America. It would thus be difficult

to duplicate the research, especially if the academic institution is operating within a non-democratic, autocratic, fundamentalist or religious environment.

Nevertheless, taking a humanitarian approach to study war photographs still provides a meaningful starting point to explore their affective impact on students' moral and intellectual development. My research revealed that the students appreciated the course, as it covered controversial and important issues around the world. In fact, the students did not realize that so much suffering was taking place in the world. There was a positive change in their attitudes, as they became able to see things from other people's perspectives, in particular gaining knowledge of war while living in peace. Moving beyond this paper, future research should consider the following questions: 'How does a teacher determine what an atrocity is, relative to a student's background?' 'How does a teacher navigate the ethics regarding the level of distress they can subject their students to?' 'Would the same students have responded differently had they been shown different atrocities with more or less shocking or disturbing content?' 'Would the "affective transitivity" of the photographs have manifested itself in different ways if the atrocity was one that had appeared to encroach upon or directly challenge the student's personal belief system (religious, political, territorial etc.)?' The power that art teachers have to change the way students understand the world, themselves, and others, is potentially enormous. Coming to understand our moral constitutions through encountering images of atrocity will never be a risk-free. However, if undertaken respectfully and sensitively, it has the opportunity to represent a significant step in allowing us to more fully comprehend our shared humanity.

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Appendix: The Course Syllabus of *Ethnic Arts: A Means of Intercultural Communication*

Rationale

In this country, due to social, political, historical, and cultural inequities, many individuals and/or groups are disenfranchised or empowered on the basis of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, and geographic location to name a few. This form of inequity or privilege is influenced by and influences construction, production and consumption of visual culture. This course has been constructed to confront and address the issues raised through the exploration of visual culture in the hope of challenging our biases and discriminatory practices within our society, which hinders democracy and social justice. This course provides opportunities for students to focus and communicate their learning and development to increase their multicultural competencies as national and world citizens.

Course Description

In this course, we will critically investigate personal, national and global identities. Personal and communal narratives surrounding visual culture define and construct meaning in our everyday lives. Visual culture (which includes both visual art and popular media) is investigated as a site through which social and cultural definitions, norms and values, and expectations are reinforced, constructed as well as challenged. The goals for this course are to develop students' skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression and foster an understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture(s) of the United States.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to facilitate student learning and meet the goals and objectives by providing opportunities to:

- Analyze personal identity (through its many components) and its construction as it determines everyday behaviors and choices.
- Identify and examine ideas and issues, values and beliefs found in visual media.
- Interpret contemporary social and political views influencing the production and the consumption of visual culture.
- Investigate conditions of change impacting visual culture: education, technology, economics, political and more.
- Improve critical thinking skills through careful description, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of readings, videos, presentations, and fieldtrips.
- Refine skills in inquiry methods, expository writing and oral communication.

Art Education 367.01 is a GEC (General Elective Course) that fulfills the requirements for: Second Level Writing, Art/Humanities, and Social Diversity.

Required Texts/Supplies

- Text Book: The World is a Text, 3rd Edition
- A style sheet chosen from the following:
- *American Psychological Association,* http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
- *Chicago, Modern Language Association* http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/

Student Responsibilities & Course Policies

1. **Attendance:** As the course involves in-class writing, discussions, media presentations, and field trips, regular and timely attendance is required. **All absences require an e-mail to the instructor explaining**

the reason for the absence, preferably before the class meeting. In order for an absence to be excused, a student must provide appropriate documentation (i.e., a medical excuse from your doctor) and/or have the instructor's approval (i.e., family emergencies, funerals.) **A student's final course grade will be reduced by half a letter grade for each unexcused absence that occurs.** A student can fail this course due to poor attendance. It is the student's responsibility to meet with the course instructor to discuss extended periods of absence due to medical problems. Three (3) incidents of unexcused tardiness and/or leaving class early equals one unexcused absence.

