

I Am Me: Using buoyant biopsychosocial art education curriculum and storyboards
to explore self-esteem with sixth grade students

by

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B.S., Kansas State University, 1984

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Schools must adapt to the needs of the 21st century learner. Relevant, meaningful curriculum with important implications toward students' needs and cultures through their biographies, psychologies, and sociologies brings value to the learner, school, and society. This instrumental, single case study sought to explore how a specific curriculum developed for this study—*I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy*—could teach an understanding of self-esteem to sixth-graders that would then be potentially exhibited in art making and reflection. While the curriculum unit developed for this study had six art projects and eight lesson plans, the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project was the central focus of data analysis. Buoyancy was used as a metaphor to assist in teaching the meaning of self-esteem. Instrumental case study was implemented by the examination of the case for larger implications in 21st century art education. By investigating the development of an intercultural classroom through art activities and art making and by using the art curriculum for social emotional learning, the curriculum was analyzed for its usefulness in providing meaningful learning above and beyond art content within middle school art classes.

Arts Based Research (Leavy, 2018) was the theoretical framework for the study, building on the work of Eisner (2002) and Dewey (1934). The study was a meta-synthesis of art education curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial education with a pedagogical focus on Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018) and Biography Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016). This study built upon the research of early adolescent self-esteem by DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996), which categorized evidence of self-esteem into the five categories of family, friends, activities, body image, and school. The acronym "EASEA" was developed during this study to represent Early Adolescent Self-esteem Analysis, encompassing these five categories of self-esteem. The intent of the student artists—the participants—was analyzed using

visual, verbal, and “vervisual” examination. The term vervisual was developed for this study to represent a third zone of communication in which visual and verbal communication are used in tandem to inform meaning.

A variety of data sources were used including field notes, interviews, information provided by students’ parents or guardians, and five different artistic phases of the storyboard that included the art making and a written or verbal artist statement for each phase. Findings of the study revealed that students told recognizable visual and verbal stories depicting components of self-esteem in a variety of ways. Students told stories in implicit or explicit ways that sometimes needed both the visual artifact and the verbal statement to be fully understood. Students felt empowered by having control over how much of their story they chose to tell. Through their art making and written or verbal artist statements, many students chose to share joyous aspects of their lives reflecting things they loved, that brought them laughter, or that represented their lives (Herrera, 2016). Students shared biopsychosocial aspects of their lives and their social emotional needs were addressed through the planned curriculum or given an opportunity to be explored.

By choice, some students shared difficult aspects of their personal lives. Data revealed that all ten trauma reflecting communications were first completed as drawings in the geometric design phase where students drew a symbol representing their past, present, and future. Findings revealed that after students first drew an image, they then felt freer to write a written description of what they had drawn. Another unique finding of the study was that the various components of students’ storyboards depicted a visual rhythm or movement that cohesively and aesthetically conveyed a vervisual language, unique to each student. The study was also particularly revealing with newcomer (refugee) students and recent immigrants, giving them a platform to share their

experiences prior to going to school in the United States and expressing the importance of their culture. The findings indicate that curriculum such as *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* has a place in art education, that university pre-service art education programs should investigate the inclusion of social emotional learning courses for students majoring in art education, and that art educators should work with school counselors in developing art curriculum that addresses character traits and other issues of concern with middle school students.

Keywords: art, Arts Based Research, art education, Biography Driven Instruction, biopsychosocial education, case study, character traits, Culturally Responsive Teaching, curriculum, EASEA, immigrants, intercultural, instrumental case study, meaningful learning, middle school, newcomers, refugees, self-esteem, social emotional learning, storyboard, storytelling, vvisual

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Major Professor
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I offer an overwhelming thank you to my doctoral committee major professor, Dean Debbie Mercer of the Kansas State University College of Education, who was by my side during this entire doctoral process. Dean Mercer held me to a very high standard and I learned so much from her as we progressed through this enormous process. I'm thankful for the quality of work she expected from me as it helped me grow substantially as a scholar and researcher. My doctoral committee—Assistant Dean and Department Chair Todd Goodson, Dr. Socorro Herrera, Dr. Charlie Nutt, and Dr. Vicki Sherbert offered varying lenses towards my study and I'm thankful for the many times they offered support, scholarly advice, and encouragement. I also thank my outside chair, Dr. Laura Brannon, who lent her psychology expertise to my defense session. I truly had a doctoral “power” committee of incredible internationally-known educational scholars and leaders. Their support was invaluable. Their encouragement during the celebratory moments of this process and also during the difficult times—which nearly all doctoral students experience—truly meant the world to me. I persevered, never gave up, and drove hard through the process, yet encountered a unique series of challenges while striving to complete this research—unusual and serious health issues and some tragic family experiences. Why do I include these personal situations in this acknowledgement section—because some of the strongest people I know are women who persevere, no matter what the challenge may be. That perseverance is why I have the opportunity to write this acknowledgement.

Dr. Barbara Hughes of San José State University's Department of Art and Art History and the Bay Area California Arts Project provided peer debriefing for this research. Dr. Hughes is an expert with credentials in the field of art education and was the 2019 NAEA California Art Educator of the Year. I want to thank her for devoting time to provide feedback on the findings of this study. Dr. Hughes, like many National Art Education Association professionals, is

always willing to give to the advancement of and advocate for art education. Likewise, Betsy Edwards of Kansas State University's Information Technology Assistance Center provided invaluable and patient support for formatting my dissertation into this EDTR format. The staff at Smithville USA Middle School were also tremendous to work with as the research was planned and conducted.

The efforts of this research came out of dedication towards the field of art education and derived from strenuous focus and perseverance. My hope is that this research is meaningful in the field of art education and education in general. My hope is also that this research inspires others to set goals and work hard to achieve them, teach their hearts out, and forgive, accept, and love people. While working on this doctoral degree I was also a full time faculty member coordinating the art education program at Kansas State University, assisted in directing a documentary film called *Refuge in the Heartland*, and edited a 616-page book called *Journey to Refuge: Understanding Refugees, Exploring Trauma, and Best Practices for Newcomers and Schools*. While I am not sure what is "next," it is probably no surprise that a cabin, a boat, some fishing, some canvas and paint, my family, and some global adventures are calling my name. And, I will continue to advocate for art education.

When we cast our bread upon the waters, we can presume that someone downstream whose face we will never know will benefit from our action, as we who are downstream from another will profit from the grantor's gift.

-Maya Angelou

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to all the children in the world that have not had the idyllic childhood that I had growing up in the great outdoors of western Kansas farming country, riding horses, moving cattle, laying irrigation pipe, driving a wheat truck, and playing outside all hours of the day and night, and then laying my head safely on a pillow in a home where I was cared for, had food to eat, running water, and had parents who loved me and were able to provide for my livelihood. I dedicate this to all the children that have not had the idyllic childhood my own children and grandchildren are having. I dedicate this research to the teachers, especially the art teachers, who give more than they have to give, go home, get up the next morning, and come back to school another day to again give more than they have to give. May the world be a kinder and gentler place for its children and may the world's teachers never run out of energy.

