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Piano Pedagogy as a Test Case*

Joseph Agassi
Tel Aviv University and York University, Toronto
agass@tauex.tau.ac.il

*Lia Laor, *Paradigm War: Lessons Learned from 19th Century Piano Pedagogy*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016. Pp. xxi + 172.

"Good taste is always a proof of good sense and a clear understanding" (Carl Czerny; cited on p. 90).

As someone with no background in music pedagogy, theoretical or practical, active or passive, I fancy that two competing first piano lessons given to a normal child might sound

something like this. Traditional: ‘Put your right hand here. No, not like that, but this way. Relax. Now, strike the keyboard with your thumb. The name for this note is Middle C’, etc. Wild: ‘Can you make a sound on the piano? Fine; again. Can you use both hands? Lovely. Is it better, do you think? Fine. Now, as you make the sounds, can you move your right hand up and down? Better, no? And can you do the same with your left hand?’, etc. Which approach is more to your temperament? Carl Czerny took the first as unquestionably the obvious answer, while Charles Ives was equally convinced about the second. My heart is with Ives.

Perhaps that is why I found this book a pleasure to read, together with its presentation of the differences within a wider history of a grand-scale disagreement. Its thrust – that of an opposition to the current compartmentalization of piano teaching – is a popular one these days. In short, it is a clear, concise summary of a forgotten intellectual history, the study of a very narrow issue from the most general of perspectives. Specifically, it deals with early nineteenth century discussions of piano pedagogy from competing social philosophies, methodologies, and aesthetic and education theories, in the process summing up discussions that involved teachers, theoreticians, pianists and composers (p. 59).

The narrow issue being examined here is still alive and hotly debated in and around music schools, yet little published literature on it is available. The debate concerns the relative merits of technique; essentially, that the emphasis on the development of technical competence is lost on geniuses, who need very little training, and on most ordinary beginners,

since they drop out before they have a chance to become proficient (thereby remaining amateurs at best). The amount of effort that music teachers invest in them is therefore a waste. As for professionals (ignoring geniuses, who never need training, and top performances that are utterly agreeable both technically and artistically), discussions are split between those who consider technique the primary concern and those who stress interpretation more. Some value clean performances over artistically interesting ones, while others go the opposite way. When it comes to education, the dispute is more extreme: some require of trainers that they show total disregard for art; others insist that attention to art must enter in the very first lesson. The difference is conspicuous, both in the choice of music to be played and in the instructional techniques utilized.

The book presents this dispute in a highly scholarly, yet very readable, manner. The discussion turns firstly on the various philosophical antecedents and then on details of opinions on music teaching. Advocates of the science-oriented, mechanistic attitude towards instruction disregard the autonomy of the student that in other contexts appears as the soul of the scientific attitude. The more integrated view, the advocates of which are traditionally hostile to science, is holistic; that is to say, there is a tendency to ignore the boundaries between the diverse topics of discussion, subjects, and so on. This study presents a compromise opinion, a modification of the holistic view that appears when a holist does not dismiss mechanistic considerations out of hand.

When considered in the light of later developments, all past theories look to us wanting. While their impact on music education cannot be disputed, history nevertheless shows repeatedly that eclectic views have certain advantages. This is not to decry the idea of diversification: clearly, eclecticism owes its very existence to the imperfect general ideas that it subsequently exploits. It is perhaps no surprise, then, that even the severest critics of the most general ideas, those who dismiss them as metaphysical, cannot let them go. The ideas in question were developed during the Enlightenment Movement (which began during the scientific revolution and ended in the French Revolution), and in the Romantic Movement that followed. Despite its failure, the scientific revolution was successful in secularizing education; indeed, secular art schools bloomed early in the early nineteenth century. The more notable piano training works were also much in demand during the same period. Among the most significant are those of Clementi, Czerny, and especially Schumann, whose approach not only influenced Bartók and Kodály, but which also led to an increase in the kinds of publications opposed to boring exercises that, for example, Saint-Saëns and Debussy expressed in their famously humorous pieces.

In retrospect, this is very agreeable. Dull exercises, such as playing scales on the piano, cause tremendous ambivalence (pp. xvii, 155). However, exercises in and of themselves are but an example of a more general problem. Repetition of the same piece of music, such as Beethoven's notorious *Für Elise*, creates the same result. It rests on the discomfort we have

about a metaphysical issue. Every thing and every event partake in it. We are both unique individuals and replicas of what makes us human; the same holds, even if less obviously, for the pieces of furniture in our homes or for the items of clothing we wear. It is no accident that Glenn Gould preferred recording to public performance, whereas Sergiu Celibidache tried hard to prevent any recordings being made of his performances. The perfectionism that Arturo Toscanini suffered from was his search for the best recording of the best performance of a masterpiece that clashed with his recognition of the right of different versions to claim excellence, each in their own, different way.

The conflict is irresolvable. Immanuel Kant identified the divine with the rational, and the rational with the universal, although he never explained why. He ignored the unique. He demanded of education nothing but discipline. For him, what we learn in school is unimportant: it is the learning of discipline while we do it that matters. His *magnum opus* is his three critiques, each concerned respectively with science, ethics, and goal-directedness. The last item includes biology and art. What upset him about the latter is that its value lies in the very uniqueness of each significant work. Science recognizes any unique experience only after generalizing it within the universal language of mathematics. That art does the opposite perhaps requires a comment. Leading art historian Ernst Gombrich saw art as the outgrowth of artisanship, where only the latter is reproducible by a formula. It is well known that some artists ─ Rubens, Schubert, Stravinsky ─ created some uninteresting work that they then

turned into unique, valuable works of art by slightly retouching them. Other artists ─ Leonardo, Beethoven ─ went the opposite way and struggled with their creative ideas from the start, always striving for the unique.

Kant, too, struggled with the unique. He said, generally, that we appreciate art because it is beautiful. Beauty is universal. The beauty of a natural scene presented no problem for him. Neither did the beauty of artefacts created by rote. The beauty of a unique artwork, however, did. He viewed it as the product of a genius that defies characterization, and as an inferior kind of work that has no intellectual value (pp. 42-3). We still suffer from this ambivalence of his, especially towards geniuses, since the optimism of the Enlightenment Movement led it to view all ability as universal. Information theorists assure us that it is – in principle – possible to replicate a painting with a degree of accuracy that exceeds our perceptions to the extent that we are utterly unable to distinguish the original from the copy. Our recognition of diverse senses of uniqueness means that an observation is unique even after it has been generalized…meaning, in turn, that Kant was in error. In principle. In his neglected 1924 classic of philosophy, *Speculum Mentis or The Map of Knowledge*, R. G. Collingwood expressed dissatisfaction with scientific knowledge for its oversight of the particular, of religious knowledge for its oversight of the universal, and a cautious appreciation of artistic knowledge for its recognition of both.

Discussions regarding the training of a pianist ─ how many exercises are necessary, or how many rehearsals are required ─ are themselves questions concerning repetition, yet their applications differ depending on the case concerned.

Professor Laor takes us, in a concise and clear manner, through the philosophies of the period in the form of the rationalist Enlightenment Movement and the irrationalist Romantic Movement. Naturally, the former preferred science to art, while the latter reversed the order of significance. Today, we tend to evade this question by referring to circumstances: it is not that we generally prefer this or that; instead we defer to what serves us best at any given moment. As to the general preference, it rests on error: "Both Enlighteners and Romantics viewed rational thinking as inherently mechanistic, while viewing art as inherently intuitive" (p. 33). Einstein destroyed the popularity of the view of science as having no need for intuition, just as Gombrich dismissed the idea that art has no need of routine. It is indeed strange that this idea was ever popular, given that we have so many art theories and so many training practices.

What we have also learned is that training can be harmful. It is impossible to judge how much damage has been done due to erroneous musical theories, and how much the popularity of these theories has been, in turn, due to philosophical errors. Yet the fact that philosophy *has* contributed, both positively and negatively, permeates Professor Laor's discussion every time the more general is linked with the more specific. Indeed, I would go further and say

that, to the extent current opinion links every art item to its background, the main challenge that artists face (and which they invite their public to share with them) is that it is not the truth or falsity of this or that idea that matters but the issues involved in the realization of those thoughts. Hence, we may notice that the commonly accepted division between the brain and the heart is erroneous. Traditionally, this division appeared as that between well-defined automatic procedures and intuitions, yet this dichotomy ought to be rejected no matter what exactly each component is made of. When we teach harmony, for example, we should indicate that the rules in and of themselves are not sufficient for composing a piece of music. (Likewise, the difference between the music of Palestrina and computer-generated music is the distance between the artistic and the merely pleasant.) Gombrich's theory of art was that training opens the way to creativity. This serves to bridge the Enlighteners' and the Romantics' views on art, a theory that Professor Laor masterfully presents. She finds its first significant expression in the forgotten philosophical work of early nineteenth century writer Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter), who greatly influenced Robert Schumann's contribution to piano training. (His 'Album for the Young' (op. 68), which seems to me better remembered now as pieces of music rather than as training for the young, is a mantle that has been inherited by Bartók.) Indeed, the author hopes that her book will help at the very least revive, if not Schumann's contribution to piano instruction, the exuberance that permeates his tremendous respect for children's autonomy (pp. 126, 130-1).

The setting of the book as a *Paradigm War*, as a controversy, ensures its presentation of different views. While clearly siding with the party that recommends training includes technical dexterity from the start, as well as considering artistic concerns and more, it contributes to the current debate by clarifying the history of the dispute. It is surprising how many misunderstandings Professor Laor finds in the documents cited, all of which are subsequently – and convincingly – clarified. These clarifications should help render the ongoing discussions more rational, while simultaneously allowing for many up-to-date items and voices, whether philosophical, aesthetic or educational, to contribute towards, participate in, and further enrich, the debate.

