ARTS INTEGRATION: AN EXPLORATION OF THE DIS/CONNECT
BETWEEN POLICY AND LIVE(D) PRACTICE

A Dissertation in
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by
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the dis/connect between arts integration policy (i.e. written texts and curriculum documents) and the live(d) practice of teachers working with arts integration. Although previous studies have examined how arts integration is implemented in schools and how it affects student achievement, particularly standardized test scores, little qualitative research has focused on the lived practices of teachers working with arts integration and how such approaches are envisioned in schools. This study is unique as it concentrates on how elementary teachers’ experiences, access to, and understandings of policy strongly affect how arts integration is organized, implemented, and measured.

This study investigates why the arts are used primarily as decoration for the classroom, and when arts integration projects are planned, implemented, and assessed, the arts component is frequently diluted and de-emphasized. Teachers continue to use the arts even though they have lofty expectations placed on them, especially in regard to pressures of teaching the prescribed school district curriculum document and working within the confines of the mandated state tests. This dissertation theorizes how misunderstandings of arts integration are perpetuated over time, and how these misunderstandings lead to un/certainty. Adopting a more felt approach to teacher education may help construct curricula that takes into account the ambiguity and un/certainty of teaching, the necessity of risk taking, and embraces arts integration in teaching and learning.

The research study includes a textual analysis of written documentation on arts integration at a national, state, and local level and qualitative research in the field.
Classroom observation, focus groups sessions, and teacher interviews regarding beliefs, practices, and training were conducted in order to understand the relationship between theory and practice. Furthermore, narratives are woven throughout the dissertation to highlight the voices of the researcher and elementary teachers. In the gaps between policy, beliefs and practice, generative discussions and curricular possibilities will be revealed that will impact arts integration, elementary education, and teacher education. Thus, this study presents an understanding of the un/certain space of dis/connect between official policy and live(d) teacher practice, and emphasizes the necessity of building a bridge between the two spheres.
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FOREWORD

Growing up as a child, the arts were always a part of my life. I could often be found with a crayon, pencil, or marker in hand—anything that would allow me to mark up the world. I remember drawing images of flowers and family on birthday cards and welcome-home banners for my father who often traveled out of town for his job. Drawing was an enjoyable recreational activity that elevated me from daily life. I escaped to drawing to express my emotions (i.e., on good days and bad days), to try to make sense of the world (i.e., explore how I saw myself, my family, and my daily surroundings), to make people happy (e.g., banners and cards), and to imaginatively complicate the world further (i.e., drawing the unknown and unreal).

I continued to engage in art processes throughout my schooling. During my elementary years in school, I had art class scheduled once a week for approximately forty-five minutes. Although I do not remember much from my elementary art experience, I recall that I experimented with different materials—I created in clay a pink glazed cookie jar in the shape of a bear-inspired rabbit. As many elementary art programs do, the projects focused on self-expression and creativity. My middle school years consisted of a formalistic approach to art. I was introduced to the right and left sides of the brain, color theory, contour line drawings, composition, negative and positive space, and so forth. The art teacher expected us to follow strict guidelines in order to learn how to correctly draw and paint. The art courses that I took in high school were often electives. The teachers minimally incorporated art history into the course and fostered self-expression, drawing skills, experimentation with materials, and problem solving as we completed different project assignments. Throughout my public schooling, I realized
that each art teacher seemed to have their own unique beliefs regarding art as well as their own teaching styles.

Although art was usually limited to the vicinity of the art room, there were a few classroom teachers who creatively integrated the arts into their academic curriculum. In eighth grade, my math teacher provided us with an opportunity for extra credit if we constructed a fractal. I remember tediously threading rainbow colored string through holes in a cardboard polygon. Also during the middle school years, my sixth grade social studies teacher assigned us to create an African Railroad. The purpose was to collaboratively create a way to travel from the top of the continent down to the bottom, while being conscious of such factors such as the terrain and weather. I recall spending numerous hours with my small group at the public library researching the geography, environments, politics, demographics, and economy of the different African countries. Our final product consisted of a written explanation and a visual 2-dimensional depiction of our African Railroad. My eighth grade science teacher incorporated the arts into her curriculum by assigning us a project titled, Moonbase. We were asked to work in small groups to design a way to sustain human life on the moon. Topics were researched such as the environment, atmosphere, and terrain of the moon, as well how to produce the needed oxygen and food to sustain human life. We imaginatively drew an architectural structure, a plant room with a photosynthesis system to produce carbon dioxide and hydrogen, areas to grow fruits and vegetables, and living quarters among others.

Although these teachers incorporated the arts on a large scale, there were other teachers who used the arts on a smaller dimension. My seventh grade social studies teacher introduced us to Julius Caesar by dressing up one of my classmates as Caesar.
The rest of us were asked to be Roman citizens as we hailed Caesar. My sixth grade German language teacher assigned us to research a person from Germany, expected us to dress up in costume (e.g., I chose the tennis player Steffi Graff) and create a script in German so to inform our classmates about our chosen person. Later on in the year, the German language teacher also invited us to bring in German foods to assist in a German celebration. My seventh grade English teacher implemented a poetry project where she asked us to not only create a poetry book, but to do so in an artistic manner. I remember writing a poem in the shape of a flower, and carefully selecting different colors, size, and fonts of the words to help convey a particular mood and meaning of each poem. All the project examples that I have provided were implemented into the middle school (i.e., sixth through eighth grade) curriculum. While I am sure my elementary teachers used the arts in their classroom teaching, I have trouble recalling the particular projects, although I do remember making a piñata and having a Mexican celebration. As for high school, I also could not easily recollect any past examples of arts activities outside of the art room. I wonder why the middle school projects re/surface so easily and the other activities do not?

As I grew older, the arts began to slowly diminish from the life. My daily curricular and extracurricular schedule tightened in high school (i.e., ninth through twelfth grade). The hours that I used to playfully draw were replaced with academic bookwork, social events, and athletics. Although I tried to enroll in an art course every school grading period, my priorities were to be concentrated in the “more” important core subjects—I had to score well on the SATs, a standardized test required for college
admission that includes reading, writing, and math, in order to gain acceptance into a good university.

It was not until college that the arts reappeared in my life outside of school. After completing a drawing course for general art credits, I began to re/see the world. I remember noticing the small ornate architectural details on the university buildings and the natural beauty of the vibrant autumn leaves. After changing my major from psychology (with plans of pursuing medicine) to art education, I began to understand art as something more than a fun free-time activity. Art helped me to learn not only about myself, but the world in general.

While briefly studying art in Rome, Italy, I was introduced to a culture different from my own. Unfortunately, the information that I had once learned in various social studies classes in K-12 schooling pertaining to European history did not resonate within my body or mind. Traveling throughout the European countries, I found myself being bombarded with art as I visited numerous art museums, churches, fountains, and palaces. I will never forget the surge of emotions that outpoured when I entered the Pantheon. It was what Dewey (2005/1934) would call an aesthetic experience, an experience that is appreciated, perceived, and enjoyed. I remember how the whole world seemed to pause as I entered the vast open spaced structure. Chills ran down my spine as I stood in history surrounded by beautiful marble tombs, sculptures, and echoing voices (both heard and unheard). It was this experience where I once again began to understand how art was connected with the world. I learned about Italian history and politics as I became familiar with the different family crests that adorned the vast architectural structures. I learned about religious conflicts, Catholicism, and the Protestant Reformation as I examined
works of art in the Vatican Museum. I learned what life was like for a man or woman living in Rome during the Renaissance as I wandered through the actual streets and markets, and examined paintings and sculptures that depicted Roman life. The works of art and architectural structures were “entry points” (Eisner, 2002; Gardner, 2006) into understanding the present and past—a past that I could finally re/experience for myself.

At the time, many of these life experiences seemed customary. It was not until quite recently that I began to appreciate how greatly they impacted my life. Not having recalled these experiences for years, these subconscious memories re/surfaced as I reflected on how my understanding(s) of the arts and learning developed. Recognizing how the arts have woven throughout my learning/living, it is no surprise that my current interests are focused on arts integration. I realize that the academic knowledge that I remember best often overlapped with other subjects (e.g., the arts), and surpassed the traditional textbook learning and standardized assessment. It is my hope that the arts continue to live in the academic setting and impress upon others as they have for me.
Introduction

The American school system has provided a free public elementary education for over a century. This free education, although compulsory, has at times struggled to provide an equal education to all students (Spring, 2006). In recent years, political legislation has forced the reexamination of school structures on the national, state, and local district level to ensure educational fairness.

Discontent with current educational curriculums, many teachers, administrators, parents, and students work toward initiating change to promote academic equality. These reformers attempt to analyze current educational programs and offer advice toward pedagogical improvement of the public school system. While educational leaders seem to agree on what is the most significant curricular content for elementary students, there is confusion regarding the instructional methods needed to administer this vital content. As times change, the need to keep education current becomes a critical concern. Educators attempt to teach diverse populations by introducing different educational reforms. Throughout the past decade, the arts have been placed at the center of new ideas pertaining to the restructuring of school curriculum (Chappell, 2005; Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000; Parsons, 1998).

The arts have gained the attention of educational reformers as research has exposed the benefits of the arts on the individual student and learning. Although the arts can encompass many branches of learning, for this research purpose, the arts will refer to the visual arts. As a means of communication, the arts have been suggested to help meet the human need of creative self-expression (Boyd, 1980). They have shown to stimulate critical thinking, help form knowledgeable citizens, and have a positive effect on child
development and learning (Stokrocki, 2005). The arts have undergone a slow transformation from being the “fun, free-time coloring activity” to an essential subject with significant benefits. The acceleration of art-related trends in the classroom has seemed to coincide with a rise in public skepticism among the traditional public school system. Numerous journals and organizations, such as the National Art Education Association have published articles and books recognizing the increased attention placed on the arts in the classroom setting.

Because the arts encompass so many disciplines, advocates believe they are a natural fit into the curriculum. In order to promote high levels of student learning, school officials and researchers have suggested the incorporation of arts integration (Bickley-Green, 1995; Luftig, 2000). Arts integration, an arts focused approach to teaching and learning, has recently been implemented in various schools throughout North America (Luftig, 2000). Large-scale programs such as, *Arts for Academic Achievement, Chicago Arts Partnership in Education, North Carolina A+ Schools Program, Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge,* and *Project Zero* have shown positive effects on education (Appendix A). Many smaller-scale initiatives have also been put into practice in particular schools at the local district level. Arts integration has been implemented in schools in geographic areas of poverty in hopes of revitalizing community and quality education (Burnaford, Aprill & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). As interests rise, exploring arts integration may prove to be beneficial for all involved in the educational community.
**Introducing Arts Integration**

What is arts integration? Arts integration is a highly complicated term with no one universal meaning. It is generally defined as an approach to teaching and learning in which the arts are directly linked with other academic subjects. For example, students can create and/or discuss works of art that not only teach about art, but also social studies, science, English, mathematics, and so forth (Figure I-1). Arts integration recognizes the educational curriculum as a whole; it does not divide the curriculum into distinct parts (i.e., math, social studies, art, etc.), but celebrates the rhizomatic overlapping qualities between subjects and content. It concentrates on the arts ability to teach across/through the curriculum and transcend the school subject boundaries.

![Figure I-1: Arts integration projects: Habitat diorama.](image)

In the traditional classroom, students typically learn through reading textbooks and completing worksheets. Although the content of the lessons is important, the lessons often become mundane. Arts integration best practices helps to teach the academic content in an innovative and exciting manner. Unlike busy art-related classroom work that does not provoke or demonstrate critical thinking (e.g., coloring in a worksheet), arts
integration aims to support the curriculum and student learning. Its teaching/learning does not serve the purpose of filling in empty time throughout the school day, but consists of carefully planned lessons that incorporate all the components of lesson planning: objectives, academic standards, procedures, assessments, and so forth (Burnaford et al., 2001).

This understanding of arts integration highlights the intentions and potential of this ideal approach, however the reality(ies) of how and why the arts are incorporated into the general classroom is anything but ideal. Arts integration can provide a quality unifying teaching/learning experience, yet it often gets interpreted and implemented in flawed ways. Teachers may have good intentions when attempting to incorporate the arts into the classroom, but it becomes problematic when the arts are not sufficiently connected to student learning or treated equal to the other subjects. Their mis/understandings of art as a hands-on fun activity that consists of coloring in the lines of a worksheet with crayons contributes to unsatisfactory arts integrated lessons (Figure 1-2). What does this mundane routine action teach? Lowenfeld (1960) warns that these coloring in the lines worksheets are more detrimental than no art activities at all because they force children into imitative behavior that hinders their creative expression. Even though he advised against these thoughtless activities, coloring worksheets are still commonly used in schooling, especially in the elementary classroom. Chapter three will explore related topics and attempt to explore how this became an accepted practice including why it is still prevalent today.
As I reflect on my childhood schooling, I remember making a pilgrim hat and tracing my hand and gluing feathers down on top of the four fingers to create a turkey for many Thanksgiving celebrations. I also recall making a Native American (we then called them Indian) drum with tall cylindrical oatmeal containers and headbands with construction paper and feathers. Although I was busy using my small motor skills to make a holiday art project, the arts were basically used as a fun activity to touch upon the other “core” subjects (i.e., English, mathematics, science, and social studies). The projects often looked very similar to one another’s hence lacking originality, creativity, and self-expression. Because the lessons were carefully planned with templates and necessary colored construction paper, there were not many opportunities to problem solve, visually represent what we were actually learning in the classroom before/during this activity, or even relate it to our own lives. Examining the projects, I learned that Thanksgiving was about pilgrims who wore hats, Indians with headbands and drums, and turkeys. But what was the first Thanksgiving was really about? What, why, and how did it happen? How was it similar to or different from my yearly Thanksgiving celebrations? Although this information may have been discussed before or after the art activity, not
much was learned about one’s self or relations with others through this holiday project. As seen in the examples above, the arts were not understood as an embodied space of inquiry.

Another typical project that gets implemented in elementary school is the creation of a musical instrument. Students can make a musical instrument, but unless this art making activity is connected to scientific concepts such as sound, frequency, pitch, and wavelength, art concepts such as form and space and what sound could visually look like, artists who explore sound through their works such as Janet Cardiff or Shigehiko Hongo, music concepts such as rhythm, pitch, and dynamics, social studies concepts of music and culture, and real-world concepts such as the purpose(s) of music, how different sounds are made, and emotions generated by music, students may not automatically transfer the necessary knowledge between the subjects or learn the extensive cross-curricular knowledge of musical instruments. If students create a musical instrument and then immediately take them home once complete without discussion, critique, or further experimentation, a necessary space of teaching/learning is ignored. This may immobilize the learning process, halting the many possible unpredicted routes that could invite students to write a short musical composition, perform the musical piece, reflect, analyze, and explain how and why the musical instrument makes the different particular sounds, and so forth. Focus is often solely placed on the art product, and dismisses what was learned through its planning and production. When the arts are poorly incorporated into the general classroom, there is a lack of respect, which results in an inferior status of the arts position in education.
Unfortunately, most of the arts integration performed in the classroom do injustices to the arts. Arts integration is more often than not treated as a doing, rather than a way of thinking through and knowing. It is quite amazing that over half a century ago Lowenfeld (1960) suggested that integration does not merely happen by shifting around subject matter, but can only happen within the students. Furthermore, I would say the same is true for the teacher. Although arts integration aims to re/connect the compartmentalized knowledge, unless a student or teacher is able to link the content for him/herself and recognize the rhizomatic qualities, integration is not achieved. Lowenfeld believes that the separate parts must lose their identity so the child can identify with the meaningful whole through emotional and sensory experiences. However, I argue that students and teachers do not “lose” or merely move beyond one identity, but continually shift between multiple identities while their perceptions of teaching and learning as arts integration attempts to deconstruct the accepted organizational structure of schooling. Do teachers and students know how to do this, or furthermore, are they willing to move between and shift their identities and perceptions of teaching and learning?

Due to the schooling structure, planning and implementing quality arts integration is not an easy task as it requires more time and effort than merely reading passages from textbooks and completing worksheets. Due to constraints regarding time, space, materials, policy, expectations, and knowledge and comfort levels with art, many arts integrated lessons result in substandard quality. Also, the overall compartmentalized structure of the school day into separate subjects and time slots provides challenges that are not conducive for arts integrated lessons. An attempt to complexify arts integration and understand what is truly happening in classrooms will be explored throughout the
next four chapters, thus guiding us to see the frequent de/valuation of the arts in teaching and learning, as well as the related un/certainties.

These challenges and misuses of arts integration hinder the possibilities and promises of arts integration. Arts integration when performed successfully promotes an exploration of curriculum as a body of knowledge, experiences, and participants constantly changing in shape and form while continually engaged in a process of becoming. As students and teachers participate in successful arts integration, they engage in curriculum-in-the-making—a live(d) curriculum—they travel on their own unique journey of learning. Students can experience the interrelations of the world as they participate in arts based research to foster their growth and learning. Arts integration should facilitate a new way of thinking in, about, and through curriculum, and attempt to encourage educators and students to make personal meaningful connection between themselves and the rest of the world so they can begin to embody curriculum.

Arts integration is complex as it encompasses many different forms of implementation. There is no one correct way to integrate the arts into the classroom, and how it is planned and performed can be an artistic process in itself (Burnaford et al., 2001). There are also different degrees or levels that the arts can be incorporated into the curriculum (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). It can be done on a low level by discussing a historical work of art or done more complexly by incorporating a hands-on art project into a lesson. These hands-on projects attempt to highlight the student process of active learning, rather than the static final product, thereby enhancing learning (Muir, 2005; Yokley, 2002). The arts can be integrated into the curriculum on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, depending upon the teacher, principal, or type of school or integration
program. Due to the nature of the flexible school day at the elementary level, arts
integration lessons tend to be initiated in the primary grades. Traditionally, elementary
classroom teachers work with the same students throughout the school day, and
incorporate arts and crafts into their classrooms (i.e., student work, bulletin boards, etc.).
Since they have the responsibility to teach most of the academic subjects in their
classroom, they have the ability to adapt their lessons and schedules as needed. This
flexibility makes arts integration more feasible in the elementary classroom

Personal Experience

In order to integrate the arts into the classroom successfully, teacher education is a
vital component. Although most elementary classroom teachers are required to enroll in
one to three general arts, art history, or arts education courses before graduating from
college, such courses often do not adequately prepare them to effectively teach in an arts
integrated curriculum (Thompson, 1995). Having taught a course for pre-service teachers
at the University level, *Visual Arts in the Elementary Classroom*, I was responsible for
exploring the importance of the arts in the regular elementary classroom. Most of the
undergraduate students were unfamiliar with art materials, art history, contemporary
works of art, art appreciation, the role of the arts in learning, and arts integration. They
did not realize art was considered an academic subject that has standards and anchors,
and to my surprise, many thought that the role of art in the elementary classroom was to
create fun bulletin boards. Thus, I was challenged with the task to incorporate all the
many significant facets of art education into one 16-week semester.
Due to time constraints, I had to prioritize the art education content and decide what would be the most beneficial to the elementary education students. I found myself asking many questions. What art related information/experiences will these future teachers find most useful in their classroom? If their school does not have an art specialist, how can I inspire them to appreciate and successfully teach the arts in their classroom? What policies regarding arts integration exist to help guide these future teachers? How can these future teachers adequately integrate the arts into their already demanding curriculums? Although many researchers and educators support using the arts in the classroom, I found that there is a lack of knowledge concerning adequate preparation and how a teacher becomes a “good” arts integrated teacher.

Even though arts integration is adopted into many schools, there seems to be a modest amount of educational training and documentation concerning policy available to teachers. This current fractured system gives teachers conflicting and vague messages about what they need to know and how to succeed teaching in an arts integration approach. This research study will attempt to understand this space of uncertainty by exploring the dis/connect (i.e., both the disconnect and connection, and the ambiguous space between) between official written policy and expectations of arts integrated lessons and the lived experiences of teachers who teach such lessons. One of the most complex issues in education concerns what is actually happening in the classroom in contrast to what is expected or supposed to be happening.
What is a Rhizome?

In the previous sections, I explored how arts integration attempts to treat each subject equally in contrast with traditional American schooling that often prioritizes only a few of the school subjects and pushes the arts into the margin. Each discipline is considered a fluid space that generates thoughts to “flow back and forth, and in and out, each influencing, directing, and informing the other” (Wilson, 2004, p. 47). Teachers and students are given the opportunity to understand the overlapping and rhizomatic potential of the school subjects in relation to the world.

What is meant by the term rhizomatic? Rhizomatic comes from the root word rhizome, which can be defined as a thick stem that grows in soil and produces upward shoots or downward roots that can develop into new plants (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996). Likewise, arts integration “grows” and “produces” knowledge, teachers and students, and provides opportunities for new information to shoot upward and/or root itself in previous knowledge. This metaphor reveals the live(d) qualities of arts integration.

Similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1996) understanding of a rhizome, education and curriculum has “no beginning or an end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills” (p. 21). Through this understanding, teaching and learning does not begin and end with the school bell. Instead, teaching and learning are dynamic processes that connect to the world and daily interactions, and previous experiences. Teachers and students attempt to re/situate themselves and curriculum in relation to past, current, and future knowledge.

Arts integration recognizes this interconnected quality of curriculum—each subject can be linked to another subject and provoke new routes of learning to sprout. As
teachers and students engage in the art integration process, they bring in their own knowledge and experiences to build upon subject matter. Their knowledge is not broken up into fragmented pieces, but combined into an overflowing sphere. They understand that subject matter is not bound by classroom walls, but that it is often interconnected. Deleuze and Guattari remind us, “Any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order” (p. 7). Arts integration encourages curriculum to come alive.

**Introducing My Research Study**

**Overview**

This study explores the dis/connect between written texts (i.e., policy, curriculum documents, and school mission statements) about arts integration and the lived practice of elementary teachers with arts integration. Although previous empirical studies have examined how arts integration is implemented in schools (Mishook & Kornhaber, 2006) and how it affects student achievement, particularly standardized test scores (Luftig, 2000), little qualitative research has focused on the lived practices of teachers using arts integration and how such approaches are envisioned in schools. This study is unique in its approach as it concentrates on how elementary teachers’ experiences, access to, and understandings of policy strongly affect how arts integration is organized, implemented, and measured. Focusing on feelings of un/certainty, it explores classroom teachers’ mis/use and de/valuation of the arts, how this mis/use is constructed, and how pressures placed on the teacher impact arts integration. While there are a variety of expectations
and challenges in providing quality arts integration, this research study investigates how elementary teachers perceive arts integration and how this perception is then implemented in the classroom. In other words, by focusing on the intersections between official written policy on arts integration, teacher beliefs, and lived practices in the classroom, important understandings will emerge. In the gaps between policy, beliefs and practice, generative discussions and curricular possibilities will be revealed that will impact both arts integrated instruction and arts integrated teacher training models. This study will confront the inner workings of arts integration lesson planning and implementation, and provide practical suggestions for strengthening the curricular program.

The research study includes a textual analysis of written documentation on arts integration at a national, state, and local level, and qualitative research in the field. Teacher interviews regarding beliefs, practices, and training will be conducted in order to understand the relationship between theory and practice. Comparing the document analysis with the interview responses and classroom observations will present an understanding of the space of dis/connect and emphasize the necessity of building a bridge between official policy and lived teacher practice.

**Research Questions**

The main question of this study is: What is the dis/connect between policy (i.e., written documentation) and live(d) practice of arts integration in a particular elementary school? Additional questions addressed are: How does written documentation explain arts integration? What do teachers define as arts integration? How do elementary classroom
teachers become skilled at, understand and conceptualize arts integration? What does arts integration look like in practice? What is the experience of teaching arts integration in an elementary school?

**My Research Design**

My research design, although briefly introduced here, will be expounded upon in chapter two. The research study is composed of three main parts: (a) written policy on arts integration at a national, state, and local level; curriculum documents; and current research on arts integration; (b) case study involving unstructured interviews and focus group sessions with teachers and regarding beliefs, practices, and training associated with arts integration, focusing on the visual arts; and (c) classroom observations of teachers employing arts integration lessons.

A poststructuralist (Lather, 2000; Morgan 2000; Peters & Burbules, 2004) narrative approach to qualitative research, intersected with understandings of case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), informs my research methodology. An understanding of the rhizome also scaffolds my research methodology. Texts, such as mission statements, lesson plans, curriculum texts, and artworks are collected and analyzed from national, state, and local sources and reviewed for their ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions. In addition, five female classroom elementary teachers from a primary school located in a school district in the suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, self-selected to be interviewed one time individually and five teachers participated in two focus group sessions. These sessions facilitated discussion regarding their experiences and understandings of arts integration. The participants included two kindergarten teachers,
one first-grade teacher, two second-grade teachers, and one art teacher. Each teacher was observed at least one time. Concurrently, intensive classroom observation of one of the second-grade teachers took place approximately three times a week over a four month time period. In order to gain a student’s perspective of art integration, informal conversations with second-grade students who participated in an arts integration lesson were recorded. The interviews and focus group sessions, in addition to the classroom observations were video recorded, and arts integration projects were photographed. The classroom observations helped to provide information regarding whether the teachers were able to implement what they expressed during the interviews. By focusing on one school in depth, I became familiar with the inner workings of how educators implement arts integration lessons.

Analysis is informed by the notion of ambiguity and Derrida’s (1997) notions of “différance” and “undecidability.” Meanings of arts integration arise differently among teachers and administrators depending on their own interpretations of the “lifeless” written documents. Detached from the authors’ intentions and understandings, the documents become open to interpretation by the teachers who bring their own beliefs and experiences into the texts. Although history of the West privileges writing, focus in this study is not placed solely on the official documents (i.e., theory, policy) or lesson plans (i.e., official practice), but on the ambiguous space between policy and practice—a lived practice. The traditional binary opposition of theory/practice is disrupted as the study explores the gap between theory and practice (i.e., theory as practice and practice as theory). In other words, the analysis examines the politics of schools: how arts integration
transform knowledge and how arts integration texts are individually interpreted, performed, and live(d) in the classroom.

Throughout this dissertation I have, and will continue to playfully use the slash to show the limitations, complications, and possibilities of language. The use of the slash (/) in the term, dis/connect, allows an exploration of the disconnect, connection, and the ambiguous space in-between. This will help as I investigate the multifaceted qualities of arts integration and the relationship between policy and practice.

Throughout the classroom observations, interviews, and focus group sessions, I investigate the elements that contribute to an understanding of an arts integration program—the multi-dimensional and living aspects of arts integration. Arts integration is explored as a complex educational curriculum, a live(d) curriculum that highlights the possibilities of subjects in the making. I search for not only what is directly observable, but also what is imperceptible—what has been erased—the silenced discussions, unheard voices, suppressed experiences, forgotten knowledge, and concealed interactions. Arts integration is a site of overlapping boundaries that becomes a breathing transparent interface between bodies and worlds and this study examines such complications.

**Presenting Live(d) Experiences Through Narrative Inquiry**

In an attempt to explore narrative inquiry in qualitative research, Chase (2005) states:

Narrative is retrospective meaning-making—the shaping or ordering of past experience. Narrative is a way of understanding one’s own and others’ actions, of
organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time. (p. 656)

Investigating my own experiences as well as other classroom teachers’ live(d) experiences with arts integration, I engaged in a process of narrative inquiry as a way of knowing (Lyons, 2006). Studying the practice of teaching through the use of narrative inquiry reveals the actual storied lives of the teachers as they reflect and interpret their personal and professional journeys (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2006). For example, presenting a literature review through narrative inquiry in chapter one, I explore existing literature and theory through personal stories of working with arts integration as an art teacher. Furthermore, chapter three relies on the potential of narrative inquiry to offer insight into how classroom teachers experience and understand arts integration as they explore past, current, and upcoming encounters, emotions, reflections, and challenges of the arts in schooling. Listening to the teachers’ stories, I reflected on what they were saying on the surface, but also listened for embedded concepts and themes, while being attentive to their emotional responses. Weaving narratives in and out of my writing combines my personal words and interpretations with the words and interpretations of the teacher participants, and highlights my position as both a researcher and a participant.

In addition, throughout the interviews and focus group sessions, the teachers were not expected to have correct answers in response to questions, but were treated as “narrators with stories to tell and voices of their own” (Chase, 2005, p. 660). Listening to their unique voices helps to disregard previously held notions of metanarratives where research and questions have one truth. In contrast, teaching is composed of complex narratives that differ according to teachers, time, and place. The stories facilitates an
exploration of subjectivity/ies and how “knowledge of teaching originates, shaped, and is brought to use” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2006, p. 366) as it takes into account the embedded social, historical, cultural, and political spheres.