I also dedicate this study to my parents who taught me many life lessons, one of which was how to work very hard. My mother drilled me on writing "4-H project stories" from my earliest memories (probably the age of five) and so writing and narrative was a skill instilled in me from an early age. She expected hard work and a great deal of practice for 4-H Day speeches and demonstrations and high school Forensics competitions—these activities began the skills that helped me with this doctoral process. She also inspired me with her art making and her box of horse drawings from her own childhood. And my dad, Cowboy Jess, taught me how to laugh, love, and sweat from a very hard day's work. His easy way with people, the twinkle in his eye, his smile and ornery shenanigans, his Cowboy way, and his love of family are some of the best gifts of my life. I can hear my dad saying "OHsome" right now from the great team roping in the sky. He was with me for part of this process. I'll never be able to say awesome the way he did. Thanks, dad, for everything!!

Preface

My career as an art educator began many years ago, after first working as a fashion designer in the Dallas area. I have experienced many different aspects of teaching and many varied teaching environments. My first teaching job was as a substitute teacher. My first art teaching job was teaching art for free at my children's school. I then worked as a long-term substitute art teacher in a private school. After six years of teaching in various settings, I obtained my official teaching certification and licensure in the state of Texas to teach in public school and have never looked back—it was the best professional decision I have ever made. I have taught art from a cart, art from a closet, art in the lobby of the gymnasium, art in a storeroom, and art in a state-of-the-art art classroom. Along the way I also taught theatre, journalism, yearbook, newspaper, one section of physics, a year of AP English, and one section of home economics in a geography classroom. I was once told by Mr. Brown, the principal I mentioned in the acknowledgements, that I was a principal's elective-teaching dream because I could teach so many subjects. We won't discuss the physics teaching gig. Let's just say I convinced the principal to have the school nurse help me as science was NOT my thing. The point I am making is that art teachers possess varied talent and we bring many skills and abilities to the school environment.

I also taught school short-term in Uganda, Ecuador three times, and Switzerland, as well as toured fine arts schools in Havana, Cuba over ten years ago, plus have done a great deal of international travel for other professional and personal reasons. My first trip overseas was at the age of 16 with the feisty Irish woman I mentioned in the acknowledgements and it opened my eyes to a huge world that existed outside of Modoc, Kansas. The world awaits all of us, it awaits

our students, and it awaits teachers who need to learn as much as they can about this shrinking globe so they can bring it often into their classrooms.

This research was bore out of a desire to demonstrate that art education has endless possibilities to contribute to the holistic learning of students and greatly enrich their lives in a variety of ways. I believe art education has a new role in the 21st century era of globalization—where people are moving faster than ever before across the world because of the availability of transportation, because of the speed with which we can communicate because of technology, and because of unrest all over the world with 70 million people forcibly displaced from their homes, communities, and countries. Schools in America are more diverse than ever and many school districts now have 60, 70, even upwards of 200 languages spoken in their districts. This movement of people around the world is going to continue and our school classrooms are going to become uniquely intercultural—more than ever before. How will teachers adjust? How will art education evolve?

I firmly believe that art education is in a position to become an even more valuable tool in the school, and when partnered with specific, targeted initiatives of principals and the expertise of counselors, art education can be harnessed within the school building to be used as an even more important tool—such as in art therapy—for the betterment of all students within the school environment. In 2019, social emotional learning (SEL) is a reported necessity by state departments of education and school administrators (Wallace editorial team, 2018). Art uniquely provides a physical and psychological space for SEL, often referred to as social emotional artistic learning (SEAL) in art education. Art is about emotion, emotion is what generates the message an artist conveys in their artwork, and art education is a tool that is underutilized in this area within schools. Art education has so much to offer . . . it is time to reinvent the school art

program as we look forward to meet the real needs of 21st century students, while also paying continued homage to the actual skills, media, and content of the visual arts.

This research proved that the school art classroom provides a venue for important social emotional learning that will benefit students, even teachers. It is my hope that this research can be used to begin a more intensified study on using SEL and SEAL in school art content. With some of the unique characteristics of the 21st century affecting students' lives, as described previously in this preface, schools cannot afford to have any content area not be fully utilized to its maximum potential. It is time that art education became a more serious stakeholder at the school improvement plan planning table. It's time to harness art education in a powerful way for students' learning that goes above and beyond the art content.

“Art can transform lives. It gives us the power to question, to confront, to explore, and to challenge how we think about the world.” -Lucy Liu, Ignite Co-Chair

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Introduction

Due to changing student demographics in American schools, technological advancements, a growing emphasis on the sciences, and school budgetary issues, art education is searching for new relevance in 21st century schools (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Eisner, 2001; Franklin, 2017; Freedman & Stuhr, 2011; Hausman, 2011; Timmerman, Sen, & Hum, 2018), including providing more meaningful curricular choices that go above and beyond traditional art content (Broome, Bobick, Ruggiero, & Jesup, 2019; Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Gude (2015) states that art teachers need to focus on the “meaningful, ethical, intellectual, and artistic principles” (p. 6) that led them to becoming art teachers. Increasing students’ intellectual sophistication, increasing their joy and interest in learning, and growing their aesthetic abilities defines contemporary art education (Gude, 2015).

Through curricular choices, contemporary art educators need to do their part to address identified school improvement plan issues. With school administrators reporting high anxiety and stress levels of students (Wallace editorial team, 2018), social and emotional learning (SEL)—or social emotional artistic learning (SEAL), as it is referred to in the art field (Peterson, 2019)—is a growing focus in education (Glasman & Karkou, 2004; Gude, 2007). This growing trend toward biopsychosocial learning, which encompasses and includes a student’s biography, psychology, and social needs (Herrera, 2016), guides some quests toward more relevant art curriculum (Campbell & Simmons III, 2012; Day & Hurwitz, 2012). While many teachers are provided curriculum by the school district, art educators are often simply given a key to a classroom and some supplies. Developing meaningful, relevant curriculum is a challenge for all

art teachers (Gude, 2017). It is important for art education to consider the relevance of what is being taught to students in contemporary times, strive to provide meaningful curricular choices that go above and beyond traditional art education content, and examine if content is valid in assisting learners' intercultural and holistic growth as human beings who possess biographies, psychologies, and social needs (Davis, 2008, 2012b).

By planning more relevant art curriculum that broadly addresses a full spectrum of curriculum topics and that teaches art for more than simply art's sake (Simpson, 1998c), art education can also increase its value to schools and to school administrators. Rich layers of art curriculum, called elegant problems by Kay (1998), include art media and art education philosophies, combined with cross-curricular integrations including core subjects, social emotional learning, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math), globally inspired themes, ecological art, social justice topics, digital art, and tradigital art—a merger of digital and traditional art—just to name a few of the possible integrations art teachers can make to broaden the scope of learning (Crawford, 2004; Simpson, 1998b). Though in days gone by, art may have been taught with purist focus on media use and technique and merged with art history, contemporary art teachers and art education programs need to be broader in topic and theme as they meet the needs of 21st century students (Gude, 2017).

This research used instrumental, single case study, with the case study being a specific art curriculum planned, developed, and implemented during this study, as well as the artifacts produced by the curriculum to explore and analyze if a specific type of art curriculum and art project intended to teach self-esteem would have relevant and meaningful implications for 21st century art education that went above and beyond art content—the latter being the instrumental aspect of this case study. This chapter is organized into the sections of (a) details of the study,

(b) overview of the issues, (c) statement of the problem, (d) purpose of the study, (e) significance of the study, (f) limitations of the study, and (g) definition of terms.