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Impact of Creative Music Making and Improvisational Approaches for Non-Music Specialists: A Case Study in Teacher Education in Japan

Yuki Morijiri
Tokyo Gakugei University
morijiri@u-gakugei.ac.jp

Abstract

The difficulties of teaching music by non-music specialists are widely debated, particularly in the Japanese music curriculum in primary school education in which the current ideas of creative music making are thought to be relatively new. The purpose of this research was to

explore how non-music major students in teacher training experienced activities of creative music making and how/what they could learn from such a session. This research study is based on one of these case studies. Japanese non-music major undergraduate students (n=50) submitted their self-reports after taking part in a ninety minute creative music making session led by a British instructor. All words in the self-reports were transcribed as data and were processed using software KH Coder 3 alpha as a text mining approach in order to elicit a lexical co-occurrence network. With these results, seven sub-categories were elicited. The most frequent words were classified into a category of ‘an enjoyable approach for a music class’ which included rhythmic activities learned by imitating the instructor. The participants also found the improvisational music approaches useful for general educational settings and showed strong interest in utilising creative music making in other classroom teaching.

Key words

music education, teacher training, creative music making, non-music specialists, generalist teacher

Introduction

In most primary school education settings, pupils are usually taught by generalist teachers who are expected to be able to teach all subjects. However, teaching music in primary school by generalist teachers has long been one of the challenges on a worldwide basis. In an earlier study, Mills (1989) reported that non-music specialist primary education students (hereinafter called "NMES" as an abbreviation of "Non-Music Education Students") had little confidence in their ability to teach music. Hewitt (2002) compared two groups, which were 'specialist' and 'generalist' teachers in terms of musical training and found out that generalist teachers showed lower levels of confidence and self-efficacy in the composition process. Russell-Bowie (2009) conducted a research study across five countries (Australia, Namibia, South Africa, USA and Ireland) in terms of priorities and challenges for teaching music in primary schools, subsequently concluding that the lack of teachers' experiences both professionally and personally in music and the lack of priority for music in schools are identified as profound problems, regardless of country. In addition to the lack of priority for music in academic achievement, lack of teachers' knowledge, resources and structure about music teaching is a barrier to improve music curriculum in schools (Bresler, 1993). Research studies have widely established that generalist primary teachers who have fewer musical experiences and less perceived expertise are likely to have less confidence in their abilities to teach music in the classroom (Henley, 2011; Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006; Garvis, 2013; de Vries, 2013, Stavrou, 2012, Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). However, there is a study

suggesting that there is not necessarily a relationship between personal musical experiences and teaching music (Jeanneret & Degraffenreid, 2012).

One of the problems for generalist teachers in teaching music could be a specific perception that music is ‘special’, which is often believed, requiring something ‘special’ for doing musical activities (Mills, 1989; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). When compared with music specialists, who seem to have already acquired some ‘special’ skills needed for performing music, generalist teachers would perceive themselves as the ones who are ‘not able to do music’. These perceptions could lead to a lack of confidence for teaching music. Another perception is that music is for someone ‘talented’: if the people perceive themselves as ‘not musical’, it weakens their confidence for teaching music (Stunell, 2010). The concept that musical ability should be cultivated by appropriate music learning and musical activities is believed by some teachers (Jaap & Patrick, 2015). However, non-music specialist teachers still seem to firmly believe that their capability for teaching music can be decided by ‘special’ training, experience and ‘special’ talent, which they perceive themselves as not having. These perceptions could lead the generalist teachers to keep music at a distance in their classroom teaching.

In their UK study, Holden and Button (2006) reported that non-music specialist teachers ranked their confidence in teaching music in the classroom the lowest among all subjects. They also added “not being able to read music made respondents feel very

vulnerable" as a reason (p.29). Hallam, Burnard, Robertson, Saleh, Rogers and Kokatsaki (2009) found that, in a primary teacher-training programme, the students who played one or more musical instruments showed a significant difference in their level of confidence teaching music compared to non-players. The students who were not able to play an instrument were significantly less confident than instrumentalists teaching music such as: singing to the class, singing to teach music, enjoying teaching music and playing an instrument for teaching. Also, according to Russell-Bowie's study (2010), it revealed significant correlations between having confidence in teaching music and musical background, such as being able to play instruments. Perceived musical abilities and technical skills in music itself can have a substantial impact on creating the people's perception of being able to teach music.

These examples of challenges for music education could be universal amongst many countries, although systems or curriculums for music education and teacher training are different in each country. Japan is not an exception. Shimojo, Hirata and Fukuchi (1996) conducted a questionnaire survey of Japanese primary school teachers regarding the difficulty of teaching each subject in their classroom. In this research, 582 teachers responded to the survey and it revealed that they thought the most difficult subject to teach in primary school was music. This research was also explicit about the main reasons why they felt teaching this subject was difficult, revealing particularly a lack of knowledge of content and a lack of

methods for teaching music. MEXT (2019) conducted a national survey of elementary and junior-high schools across Japan in order to explore the actual situation of teaching in schools. Nineteen thousand, six hundred seventy-one primary schools responded to this survey and the results showed the proportion of subjects taught by non-classroom teachers, namely specialist teachers, in the academic year 2018-2019 (April 2018 to March 2019). From Grade 1 (aged 6-7) to Grade 6 (aged 11-12), the proportion of music taught by music specialist teachers increased; Grade 1 = 12.2%, Grade 2 = 20.7%, Grade 3 = 40.6%, Grade 4 = 47.8%, Grade 5 = 54.0% and Grade 6 = 55.6%. Particularly in lower grades (Grade 1 – 2, aged 6-8), mostly classroom teachers who are generalist teachers teach music in their class. This fundamental situation has not changed much on a worldwide basis, including Japan, and is part of the critical issue of music taught by generalist teachers.

Creative music making in Japan

In Japan, the national curriculum has been set up and named the “Course of Study” by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for school education. This guideline has been revised approximately every ten years since it was officially published with legally binding force in 1958 (although the first tentative guideline was published in 1947). In the current music guideline, the subject has two areas: Music-Making and Appraising (MEXT, 2011, 2017a, 2017b). The area of Music-Making has

three sub-areas as activities: Singing, Playing Instruments and Creative Music Making. Among these three activities, the current ideas and concepts of creative music making are relatively new. In previous guidelines before 1989, the ideas for music creation were based on the Western Classical music tradition, such as making a melody based on a piece of tonal music, making accompaniment with chords, and arranging some parts of a piece of music with notation (Shimazaki, 2009). In 1989, a revised guideline for compulsory education was published by MEXT and introduced a new concept as 'creative music making'. This concept was influenced by more contemporary ideas from overseas, such as Soundscape by Murray Schafer and creative music making by John Painter. Including more exploratory and improvisational musical activities and the use of various sound materials, these new concepts were expected to expand the ideas of musical creation in music education. In brief, this new revision attempted to introduce new musical ideas or applications in music creation rather than continuing with the more conservative, conventional ideas of music itself in music education. It was believed that this new approach would enable pupils to make music by applying not only the approach based on the Western Classical music tradition, but also on different styles of music making.

However, in spite of the intentions of the government, schools actually faced a difficult situation. In music education in Japanese Schools, music activities in a class had emphasised practice and rehearsed music and there were fewer opportunities for improvising and creating.

In an extensive survey involving 911 elementary schools in Japan, 52.3% of elementary school pupils responded that they liked or would rather have the activity of creative music making in music class, whilst 68.1% of them responded that they generally like music classes (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2015). By comparison, only 32.7% of elementary school teachers agreed positively that pupils are highly likely to be interested in making music with musical structures and the process of constructing music. Furthermore, only 15.5% of the teachers believe that the pupils easily acquire creative music making (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, 2015). Adachi and Chino (2004) reported that activities of creative music making were incorporated into music education by only 66% of the elementary schools which responded to their survey. They also pointed out two reasons why creative music making is not practiced. The first reason was that people believe "only exceptional people with a special talent or extensive training can actually create such music" (p.307). This perception is associated with a conventional understanding of music. The second reason is the lack of a long-term vision of teaching the activities of creative music making. For teachers in elementary schools, it was quite challenging to teach music with this new concept of creative music making, particularly for musical activities for which they had no teaching experience and no personal experience in music creation. Creative music making is understood as one important aspect in music education, however teachers generally have less confidence in engaging students in creative activities (Henry, 1996; Dogani, 2004).

Alongside teachers who already had experience teaching in schools not being able to cope well with the new ideas of creative music making, this situation was highly likely to create additional consequences for students enrolled in teacher training in higher education. In teacher education, some influences come from what the students had experienced in their own school education, as well as their own musical skills and background (Hennessy, 2000; Russell-Bowie, 2010). In teacher training, the students learn how to teach music based on the National Curriculum in domestic contexts. In addition, they will reflect what they had received in their own school education, and their basic concepts of teaching music will be influenced by the range of their own experiences of learning music, as most NMES only receive music education in school settings. Critically, it could be said that there might be fewer opportunities to learn new concepts in the understanding of music and how to teach music in schools in a teacher training programme in higher education, unless the students have prior knowledge of the teaching approaches which they have not experienced.

Since the current ideas of creative music making were introduced to Japanese music education, creative music making activities have been challenging for both pupils and teachers. If the pupils have not experienced creative music making sufficiently in schools, it will be difficult to look back at their creative experiences in childhood as fruitful learning when they grow up. Their experiences of music creation could also form the basis of their understanding of music. If the students in teacher education perceive themselves as not being

able to teach creative music making because of a lack of experience or expertise, higher education needs to cultivate these skills in the students. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) reported that NMES showed improvements in confidence in their personal musical abilities and their abilities to teach music in the primary school after participating in 'blues activities', which were aimed at playing an improvised 12-bar blues on an electronic keyboard for beginners. Russel-Bowie (2010) also emphasised the importance of higher education for trainee teachers as a chance of empowerment. Abilities and confidence for generalist music teachers can be improved in higher education and in their experience of learning (Henley, 2017; Holden & Button, 2006).

Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore how NMES in teacher training experience activities of creative music making and how/what they could learn from these sessions. As many generalist trainee teachers are likely to believe that music is special and teaching music can only be done by someone who acquires special skills or has talent, this research aimed to investigate exploratorily their perceptions on creative music making after taking part in an improvisational creative music workshop.

Methodology

Participants

The participants were 50 undergraduate students (Male = 19, Female = 31) in their 3rd year

Bachelor of Education, who majored in primary school education and also had a sub-major based on a subject at university in Tokyo, Japan. All of the participants were non-music major students, namely NMES. The details of their major subjects are shown in Table 1. Art Education in the university indicates studying pedagogy in terms of visual art, such as; painting, graphic design and craft, which are not related to music or drama.

Table 1 *Sampled students' major subject in primary education*

Major subject	Number	%
Art Education	23	46.0%
Mathematics Education	19	38.0%
English Education	5	10.0%
International Education	2	4.0%
Calligraphy Education	1	2.0%
Total	50	100.0%

All of the participants were enrolled in a music pedagogy module. At the first class of this module, the participants responded to a brief survey about their musical experiences. In a part of it, they submitted comments about what the most memorable experiences were in music classes in primary and secondary schools. None of the participants reported Creative Music Making as the most memorable experience in music classes. Twenty participants (40%) reported activities related to 'Singing' as the most memorable ones and nineteen participants (38%) reported 'Playing Instruments". Six participants (12%) reported the most memorable activities were in the area of "Apprising" and another five students mentioned other activities

(e.g. talking with a teacher). The participants took three classes (each class lasted 90 minutes) before taking part in the subject session and had learned basic concepts for primary music education, such as the purpose of studying the subject, a brief guideline of primary music education and some musical terms. They had also experienced some activities of singing and playing instruments.

Research design

Due to the specific educational situation, a case study was utilised as a research method. A case study is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi) and can be applied for an individual case, including a class, an event and a group (Gillham, 2000; Thomas, 2011). Particularly, an educational case study is "an empirical enquiry which is: conducted within a localized boundary of space and time… into *interesting* aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system" (Bassey, 1999, p.58). Also, if the research question is based on exploratory views, such as *"how"* and *"why"*, the case study method could be interesting to examine (Yin, 2009). In this research study, the research questions are exploratory in a specific social context. The research session was conducted as a part of module with NMES and its data was derived from their comments, based on what they learned and how they felt. Therefore, it might be suitable to apply the case study method to explore the case as a research method.

The participants took part in a creative music making workshop, led by an English instructor at a university hall. The workshop lasted 90 minutes in total and was taught in English and translated into Japanese by a researcher for the participants when necessary. The workshop was designed within the context of this research study. Based on the concept of creative music making, the workshop was planned to include some potentially new concepts for the participants: improvisational approaches, the creative process of music making, and deviation from a written music score. The workshop was taught with the VOCES8 Method (Smith, 2013), that was inspired by Hallam's (2010) research study, as an implementational approach throughout the session. The VOCES8 Method includes using Latin and African rhythms, which are thought to be less familiar to Japanese students. This method embraces improvisational approaches to the performance of music without special musical expertise and accessible ways to create music for the general classroom environment. The workshop basically contained three different music activities which have not been introduced to authorised music textbooks for compulsory education in Japan. Each of the three activities focused on rhythm, melody and harmony.

The first activity mainly explored rhythm. The participants were asked to copy whatever the instructor did, for example body movement, body percussion, making sounds and creating rhythm. After this, they learned three different rhythmic patterns with hand claps, and then were divided into three groups to create layers using the rhythm and sounds which

they had learned in various ways. This first part lasted approximately 25 minutes.

The second part focused on harmony. The instructor demonstrated a cyclical harmonic progression comprised of four chords (F-Bb-C-F) on the piano to the participants. They were asked to pick out one note from each chord and sing it in various ways, for example by a vowel or humming. Approximately 10 minutes were spent on this part.

The final activity was creative singing of songs with melodies. A music sheet entitled 'Spiritual Medley', which consisted of 3 songs; (Wade in the Water, Hit the Road Jack, Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child) and 1 voice percussion, was provided for their information. The participants learned 1st (Wade in the Water), 2nd (Hit the Road Jack) and 4th (voice percussion) voices. They mainly sang the 1st and 2nd melodies by ear and tried a ‘mashup’ with the instructor’s direction, using various singing styles, such as singing with lyrics or humming with changes of dynamics. This final part lasted approximately 20 minutes. In addition to the three main activities, the students had opportunities to listen to the theoretical background of the method, for example the intention of each musical activity, useful teaching skills and expected outcomes of the method. There was also time allocated for questions at the end of the session. The full session was recorded with permission granted beforehand and the researcher was present in the session as an interpreter and an observer. After the session, the recorded video was observed in order to understand the students’ behaviour and submitted comments.

Data collection and analysis

In the case study method, qualitative data collection, such as observations, interviews and documents are often preferred (Stake, 2005), therefore this research study used self-reports as documents to analyse the data. A week after the workshop, the fifty participants submitted their self-reports about their experiences and thoughts about the workshop. All words were transcribed as data and were processed using software, KH Coder 3 alpha, as a text mining approach (Higuchi, 2016, 2017) in order to elicit a lexical co-occurrence network in the self-reports. This software enables us to draw a lexical co-occurrence network based on the Jaccard similarity coefficient. According to the developer, this approach suggests that researchers should go back to the original text data during analysis in order to ensure the reliability of its results related to the context of the original texts (Higuchi, 2016, 2017). In this case, some modifiers were excluded in the process of analysis, such as ‘really’ ‘quite’ and ‘very’ because these are not significant words to describe the content itself. After eliciting a whole lexical co-occurrence network, the context of each sub-category (subgraph in the network) was considered with the linked original texts in order to understand the contents and to label each sub-category as a component. In addition to a text mining approach, an observation was utilised to interpret the comments and students’ behaviour.

Results

From all data, 2,915 words were extracted, and 1,172 words were used for analysis. Table 2 shows the list of words which appeared more than 4 times in all data. Figure 1 illustrates a lexical co-occurrence network generated from all data. In Figure 1, the size of each circle corresponds to the frequency of the word it contains. Each line shows co-occurrence, for example the darker lines indicate the higher coefficient. According to the result of analysis, seven subgraphs were generated as Figure 1 illustrates.

Table 2 *Extracted words and frequency*

Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency	Words	Frequency
Enjoy	46	People	12	Workshop	6	Listen	5
Music	35	Myself	11	Different	6	Method	5
Think	35	Use	10	Like	6	Impression	4
Rhythm	24	Move	10	Receive	6	Activity	4
Sing	22	Fun	10	Good	6	Participate	4
Sound	19	Chord	10	Language	5	Useful	4
Feel	17	Appreciate	9	Pupils	5	Time	4
Instructor	15	Together	9	Natural	5	Concentrate	4
Copy	14	Difficult	8	Various	5	Before	4
Class	13	Beginning	7	All	5	Communicate	4
Body	13	Make	7	Experience	5		

* Words that appeared more than 4 times

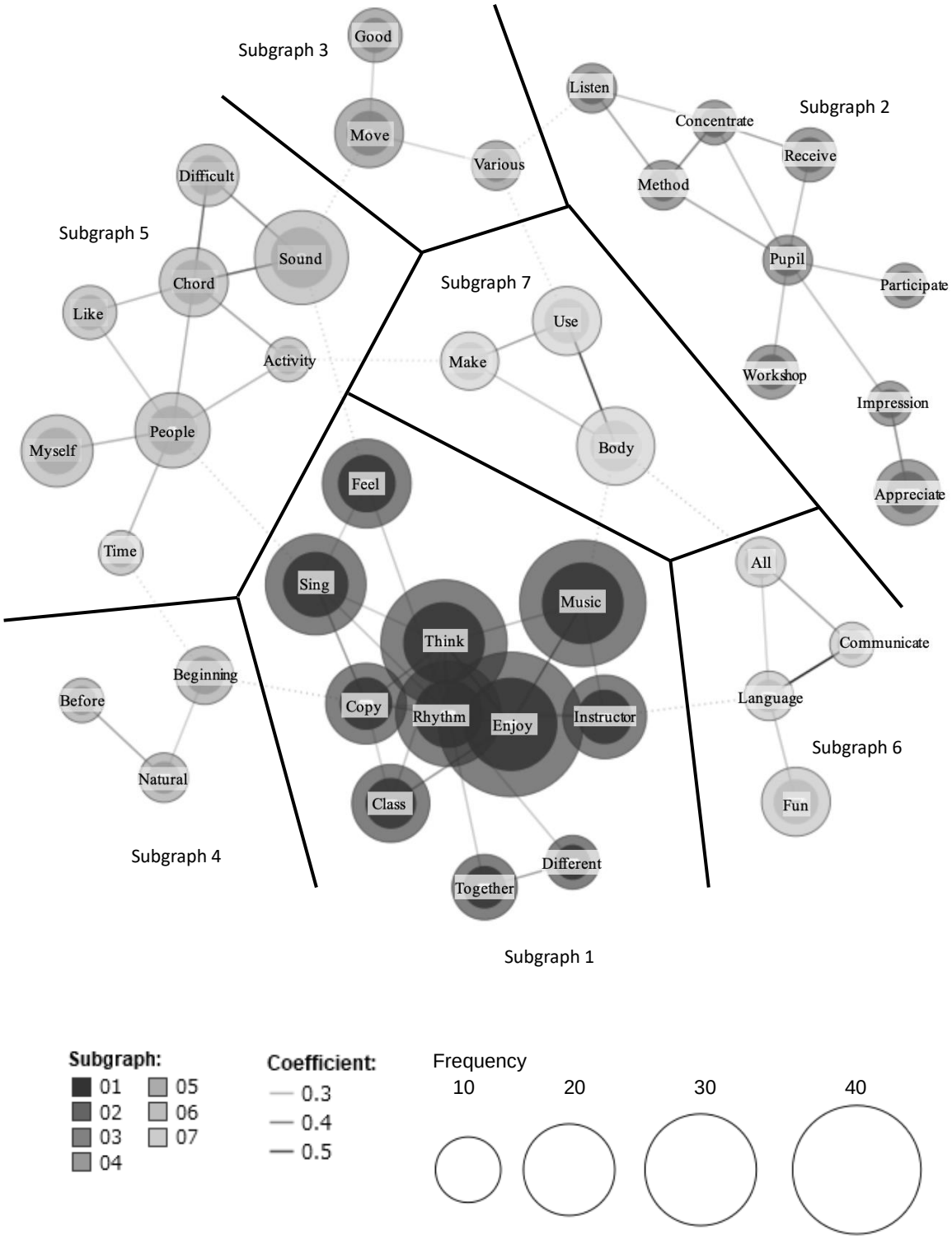

Figure 1 *Lexical co-occurrence network*

The term ‘Enjoy’, which was assigned the highest frequency from all data, obtained