Using narrative inquiry allows me to expose personal details of myself and of classroom teachers in order to help engage the audience-reader, promote emotional response(s), and/or personal connections. Perhaps Ellis and Bochner summarize my intentions best as they state:

I turned to narrative as a mode of inquiry because I was persuaded that social science texts needed to construct a different relationship between researchers and subjects and between authors and readers. I wanted a more personal, collaborative, and interactive relationship, one that centered on the question of how human experience is endowed with meaning and on the moral and ethical choices we face as human beings who live in an uncertain and changing world. (2000, p. 743)

Aligned with writings on narrative inquiry, I am not concerned with whether my story and others’ stories reflects our pasts “truthfully,” but what kind of person(s) it shapes us into, the consequences the stories produce, and new possibilities it introduces for living our unique lives. It is my hope that this “text functions as an agent of self-discovery or self-creation, for the author as well as for those who read and engage in the text” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 746) and promote dialogue to further the complicated conversations surrounding qualitative research, narrative inquiry, education, and arts integration.
Significance

In an era of standards based education, “special” subjects, such as art, are slowly disappearing from schools. Although the visual arts are considered a “core” academic subject with academic standards and anchors, they are often not given as much attention since they are not officially assessed on a state or national level. Instead of focusing only on the core subjects that are state tested, reformers have suggested the potential of the arts to teach across the curriculum. Although educators are aware of the academic standards (i.e., the expected end results), they have the challenge and potential to design and implement creative and unique lessons to strengthen the process of learning and teaching. Using the arts in the classroom has been suggested to help motivate student learning, stimulate critical thinking, and reach diverse learners.

In arts integration lessons, elementary teachers are encouraged to use the arts to enhance student academic learning in the classroom. Although the end goals of such a reform are clearly articulated, there is often ambiguity as to how to successfully meet the stated goals, implement arts integration, and a lack of deep understanding as to what integration entails. Most teachers lack professional training in arts integration and there is very little guidance for them when they are in the field. Teachers suffer from feelings of apprehension and confusion regarding arts integration programs.

I was one such teacher. Before becoming a doctoral student I worked for four years as an elementary art teacher in a public school that emphasized arts integration. During this time I was conscious of teachers’ sense of detachment from formal educational policy on arts integration. My research study grows out of this sense of frustration coupled with the fact that I have taught in a pre-service teacher education
program that has recently undergone a curricular shift to embrace arts integration. However, while this new University program embraces arts integration in “theory” and “policy”, each subject area is taught separately and isolated from the general elementary pre-service program. As such, there is a need for research on arts integration at the public school level, which would then impact the ways that University pre-service programs develop arts integrated curricula and teacher training.

The knowledge gained from this study can be transferred across a multitude of disciplines including the new arts integration model offered at Penn State University. As part of the Arts and Literacy Block, this new program attempts to address the interdisciplinary needs of the future teachers. Through a heightened awareness of what is actually happening in the schools (i.e., lived practice), teachers and administrators can begin to form a better understanding of what arts integration is, how it influences teacher beliefs, and how to better meet the challenges of training of future educators.

**Further Implications/Outcomes**

Having taught in an arts integration public elementary school and University pre-service teaching program, I recognize that there is a space of dis/connect between the two spheres of policy and lived practice, and that a course of action can be initiated with the purpose of dissolving the constructed boundaries. This study provides a contribution of new sources and novel perspectives. Examining art integration through a poststructuralist narrative approach offers a unique interpretation of the school program in relation to different disciplines, experiences, and theories. As arts integration programs offer an
innovative approach to learning and understanding, it becomes a revolutionary concept that can have many benefits when it is properly understood and initiated.

Investigating lived practices in arts integration provides advancement for the field of education. There is a need to improve arts integration and teacher education for classroom teachers, art teachers, and administrators in K-12. Teacher education can include, but is not limited to pre-service higher education programs, in-service programs offered at a local school district level, and professional development courses at a state and national level. By actively listening to the beliefs and experiences of teachers presented through this study, the educational community will have a better understanding of the lived realities of arts integration and thereby be able to provide alternative models in education and teacher training. Additionally, this study will expound upon implications for teachers who are responsible for teaching the arts (i.e., their school is without an art specialist), and work towards developing quality arts curriculum.

The study presents opportunities for transformation in the hopes of establishing a cohesive and flourishing arts integration program, bringing issues that have been historically overlooked into clear view. Acknowledging that there is a space of dis/connect between policy and practice, this study offers a better understanding of the lived practices and experiences of teaching in an arts integrated school in relation to official written documentation on arts integrated programs. Consequences of disregarding the dis/connect will widen the gap between written text, teaching, curriculum, and pedagogy, and subsequently influence how we educate and train pre-service elementary teachers. University officials, school administrators, and teachers would do well to
increase awareness and actively respond to these challenges by providing a beneficial bridge between official policy and lived teacher practice.

Organization of the Chapters

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. The chapters are not intended to be read only in the sequential order as presented, but encourage movement between the sections, pages, and words. The introductory section of the dissertation is an opening to the research study and explores the significance of the project. This section briefly situates the arts in education, presents the concept of arts integration, and exposes personal interests in the topic.

The first chapter is a review of relevant literature through a narrative approach of understanding my personal experiences with arts integration. Recent arts integration educational studies are examined, as well as pertinent policy at a national, state, and local level. Multiple definitions, understandings, and implementations of arts integration are investigated. Using an understanding of “currere” or a live(d) curriculum, this section addresses how curriculum is/can be understood in relation to arts integration.

The second chapter is composed of the methodological aspects of the study. This section offers insight into the research design in relation to the site, participants, data collection methods, and analysis. Using a poststructuralist framework, an understanding of the rhizome and ambiguity scaffolds my research methodology, and examines the relationship between text and interpretation, and curriculum and implementation.

The third chapter presents the findings of the research study. This section exposes how elementary educators are trained, understand, implement, and assess arts integration,
as well as the factors that inhibit or progress their ability to use the arts in the classroom. It examines how the arts are de/valued, the role of un/certainty and risk in schooling, and highlights the benefits and complexities of using the arts in the elementary classroom.

This chapter discusses the contributions of the study to education, and addresses the tensions of arts integrations, provoking the gaps, contradictions, and promises of the arts in the elementary classroom. It exposes the disconnect between policy and live(d) practice in arts integration and suggests possibilities and the necessity of bridging the chasm.

The fourth chapter summarizes the research study. This section also explores personal struggles and successes throughout the study, and acknowledges how my own un/certainty impacted the study. Furthermore, it will present new questions and research ideas in hopes of continuing discussions and understandings of arts integration.
Chapter 1

Exploring Arts Integration: Re/thinking the Boundaries

Arts Infusion: A Personal Experience with Arts Integration

Accepting my first job directly out of college, I was hired to teach art in two elementary public schools. Although I thought I was hired to teach only the visual arts program, I soon learned that I was expected to hold many additional responsibilities. The school district offered specialized elementary programs named “Schools of Focus”. Parents had the choice to send their children to any of the six schools for specialized instruction in either the arts, Spanish, environmental awareness, or entrepreneurship. Although most of the students attended the elementary schools located nearest to their homes, some parents did take advantage of the choice option.

I was assigned to teaching in two of the district’s elementary schools, one of which was defined as an arts infusion school. Although I understood my responsibilities as a school art teacher I was confused with the concept of arts infusion. Davis (2005) explains that arts infusion attempts to insert the arts from the outside into the academic classroom and that visiting artists are an integral component of this type of teaching/learning. As I searched for information regarding arts infusion, I began to understand it as a type of arts integration that includes artists-in-residence as active participants working alongside the classroom and art teacher. The school district defined arts infusion as a way to stimulate students to think abstractly and creatively, improve confidence with communication skills, enhance problem-solving skills, and recognize the
importance of the arts in daily life. Teachers were expected to incorporate the visual and performing arts in the academic curriculum to help enrich and expand student learning by providing them with an opportunity to engage in a variety of hands-on interdisciplinary projects. Arts infusion aimed to explore art’s aesthetic, cultural, and historical significance, and as the visual arts teacher in this particular school, I was expected to work diligently toward achieving these goals. Facilitating and teaching arts infusion for four years, I recognized many benefits and also encountered many challenges which I will outline below.

**Organization: Planning and Instructional Time**

The district-wide elementary school schedule was divided into a six-day cycle. As an art teacher who traveled between two schools, I was assigned to teach at each school for three consecutive school days. The students had art class scheduled once every six days for 50 minutes, during which they engaged in art lessons. But because the arts infusion school was a smaller school with fewer students, instead of teaching the regularly scheduled art lessons every day, I had one full day to devote to extra lessons for arts infusion. In other words, in addition to receiving the regular art instruction, the students in this school had access to more interdisciplinary art instruction. Thus, students in this school explored art through two overlapping approaches: they engaged in an art-based approach where art is studied as its own subject and offers insight to all the other academic subjects as they are taught through an arts lens (Davis, 2005) and through arts infusion. For example, in the regularly scheduled art class, I designed lessons that concentrated first on art, and then would make any interdisciplinary connections. The
projects would often be connected to information that was not included in the district curriculum English, math, science or social studies documents, but I would teach this “extra” curricular content as it was inherently linked to the lesson. Yet in art infusion, the arts and another subject were simultaneously thought through when designing and teaching the lessons. There was more attention to linking specific content from the curriculum documents in the different academic subject areas. For example, if the students were expected to learn about African American history or communities in social studies, or the solar system in science, we (i.e., the classroom teacher and I) would find themes, issues, artists and works of art that could be related to such topics and design a lesson from there that supports the prescribed learning objectives.

To facilitate teacher participation, I provided the classroom teachers with the opportunity to sign-up for arts infusion. They were asked to schedule at least one week in advance with the amount of time needed, a theme or lesson idea, and provide necessary subject matter content and resources. Teachers could sign up for whole-day, half-day, or hour-long lessons since the entire arts infusion day was open and flexible. I would then try to meet with the classroom teacher to discuss our ideas for the hands-on project. Due to scheduling conflicts, we would often meet before school or if we ate during the same period, we would speak during lunch. Depending on the plans, lessons could range from individual projects, to small-group projects, to class projects, to school-wide projects. Discussions and critiques (e.g., of historical, contemporary, and student artwork) were also regular aspects of arts infusion, but since the teachers did not have access to their art materials and were not always comfortable with the art making activity, they often heavily relied on me. Hence, the bulk of the responsibilities for the arts infusion lessons
were placed on me. Although teachers presented me with basic content matter that the students were learning, I was the one accountable for researching additional information on the subject, designing an arts integrated lesson, searching for historical or contemporary artists who work with similar content or materials, and gathering and preparing the needed supplies. The lessons were more often than not, designed solely by me without the collaboration of the other teachers. The arts infusion projects were to be co-taught both by the teachers and/or artists involved, and not used as preparation period for the classroom teacher. Additionally, because I taught at two different schools, my part-time absence at the arts infused school hindered my involvement with the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PCA), a non-profit community arts organization, artist-in-residency program at the school. Due to my responsibilities, I could only be at this arts infused school either two or three days a week and this schedule would often force me to miss meetings, discussions, and activities related to the PCA program. Therefore my absence and demanding schedule did not allow me to really have any input in planning or teaching these particular lessons with the artists.

I soon encountered challenges involving finding sufficient time for planning, designing, implementing, and displaying the arts infusion projects. Although I did have one full day to dedicate to arts infusion, it became difficult to arrange time to meet with the classroom teachers to discuss ideas and upcoming projects. This was further complicated by my teaching schedule, which was organized so that I was teaching in the environmental school the three days prior to arts infusion day. Events such as assemblies, standardized testing, and snow delays often interrupted scheduling time to implement the arts infusion lessons. Many of the projects took more than one day to complete,
especially if they involved materials that had to dry before moving on to the next step. This left teachers with two options: they either had to finish the project without my assistance or wait to schedule time during the next week’s arts infusion day. Since the art room was used as the music room for the days that I was not there, preparing for the days activities was challenging. A full-time art teacher would have been ideal for each school.

Some teachers signed up for arts infusion in order to be relieved of their teaching duties and free up time in their schedule. Since I was in the classroom teaching the arts infusion lesson, instead of co-teaching, some teachers would sit at their desks to grade homework assignments and tests. I would occasionally have to remind them of their responsibilities and ask them to assist with the lesson. As Eisner (2002) acknowledges, “An integrated curriculum makes more, not fewer, demands upon the teacher” (p. 155). Instead of teaching each subject area in separation, as their textbooks do, the teachers are asked to personally connect the curriculum content, which demands much more planning time. Due to my routine presence in the general classroom and extra time that I was able to spend working with the teacher and students, our relationships seemed to naturally evolve over time. Therefore, I never felt too awkward if I had to remind the teacher of her responsibilities in regard to arts infusion.

Relationships

The nontraditional organization of arts infusion seemed to strengthen my relationships with the students, coworkers, and parents. As I worked closely with teachers and students in their classroom setting, I began to see them more often and in a different context. No longer was I imprisoned in the art room, which I also shared with the music
teacher, but welcomed into the students’ and teachers’ regular classroom. The students were often surprised that art could overflow into their classroom learning and that my knowledge was not limited to the visual arts. The students and classroom teachers began to appreciate art from different perspectives. As I continued to work with the students outside of the art room environment I experienced their behaviors in the regular art class improving, and had more positive interactions. As the students worked on the arts infusion lessons, many of which were hands-on group projects, communication skills and comfort levels seemed to increase.

I began to understand and appreciate the challenges my coworkers experienced, their teaching styles and beliefs, as well as learning about their personal lives outside of the school. Co-teaching enabled students to receive extra help, more personal guidance, and different perspectives. I was given the opportunity to see the students’ strengths in other areas outside of the arts. The students’ abilities in the other academic areas amazed me. I wondered how all of this remarkable learning had gone personally unnoticed. As we engaged in the arts infusion lessons the boundaries between the student and learner blurred. This type of arts integration seemed to promote co-teaching and co-learning as both teachers and students were engaged in a collaborative approach.

Interest, Enjoyment, and Motivation

Arts infusion promoted a sense of enjoyment, interest, and motivation among the teachers, students, and artists involved. Throughout the lessons, I felt it was important for the students, teachers, and myself to critically examine issues that were prevalent in our lives, as well as across the curriculum. Contemporary artists who explore themes that
relate to the academic content were commonly investigated. As I present an example of an arts infusion lesson that was implemented in a second-grade classroom in the following section, insight regarding my approach to arts infusion and interests as an art educator will be provided.

In mid-January, one of the second-grade teachers approached me to create an arts infusion lesson that celebrates African American history month (Figure 1-1). We collaboratively decided to create a unit that explored freedom, and I developed an arts infusion lesson that would enable the students to explore societal issues such as power and oppression. The second grade students, who were learning about African American history in their regular classroom, were asked to associate concepts of freedom and slavery. I introduced the contemporary African American woman artist, Kara Walker, and a few selected installations/artworks that she had created. We discussed many terms such as positive and negative space, body language, timeline, storytelling, freedom, identity, and silhouettes. Working with the classroom teacher, she and I assisted the students in creating a visual timeline of events through African American history, recognizing important movements and people in the pursuit of freedom. Students chose one aspect from the timeline to create using the Walker-inspired silhouettes. Students traced one another’s body on large black paper in a particular body position that conveyed their person, object, or concept. The students then cut out the silhouettes that depicted slaves being sold, engaging in plantation work, crawling in the Underground Railroad, and people such as Tiger Woods who have pushed the boundary of limitations for African Americans. The students then chronologically arranged the silhouettes in a visual timeline around the multi-purpose room walls for the whole school to enjoy,
internalize, and reflect upon. Perspective in relation to the location of the human figures, houses, and clouds stimulated the students to think about what appropriate size to make the silhouettes. Although the installation focused primarily on visual art and social studies, aspects within other subject areas were explored as well. In English class, the students researched their portion of the installation and wrote a few short paragraphs about the history and impact of the person, place, or event. They presented their installation during a school-wide assembly as each student read a statement explaining their visual representation of the person or event of the African American history timeline. Many parents also attended the monthly school assembly.

Figure 1-1: African American history timeline installation.

As the students engaged in the art production, they seemed to really enjoy the learning process. Their smiles, time on-task and inquisitive questions demonstrated their excitement and desire to learn. In this arts infusion lesson, teaching and learning were not contained within the building walls, but permeated throughout the school. The multi-purpose room was filled with art. Students would pass me in the halls and ask when I
would visit their classroom again. They were eager to engage in more arts infusion projects, and eager to learn in general. Obscuring the margins “between school and not-school” (Sumara & Davis, 1997, p. 300) seemed to increase learning, awareness, and appreciation. This project, along with many other arts infusion lessons, was designed to establish meaningful associations between art, regular classroom content, and their everyday lives. The students and teachers explored new spaces of integrative learning that encouraged “new connective tissues [to]... emerge, new visions [to]... develop, and new meanings [to be]... constructed” (Lyburner, 2004, p. 76). To promote learning, the unfamiliar must first be tied to a child’s sense of what the world is, how it works, and how they are an integral part in the whole process (Walsh, 2002). Students must find information meaningful in order to engage with the knowledge. Stewart & Walker assert, “In order to generate and investigate their own questions, students need to see them as relevant to their own lives” (2005, p. 13). Although these statements focus on the student, I would argue that the same is true for teachers. This discovery/learning/teaching process stimulates students and teachers to establish their own unique understandings, beliefs, and opinions. I experienced an enjoyment of co-teaching with the classroom teacher, and as we worked together, we motivated one another. We were excited to see the students so involved in the lesson, and at times, we almost forgot that we were in a school setting.

In this particular arts infusion project, priority was not positioned on only one subject, but attempted to place an equal emphasis on at least two academic subjects. Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) refers to this as “parallel processes” (Burnaford et al., 2001) and the North Carolina A+ Schools Program as “two-way integration” (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Each subject was considered a fluid space that
generated thoughts to “flow back and forth, and in and out, each influencing, directing, and informing the other” (Wilson, 2004, p. 47). Students were given the opportunity to understand the overlapping and rhizomatic potential of social studies and the visual arts in relation to the contemporary world and African American history. Similar to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1996) understanding of a rhizome, education is continually in a state of becoming as it has no beginning or ending. As each student entered the classroom, he/she brought in his/her own knowledge and experiences to build upon. His/her knowledge was not broken up into fragmented pieces, but combined into one overflowing sphere.

Many additional arts infusion projects were implemented throughout the school year as well. A first grade class created butterfly wings and performed a play to complement a science unit. A second grade class created a two-dimensional map of their local neighborhoods in a social studies lesson in community (Figure 1-2). A different second grade class investigated the notion of heroes in accordance to a story that they read in English class by studying Faith Ringgold and creating a hero quilt (Figure 1-3). In a third grade science class, the students discussed the artist James Turrell and created a Turrell-inspired lighted solar system installation (Figure 1-4). They were asked to research different planets and use the information to make each planet out of colored cellophane. In science class, third-grade students created musical instruments in a sound unit. They experimented with how music affects their moods and drawings, as well as brainstormed the sounds that they imaginatively “heard” when looking at a Kandinsky painting. Important related terms such as frequency and pitch were discussed. The whole fifth grade participated in Colonial Days, a culminating activity that took place after their social studies unit on colonial America (Figure 1-5). The students transformed the
classrooms by making murals, a log-cabin structure, stone walkways and fireplaces, placemats, etc. Students learned traditional colonial dance, sang songs, made soap, candles, rugs, brooms, as well as dressed up in costumes for the special occasion. Parents volunteered to make colonial American dishes for the students to eat.

Figure 1-2: Community: This is our neighborhood.

Figure 1-3: Hero quilt.
Involvement

There were many people who contributed to arts infusion. As the art teacher, I was in charge of the visual arts aspect, with additional help from the physical education teacher who taught ceramics. There was a music teacher who ran the chorus and theater portion. Although funding was becoming scarce my last year at the school, we had a partnership with Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (PCA) who assigned local artists (e.g., a
storyteller and mural artist) to additionally help with the program. The school’s Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) funded assemblies that supported the arts as well. A few of the assemblies included a puppet show and a dance performance. Additionally, parents were invited into the classroom to assist the teachers, artists, and students with selected arts infusion lessons.

Although the PCA offered much assistance, challenges were encountered regarding perceptions of art. The professional artists and art specialists often held different visions of arts infusion than myself, or the classroom teacher. The artist(s) in-residency often understood art as a means of expression and social transformation, whereas the classroom teachers often understood art as a craft and as a teaching tool to promote academic learning. As I continued participating with arts infusion, I began to understand arts infusion as an approach that motivates student and teacher learning.

A lack of involvement by a few of the classroom teachers of the school was problematic. Quite often, the same teachers, the ones who enjoy the arts and project-based hands-on learning, would sign up for arts infusion with great ideas. But, there were also a few teachers who seldom participated and were hesitant to sign up for arts infusion. Perhaps they felt pressure to cover subject content needed for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) tests, or did not like the arts or letting go of complete control of their class. Learning how to share teaching responsibilities in a classroom and shift roles according to the lesson was often a difficult task, and as classroom teachers worked with art specialists and artists, we often struggled with our own identities and responsibilities in the classroom (Burnaford et al., 2001). I found that some teachers were easier to work with than others, and the teachers who were flexible, open to new ideas,
and comfortable with getting a bit messy, seemed to work well with my personal teaching style. Many teachers were not aware that the classroom academic standards mandated by the state could easily be woven throughout the arts standards, or further, that the arts even had their own academic standards. In order to prevent certain subjects, such as the arts, being overlooked in the schools, political legislations were established. The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 attempted to resolve prioritizing academic subjects by stating that all students should have an equal education in all academic areas. Soon after, national and state standards for each subject and grade level, including the arts and humanities, were officially accepted and put into practice. As of 2004 in Pennsylvania, students in third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh were tested for levels of proficiency in only reading and math. Because these subject areas are tested, school districts and teachers often designate additional attention, time, and funds to the “tested” areas. If particular schools do not score proficiently on the tests three years in a row, then they are to undergo a restructuring, students are free to attend other proficient schools, and teachers and administrators may lose their jobs. Basically, the schools would lose funding and would have to be run through the state. As districts were/are threatened with this outcome, does it not make sense that the teachers feel obligated to place emphasis on the “tested” areas and subject matter? Although arts infusion can help teach this “tested” information, it takes much extra planning and teaching time from the regular school day.

**Funding**

As mentioned above, another area of interest for arts infusion involved funding. Although the program was externally funded before I was hired, during my four years
teaching, I was expected to purchase all the needed supplies for both the regular art program and art infusion from my yearly art budget. It was at times challenging to order all the supplies a year in advance when we did not yet know what supplies would be required.

Due to a lack of funding during my last year teaching, our partnership with PCA was beginning to dwindle. With the absence of the artists-in-residency, I felt that I was the backbone of the arts infusion program, and due to lack of funds and time, the lessons and schools were not flourishing with the arts as past years. Although Burnaford et al. (2001) stress the importance of establishing long-term partnerships with arts organizations, I found that without funding it is very difficult to keep the alliance(s) alive. Grant programs that offer financial assistance for the arts often last for a few years and when the funds are exhausted, they do not usually renew the grants. They assign the monies to other applicants or schools who would benefit from arts infusion. It is the goal of many of the grant programs, that by having the artists-in-residency, the classroom teachers will learn from them, which will in turn allow teachers to continue doing arts integrated projects successfully after they leave. I experienced that once an artist-in-residency left the school, many classroom teachers did not continue using the arts in the classroom, as they still did not feel comfortable with the materials and art content, and additionally, had time constraints with planning and implementation of such lessons.

**Space**

The issue of space, especially with the storage of the supplies and projects, and creation of the works of art is an important concern. Some of the classes that had over
twenty-four students would often have a difficult time in finding enough room to work, especially if we were creating a medium to large size work. Because the art room was smaller than the regular classrooms, many of the teachers allowed their classroom space to be used as a large art studio during arts infusion. The students would help me transport the lesson materials and supplies from the art room, located in the basement, upstairs to their rooms. We would also use the schools hallways, multi-purpose room, and areas outside of the school as needed for space to work, store, and display.

Since I shared a room with the music teacher, I needed to make sure that all the art supplies, resources, and projects were organized and properly stored. Although the music teacher was very careful with the stored supplies and works of art in the room, there were about 250 students who visited the room for music and chorus class during the three days that I was at the other school. The tables and chairs would have to be reorganized every time the room transitioned from music to art, and vice versa. We did our best in attempting to keep artworks free from damages.

Support

In order to keep a strong arts infusion program, maintaining support from the school and district administrations is important. During my first three years teaching at the arts infusion school I received great support from the principals in office. My first principal would often visit the classrooms during the arts infusion lessons, and would assist as needed. Understanding that she was the principal who applied for the arts grant years earlier, it only makes sense that she enjoyed the arts and believed they play an important role in learning. During my second year teaching, she went on maternity leave,
which left the school with a vacant principal position. Over the next three years, there were three acting principals in the school who had varying knowledge about the arts and arts infusion.

During my fourth year teaching, a principal was transferred from the middle school to fill the vacancy from the resignation of the principal who had been on maternity leave. Although this new principal stated that she appreciated the arts, one of the students’ murals was soon mysteriously painted over by the maintenance staff. It was quite difficult to explain to the students why the mural was now covered with plain white paint. When I inquired about the disappearance of the mural, the principal claimed to have not known about the situation. But as I investigated further, the maintenance crew informed me that every work order had to be approved by the building principal. This experience suggested the principal’s lack of support of the arts, and I quickly lost respect for her as the principal of a school that was supposed to appreciate and showcase the arts.

In order to offer a successful integrated curriculum, schools need to provide organizational support, expertise, and high standards (Remer, 1996). It is also important to network and collaborate, especially in establishing lasting partnerships. Local support is vital in establishing a strong arts integration program—changes must begin from the bottom up. Teachers must have a solid foundation and support to assist in their planning and teaching. Continuing a strong program was complicated as I tried to satisfy parents, teachers, principals, and administrators, as well as my own expectations.
Non-Arts Content Knowledge

Having a firm understanding of each grade level and academic content for each subject is very important for preparing and teaching arts infusion lessons. Many of the teachers, including myself, faced challenges regarding properly understanding the academic content and curriculum plan. A better understanding of the curriculum of each grade level would have helped me to better serve the needs and goals of the teachers, students, and school. Although this could have been included in the category below, it is important to mention it on its own. Just as it is important for the classroom teacher to become familiar with the arts, and it is equally important for the art specialists and artist-in residency to learn about the non-art subject matter. Much personal time was spent trying to refresh my knowledge of science, social studies, mathematics, and English class. The projects were often expected to support the academic standards, so I also had to become familiar with all the different subjects and the related content.

Exploring arts integration, Burnaford et al. (2001) discuss the reciprocity of this type of learning/teaching. They state, “Arts integration is not just about the arts deepening other learning in other areas; it is also about the rest of the curriculum deepening and enriching the making and understanding of the art” (p. 10). I agree that the arts deepen other subject areas, just as the other subject areas enrich the making and understanding of the arts.
**Arts Content**

As previously mentioned, high-quality arts infusion heavily relies on a teacher’s knowledge of the arts. As new teachers were hired in the school, many of them were unaware of the concept of arts infusion and especially uninformed on how to implement it into their classroom. Professional development programs and in-service trainings would have been beneficial in order to provide an understanding of arts infusion. Designating time to explore arts infusion could have provided a forum to brainstorm and discuss lesson examples. Teachers needed to be skilled in art history, contemporary art, art vocabulary, and learn how to think and talk about/through the arts (Perkins, 1994). It is equally important for them to familiarize themselves with artistic materials and actively engage in the art making process so they begin to feel comfortable and understand the potentials and limitations of the materials (Burnaford et al., 2001). Some teachers would only sign-up for arts infusion when they disliked a particular unit of study or wanted a break from teaching. It was often challenging to co-teach a lesson when the classroom teacher wanted a brief escape. However, quite often, when we began the lesson, we would energize one another and find ourselves actively enjoying the teaching process.

Professional development training could also have addressed areas of assessment regarding arts infusion. Teachers often seemed to lack the knowledge regarding how to assess the arts integration projects. More often than not, teachers did not formally assess the works of art as they did not feel that it was a suitable form of assessment. In other words, they did not know how to properly assess the works. This would send a message to students that the hands-on arts infusion projects were less important than their tests and homework, for which they received a letter grade.
Many of my co-workers had varying understandings of the arts and of arts infusion. Occasionally, a few teachers would want to create art infusion projects in their classroom that related to an upcoming holiday. For example, one teacher wanted to create headbands with deer antlers for Christmas. When I asked her how this related to her class lessons and curricular content, she seemed baffled, and said it did not. Because it was a hands-on project where students made a final product, she assumed it would work. I was surprised by her request especially since she had worked in the school for many years with the arts infusion program. In order to agree to help with the project, I challenged her to incorporate it into her teaching and the students’ course work. She decided to have the students read a story about deer and perform a short play based on the reading. I found myself confronted with the test of trying to educate teachers who are “set in their ways” regarding the placement of the arts in the school, and the issue regarding what is constituted as a “proper” arts integrated project. Although I do not consider making a costume prop for a play a strong arts integrated lesson, I agreed that the performance of the play was, so I decided to help assist with the antler headbands. But, before the art production aspect, we discussed additional information regarding the purposes of antlers, what antlers are made from, and looked at a few selected art images that include deer.