Details of the Study

This research gave a rich lens to broadening the scope and reach of art education curriculum content into the field of social emotional learning. School art education teachers are generally not given a curriculum to use by schools or school districts (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Simpson, 1998b). Therefore, art education continually seeks curricula with deep meaning that is useful, timely, and relevant for learners. With 21st century schools attempting to meet the needs of 21st century students (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Eisner, 2001; Franklin, 2017; Freedman & Stuhr, 2011; Hausman, 2011; Timmerman, Sen, & Hum, 2018), art education advocates for new frontiers in official school art curriculum (Gude, 2015). In this study, qualitative analysis was used with instrumental, single case study methodology, with Arts Based Research as the theoretical framework—building on the work of Eisner (2002) and Dewey (1934).

Qualitative Research

The *I Am Me* research methodology was qualitative, instrumental, single case study and was qualitative in research design. Qualitative research uses an inductive method of comparing rich, descriptive narratives and works well with both visual and verbal communication (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research also typically works with small groups of people, situated within their normal setting (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014), which aligns with this study. The general definition of qualitative research aligns with the purpose of this study.

Case Study

In an effort to more clearly explore the relevance of art education in the 21st century, allowing for meaning making above and beyond traditional art content, the methodology for this research is an instrumental, single case study focused on a biopsychosocial art curriculum unit developed by this researcher to teach self-esteem and that was implemented in two sixth grade classes in a diverse, urban middle school. With the research being conducted at a highly diverse middle school, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) (Gay, 2018) and Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2016) were important elements of the unit's instructional methods. The eight-week curriculum unit was entitled *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy*. The unit contained six art projects that were produced by students. Five art projects were completed, one per week. Students also built a key art project—the *I Am Me Storyboard Project*— slowly over the eight weeks of the art unit. This curriculum unit and its various art projects explored self-esteem, which was often referred to metaphorically as buoyancy in the daily teaching focus—both through tangible items such as birds, boats, and balloons and intangible emotions such as positive thought. This researcher co-taught the unit with the school art teacher. The curriculum unit, including all of the students' art projects and the students' written or verbal artist statements, was the case study.

Case study is emerging as a viable methodology in the social sciences, but according to Yazan (2015), although case study is used frequently in qualitative research, it has undefined protocols that can sometimes cause confusion about its definition. According to Liang (2018), case study does not have to be a classroom of students or a group of teachers. Instead, Liang indicates case study can be a specific curriculum or a specific art project, such as the *I Am Me*

curriculum. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) confirm this by stating case study can be about a process and a curricular unit and making an art project are both a process.

This case study was both holistic and instrumental. Holistic analysis in case study is when the researcher examines the whole case and uses descriptive analysis of themes, interpretations, or assertions based on the entire case (Stake, 1995). Instrumental case study, according to Stake, is when the case is used to understand something else, rather than just the exact case. For example, in this research, while students were making the *I Am Me Storyboards* as an art project, the storyboards were instrumental in developing an understanding of whether or not art projects like this have value not only in the art classroom, but also in the overall school environment and the life of the learner. While this larger purpose, this instrumental purpose, of determining if art projects such as *I Am Me* have value in the classroom, school, and in students' lives is large in scope, the goal of education should be to make meaning in all three of these areas. Stake posits qualitative case study as emphasizing episodes of nuance, the sequence of contextual happenings, and the wholeness of the case subject. The "wholeness" in this study has implications for the instrumental aspect of the study.

Instrumental Case Study

While students were making the *I Am Me Storyboard* project, the storyboards and evidence of self-esteem were the focus of the main research question, yet as a part of instrumental case study, the overall curriculum unit was a tool in gaining understanding of whether or not art projects such as those in the *I Am Me Unit* could have larger meaning for implementation in art education, the holistic learning of students, and contribute to an intercultural community within the classroom. Yin (2018) labels this kind of case study *real-world* case. Instrumental case study is when an actual case study is examined for a larger, more meaningful, and relevant

purpose (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). For this research, this meant that while the storyboards were the actual case study, the more important aspect of this instrumental case study was the issue of whether or not art education curriculum such as this curriculum unit could be relevant in students' learning and the school. The data analysis goal was both a search for self-esteem through the storyboard activities and the curriculum unit was also assessed for relevance and meaning in contemporary art classrooms.

Arts Based Research Theoretical Framework

Arts Based Research provided theoretical framework for this study. Giving an artistic lens and interpretation to the study's framework was key in designing the study. Arts Based Research (ABR), an emerging methodology *or* theoretical framework, and no longer just an informant in research, was used as the theoretical framework to examine the *I Am Me Storyboards* (Leavy, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2018). ABR is a way of looking, seeing sub-layers, planning, and knowing (Eisner, 2002; Leavy, 2018). This case study was analyzed by knowledge built upon zones of visual and verbal communication. According to Leavy (2015, 2018), art often functions in a third zone—a unique combination of the visual and verbal communication. While word and visual images are two common zones of research, the relationship between word and the visual images creates a third zone or new context of knowledge where the full understanding of the visual cannot exist without the verbal, or vice versa (Leavy, 2015). Breaking new ground and building on the work of Leavy (2015, 2018), this case study used the structure and support of ABR to support the single case study research.

Data for the Study

The instrumental, single case design gave a rich and impactful platform for the nuances, contextual sequences, and the overall unique qualities of the *I Am Me Storyboards* to emerge.

Data was gathered from the storyboards made by students in two random sixth grade classes, one class with 36 students and one with 34 students, at Smithville USA Middle School (a pseudonym) in an urban population center. Eight sources of data were collected and examined for patterns. Artist statements were worksheets developed for the I Am Me Unit (see Artist Statements in curriculum unit in Appendix N). In the study, five data sources came directly from the actual storyboard art project and the various verbal or written artist statements for each storyboard phase and there were three other sources of data. The following is a list of data sources:

- *I Am Me* Biography Card
- Color Choice Storyboard Phase and Artist Statement
- Geometric Design Storyboard Phase and Artist Statement
- Digital Photo Storyboard Phase and Artist Statement
- Characteristic Words Storyboard Phase and Artist Statement
- Final Storyboards and Final Artist Statement
- Researcher's Field Notes
- Informal Interviews of Art Teacher

Categorizing of data. Data was tallied and noted as self-esteem categories based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease's (1996) early adolescent self-esteem categories of family, friends, activities, body image, and school. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) indicate that coding, or in the case of this study dividing data into self-esteem categories, is deep qualitative reflection and provides deep analysis and interpretation of the meaning of the data. Heuristic coding was done by reading the verbal artists statements, comparing the statements to the actual art phase of the storyboard, and field notes, as well as examining the overall

components of the storyboards (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Chunks of data regarding varying topics that students wrote about were gleaned from the categories and gave this researcher intimate and interpretive familiarity with the data and the student artists. After chunking was done, the data was reviewed for patterns in individual student's performance and six students were identified at the end of the study for further examination whose final storyboards expressed all five of the self-esteem categories discovered in DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease's 1996 study on self-esteem. Assertions in reporting findings, conclusions, and implications for the future were made based on a summative synthesis supported by data evidence. By conducting the research in two sixth grade school classes, cross-case analysis gave applicability of findings to other settings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

Three matrixes were made as suggested by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) and include:

- a checklist matrix of data and data gathering;
- additionally, a role-ordered matrix to sort data into categories; and finally,
- a case-ordered descriptive meta-matrix using both classes of students and ordering data in regard to the eight data gathering points previously listed and criteria that was related to each of them.