0.47 Jaccard Similarity Index with the term ‘Think’ and 0.41 with the term ‘Music’, followed by 0.39 with ‘Rhythm’ and 0.36 with ‘Class’. These words are included in subgraph 1 in Figure 1. Subgraph 1 (bottom centre in Figure 1) comprises eleven words: Enjoy, Music, Think, Rhythm, Copy, Instructor, Sing, Feel, Class, Together, and Different. The sentences in the original data which were associated with this subgraph include the contents of the participants’ joyful experiences by copying what the instructor did, which turned into structured rhythm patterns with some layers, and then into actual music. Also, the participants felt that they made music by themselves without special techniques or expertise. This category of the subgraph was named as an “enjoyable approach for music class”. In this category, some participants described their experience as follows:

> “ ... when three different rhythmic patterns were mixed together, it became a really interesting sound even though each rhythm was totally different.”

> “At the beginning, we just started to copy him [the instructor] and then realised this became rhythm. And then we layered a couple of rhythmic patterns … I felt it was really great and got a new understanding of the power of music.”

> “I really enjoyed the session and I was impressed to be able to make great music

by just copying him [the instructor].”

“ ... I thought we (future teachers) would need to devise a way to let pupils enjoy music like I did in this session. If we can create an enjoyable environment, pupils could positively join in and it would help us to make active learning classes.”

The participants seemed to enjoy the rhythmic musical activity of imitating the instructor. Also, it could be thought that the participants were attracted by both the instructor’s manner of presentation and his personality; being energetic, appealing and engaging, in addition to the positive effect of being taught by a guest lecturer.

In this manner, the other six categories were delineated and given names relating to the words contained therein. Table 3 shows each subgraph, words comprised in its subgraph and the name of the category. Subgraph 2 (top right in Figure 1) was labelled as “general educational ideas” which includes the participants’ perspectives on educational leading in general educational settings, not only in purely music education settings. Improvisational approaches in music making prompts reactions, heightens attention to surroundings and increases concentration on what they are doing. Students in higher education rarely learn music pedagogy through learning improvisational approaches themselves. The participants were inspired by utilising this idea to capture people’s attention in a learning environment.

Some examples of the participants' comments are as below:

" ... I really enjoyed and appreciated learning a way to get students' attention and to let all pupils participate in musical activities with a song and melodies, regardless of one's limitation at music."

"It was a really useful way to get pupils to listen to a teacher and concentrate on activities. I deeply learned this essential skill as a teacher though learning music in this workshop. When I become a teacher, I definitely want to try this way."

"I thought it would be useful for both class management and teaching a subject if this method could be applied in educational environments."

"I think this method enables every pupil to participate in and enjoy music easily, although playing music could be thought to require technical skills. It was new for me as I didn't receive this kind of education in Japanese schools. It was informative."

Table 3 *Category of subgraph*

subgraph	Name of category	Words in the subgraph
1	Enjoyable approach for music class	Enjoy, Music, Think, Rhythm, Copy, Instructor, Sing, Feel, Class, Together, Different
2	General educational ideas	Pupils, Workshop, Concentrate, Listen, Method, Receive, Participate, Impression, Appreciate
3	Various movements	Move, Various, Good
4	Natural introduction	Beginning, Natural, Before
5	Difficulty of singing in chords	Sound, Chord, Feel, People, Myself, Sing, Difficult, Activity, Like, Time
6	Non-verbal communication	Fun, All, Language, Communicate
7	Making music with body	Body, Use, Make

The third category was regarding “various movements”, which contained terms “move”, “various” and “good” (top centre in Figure 1). As the workshop included body percussion, some participants mentioned their experiences with various movements. The fourth category was labelled “natural introduction” (bottom left in Figure 1). The workshop did not start with many verbal explanations or introductions but rather was facilitated with an alternative way of communication, by copying body movements and making rhythm together with just a few physical instructions. Usual instructions for a class are more explanatory and formal in Japan. Some of the participants reported that they unconsciously started learning music and then realised that the activity at the beginning was a warmup in preparation for further musical activities.

The fifth category (bottom centre in Figure 1) was named “difficultly of singing in

chords", which focused on the activity of singing notes within chords. The instructor asked participants to pick a note within a chord and sing it in different musical contexts. This activity was challenging for some participants and brought opportunities to think about what they had received in music education in their school lives. Some examples are as follows:

> "When we made a harmony from a chord, if we had taken a bit more time to make sure of a note and build up a harmony slowly, we would have been able to enjoy the harmony in various ways. Around me, everyone just hummed the same tune as we didn't have confidence."

> " ... the most impressive activity was individually choosing one note from a harmony and singing it. When he [the instructor] said we could arrange within a harmony, most of us didn't do that and hesitated. Japanese people are very good at doing the same things as others do. However, we are likely to be very passive, and avoid creating something original and doing something different from others. I tried to consider how to solve this fundamental problem, but it is difficult to reach a conclusion."

Observation of this activity showed that the participants' voices were quieter compared

to other activities and their facial expressions slightly more serious. It is understandable that they hesitated somewhat doing such a unique, improvised activity.

The sixth category (bottom right in Figure 1) was labelled “non-verbal communication”, as some participants gave their comments that music is a universal language with which to communicate. In this university, undergraduate courses are primarily taught in Japanese, making it unusual to take a class in English. This experience might make the participants think about the difference of languages and ways of communication. The participants felt they were communicating with each other through music. For example:

> “I felt we could communicate with each other even though we cannot understand each other’s language.”

The seventh category embraced “making music with body” (centre in Figure 1). The participants found that they could make music effectively using their own bodies. One of the stereotyped prejudices could be that music is comprised of singing and instrumental sounds, such as piano, guitar and recorder in a music class.

> “ ... I’ve learned we can create music with the whole of our bodies, not only by clapping hands or with the voice.”

From the data, the seven categories were generated. Each category embraced the contents of creative music making which the participants experienced in the workshop and included their perceptions of the musical activities. Also, some general educational perspectives were revealed from their self-reports.

Discussion and Conclusion

Data revealed that the non-music specialist, NMES' perceptions of their own experiences through the workshop on creative music making. The most frequent words (top 5) were categorised into the component of "enjoyable approaches in music education" and it mainly contains the activity using rhythm. The NMES specialists were highly likely to perceive that playing rhythms with their bodies is an enjoyable activity for many people, without a technical barrier, although the workshop contains other activities focusing on melody and harmony. They learned to play each rhythm separately and then made layers using the rhythms they had played, including improvisational ideas. Despite the fact that three rhythmic patterns were played and layered together, none of the participants reported that it was confusing or difficult. In contrast, they found it difficult singing a single note within a three note chord. There was a perceived gap between these two activities in terms of musical technical difficulty. There could be two main reasons for this. One reason would be related to

the features of each of the musical elements. Rhythm is thought to be a more primitive and primary musical element compared to harmony (Cowell, 2004). In most educational resources, studying rhythm is introduced to pupils before studying harmony. Rhythm and harmony embody different levels of musical complexity and therefore activities with rhythm could be more simple and more accessible, which enabled the NMES specialists to feel that they 'are able to' play and make music. The other reason could be the process of producing sound. In the activity with rhythm, they learned every single rhythm, then layered what they had learned. As a result, layered rhythmic patterns were created. However, the opposite process was required in the activity with the chords. The harmonies of the chord progression were demonstrated and introduced first. Then, the NMES were asked to choose a note they liked in each chord. When everyone chose and sang one note for each chord, the harmonies of the proposed chord progression were created. Thus, it could be suggested that the activity with rhythm was more like a "bottom-up" process of creative music making and the activity with chords was more like a "top-down" process. Also, as the NMES did not have much musical expertise, some of them found it difficult to hear and identify the individual notes of a chord by ear. Particularly, they did not have much confidence singing a different note from the others or arranging their singing in a chord. The lack of confidence in showing their creative ideas in the activity could lead us to conclude that they all gravitated towards the easiest choice, namely singing the same note as the others. From these observations, it could

be thought that a bottom-up process of learning as a small step with primitive musical elements would be easier and could make them feel more secure for music making. Additionally, it suggests that fundamental psychological states, such as confidence and security, could support their positive approach to and attempts to further participate in creative musical activities.