In order to understand arts infusion, teachers first have to gain an understanding and appreciation of the arts, and the role of the arts in learning. Many researchers and art educators have explored the importance of the arts in schools. Eisner (2002) argues that the arts can serve as models for what educational practice might be at its very best as it transforms consciousness. He believes that we become conscious through senses and experiences and that the arts provide an entrance into this awareness. Further, he claims
that teaching the arts to students strengthens decision making through a more complicated way of learning. Fowler (1996) believes that the arts open the doors to learning as they promote thinking receptively, aesthetically, creatively, communicatively, and culturally. Remer (1996) lists five reasons why the arts are crucial for lifelong learning. She suggests that the arts express feelings and ideas that words cannot convey, expand the child’s way of knowing and bring creativity to the nation’s classrooms, help students integrate their learning and discover the connectedness of things, help children who are emotionally and physically restricted and motivate young people who are socially alienated, and build community within and beyond the school walls.

Teachers of arts infusion also need to understand arts infusion as a type of arts integration. Integrative curriculum can mix together any academic subjects, and many researchers concentrate on why schools should integrate the arts, in particular, with the other disciplines. Burnaford et al. (2001) explain that the arts are well suited for integration because the arts deepen instruction by connecting thought, feeling, and action, facilitate co-teaching and co-learning, and link the self to the larger community. Rabkin and Redmond (2004) state, “In arts integrated schools, students constantly move back and forth between different methods of inquiry and observation, symbolic languages, expressive modes, formal curriculum, and their own lives” (p. 128). The arts integration approach can open up dialogue between what is known and what is unknown in hopes of creating new knowledge. As information is experienced, gathered, organized, and analyzed in unique routes, students can create their own space(s) of making and doing that stimulate new ways to view, understand, and engage in learning. The arts help situate both the creator/teacher and learner/observer on a path of engagement (Goldberg, 2005).
Arts integration does not attempt to position art at the center of the school curriculum, but uses the arts as launching point for interdisciplinary learning. As Attenborough suggests, “the value of using art as the beginning for the integration of other subjects creates an atmosphere of acceptance, experimentation, and imagination” (2002, p. 88). As teachers understand arts integration, they can begin to rethink the role of arts infusion in their classroom and across the curriculum.

Recognizing that many schools, particularly at the elementary level, have recently been introducing arts integration in the curriculum, it is important to become aware of the goals, purposes, and outcomes of such programs. Throughout my four years teaching in the elementary school, neither my coworkers nor I received any official documentation regarding arts integration. Reading current arts integration research and discussing lesson ideas could have helped the classroom teachers learn more about this unique approach to teaching and learning.

**Pre-Service Training**

Just as professional development training is important for classroom teachers who work in arts integrated schools, pre-service training in the arts is important for all educators. Teachers should be introduced to different teaching techniques and learning styles, in particular how the arts provide alternatives to traditional schooling. University pre-service education programs should emphasize not only the theoretical aspects of the arts in learning, but also provide practical suggestions for integrating the arts into the classroom. Even if teachers are unaware of the theoretical benefits of the arts, most teachers, in particular elementary teachers, incorporate the arts into their classroom.
Rarely do I walk into an elementary school and not see student drawings and projects, colorful decorations, creative display boards, and posters on display on the walls of the school. Just because they are not art teachers does not mean that they do not teach the arts on some level. Acknowledging this fact, it is important for all educators to familiarize themselves with the arts so that the arts can be treated with respect in the classroom. This implies that university education programs need to accept more responsibility by providing more quality arts courses that are not merely electives.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I had the opportunity to teach an art education course designed for pre-service elementary educators. Although most teachers are required to enroll in one to three general arts, art history, or arts education courses before graduating from college, such courses often do not adequately prepare them to effectively teach in an arts integrated curriculum (Thompson, 1995). I argue further that these university courses do not adequately prepare them to effectively use the arts with respect in their classroom in general. As Cooperman states, “Good teachers, working together, could weave these various [interdisciplinary] pieces into a curriculum that would be comprehensive in outlook, and yet deal with specific educational issues in a way that made learning seem a joy, rather than the acquisition of a boring hodgepodge of disconnected knowledge” (2005, p. 67). Although many researchers and educators would support this concept, there is a lack of knowledge concerning how a teacher becomes a “good” interdisciplinary teacher. Or, further, there is a lack of knowledge concerning how an administrator becomes a “good” leader of an arts infused school.
A Broad, Yet Informed Understanding of Arts Integration

Whether it is explored in university pre-service courses or professional development programs, it is important for educators to understand arts integration, what it looks like in practice, and how it is properly implemented and assessed. A broad yet well-informed understanding of arts integration is needed in addition to a willingness to experiment with alternative forms of teaching and learning.

What is arts integration? The challenge in attempting to answer this question is troubled in the terminology and the various meanings associated with the phrase. Before exploring arts integration as a whole, it is important to look at both words separately.

“Art” is a word that is itself complex. Art is usually associated with a product such as a painting, sculpture, or photograph, but is also linked to the skills involved in making such products or creation process. Dewey (2005) states, “art denotes a process of doing or making” (p. 48). He understands art as an active practice as one experiences the world. Eisner (2002), influenced by Dewey agrees with this explanation and adds, “The phrase ‘work of art’ can have two meanings. It can refer to work of art, or it can refer to the work of art” (p. 81). Art in this sense can be both a final product and the labor or process of doing and perceiving. The “arts” can encompass many creative forms including the visual arts and the performing arts.

The second word, “integration,” can be defined as an opening up of boundaries that allow for the combination of separate entities. In relation to education, integration refers to the combination of academic subjects. Dewey (2005) explains, “In every integral experience there is form because there is dynamic organization” (p. 57). This implies that when the educational setting is integrated it has form and continuously changes with
shifting needs, time, desires, culture, environment, and so forth. Vars (2005) understands curriculum integration as “a student-centered approach in which students are invited to join with their teachers to plan learning experiences that address both student concerns and major social issues” (p. 96). Beane (1997) also highlights the potential of curriculum integration to teach about social issues and democratic communities. Integration deepens instruction as it encourages finding problems and asking questions (Burnaford, et al., 2001).

Connecting the two words together implies that arts integration focuses on how art processes and art products dissolve boundaries and fuse together isolated bodies. Exploring arts integration, Grumet (2004) explains:

This word we are using, ‘integration,’ comes from the Latin word *integrare,* which means to make something whole, just as we call whole numbers ‘integers.’ When we speak of arts integration, we are speaking of a process of curriculum development and instruction that enriches relationship among students, teachers, and parents, as well as relationships within each of these groups. Arts integration is an approach to teaching and learning that lives in lessons and curriculum. (p. 50)

In this sense, arts integration helps to make learning whole as it deeply connects the participants and the subject areas. It is a way of thinking about learning and teaching not as an end product, but as a continual life-long process.

A common misperception of arts integration is that it attempts to centralize the arts into the educational curriculum. Although arts integration attempts to re/situate the arts in education, I would disagree that it attempts to move the arts from the margins of
education to the center of learning and teaching (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Rather, I would argue that arts integration attempts to dissolve the margin boundary, and de-centers the curriculum, leveling all the disciplines. Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (1999) state:

The double face of arts learning—its simultaneous openness and closeness—gives it a special role in the curriculum. Educational policy, therefore, needs to bear in mind that in the best possible world neither arts learning nor learning in other subjects is sufficient unto itself. (p. 45)

In order to fully understand each academic subject, it is vital to understand the other subjects concurrently. No one subject can possibly exist without the other. For example, how could the Italian Renaissance be explored in a social studies class without mentioning the arts? How could the arts be explored without the scientific discoveries of colors and wavelengths? How could the wavelengths of color be explored without involving mathematics, and so forth? Our daily interactions with the world are not separated into different subjects—we experience social studies, math, science, art, and language simultaneously. Why would we then compartmentalize learning in school? Why is it necessary to disconnect the connected world? Would it not then, make sense to reconnect the world through educational learning/teaching?

Arts integration provides teachers and students with the opportunity to explore the space in-between the disciplines and to travel back and forth across the messy subject boundaries. Burnaford et al. (2004) states, “Arts integration is teaching and learning, in which the arts play a key role in the development of learners’ capacities to negotiate between multiple spheres—between the self and the world..., between the realms of
experience..., and between types of achievement” (p. 10). Teachers and students are forced to understand the overlapping qualities of teaching and learning, and one academic subject to the other.

Arts integration can generally be defined as an approach to teaching and/or learning in which the arts assist with student learning that is linked directly with other academic subjects. For example, students can create a work of art or investigate an artwork that not only teaches about art, but also about social studies, science, English, and/or mathematics. Although it is a widely used term, it encompasses many different forms of implementation. I agree with Burnaford et al. (2001) who acknowledge that there is no one correct way to integrate the arts, but how one goes about integrating the arts can be an artistic process in itself. When designing arts infusion lessons, I would often find myself trying to creatively connect subjects, and design lessons that the students, and I, would find engaging. It took much more effort and imagination to plan and teach an African American history in an innovative and artistic way (e.g., the visual timeline installation) instead of a more traditional approach of reading a book and completing a worksheet. Eisner (2002) organizes arts integration into four different curricular structures, all of which I found myself incorporating into my arts infusion approach. He states that students can use the arts to help understand history and culture, to identify likenesses and dissimilarities among the arts, to identify a theme or idea to help students understand connections between the arts and other subjects, and to facilitate problem solving.

As I reflect on how the arts have impacted my own education, I begin to become aware of the possibilities of the arts and learning. Goldberg (2005) explains three ways to
successfully integrate the arts into learning: learning with the arts, learning through the arts, and learning about the arts. As students learn with the arts, they use the arts to study a particular subject, such as Science or Social Studies. Students are introduced to works of art as a way to enter and explore the subject(s). For example, recalling the information mentioned in the foreword, my knowledge of Italian history improved as I viewed and studied Roman works of art. Learning through the arts encourages students to actively create works of art as they investigate their understandings. As I participated in hands-on art projects, such as the African Railroad and Moonbase, I actively explored and expressed my comprehension of subject matter. Knowledge including African geography and topography, and the physical characteristics of the Earth’s moon was conveyed as I planned and created the hands-on works. Learning about the arts involves students to become genuinely interested in the art products and processes which then evolves into something larger—students want to learn about the arts as its own discipline. For example, as I saw Bernini’s sculptures and attempted to draw/copy his works of art, my interests in artistic materials, techniques, artists, and art in general increased. If done successfully, I argue that it is quite possible for students, and teachers, to learn with, through, and about the arts simultaneously.

Similarly, when designing arts infusion lessons, I found that there are also different degrees or levels at which one can integrate the arts into the curriculum (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). They can be integrated into the curriculum on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, depending upon the teacher, principal, or type of school or integration program. It can also be done on a low-level by introducing an artwork discussion or critique into a lesson, or done more complexly by incorporating a hands-on art project
into a lesson. A low-level degree can include a discussion about a selected work of art into a lesson. For example, if the lesson topic is neighborhoods, Edouard Vuillard’s painting, *Place Vintimille*, can be incorporated into the lesson discussion. Questions can be asked to get the students thinking about the cross-curricular content of the work of art. How does this neighborhood differ from your neighborhood? How is this neighborhood similar to your neighborhood? What is happening in the artwork? What time of the year do you think it is and what do you see in the painting that provides this information? Where do you think this painting takes places? What time of the day do you think it is and why? What colors and shapes do you think are the most prominent? What location do you think this painting was painted from? What do you see that suggests this vantage point (Guggenheim, 2009)? Information about the artist and work of art can be provided to guide the class discussion. Additional lessons could then be planned to encourage students to write a poem or story about their own neighborhood. A higher-level degree of arts integration could also be incorporated into the classroom by using this work of art as well. For example, students could create a painting that depicts their own neighborhood. They could use the discussion above to brainstorm what and how they will paint. Art concepts including composition, space, perspective, color, shades, and tints can be introduced as students create a work of art that expresses their individual exploration and representation of their neighborhood. Both the degree levels on the arts integration spectrum above would integrate the arts into the classroom learning and highlight the overlapping qualities between the academic subjects.
Art Education and Arts Integration

As I have researched arts integration, I have become aware of a historical tension that exists between arts integration and traditional art education practices. Many art educators are against the concept of arts integration for a multitude of reasons. In the following section, I will attempt to explore the conflict(s) and situate my beliefs accordingly.

Many traditional art educators teach the arts for art’s sake. They believe art is an important subject that needs to be taught by an art specialist. Art education in the schools typically consists of art classes (e.g., drawing and painting) usually offered in the designated art room and taught by the art specialist. Conventional education practices separate academic subjects and learning, as the different educational parts are not intended to fit together. Although the art class and lessons often explore content other than the art standards, art specialists believe that they should be the only ones who teach the arts since they have been properly trained.

In contrast to this traditional method, arts integration is usually implemented in the regular classroom. With assistance from the arts specialists or artist-in-residency, classroom teachers rely on arts integration to help weave the separate educational parts back together. As teachers (and students) link together fragmented knowledge and examine associations, they begin to explore spaces of uncertainty and flexibility. Dewey (2005/1934) acknowledges moments of resistance and tension because of their possibilities of surfacing to consciousness an experience that is integrated and whole. He states, “In life that is truly life, everything overlaps and merges” (p. 17). Arts integration attempts to teach toward the overlapping and merging qualities of education of life.
Arts integration advocates often believe in the power of the arts as means for knowledge transfer. Perkins (1994) describes transfer as “the impact of learning in one context on performance in other significantly different contexts” (p. 86). The arts, through this approach, are understood as a facilitator of learning (Wakeford, 2004). The term transfer is used to define how knowledge learned in one area can be transferred and used in another area. Rabkin (2004) insists:

Integrated arts education is not arts education as we generally think of it. It is designed to promote transfer of learning between the arts and other subjects, between the arts and the capacities students need to become successful adults. It is designed to use the emotional, social, and sensory dimensions of the arts to engage students, and leverage development and learning across the curriculum.

(p. 9)

Arts integration advocates claim that they have not aimed toward replacing the traditional art program, art teacher, and/or art room. They have attempted to use art integration as a strategy for engaging students with the academic curriculum and improving achievement without corrupting art as a discipline and aesthetic (Weissman, 2004). Not only is knowledge transferable, but the teacher’s excitement of learning is transferable as well. They understand that art offers a unique approach to experience the world, and that the arts are not just learned, but that they help the process of learning (Wakeford, 2004).

As arts integration has been incorporated into schools, critics have worried that arts integration will reduce the integrity of the arts in school. They are concerned that as classroom teachers and artists-in residency accept the responsibility to incorporate the arts into the curriculum, there will be no need for art specialists. They feel that the arts
should not have to prove that they are important in other subjects because they are valuable in themselves (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Glick and Holyoak (as cited in Grumet, 2004) have found that people are generally unable to link disparate knowledge matter until the connections are provided to them. In order to facilitate transfer, transfer must be taught (Perkins, 1994), and transfer can only happen if there is meaningful learning taking place (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Burton et al. (1999) state:

In other words, we question whether transfer—or a one to one correspondence whereby one discipline serves another—is the only, or even an appropriate, way to conceptualize the relationship across disciplines. The unidirectional model is much too simplistic and ill serves the complexity of thinking involved in learning. (p. 43)

Through this understanding, critics of arts integration believe the arts should be its own separate discipline, and that they should not fight to keep the arts alive in the classroom at the expense of the arts themselves.

Remer (1996) suggests that teaching the arts for its own sake is the best argument for keeping the arts in schools, while transfer is second. Remer posits that art can be taught for arts’ sake, at the service of other studies, other studies can be taught at the service of the arts, and as an equal partner in a holistic, humanities/global education or multicultural approach. Although the arts can offer possibilities toward knowledge transfer, the arts need to be first recognized for its educational potential. This argument is quite complex due to the fact that not much is known about how learning occurs, and how arts integration, in particular, promotes learning (Wakeford, 2004). Although arts integration programs such as Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge
(TETAC) and Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) measured arts learning and found an increase in arts knowledge, other programs including, Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA), Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE), and North Carolina A+ School Program, did not assess arts learning, but only learning in other subject areas (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004).

Russell and Zembylas (2007) suggest that there are concerns regarding arts integration. There are many classroom teacher complaints concerning issues of time for preparation and implementation of the arts integrated lessons. They feel their schedule is already quite demanding and do not have extra time to learn and concentrate on new creative arts integration lessons. There are conflicting arguments pertaining to what is considered a “good” arts integration lesson and how exactly the arts benefit student learning. Art specialists feel threatened because if the arts are taught in the regular classroom, there would be no need for an art room or art specialist—they could lose their jobs. Due to the unique qualities of arts integration, assessing these programs is problematic. Davis (2005) acknowledges that observable and interpretive assessments cannot easily be explained in quantitative measures. Although standardized test scores, drop out and attendance rates can help offer insight into school programs, they do not easily measure important potential outcomes of art integration including respect, collaboration, creativity, imagination, passion, or reflection. These attributes are not only vital for cultivating knowledgeable school students, but well-informed citizens, friends, employees, learners, and so on.

As an art educator, I can understand and relate to the tension that exists between arts integration and traditional arts education practices. Based on my personal
experiences teaching an art education course for pre-service elementary teachers, I am aware of the mis/understandings and mis/uses of the arts by teachers in the general classroom setting. This concern has formulated my beliefs that the arts need to be effectively taught to all educators, not just art specialists. Although arts specialists play an important role in the teaching of the arts, it is important to remember that the general classroom teacher often spends more time during the school day with the students. We also cannot ignore the fact that the arts are already incorporated into the general classroom, in particular at the elementary level, so would not it make much more sense to educate the teachers about the arts before they begin to mishandle them? Even though art specialists may not want to acknowledge arts integration in the schools, it is already occurring, and it would serve everyone’s best interests to assist and help make the understandings of the arts stronger. It is important for the art specialist to understand that their responsibilities go far beyond the art room, and their role as an art advocate includes teaching their co-workers about the importance of treating the arts with respect.

Furthermore, many of the critiques of arts integration are based upon the assumption that schools have art specialists. However, what happens if there is no art program in a school? How or what do students learn about the arts? Regardless of art educators’ discontent with arts integration, we cannot ignore that many classroom teachers are given the responsibility to teach all academic subjects, including the arts. Therefore, art educators cannot just ignore or dismiss arts integration, but should address the challenges and work toward strengthening the arts place in the classroom. Arts integration should be made more meaningful for teachers and students and relevant in both the classroom and teacher education programs. Although I argue that the arts should
be both taught as a separate discipline as well as a catalyst for transfer—education should teach art for life’s sake—we must accept that there is not always an art specialist present. Unable to predict the future of the arts place in the schools or even the de/positioning of specialists, in an era of high-stakes testing and issues of funding, I do not see harm in exploring arts integration and the inherent connections art has with all the academic subjects. Understanding the potential of the arts in learning and engaging and motivating students and teachers, we should not limit the arts to just the art room, but open them up to all classrooms.

**In Re/flection**

During the 21st century, much attention has been focused on educational curriculum. Reformers attempt to analyze current educational programs and offer advice toward improvement. Over the last few decades, the arts have occasionally been at the core of new ideas pertaining to the restructuring of school curriculum. In an era of high stakes testing, academic subjects that are not assessed on a statewide basis, such as the arts, are slowly disappearing from schools. In an attempt to re/situate the arts in education and promote high levels of student learning, reformers have suggested the potential of the arts to teach across the curriculum. Arts integration concentrates on the arts ability to teach across the curriculum, and re/think and transcend the traditional boundaries of school subjects.

Many supporters of arts integration recognize the varying learning styles of the students as well as the importance of active participation and relevancy of curriculum content. Goldberg (2005) states, “Using the arts as a way to teach subject matter places
the learner in the position of truly working with ideas and taking control of learning in a manner that is at once intellectual, personal, meaningful, and powerful” (p. 5). Although life experiences, topics, and/or academic subjects often seem like they are separate entities, it is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness. Arts integration is more spontaneous and alive than the traditional separated disciplines. It is better suited to explore the complicated system of education and knowledge as it acknowledges and opens up the complexities of learning.

Although few researchers/teachers have provided accounts of art integration as live(d) practice, over the last decade there has been an increase of attention spent exploring these programs. Remer (1996) suggests that we must become aware of education and art, and accept all definitions and philosophies of art, teaching, and learning (p. 501). As Pinar (2004) states, a goal of curriculum should be “to enable students to connect their lived experience with academic knowledge, to foster students’ intellectual development, and students’ capacities for critical thinking” (p. 21). Arts integration facilitates a new way of thinking in and about curriculum. Arts integration projects attempt to encourage students to make personal meaningful connection between themselves and the rest of the world—they begin to embody curriculum.

As I attempt to situate my beliefs regarding arts integration, I find that I am confronted with many different concerns. Although the arts can offer possibilities in education, learning, and teaching, I am aware of the practical aspects and challenges of arts integration. Understanding that there are many different ways and degrees of integrating the arts into other academic subjects, I recognize the feasibility of such programs. It is wishful thinking to expect that teachers possess the necessary knowledge
regarding the arts and/or how to integrate the arts into the curriculum. It is also impractical to count on teachers integrating the arts in every lesson everyday. I am not suggesting that it is necessary to use the arts for every lesson and or that this is the only way to teach/learn curricular content, but that arts integration is one method of teaching/learning that offers possibilities in the classroom. Just as teachers use different teaching techniques in the classroom such as small group work, memorization, inquiry, discussion, reading textbooks, etc., arts integration can be an effective approach to teaching and learning. Although the more the arts are incorporated into the curriculum the more benefits may be experienced, incorporating the arts on any level or degree into the other subjects can be beneficial.

The experience of teaching in an arts integrated school generated personal interest into the live(d) workings of arts integration. Although I tried my best to maintain a strong arts infusion program, once funding with the community arts organization diminished, I was troubled to see how quickly the quality arts lessons and projects seemed to disappear from the classrooms. Although I tried to enliven learning and teaching in the classroom with arts integrated lessons, I soon realized that I could not do it alone. It was the classroom teachers who interacted with, taught, and impacted the student on a daily basis. It was important for them to truly understand the potential of the arts in order to successfully use the arts in their classrooms. The experience working with my colleagues helped cultivate my current interests with how general elementary teachers practically use the arts in their classrooms. Even if a school is not designated as an arts integrated school, many elementary teachers use the arts to some degree in their classrooms and to guide the learning and teaching processes. This reaffirms my beliefs that the arts are and
should be an integral part of schooling and has such directed my interests to learn about how elementary teachers understand and implement the arts in their classroom and across the curriculum.

Although studies have shown that arts integration can improve student achievement and behavior, stimulate intellectual and emotional growth, promote holistic thinking, increase learning and creativity, and promote socially pertinent democratic education (Burnaford et al., 2001; Deasy, 2002; Fiske, 1999; Fowler, 1996; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Russell & Zembylas, 2007; Weissman, 2004), it is important to explore why and how arts integration results in these findings. It is also important to acknowledge that there are no studies that have shown arts integration to be detrimental to education, teaching, or learning. It is not that the students are studying harder or have suddenly overcome unwanted behavior, but that the students are more interested and engaged in their learning. Teachers cannot force students to learn—they must want to learn for themselves. Using the arts in the classroom can help promote active participation with learning, which may in turn stimulate student desire to learn more. Shouldn’t one of the primary goals of education be to inspire students to inherently learn? In my experiences teaching arts integrated lessons, the students became eager to learn more—they were excited to engage in more arts integrated lessons. They were not told that they had to learn, but learned voluntarily and enthusiastically. I do not know if this is due to the nature of the lessons highlighting connections between students and their surrounding world, or that they engage in a type of learning that is closer to “play” than “work”. Young children, and human beings at any age, learn through play (i.e., experimentation and interactions with the world)—it is how they first experience the world. This playful
learning stimulates the imagination (Greene, 1995) and leads to new knowledge. There seems to be a close connection between hands-on learning and active participation in arts integration lessons and “play.”

Exploring the possibilities of arts across the curriculum can help offer insight to education, teaching, and learning. Arts integration is beneficial not only to students, but also teachers and the school community. Arts integration provides a connection between different academic subjects, pulls the outside world into the classroom, and resituates the arts from a museum wall or pedestal into the classroom and everyday life. Arts integration can playfully reawaken the curriculum, teaching, and learning. I plan to continue to explore the possibilities of arts integration, as it offers a unique, innovative, and engaging approach to teaching and learning. Arts integration can offer potential benefits to education and should be incorporated into schools. Acknowledging that the school day, academic standards and standardized tests are broken up according to academic subjects, it challenges teachers to work and teach from a space between the established standards. If forces them to rethink the possibilities of education while struggling to be set free from educational tradition. Boundaries limit everyday experiences.

I have witnessed positive effects that arts integration has had on one elementary school. It is my hope that more schools will acknowledge the importance of the arts and the potential it can have within the educational setting. Arts integration programs offer an innovative and engaging approach to learning, experiencing, and understanding.
Chapter 2

Methodology

Design of the study

My research study is composed of three main parts: 1) written policy on arts integration at a national, state, and local level; curriculum documents; and current research on arts integration; 2) unstructured interviews with five teachers and focus group sessions with five teachers regarding beliefs, practices, and training associated with arts integration, focusing on the visual arts; and 3) classroom observations of six teachers employing arts integration.

My research methodology is informed by a poststructuralist (Lather, 2000; Morgan, 2000; Peters & Burbules, 2004) approach to qualitative research, intersected with understandings of case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) and narrative inquiry (Chase, 2005; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Lyons, 2006). Revealing characteristics of qualitative research, my study attempts to study teacher behavior(s) in the natural school setting. This theoretical approach aims to deconstruct notions of essentialism in order to facilitate complicated conversations surrounding education. Because I am interested in learning why and how teachers understand arts integration and how it relates to policy, a poststructural framework allows me to recognize the multiple realities and dynamic characteristics of the study as well as the educational classroom. The study acknowledges that teachers have fluid, multiple discourses and identities that cannot be controlled and are embedded in history in which should be identified in order to understand the live(d) practices of teacher. Focusing attention toward the uncontrollable variables in the
classroom, while exploring the complex and socially negotiated discourses, I move toward a de/centering of the researcher by investigating a few teachers who can provide information that can be used across a multitude of cases. Through the use of narrative inquiry and descriptions, the study attempts to recognize the participants’ individual perspectives and experiences.

The study consists of an in-depth analysis of teachers at one school. By focusing on one school in depth, I became familiar with the inner workings of how educators implement arts integration lessons. Using multiple teachers and students in the study, the study can also referred to as a holistic case study (Yin, 2003).

**Finding a Research Site**

Having taught at the elementary level and noticing that the arts are prevalent in many elementary schools, I wanted to focus my study at the elementary level. Selecting a school district for this research study proved to be quite problematic. It was not because there were so many interested districts to choose from, but a lack of districts that were willing to participate. I had hoped to select a school district based on their history with arts integration, academic performance, as well as geographic urban or suburban location serving the needs of a diverse student population. But, when choosing a school district to conduct research, my final decision was based on the only district that invited me into their buildings and accepted my research proposal as submitted.

I intended to study a school that was identified as an arts integrated school, but as I searched for these special types of schools, I found very few in my geographic area. I then decided to select a school that was not “labeled” as an arts focused school in order to
examine the workings of a “typical” elementary school employing arts integration.

Focusing on one school in depth, I aimed to become familiar with the inner workings of one particular arts integration program and participants that would allow me to apply my findings across a multitude of situations.

Over a 12-month span, I sent emails and printed letters through the mail to approximately 50 superintendents and school principals from various school districts in the Pittsburgh area to explain my research study. Searching the Internet, I found a few elementary schools in eastern Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Florida that implement arts integration, so I sent additional emails. Receiving feedback from only four contacts in the Pittsburgh area, I spoke with three officials from different suburban school districts. I met personally with an elementary principal from one district, an elementary teacher from a second district, and spoke via phone with another elementary teacher representing a third district. I also submitted an IRB application to an urban district, and it took about 11 months to receive a final response. Although they finally agreed to participate a year later, it was under the condition that no students could be included in the study, which meant their faces and voices could not be recorded in any way. I declined the offer since I was already conducting research in another district, and because it would be quite challenging to understand arts integration without factoring in the role of the students and the classroom conversations.