Analysis was also done on students who self-identified as immigrant or non-immigrant students and males and females. Since the *I Am Me Storyboard* project was about revealing personal characteristics and components of self, students were allowed to use their surname or first name as one of the 15 words they placed on the storyboards if they chose to do so. The significance of this is important. An art teacher cannot ask students to do an art project entitled *I Am Me* and then tell the students they must be identified with a code or a number. Finally, a

network model was made to depict overall nodes of connection, summary, and assertion (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The goal was to look first for evidence of self-esteem through a qualitative analysis of the data and then to develop a better understanding of students' intent in their art making and artists' statements.

Biopsychosocial Approach

This case study focused on the biopsychosocial aspect of this art curriculum unit, and specifically its key art project, the *I Am Me Storyboard*, as part of a loftier purpose of using this curriculum as an instrument of analysis of more relevant 21st century art curriculum that provides relevance to real life issues. Biopsychosocial is a hybrid word, combining biography, psychology, and social needs of the learner into one word, and it originally came out of the medical field (Henriques, 2015). The value of the biopsychosocial approach, as Herrera (2016) explains, is one of a holistic approach to understanding students. Biography refers to students' physical self, psychology refers to their emotional self, and social refers to the human need to socialize, relate, and interact with others (Herrera, 2016). These kinds of thoughts need time to develop in students' thought processing, and so an important component of this curriculum was giving students opportunity to develop their thoughts over eight weeks as they chose their own stories to tell. Much research exists that suggests the credibility of biopsychosocial art education and curriculum choices.

Self-Esteem

The human characteristic of self-esteem, which effects opinion of self and potentially school success, was the main focus of the study. Having and enhancing self-esteem has the potential to help students be more confident and successful in school (EduNova, 2012). Self-esteem, according to DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996) situates adolescents into

the five categories of (1) family, (2) friends, (3) activities, (4) school, and (5) body image and this epistemology of self-esteem provided the foundation for this research’s analysis.

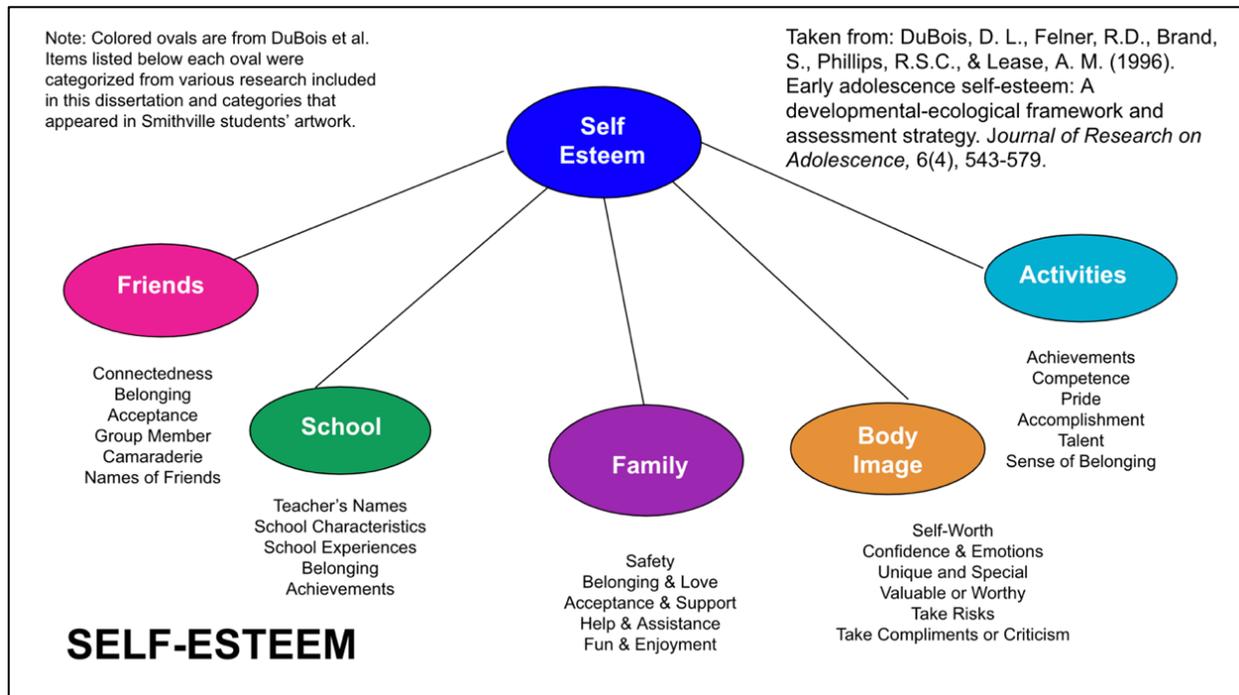


Figure 1.1. Components of adolescent self-esteem.

Culturally Responsive Teaching and Biography Driven Instruction

Gay (2018) states that Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is student-centered, as is an exploration of individual student’s self-esteem. Students’ cultural uniqueness and strengths are identified, targeted, and nurtured in Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) to help students excel in school where emotion and life are part of the classroom experience (Herrera, 2016). An art unit that gives students freedom to explore their biopsychosocial self, implemented with CRT and BDI, and which includes content related to self-esteem, positivity, and buoyancy has opportunity to encourage an intercultural community within the classroom. According to Gude (2017), Davis (2008, 2012b), and Day and Hurwitz (2012), this is the kind of meaningful and relevant teaching that art educators need to be conducting.

Growing diversity. One of the reasons for biopsychosocial art curriculum is the growing diversity of students in American schools and the effort educators need to make to address the needs of immigrant students (Herrera, 2016). The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) is increasing in the United States (NCES, 2017). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the fall of 2015 there were over 4.8 million ELL students in the United States, which was approximately 9.5 percent of all United States students (NCES, 2018a). NCES (2018b) also reported 50.3 million students enrolled in public school during the 2015-16 school year. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2017) stated that there were 9.4% more ELL students in 2014-15 than in 2013-14, with steady increases for several years prior. Additionally, the American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau shows in its most recent report that 381 languages are spoken in in the United States by people five years old and older (Ryan, 2013). These numbers indicate that our schools are becoming much more diverse.

Diversity directly relates to the community of the classroom and school. Diversity is also more than having ethnic, racial, cultural, or linguistic differences. Diversity manifests itself in many ways including age, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, personality, education levels, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, and life experiences (Blane & McClure Brenchley, 2018). Since the classroom is a community of individual identities that interact and function together, the overall diversity of the classroom directly contributes to the environment of the classroom. Students' biographies, psychologies, and social abilities uniquely contribute to the overall health of not only the individual classroom, but the larger school environment (Herrera, 2016). Clearly stated, the art classroom provides a unique

setting for students to explore their own identities and personal characteristics, share what they learn with their peers, and expand this learning to the school and community.

Overview of the Issues

This section will discuss the issues of (a) the past relevance of art education, (b) the current relevance of art education, (c) Eisner (1998a) and Dewey's (1934) vision for art education, (d) the state of art education, (e) curriculum generation in art education, and (f) the 21st century focus for art education. This study examined the effectiveness of the *I Am Me Unit*, which was better understood by knowing the impact of Eisner and Dewey on art education. After the unit was completed, the results of student learning in and through art class had the potential to impact students' greater holistic learning and growth in their overall school experience and lives. In order to understand the importance and need for this kind of the research, important issues regarding art education's place in the school and the growth and development of art education over time will be discussed in the following section. Current curriculum being taught in art education is directly related to the historical evolution of art education.