In relation to this aspect, one important role of creative music making in this study was to broaden the understanding of music held by most students, including NMES. They may believe that music is something which is played from a score, should be readable as a score, should be structured with technical knowledge, should be played by instruments and should be sung with a beautiful voice. This conventional understanding of music leads to the perception that 'music is special' (c.f. Mills, 1989; Hennessy, 2000; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). However, in this study, the NMES found that they could create music using only their bodies and voices. Some students were motivated to utilise these music activities outside music classes as general activities when they become teachers in the future. It could be said that their experiences brought them a new understanding of music, made them perceive music as less challenging and enabled them to expand their existing understanding of music, which could possibly change their stereotyped conventional understandings of music itself.

From this case study, we can suggest that, not only are there musical benefits to learning creative music making, but also that broader, general educational benefits for the

NMES were revealed. As improvisational approaches require concentration, prompt reactions and active engagement in the activity, the NMES realised the value of applying these approaches as a vital technique for classroom management. It is crucial that NMES acquire general teaching ideas from music teaching. Generalist teachers usually teach not only music, but all subjects. Therefore, fundamental educational skills which are adaptable for all subject teaching and classroom management are needed. Some improvisational approaches would be beneficial in a variety of educational settings in order to draw pupils' attention to their teachers or for engagement in learning. It was fascinating that, in their creative musical learning, the NMES specialists discovered a way to use this as a general educational technique to get pupils to engage in an activity. They found it applicable not only in music teaching, but also in general educational settings and were motivated to utilise this approach when they become teachers in the future in various educational settings.

Implications for higher education

This research study could suggest the value of these approaches to higher education, as it revealed positive possibilities to change non-music specialist teachers' conventional understanding of music and its application in the classroom. Russel-Bowie (2010) stressed the importance of higher education in order "to empower and encourage preservice teachers to develop their personal confidence and competence in music" (p.85). Part of the roles and

responsibilities of higher education in teacher training could be to expand students' comprehension of music education and reduce apprehensions and feelings of inadequacy about teaching music. From this research study, it can be concluded that it would be beneficial for NMES to be able to begin using creative music making with fewer technical barriers and alter any mental barriers they may have toward teaching music. Successful experiences could help them to break the perceived barrier of their level of musical ability and would contribute to developing their confidence in the creation of music. If the teacher trainees can feel that they are able to make music by themselves in enjoyable ways, these successful experiences could contribute to their confidence in utilising musical activities for teaching in the classroom and could develop a different understanding of music. If there are enough opportunities for experiences which raise the students' confidence in music and for learning various activities for wider musical understanding, creative music making in primary school education may be less challenging for generalist teachers.

For non-music specialist teachers, learning new ideas for creative music making could contribute to expanding not only their musical knowledge for teaching music, but may contribute to acquiring also general educational ideas about how to lead pupils in a classroom. Learning something new often has the power to change the students' perspectives on musical understanding. In this study, it was revealed that new styles of music teaching and creative music making were informative for and beneficial to the non-music specialists. It brought

them opportunities to re-think music itself and music education, and to explore wider educational practices. The student teachers learned about the process of creating music, and how to elicit important techniques for leading pupils and creating an enjoyable learning environment. Particularly, the students who felt technical barriers for conventional musical teaching needed to have an alternative way to teach music confidently. Through the successful experiences of creating music with fewer technical barriers, the non-music specialists also learned how to make music and then reflect upon how they achieved it. It was also an opportunity to compare these techniques with the teaching they had received in their music class while they were still students in school. Further they were able to reflect upon their personal musical experiences and think about their future vision as a teacher of music. Experiences with new ideas of creative music making could give generalist teachers a chance to develop their own ideas, both musically and educationally.

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The Implications of 'Literacy' Acquisition for Students from Low Socioeconomic Communities Transitioning from Secondary Schools to Tertiary Art / Design Institutions in New Zealand

Steve Lovett
The University of Auckland
s.lovett@auckland.ac.nz

Jill Smith
The University of Auckland
j.smith@auckland.ac.nz

Abstract

This article provides insights into aspects of a larger qualitative study that investigated 'literacy' acquisition in art education, particularly for Māori and Pacific Island students from

low-decile secondary schools in low socioeconomic communities transitioning to tertiary art / design study. The research was located in New Zealand where national curriculum and assessment systems for secondary schools, and tertiary education strategies, emphasize literacy acquisition. The research was contextualized within the impact of socioeconomic, cultural, political and educational factors on students' learning. It was underpinned by literacy models for the arts and informed by culturally inclusive pedagogies. Data were sought from secondary school art teachers in low-decile schools, tertiary art / design lecturers in first year programs and first year tertiary students. Presented through participants' 'voices' and examples of students' artworks, the findings reveal a complex range of insights, beliefs and strategies about literacy acquisition as a potential pathway to success. The conclusions point to secondary schools and tertiary art / design schools needing to address the challenges faced by students, particularly Māori and Pacific Island, who come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, attend low-decile schools, are often first in their family to transition to tertiary education, and lack preparedness for research-led and critically-centered study.

Key words

literacy acquisition, tertiary art / design education, socioeconomic factors, culturally inclusive pedagogy, low-decile schools

Introduction

This article draws on research in two secondary schools and a tertiary art / design institution in New Zealand. The research focused on seeking answers to what forms of 'literacies' in senior secondary school art programs support students, particularly Māori and Pacific Island, who attend low-decile schools in low socioeconomic status (SES) communities, to achieve success when they transition to tertiary art / design courses. It also sought answers to how these students, who are often first in their family to attend tertiary institutions, are supported to acquire the range of 'literacies' required for art / design study during their first year.

Positioned in a qualitative interpretative paradigm, the research was contextualized within socioeconomic, cultural, political, and educational factors that affect learning and achievement for students from low SES communities. It was underpinned by requirements of New Zealand's national curriculum and tertiary education strategies that emphasize literacy acquisition. The findings, presented through a sample of participants' 'voices' and examples of students' artworks, reveal a complex range of insights, beliefs and strategies about literacy acquisition as a potential pathway to success. They point to a disconnection between secondary schools and tertiary institutions, and the need to address challenges faced by Māori and Pacific Island students transitioning from secondary schools to first year tertiary art/design programs, including preparedness for research-led and critically-centered study.

The Research Design

The research was conducted by Steve Lovett who taught for 22 years at a tertiary art / design institution in a low SES community. It was motivated by his struggles with literacy acquisition as a young person and how he overcame that with support. During postgraduate study, Lovett's concerns about literacy acquisition by students from low-decile schools came to the fore. Jill Smith, an experienced tertiary art teacher educator and researcher, introduced him to theories concerning the formation of literacies and critical thinking, culturally inclusive pedagogical perspectives, and art education for ethnically diverse students. Lovett was inspired by the idea that art education research can be conceptualized, conducted and reported with images as data, not text alone. Smith was his supervisor for the Master of Education research reported here.

Aims of the research

There is an absence of research in New Zealand about students from low SES communities, including Māori and Pacific Island, transitioning from studying art in secondary schools to tertiary art / design schools. The aims of the research were to investigate how these year 12-13 students (16-18 year olds) who attend low-decile secondary schools in low SES communities develop various forms of literacies at school; whether literacy acquisition at school prepares them for tertiary study; and how they are supported in their first year of

tertiary study to achieve success through research-led and critically-centered forms of literacies.

The research questions

The overarching question was: "What forms of 'literacies' in year 12-13 secondary school art programs and first year tertiary art / design courses enhance success for students, including Māori and Pacific Island, who come from low-decile schools in low SES communities?"

Four sub-questions guided the research:

- How do education policies, national curriculum, and assessment modes articulate what literacy means for art education at year 12-13 in New Zealand secondary schools?
- What kinds of literacies are fostered in year 12-13 art courses by teachers at low-decile schools in low socioeconomic communities?
- How do national policies and programs at tertiary art/design schools articulate what literacy means?
- What forms of literacies are required in programs for tertiary art/design students in their first year of study?

The theoretical framework

The research was positioned within an interpretivist qualitative paradigm based on the nature of the research problem, its aims and questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). It was underpinned by arts-based methodology for which there is burgeoning literature on the theoretical grounding for using the 'visual' as a potent tool in art education research (Leavy, 2015; Weber, 2008). Smith (2016, 2019) argues that images, including artworks by participants, are not mere additions to research but a vital means for learning about them and their art making processes.

Research settings and participants

Selection of participants and settings was based on the claim that purposive sampling is a significant feature that contributes to the quality of interpretations made by the researcher and underlying inferences in the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Selection was also influenced by Lovett's experience of teaching at a tertiary art / design institution where year 12-13 students from low SES communities entered first year study in art and design.

The settings were two secondary schools and one art / design tertiary institution. Four secondary school art teachers, two from each of Schools A and B, are long serving practitioners, members of their communities, and aware of socioeconomic factors that shape students' lives. Three teachers are New Zealand European and one is Māori New Zealand

European. School A is a low-decile 1 co-educational school with 59% Māori students, 29% Pacific Island, 6% European, and 6% other ethnicities. Although School B is a mid-decile 7 co-educational school with 66% European students, 30% Māori, 2% Pacific Island and 2% other ethnicities, it has a significant cohort of students from low SES communities. With permission from their 16-18 year old students, examples of art works are included in the findings. At the tertiary art / design setting, referred to as Tertiary Institution 1, two art / design lecturers, both European, and two first year students, both Māori, participated. Albeit small in scale, the eight participants provided rich data through their words and art works.

Data collection methods

Data collection comprised analysis of curriculum and policy documents pertinent to secondary schools and the tertiary art/design institution, followed by individual semi-structured, 90-minute face-to-face interviews with the four art teachers, two tertiary lecturers and two first year students. Leavy (2015) describes interviews as knowledge-producing conversation where meaning making is co-created. Thus, personal accounts of the participants were combined with the researcher's interpretations. The third dataset were photographs of students' artworks.