Communicating with the principals and teachers, I began to notice a similar and somewhat uncomfortable conversation. Although many of them acknowledged the importance of the arts in learning, they stated that due to a lack of time, they do not integrate the arts into the curriculum as much as they once did. Because of the high-
stakes standardized testing, in particular, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), there are more demands on the teacher to teach the “necessary” information. Although the principals and teachers were gracious and helpful, they basically ended the conversation by saying, “We really don’t do arts integration on the level that you are looking for.” Although I would further explain that I wanted to see for myself how and how much the teachers use the arts in the general classroom, they decided that their school might not be a good fit for the study. I began to wonder; why is it that these schools are so hesitant to let me see what is happening in the classroom? Are they trying to hide something? Do they feel that arts integration is detrimental or unnecessary in schooling, therefore has no place in the classroom? Are they worried that my presence may provoke art activities that are not conducive for the students’ preparation for the mandated state tests? Because the arts are not included on the tests, what does it suggest about the arts place in teaching/learning? Are the principals nervous about what I will find—perhaps injustices done to the arts? Most principals typically tend not to worry about the arts since it is not part of the current high stakes testing, so I doubt that is a concern. Furthermore, did the principals really know how the teachers use the arts in their classrooms? I know when I was an elementary art teacher, the principal(s) really did not know what was happening in my art room, s/he only saw what was hung in the hallways. These conversations and rejections really sparked my curiosity. Why are these schools so nervous about being evaluated and in particular what might this nervousness mean in an era of high stakes and accountability? These questions will be further explored in chapter three as I examine the lived practices of arts integration.
One of the principals whom I spoke with, used to work as a teacher in another school district, and recommended that I contact a kindergarten teacher from her previous school. After an initial phone conversation and email correspondence, this kindergarten teacher invited me into her classroom to discuss the study. Having a great interest in the arts and having been successfully awarded grants for arts integration projects with the PCA, she thought her school might be interested in participating in my project (Figure 2-1). Knowing that I wanted to conduct research in a school that would be welcoming to me (i.e., and my study), I urged her to lead me down the necessary steps of gaining the district’s approval.

Figure 2-1: The school.

The 17 square mile school district is located a few miles southwest of Pittsburgh, and is connected by a major highway. Although once a rural area, it is now composed of four communities that are primarily residential with some commercial and industrial areas. The website states:

The district, which was formed in 1956, serves well over 30,000 residents, and has an enrollment of approximately 3,450 students in Kindergarten through twelfth grade.... The community... represent a myriad of professions and diverse
cultural backgrounds that actively participate in the education process. (school
district website, 2008)

There are approximately 750 students at the Primary School in kindergarten through
grade two. The educational program boasts a full-day, developmental kindergarten and an
elementary foreign language program in Spanish. The school, in particular the
kindergarten classes, has collaborated with the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. The
schools is composed various ethnicities: approximately 87% white Caucasian, 7%
Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% African American, and 1% Hispanic students. 19% are
eligible for discounted or free lunches. There are about 50 fulltime teachers, and the
student/teacher ratio is 14.8:1 (http://www.schooldigger.com). It may be important to
recognize that because the school is composed of students from kindergarten through
second grade, they do not, as of 2008, take the PSSA tests. These particular tests do not
start until the third grade.

Participants

As I prepared all the necessary paperwork (i.e., project summary, IRB approval
from Penn State, teacher consent letters, student consent letters, interview and focus
group protocols, clearances, etc.), the kindergarten teacher whom I met, spread the word
about my study among her colleagues and collected names of interested teachers. She
randomly picked the teachers’ names, from those who had volunteered, out of a hat in
order to decide who would participate in the study. Although I would have liked to
personally meet and observe the teachers, and use information regarding their gender,
age, race, experience, instruction styles, and grade level of teaching, to assist in the
selection of the participants, I was quite excited that there was interest on part of the
teachers, therefore did not interfere with the district’s procedures and stipulations. As
communication with the kindergarten teacher continued, I found out that a few of the
teachers from the school were working on applications to become National Board
Certified Teachers (NBCT), and that their participation in the study might help strengthen
their submission. This could help to explain their interest in the study.

Gaining approval from the school district, I began emailing the teachers who had
volunteered to participate. Included in the study were two kindergarten, one first-grade,
and two second-grade teachers. Also, the art teacher who was not initially part of the
study, volunteered to join within the first few weeks of the study. I sent an email that
contained information explaining the study and a teacher consent form (Appendix B) and
student consent form (Appendix C) to each participating teacher. After an initial
meeting/interview with these teachers, one of the two second-grade teachers who were
working on their National Board Certification immediately welcomed me into her
classroom and quickly returned the needed teacher and student consent forms. Although I
included six teachers in my study, I decided to focus more intently on this second-grade
teacher and her classroom since she was willing and interested in working with me. She
had been teaching for 17 years and has had experience with kindergarten, first-grade, and
second-grade. Her second-grade classroom during the 2007-08 school year was
composed of 22 students. Having attended and graduated from this same school district
decades ago, she possessed a wealth of information about the geographic area,
community, and educational history.
The six teachers who participated in the study seemed to accurately represent the make-up of the faculty in the school. Each teacher was a white Caucasian women who has taught in the district for many years, devoting anywhere between nine and thirty-four years to the school, with the exception of the art teacher who had only worked there for a few years. Although they are not the most diverse group, they reflect the teacher population; the faculty is composed predominately of white Caucasian women who are experienced teachers. I was however a bit surprised that the teachers who were selected to participate in the study were all veteran classroom teachers. Is it because these teachers know the school, students, expectations, and curriculum documents, and basically already know how to teach? Do they feel comfortable and stable with their job, which in turn allows them to freely use the arts? Or possibly, have they been teaching for so long that they are set in their ways of using the arts in the classroom, just as they always did before the high stakes testing? I wonder if the newer, more inexperienced teachers volunteered for the study and did not get selected (i.e., either intentionally or unintentionally), or if they were just inundated with work and pressures and did not feel they had the time to devote to the research.

Research data in this primary school was collected over a four month time period. The interviews, focus group sessions and classroom observations were conducted from December 2007 to March 2008. Due to many weather related school delays and cancellations, teacher sickness and family emergencies, assemblies, and other various scheduling conflicts, I had to be very flexible when it came to data collection.

I interviewed each of the five classroom teachers once individually (the art teacher was not interviewed individually since she was a late addition to the research
group). The teachers were asked questions during the one-hour semi-structured interview (Appendix D) that facilitated discussion regarding their experiences and understandings of arts integration. The interviews were conducted in their classrooms before or after school, and were video recorded so I could more accurately document the teacher responses. I also took notes during the interviews to help detail the conversations and guide the path of questioning. In addition, I selected one of the second-grade teachers for two follow-up unstructured interviews and there were also many casual spontaneous conversations between us before, during, and after the classroom observations. These interviews and informal conversations were also documented through video recording and note taking, however at times when our unplanned communications occurred while I was arriving or departing (i.e., the video camera was powered off), I detailed the dialogue in my notes immediately afterward.

Although the five participating classroom teachers, along with the art teacher, were all invited to two focus group sessions, due to personal reasons only five teachers attended and participated in each session. The two one-hour semi-structured focus group sessions were video recorded. Questions from the first sessions addressed how teachers understand arts integration. Topics that were discussed included the training of arts integration (Appendix E). The second session explored how teachers implement arts integration. Topics that were discussed included design, implementation, and assessment aspects of arts integration (Appendix F). These sessions took place in a conference room in the school and lasted approximately one hour after the instructional school day.

At least one classroom observation of each of the five participating classroom teacher in addition to the art teacher was conducted over the four-month span. The
observations helped me to see first hand whether the teachers were actually implementing what they were saying during the interviews and focus group sessions. In addition to observing the classroom, I also chose to take notes and video record so I could later reexamine the documentation to review what was happening and what was said. Furthermore, 22 classroom observations of the second-grade teacher were conducted, up to three times a week, and also recorded through video recording and note taking. Each observation lasted between 40 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the lesson and schedule. Four teachers also invited me to observe their classroom more than once: I observed a kindergarten class and their work with the PCA seven times; I observed the other second-grade class 12 times; the art teacher invited me to observe four times; and another second-grade teacher who did not volunteer for the study invited me to watch her teach one lesson. Although I was permitted to observe and take notes, I did not video record the kindergarten’s work with PCA or the one visit to the non-participating second-grade classroom.

Parental consent forms were sent home with the students in the four classrooms that I was permitted to videotape. The art teacher did not need to send home letters since the students were already filling out the forms in their general classrooms. Casual unstructured interviews as the students were working on projects were conducted. The questions investigated the students’ experiences and understandings of arts integration and lesson content. This allowed the student perspective concerning what arts integration is to be explored. As agreed to on the consent forms, most of the students were permitted to be video recorded. Also, student artworks were photographed and video recorded over the four-month time frame.
For each classroom observation, interview, and focus group session, I wrote field notes and personal reflections, often referred to as memos (Charmaz, 1983; Maxwell, 2005). The field notes attempted to descriptively explain what I saw and felt from my viewpoint as a participant observer. I also included observer comments in my field notes when I wanted to include additional remarks. The memos were subjective notes that contained personal reflections and was written after the data collection. I explored areas or reoccurring themes that I thought were important at the time, including topics that were absent from the observations, focus groups and/or interviews. The notes also explored the challenges that I encountered during the research study.

**Written Documents**

On the local level, I collected many written documents. I reviewed the school district’s mission statement and related information provided on the website. I photographed and/or photocopied lesson plans and arts integration projects that the teacher planned and implemented. The second grade curriculum document was also reviewed. The subject areas of the curriculum include: mathematics, science/ecology, social studies, health, language arts, Spanish, music, library, physical education, and art. Textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets for each subject were reviewed, as well as the teacher handbooks that supplemented the material. I also gathered information from the Internet about the PCA and their artist-in-residency program. On the Pennsylvania-state level, I collected the state’s academic standards. On the national level, I collected information about the National Board Certification process, in particular for the early childhood generalist, and also reviewed sections of the No Child Left Behind Act.
Furthermore, I searched for organizations and grants that encourage arts integration, and conducted a literature review of current arts integration research.

**Analysis**

This research study consists of in-depth analysis of teachers and written policy. The written documents were reviewed for their themes, patterns, ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions, as was the data collected from the interviews, focus groups, and observations. As I collected data, I attempted to recognize the items, emerging patterns, and overall structure during the analysis of the data (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999). Comparing the document analysis with the interview and focus group responses and classroom observations presents an understanding of the space of dis/connect and emphasizes the necessity of building a bridge between official policy and lived teacher practice.

Analysis is informed by the notion of ambiguity and the poststructural theorist, Derrida’s (1997) notions of “différance.” As teachers interpret written documents, multiple meanings and understandings surface as their live(d) experiences and beliefs are woven throughout their interpretations. In this study, the written text is not privileged, but is explored in order to understand its relationship with what is happening in schooling. The analysis examines the politics of schools: how arts integration programs transform knowledge and how arts integration written texts are individually interpreted, performed, and lived in the classroom.
Making of Subject/ivities in Interpretation

Once the written policy reaches the hands of the teachers, it begins to undergo a transformation—the curriculum documents become exposed and open for interpretation. For example, in the second-grade school district curriculum document for language arts, there is a section titled, Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature. It states that students are expected to identify literary elements in stories, and describe characters, settings, problem, and solution either orally, written, or in pictures. Although teachers can meet this objective in a variety of different ways, one of the teachers often uses a picture mural worksheet, referred to as “Four Squares” in the classroom (Figure 2-2). In a language arts lesson that was also being integrated into a social studies lesson on community, she asked each student to choose a pourquoi story from a list of selected stories and after reading the story, complete a Four Squares worksheet. In the center was an oval where the students were supposed to include the country where the pourquoi tale originated. In each one of the four squares, students were asked to write and visually depict a beginning topic sentence, the character(s), their favorite part of the story, and an ending conclusion sentence. Because this teacher enjoys “artsy” activities, she often tries to incorporate the arts into her teaching because she it makes the lesson more enjoyable for herself and for her students. Her interpretation of this particular language arts objective was different from other teachers’ interpretations as she incorporates her own interests in pourquoi stories and in the arts. She could have chosen to ask the students to simply write a paragraph or speak about the literary elements, but she felt it was important for the students to draw the stories so they could begin to visualize and creatively depict what they read in the story. Presenting this curriculum content in this
manner allows students to then interpret the story verbally and visually. Interpretation involves how one understands something, in this case, how a teacher understands the curriculum documents. The poststructural understanding of written text emphasizes the concept of the centrality of the reader and the de/centered nature of the written product itself. No one teacher can truly understand and objectively interpret any written policy. Interest is placed on how individuals read the same written text in vastly different ways—interpretation is subjective.

Figure 2-2: Pourquoi stories: Four squares worksheet.

Reading written policy documents is similar to “reading” a painting as it goes beyond merely “seeing” what is contained on the paper or canvas. As readers or lookers view the printed words, symbols, or images on a page or canvas, they bring their own experiences and knowledge to the work. Interpreting the work through their experiences, meaning(s) is individually re/created. Thus, there is an unpredictable aspect of interpretation as prior experiences and knowledge re/surfaces. Jardine (1998) explains, “a good interpretation, then, is not definitive and final, but is one that keeps open the
possibility and the responsibility of returning, for the very next instance might demand of us that we understand anew” (p. 43). The policy documents are not bound in the rectangular page or inside the school building walls. They become more than supportive structures; they become alive and are dependent upon exterior happenings and life experiences—they become part of the live(d) curriculum.

It is important to recognize that when reading policy documents, language can be deceptive and tricky. Ellsworth states, “Some knowings cannot be conveyed through language. They fall in the spaces between the fixed positions on the grids of grammar, definition, and syntax” (2005, p. 156). Spaces in between words and margins in written text facilitate teachers to re/construct their own interpretations of the curriculum—there is room to fill in the blanks. It is in these gaps that we re/situate our lives in and through the curriculum. In the English language, words often have multiple meanings and definitions. Words are not anchorable; their meanings exist only in relation to something else (Smith, 1999). This helps to reaffirm the impossibility of one universal meaning in regard to interpretation of written policy documents.

Derrida (1997) explores a similar notion through his concept of différance. He asserts that the term différance is a process that is both present and absent within the making of meaning, and is composed of two processes at once: difference and deference. Difference suggests that things only make sense when they are compared to something else. Deference maintains that one must defer or wait for something in order to have something to compare it to. Difference connects to space and deference to time. Meaning only exists when it is in relation to other things. Therefore, in order for written text to have meaning, it must exist in a system of connections. The policy documents can be
interpreted, never being fully understood, but always attempting to be. The documents can only have meaning when teachers are able to relate it to other words, experiences, or knowledge. The policy documents can exist only in relation to the reader/teacher, and must wait to be interpreted until the reader approaches the work. This suggests that there is no universal interpretation, nor original meaning in the intricacies of language.

This concept is similar to my understanding of the rhizomatic qualities of the live(d) curriculum. As explained in the introductory chapter, a rhizome is a reticulated stem that grows in soil and produces upward shoots or downward roots that can develop into new plants (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996). Likewise, curriculum is the main axis of education that “grows” and “produces” knowledge as well as informed teachers and students, and provides opportunities for new information to shoot upward, downward and/or root itself in previous knowledge. It has “no beginning or an end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills” (p. 21). Through this understanding, teaching and learning do not begin and end with the school bell or curriculum document. Instead, they are dynamic processes that connect to the world and daily interactions, and previous experiences. They attempt to re/situate themselves and curriculum in relation to past, current, and future knowledge and explore the routed possibilities while expanding the dimension(s) of curriculum. A live(d) curriculum has a dynamic dimension and “forms a rhizome with the world” by inviting personal associations to be established. Through this understanding, curriculum is more than just a document; it becomes a breathing transparent interface between bodies and worlds, a site of overlapping boundaries.
Curriculum is a complex and commonly used term in the educational institution. Often, it refers to the academic subjects and the related elements being taught in the schools—a fixed body of knowledge, a static document that states what content teachers are expected to teach. Each academic subject, such as language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, art, or music is provided with a written plan that affirms the most basic and fundamental information to be taught at each grade level. I argue that the term curriculum however suggests more than just the curriculum document. It includes an investigation of all related elements—the live(d) aspects of curriculum—that contributes to an understanding of the whole curriculum. In the next chapter, I will explore the live(d) aspects of curriculum, investigating how a teacher and/or student understand curriculum documents and academic content in relation to personal experiences and previous knowledge and interactions.

Instead of concentrating on the many dimensions of curriculum, focus is often placed only on two aspects of the curriculum: the document and assessment. The irony of this situation is that the assessment component does not directly examine how the teacher understands, interprets, or implements the curriculum, but examines quantitative standardized test scores of students that indirectly assess teacher effectiveness. Ellsworth (2005) writes, “The area of curriculum (the area supposedly concerned with knowledge itself) is often treated as primary, while the area of pedagogy (the area of instruction concerned with the teacherly description, explanation, and restatement of curricular knowledge) is often treated as secondary” (p. 12). Attempting to understand not only the curriculum document and the assessment, but also the space between the two areas can increase curriculum understanding.
In order to further this investigation, I am going to borrow Ted Aoki’s terms “curriculum-as-plan” and “curriculum-as-live(d)” (as cited in Pinar & Irwin, 2005). The curriculum-as-plan is the curriculum document, silent and unchanging. The live(d) curriculum, however, refers to the document coming alive through the teacher and/or student, acknowledging the past and ongoing experiences related to the subject matter. The lived curriculum is an attempt to explore what is actually happening in the classroom. The curriculum document and the assessment of outcomes is loosely situated within the wide-ranging space of the live(d) curriculum. Aoki’s use of the parenthesis around the letter “d” in the word live(d) explores the complexities of language. It suggests that curriculum is not only currently living, but has lived in the past and will continue to live in and through life experiences.

Addressing curriculum theory, Pinar states, “We have reconstructed the curriculum; no longer is it a noun. It is instead a verb: currere” (2004, p. 19). He reaffirms the notion of the live(d) curriculum as an active living body. Curriculum is multi-dimensional, highlighting human interactions and experiences in and out of the classroom. It highlights the making of subjectivities.

In her discussion of text, Grosz (2001) explores the dynamic and complex qualities of texts. She states,

A text, whether book, paper, film, painting, or building, can be thought of as a kind of thief in the night. Furtive, clandestine, and always complex, it steals ideas from all around, from its own milieu and history, and better still from its outside, and disseminates them elsewhere. It is not only a conduit for the circulation of ideas, as knowledge or truths, but a passage or point of transition from one
(social) stratum or space to another. A text is not the repository of knowledge or truths, the site for the storage of information...so much as it is a process of scattering thought; scrambling terms, concepts, and practices; forging linkages; becoming a form of action. A text is not simply a tool or an instrument; seeing it as such makes it too utilitarian, too amenable to intention, too much designed for a subject. Rather, it is explosive, dangerous, volatile. Like concepts, texts are the products of the intermingling of old and new, a complexity of internal coherences or consistencies and external referents, of intension and extension, of thresholds and becomings. Texts, like concepts, do things, make things, perform connections, bring about new alignments. (p. 57)

Through this understanding, I re/think curriculum not only as a document, but as curriculum in the making. Curriculum documents are not simply a tool or instrument, but a space that encourages interpretations and teachers to think in, of, and beyond curriculum.

The interpretation process helps to blur the boundaries between the curriculum authors and readers/teachers (Morgan, 2000; Taylor, 2000). As the teacher explores the curriculum and the interconnectedness qualities to life, it stimulates a process of becoming within the teacher. The intent of curriculum is not to present a single, complete truth but to present information to stimulate the teacher to make his/her own meanings and multiple associations. As the teacher makes these “associated leaps” (Morgan, 2000, p. 135), he/she can feel empowered to re/construct the curriculum by critically examining the information and connecting it to his/her daily lives.
Making of Subject/ivities in Implementation

Just as interpretation is personal and subjective, so is the implementation of the curriculum. Teachers are often provided with the curriculum document that states what information they are expected to teach, however the document often does not make any mention of how to put the document into action or how the knowledge is to be taught. The curriculum document and implementation are simultaneously separate from and yet connected to each other. This vague space seems to provide teachers with the freedom to plan and teach creative lessons, although their ideas are often halted by concerns such as space and time. Acknowledging that every student does not learn at the same rate or retain the same information, the implementation of the curriculum document can be challenging.

The implementation of curriculum in schools is often thought to be timeless and constant overtime. It is assumed that what worked five years ago in the classroom will work again now and in the future. Stewart and Walker (2005) explain, “There is truth to the idea that teachers tend to teach what and how they were taught” (p. 16). This is problematic because the way we were taught may not make sense in the twenty-first century. The world has changed with the development of digital technologies. Students and teachers are bombarded with vast amounts of information in the media and Internet. Implementation must be geared to meet the unique needs of the time, and especially for a diverse classroom. Implementation, in a sense, is the performance aspect of curriculum. It is the ephemeral presentation of knowledge.

When teaching classroom content, there are many resources, tools, materials, strategies, and techniques that can be employed. Just as artists can choose from a variety
of materials (watercolor paint, ink, pencil, crayons, paper, plaster, metal, etc.), teachers can also select materials (textbooks, chalk, videos, computers, workbooks, crayons, pencils, etc.) to use throughout a lesson. Artists often experiment with different techniques (splattering or dripping paint, contour drawings, collage, etc.) as teachers experiment with teaching techniques (collaboration, inquiry, discussion, etc.). Each material and technique possesses unique advantages while simultaneously possessing distinct disadvantages. Chalk pastels may work better than markers when drawing a sunset, but markers may work better when flat colors are needed. In the classroom, small group work may work better for brainstorming writing ideas than would working independently. Through the careful selection of materials and techniques, teachers, like artists, invite students (audiences) to experience the curriculum (artwork). Learning how to successfully implement the curriculum-as-plan relies not only on the reading of textbooks and journal articles, but through hands-on practice. What works for one teacher may not work for another. Our beliefs, experiences, and personalities greatly affect how we teach. Ellsworth (2005) explains, “Pedagogy, like painting, sculpture, or music, can be magical in its artful manipulation of inner ways of knowing into a mutually transforming relation with outer events, selves, objects, and ideas” (p. 7). Teachers, like artists, present information in hopes of stimulating new ideas and encouraging connections to emerge.

Ellsworth (2005) states, “Knowledge, once it is defined, taught and used as a ‘thing made,’ is dead” (p. 1). In this sense, once the curriculum is implemented, the knowledge is lifeless. Once teachers interpret and teach the curricular knowledge, it is then left in the hands of the students to make it their own, or bring it back to life. As
teachers and students participate in the world, their understandings and associations continuously evolve in which effects how and what the students learn.

Although teachers are often required to plan lessons prior to implementation, it is often difficult to adequately predict how the lesson will progress. Teachers attempt to teach the unknowable and unpredictable. Planning lessons in advance can be helpful when organizing information, however the plans should not be used as strict guidelines for implementation. In relation to architecture, Grosz (2001) states, “After it is built, structure is still not a fixed entity. It moves and changes, depending on how it is used, what is done with and to it, and how open it is to even further change” (p. 7). The implementation of the lessons should be flexible to allow for new routes of learning to emerge as teachers open the future.

**Live(d) Curriculum as a Methodology**

In order to understand how the interconnected layers of curriculum interact and perform, it is imperative to examine live(d) practice. Understanding that teaching and learning are dynamic processes and to comprehend the complexities of curriculum, researchers should rely on the potential of different methodologies that allow for a deep investigation into live(d) practice.

Understanding live(d) curriculum in relation to research methodology provides insight into educational research. Contemporary educational research allows for a blurring of methodologies. The layers of methodology are open and flexible. While they may not tell the whole story, methodologies reveal and offer insight into the embedded
layers in education. Engaging in live(d) curriculum can open up dialogue between what is known and what is unknown in hopes of creating new knowledge.

Through experiencing live(d) curriculum a wealth of knowledge is experienced, gathered, organized, and analyzed. Teacher and students create their own space(s) of making and doing that stimulates new ways to view, understand, and engage in educational research. Instead of limiting oneself to the resources found inside of a library or document, one may be surprised to unravel the resources inside the live(d) curriculum, inside of him/herself, and inside the classroom. The spaces of live(d) curriculum are the hot spots of unrest that lead to more layers of linkable exploration(s) and future questions.

**My Limitations and Role as Researcher**

As a researcher, it is important to recognize the limitations of a researcher, but also acknowledge how the same limitations can be celebrated. I must be willing to recognize that my study is not infallible. Based on personal experiences with arts integration, I must admit my biases as the researcher when interpreting the data. Although the teachers may have some understanding of arts integration and related written documentation, and may think that they successfully implement arts integration project, they may not have as much of a firm understanding as I, and others, deem is necessary. Also, having taught in an arts integrated school, I have already established problem areas that exist in these programs. My experiences provide a unique examination of the situation, and allow additional insight to the study. Reviewing the written documents and the video recordings of the classroom observations, teachers interviews,
and focus group sessions, I acknowledge that as the reader/researcher, I interpret the collected data in a unique way. Detached from the author’s intentions, I will reconstruct the words and sentences while focusing on arts integration.

As discussed, the research site and participants had their own limitations. Depending on the participants, their feedback and interview responses may have varied based on their comfort level with me and/or the topic area, and what they think were my ulterior motives (i.e., educators thinking that I am assessing their teaching). Their answers may have also varied once they gained insight to my beliefs as an art educator. It is better to recognize the challenges or threats so that I am more prepared to successfully deal with them. Teachers may have also changed their behaviors and certain lessons. Since I was focused on the art aspect, they could have experimented with more arts lessons in the classroom. Having limited access to the classroom, I observed the classroom when the teacher invited me into the room. Although I asked to visit them two to three days a week, they scheduled the times. Due to teacher absences, delays due to weather, and assemblies, my schedule had to be flexible.

Layering multiple methods of data collection, I was engaged in a continual process of interrogation. The teacher interviews, focus group sessions, and classroom observations were seamed together to reveal intersections and contradictions. This layering of methods along with a review of lesson plans, arts integration documents and projects helped to complicate the live(d) curriculum of arts integration. Writing detailed field notes in addition to video recording the interviews, focus group sessions, and classroom observations, allowed me to acknowledge the uncertainties of interpretations and complexities/impossibilities of knowing as meanings shift and rupture.
Looking on, in, and through the layers of research methods shares many similarities to a palimpsest. A palimpsest is a historical manuscript in which text is written on top of multiple erased layers of older texts. As many of the layers are not completely erased, traces of words show through to help convey information about the past. The palimpsest can be understood as an artifact that contains a record of its history (Gerber, 2003). The visibility of strata allows access to the semi-deleted documented information, its content never being fully forgotten. The notion of a palimpsest is similar to a chalkboard (Figure 2-3). Although text and images created with chalk can be erased, quite often traces of visible chalk layers remain. The continual process of writing and erasing provides information regarding who produced the chalk writings, his/her beliefs, when the writings happened, and so forth. The layers can suggest knowledge regarding politics, history, religion, economics, society, and so forth. Thus, these layered methods of data help to access the complex life of arts integration, teachers, and education is general. I invite the past to re/surface as I attempt to work through the layers. Although I do not believe any situation can be fully experienced or understood, I hope to provide awareness in an effort to shed light on the educational setting. As I investigate what is happening in the classroom, I will attempt to create spaces of inquiry that explore how I, as well as the teachers and students, experience arts integration and how their lives cultivate their ways of knowing.
As an observer participant, I am aware that subjectivity is an integral part of the research process. Visiting the classroom on a regular basis, the relationships between the teachers and students, and myself strengthened. I began to gain more access to personal information and typical behaviors as they felt comfortable with my presence. Also when planning and teaching a lesson, the teachers would occasionally ask for my advice. Although I could have chosen not to provide them with information, I wanted them to learn more about the arts, in hopes that they will use the information again in the future. I found that over the four months study, I struggled with my overlapping identities of being an art educator and a researcher. I found that the research study provided me with more knowledge other than just learning about arts integration, it was also about my teaching and guidance of arts integration. Both the participants and myself were continuously re/thinking our roles and practices.
Chapter 3

Exploring the De/valuing of Art in Arts Integration

Having the opportunity to research how arts integration is practiced in a primary school, I was excited to see how the arts would come alive with the other academic subjects. However, as the weeks passed, most of the lessons that I encountered lacked a strong art component. I began to wonder; what happened to the *arts* in arts integration?

Over the course of the study, I witnessed a de/valuation of the arts in arts integration. The arts were used quite often for decorative purposes and the arts component was greatly diluted. Because teachers lacked understandings of arts integration, feelings of discomfort and uncertainty surfaced. There is a level of risk involved as teachers enter a space of uncertainty in teaching and learning. Throughout this chapter, I will explore these topics and address what can be done to attend to the problem of de/valuing the arts in the classroom, and address the implications for teacher education, arts integration and curriculum development.

**Arts Integration as Decoration**

Walking through the primary school’s hallways, I encountered walls that were inundated with colorful student artworks (Figure 3-1). Proceeding into a second-grade classroom, student work brightly hung from the ceiling, bulletin boards, and walls. The arts decorated the room, establishing a comfortable, warm and busy looking environment.
Using the arts as **decoration** in the classroom has been a common practice throughout educational history (Stankiewicz, Amburgy, & Bolin, 2004), and today contributes to a devaluation of the arts in arts integration. Decoration can be defined as the addition of ornaments to enhance the attractiveness of something, such as the classroom or school building, informs arts integration. Most of the artworks hanging on the walls of the primary school were cute, multi-colored and visually appealing (Figure 3-2). The works showcased a level of neatness and creativity, and the students’ abilities to color in the lines and draw realistic objects and persons. Although the arts can be used as decoration, this should just be one of the many purposes of arts integration.

Figure 3-1: The decorative school.