Past Relevance of Art Education

While the 20th century art educator found a legitimate home in public school, their role was expected to follow the canonical model of the previous few hundred years of art education, with children's skills focused on appreciation, imitation, and emulation of the works of master artists, most of whom came out of the church and religious paintings and sculptures (van Heusden & Gielen, 2015). Additionally, in more recent times art education was often seen as a method to provide decorations for refrigerator doors (Hausman, 2011). While art education has

typically been viewed with prescribed methods of practice, the field must continually reinvent itself in order to maintain its relevance and existence in schools (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Eisner, 2002; Freedman & Stuhr, 2011; Hausman, 2011). Some scrutiny of the art education program has merit as in the case of moving from a fine art, Accademia D'Arte, and art history lens toward a more 21st century focus (Eflund, 1990). Too much uniformed scrutiny by school leaders and policy makers has the potential to cause art classes to be removed from schools because its importance and relevance are not fully understood (NAEA, 2014; NCES 2014; PCAH, 2011).

Current Relevance of Art Education

A notable examination and debate about art education, which continues to this day, began in the American 1960's when old, prescribed ways of doing things were questioned. (Davis, 2008; van Heusden & Gielen, 2015; PCAH, 2011). Generally, the existence of art education is what is questioned, but not usually its validity, importance, and the esteem others hold it in (van Heusden & Gielen, 2015). Validity is, for the most part, understood (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Eisner, 2002). Students, parents, school administration, and the community often revere the art program and find it to be valid in students' school days. Yet among those who advocate for art education, there has been a concerted effort to make art more relevant in the 21st century school through specific curricular choices that move art from the traditional studies of media technique, art history, aesthetics, and the Elements of Art and Principles of Design toward a more biographical, psychological, and socially intended purpose (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Freedman & Stuhr, 2011; Leavy, 2018; Simpson, 1998b).

Eisner and Dewey's Vision for Art Education

Two notable researchers and theorists convey the relevance of art to the general public and to education. Elliot Eisner and John Dewey offer profound insight into the fields of art and art education. The forward-thinking art education philosophies of Dewey (1934) and Eisner (2002) laid the groundwork many years ago to examine and use art as a powerful educational tool that validates art education's relevance.

Eisner. Eisner (2002) both eloquently and straightforwardly elucidated the most significant merits of art education in the *Ten Lessons the Arts Teach* (Eisner, 2016) (see Appendix A to view the complete description of the ten lessons). Eisner built upon the work of Dewey (Eisner, 2002; Smith, 2005). Essentially, Eisner simplified and summarized the implicit and explicit ways in which art helps students see, speak, learn, and know about fundamental aspects of life. Eisner's (2002) points regarding what students learn in and through art education are only briefly summarized here:

1. Judgements prevail over rules in art.
2. There is more than one answer to a problem.
3. There are many ways to see a problem.
4. Unanticipated problems can arise.
5. Cognition is not limited by words and numbers.
6. Slight differences can have big effects.
7. Images transform to reality and materials can be used in transformative ways.
8. Children can find a way to say things they may not know how to say.
9. Through art, children can have experiences they can have nowhere else.
10. The position of art in schools reveals what adults think about art.

Eisner (1998a) argued that school art programs with little to no structure and that simply gave children art supplies to be creative offered very limited artistic content. One of Eisner's great achievements in art education was his contribution to the field of curriculum development. He developed the Kettering Project that began in 1967 and provided curriculum materials for untrained and new elementary teachers (Smith, 2005). Eisner also served on the board of The Getty Center for Education in the Arts and advocated for discipline based art education (DBAE), which included the strands of art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetic inquiry (Smith, 2005). Yet possibly Eisner's most important contribution to the field of education is his framework that challenges art teachers and all teachers to view education itself as an art form, to develop more creative and appropriate activities and responses to educational encounters with students and other educators, and to think more deeply about how art education can enhance student learning (Eisner, 1988b, 1998a, 2002, 2016).

Eisner (1998a) framed art based theory as the verbal, visual, and verbal/visual zone of analyses. Eisnerian theory contends that our environment is qualitative and is shaped by sights, sounds, tastes, and smells (Eisner, 2002), and is "a process that is shaped by culture, influenced by language, impacted by beliefs, affected by values, and moderated by the distinctive features of that part of ourselves we sometimes describe as our individuality" (Eisner, 2002, p.1). Eisner understood that children gained understandings of identity through art exploration. Eisner also understood that children bring their whole self to art, their biopsychosocial self, and all that is encompassed by this notion. Eisner's theory stated people have the ability to use imagination to imagine unencountered possibilities and share their private thoughts, or their identities, in public ways. Like his predecessor Dewey (1934), Eisner felt that art was an experience that could be created because of interaction with life.

Dewey. Dewey (1938a) articulated traditional and progressive education, just as Eisner (1998a) did many years later. Dewey is important to mention as Eisner's work built upon Dewey. On one hand, according to Dewey, education needs to be relatively structured, disciplined, ordered, and didactic. On the other hand, education needs to also be relatively unstructured, free flowing, and provide students the opportunity to direct their quest for knowledge. Furthermore, Dewey criticized traditional education as lacking a holistic understanding to meet the needs of students as well as designing curricula that was overly focused on content and less on contributing to the overall well-being of students as individuals in society. He also argued that progressive education could be too free and reactionary (Dewey, 1938). Dewey claimed that too much freedom in education ran the risk of creating weakness in focus and content choices. Most importantly, Dewey argued that first and foremost educators needed to understand the nature of the human experience.

Dewey's (1938a) educational theory assumed that principles of continuity and interaction create experience. Continuity means that each experience a person has will influence their future, and interaction is that both one's past and present situations determine their present state (Dewey, 1938a). Dewey's framework stated that once teachers understood the theory of experience, they could organize subject matter so it accounted for students' past experiences, provided them with new experiences that would help them grow, and therefore expanded the likelihood of their contribution to society. Dewey argued that art intensified experiences, that art was a manifestation of experience simply as experience, and because of this unalloyed experience art provided a channel for the imagination and the advancement of education. Both the work of Eisner (1998a) and Dewey (1934) provide a framework for art curriculum that is biopsychosocial in nature.

Deweyian and Eisnerian influence on this research. In furthering the work of Dewey (1934, 1938a) and Eisner (1988b, 1998a, 2002, 2016), this study examines the *I Am Me Storyboards* through their framework. The research examines how can art education be more than we know it to be? Dewey and Eisner value art education not for education's sake, but because of its value in helping the learner, in this case students participating in a specific art curriculum, grow into "being" with a deeper understanding of self. In other words, when learners use art to explore their biographies—which includes identity, and their psychological understandings—which includes self-esteem and attitude, and their social constructions—which includes the communities of multiculturalism (understanding their own biographies) and interculturalism (understanding their own biographies and sharing them with others) – there is the potential for art education to be elevated for both the learner and the school. Dewey posits that society will benefit from this inclusion.