Data analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide to thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The

aim was to determine patterns of meaning across the dataset that provided answers to the research questions, followed by generating codes to identify important features and ascertain key ‘themes’ that emerged to locate recurring features of participants’ accounts, perceptions and experiences. Reviewing, altering and developing the themes ensured that data made sense and captured the ‘essence’ of each theme. The final step was analyzing key patterns and themes to provide answers to the questions. Photographic data of students’ artworks enabled cross- checking between what the participants said and did to ensure authenticity and validity.

Background to the Research – Contextual Factors

The research was informed by literature pertinent to five contextual factors:

- **The impact of socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors on low SES students in New Zealand**

The term ‘socioeconomic status’ (SES) applies to interacting social and economic measures of employment, education, health, economic characteristics and social standing or class of an individual or group in society (American Psychological Association Socioeconomic Status Office, 2019). The term draws on theories of Max Weber (1864-1920) who used a three-part theoretical model to understand the operation of class concepts in society, from social standing and economic position; to class enacted through shared group characteristics and

goals that cohere around cultural identity, gender, sexuality, educational achievement, occupation or immigrant status; and to status and class as expressions of power, privilege and socioeconomic hierarchies (Waters & Waters, 2015).

Further compounding the positioning of SES communities in New Zealand are the effects of New Right political ideology in the 1980s and 1990s that shaped education, health and social outcomes. Johnson et al. (2018) contend that these determinants have direct consequences for educational outcomes, particularly on Pacific Island and Māori populations. This confluence of challenges makes educational achievement more complex for students from low-decile schools in low SES communities, including adverse consequences of truancy, residential transience, and leaving formal education earlier with lower levels of achievement (Dixon, 2018; Gerritson, 2018). The Ministry of Education (2015) admits that the system is less successful for Māori and Pacific Island students and people from low-income families. Milne (2013) is more critical, identifying cultural difference as operating as ‘white streams’ and ‘whiteness’ with the potential to distance Māori and Pacific Island students from education. Earlier, Freire (2000) described this space as ‘the culture of silence’, amounting to exclusion from pedagogical structures, curriculum delivery, and contributing to achievement disparities.

- **The implications of the 'decile rating' system on achievement and assessment of low SES students in secondary schools in New Zealand**

A key implication for students in low SES communities is the decile rating system, from 1-10, used in secondary schools. The New Zealand Government (2019) uses deciles to indicate the extent a school draws its students from low SES communities, and to target funding for state schools to help overcome barriers to learning that students might face. The lower the school's decile, the more funding it receives.

Hattie (2002) found in his analysis of New Zealand schools that decile calculations produce an "almost racist bias … that the index uses the percentage of Māori and Pacific Island students in a school as an index of lower decile" (p. 5). He contends that instead of achieving a measure of social justice in low SES communities it now 'concentrates' students in low-decile 1-3 schools. Johnson (2018) concurs that exclusion of the poor is epitomized by prohibitive property prices in 'top' school zones, in which high-decile 8-10 schools are located, and in 'white flight' of European students from low-decile schools.

- **The reality of educational achievement statistics for students from low SES communities**

The majority of New Zealand's population is of European descent (70%), with Māori the largest minority (16.5%) and Pacific peoples at 9% (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). Ministry of Education (2017) data that plots the history of students from low-decile secondary schools

notes that 92.3% of students from high-decile 9-10 schools remained at school until 17 years, 73.8% higher than for low-decile 1-2 schools. The proportion of Māori students remaining at school to age 17 was 69.6% and for Pacific Island students 81.6%. Data for university entrance show that Māori and Pacific Island students in decile 1-3 secondary schools attained university entrance at half the rate of those in decile 8-10 schools (NZQA, 2018).

- **The effects of national curriculum and assessment policies on visual arts education in secondary schools**

The New Zealand Curriculum (MoE, 2007) provides a framework to support all students, including those from low SES communities, studying art in secondary schools. The curriculum contains four open-ended 'strands': Understanding the Visual Arts in Context (UC), Developing Practical Knowledge (PK), Developing Ideas (DI), and Communicating and Interpreting (CI). A key feature is non-content specificity, enabling art teachers to determine curricula content and pedagogy most suited to their students. This means that focus can be on students' ethnic and cultural identities, interests, choice of media and processes, and individual ways of working. One exception is for all students to learn about the culture (tikanga) and language (te reo) of the indigenous Māori people during their secondary schooling.

Assessment of students' art making is measured through the *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* (NZQA, 2018), the main qualification for 16-18 year old secondary

school students in their final three years. NCEA provides flexible assessment choices for schools to select Achievement Standards from a suite of possibilities. Four of the five standards are internally assessed by art teachers, and a portfolio submission is externally verified by NZQA. In this standards-based system 'marks' are not given but levels of performance are awarded as Achieved, Merit, and Excellence, or Not Achieved. A key feature of the standards is emphasis on students studying 'established practice' appropriate to their chosen art discipline. This is interpreted by teachers as using 'artist models' to help students understand how artists' processes and artworks can inform the development and resolution of their own ideas and increase their fluency of techniques and materials.

- **The importance of culturally inclusive and responsive pedagogies for low SES students**

Theories of cultural reproduction advocated by Bourdieu (1973), that underpin concepts of cultural capital developed by students within the culture of teaching and learning, had a direct bearing on this research. Bourdieu asserts that individual's and families' cultural resources are a form of "inherited social capital" (p. 100), analogous and equal to their "economic resources" (p. 107). Bourdieu contends that cultural capital is also determined by the dominant cultural group who reproduce underlying cultural structures, values, and measures of attainment. The knowledge (cultural capital) that all students bring to learning should be

recognized, valued, and activated in pedagogical practices.

It is argued that for Māori students, art in secondary schools is a curricular space in which to express their agency in developing culturally responsive forms of knowledge (Milne, 2013). Bishop and Berryman (2010) argue for concepts of manaakitanga (care), mana motuhake (care for student achievement), ngā whakapiringatanga (a healthy learning environment) and wānanaga (discussion, deliberation, consideration). They believe these interwoven concepts are fundamental to teachers taking responsibility for engaging all learners. Stucki (2012) emphasizes a relationship-oriented pedagogy where "group work, teina/tuakana, ako, whanaungatanga, mihi, contribute to group success" (p. 12). These Māori values contrast with 'individual' achievement promoted in many higher decile schools, often driven by external examinations (Smith, 2019).

In the context of Pacific Island education Māhina (2010) emphasises, similar to Māori, relational ethics through concepts of tā-vā (tā being time and action and vā being space and content) with identity being connected to ancestors through genealogy and mythology. Mara and Marsters (2009) support relational pedagogy for learning success, indicating beneficial increases in confidence and achievement among mentored students, and the role of unspoken tacit knowledge in shaping learning experiences for low SES students.

Education policy which addresses more relevant pathways for low SES learners transitioning out of school to tertiary education or the workplace (MoE, 2016) was pertinent

to this research. This is expressed in *Kā Hikitia: Accelerating Success 2013–2017* (MoE, 2013):

> Teachers must make the learning process transparent and understandable for the students, with incremental steps in learning to be open to practice and revision, and providing opportunities to practice and requiring students to construct their own meaning of new information and ideas. (p. 17)

Tomoana (2012) advocates for the relevance that tuakana-teina (mentor and junior) pedagogical models have for Māori and Pacific Island students. He cites the benefits that learners derive from understanding and incorporating more of their cultural and tacit knowledge alongside the demands of a research driven epistemic delivery.

Background to the Research - Definitions of Literacy Education

Further literature that informed the research focused on definitions of 'literacy' and the implications for low SES students transitioning from secondary schools to tertiary institutions:

- **Definitions of literacy in the New Zealand curriculum**

In *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) it is stated that:

> In visual arts education, students develop visual literacy and aesthetic awareness as they manipulate and transform visual, tactile, and spatial ideas to solve problems. They explore experiences, stories, abstract concepts, social issues, and needs, both

> individually and collaboratively. They experiment with materials, using processes and conventions to develop their visual enquiries and create both static and time-based works. They view art works, bringing their own experiences, sharing their responses, and generating multiple interpretations. Their meaning making is further informed by investigation of the contexts in which art works are created, used, and valued. As they develop their visual literacy, students are able to engage with a wider range of art experiences in increasingly complex and conscious ways. (MoE, 2007, p. 21)

- **Definitions of literacy in tertiary education policies**

In the *Tertiary Education Strategy 2013-2019* (MoE, 2014) it is stated that "A person's literacy refers to the extent of their oral and written language skills and knowledge and their ability to apply these to meet the varied demands of their personal study and work lives" (p. 58). A tertiary ready learner is described as "an independent learner with the ability and confidence to use a range of competencies and skills in a range of academic domains and problem-solving contexts" (Centre for Studies in Multiple Pathways, 2011, p. 6).

- **Five literacy models identified as potential pathways for success**

Five strands of literacy models were identified as potential pathways for success in art/design. The first strand, 'semantic literacy', is defined as argumentative reading and writing in which a relationship is constructed between adjoining words and clarifies the sense of a sentence (Newell et al., 2011). The second, 'syntactic literacy', is concerned with understanding and use of correct word order and concept organization in language. Barbousas (2014) and Barton (2019) expand the syntactic concept to include 'visuality', claiming that the visual possesses

characteristics of a language, analogous to reading and writing.

The third strand, ‘visual literacy’, is associated with “multiliteracy and multimodality, thus developing concerns with visual arts education as visual culture” (Duncum, 2004, p. 254). Barton (2019) concurs that visual literacy in art / design education is expressed through students’ ability to see, analyze, and respond to the world around them, identifying contexts and applying these to their aesthetic outputs. Thus, visual arts literacy demands integration and synthesizing of various forms of communication and meaning making in the arts to support students becoming literate in aesthetic discourse. Expanding on this, Barbousas (2014) contends that “the visual image as an outcome of literacy formation is an intentional object … mobilised through practices that adhere with art world relationships” (p. 52).