Figure 3-2: The decorative classroom.
When I asked how teachers’ themselves understood arts integration, one teacher described it simply as, “the icing on the cake” (personal communication, January 28, 2008). This explanation supports the notion of art as decoration, and conflicts with the intentions of arts integration. Highlighting the arts unique ability to reconnect the inherently related academic subjects, arts integration is aimed to promote the establishment of meaningful associations between art, classroom content, and everyday lives (Grumet, 2004; Weissman, 2004). Understanding arts integration as “icing on the cake” implies it is an extra layer, not really needed but a nice addition, and a decorative coating, a visually appealing surface. However, icing is separate from the cake and conceals what is underneath. Arts integration does not attempt to conceal teaching/learning rather make it visible and alive. Also, it aims to combine the academic subjects together, not keep them compartmentalized.

Arts integration as decoration reveals a narrow understanding of art. Decorations are used to make something more attractive or to beautify one’s surrounding. One teacher states:

I probably am a very visual person.... If it’s visually appealing, I’m a sucker. I will buy it if I like the packaging. You can put the same thing and decorate it with ribbons and bows and I will be like, oh, it’s beautiful, I will pay five more dollars. So, I think it is part of my personality. I like things to look nice. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

This statement helps to explain one teacher’s limited understanding of how she positions the arts in her classroom. Wanting her classroom to look nice, she incorporates art projects that will create a visually pleasing environment. She acknowledges that she
enjoys the sweet outside “icing” layer and admits being an easy target for marketing tricks and strategies. If something looks nice, then she is more likely to buy the product. This surface deep notion lacks a degree of critical thinking within the teacher, and reminds me of the contemporary artist Barbara Kruger. With a background in graphic design, Kruger explores how images of beauty and attractiveness are constructed to signify what is cool and accepted (Nadaner, 2002), thus captivating the audience and robbing power from the consumer. Her works superimpose bright bold written text with contradictory black and white images borrowed from magazines and advertisements that sell the very ideas she is disputing. She makes a critical statement by bringing a critical awareness to the power of media imagery. Although we encounter images that may look nice and harmless, Kruger reinforces the necessity of looking for the hidden layers of meaning. Relating this concept to teaching, I wonder how this teacher explores art beyond the decorative surface that is taught through her teaching. I admit that I, along with many others prefer neatly organized and pretty things, but when it comes to art and life, there is a need to investigate the many complex layers underneath the surface.

There is a traditional assumption that art has to be pretty, however it is important to recognize that art can also be unpleasant. Aesthetics in art push beyond beauty and pleasing qualities by focusing on the unappealing and grotesque qualities of art. Art can promote critical thinking, and in order to do so, art often is not pretty. A few miles from the school where I conducted the study stands the Andy Warhol Museum. Andy Warhol, a well-known pop artist who was born and raised in Pittsburgh, worked with photography and printmaking processes. The museum displays works of art that are not only pretty, but also visually interesting and unpleasant. Warhol’s works, many of which explore the
themes of life and death, facilitate conversations about society. The works may intentionally be unpleasant so viewers are forced to reflect and comment on the subject. For example, Warhol’s *Little Electric Chair* (1965) invites conversations surrounding the complexities of capital punishment. This particular artwork does not display the pretty aspects of arts, rather a powerful image that encourages complex and uncomfortable discussions. Another artwork, *Green Car Crash (Green Burning Car I)*, created in 1963, examines death and the violence in everyday life. Using images from newspapers, Warhol highlights how the media transforms personal tragedies into public spectacles. In everyday life, students are bombarded with images and stories about violence and death through the television and newspapers. Because these discussions cannot be ignored, art provides an opportunity to think through problems and one’s understanding of his/her surroundings and beliefs. These examples show the inherent relationship between the arts and society, and the possibilities of creating unpleasant works of art as an artist strips away the sweet pleasing layer.

The arts should not be used solely for decorative purposes, but should also provide a space of critical inquiry (Geahigan, 1998). None of the lessons that I observed or the discussions that I heard made any references to the power of art to generate complicated conversations (Pinar, 2004) or critical thinking. Why is this so? Possibly because the curriculum documents at the district level do not promote art as a way of thinking or knowing; it supports art as a way of doing. For example, to visually depict the familiar weather saying for the month of March, “in like a lion, out like a lamb,” students created an artwork (Figure 3-3). If one really wanted to connect it to the written
curriculum, it could be connected to Science and the seasons and weather, but this activity was done primarily as a fun recreational activity.

![Figure 3-3: In like a lion, out like a lamb.](image)

But stepping back from the project, I found myself asking questions related to how and why this has become a commonly accepted saying. If March comes in like a lion, does it always go out like a lamb? And why create an artwork depicting this adage? Because humans have an inclination toward the familiar, as teachers enter the classroom, many of their educational experiences as a child learner re/surface. It is more comfortable to do what they know, than to enter into uncertainty and try something new. Most teachers enter the field of education because they believe that they had a positive experience with traditional educational learning; they received good grades and have happy memories. Because they lived through education, they know what education is, how it is performed, and so forth. However, teachers are reluctant to critically reflect on their own learnings and experiences. The security blanket of learning (Britzman, 2007) from experience does not allow them to critically see the embedded structure of power and politics in education and learning. Britzman addresses how experience dulls our thinking. She states:
Growing up in education permeates our meanings of education and learning; it lends commotion to our anticipations for and judgments toward the self and our relations with others. It makes us suspicious of what we have not experienced and lends nostalgia to what has been missed. (p. 2)

We, as teachers, are continually caught up in a complex entangled web of learning. In order to learn about one’s self we must understand our relations with others and of the world. Similarly, Ellsworth (2005) explores the learning self and the “sensation of simultaneously being with oneself and being in relation to things, people, or ideas outside oneself” (p.16). It is not the fault of teachers; they have not been trained to examine their own experiences precariously or to investigate the power relations at work. Britzman argues that there must be a movement from ignorance to knowledge; teachers must gain a critical awareness of learning and teaching. Schooling traditionally does not teach critical awareness. For example, students are not supposed to ask questions such as, “why do we have to learn this” or “why are we doing this?” Or if they do ask such questions, they are acting insubordinately. Refusing to obey the customary orders is turning one’s back on the powers that teach and/or created schooling. Schooling is a place of learning, but is it a place of thinking and knowing? Is it a place of becoming? Thus, teachers often have not removed themselves far enough from education in order to understand the power relations of how they became to be and have continued along the same path.

Examining the student artworks hanging in the second-grade classroom, the products all looked quite similar. I had a hard time differentiating between their works because they lacked a degree of individualization. Why did the art all look the same? Unfortunately, the concept of cookie cutter art is not an uncommon practice in the
classroom (Check, 2004; McKay & Monteverde, 2004; Walling, 2006). The teachers admit that it is easier to ask students to trace and cut patterns than draw shapes themselves. Not only was it more time efficient to use patterns, but it also kept the students working at a similar pace and increased the chances of an attractive finished product. Because the teachers want each student to have a nice, visually appealing artwork at the end of the lesson, the patterns helped to ensure its success. If the students follow directions and use the correct patterns on the different colored construction paper, then the students will have a work that they can be proud to have created. Patterns help make art easy but when has art ever been easy? These preplanned projects consist of simple to follow directions to guarantee a nice looking product. But should art really be about following directions? Much of the artwork that is produced in the twenty-first century disregards the traditional rules of art. Here again is another example of power relations at work—the rules of art. Who made these rules? Were they established during the Italian Renaissance when the religious dogma and papal families commissioned, hence controlled, a large portion of the art being produced? Was it then that we were hypnotized by the grand architecture and realist, true to life paintings and sculptures, that we forgot about the art that was being produced around other parts of the world?

I watched an entire lesson where the students followed directions and learned how to make snowflakes (Figure 3–4). Once again, if needed, there could be a link to the science curriculum documents in regards to change and the weather, but the lesson seemed separate from any academic learning. They folded white paper and cut with scissors to make snowflakes, but where was the critical thinking or self-expression? After the activity, I realized that the teacher never discussed symmetry, a topic that they were
examining in their math workbook. How had this seemingly obvious connection been overlooked? Is it that we are trained to see the academic subjects as disconnected areas and/or did the teacher just want to quickly create some wintry decorations for the wall? It is interesting to think about how the makers of curriculum documents or the selectors of knowledge decide what information is deemed important, and then break it apart into smaller categories for educational purposes. Ellsworth (2005) states:

Curriculum, when staged as education’s content, cuts relationality, plural interconnections, swarming complexity, the fluidity of the world into ‘subject matter,’ ‘facts,’ ‘timelines,’ ‘diagrams,’ ‘textbooks.’ Then it asks pedagogy to put these elements or units back together into the living, breathing continuity of the experience of the learning self. (p. 163)

Teachers and students need to reconnect the compartmentalized information in order for it to make sense in their daily world. But unfortunately teachers and students do not always make the associations that are needed in order to breathe life back into teaching and learning.

Figure 3-4: Snowflakes.
Not only did the arts integration projects decorate the classroom and hallway, but the arts also regularly decorated the other subject(s). A common critique of arts integration includes that one subject is promoted as the expense of another (Brophy & Alleman, 1991). I found the writing component of the language arts to be the academic subject that was most often decorated by art, thus devaluing the arts. The written text usually done on lined school paper often was the main part of the project, and the drawings that supplemented the writing were performed second. The arts integration projects rarely relied on the arts’ ability to visually communicate an idea or story without using words. Hence, the written text was perceived as more important than the art component. For example, in a social studies lesson that explored timelines, a teacher created a Pittsburgh Firsts unit to celebrate Pittsburgh’s 250th birthday (Figure 3-5). Each student was given a piece of paper with a Pittsburgh First printed on it and the student had to visually communicate what was written in words. They then used the papers to create a timeline based on when the Pittsburgh Firsts occurred. The drawn component was included to help make the timeline more colorful by illustrating the words. Were the drawings really needed? What did the students really learn from the art component of the lesson? What did this lesson teach about art other than it is an extra hands-on activity and a final decorative product?
Since many of the lessons were created primarily for decoration, I am not surprised with the principals’ comments to the teacher. One teacher responds:

We’ve been told that it’s time to put some of the cutesy stuff that we do away—that we really need to focus on just reading and math and science.... But we have been told, less—we don’t need to see as much. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

I wonder if the arts integration projects hanging on the walls had truly integrated the arts with another academic subject and demonstrated student learning, would the principal see it as such or would he still think it’s cutesy? This reminds me of an anecdote previously mentioned in chapter one from when I taught elementary art. Two years before I was hired at the school, the former art teacher and students created a mural with Keith Haring-like figures on the basement wall next to the art room. My fourth year teaching, the new school principal and assistant superintendent were touring the building and apparently decided that the mural was not “pretty.” One day I entered the building and the mural was painted over—the wall was white. I questioned and wrote numerous letters and emails, but never received an explanation as to why the mural had disappeared. This story offers
insight into the level of understanding that many principals and administrators have when it comes to the arts. The arts are often mis-viewed as a fun-time recreational activity that should be visually appealing, and unfortunately based on many of the art activities that are implemented into the general classroom, I see why arts integration gets a bad rap.

Most of the student artworks that adorned the walls were two-dimensional and involved traditional classroom art materials. Materials such as pencils, crayons, glue, scissors, construction paper, and occasionally markers were used in the classroom. Although nontraditional materials, such as leaves, were incorporated into some projects, more often than not the teacher told the students to use crayons. I should interject here that the project that was created with leaves, was performed at home as an extra credit assignment, but this will be discussed later in the chapter. Introducing chalk pastels to her students, one teacher states:

This kind of chalk is called pastels. It is different than the sidewalk chalk you use at home. These are much brighter. There are some drawbacks to using chalk. When we are finished, we will need to wash our hands. You need to be careful because chalk smears. You may want to use the smearing technique, but this is what will happen to your finger. You need to be careful about putting down your arm and elbow down on the paper because you don’t want to smear your work.

(personal communication, March 13, 2008)

Using chalk in the classroom was an opportunity to connect the arts with the story, Cool Ali that the students read in their language arts book (Figure 3-6). But I was a bit surprised when the teacher explained that the smearing characteristic of chalk was a drawback. I would argue that the chalk’s ability to be smeared is one of the unique
qualities of chalk. It is what sets it apart from markers and crayons—the potential of smearing to create new colors or gradations of colors. Although she borrowed the materials from the art teacher and borrowed the lesson from another second-grade teacher who I helped to design the lesson, this teacher did not really think through the materials or lesson. Much more thought needs to go into designing and teaching lessons that focus on the process of art.

Figure 3-6: Cool Ali chalk drawings

In order to connect the story that focused on a young girl named Ali and how she used chalk to draw cool thoughts on a sidewalk during a warm summer day to the art activity, the teacher simply explained:

Each one of you will be getting a section of a sidewalk. In this story, it is a really hot day so she drew cool and refreshing things.... We have had some cool days, so I want you to draw things that make you think of warm thoughts and/or spring.

(personal communication, March 13, 2008)
The teacher basically told the students what to do and did not guide them to make a connection between the arts activity and language arts story on their own. They recalled the cool wintry images that Ali drew before they brainstormed some warm springy images, but the teacher did not mention that illustrations could be used to communicate ideas or stories, which is an objective of the written language arts document. Throughout the lesson, she continually reminded the students to make their projects colorful since she like color, and would say things such as, “I’d like to see some tulips or daffodils.” But she did not offer any information or different possibilities that could strengthen the design or composition. I found myself wondering why the teacher chose to implement this lesson? Was it because it was such a great lesson or because she saw the brightly colored works hanging on the wall and across the hall and wanted more decorations for her classroom? Was it to show me, the researcher, that she does integrate the arts into her classroom? I was excited that she tried using an unfamiliar art material that was not often incorporated into her lessons. It shows that this teacher is open to arts integration ideas and materials, but at the same time could benefit from guidance in planning and teaching the lessons. This teacher was beginning to move past her level of comfort and enters into a classroom of risks and uncertainty (Britzman, 2007).

Emphasizing the arts for decoration purposes seemed to diminish the importance of the artistic process by focusing on the final product. Many of the teachers preferred to have students create their own art piece so they would have a product to take home to show their parents what they did in school. This final product verifies that the students were busy, but does not show what they are busy learning or the learning process. The necessity of creating individual artworks also undermines the possibilities of
collaborative art projects, site-specific installations, and performance art pieces. Such artistic processes do not result in tangible take-home products thus they are often overlooked by the teacher.

Because the product is produced primarily for decorative purposes, the arts were absent from most lessons beyond the hands-on component. Teachers equated art with doing and making a product, and did not associate art as an entry point or space of learning/teaching that could promote discussions and learning. For example, to assist the time capsule lesson that commemorated the year 2007, the teacher did not think to include a discussion or critique of Andy Warhol’s Time Capsules that he collected and created throughout his lifetime (Figure 3-7, Figure 3-8). Consequently, discussions about historical and contemporary works of art that related to academic content were absent from the classroom.

Figure 3-7: Time capsules.
Using the arts primarily for decorative reasons offers insight into many of the teachers’ struggles with the concept of art in arts integration. There seems to be an existing tension between their understandings of art and arts and crafts. In an attempt to explain arts integration, a teacher responded:

The first thing that comes to mind is tying parts of the curriculum together in a way that’s not workbook or reading from the text[book].... So when you say art integration, getting away from the regular textbook and paper and pencil activities is what I envision.... It’s what you do extra to make it memorable to the kids.... I may be more crafty, which I don’t know if I classify it as artsy. I see the two as separate things. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

A few weeks later, she said:

I think a lot of elementary teachers, we will do more of project based, which I call it arts and crafts, which I think is a form of art, but it’s not true art to me. It’s more activity based.... I will have a project, and a lot of the project will be, them
following the directions and tracing the patterns. And see, that’s where I think it’s the craft part. When it gets to break away and they get to add their own self-expression, then that’s when the arts come in. (personal communication, January 28, 2008)

Many of her lessons demonstrate this understanding of art versus arts and crafts. For example, in the lesson, My Snowman’s Problem, each student creates a two-dimensional snowman from templates and then creates a unique hat (Figure 3-9). The students then complete a riddle worksheet that describes the hat in terms of shape, color, and size. Hanging all the similar snowmen in the hallway with the riddle separate from the hats, the students are challenged to find the appropriate hat for each snowman. Thus, the snowman would be considered the craft part since the students are expected to use the templates, and the snowman’s hat is the art component since it allows for creativity and self-expression (within limits). It meets the requirements of the math written curriculum since students are expected to recognize and draw two-dimensional objects, as well as problem solve. It is much more difficult to make a connection to the art curriculum documents. Perhaps students are producing works of art appropriate to their “individual artistic experience?”
Many teachers struggle with preconceived notions that there are fundamental differences between art and arts and crafts. Many teachers equate art as “high art” or something beautiful that can be found in an art museum. Furthermore, they believe “real” art is taught only by the art specialist(s) in the school’s art room. The art curriculum documents for the second-grade includes crafts along with other art such as drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture. The students are expected to be able to recognize crafts as works of art. Based on this understanding, crafts are art, therefore the teachers who are implementing crafty projects, are implementing art. However, since the classroom teachers are not officially trained in the arts, they feel that they do not possess the authority to teach the arts in the classroom; they feel more comfortable teaching arts and crafts.

Whether or not teachers categorize the projects as art or arts and crafts, many teachers continually include the arts to some extent in their teaching and in their classroom. They are unsure whether their use of the arts should be defined as arts integration. Is it arts integration if the teacher does not “teach” anything about art? Is it arts integration if the students are creatively engaged in self-expression as they produce a
work of art that demonstrates learning in another academic area? There is a need to move beyond trying to label lessons or projects as arts integration in order to focus on how teachers comprehend and integrate the arts into teaching and learning.

One teacher’s understanding of arts integration as the “icing on the cake” exemplifies her limited awareness of the possibilities and potential of the arts in the classroom. Reviewing the curriculum documents, nowhere were the arts equated with a way to decorate the classroom. Where then did the teacher’s learn this? The use of the arts in the classroom is perpetuated throughout time. Teachers remember their own educational experiences, and continue to use the arts as teachers did decades ago. Coloring in worksheets has shown to be a common practice in the classroom, especially around the holidays. What exactly does coloring in a worksheet teach? There is a need for teachers to rethink the accepted art practices done traditionally in school. Just because it was done forty years ago does not mean that it should continue—the arts can do much more than decorate the classroom walls.

Diluting the Arts in Arts Integration

Many of the arts integration projects that were produced in the general classroom displayed a weak or diluted art component. Although the lessons incorporated the arts by having the students create a hands-on art project, the arts really were not being fully integrated into the lesson with respect. Arts integration aspires to demonstrate student learning in art and at least one other subject, but many of the projects focused more on the non-art area and used the arts for various rudimentary purposes, thus devaluing the importance of the arts.
Arts integration was occasionally an **afterthought** to a lesson. If there was extra class time in the schedule, then an art activity would be used. It was viewed as a fun activity and in contrast to the rest of the school day, it was a bit more unstructured as students were permitted to quietly talk and move around the classroom as needed. Thus, art was often used in the classroom as busy work. Although being busy in school usually implies something positive such as working hard, if the busy work does not entail critical thinking or reflect learning, then it is mundane and without thought. For example after students completed their in-class mathematics workbooks or language arts writing, they were invited to color in the worksheet or add a visual component to the writing activity (Figure 3-10). As students drew and colored with crayons, they were kept occupied and quiet. The teacher was able to use this time to walk around and assess students who may be encountering problems with the learning or writing and offer individual help. Keeping the students busy, often helped minimize discipline and behavior issues in the classroom. Art as busy work devalues the importance of the arts as it is used for classroom control.

![Coloring classroom work](image)

**Figure 3-10:** Coloring classroom work.
Because the arts integration projects were frequently uncomplicated, students did not need much teacher assistance. The students did not encounter many challenges other than having to borrow a certain pattern to trace or colored crayon from a friend, so the projects did not regularly encourage high levels of thinking, problem solving or creativity. Instead of questioning and guiding the students to work through their difficulties, the teachers would often tell the students what and how to add to the artwork.

While many of the arts integration lessons involved students creating a hands-on work, there seemed to be an absence of contemporary and historical works of art. Milbrandt (2002) states, “Postmodern art can help the students better understand the contemporary world in which they live.... Postmodern art, like contemporary life, reflects multiple, overlapping perspective and values” (p. 318). Many of the teachers were not knowledgeable about artists or art movements, or if they were, their knowledge was limited to the famous Western European artists from the art history canon (e.g., Renaissance and Impressionistic artists). This offers information as to why most of the works created in the classroom displays realistic qualities. The only time that I observed an arts integration lesson that welcomed an abstract concept was the Noodle Art lesson used to celebrate the 100th day of school (Figure 3-11, Figure 3-12). The teacher asked the students to create a work of art with 100 noodles. Each student received a piece of 9x11 oak tag and a bowl full of uncooked noodles varying in size, shape, and color. The students were encouraged to create anything they wanted as long as they only used the correct number of noodles. The students took the lesson in various directions. Some students incorporated the noodles so they stood up perpendicular to the paper. Others used the shape of the noodles to convey a sense of texture. Each student work of art
looked different from their peers’ art. One student created a landscape with a motorcycle since he is interested in various means of transportation. He used round noodles for the wheels and red noodles for the sun. Another student created an abstract design with the noodles.

Figure 3-11: 100 noodle art.

Figure 3-12: 100 noodle art.
There was also an absence of historical and contemporary art images in the classroom due to inaccessibility to art prints and reproductions. However with the introduction of computers in the classroom, teachers now have limitless access to works of art and art related information. Some teachers use the Internet to strengthen their arts integration lessons. For example, I observed a lesson that the second-grade teacher borrowed from another teacher, which was based on a language arts story about a little girl who draws “cool” images on a sidewalk during a hot summer day, she used the computer to introduce an artist. The artist, referred to as the Sidewalk Chalk Guy, uses chalk to create drawings that look 3-dimensional on sidewalks. She invited the students to examine and discuss the works of art before drawing their own Cool Ali inspired chalk drawings on black paper.

The use of the Internet as a resource for teachers evokes concerns regarding one’s judgment and critical examination of lessons found online. With an infinite number of lesson ideas on the Internet, it is important for teachers to make well-informed decisions regarding the selection of quality lessons (Benzer, 2005). Are teachers able to differentiate between what a high-quality arts integration lesson looks like in contrast to a weak arts integration lesson? Are they able to search for and find an artist or work of art that explores a concept, topic, or issue that relates to what they are teaching? Using the Internet as a classroom resource has much potential if teachers know how to successfully navigate the space with a critical eye.

Another perplexing topic associated with the de/valuing of the arts in arts integration involves assessment. In U.S. schools, much emphasis is placed on grades. Assessment, a method of evaluating student performance and attainment, is usually
presented on a grading letter system. The letter grades demonstrate student learning of the subjects’ academic objectives included in the school district curriculum documents. Since the arts, along with the other academic subjects have written curriculum with prescribed objectives, the students’ ability to demonstrate their understanding of the objectives can be assessed. Having to work within the constraints of the prescribed curriculum documents and established system of assessment, classroom teachers are responsible for assigning grades in all the academic subjects except art, music, physical education, and Spanish, the classes that they refer to as the “specials.” Because the classroom teachers do not have to assign grades for art on the report card, they do not assess the art component of the arts integration projects. But the art teacher who assesses and assigns grades for art does not assess the arts component of the arts integration either, since it was not created in her presence or in the art room. Thus, if the art aspect of a lesson is not graded in the general classroom, then it is implied that it is less important than the other subject areas that are given grades as assessment. Most of the teachers did not assign grades for the art aspect of the arts integration project; they often just checked for a product and/or would give extra credit points. One teacher said, “I don’t assess art...It’s about creativity... It’s not cut and dry” (personal communication, February 25, 2008).

Why is it that teachers think it is unfair to assess art, yet they assess mathematic abilities, writing skills, and so forth? There is confusion and apprehension because of the unique characteristics of art. Eisner and Day (2004) state:

The [art education] field embraces outcomes that are not simply routine or definable in their entirety in advance; it values outcomes that are imaginative, diverse, and interesting in any number of ways. Thus, there may not be a single
criterion or rubrics as they are called that can adequately represent what students have learned. (p. 5)

If teachers continue to not assess the arts, they will continue to be further marginalized, but conversely, if they work within the assessment constraints, the learning cannot be fully assessed. Working within the curriculum documents, since arts integration attempts to teach art along with another subject, there should be learning objectives for both academic subjects. Through this understanding, the objectives for both subjects should be accessed accordingly. If the art component is not demonstrating any learning, then the lesson needs to be reevaluated and reworked.

The devaluation and dilution of the arts in arts integration was also insinuated in the teachers’ lesson plans. When I reviewed the teachers’ lesson plans, I was surprised to often not see any mention of the arts integration activity. For example, one teacher wrote that the students would work on telling time, and included a page number from the mathematic textbook or workbook, but did not mention that they would be creating their own clocks out of construction paper in order to use to work on their telling time skills (Figure 3-13). The absence of art and any related information from the art curriculum provides insight into the teacher’s positioning of the arts in her classroom—it is not as important as the other academic subjects. This is not to fault the teachers as they are just trying to work and survive within these relations of power at work. For example, the academic standards in Pennsylvania are ranked in an order from one to thirteen; the Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening standards are 1.1-1.8, the Mathematics standards are 2.1-2.11, the Science and Technology standards are 3.1-3.8, and the Arts and Humanities standards are 9.1-9.4. This positioning, or ranking, of the subjects
demonstrates which are the most important in Pennsylvania’s education. Why did the written curriculum makers choose to assign numbers? Why not follow a same format as the national academic standards where they are based on the alphabetical letters of the subject area, hence showing no ranked order of importance. For example, the language arts standards are NL-ENG.1-12 and the visual arts standards are NA-VA.1-6. Because the written curriculum at the school district was based on the Pennsylvania’s academic standards, the ranking order of what is deemed the most educationally significant is conveyed through the documents.

Figure 3-13: Clocks: Telling time

Although the curriculum documents at the local level never used the exact phrase arts integration, there were references to the arts in regards to the other academic disciplines. The only time the documents used the wording “art activity” or “art project,” other than in the art and music section was once in the science section and once in the social studies section. The science section suggests engaging in an art activity that reuses trash. The written social studies curriculum states that students can create drawings to
explore multiculturalism as a procedure for assessment. Although it did not use the word art through most of the documents, the arts were included to some degree. For example, the science section suggests the creation of dioramas for animals or habitats. The document however is ambiguous about how the art activities, drawing, or dioramas should be taught and assessed. This ambiguity may be intentional in order to allow teachers to infuse their own creativity and teaching expertise into the lesson, but this is based on the assumption that the teachers understand teaching and assessment in relation to art.

Although the art component of the arts integration projects were usually overlooked in regards to assessment, the teachers periodically assigned points. One of the lessons where the teacher did give points for assessment was a time capsule project (Figure 3-14). This project was given as a compulsory out of school assignment. The students were to write a paragraph that remembers the year 2007. They were then asked to create a collage using magazines and newspapers on a time capsule template that complements the writing. The assignment was worth 20 points: five points for the cover, five points for creativity in the writing, five points for punctuation and spelling, and five points for neatness. Since the art component was only worth one quarter of the total possible points, it infers that the writing component is much more important. But, how did she assess the five points for the cover? Was it based on creativity, neatness, and/or ability to visually communicate what they wrote? No. Basically, if they created a collage cover, then they more often than not received the full five points. The teacher’s interests were primarily on the writing component, and the art aspect seemed to help students with weaker writing skills earn extra points. She didn’t feel comfortable grading the collage
since it was about self-expression and creativity. Examining the collaged covers, I noticed that a few of the students only included personal drawings on their collage. Was the collage supposed to be created from only magazines and newspapers, as stated on the assignment sheet? Was it okay if the students included photographs? She also thought because it was a take home assignment, that it would not be fair to assess students if they did not have access to different collage materials such as magazines, newspapers, glue, or markers, or crayons.

![Time capsules](image)

Figure 3-14: Time capsules

Using arts integration as an out of school activity and as bonus points also dilutes its place in education. Due to time constraints during the school day, many teachers used the arts integration projects as take home activities. What does this imply about the importance of this lesson? For a science lesson on trees and leaves, a teacher assigned an optional leaf project for extra credit (Figure 3-15). She explains that she got the idea from a Scholastic book titled, *Look What Kids Can Make From Leaves* and another book titled,
The Leaf Man. She reads the book in class and asks the students to create an animal inspired work of art using leaves as the art material. Justifying why she assigns the project as an out of school activity, the teacher states:

Some kids can’t handle anything extra. They can only handle what is done in the school day. Getting homework out of them is tricky. And then you have that group of kids that is so creative and they need that outlet. And then you have the group of kids that is gifted and you need to challenge them. So this way, it was hitting two-thirds of the kids and the one-third got a wonderful experience from the nature trail and identifying the leaves, they were good. Then the other kids that wanted to take it one step further, they could. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

Although she is trying to address the complexities of teaching toward the diverse needs of the students, using this project as an at home activity for bonus points, perpetuates the success of certain students and the neglect of others. Obviously the teacher sees the importance of this arts integration because she invites the students to engage in the activity, but at the same time by making it voluntary demonstrates to the students that the arts are not as important as science. Because they are created at home, does she suggest that it is not as important as the other workbook and textbook activities that are performed in class?
Using arts integration as an enrichment activity in the classroom is suggested in the district’s written curriculum. In the Language Arts document, enrichment activities can include creating dioramas and puppets. In order to explore environmental issues/ecological concerns in the science curriculum, the document suggests art related projects as an enrichment activity. Although it may suggest some value for the students labeled as enrichment students, it devalues the overall importance by narrowing it to an exclusive group of students. As an enrichment activity, it suggests that art activities promote a higher level of thinking, problem solving, and/or creativity? If this is so, why not promote this level of thinking with all the students, and not focus on just the gifted ones? Because this is an extra activity designed exclusively for a select group of students, when will the students have time to engage in the activity? Should this enrichment activity be performed at home? Or does it suggest that gifted students work faster, therefore may need extra work to fill up time during the school day?