With the instrumental aspect of this case study seeking to explore how implementation of the *I Am Me Unit* assisted in the development of more relevant 21st century art curriculum, the holistic needs of 21st century students learned through their art class curriculum was investigated. Curriculum does not magically appear for art teachers. While many teachers are given purchased curriculum for the school, art teachers generally write their own curriculum or find it from resources on the Internet or curriculum books. Art teachers tend to be given a key to a classroom and students. Curricular choices are impacted by the art teacher's interests, skills, life experiences, and decision making. On a daily basis, art educators experience the worth and value of learning that happens in the art classroom through the curricular choices they make. They see the spirit and heart of a child soar to new heights of knowledge and understanding, being propped up with buoyancy of thought and media such as luscious, colorful paints and the

tactile smear of oil pastels. Art teachers see the engines of students' minds crank and turn with 2D invention and 3D exploration. "Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skills" (Smith, 2009). Art teachers see the child who deals with great personal familial difficulty find peace and solace in the art classroom. The watchful art teacher sees the intelligence of creativity, the experimentation of art, and the aesthetic and scientific discovery that both happen through the logic, sequence, and innovation from participation in art education (Leavy, 2015, 2018). Art teachers also see the young da Vinci's and Galileo's at work, as well as the Gandhi's and Mandela's deep in thought. Those art teachers who turn the art classroom into inventive labs of discovery, rather than assembly lines of production, have the potential to see the ordinary turned into the extraordinary, advancing levels of student genius (Davis, 2008, 2012b; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1988b, 2002). While this research is focused on the artwork made by students and the relevance of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit both within students' lives and the context of their school environment, art teachers who make learning relevant in students' lives also propel art education's value not only in the school, but further contribute to the community and greater world (Davis, 2008, 2012b; Dewey, 1934, 1938a; Eisner, 1988b, 1998a, 2002, 2016; Leavy, 2018). Students daily life experiences—their microspheres—lay the foundation for developing life understandings—their macrospheres (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

State of art education. At the local school level, students, and parents deeply value school art classes, as ascertained by Dewey (1934) and Eisner (2002), while administrators and school boards of modern times must often focus on the needs of well-intentioned, mandatory standardized testing and budget issues (PCAH, 2011; Ruppert, 2006). There is a disjuncture between *needing* art and *caring* about art (Davis, 2008; PCAH, 2011). Evidence shows most

people revere art for varying reasons and believe that art gives the overall school environment a unique buoyancy, enhances the social and emotional environment, and creates an aesthetic atmosphere in the school building and community (PCAH, 2011, Ruppert, 2006). Even so, when schools need to make necessary financial cuts the art program is nearly always the first program found on the budget chopping block floor (PCAH, 2011). A quality art program that is visibly contributing to the overall effectiveness of the students, school, school district, and community will not likely experience this fatal cut (Dickson, 2015). Quality art programs implement quality curriculum.

Curriculum Generation in Art Education

One way to preserve the art education program is through relevant, 21st century curriculum that elevates holistic, whole child learning (Leavy, 2015). While some school districts provide curriculum guides, art educators generally write their own curriculum and plan all activities and projects (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Simpson, 1998b). “Many districts choose to develop their own art curricula, sometimes based on the belief that teachers are more likely to enthusiastically teach what they have a stake in through their own efforts” (Day & Hurwitz, 2012, p. 349). Detailed art curriculum can be costly for schools to purchase, and with art specialists capable of generating their own instructional materials, many districts opt for generating their own art curriculum (Day & Hurwitz, 2012).

Some school districts do provide curriculum guides. In a recent survey, the National Center for Education Statistics gathered data indicating that 83 percent of public schools offering the visual arts also reported providing a curriculum guide that teachers were supposed to follow (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). While 83 percent appears to indicate that a vast majority of surveyed schools supplied art curriculum guides, only 1095 elementary and 1302 secondary

visual art specialists participated in the survey—a small fraction of school art teachers. In 2015-16 the National Center for Education Statistics reported 98,300 public schools in the United States (NCES, 2018c) which indicates that a small percentage of schools were surveyed by Parsad and Spiegelman.

Table 1.1

Program Characteristics of Visual Arts (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012)

Among public elementary schools that offered instruction in visual arts, percent reporting selected program characteristics for visual arts, by percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: School years 1999–2000 and 2009–10

School characteristic	Instruction was available at least once a week		Instruction was offered throughout the entire school year		Dedicated rooms with special equipment were the primary space for instruction		Arts specialists were employed to teach visual arts		Had district curriculum guide that teachers were expected to follow	
	1999–2000 ¹	2009–10 ²	1999–2000 ¹	2009–10 ²	1999–2000 ¹	2009–10 ²	1999–2000 ¹	2009–10 ²	1999–2000 ¹	2009–10 ²
All public elementary schools	85	85	88	87	56	68	72	84	78	83
Percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch										
0 to 25 percent	88	90	91	92	70	76	80	89	86	87
26 to 50 percent	85	88	85	87	53	75	71	87	79	82
51 to 75 percent	83	78	85	88	48	63	63	78	72	80
76 percent or more	81	84	88	83	41	59	67	81	70	83

¹Percents are based on the 87 percent of public elementary schools that reported instruction designated specifically for visual arts during regular school hours in the 1999–2000 school year.

²Percents are based on the 83 percent of public elementary schools that reported instruction designated specifically for visual arts during regular school hours in the 2009–10 school year.

NOTE: More detailed data are provided in supplemental tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 130, 131, 132, 133, and 134 at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2012014>. The 1999–2000 data presented in this table may differ from previously published information because missing data from the 1999–2000 surveys were imputed for analysis in this report. Arts specialists are education professionals with a teaching certificate in an arts discipline—such as music, visual arts, dance, or drama/theatre—who provide separate instruction in that discipline.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, “Elementary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 2009,” FRSS 100, 2009–10; and “Elementary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 1999,” FRSS 67E, 1999–2000.

While some school districts do provide art curriculum guides, they are generally brief lists or summarized plans that allow for broad, sweeping interpretations (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Parsad and Spiegelman (2012) do not report how many art teachers develop their own instructional materials and unit plans. Generally, district curriculum guides, if provided, are a list of broad topics or themes—such as study a society or culture, an assigned *Element of Art* or *Principle of Design*—such as line or pattern, vocabulary words, and an overall required media such as water color, oil pastels, clay, and other types of media (Not to be confused with

technology language, “media” is the word for multiple art supplies and is the plural form of the word “medium,” which indicates a single art supply.). Many of these curriculum guides produced by a variety of school districts are made available to the public via the Internet and vary in detail and scope of provided guidelines.

21st Century Focus for Art Education

Art education must be challenged to contribute to the holistic education of the student, as all school content areas are, and move from the focus of past emphases, as previously mentioned (Davis, 2008, 2012b; Dewey, 1934, 1938a; Eisner, 1988b, 1998a, 2002, 2016; Leavy, 2018). With students in American schools speaking more languages and coming from more cultures and backgrounds than ever before (Herrera, 2016), all teachers, all content areas, and all schools must place emphasis on meeting the needs of all learners. According to Herrera (2016), teachers should examine pedagogy from a biography-driven lens to be more inclusive of culturally and linguistically diverse students and as the *I Am Me* curriculum has done. According to Herrera (2016) and Gay (2018), this also suggests that teachers should examine pedagogy through a culturally responsive lens. Art curriculum with a biopsychosocial component may be extremely valuable when taught and researched in the art classroom because, according to Leavy (2018), art allows researchers to examine not only students’ art making, but also the whole child, the whole student.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the world educators are gathering research and attempting to develop relevant curriculum that propels learning toward intended targets within the classroom (Postman & Weingartner, 2009). The problem is not a shortage of curriculum (Brunnick, 1999; Postman

& Weingartner, 2009). Instead, the problem is how can art education become more relevant in schools by using the very criteria—the same art supplies and thematic topics—that defines and shapes art education in more meaningful, relevant ways (Gude, 2007). When using the emotional, social, psychological components of art education in a more deliberate and intentional way, the problem of art education’s relevance may be solved (Leavy, 2018). Various research has been conducted on the criteria for valuable curriculum.