2. **Guidelines for Class Discussions:** Students are expected to use appropriate terms and language within all class discussion. Racial slurs, derogatory naming or remarks disrespectful of the rights and dignity of "others" will not be tolerated. Beliefs and worldviews divergent from yours may be shared; respect for those differences is to be maintained within the classroom.

3. **Class Participation:** Active participation in classroom activities, discussions, and fieldtrips is a course requirement and counts for 10% of the final course grade. Class participation is evaluated daily. Therefore, excessive absences and highly inconsistent participation will impact class participation grades negatively. Quality participation includes consistent attendance, obvious preparation for class, asking pertinent questions and offering relevant comments, taking notes, actively engaging in classroom discussions and other activities, working constructively in large and small groups and submitting assignments on time.

4. **Rewriting Assignments:** Students may choose to rewrite all papers that were handed in on time once. All rewrites are due **ONE WEEK** from the date your original paper is returned from the instructor. If the rewritten paper shows **significant improvement**, the grade may be improved up to one letter grade (e.g., a C becomes a B). ***There is no makeup or re-do for leading a discussion. There is no rewrite for the final paper. Students cannot rewrite any paper that was handed in late.***
5. **Late Assignments: Assignment grades are reduced by 1/2 a letter grade for every weekday an assignment has not been handed in after the assigned due date.** Late assignments can be handed in at the beginning of class on scheduled class days, during office hours, or in the instructor's mailbox. Written assignments cannot be handed in as e-mail attachments unless a student has received the instructor's prior approval.

6. **Returning Graded Assignments:** Papers will be returned two weeks after the instructor receives papers. Papers are typically returned during regular scheduled classes. Final papers will be available for pick up in the art education office, 258 Hopkins.

7. **E-mail :** E-mail is used as a means of communicating with students about the course. E-mail is sent to your Ohio State email account.

8. **Plagiarism:** Copying and claiming someone else's words, ideas, or works (i.e., essays, term papers, in part or in full) as your own is considered plagiarism. A proper reference style should be used when using words or ideas of other people. Suspected cases of plagiarism must be reported immediately to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. The Committee regards academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. **If in doubt, credit your source**. Be sure to consult the course instructor, if you have questions about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration.

9. **Students with Special Needs/Disabilities:** If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office of Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

Assignments

Papers should describe, analyze and interpret visual culture forms and practices, their impact on cultural identities, and how they reflect and/or reinforce societal values. Do not write a paper that is only descriptive (i.e., a book report) or based on unsupported opinions; A successful paper goes beyond descriptive and personal opinions by presenting clearly expressed ideas and a well-developed arguments substantiated with citations and examples.

Paper Style and Format

All written assignments completed outside of class must be typed, meet required length, and should include:

- A cover page with title, your name, course title and assignment title and date.
- A descriptive title for the paper.
- Page numbers on all pages
- Left and right margin: no larger than 1.5"; Top and bottom margin: no larger than 1.0"
- Use 12 point Times or Times New Roman font
- Double-space all lines, except quotes over 40 words, which must be single-spaced and indented one-half inch.
- Spell check, proof read, and **staple (plastic coversheets).**
- Choose one of the following style sheets and follow it consistently: *American Psychological Association, Chicago, Modern Language Association.*

A. In-Class Written Assignments / Participation (10%):

Students are required to write in-class assignments related to course readings, class discussions, and/or other assigned activities. These assignments are designed as opportunities to develop specific writing techniques, to improve critical thinking skills, and to explore course content topics without the pressure of a letter grade. These assignments are graded pass/fail. If the assignment is missed, it may not be made up and credit will not be received for the assignment.

B. Site Paper/Site Presentation (15%):

In this assignment, you will need to visit (in person) a cultural site, observe its characteristics, gather information (brochures, photos, etc.), write a 3-page typed, double-spaced paper, and give a short presentation. Your paper should demonstrate how visual images contribute to a sense of "place" and should explain how these images relate to the individuals who visit the site, the immediate community and the larger social/cultural conditions. This assignment can be carried out as follows:

- Choose a place about which you have some knowledge, familiarity and experience, or about which you would like to learn more.

- Visit that cultural site and gather visual materials and information for analysis in your class presentation and paper.