This discussion brings up a very important question. Should the arts be assessed? As mentioned before, the arts integration lessons should be designed and implemented for a reason. They are not utilized only to be a fun recreational activity or to fill up extra
time, or at least they should not be used for these basic purposes. Although the arts can help generate excitement and promote engagement, arts integration should offer much more. They should teach whatever the creator intended them to teach, and hopefully much more. This knowledge therefore should be assessed to ensure the students understand the academic content. If they do not, then the teacher needs to reinstruct the subject matter. Using arts integration projects as assessment is one form, along with tests, quizzes, discussions, and self-evaluations that can be used in the classroom to assess learning.

The curriculum documents also suggest using art activities as a method of reteaching subject content and objectives. For example, in order to explore environmental issues and ecological concerns, the school district science document states that posters can be used as a procedure for assessment but also as a reteaching activity. It is not used as the primary teaching activity, rather a secondary activity. The notion of reteaching with the arts suggests that the arts are unable to teach the academic first, but it can be used as a supplementary tool, after learning takes place. More often than not, the art activity happened after the initial teaching. Teachers would teach the information from the textbook or workbook, then extend the lesson with the art aspect. However, if the teacher ran out of time, then art would get cut out of the lesson. But because the content was already taught, it did not make much difference if the art component was removed.

There are assumptions in the curriculum documents that the teacher is able to efficiently integrate the arts in their teaching. Assuming that all teachers are able to design, implement, and assess art activities in the classroom, devalues the difficulty of such lessons. The document presupposes that the teachers are knowledgeable about the
arts, as well as confident in teaching in such ways. For example, the social studies
documents fail to account for the possibility that teachers might not be informed about art
from different cultures. Similarly, the language arts document fail to address the
possibility that teachers may not understand a broader definition of “text” that includes
visual, digital, and other forms of nontraditional texts. Many of the standards also assume
that teachers know how to encourage students to talk about and draw what they see and
think, and that they know and understand different types of art such as collages,
dioramas, mobiles, as well as the materials needed to create such products. Nowhere in
the curriculum document does it address how teachers should teach the limited “factual”
curricular information. Nowhere does it mention anything about the political, economic,
and societal aspects of the school, teachers, or students.

Due to the diverse life and educational experiences of teachers, I argue that
assumptions can be dangerous because they do not take into account the complex nature
of teaching/learning. Although some teachers may possess this selected knowledge and
abilities, other teachers may not. For example, how does a teacher choose a particular
work of art or artist to explore in class? How does a teacher know how to effectively plan
a lesson that involves the arts? How does a teacher know how to effectively talk about
works of art? How does a teacher know how to assess an art component of the lesson?
Many of the standards include art related activities, such as poster making as a procedure
for meeting the objective(s). However when creating a poster, do teachers provide
information about design elements that students can explore in their compositions as they
visually communicate an idea and share the learned knowledge? As emphasized in the
national standards for the arts and humanities, are the visual arts really being taught with respect as they are integrated with the other academic subjects?

**Why are the Arts De/valued in Arts Integration?**

Based on my arduous experience of trying to find a research site that welcomed my research of arts integration in the elementary classroom, as presented in chapter two, I should have begun to suspect the neglect of the arts. But with arts integration being an integral component for the National Board Certification for the early childhood generalist teacher, I knew that educators were aware of the potential of arts integration. For example, the certification application asks teachers to prepare a portfolio with four main entries. The second entry titled, Building a Classroom Community states, “In this entry, you will demonstrate your knowledge and ability to deepen student understanding of an important topic, concept, or theme in social studies through the integration of social studies and the arts” (p. 135) (Figure 3-16). Because this certification is created and assessed by educators and peers in the field, it shows that fellow colleagues and teachers believe that arts integration is significant in the primary classroom, or at least it offers strategies for meaningful learning in social studies. However, when it comes to what is actually happening in the classroom, the arts really were not being integrated into the classroom. Throughout the study I continued to ask myself many questions: Why dilute the arts in arts integration? Why treat the arts as decoration? How has this become an accepted practice? Although there are numerous reasons why the arts are being devalued in arts integration, I will explore two integral reasons: lack of teacher education and lofty expectations placed on the teacher.
The topic of teacher education in the arts for classroom teachers involves establishing comfort levels with the arts, arts integration and art materials. Teachers are educated formally and informally. Formal education includes academic schooling at an undergraduate or graduate level, and professional development at the workplace. Informal education includes everyday experiences inside and outside of the school and self-reflections. Much of a teacher’s understanding of arts integration is formed through both formal and informal education and experiences (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Because each teacher’s schooling and life experiences are so very different, understandings of arts integration widely differ. Many of the teachers lacked knowledge, or a knowing, of arts integration because of its absence through their education. Asking one teacher to discuss how she was educated to integrate the arts into the elementary classroom, her immediate response was simple—she had no training in regards to arts integration. But as she spoke, she referenced many informal experiences such as asking the art teacher for help and looking through teacher magazines including Scholastic. She
also mentioned aspects relating to formal education. She explained that during her Master’s program she enrolled in a course that briefly discussed moving past cut and pasting activities. Knowing that art courses are an integral part of many pre-service education programs and because she did not mention anything about her undergraduate schooling, I decided to inquire further. Because it has been some time since she received her teaching degree, she initially overlooked her undergraduate training. Her years of experience teaching in the schools seem to overshadow her original teaching training. She states:

I think I had to take two art courses.... I think there was one course that was titled, Art in Elementary Education. Then I had to take an art appreciation course. I remember taking a course where you learned about different artists and how they use line and technique. That was a little beyond me. Although I found it interesting, it was a little above my—art in elementary education was probably more my thing but I did take art appreciation. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

Her response suggests that she received education about the arts in her pre-service teaching program, but did not receive any education regarding arts integration. I began wondering, how are the two topics different? Or furthermore how are they related? Traditionally speaking, arts in elementary education may be just that, using or including the arts for any purpose in the classroom, such as classroom control, a filler project, for decoration, to teach toward multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993; Gardner, 1999), and so forth. Arts integration, however, highlights the arts as a space of inquiry that facilitates students/teachers to explore connections between academic subjects, between the
academic subjects and themselves, between themselves and others, and so on. Through this space, students are encouraged to explore beliefs, and multiple perspectives that encourage different ways of knowing the world. In today’s educational setting, some people may argue that one of the main differences is that arts integration teaches the content standards or objectives of two or more subjects, and just using the arts in the classroom may have no value in relation to learning the academic standards. Because one of the main purposes of schools is for the students to learn the prescribed written curriculum, why would the arts be included for any other reason? Although I wish the prescribed academic standards would just disappear, for the time being, teachers are expected to work with and through this required and accepted canon. Thankfully most curriculum documents do not place limitations on how a teacher instructs the objectives. They may make suggestions, but usually there is some freedom of the teacher to design and implement lessons accordingly. This opens the door for arts integration and its possibilities in the classroom. Thus, if the arts are treated with respect, I personally do not believe there is or should be a difference between arts integration and using the arts in the classroom. Yes, this is much simpler said than done, and based on my experiences in the classroom, I did not experience the arts being used with respect. But it was not because the teachers chose not to; it was because they did not know how to successfully integrate the arts. They lacked the education and guidance needed to look at their own understandings of art and how their schooling propagated these beliefs.

In response to the art appreciation course that she was required to take, why was it “beyond” her? Based on her word selection, she did not seem to gain an appreciation of art, although it seems that was the general purpose of taking the course. More often than
not, these art courses are large classes composed of a diverse group of students majoring in vastly different subjects. She obviously saw the course as disconnected from her life, her learning, and her teaching. Unfortunately in the long-term, she did not learn that there is much more to art than line and technique. The course did not give her the opportunity to experience art as a space of interrelating thoughts or inquiry, to understand that the arts is a way to experience the world, or to learn about one’s self. She did not individually make the connections between the arts and the academic subjects that she would someday be teaching. She did not learn how to talk about or experience art. As such, how is she supposed to use and appreciate the arts in her classroom if she has not been properly educated to do so herself? She never moved past the comfortable space of learning. She needs to engage in a rethinking of experiences and the way she comes to know.

If a teacher lacks an education in and understanding of art, it is no surprise that it would result in a lack of confidence in their teaching of arts integration. When teachers did not feel comfortable with particular lessons or content, it resulted in insecurities. One teacher states:

I think it depends on your comfort level too. I don’t see myself as an art teacher. I was talking to you about, okay, I need to put more art vocabulary when I am doing my lessons. So my comfort level is here and it would take a lot for me to get here. So, I am more comfortable with the cookie cutter or cut and paste. And I try to give them ways, okay, you know we did this all the same, now you add your own personality. You add this and that. But I like to all start out the same because that is where my comfort level is. And it is easier for me to plan that. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)
This teacher was hesitant to enter into the uncertain space of art because it was uncomfortable. It is more convenient to continue teaching in ways one is accustomed or as one was taught in school, but unfortunately this does not lead to new discoveries or teaching possibilities. It is difficult to change her ways and she seems to not really want to change her ways. How did she become comfortable with cutting and pasting and how did it become a common practice in her classroom? She obviously let it in. She has the authority to design and implement lessons to support the prescribed curriculum. Let me interject that during my time in the school, I never saw any paste being used, only glue. It is an antiquated saying, and perhaps sheds light into her experiences and education with the arts. Perhaps her educational training is antiquated? If this is so, it is important for teachers to be open and flexible to new ideas to bring their teachings up to date. Although one of the courses in her graduate program encouraged teachers to think past cutting and pasting, as she looked around the room, she acknowledged that her use of the arts have not really evolved past cut and paste decorations.

An interesting area to focus our investigation is the anomalous places of learning. (Ellsworth, 2005). In this case, exploring the space of teachers’ feelings of discomfort and insecurity. Introducing the notion of felt reality, Ellsworth writes:

when we look at test scores or curriculum content, we are looking at only one dimension of the reality of learning. That other dimension of learning’s reality—its nondecomposable continuity of movement and sensation, its felt reality of the relation that is experienced couched in matter—is as real as test scores or curriculum content. (2005, p. 35)
Surfacing the felt realities of teachers provides a unique perspective into the world of teaching and learning. Because the teacher grew up with education and moved across a pre-service education program to earn a teaching certificate, and has taught in a school for seventeen years, we assume and expect that she is confident in her teaching abilities. But in actuality, she has hidden layers of doubt beneath her poised façade. These places of discomfort re/surfaces the tension associated with teaching are often overlooked because it may make the teacher look incapable of teaching. Feelings however are a place of knowing. These feelings render internal conflicts with the teacher. While these tensions frequently exist during the first few days of student teaching or with one’s first teaching job, it is expected that these feelings will not stay with a teacher throughout her life’s career. These feelings are not often addressed in teacher education, because it makes the profession seem scary and unmanageable—it exposes the uncertainty that is an integral part of teaching. As Britzman (1991) states, “schooling is a place where unpopular things are often masked” (p. 64). Although they are masked these feelings are common—they are the needed feelings of teaching and learning. Feelings of discomfort that are often perceived to be negative are not necessarily damaging or harmful to the teacher or students, rather they are complex spaces full of risks, hope and possibilities. Britzman encourages us to challenge the comfort of clear boundaries by blurring the popular and unpopular. Here it would be a blurring between comfort and discomfort, and certainty and uncertainty.

It is important to recognize that these private feelings are socially constructed; they suggest the power relations at work. These feelings are implicated in conditions that are oppressive. They are not just emotions that are personal and separated from the world,
but are fueled by our past and present encounters as well as the conditions where we are not present or have control over. Insecurities in teaching result from one’s relationship with students, curriculum documents, standardized testing, state mandates, school policies, education, training, life experiences and so forth. Although they are a key component of education, these feelings result from situations that teachers do not always have much control over. Thus, teachers’ feelings of comfort and discomfort, and certainty and uncertainty with teaching and learning are always present and continually resist working together—they are always in tension, yet simultaneously must work collectivity.

Derrida (1997) explores a similar notion through his concept of différance. To explore the complexities of language, Derrida creates this new word with multiple meanings, which provides insight into understanding teaching as a deconstructive practice. In the translator’s preface, Spivak states, “The two together—‘difference’ and ‘deferment’—both senses present in the French verb ‘différer,’ and both ‘properties’ of the sign under erasure—Derrida calls ‘différance’ (1997, p. xliii). He asserts that the term différance is a process that is both present and absent within the making of meaning. It is composed of two processes at once: difference and deference. Difference suggests that things only make sense when they are compared to something else (i.e., it connects to space), and deference maintains that one must defer or wait for something in order to have something to compare it to (i.e., it connects to time). Meaning only exists when it is in spatial or temporal relation to other things, therefore, in order for feelings of un/certainty in teaching and learning to have meaning, they must exist in a system of connections within the structure(s) of schooling. Thus, attempting to locate what a teacher thinks is certain (i.e., as her past schooling experiences created within the formal
educational structures) she “others” what is uncertain because she has not previously encountered it. Resituating certainty into current contexts and understandings facilitates a working between active and passive voices of defining what is certain and what is not certain in schooling while reconstructing schooling from one’s own perspective. Hence, as the past continuously unfolds itself onto the present, teachers are engaged in the process of becoming in the space in-between certainty and uncertainty. Similarly, Derrida’s exploration of undecidability allows an examination of what is unresolved and unsettled, that is the un/certainties that reveal teaching coming undone. These un/certain feelings are not isolated from the rest of the world, and as teachers dwell in the space among certainty and uncertainty, they struggle to make their own meaning of teaching and learning with the arts as they “become teacher.” Teaching is always open and never unchanging, thus always un/certain. Furthermore, certainty in teaching is implied through the curriculum documents, however the uncertainties are explored as the teachers interpret and attempt to situate them into their lived experiences. Teachers work within this space of un/certainty as they make subjective meaning(s) of the policy documents—written words cannot determine a universal meaning since they are always open to interpretation.

Similarly, un/certainty in teaching and learning can also be explored through Deleuze and Guattari’s (1996) understanding of a rhizome. These feelings of uncertainty are complex reactions to the closely intertwined power relations at work in education. Teachers attempt to re/situate themselves in relation to past, current, and future knowing which informs their educational journey, in particular their educational experiences and mis/understandings of art. Thus, teaching and learning are dynamic processes. There are
opportunities for new teacher ideas about teaching and learning to shoot upward and/or downward leading into uncertainty, and also chances for teachers to root themselves in previous knowledge, remaining on a path of certainty. In the principle of asignifying rupture, Deleuze and Guattari state:

A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines.... Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of a rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. (p. 10)

As teachers move along their planned pathways of learning, they too often remain in their comfort zone. Never straying from this path, teachers perpetuate the familiar from the past. As soon as teachers encounter something new or unexpected, feelings of discomfort and uncertainty arise. This rupturing of their routine teaching, allows teachers to explore these uncertain spaces and forces them to try something new, hence opening up unlayed paths and new worlds of possibilities. These feelings that have a negative connotation, should be welcomed, explored, and celebrated as they refreshingly reinvent teaching and learning.

Through this understanding, teaching and learning embraces subjects in the making. It is the multiplicity of teaching as it grows in the middle, the in-between, a place of différance. The layers of teaching and learning through understanding, memories, identities, and interactions continually re/surface, thus teaching has no resting place. As
teachers reside in these complicated un/certain and un/comfortable spaces, they struggle through teaching—constantly engaged in processes of self-understanding and social reconstruction. This struggle facilitates an embodied knowing, as the teacher openly faces risks, possibilities and hope. Ellis and Bochner (2000) recognize embodiment as a source of knowledge. As teaching and learning become something to “feel” and “do,” teacher and students embody and produce knowledge. Feeling and doing curriculum crystallizes a more fully understanding of what it means to be a teacher and of the practice of teaching.

Entering into a space of un/certainty and dis/comfort is a risky endeavor. Taylor (2008) acknowledges that although risks can be an opportunity for some people, it can also be an excuse for others. One does not know what dangers or possibilities s/he will encounter or expose oneself to. This is scary for many teachers especially since they have prescribed academic content that they must teach the student. But in order to reinvent education to keep teaching current with the evolving world and changing needs of students, risks must be encountered. What is deemed risky goes beyond personal opinion. Taylor states, “Risk is socially constructed and mediated—meaning that what we perceive as risky is greatly affected by what gets labeled as such.” (2008, p. 4). For example, teachers may feel arts integration is risky because the principals may not support this type of learning as it does not represent the format of the mandated standardized tests. Teachers should not be concerned with the risks of entering the space of uncertainty, but the risks associated with not entering the space of uncertainty. Taylor asks, “What risks do artists and art teachers construct, tolerate, and/or proliferate in both their teaching and artmaking practices? How does risk affect what we do and don’t do in
art education?” (p.4). Ellsworth (2004) warns that if we do not take risks, then we are threatening and reducing the future to a form of repetition. Taking the risks out of teaching and learning leaves education in a monotonous place that recycles tradition.

There are many risks associated with arts integration. Arts integration attempts to halt traditional education as it blurs the boundaries between the academic subjects, thus teachers who utilize arts integration are disregarding the compartmentalized structure and rules of education. They risk teaching the academic subjects in a manner that is not supported through the mandated standardized assessment tests. They risk entering into a new space of un/certainty in teaching and learning that they have not encountered in their own educational journey, as arts integration explores the arts beyond a recreational activity or decoration. They risk teaching one subject at the expense of another, usually at the expense of the arts since they do not possess a firm understanding of the arts. But without these risks, there is no room for opportunities and change.

Risks have a vital place not only in education, but within the arts as well. Because artists have continued to take risks throughout history, art has moved beyond realistic painting and sculpture. Art that pushes past traditional notions of art such as site-specific installation, multi-media, and performance art are now prevalent in the art world. As I was observing the second-grade classroom, the 55th Carnegie International was about to open across town at the Carnegie Museum of Art. The hype of the show evoked personal memories of one of my favorite Carnegie International shows. Seven years earlier, the 53rd showcased forty contemporary artists in the Pittsburgh museum and I was introduced to a contemporary artist named Shirin Neshat.
Neshat, born in Iran, presently lives in America as a photographer and filmmaker. Her experiences as a Muslim woman moving to America and being briefly exiled from her homeland of Iran influences her art. Many of her works examine the position of women in Eastern and Western societies and attempt to recreate gendered spaces of boundaries. Her most current work, *Women Without Men* (2009) is a departure for Neshat as it is a feature film based on an adaptation of book by the Iranian author, Shahrnush Parsipur. Banned in Iran, the book focuses on the lives of five Iranian women during the 1950s and their “struggle for freedom and survival in a society that lays down strict rules regarding religion, sex and social behaviour” (Solo show: Shirin Neshat—*Women without Men*, para. 5). Exploring her new direction in art, she explains:

> My projects are not strategic but simply what I feel most strongly about. Every time you change, you may be taking a lot of risk. I know what is ultimately important to creativity is my own anxiety and vulnerability as a human being. For example, I have made my name as an installation artist and photographer, but my new venture is a film—a genre with which my name is not associated. It could end up being a disaster, but I am willing to take the risk, since I am fascinated by the characters and the story. And the experience of working and writing with Shahrnush Parsipur has taken me psychologically to new place as an artist. (Dalal, 2005, para. 13)

Understanding the necessity of trying new things in order to grow as both a person and artist, Neshat embraces the possibilities and dangers related to taking risks. Although she is uncertain about the success of the project she has entered into a new space of art making and welcomes change in herself. Similarly, in a conversation with the artist
Vanessa Beecroft, Neshat states, “I think that sometimes we have to throw ourselves in
situations even if there is a great risk, just to experience life again and just to feel alive
and be adventurous” (Kontova, 2007, part 2). Entering into a space of uncertainty keeps
her from falling victim to a comfortable yet mundane life. Her path ruptures and she
continues on in a new direction while always being connected to her previous encounters.

She not only acknowledges her own risks, but also recognizes the risks associated
with showing her work in her homeland of Iran. Due to the political climate,
controversial content and lack of appropriate sites, she has found it challenging to exhibit
her art in Iran. The first time Iranians were able to see her work in person was in 2004 at
the Museum of Contemporary Art of Tehran during President Khatami’s ruling when
there was leniency regarding cultural censorship. However with the new government,
Neshat is unsure of her future abilities to show her work in Iran (Lekay, n.d.).

Trying new things is not easy. Confronting the unknown causes insecurities, yet it
is a vital process of becoming and change. Discussing her new work of art, Neshat states:

Generally speaking, this film has been my greatest artistic challenge in its scope
and merit. I’ve taken four years to prepare it, and now I’m nervous but remain
totally inspired by this novel of Women Without Men, and deeply committed to
portraying the political atmosphere of 1950s Iran. (Kontova, 2007, part two)

Her anxiety is offset by her motivation, enthusiasm, and dedication to her art making and
the certainty and promise that it will elevate a social consciousness.

Just as artists acknowledge the importance of risk in art, teachers would do well to
embrace risk in the classroom; the spaces of tension and insecurity demands attention.

Much of teaching and learning is unknown; things do not always go as planned
(Britzman, 1991). We don’t really know how students learn or how they feel on a minute-to-minute basis. We don’t know the best way to teach, because there are so many possibilities and factors that contribute to the complexities of teaching. The classroom, just like the world, is a place of uncertainty. The feelings show that the teacher is embodying teaching and learning. If there were no insecurities, then the teacher would not truly be teaching and learning. A teacher’s teaching and learning is affected by her embodiment and/or disembodiment of art.

The teachers also expressed discomforts about art materials and processes. They never had the opportunity to use different art supplies or engage in art making processes that explore the arts as a space of inquiry. After some time in the classroom, I realized that the teachers do not have much access to art supplies (Figure 3-17). One teacher personally purchased crayons, pencils, and markers for the students at the beginning of the year, but unfortunately they were used up within a few months. She reverted to using materials such as dried noodles for projects because it was more cost effective. She sent home letters inquiring for any donations, and some students eventually brought in their own markers and crayons. The teacher had already spent a lot of her own money on glue and almost all the bottles are clogged. The teachers at times borrow materials, like the chalk pastels, from the art teacher, but having to stay within her own budget to teach the arts, the art teacher is unable to always share the materials freely.
Without an understanding of the subject matters’ relationship with art or materials, teachers are unable to embody arts integration. Their own comfort levels with the arts greatly impacts how they use them in the classroom, and most of the teachers in this study expressed uncertainty. They did not know much about using art materials or simply talking about art. But, when they did venture out of their comfort level and integrate arts in their teaching, they were open to advice and suggestions. They would often encourage my participation in the lesson discussion by asking, “Is there anything else that you think I should include?” They welcomed advice on how to talk about art, but were quite hesitant to do so on their own. Or perhaps they were afraid of embarrassing themselves by incorrectly using art in my presence. Because the teachers use the arts in the classroom, they see some value in doing so.

Working within the constraints of time is often difficult in regards to art integration (Deckert, 2001). Although incorporating art activities in the classroom is more difficult in terms of preparation and teaching than instructing directly from the textbook and workbook, teachers continue to use the arts on a regular basis. One teacher explains:

Figure 3-17: Art materials in the classroom.
I think regular instruction is easier, it’s so much easier to tell a child let’s read this and then answer the question and write the answer. That’s really easy. I think it’s boring. I like when I have projects planned more than my typical day. I have to be very organized. The night before I leave I have to make sure that I have everything out. Make sure I know if have to stop at the store to get anything. Make sure that if I have parent helpers coming in that everything is coordinated. Because in a project-based setting if I don’t think ahead a couple of steps, it could turn into chaos in three seconds. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

She personally finds that when she uses the arts in her classroom, teaching becomes more enjoyable. It does require more work than traditional teaching/learning, but she feels it is well worth it as she looks forward to seeing what students come up with and is often surprised by their amount of creativity. However the idea of chaos frightens the teacher. She has learned in her training that chaos in the classroom equates to poor classroom management and reveals her inability to control the students. Although chaos suggests disorder, it can also imply unpredictability and possibility. Chaos, as an unbounded space of matter, gave way into something new and astonishing—the creation of the universe—from which came life. Feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty impede the teacher from working through the space of chaos to discover new worlds. She is stuck in a state of static teaching and learning, refusing to take risks to explore how chaos and uncertainty are integral parts of schooling. Although she may encounter barriers, her job as a teacher is to creatively unearth options to overcome the obstructions. Her first encounter working through this dynamic space of chaos may be uncomfortable and difficult, but as she continues to welcome it into the classroom, she will gain a sense of familiarity and
become more at ease. Similarly, Deckert (2001) finds that teaching an arts integration lesson for a second time will be easier than the first, and acknowledges the importance of counseling teachers to expect things to turn out differently every time a lesson is taught. Since teaching and learning is never at rest, this chaos leads to a process of discovery, of which the element of surprise is an integral part. According to Burnaford et al. (2001), “teachers continually report surprise and even shock when they see what students have learned and can do using the arts” (p. 90). This teacher’s discomfort yet willingness to use the arts is important, however it is apparent that any training that attempted to explore the arts as uncertain, beyond merely a safe decoration is absent from her classroom.

Not only does a lack of education contribute to a devaluation of the arts, but so do the lofty expectations placed on the teachers. Teachers feel pressure from a myriad number of people from the administration and principals, to co-workers, parents, students, and themselves. This is excluding the additional pressure from outside of the school environment. Demands related to standardized testing, curriculum documents, time constraints, scheduling, and funding are closely intertwined with the pressures of teaching.

Because the elementary classroom is place of concrete facts and correct answers, using the arts in the classroom may seem contradictory to its purposes and goals. But stripping away all the mandates, the classroom should be a place of learning and understanding. Demands related to standardized testing are quite elevated in today’s educational system (Sabol, 2004). Standardized tests are the accountability system of the United States of America. In 2006-2007 students in Pennsylvania public schools were tested in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and eleven in reading and math.
Students’ scores are expected to increase so that by the year 2014, all students will be 100% proficient in reading and math. Although students in second grade are not tested, pressure is placed on the teachers to prepare students accordingly so when they enter third grade they will be equipped with the necessary skills. One teacher states:

And standardized testing, oh my gosh. If we don’t have our scores up, you lose funding. It’s ridiculous.... And I think if we keep on this treadmill right now of getting the test scores up or you lose funding, you’re going to see a lot more of it [arts integration] go to the wayside. Because realistically we need the funding to have the schools run. So when you do these extra credit activities on the side, you’re going to be told no, you don’t have time for it. Or, you are going to be told, look at your test scores, look at your hallway. Your hallway looks pretty and it’s decorated and you’re kids have done all this stuff, but your reading scores are way down. I think we are seeing it [art in the classroom] diminish a little bit. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

This teacher is reaffirming her understanding of art merely for decorative purposes as she struggles to situate the arts’ place in relation to standardized testing. Because the tests focus on reading and math, most of the weekly schedule focuses on these two subjects. For example, the second-grade students are supposed to receive approximately 900 minutes of language arts and 300 minutes of mathematics instruction weekly. An average of 100 minutes is dedicated for Spanish, 90 minutes for science and health, 80 minutes for physical education, 60 minutes for social studies, and 40 minutes for each music, art, and library. Based on this distribution of time, art is limited to the 40 minutes of official art class. When then would teachers have time to integrate the arts into their classroom?
Furthermore, there is conflicting information in regards to the curriculum documents. Since art projects are suggested in the science and social studies curriculum documents, where exactly does the art activity fit? Feeling the pressures to dedicate more time to the subjects that are tested, the arts often get marginalized, and based on the teachers’ weekly schedules, the arts only have a place in the art room.

Because the standardized tests are organized in a multiple-choice format with a writing component, teachers are pressured to incorporate similar formats in their classroom. It is interesting to reflect on what the formats of these tests indirectly teach the students and teachers. Possibly that there is always one correct answer and there is no place for subjectivity in education? Are these mandated tests suggesting to both teachers and students that perhaps that multiple-choice questions and short writing activities are the best means of assessing student knowledge? Why then would teachers use the arts to assess student learning if it is not used on the standardized tests? The demands of testing have affected art integration in not just Pennsylvania, but in schools across the country. For example, high-stakes testing in North Carolina schools produced obstructions for teachers to integrate the arts into the classroom. Furthermore, similar to the teachers that I worked with, they expressed worries about restrictions with curriculum, having to teach to the test, and a lack of self-confidence that inhibited their use of arts in the classroom (Andrews, 2008).