Crawford (2004) reported six reasons for using art curricula with kindergarten through eighth grade students including: (a) the arts make content more accessible; (b) the arts encourage joyful, active learning; (c) the arts help students make and express personal connections to content; (d) the arts help children understand and express abstract concepts; (e) the arts stimulate higher-level thinking; and (f) the arts build community and help children develop collaborative work skills. Estes, Schwab, and Gunter (2003) presented the Values Development Model of Instruction that purported that teachers should discuss ethical and social values with students. Steps in the Values Development Model of curriculum development are to (a) identify the theme of what is to be taught, (b) specify the big question in what is to be taught, (c) select supplemental resources on the topic of study, (d) explore interdisciplinary connections to the topic, and (e) teach the lesson in ways that entice students into caring about what they are learning.

Reggio Emilia schools in northern Italy utilize a constructivist philosophy where children carry out “long term, intrinsically interesting projects carried out in a rich variety of physical settings both in the school and throughout the community” (Windschitl, 2000, p. 102). Children are viewed as able to plan, coordinate ideas, and abstract their thoughts without the teacher planning overly structured unit and lesson plans (Windschitl, 2000). Wiggins and McTighe

(2005) asked teachers to develop curriculum with the end in mind from the very beginning of planning. Backward Design, as Wiggins and McTighe explained, is when curriculum choices are made that shift the focus to the specific learning sought before thinking about what the teacher will do as activities and to provide teaching. Henry (1996) asked teachers to plan curriculum that took learning to new levels of integration and synthesis and revealed that storytelling was a method to accomplish this. Olson (1998) stated that visual storytelling was a viable method of instruction and realization in art education.

Again, available curricula are not the problem, as many committed, knowledgeable educators are writing a great deal of instructional materials (Brunick, 1999). The problem is greater than available curricula. Jacobs (2010) spoke of redesigning schools for the global learners that now inhabit schools. There is no longer one biography in the school, there are multiple. Students also bring many emotions and social needs to the classroom. Curricular needs are not singular, they are complex and need to meet the complex nature and needs of the learner. The larger issue, according to Brunick, is addressing the psychosocial needs of students in the classroom.

It seems plausible that a more viable use of the school art program and curricula includes designing and generating creative activities that both teach art and provide for elegant design (Kay, 1998). By including topics or themes in curriculum planning such as social emotional learning, and exploring character traits such as self-esteem and a positive sense of self that can be an asset for other learning and aspects of life, students' biographies, emotions, and cultures are given opportunity to feel at home and welcome in the classroom (Gude, 2007; Glasman & Karkou, 2004). "Art education has the potential to inspire and enrich lives well beyond the

normal constraints of everyday educational experiences” (Morris, 2011, p. 3). This potential may generate student success in other areas of education and life (Smith, 2009).

Hicks (2012) reported that well-planned art curriculum enhances “students’ ability to articulate their own identity and to find meaning around”(p. 91) this discovery. Slivka (2011) explored art curriculum that was unknowingly “deculturalizing ethnically diverse students by replicating the same content intended to conform minority student populations to adopt Western conventions” (p. 225). Stankiewicz (2016) used art education to explore sense-making of senseless events such as mass murders, school shootings, and other tragedies. Using art curriculum to address peer pressure and the emotions caused by it are central to Ivashkevich’s (2012) research. Rolling and Bey (2016) reported using the art classroom to teach identity constructs and examination of self-image. Cress (2012) used art education to ask students to use their past lives to explore their present lives through visual representation. Travis and Hood (2016) researched using art education to explore disruptions, breakdowns, resistances, silence, and refusals. Buffington, Williams, Ogier, and Rouatt (2016) explored identity as a driving force of art education. Bae-Dimitriadis (2016) investigated the use of art education to help refugee girls understand the difference between power created by things and power created by humans in an effort to help them better understand their bodies. Davis (2005) wrote of the importance of emotion and feeling in art education.

Day and Hurwitz (2012) researched the importance of psychological growth through art education and the relevance of developmental mark-making in children communicating thoughts of self. Delacruz (2011) argued that art education can teach civility to students in an uncivil time. Szekely and Buckman (2012) believe art education should be used to explore fear and belonging with middle school students. In a transformative study, Campbell (2011) researched

the use of art education to teach to the holistic learning of students including social, moral, spiritual, physical, sensory and cognitive learning. Substantial research exists in the field of curricular focus on biopsychosocial content.

Purpose of the Study

This chapter demonstrates a need for art education to transform from standard and normative curriculum choices, such as art media and technique, as well as art history, to being more relevant as a content area for 21st century American learners who now, more than ever before in school classrooms, come from a variety of diverse and linguistic backgrounds (Herrera, 2016) and emotional needs (Wallace editorial team, 2018). The argument can be made that art should be art for art's sake, but 21st century art education has the potential to serve a much greater, more profound purpose (Davis, 2008, 2012b). The *I Am Me* curriculum written for this study led students on a curricular journey involving positive thought, discovery, and self-realization, giving students opportunity to make personal artistic choices and express them through both visual and verbal communication. Through choices made in visual and verbal storytelling, students shared aspects of their life that were important to them—a meaningful and normal pedagogical strategy in the relational field of education (Kuyvenhoven, 2009). While sixth grade teachers might instruct students to write stories about themselves in written language, this study gave students the opportunity to use the visual language of art to do the exact same thing. The overall relevance of the *I Am Me* curriculum as an emerging art classroom teaching method was surveyed based on student accomplishment throughout the unit.

Research Questions

This research was guided by this main question (see Figure 1.2): In what ways do sixth graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project? This research was also guided by these two related sub-questions: How can an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom? How can art curriculum such as the *I Am Me* curriculum unit produce more relevant, meaningful 21st century learning above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?