- Using the course concepts, effectively describe the site (The space, artifacts, arts, aesthetic focus, etc.), critically reflect upon how the site's sense of "place" is constructed from both what is present *and* absent (questions of representation) analyze its connection to its cultural context and interpret how the site is culturally significant at different levels (personal, community, national and/or international). *Suggested* sites might include:

  Galleries and Museums:
  - OSU Multicultural Center: Ohio Union 4th floor
  - *OSU Wexner Center For the Arts*
  - OSU Hopkins Hall Gallery
  - OSU Exposures Gallery 292.9983
  - OSU Hale Black Culture Center 292.0074
  - The Ohio Craft Museum: 1665 W. Fifth Ave. Columbus, OH 614.486.4402; Free admission and parking

- Columbus Museum of Art: 480 E. Broad St. Columbus, OH 614.221.6801; $4 suggested student admission; $3 parking; Thursday evening free admission.
- Cultural Arts Center: 139 W. Main St. Columbus, OH 614.645.7047
- King Arts Complex: 867 Mt. Vernon Ave. Columbus, OH 614.252.5464
- Ohio Arts Council Riffe Gallery: 77 S. High St. Columbus, OH 614.644.9624
- Ohio Historical Center: I-71 & 17th Ave. 614.297.2300

C. Event Paper (5%):
Students will attend 1 event that is pre-approved by instructor. This event can be a gallery exhibition, concert, and lecture, celebratory event that is not of one's cultural group. The purpose is to surround oneself with difference. Review OSU News, Wexner Center, Multicultural Center's Calendar, Hale Center, to mention a few options, for programming events. A one page paper that includes a description of event (where, when, what, who, and why), as well as what did you learn.

D. The Visual Culture Producer Paper (15%):
People are engaged everyday in making aesthetic decisions and constructions. We are not simply consumers of visual culture, but are also continuously engaged in making aesthetic decisions that reflect our personal identity and/or are significant to ourselves, our families and/or communities.

The Visual Culture Producer Paper requires you to prepare and conduct an interview with someone you select regarding his/her form of cultural production. Who you select to interview as well as your question strategies and completed paper should clearly relate your interview data to the larger goals of the course (i.e., the intersection of social/cultural identity and visual culture). You are encouraged to define "making" broadly. For example, collecting, decorating, performing are all forms of "making" that do not necessarily result in a "new" object.

- Write a 3-page, typed, double-spaced paper describing aspects of the producer's identity relevant to your analysis. Always include the artist's name. Other relevant information could include his/her: age, ethnicity, gender, place of origin, sexual orientation, training (professional and/or self-taught), etc. Discuss the relationship between the producer's work and his/her interests, satisfaction, practice, beliefs and values. Be cautious not to objectify the person you interview and continuously reflect upon how to construct your writing in such a way as to create space for your visual culture producer's voice and agency.

- Analyze what the producer makes or does (practice, product and/or process). What are the most common themes/ideas in his/her work? How do his/her values and beliefs inform his/her visual creation and/or its function?

- Analyze the visual form/practice and its relationship to the producer's life experiences. What are his/her social and cultural affiliations? How did s/he get started making things? Why does s/he continue to make things? Why is making such visual works enjoyable/important? How does s/he relate personal identity to the work created? How does the producer's work fit into his/her cultural traditions and changing cultural practices (Traditional, Transitional, or Transformative Arts)?

- Considering the course concepts, interpret the significance of the visual culture producer and his/her work. (What have you learned from the artist and his/her work? How has the producer and his/her work influenced your ideas about visual culture? Specifically, what are the most important issues that influence understanding and appreciation of visual media? (e.g. aesthetic, cultural, economic, environmental, gender, historical, political, racial, sexual identity, and/or social issues)

E. Final Paper/Presentation (45%):
Write a 5-7 page, double-spaced paper describing, analyzing, and interpreting a cultural form or practice in North America. Your paper should follow the paper format guidelines outlined in the course syllabus. Relate your topic to one of the following ten themes:

- Architecture and Dwellings
- Art, Aesthetics and Culture in Everyday Life
- Naming and Cultural Diversity
- Visibility and Invisibility
- Religion and Spirituality
- Ritual, Celebration and Festivals
- Visual Culture and the Body
- Visual Culture and Environment
- Visual Culture and Identity Construction (e.g., age, gender, race, sexual orientation)
- Visual Culture and Narrative

- Analyze how the form expresses, reflects and/or reinforces individual or group identity (interests, attitudes, beliefs, and values).