The fourth strand is ‘digital literacy’. Hegarty et al. (2010) describe a digitally literate person in a tertiary environment as someone who demonstrates “openness, the ability to problem solve, to critically reflect, technical capability and a willingness to collaborate and keep up to date prompted by the changing contexts in which they use information” (p. 7). Independent from the above, yet dependent on digital capability, the fifth strand, ‘Information Literacy’ (IL) concerns information management. Madjar et al. (2010), in secondary school contexts, and Hulett et al. (2013) within university settings, pinpoint the basis of IL skillsets as developing students’ familiarity with, dexterity in, and navigational use of information to facilitate research, note taking, reading strategies, participation in critiques and critical

discussion (Elkins, 2010). However, Johnson (2018) found in her examination of low SES students' progression into tertiary study they require induction to academic systems and processes to facilitate full participation in university life.

The Research Findings

Secondary school art teachers – beliefs and strategies

It was evident that the secondary school art teachers employed strategies aimed at equipping students "to develop visual literacy and aesthetic awareness" as defined in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (MoE, 2007, p. 21). At School A, however, there were significant literacy engagement and retention challenges. Teacher A-1 said, "I don't often teach the same students from years 9-13 (13-18 year olds) … often I'm picking up new students in their final year." Her comment that "students and their families move around a lot" reflects residential mobility statistics that affect engagement (Dixon, 2018). Teacher A-2 described the complex socioeconomic issues facing students, describing them as "children with adult problems." These observations align with research about the widening gap and inequalities for health and social outcomes (Carroll et al., 2011). School B, while classified as decile 7, has a significant cohort of students from low income families who live in the area to escape escalating suburban rentals. The teachers spoke of the challenges that family circumstances create and how they and students negotiate access to knowledge and learning shaped by income

disparity (Carroll et al., 2011; Easton, 2013). Two key themes emerged from the interviews:

- **Delivery structures to reflect the learning preferences of students**

The teachers at both schools structure students' learning around a mix of internal assessment activities through the year, affording longer lead times for developing practical art making knowledge which is then scaffolded into more complex academic literacy tasks. Delivery focuses on all four curriculum strands tailored to specific student cohorts, concentrating around Developing Practical Knowledge (PK) and Understanding the Arts in Context (UC). Teacher 1-B explained that for UC, research is mainly through practical tasks and annotated notes. Developing Ideas (DI) and Communicating and Interpreting (CI) are included throughout so that all four strands are encompassed. At School A, the focus is also on practical strategies. Teacher A-2 said, "When we introduce an 'artist model' the students need to understand the artist's processes, so we demonstrate something similar so they can see how the art is made and understand it from a practical perspective." Common to both schools was Teacher B-1's approach whereby students are supported to develop literacy through art in "a continual process of visual research, making something, and then we critique and evaluate, and then we plan again for a bit more visual research."

Teacher B-1 described how two female students, both 17 year olds, were "non-achievers in previous years." Her strategy to assist them achieve success was allowing

them to have full use of the photography studio, and freedom to invite friends to collaborate, and exploring themes that resonated with their cultural heritage. Using friends as models inspired these girls to produce beautiful images that capture their ethnicities and cultural identifiers, a pedagogical approach advocated in the curriculum. The Māori student [Fig. 1] emphasized signifiers of her cultural heritage, including the kauwae (chin tattoo), rau manu (head feather), kahu huruhuru (feather cloak) and some whakairo (carving), a key element in a wharenui (Māori meeting house).

Figure 1 *Female, Māori, 17 years, School B – NCEA Level 2 Photography (from portfolio)*

In the photograph below [Fig. 2], the Pacific Island student of Niuean heritage encapsulates her distinctive cultural signifiers such as the Niuean hiapo (tapa cloth) with its strong contrast of black patterns painted on bark cloth, printed lava lava (wraparound skirt)

with its stylized patterns from nature, mother-of-pearl shell pendant, necklaces of cowrie shells and seeds, and finely woven ili (fan) attached to a large shell. Teacher B-1 noted, “This success in photography meant that these two students made gains in other areas of the curriculum.”

Figure 2 *Female, Niuean, 17 years, School B - NCEA Level 2 Photography (from portfolio)*

Teacher B-2 spoke of how two male students “excelled in the art program, and their achievement was instrumental to their engagement in developing confidence in more

traditional forms of semantic literacy." The student below [Fig. 3] reconnected with academic subjects at school, countering his noted 'distraction' and behavioral issues. To support him, and other students, she allows them access to the Google account on her website, giving this student space to focus on visual skills using rewindable and digital learning tasks to scaffold semantic and syntactical literacy around the production of his images. The work developed from his involvement with gaming and "how he responded to the look and storylines of gaming through developing digital literacies."

Figure 3 *Male, European, 17 years, School B - NCEA Level 3 Painting portfolio (Excellence)*

Figure 4 *Male, Māori-European, 17 years, School B - NCEA Level 3 Painting portfolio (Excellence and Scholarship)*

The student above [Fig. 4] emphasized attention to detail while developing an understanding of the conventions of gaming through his involvement with art as 'visual culture'. Teacher B-1 explained that he was contending with complex extra-curricular issues and was directed into the art program as a means of attaining NCEA: "The space to concentrate on developing a visual language became a pathway for him to develop associated forms of scholastic achievement in more academic areas of the curriculum. His Achievement with Excellence, as well as Scholarship at Level 3 for which written statements are required to support visual outcomes, attests to his ability to understand and use semantic and visual literacies."

- **Pedagogical challenges and opportunities**

A second theme that emerged at both schools was the differential rates of digital access and

the effects on students. Although low-decile schools receive greater government funding, the teachers reported that this does not translate into the level of digital capacity needed in their schools. Teacher A-2 stressed the implications for teaching and learning that financially based differential access has for students as they develop strategies to retrieve the knowledge that devices grant to users. All four teachers spoke of budgetary constraints on resourcing digital hardware and software to adequately support student learning. They also saw the prevalence of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) polices in schools as exacerbating the difficulties of ensuring equitable access to learning and knowledge acquisition. Teacher B-1, noting the problems of resourcing digital delivery for the large cohort of low SES students in the art program, said "I only have 10 static computers in my class and these are for students from low decile families who don't have personal devices and uncapped data."

While each teacher was aware of the challenges that students bring to class, they acknowledged this provides opportunities for innovative pedagogical practices. They devise strategies to re-engage students who may only attend art classes. Teacher A-1 spoke of "going on a journey with students about their particular interests, such as 'tagging', to hook them in." A pattern evident in both schools was that curricula delivery guided by the 'strands' was augmented with significant components of on-line 'rewindable learning' (MoE, 2020a). Each employed Google sites, noting their presence as significant, easy to use, and allowing them to structure learning tasks for students to build on as they develop PK, UC, DI, and CI. Students

being able to revisit sites whenever it suited them, and for as many times as they need for learning, was considered a distinct advantage. This affirmation of rewindable learning models reflects Duncum's (2004) advocacy for student use of media outside the classroom.

Another strategy used by the teachers at both schools is for students to achieve 'Literacy Achievement Standards' for NCEA through art, in conjunction with their selected Visual Arts Standards. Teacher A-2 said, "We align practical learning tasks with literacy development which reflect the presence of digital technology in students' lives. This means our art courses have higher rates of attendance, retention, and student engagement." Teachers in School B develop questions to guide students toward written responses to enhance their understanding of art conventions, broad categories of art practices, and specific details within artist model exemplars. Teacher B-2 said, "This enables students answering questions to build up written work for assessment in the NCEA literacy achievement standards."

Teacher A-1 used a year 13 student's portfolio for NCEA Level 3 Painting to exemplify her approach to teaching literacy [Fig. 5]: "Understanding of context is one thing we emphasize, but students also develop and communicate ideas, and acquire practical knowledge as they go." She described this student as a high-level thinker who was successful in English, but art was the primary means for him to express his interest in what is happening in the world. Aligning with the curriculum's emphasis on students exploring issues that are of concern to them, "he sought solutions to social, community and identity questions. This work

references issues around our LGBTQI community and oppression of women, women's rights and things that concern him." His work exemplifies reference to the 'established practice' of artists, a key component of NCEA. He was inspired by the work of Jean-Michael Basquiat with its expressionist and graffiti style and enigmatic remarks about cultural and political issues. The artworks, and messages contained therein, support Leavy's (2015) assertion about the power of autobiographical visual data to communicate the "textured nature of social life while illuminating the link between individual experience and the macro context in which that experience occurs" (p. 260).

Figure 5 *Male, Tongan-Māori, 18 years, School A - NCEA Level 3 Painting*

(details from portfolio)

Tertiary art and design lecturers – challenges and strategies

Tertiary Lecturers 1-A and 1-B at Tertiary Institution 1 taught students in the first year art/design program. One aim of the research was to discover what strategies they use to meet the *Tertiary Education Strategy's 2013-2019* (MoE, 2014) definition of literacy: "A person's literacy refers to the extent of their oral and language skills and knowledge and their ability to apply these to meet the varied demands of their personal study and work lives" (p. 58).

Lecturer 1-A, born overseas, identifies New Zealand as home. She has undertaken much work to understand the lived experiences of students during 20 years in tertiary education as a student and studio-based lecturer. Much of her teaching concentrates on the

demands brought to the tertiary setting by students from low SES backgrounds. She identifies with them who, like herself, was a first in family tertiary student.