Not only do the tests assess the students but they also ensure that the teachers are doing their jobs correctly. The states’ departments of education seem to scare the teachers by threatening that if their students don’t reach proficiency, then they will lose funding. Although the school will not lose funding initially, if students continue to score below
proficiency, then the school could be reorganized, which could result in the teachers losing their job. Thus, the pressures associated with the standardized tests contribute to a devaluation of the arts in the classroom.

Trying to teach the necessary academic content, teachers are forced to confront everyday school demands. In addition to standardized tests, teachers struggle with issues regarding class size, diverse abilities, and scheduling conflicts. One teacher states:

My class size is tending to get bigger. And the second is that there is more curriculum that we are supposed to get across. We now have Spanish, not that I think Spanish isn’t wonderful, but we have it everyday for 20 minutes. We have two computer classes a week, but our day hasn’t been made any longer and we are supposed to get more information into these kids. We are very broad. Cover this, and this and this. And we have less time to cover it in and have more problems. Besides the class size getting bigger, I have more issues now than I did 17 years ago. I have way more issues—more social, economic and family issues that are not left outside the door. (personal communication, December 5, 2007)

This teacher had expressed a lack of self-confidence not only in regard to the arts, but also seems a bit uncertain about her ability to successfully teach in general in a classroom full of complexities. Hence, with these added pressures, arts integration tends to disappear because there is less available time in the school day. Unfortunately because these social, economic, and family issues are not part of the written curriculum or standardized tests, teachers do not address these topics in the classroom. Although individual students’ lives inform her lesson planning and teaching strategies, the students are not provided with an opportunity to explore these issues for themselves.
Contemporary art and issue-based approaches to art education has been suggested to help explore these complex topics that are inherently linked to one’s life long process of learning (Gaudelius & Spiers, 2002). In addition, school assemblies, personal illness, family emergencies, weather delays and school cancellations, necessitated the need for flexibility when planning and teaching arts integration. Thus, unexpected events and daily pressures of the teachers often influenced arts integration.

What Can We Do to Attend to This Problem?

Although most of the published studies conducted on arts integration incorporate large-scale programs with funding opportunities and artists-in-residencies (e.g., CAPE) to promote their success, I wanted to see how the arts were being integrated in a school and classroom that did not have much financial, artist, or administrative support. Similar to Burnaford et al. (2001), I do not suggest that arts integration should take the place of the art class, but that both should be working simultaneously; arts integration should be another access point to the arts in schooling. Furthermore, I was not attempting to label what was arts integration, but focus on how the teachers understood and experienced arts integration. Aware that many critics would prefer to ignore the arts existence in the general classroom, the fact is quite simple: teachers continue to integrate the arts in their teaching. The arts have and will continue to be integrated into the general classroom, and in order to treat the subject with respect we need to rupture the space of static art teaching/learning in the classroom (e.g., coloring in worksheets) to promote new pathways of dynamic teaching and learning. Grumet (2004) states:
Arts integration lessons offer the same opportunities to teachers that they offer to children: the opportunity to make a connection among the discourses of mathematics, science, history, and literature, and life experience, imagination, and creativity. (p. 75)

There is a need for teachers to understand the possibilities of arts integrations and how to truly integrate the arts in teaching and learning.

In order to attend to the problem of the devaluation of the arts in arts integration, we must revaluate the position of art. Focusing attention on teacher education (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004), such as pre-service education, graduate education programs, and professional development training, is key to bring respect to arts integration. Based on publications about arts integration, I know quality arts integration exists, but unfortunately I did not experience it throughout this study. The answer although it may sound simple, it is quite complex; teachers need help.

Because many students enter teacher education programs with problematic assumptions about learning and teaching, there is a need for them to critically reflect on their own notions of teaching and learning, in particular the way they make meaning. Such programs must educate teachers to become self-reflective and critical of their own teaching and learning. They should be guided to reflect on why they choose to cling on to old teaching practices, and feel empowered to move beyond teaching practices that they encountered through their schooling (e.g., analyze the purposes of coloring books). They must discover the “uncomfortable ways teachers are implicated in any pedagogical encounter, and the tensions already embedded in practices” (Britzman, 1991, p. 62). Difficulties related to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of arts integration are
rooted in the multilayered voices and silences of experiences. Teacher education programs would do well to address all the conscious and unconscious encounters of the past and present in hopes of being well-informed of the future. Re/surfacing experiences and emotions enables teachers to become more intimately connected to the teacher education process as they are not just memorizing facts, but opening themselves up to a reflective personal journey to discover the power relations at work in education and art education. Teachers ought to learn how to respond to the various needs and pressures of teaching in the twenty-first century by reflecting critically on their own encounters with the world and acknowledging the power relations at work and the role they play in social contexts such as education at any particular point in time. This can help push pass a traditional narrow understanding of the arts in the classroom.

It is important for teacher education programs to rethink what it means to become a teacher. Learning to become a teacher denotes learning to think like an artist by using creativity and risks to work through tensions between policy and practice. As Davis (2005) states, “Artful educators exploit the room for generative ambiguity and multiple interpretations that persist in any discipline” (p. 189). Teachers need to become well informed about the arts. They cannot effectively integrate the arts into the classroom if they do not have a firm understanding and/or familiarity with the arts. Thus, as university professors, art educators, and art advocates, we need to redesign teacher education models to familiarize teachers with art materials, artists, and historical and contemporary art to move past decorative cut and paste activities. It is also important to understand that the arts do not need to be visually pleasing, and instead can be grotesque and unappealing as they attempt to investigate the complexities of the world.
Teacher education programs would do well to infuse contemporary knowledge and research into the curriculum. In order for teachers to understand how the arts can assist learning and work as a space of inquiry, education programs should focus both on the creation of art, as well as the arts’ ability to promote learning about one’s self as an educator and their relations to others. The arts should not be perceived only as another academic subject, but rather as an integral part of teaching and learning—a way of thinking and knowing. Over the last decade, the incorporation of a/r/tography (Irwin & deCosson, 2004), an arts based research methodology into pre-service education has been suggested to help facilitate an understanding of the spaces in-between art/ing, researching, and teaching. Becoming a/r/tographers allows pre-service teachers to engage in art as a form of research inquiry, meaning making, and embodied learning (LaJevic & Springgay, 2008). Through the creation of art, for example visual journals, pre-service teachers are encouraged to enter into the spaces of un/certainty as they explore themselves as learners and teachers in relation to others and to the world. A/r/tography repositions the arts as an integral component to learning, and infuses it into the common and accepted practices of researching and teaching. Welcoming a/r/tography into the curriculum helps to explore the subjectivities of teaching, the diverse needs of the student population, and the necessities and possibilities of arts integration in schooling. Art can present, explore, and attempt to work through important issues that are prevalent in today’s world, which can lend itself well to teacher education and arts integration.

Furthermore, teacher education programs would benefit by exploring subjectivities in teaching and learning. Teacher and student subjectivities are created and change daily as they are active components of schooling. So, where is the place of
subjectivities in relation to the objectives in the curriculum documents? The Pennsylvania Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standards (1999) states:

The standards provide the targets for instruction and student learning essential for success in all academic areas, not just language arts classrooms. Although the standards are not a curriculum or a prescribed series of activities, school entities will use them to develop a local school curriculum that will meet local students’ needs. The language arts—Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening—are unique because they are processes that students use to learn and make sense of their world. Students do not read “reading”; they read about history, science, mathematics and other content areas as well as about topics for their interest and entertainment. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, p. 1)

The standards at both the national and Pennsylvania state level highlight the necessity of building curriculum that is unique to the school district, teacher, and student needs. Although this document acknowledges the volatility and subjectivity at work in teaching and learning, it leaves the responsibility to the individual school districts to decide how they will teach the connectedness of the academic standards. But stating exactly what the students should learn does not really account for the complexities of subjectivities in the classroom. Therefore, teachers are presented with the challenge of working between the objectives and subjectives of schooling.

Teachers must begin to understand that there is more to arts integration than a hands-on project. There are many degrees that the arts can be integrated into the classroom. A discussion about a work of art can be explored in a science class, as an alternative to a hands-on art activity. Teachers thus must be knowledgeable about how to
talk about art. They need to become aware of many accessible art related resources such as websites, art teachers, and community art organizations. Teachers should rethink the purpose of art in arts integration, and not limit the arts to self-expression and for decorative purposes.

Not only do the teachers need to build comfort levels with the arts, they need to acknowledge the high expectations placed on them and how it often results in insecurity in one’s teaching, especially in regards to arts integration. Adopting a more felt approach to teacher education may help construct curricula that take into account the ambiguity and un/certainty of teaching in schools, and embrace arts integration in teaching and learning. Understanding that we cannot adequately teach or control feelings does not mean that we should ignore the place of feelings of un/certainty in teacher education. Taking risks and working with uncertainty play a vital role in teaching and learning, therefore teachers must be forewarned and guided into working within this scary, yet hopeful space. Engaging pre-service teachers with the opportunity to take risks and venture out into the unknown can help them move away from their comfortable art as doing activities (e.g., coloring in worksheets) and move into art as a way of knowing, learning, and teaching.

Although often overlooked, welcoming uncertainty and insecurity into teacher education can help prepare teachers for what they will actually encounter—a world of unknowns and tensions. Teachers would benefit from gaining a familiarity with the arts and understand the importance of risk taking in order to embrace and promote change. Teaching demands a negotiation between certainty and uncertainty, and between comfort
and discomfort. Furthermore, just as the arts are woven in, through, and out of our daily lives, so is un/certainty and risk.

In addition to teacher education programs, art educators play a vital role in the development of arts integration. In order to re/value arts integration, art educators must acknowledge what is happening in the classroom and work toward furthering an awareness and appreciation of the arts. Through the creation of more interdisciplinary meetings with collaborative work times that facilitate brainstorming and conversations between all the teachers, an attempt can be made to dissolve the academic boundaries. They need to understand that there has to be a willingness and understanding, that the goals are important for all involved, and that their efforts may result in critical, creative, and well-rounded teachers who can begin to transcend the boundaries of schooling. Art educators should begin and/or continue to form relationships with others in the educational and art community to facilitate support for arts integration, and make an effort to familiarize themselves to the curriculum content in all the academic subjects and should invite teachers to co-create and/or co-teach activities that support arts integration. Additionally, art teachers must be advocates for the arts and understand that they are not just teaching the students about the complex and interdisciplinary component of art, but also to the other teachers, principals, and parents as well. They can conduct professional development programs that explore the arts place in learning and teaching and attempt to explore the space of un/certainty together and the need to take risks to further explore the possibilities of teaching and learning. They could initiate programs such as after school art classes designed for the teachers so they can begin to gain exposure and a level of confidence with the arts and art materials.
Because most pre-service education programs incorporate at least one course that explores the arts in the elementary classroom, it is important that this course addresses practical needs and lived situations. Although it should be assumed, we must make sure that there are qualified faculty members teaching this course. That does not mean any art educator, but an art educator that is familiar with the demands and expectations of the general classroom teacher as well as the general elementary academic content. As for the art appreciation courses, instructors need to make the courses fit the individual needs of the students. For example, invite the students to reflect on the content and how it can be applied to their area of interest, whether it is education, business, or the sciences. We must make it a priority to rework these courses to fit the students’ interests. Integrating the arts in teacher education can provide pre-service educators with a fresh approach to learning and teachers as it highlights multiple meanings, diverse perspectives and acts as a space of inquiry. Exposing current and future art and general educators to the possibilities and impossibilities of arts integration can help promote a greater understanding of this felt notion of un/certainty, especially in relation to the arts place in schools.

The knowledge gained from this study can be transferred to arts integration models used in many teacher education programs, in particular to a relatively new curriculum offered at the Pennsylvania State University. The Arts and Literacy Block, a program within elementary education attempts to address the interdisciplinary needs of the future teachers. Although it embraces arts integration in “theory” and “policy,” each subject area continues to be taught separately and isolated from the general elementary pre-service program. For example, as the instructor for the art education course that
explores the arts in the elementary classroom, I was detached from the other courses in the Arts and Literacy block. Each student was required to take all the same courses (i.e., art education, music education, and language arts and literacy education) in one semester that highlights how the arts and literacy contribute to meaning making in a complex diverse world. However, although the instructors attempted to have meetings every semester to discuss the interconnectivity of the courses, each class was still disconnected from the others. The only way I became familiar with the content that what was being taught in the other classes was through conversations with the students. Thus, this arts integration program lacked a genuine integration. Since the instructors were not continually working together and unfamiliar with the content across the curriculum as they taught each course in separation, how could students be expected to truly understand the rhizomatic concept of arts integration?

Although I had hoped that my arts integration research study at the public school level would help impact the ways that university pre-service programs develop arts integrated curricula and teacher training models by highlighting how the arts are inherently connected, and used across the curriculum, my findings show precisely the opposite—it presents the disconnect. Just as the teacher education program that is supposed to showcase arts integration ends up being compartmentalized, so is arts integration being performed in the public school. It seems that the structure of formal education resists arts integration. With separate textbooks, workbooks, and curriculum documents, how is integration even possible? Understanding the high costs associated with textbooks, school districts invest a great amount of funding for the purchase of such books. Would any publishing company take a risk and attempt to reorganize their formats
to better embrace integration and the interconnectedness of the world or are the constraints of high-stakes testing too discouraging for such changes? But then again, would it even make a difference since teachers and the tests are already set in their ways? Is a reformatting of textbooks, curriculum documents, or tests really what education needs, or should we just begin/continue arguing for the destruction of such prescribed, limited ways of teaching and learning? But then if teachers do not have guiding principles or objectives, how will they know what to teach? How will school districts and states be accountable for student learning? Are we really able to trust that teachers have a firm handle on academic content and teaching? Based on my findings, many teachers seem to hang onto antiquated views of schooling since their teacher education programs did not guide them to critically reflect on their own schooling. Thus, they lack confidence in trying something new and unfamiliar to them. But perhaps that is exactly what is expected of teachers—nothing new—if it is not broke, then why fix it? Linking knowledge and power, Grieshaber and Ryan explains:

> From a postmodern perspective, the dangers inherent in assuming that knowledge production is ahistorical and value-free requires that all knowledge be viewed as partial and context-specific... learning to teach has been conceptualized as mastery of a particular set of knowledge and skills that are relevant to all contexts at any point in time. A postmodern teacher education involves moving away from this mastery model to an examination of how knowledge creates boundaries and possibilities. (2005, p. 36)

To what extent are teachers being controlled by the curriculum document and the high-stakes tests (which then controls what should and should not be taught)? Teaching in
today’s global world requires teachers to be taught from a contemporary perspective that attempts to deconstruct boundaries and compartmentalized learning and teaching. Teacher education therefore needs to be reconceptualized to keep up with the times.

How do we as academicians reach these lofty goals? We need to embrace change, which is inherently difficult (Burnaford et al., 2001). We need to spend time in the classroom to see what is happening—the live(d) curriculum. We need to examine not just the successes, but also the weaknesses and insecurities of the teacher. We can be sympathetic and attempt to understand the high demands of the elementary teachers through conversation. Because these teachers spend the most time with students in the school (and perhaps more time than the students spend with their own parents at home), the general classroom teacher truly impacts student development and understanding of the arts. For if we simply ignore the misuse of the arts in the classroom, the devaluation will just continue to perpetuate. This is of particular concern for schools that have dropped their arts program. Where will these students begin to experience the arts? Who will be teaching them about the arts? As this study shows, the arts, or at least hands-on artsy projects are being implemented in the classroom. In regards to arts education, Sabol (2004) states, “What the future of visual arts education holds is uncertain, but actions taken today can influence outcomes in the future” (p. 545). It is imperative that we immediately address the misunderstandings of art and raise the value of art in arts integration.
Chapter 4

In Conclusion

In Summary

Throughout the past few decades, attention has been placed on the arts role in teaching and learning (Chappell, 2005; Krug & Cohen-Evron, 2000). The arts have been shown to have many benefits in schooling by promoting active participation (Goldberg, 2005), teaching toward varying learning styles (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004), and fostering creativity and self-expression (Boyd, 1980). Focusing on the arts’ unique ability to connect the compartmentalized academic subjects, arts integration has been introduced into the educational setting. Arts integration is generally defined as an approach to teaching and learning in which the arts are directly linked with other academic subjects. Walking into most elementary schools today, one frequently encounters colorful student works hanging on the classroom walls, hence demonstrating that the arts are not limited to the art room, and that the general teacher continues to use the arts.

Having the opportunity to work as an elementary art teacher in a school that embraced arts integration, I encountered the successes as well as the challenges of this unique approach to teaching and learning. My experiences with arts integration supported many research findings with other studies, as I found that I built greater relationships with both the teachers and students since I worked with them more frequently in their regular classrooms (Burnaford et al., 2001). There were fewer problems involving motivation and behavior as I co-taught the lessons and managed the classroom alongside the classroom teacher, and there seemed to be a better sense of community as students
collaboratively and creatively worked through problems (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004). Although I experienced benefits, there were also many challenges. Having to work around a lack of space and funding, scheduling and time constraints, getting all the teachers to participate and interested in using the arts in the classroom, and receiving support from the administration, were just a few of the problems I encountered. Overall, I experienced a mis/understanding of art by many of the teachers. Although I attempted to inform them of a broad concept of the arts and continued to show how the arts could be integrated into the classroom, however as soon as I left the room, many of the teachers fell back into their usual routines of mis/treating the arts.

After leaving my elementary art position to pursue a doctoral degree, I was presented with an opportunity to teach an undergraduate course designed to teach elementary pre-service teachers about the role(s) and possibilities of the arts in the classroom. I was challenged to select what was needed and useful for general educators and squeeze the content into sixteen weeks, and when it came down to it, there were varied interests and experiences of the students’ with the arts. Questions continued to resurface within me; with all the demands of mandated tests and prescribed curriculum content, what is the place of the arts in schooling? Furthermore, how do teachers working in this context understand and integrate the arts into their teaching?

My experiences of working within arts integration prompted personal interest into further exploring the related policy and practice of such an approach to teaching and learning. Because a modest amount of qualitative research has focused on the lived practices of teachers in such integration approaches and how such approaches are envisioned in schools, I concentrated on how elementary teachers’ experiences, access to,
and understandings of policy strongly affect how arts integration is organized, implemented, and measured, while highlighting the pressures, expectations, and challenges in providing quality arts integration.

After an arduous time of searching for a school that welcomed my study, I finally found a primary school that invited me to into their classrooms. Over a four-month span, I conducted interviews, focus groups sessions, and classroom observations with six public school elementary educators. Concurrently, I performed intensive classroom observation on one second-grade educator up to three times a week. I collected and analyzed texts from national, state, and local sources for their ambiguities, uncertainties, and contradictions. Exploring arts integration policies and practices through a poststructuralist narrative lens allowed me to explore the complexities of teaching and learning, and the voices and feelings that are often disregarded. Analysis was informed by the notion of ambiguity and un/certainty as I searched for how arts integration transformed knowledge and how arts integration texts were individually interpreted, performed, and lived in the classroom. Building upon the work of Ellsworth (2005) and Britzman (2007) and their ideas of uncertainty and risk, I connected my findings to Delueze and Guattari’s (1996) concept of the rhizome, and Derrida’s (1997) notion of différance.

Although I had hoped to see how arts integration as a live(d) curriculum supports a rhizomatic classroom, I found that the arts component of arts integration was often being de/valued. Many of the teachers enjoyed the arts and acknowledged the value and benefits of using the arts in the classroom, however their narrow understanding of art made it impossible for them to effectively use arts integration. The arts were used
primarily as decoration for the classroom, and when arts integration projects were planned, implemented, and assessed, the arts component was frequently diluted and deemphasized. The teachers understood the arts in such marginalized ways due to the arts’ mis/treatment throughout their own life encounters, in particular as students themselves. As the arts were pulled in and then pulled out at one’s convenience, arts integration lessons were often performed at the expense of art. The teachers accepted conventional mundane art activities such as coloring in worksheets and tracing, cutting and pasting templates as customary classroom practices. Furthermore, because the arts have traditionally been treated as a separate entity in formal education, teachers have a difficult time moving beyond the compartmentalized structure. Although teachers live in a world that is complex and inherently interconnected, their academic education does not foster teaching and learning in such ways. The academic subjects are continually in conflict with one another—never completely separate from one another, but never completely a part either. The teachers, more often than not, try to alleviate this tension through the continued use of separate lesson plans, textbooks, and designated time slots for each subject. It is simpler to take out the science textbook for science class and the math book for math class. Although it is simpler for the teacher, it does not provide teachers or students with an understanding of the complex interconnected quality of everyday life and encounters. Thus, they have a difficult time conceptualizing arts integration due to the continual struggle between the arts relationship with the other subjects.

As specifically stated in the science and social studies curriculum document, the teachers were supposed to integrate art activities into the classroom. However, the
curriculum document seemed to contradict itself as the written policy also included the arts as reteaching and as enrichment activities. This sends conflicting information to the teachers about the arts’ place in the classroom, which in turn causes feelings of uncertainty to arise. Should the arts be taught alongside the other subject(s), or taught after the initial learning as an extra instructional tool? Furthermore, should the arts be directed only toward a select number of gifted students?

When it comes down to it, teachers continue to marginalize the arts as they try to live up to the lofty expectations placed on them, especially in regard to the pressures of teaching the prescribed school district curriculum document and working within the confines of the mandated state tests. They did not understand the arts as a space of inquiry (i.e., exploration of one’s self in relation to others and surroundings), and because the written curriculum and standardized tests are built upon prescribed facts, the teachers struggled in situating the subjectivities of art effectively in teaching and learning. Since the arts are not supported with concrete information that can be recited and memorized, they did not seem to fit into the classroom demands. Typically in schooling, focus is not placed on the teachers or students exploration of one’s self, but on the regurgitation of knowledge, hence disembodying knowing. As Davis (2005) states, “Art is about feeling—important, but not the stuff in school” (p. 82). Thus, neither art nor feelings were viewed to be an important part of teaching and/or learning.

As teachers traverse between the curriculum policies and their live(d) practices in the classroom, they stumble upon a place of ambiguity. This ambiguous space is full of feelings of un/certainty and in/security. Therefore, this study presents the space of dis/connect between arts integration policy and live(d) practice as a place of un/certainty
and dis/comfort. As teachers dwell in-between the worlds of policy and practice, they continually negotiate with certainty and uncertainty, and comfort and discomfort, thus encountering the complexities of teaching with arts integration. They attempt to resituate their own encounters with the arts in teaching and learning as they interpret and implement the curriculum documents, which unfortunately often de/values the arts. They engage in a process of becoming a teacher everyday as each day presents itself with new academic content, experiences, situations, problems, and promises.

Arts integration policy and practice are constantly in tension. Although the written curriculum policy documents include arts integration activities, there is no mention of how to interpret, implement and/or assess such objectives. The documents disregard any challenges that may be experienced in the classroom, and there is no room for insecurity in teaching. These spaces of tensions, although challenging and chaotic, allow for surprise and hope as they rupture into new possibilities. Policy and practice work in relation to one another and each one is contingent upon the other—they simultaneously work together while continually resisting forces.

Theorizing the felt space of un/certainty between policy and practice provides insight into teacher struggles with not just arts integration, but teaching in general. It is expected and assumed that teachers are confidently able to teach, and when insecurities arise, it is viewed as negative. Because teachers lack an understanding of art, it often results in insecurities with arts integration. Instead of accepting and working through these insecurities, they ignore it and continue along their normal comfortable path, not taking risks or entering into uncertain spaces. Teachers felt pressure of time constraints of
teaching the curriculum documents, hence did not feel comfortable taking risks in the classroom since it is not generally considered an accepted teaching practice.

In Reflection: My Struggles and Successes

Throughout the research study, I encountered struggles and successes as a researcher and art educator. As I reflect upon and interpret my personal experiences, the interactions, events, and emotions become learning opportunities. My struggles often led to feelings of un/certainty and dis/comfort, however my successes led to feelings of satisfaction and hope.

During the four months I spent in the school, I occasionally felt un/certain about my role as a researcher. Because I adore arts integration and believe it has many benefits in teaching and learning, it was challenging at times to critically examine the situation. I enjoyed seeing the arts pop up in the classroom, however I was quite dissatisfied with how the arts were being integrated in the classroom. I sat quietly in the back of the classroom and bit my tongue as the teacher distributed coloring worksheets. I watched the students mindlessly color inside the lines of a groundhog, cut it out, and glue it down to a piece of construction paper. It was very uncomfortable to observe these so-called “arty” lessons. I wanted to jump in and scream, “No! Stop! What are the students learning from this mundane activity?” But I could not interrupt the teachers’ instruction and classroom routine. Although I’ve seen similar activities before in other school settings and have come to expect such practices from classroom teachers, as an art educator and researcher sitting in that particular room at that particular time, it was painful to watch. After the lesson ended, the teacher moved onto the next academic subject, or daily lesson, and I
silently packed up my belongings and departed. There were so many words left unsaid, but her teaching and personal responsibilities did not allow extra time for such conversations. I did not have the chance to ask why she chose to implement this activity, or provide her with feedback explaining why this lesson had done an injustice to the visual arts. However, it was not only the time constraints that prevented such questions to arise, it was my own uneasiness with presenting the topic. Knowing that these teachers were not working in a specialized school dedicated to instruction through the arts, why did I have such apprehensions about confronting the teachers about what I saw happening in the classroom—a devaluing of the arts in the classroom? Why did I have a difficult time completely disregarding these hands-on lessons and accepting that they really were not arts integration at all?

Everyday that I entered the school, I signed in at the main office and received a visitor’s sticker. I was expected to place the adhesive label somewhere on my clothes so everyone knew that I was a welcomed guest. The teachers would review their schedules in advance and invite me into their classroom to observe. I was careful not to overstay my welcome because the teachers could voluntarily stop participating in the study at any time. Although I appreciated the teachers’ cooperation and willingness to allow me access to their practices, I felt somewhat powerless as a visitor. If I started asking too many questions, criticized their teaching, or became too much of a nuisance, teachers could stop inviting me into their classroom; I was at their disposal. In order to collect research, I felt that I had to succumb to the workings of the school and teacher. I was in an awkward situation. I was not satisfied with the data that I was collecting, but at the same time, I did not feel comfortable stepping out of the visitor space. Additionally, since
the teachers were proud of their lessons and of the art products, and their professions seemed to be so entangled in their personal lives, I did not want to incite feelings of disappointment or humiliation. It is not a commonly accepted practice to enter a classroom and interrupt classroom learning, assess a teacher’s lesson, or furthermore critique the culture that create the conditions. It is more popular to sit quietly in the classroom so there is no interference with the teacher’s responsibilities and classroom routines. I felt myself falling into a trap of the popular. I slowly realized that it was my own un/certainty that prevented me from confronting the teachers.

Unfortunately, after three months in the classroom, I found myself becoming tolerant of the mundane hands-on activities. I began searching to find the “good” aspects of arts integration in the lessons and I made concessions by saying, “at least the teachers are trying to use the arts.” As relationships with the teachers strengthened, I began to feel sympathetic to the overburdened lives of the teachers. It is not that I made excuses for their actions, but began to understand the pressures and confines that they were working within. I saw that they did not intend to de/value the arts. They were simply never taught to critically think through the arts and move past the antiquated art activities. Their own experiences with schooling created conditions of what was popular formal education, and arts integration did not fit such a category. What I experienced was popular teaching—teaching subjects in isolation, teaching that there is a definite answer and correct way to do things, and teaching the arts as a busy time activity and classroom decoration. Thus, the de/valueation of the arts originates in the structures of schooling (i.e., the mandated high-stakes testing), and the teachers sadly get caught up in this entanglement and perpetuate a narrow understanding of the arts in teaching and learning.
Throughout the study, I also encountered successes that resulted in positive outcomes. Not only did I want to gain an understanding of the dis/connect between policy and practices of arts integration, but I also wanted to intervene and bring an awareness of arts integration to the teachers. Engaging in focus group sessions, informal conversations, and e-mail correspondence with the teachers helped to intervene the popular teaching(s) of the arts.

Organizing focus group sessions, I made it possible for teachers to converse in ways that they were not used to doing. I created an informal, comfortable and open space where the teachers could freely communicate. They shared how they integrate the arts into their classrooms and listened to the understandings and ideas of others. Inviting the art teacher to participate in the sessions, I allowed her voice to be heard as she offered guidance and input throughout the conversations. Even though the teachers worked in the same school building, they often did not schedule time to talk and share ideas. The focus group sessions encouraged the teachers to start a conversation that seemed to make a difference. The art teacher spoke about how she assesses works of art after one second-grade teacher spoke hesitantly about the topic. As the other second-grade teacher spoke about her mask-making lesson inspired by Pourquoi stories, the art teacher informed her that she was making masks with her students in the art room. The art teacher invited her to visit the art room during the next week and offered to explain what the students’ are learning and making in art class. After one of the first-grade teachers expressed confusion about what art vocabulary she could be using in the classroom, the art teacher informed her about the resources in the art room and suggested referencing the academic standards of arts and the humanities on the national, state, and local level. As the conversation
fluidly transitioned from one topic to the next, the teachers seemed to collaboratively work together in order to achieve the common goal of effectively integrating the arts into the classroom.