- Interpret the immediate conditions and the broader contextual issues (social, historical, technological, political, economic, educational, etc.) influencing the producer/consumer, the form and/or practice, and the community.

- Critically evaluate and reflect on the significance of your interpretation. Be self-reflective; include a discussion of your own cultural/ethnic heritage and your beliefs, values and opinions.

- Support your interpretation with references from at least **5 resources:** course readings, interviews, books, journals, video, internet, etc. (Please note: No more than one of the five resources can be a website.)

  - **The Final Paper Proposal & Outline of Argument (10%)**
    - The Final Paper Proposal consists of four paragraphs describing your main topic (and related topics), your tentative thesis, your purpose, and your research strategy.
    - The Outline of Argument consists of single sentence statements of a thesis, supportive reasons, information, examples and a conclusion.

  - **The Rough Draft (10%)**
    - The Rough Draft develops the Outline of Argument and Proposal into a complete working draft with a bibliography.
    - The Peer Review is designed to help you write a paper that is clear and concise; the peer evaluator's constructive suggestions are beneficial in this process. Evaluation criteria will be given in class.

  - **The 7-page Final Paper & Presentation (25%)**
    The Final Paper Presentation consists of a 5 minute discussion of the student's final paper. Presentations will be assessed on content, delivery, and presentational aids.

    - **Content:** The content of a presentation must address the assignment criteria for the paper. An introduction should state clearly your purpose in the presentation (to inform, to demonstrate, to convince, etc.) and your position (thesis) regarding that topic. Your ideas should be sequenced to lead the audience to a significant understanding of the major ideas addressed in your paper. A summary of ideas at the end can be accomplished in any number of ways, but should engage the audience to reflect upon the issues raised.

    - **Delivery:** Delivery is assessed primarily on organization and preparation. An outline of your argument should be prepared for the instructor. You may use the outline or note cards to organize/integrate the content, the presentational aids and the strategies for involving class members in a brief discussion or activity. Your presentation should be rehearsed with attention to appropriate speech, stance, eye contact, gestures, etc.). ***Do not read your paper. You should have a reasonable familiarity with the subject and your argument in order to "field" questions and opposing positions.***

- **Presentational Aids:** Use at least **one** of several forms of media to support and to enhance the content and delivery of your presentation. The following ***suggested*** aids should be carefully and meaningfully integrated into your presentation. (Actual objects, Audio, Visuals, Video clips, Internet, Digital Images)

Evaluation

Assessment Criteria for Writing Assignments

Assignments in this course are evaluated using the following criteria:

- The paper's topic and thesis are clearly presented.
- The argument is effectively organized and supported by outside information. Style is appropriate to the purpose and the audience.
- Grammatical and mechanical elements are controlled (word use, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraph transition and development).
- Specific criteria of the class assignment have been met.

Grade Distribution

- 10 pts Quizzes
- 10 pts Site Paper (3 pages)
- 5 pts Site Paper Presentation
- 15 pts Visual Culture Producer Paper (3 pages)
- 5 pts Event Paper (1 page)
- 10 pts Final Paper Proposal and Outline
- 10 pts Final Paper Rough Draft
- 20 pts Final Paper (7 pages)
- 5 pts Final Paper Presentation
- 10 pts Participation in classroom activities, discussions, and fieldtrips

Grading Scale

Total of all Assignments = 100 points
Final course grade = Number of points earned/ 100 points

	A 93-100	A- 90-92
B+ 87-89	B 83-86	B- 80-83
C+ 77-79	C 73-76	C- 70-72
D+ 67-69	D 63-66	E 62-0