Lecturer 1-B is a European New Zealander and practicing artist. His focus on making art informs his teaching, imbuing it with a keen sense of the economic realities of forging a sustainable career. His work spans commercial and fine arts practice, thus emphasis is placed on students developing an "understanding of how imagery, videos, pictures, advertisements, and artworks communicate in ways that may be quite foreign to them." He admits that challenges facing many first-year students in navigating the acquisition of "new research and information literacy (IL) skills can put low SES students on the back foot academically."

At Tertiary Institution 1, the student cohort comprises 40% New Zealand European, 16% Pacific Island, and 11% Māori. The rates of tertiary progression are between 70% for Māori and 85% for Pacific people (MoE, 2020b). Two key themes emerged:

- **Delivery structures and pedagogical practices**

The lecturers agreed it was crucial for students to understand the shift from secondary school to a new pedagogical system. Lecturer 1-A noted, "Institutional mechanisms are reflected in the application of academic criteria contained within each dimension of learning." Both lecturers contextualize their pedagogy in light of Bernstein's (1999) distinction between "lived experience and pedagogical potential" (p. 267). This presents them and students with

potential for an expanded concept of literacy in art/design by incorporating students' lived experience. However, Lecturer 1-A was critical of the institution's emphasis on forms of literacy and pedagogical structures that reflect a degree of curricular bias. Milne (2013) refers to this bias as "gaps and silences" (p. 98). Lecturer 1-A said, "This is where institutions fall down because they do not adequately reflect on and match the criticality they demand from students."

Having worked extensively in first year programs, both understand the challenges facing students entering tertiary study. Johnson (2018) claims that higher education is aimed at an affluent mix of predominantly New Zealand European students. Lecturer 1-A agreed, noting that Pacific Island and Māori students and low SES students understand they enter tertiary education from "outside the canon … they know it when they walk in the door, they know it intimately because they're having to function in multiple worlds; they might be speaking and living by Tē Aō Māori tikanga at home, then having to function in a European world."

Lecturer 1-B concurred, noting that students "encounter a whole new way of having to fit into an academic system that might be outside their family experiences." Both lecturers said that students grapple with pedagogical structures concerned with delivering high caliber, research driven, subject specific epistemic knowledge which (Bernstein, 1999) describes as "codified" (p. 270). These lecturers recognize the challenges that understanding this codified

knowledge has for first in family students whose whānau (Māori extended family), kāinga (Māori home/dwelling), aiga (Samoan family), and community knowledge does not necessarily prepare them for tertiary study. Lecturer 1-A stressed that one challenge for students is to "understand the bureaucratic structure of academia." Bernstein describes this challenge as the acquisition by learners of a new and unfamiliar "order of pedagogical identity" (p. 271). Lecturer 1-B described this form of epistemic delivery as the institution "performing knowledge as though knowledge is an object." Lecturer 1-A also noted the difficulty many students face in accessing necessary forms of institutional 'cultural capital' in the transition into tertiary study. These are significant factors, evident in attrition that impacts on rates of learning success in first year programs.

Both lecturers referred to economic circumstances facing students at tertiary level; that financing full-time study is a barrier and government funding does not adequately support low SES students. Lecturer 1-B concluded, "The consequence for students struggling with time and resources is hindering their development of a new pedagogical identity underpinning the expression of criticality."

First year tertiary art and design students – insights and experiences

Students 1-A and 1-B, both 20 years old, completed their first year at Tertiary Institution 1. Both are the first in their family to pursue tertiary education. Student 1-A identifies as Māori

and Student 1-B as Māori-European. Both draw on tikanga Māori concepts to inform their respective fields of contemporary fashion and media practice. They enjoy family support, but circumstances constrain financial provision, resulting in part-time employment while studying full-time to make ends meet.

Each student reflected on their educational development and acquisition of new and advanced forms of knowledge in their respective fields. They shared a preference for visual and kinesthetic forms of knowledge – the physicality of making art – over semantic and syntactical knowledge, but understood the importance of developing practical arts-based knowledge through written reflection and critical discussion (Langer, 2001; Newell et al., 2011). Both noted, however, that instruction about how to research and reflect on a developing practice was not always well communicated. The most effective support was sharing practical knowledge and resources amongst peers, a student-initiated outcome of peer-to-peer learning conducted in the social context of tuakana-teina groups in which there is a relationship between a mentor and younger person.

- **First year Student 1-A**

Student 1-A said she found the transition to tertiary education difficult because "the difference in learning was too big … the first year was like secondary school in that it is still art, but the increase in workload is significant." She held the lecturers in high regard, noting

the extent and depth of their concern when learning was challenging for her. She was also aware that, as one of a small group of Māori and Pacific Island students in the program, "curricular delivery was directed towards the European majority." This reflects Milne's (2013) reference to the potential for curricular silences. For Student 1-A, the experience was of an unvoiced requirement to construct a new academic identity within the institution. She found self-directed learning difficult "because every day was largely self-directed, usually for an hour we'd have a teacher in the morning and that's it." Student 1-A felt "a bit lost and out of place" and uncertain about her future plans. Madjar et al. (2010) report that it is common for students to feel overwhelmed if they think they are failing in programs, a position made more stressful when they are first in family tertiary students from low SES communities.

When asked about her perceptions of visual culture in the context of literacy acquisition, Student 1-A said that the influence of web communications plays a large part in shaping her ideas: "For me, visual culture is the way in which people use social media to express themselves or a topic on social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Reddit … these encourage creativity within my generation and keep us engaged with each other." Student 1-A opted not to offer examples of her art making which reflect her ideas about visual culture.

- **First year Student 1-B**

Student 1-B has contended with a level of 'residential mobility' (Dixon, 2018), attending more than one secondary school. While this was disruptive it provided insights into contrasting pedagogical models and how students work within them. Student 1-B offered cogent observations about the merits of a tightly controlled curricular framework, and a more liberal structure that grants greater freedoms about pathways to higher education or employment. She observed, however, that the pitfall of curricular freedom was that some students "fall through the cracks." Student 1-B understood the complexity in creative arts teaching and learning models, noting that "It's really hard because you need both, the structure and the freedom."

Above all, Student 1-B said she experienced difficulty with "the academic writing thing … I assumed I was going to art school to do art and learn about art, but not to write about things." She received no effective signposting at school of what lay ahead in tertiary education, or emphasis on critical thinking and the place of academic reading and writing in art/design programs. Student 1-B found that facilitation and delivery of arts-based critically-applied knowledge in the first year program was not always consistent. While she recognized the expectation to employ "critical thinking in general and thinking about contexts around art, this was not made clear enough." She was inexperienced with critical discussion about artworks and struggled to understand how to participate in the studio. She also felt the

emphasis on “the conceptual thing was not adequately matched by clear communication about the scope of resources that students could access to develop practical and theoretical aspects of their practice in their first year courses.”

Figure 6 *Female, Māori-European, 20 years, Student 1-B, first year tertiary student*

Despite her misgivings about aspects of the program, Student 1-B found she had space within it to explore her Māori-European heritage and contemporary cultural identity. For her hand printed fabric designs [Figure 6] she drew upon a key motif, the 'koru' (a spiral shape based on the appearance of a new unfurling silver fern frond) portrayed in customary and contemporary Māori taonga (treasures) and art making. Stylised forms of Māori whakairo (carving) and images inspired by popular visual culture sourced from the web are also evident in these studies.

Conclusions

What became apparent from the data were the distinct differences between the secondary schools' and the tertiary institution's environments, curricula and pedagogical practices, relationships with students, particularly Māori and Pacific Island from low SES communities, and approaches to literacy acquisition.

There was a strong correlation between the knowledge the four secondary school art teachers held of their particular school's community, the consequent struggles for students with troubled lives in homes that were experiencing low socio-economic circumstances, and how the support they gave students was enacted in their classrooms. This was aided by having whanau / family-based secondary school art environments in which students were

encouraged to work collaboratively if they wished, and a comparatively small cohort of 16-18 year old students studying art at years 12 and 13. The art teachers understood the benefits of tuakana teina relationships. Their pedagogical practices were assisted by having a national art curriculum that is open-ended, yet offers opportunity for young people to tell their stories about their cultural backgrounds [Figs 1-2], interests in contemporary visual culture [Figs 3-4], and issues with which they connect [Fig 5]. In respect of 'literacy', both schools offered students the opportunity to gain credits through the Literacy Achievement Standards, in addition to the selected visual arts standards.

The art teachers' pedagogies and students' art works also reflected a shortcoming of the national curriculum – an emphasis on 'visual literacy' but a lack of specificity about the importance of 'semantic' and 'syntactic' literacy, and little reference to verbal and written critique and critical reflection. The year 12 photography students produced lovely images that encapsulated aspects of their cultural identities. Although ideal as a starting point, an opportunity was missed to extend these students' thinking and art making to a more robust socio-cultural-political and critical level that reflects less idealized representations. The year 13 student [Fig. 4] who gained Scholarship, as well as Excellence, was likely the most prepared for transitioning to tertiary level study. As Johnson (2018) asserts, low SES students' progression to the tertiary environment requires induction to academic systems and processes to facilitate full participation in university life.

The voices of the two tertiary art / design lecturers revealed they had the interests of students at heart. Both were aware that many first year students from low SES backgrounds face challenges with negotiating acquisition of research and information literacy skills and mastery of oral and written language skills required at tertiary level, and how these gaps can disadvantage them as they progress through education. The two Māori first year students found the transition from secondary schools, located in their particular cultural communities, to large classes of 50 students in which they were a cultural minority, difficult and alienating. They found solace in tuakana teina support. Above all, they felt unprepared for the level of self-directed learning expected of them. Their responses point to a need for induction, at the outset of first year tertiary study, to assist with the transition from the personal and individually supportive style of secondary schooling to independent, research driven and critically-centered study that is expected at tertiary level. Initial induction, ongoing support, and more face-to-face contact with lecturers could well help to reduce attrition rates among low SES tertiary students.

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