Not only were the focus group sessions successful in facilitating conversations, so were the informal discussions between the classroom teachers and myself. The teachers would quite often ask me for advice with what they were doing. For example, the second-grade teachers wanted to know if there were any children’s books about artists that they could use in their classrooms. I spoke about a few books that I was familiar with and also followed up the conversation with an e-mail. I wrote:

1) Here is a list of children's books regarding art/artists that may be useful...check to see if your school library owns them. If not, your local library should! I am not sure of the reading level, but I think they would work well with 2nd grade.

Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Artists, By Mike Venezia,

Although I did not see or hear any art-related books being used in the classroom during my four-months in the school, I hope the teachers had a chance to recognize and review a few books that they may use in the future.

Not only did teachers ask about art related children’s books, but they also inquired about arts integration lesson ideas and art materials. As mentioned in chapter three, I assisted a second-grade teacher in designing a lesson to support the Language Arts story, *Cool Ali*. We spoke about the themes of the story and how we could make it relate to the
students’ lives. I recommended that she look online to search for artists that use chalk pastels so students could see a few characteristics of chalk. Additionally, I made a few suggestions to help the students’ success with the chalk pastels, such as rolling up shirt sleeves, not leaning directly on the work because it easily smears, using different fingers to blend the different colors, and starting with the lighter colors first since it is difficult to color over the darker colors. Watching the teacher implement the lesson and introduce chalk pastels, I was proud as she clearly articulated the helpful tips.

A week later as I was observing a different second-grade teacher implementing this same lesson, I noticed that she did not offer the helpful tips that I had previously discussed with the other teacher. But as the students began working, the other second-grade teacher popped her head in and said that the students may find it helpful if they roll up their sleeves, use different fingers for smearing, and so on. Hearing her helpful words directed to both the teacher and the students made me smile as she showcased her new knowledge of the art material. I guided her understandings of chalk pastels in such a way that she now feels comfortable to share and pass the information along to others. I was proud of the interventions that occurred, especially when it disrupted a popular, or institutional learning.

**Further Possibilities**

Looking ahead to my continued career as an art educator and researcher, I plan to utilize the information gained from this study in many ways. I will advocate for multiple compulsory art education courses for teacher education programs, in particular at the elementary level. The one art education and art appreciation course are just not enough to
explore the complexities of art, especially in relation to teaching and learning. I will continue employing arts based research practices, such as visual journaling, to provide pre-service teachers with an opportunity to experience the arts as a way of knowing. Furthermore, I would like to design course(s) that focus on the arts across the curriculum that would be open to all education students (i.e., elementary education, math education, English education, science education, social education, art education, and so forth). They can be cross-listed in order to collectively bring students from different majors to explore themes that draw together related topics and issues. This will provide students from art education with an opportunity to work together with students from other areas in education and help to break down the divide between the disciplines. I also plan to get involved with curriculum programs at The College of New Jersey, such as the Freshman Seminar (FSP) and Interdisciplinary Connections, which aim to support interdisciplinary teaching and learning, and look for opportunities to collaborate with faculty members across the various schools and departments. For example, I would like to co-design a course with a mathematician, scientist, writer, or social scientist to highlight the connections between art and math, science, language arts, and/or social studies while exploring historical and contemporary artists and real world concepts and experiences.

It is my hope that the research findings presented will encourage further empirical studies. For example, interviews with former students from the Arts and Literacy block at Penn State could be conducted in order to explore how they understand the dis/connect between policy and practice when they are student teaching or fully employed in the schools. It would be interesting to learn how their experiences with arts integration at Penn State translates into their teaching practices. Will they continue to fall into the
coloring worksheet trap and/or will they integrate the arts to a larger extent? It would also be helpful to expand this study beyond the elementary grades and explore arts integration at the secondary level. For example, how do high school science teachers understand the dis/connect of arts integration in science? How about the dis/connect in social studies, math, English, and foreign language at the secondary level? In addition, do teachers in Pennsylvania’s nonpublic and private K-12 schools experience the same apprehensions about arts integration since they do not have to participate in the PSSA high-stake testing? Is there more flexibility and/or opportunities for arts integrated teaching/learning? Furthermore, studies could be performed that investigate how principals and administrators comprehend arts integration and the arts place in the classroom. How much do their understandings of arts integration impact the school curriculum?

It may also be interesting to research the teachers from this study again in a few years. Did my presence have any long-term effects? Will they attempt to design new arts integration lessons, or revert back to cutting and pasting templates and coloring in the lines of worksheets? After having the chance to speak with co-workers during the focus group sessions about arts integration, will any of the conversations re/surface or promote more art related cross-disciplinary work? Or, focusing on the two second-grade teachers that were working toward their National Board Certification, what feedback did they receive from NBPTS regarding their Building Classroom Community through arts integration entry submission? Furthermore, it could be helpful to contact NBPTS to explore how the applicants mis/understand arts integration and what they have learned from reviewing thousands of applications from all over the United States over the last twenty years.
I would also like to plan and/or instruct professional development programs for classroom teachers that allows for an exploration of arts integration. Modeling initiatives, such as the Odyssey Project, a Canadian teacher development program aimed to enhance learning of the arts and instructional effectiveness (Andrews, 2008), can be useful when designing such programs. Offering teachers the opportunity to collaboratively work alongside artists, the Odyssey Project attempts to improve teacher understandings of learning in and through the art, and establishes a level of community, comfort, and support that fosters an open learning environment and promotes risk taking. Learning from what others’ have done will help assist the creation of a teacher development program that embraces un/certainty, risk-taking, and encourages critical reflection of one’s own experiences with the arts and the arts in schooling.

Reflecting back on my research study, I wonder when we will accept that feelings of un/certainty are not just frilly, feminizing, weak things that should be left outside of schooling, but are integral components of curriculum and pedagogy? The manner in which formal education disregards emotions, especially teachers’ insecurities with the arts, exposes the inadequacy of teacher education. It reveals how established structures of power limit teachers’ ability to think critically and reflectively about experiences, encounters, and understandings of art.

What will it take for arts integration to become an accepted practice? How will teachers who are taught to welcome arts integration change the curricular landscape? Will the arts presence in the classroom decrease, or will it increase as a chance to fix a broken (i.e., underachieving) classroom? In many cases, arts integration is implemented as a last case scenario. For example, schools with poor tests scores, attendance, and behavior, are
more apt to take risks and try something new because obviously their routines were not adequate. Does it take a broken classroom in order to initiate change? Furthermore, why is formal education so afraid of change? Since there is no evidence that the arts hurt schooling, why do the arts continue to be marginalized and devalued?

When will classroom teachers begin to understand the openness and multifaceted aspect of arts integration? Hopefully once teacher education programs begin to rethink curriculum through arts integration, pre-service teachers will have an opportunity to embrace the notion of interconnectivity and highlight the rhizomatic qualities of the academic subjects, as they become the authors of their own unique teaching/learning paths. They can explore arts integration as a live(d) curriculum that highlights how curriculum, teaching, learning, and the arts functions in everyday life. As arts integration programs offer an innovative approach to learning and understanding, it becomes a revolutionary concept that can have many benefits when it is properly understood and initiated. I hope the teachers’ conversations from the focus group sessions will remain alive in the school and continue to evolve, as they continue to experiment with the arts and gain an acceptance of the un/certainty in schooling and arts integration.

A Hopeful Intervention Gone Slightly Awry

During the first few weeks of the study, one of the second-grade teachers approached me and asked for my input about an arts integration lesson that she needed to create and teach for her National Board Certification. She explained how she wanted to integrate the arts with a unit on African American history in order to build classroom community. I informed her that I had taught lessons in the past that she might find helpful
and offered to share the information. I was excited to help elevate her understanding of
the arts by introducing new artists and lesson ideas. In an e-mail sent to her, I wrote:

Attached is information regarding a few of the topics that we have briefly
discussed.... 2) Attached is a PowerPoint of two art examples that I have done
with students for African American History Month. Each artwork is based on a
female African American Artist (Faith Ringgold who is also an author, she wrote
Tar Beach, a book that explores "heroes" and Kara Walker, a contemporary artist
who explores silhouettes and visual storytelling). 3) I have also attached a draft of
a lesson plan that I wrote for the Kara Walker installation/ timeline artwork.
Hope this helps! I will see you on Thursday at 2:00! (personal communication,
January 8, 2008)

She quickly responded, and thanked me for my help. She also asked me to share the
websites of where I found the images of Walker’s work because the ones that she located
online looked scary to her. I did a quick google image search and e-mailed her a few
websites to explore. I also suggested that she look at the PBS Art 21 website and try to
rent the supplemental DVD from the local library, that showcases an interview with
Walker. Furthermore, I informed her that many of Walker’s images are a bit grotesque
and intense, and I remembered that I had to really study the images before I used them in
the classroom. Once again she thanked me for my assistance and planned to teach the
lesson in February for African American History Month. I was looking forward to seeing
how she was going to interpret the information that I sent her and create and implement
her own arts integration lesson.
As the weeks passed, there was not much more conversation about this project. I reminded her in person and in e-mail correspondence that I was excited to observe her teaching this particular lesson, however she never gave me a date and time where she planned to teach it. One day when I was observing the other second-grade teacher, she visited the room to ask a question. When she saw me sitting in the back of the room, she walked back and informed me that she already started teaching the African American history arts integration lesson. She said that they were currently cutting out the silhouettes. I was very disappointed that I was not invited to observe the lesson, but quickly asked if I could come and watch the remainder of the art-making activity. She agreed, so I followed her to the large, open room that they were using for the project. I walked around and saw students tracing their partners’ body on large rolls of black paper. The teacher walked around assisting the students and asked questions that assessed their learning. Not knowing how the teacher introduced Kara Walker, the concepts of silhouettes and installations, or even African American history, it was impossible for me to gain enough information about the arts integration project to analyze and reflect on the lesson.

Walking through the main hallway the next week, I encountered the silhouettes on the wall. They looked quite similar to the installation that I had done with my elementary students years ago, but without the incorporation of silhouetted objects (e.g., clouds, grass, house, and so forth) that helped to add perspective and convey a sense space. The silhouette figures were squeezed into small empty spaces on two opposite walls, not really conveying the concept of a timeline, which they were learning about in math class.
I recognized various representations of African Americans persons from the body position of the silhouette figures, however a few were difficult to decipher.

The next day as I was walking down the hallway, I noticed something different about the “installation.” The stark contour line of the silhouettes was no longer jumping out at me. Laminated store-bought colored images in addition to computer generated written text of the persons’ names were superimposed onto the figures. The students’ creativity and efforts seemed to be trampled upon as the teacher taped on mass-produced illustrations. Walkers’ intentional use of black colored silhouettes seemed to be completely disregarded and dismissed. I was sad to see the artwork become teacher-made.

Figure 4-1: Arts integration: African American history artwork.

Although I made many efforts to help this teacher learn about a contemporary artist, installation art, issue-based art education, and so forth, the teacher fell back into her normal routine of de/valuing the arts. She left no room for interpretation of the silhouettes, as she made sure to use large letters to spell out exactly who was being represented. Based on the little that I saw from the lesson, she seemed to rely heavily on the lesson plan that I provided for her and did not tweak it much to fit her own needs. I
wish I would have heard her introduce Kara Walker, installation art, silhouettes, the hands-on component, as well as African American history, but as I said before, I was a visitor in the school and had to be invited into the classroom. Perhaps her un/certainty with the lesson concepts and of the visual arts prevented her from asking me to observe this lesson. Perhaps she was afraid of mis-teaching the lesson plan that I designed.

Despite this intervention going slightly awry, I feel that I was successful in attempting to introduce arts integration into the classroom. I provided the teacher with the needed guidance (or at least a lesson plan) to experiment with new ideas of teaching, and a new way of approaching subject matter. She learned about Kara Walker, visually storytelling, installation art, and how the arts can relate to other academic subjects. I hope she will understand that her African American Cube lesson (Figure 4-2) is not arts integration, but a creative way to showcase what they learned in Social Studies. I hope she will understand that the arts that have been traditionally accepted in the classroom may actually work against arts integration as a living, rhizomatic approach to teaching and learning. I hope she will continue to push through her preconceived notions of art, continue to think through the arts, and discontinue the de/valuation of arts in the general elementary classroom.
Not a Black and White Anecdote

Sitting in the second-grade classroom, I watched the students’ excitement as they prepared for the special arts integration activity. They rearranged their desks in groups of four, cleared their desktops of all their textbooks, and attentively listened to the teacher explain the directions. The students rolled up their shirts’ sleeves as they anxiously waited for the student helpers to distribute the pieces of black construction paper and containers of colored chalk pastels. They began quietly talking to their classmates about their ideas for the drawings. I heard murmurs of sunshine, flowers, swimming pools, rainbows, fire—anything that reminded them of a warm spring/summer day. As students’ independently worked they experimented with blending colors with their fingers. I heard one student say, “I love smearing on paper, but I hate smearing on the sidewalk because it hurts my hands.” As I walked around I saw one student draw a hot tub in the middle of the paper (Figure 4-1). He outlined the circular tub in black chalk and then used a white pastel to draw small circles around the object. Carefully smearing the individual colors,
he accidentally smeared the white into the black space, and enthusiastically said, “Cool! Hey look, I made gray by mixing black and white chalk.” He was quite excited by this discovery and shared his work with the other students.

Figure 4-3: Cool Ali chalk drawing

Reflecting on the student’s finding, I soon began to make connections between his experience and the concept of arts integration. As explored, teaching and learning is not simply black and white. There are many complexities, or shades of gray, when curriculum is practiced. The shades of feeling, in particular emotions associated with uncertainty surface as teachers reflect on their own schooling and encounters with the arts. Arts integration attempts to explore the ambiguous spaces in-between the black and white of schooling. It is impossible to dismiss the gray shades as it takes into account the individual and subjectivity in teaching and learning. As curriculum documents are interpreted and implemented teachers explore their own areas of grayness in live(d) practice. Understanding the possibilities and complexities of arts integration can promote a more cohesive and flourishing art curriculum as both classroom teachers and art
teachers explore this unique space of teaching and learning. I hope this research promotes further discussion and questions about the gray, uncertain yet hopeful spaces of arts integration.
References


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Appendix A

Arts Integration Programs

Many examples of arts integration have been implemented in American schools over the last decade. Researchers and educators have highlighted the benefits of arts integration. Although this approach tends to be initiated at the elementary and middle school levels due to the nature of the flexible structure of the school day, many secondary schools have implemented similar programs. Some of the programs discussed below are included in large reviews initiated by the Department of Education and Arts Education Partnership. *Champions of Change* is a compilation of seven studies that investigated the impact of the arts on learning. Researchers found that learners attained “higher levels of achievement through their engagement with the arts” and that “learning in and through the arts can help level the playing field’ for youngsters from disadvantage circumstances” (Fiske, 1999, p.viii). *Critical Links* summarizes and discusses 62 research studies that examine the effects of arts learning on students' social and academic skills (Deasy, 2002).

The Minneapolis Public Schools received a grant in 1997 for a school reform titled, Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA). Teachers and artists worked together to create a program that used the arts to teach across the curriculum. Based on test scores, evaluators found that arts integration increased student achievement and improved teaching as educators became the designers of the creative lessons and accepted responsibility toward school improvement (Weissman, 2004).

Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) was created in an effort to improve the schools in Chicago early in the 1990s. Understanding the relationship between art and culture, emphasis was placed on establishing cooperative partnerships
between the urban schools and various local arts organizations. CAPE stresses not only
the importance of the artist-in residency, but also the integration of the arts into schools
on a recurring basis (Burnaford et al., 2001). Evaluators found an improvement with
student-student, student-teacher, and teacher-teacher relationships, and student behavior
(Rabkin & Redmond, 2004).

North Carolina A+ Schools Program in North Carolina used arts integration as a
reform to increase student learning. This arts integration program supported Gardner’s
(2006) Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), a theory that believes that human cognitive
competence is best understood through a combination of abilities (musical, bodily-
kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and
naturalistic intelligences). Evaluators did not find evidence that this program increased
learning, but according to teacher surveys, students who did not learn well through
traditional teaching techniques, learned better with arts integration. Teachers also
experienced community building as the school created partnerships and more parent
involvement (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004).

In 1996, Transforming Education Through the Arts Challenge (TETAC) was
created by the National Arts Education Consortium (NAEC) to improve student
achievement and the learning environment. The NAEC selected 35 schools from
California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas to
participate in the study. There was no evidence that demonstrates an increase or decrease
in learning or transfer of knowledge. Teachers did however experience an impact on
student thinking, writing, and curricular connections. They also reported better student
behavior, parental involvement, and staff morale (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004).
Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) program started in 1987 in South Carolina to ensure that each child receives an equal quality education in the arts. Evaluators did not find an increase or decrease in student learning, but teachers reported to have witnessed better student behavior, an increase in parental involvement, and improved staff morale (Rabkin & Redmond, 2004).

Schools, Parents, Educators, Children, Teachers Rediscover the Arts (SPECTRA) was an arts infused program that was implemented into two elementary schools in Ohio. Based on an empirical evaluation, when compared to two other controlled schools, the SPECTRA program produced a greater increase in math and reading test, improved attendance and reduced discipline problems (Fowler, 1996).

Project Zero, a research group at Harvard that studied learning processes, collaborated with ETS and Pittsburgh Public Schools to establish Arts Propel. A goal of this program was to study and improve education of the arts with an emphasis on a cognitive approach to art education. Arts Propel stressed the importance of students to think artistically, by engaging in the processes of production, perception, and reflection. Although this is a widely known arts integration program, no one has systematically evaluated this approach.
Appendix B

Teacher Consent Form

Lisa LaJevic  
PhD Candidate  
Penn State University  
Art Education Office  
207 Arts Cottage  
University Park, PA 16802-2905 USA  
email: lml150@psu.edu

October 19, 2007

Dear Educator:

As a current doctoral candidate at Pennsylvania State University in the department of art education, I am conducting a research study that explores educators’ experiences teaching arts integrated lessons in elementary schools. Your school has been selected to participate in the study and the school district has approved the research project entitled, *Arts Integration: An exploration of the dis/connect between policy and live(d) practice*. The benefits of participating in this study will include opening your own and others awareness of arts integration.

I am requesting your participation, which will involve weekly observations of your classroom teaching, one 1-hour interview, possible follow-up interviews, and two one-hour focus group sessions. The interviews and focus group sessions will take place outside of the instructional school day. I hope to video/audio tape the interviews and focus group session and audiotape the classroom observations to keep an accurate record of the responses and procedures. I would also like to photograph projects and review lesson plans regarding arts integration.

Your participation is voluntary and if desired, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of
benefits you would receive otherwise. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this study. If you speak about the contents of the focus group outside the group, it is expected that you will not tells others what individual participants said.

I am in no way critiquing or assessing your teaching. I am interested in how teachers understand and implement the arts into the elementary classroom. I am in no way associated with the school district and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. In any reports using this information, your confidentiality will be promised to secure your privacy. If you have any questions regarding the research or are interested in the final results, please contact me at lml150@psu.edu. My dissertation advisor, Stephanie Springgay, can also be contacted via email at sss23@psu.edu. I would greatly appreciate your signature below accepting your participation.

If you agree to participate in this study, please return one of the signed copies of this letter. Keep the other copy for your records. I look forward to meeting with you. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa LaJevic

Printed Name __________________________ Date __________________________

Signature ______________________________

Please check the following that apply:

_____ I consent to be audio recorded during the study

_____ I consent to be video recorded during the study

_____ I do not give permission for my recordings to be archived for future research projects. I understand the tapes will be destroyed on (January 1, 2012).
I do not give permission for my recordings to be archived for educational and training purposes. I understand the tapes will be destroyed on (January 1, 2012).

I give permission for my recordings to be archived for use in future research projects in the area of art education and arts integration.

I give permission for my recordings to be archived for use educational and training purposes.
Appendix C

Student Consent Form

Lisa LaJevic
PhD Candidate
Penn State University
Art Education Office
207 Arts Cottage
University Park, PA 16802-2905 USA
email: lml150@psu.edu

October 16, 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As a current doctoral candidate at Pennsylvania State University in the department of art education, I am conducting a research study that explores educators’ experiences teaching arts integrated lessons in elementary schools. Your child’s teacher has been selected to participate in the study and the school district has approved the research project entitled, *Arts Integration: An exploration of the dis/connect between policy and live(d) practice*.

I am requesting your child’s participation in one focus group session. Although the study focuses on your child’s teacher’s experiences, approximately five students from your child’s classroom will be asked to participate in a short 15 minute group discussion regarding their experiences with arts integration. I will be video or audio taping the focus group session to keep an accurate record of the responses.

Your child’s participation is voluntary and if desired, he/she may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. He/She does not have to answer any questions he/she does not want to answer. Your child’s classroom learning and involvement will not be interrupted by this focus group discussion. If your child speaks about the contents of the focus group outside the group, it is expected that you nor your child will not tell others what individual participants said.

I am in no way critiquing or assessing your child. I am interested in how he/she understands and experiences arts integration and related projects in his/her classroom. I
am in no way associated with the school district and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. In any reports using this information, your child’s confidentiality will be promised to secure your privacy. If you have any questions regarding the research or are interested in the final results, please contact me at lml150@psu.edu. My dissertation advisor, Stephanie Springgay, can also be contacted via email at sss23@psu.edu. I would greatly appreciate your signature below accepting your child’s participation.

If you agree to participate in this study, please return one of the signed copies of this letter in the self-addressed stamped enveloped. Keep the other copy for your records. I look forward to meeting with your child. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa LaJevic

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Printed Name (to be written by the student)

__________________________________________       __________________

Parent/Guardian’s Printed Name       Date

__________________________________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Please check the following that apply:

_____ I consent to be audio recorded during the study

_____ I consent to be video recorded during the study

_____ I do not give permission for my recordings to be archived for future research projects. I understand the tapes will be destroyed on (January 1, 2012).
_____ I do not give permission for my recordings to be archived for educational and training purposes. I understand the tapes will be destroyed on (January 1, 2012).

_____ I give permission for my recordings to be archived for use in future research projects in the area of art education and arts integration.

_____ I give permission for my recordings to be archived for use educational and training purposes.
Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interviewee Name: 
School: 
Grade level: 
Subjects Taught: 

This interview will last approximately one hour outside of the instructional school day at an agreed upon location. Your participation is voluntary and if desired, you may choose to not answer selected questions. I will be video taping the interviews to facilitate my note taking and to keep an accurate record of the responses. The interview questions are open-ended and intended to facilitate discussion.

I am in no way critiquing or assessing your teaching. I am interested in how teachers understand and implement the arts into the elementary classroom. I am in no way associated with the school district and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. In any reports using this information, your confidentiality will be promised to secure your privacy.

Interviewee Background

1. How long have you been teaching (in this particular school)?
2. What do you think qualified you to teach in this particular arts integrated school?

Teachers’ Understandings

3. How do you define/understand arts integration? In other words, what is arts integration to you?
4. What are the goals/objectives of arts integration in your school/classroom?
5. What motivates you to use the arts in your teaching?
6. How were/are you trained to teach an arts integrated lesson (attend In-service programs, professional development, or college courses)?
7. What is your understanding of the official school policy regarding arts integration (written/verbal)?
8. What resources are available to teachers to learn about or improve the art integration program (verbal/written instruction/explanation)?

Teachers’ Implementation

9. How do you incorporate the arts into your teaching?
10. How do the arts fit into your curriculum?
11. How do you design an arts integrated lesson?
12. Explain one arts integrated project that you have implemented in your classroom?
13. How do you think your arts integration teaching could improve?
14. What do you think are the benefits of arts integration?
15. What do you think are the challenges of arts integration?
School Information
16. How/Why did this school (or you) become involved in arts integration?
17. What is the strategy at this school for learning/improving art integration instruction?
18. How did/does the school district/administration/principle help you to understand art integration?
19. What rewards do teachers receive from the school for incorporating arts into classroom learning?
20. Do you think teaching in this arts integration school has changed overtime? If so, how?
21. Describe how arts integration teaching practices are evaluated, valued, improved at your school?

If time permits...
22. What do you think is the future of arts integration at this school?
23. How do you collaborate with others (teachers, artists, organizations, parents)?
24. How often do you incorporate the arts into your teaching (into the curriculum)?

Thank you very much for your time and effort. Over the next few months, I will ask you to participate in two focus group session with your participating colleagues. The first session will focus on teachers’ training and understandings of arts integration, and the second will focus on the implementation and design aspects of arts integration lessons.
Appendix E

Focus Group Session I Protocol

The first focus group session will explore how teachers understand arts integration. Topics that will be discussed include training of arts integration. This will be the first of two focus group sessions that I will conduct separately at each of the two participating elementary schools outside of the instructional school day. This session will take place in the teachers lounge, unless the participants desire to meet elsewhere, and last approximately one hour.

Your participation is voluntary and if desired, you may choose to not answer selected questions. I will be video taping the interviews to facilitate my note taking and to keep an accurate record of the responses. The questions are open-ended and intended to facilitate discussion.

I am in no way critiquing or assessing your teaching. I am interested in how teachers understand and implement the arts into the elementary classroom. I am in no way associated with the school district and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. In any reports using this information, your confidentiality will be promised to secure your privacy. I ask that all the participants in this focus session demonstrate respectful behavior to help maintain a comfortable environment. This is an opportunity for you to engage in discussion with your colleagues regarding your experience with arts integration. I expect that you will demonstrate superior active listening skills. I ask that one person speak at a time so every participant will have an equal opportunity to engage in the discussion and to keep the dialogue flowing.

Questions
1. When was the concept of arts integration introduced into the school? How were you trained?
2. Why did you choose it incorporate arts integration program in this school/ into your classroom?
3. How do you define “art”?
4. Why do you think it is important to incorporate the arts into your classroom? Benefits? Challenges?
5. How are you currently trained to adequately teach in this arts integration program (attend In-service programs, professional development, or college courses)?
6. Are you satisfied with your training? Please explain your answer.
7. How do you think the training could be improved in order to help you teach better in this program?
8. Do you feel it is important to improve your teaching in relation to the arts?
9. How do you explain arts integration?
10. What are the goals/objectives of arts integration in your school/classroom?
11. What resources are available to teachers to learn about or improve the art integration program (verbal/written instruction/explanation)?
12. What motivates you to use the arts in your teaching?
Appendix F

Focus Group Session II Protocol

The second focus group session will explore how teachers implement arts integration. Topics that will be discussed include design, implementation, and assessment aspects of arts integration. This will be the second of two focus group sessions that I will conduct separately at each of the two participating elementary schools. This session will take place in the teachers lounge, unless the participants desire to meet elsewhere, and last approximately one hour.

Your participation is voluntary and if desired, you may choose to not answer selected questions. I will be video taping the interviews to facilitate my note taking and to keep an accurate record of the responses. The questions are open-ended and intended to facilitate discussion.

I am in no way critiquing or assessing your teaching. I am interested in how teachers understand and implement the arts into the elementary classroom. I am in no way associated with the school district and all information collected will be kept strictly confidential. In any reports using this information, your confidentiality will be promised to secure your privacy. I ask that all the participants in this focus session demonstrate respectful behavior to help maintain a comfortable environment. This is an opportunity for you to engage in discussion with your colleagues regarding your experience with arts integration. I expect that you will demonstrate superior active listening skills. I ask that one person speak at a time so every participant will have an equal opportunity to engage in the discussion and to keep the dialogue flowing.

Questions

1. Please explain one arts integrated lesson that you have previously taught that you think was successful. What made it a success?
2. How do you get your ideas for arts integrated lessons?
3. How/When do you plan/design arts infused lesson? What are the important components that you try to include in the lessons?
4. What resources are available for you to use for your arts integrated lessons (supplies, personnel, art prints, etc)
5. How comfortable do you feel teaching arts integrated lessons?
6. How do you teach the arts integrated lessons? How often?
7. Do you think the arts fit well into your curriculum? Please explain.
8. How do you rate the importance of the arts in relation to the other academic subjects?
9. Please explain one arts integrated lesson that you have previously taught that you think needs great improvement. How could you improve the lesson?
10. How do you assess the students’ arts integrated projects?
VITA

Lisa M. LaJevic

Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 2009 Ph.D. in Art Education

Carlow University, Pittsburgh, PA 2005 M.Ed. in Art Education

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 2001 B.S. in Art Education

Teaching Experience

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania Instructor of Art Education and Supervisor of Student Teachers 2008


The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania Graduate Teaching Assistant, Saturday School 2006-2007

The Penn Hills School District, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Elementary Art Teacher 2001-2005

Research Experience

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA Research Assistant, Student Teaching Program in Pittsburgh, PA 2009

Publications


Recent Presentations