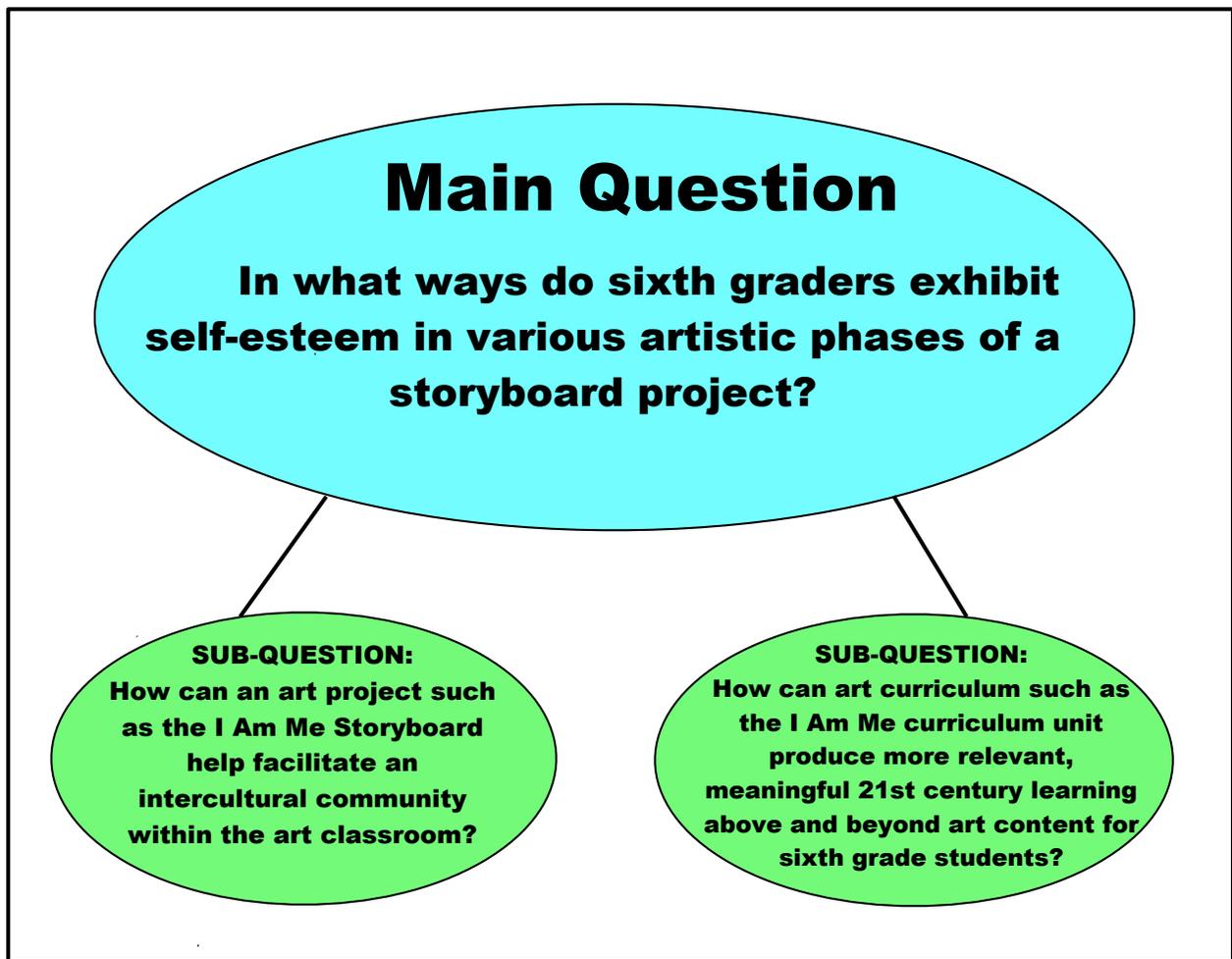


Figure 1.2. Research questions. In the above diagram, the research main question and the two sub-questions are detailed.

Research Flow Chart

The following network model depicts the research organization (see Figure 1.3): :

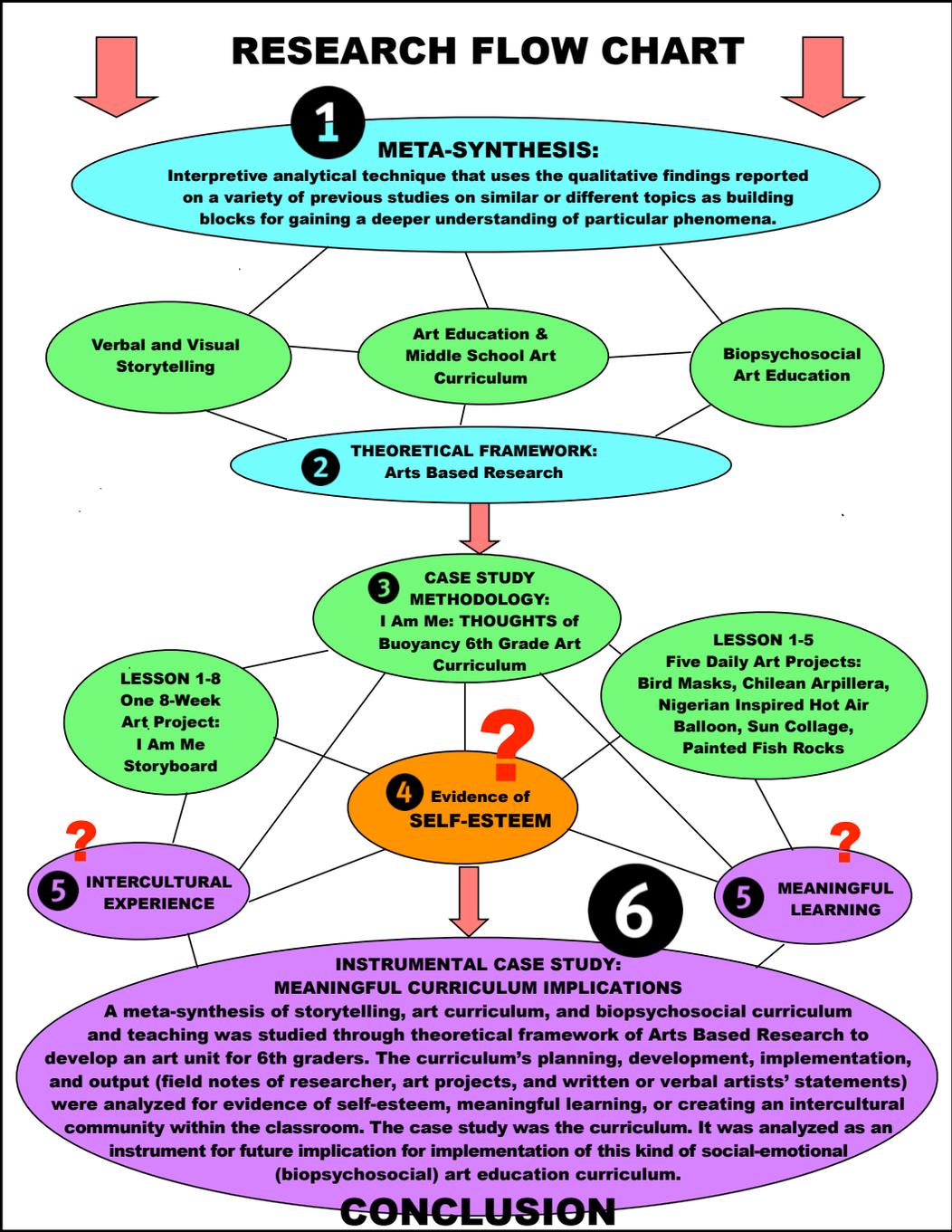


Figure 1.3. I Am Me Research Flow Chart. The network model of this research shows that this study began with a meta-synthesis of storytelling, curriculum, and biopsychosocial art education. Following this meta-synthesis, the theoretical framework was established and included using the lens of Arts Based Research to develop this case study. Instrumental, single case study was

determined to be the methodology and the actual case was determined to be a curriculum unit written by the researcher for this study called *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy*. The curriculum unit had eight lessons, ideally taught one lesson per week for eight weeks. The research sought to explore self-esteem as its main question, and intercultural experiences and meaningful learning that goes above and beyond art content in school art classes as sub-questions. The instrumental case study aspect of this research was an investigation if curriculum such as *I Am Me* was relevant and meaningful in 21st century art education.

Significance of the Study

Art education must continually seek to be relevant (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012b; Eisner, 2002; Freedman & Stuhr, 2011; Hausman, 2011). Art educators can have differing views on the content taught in art classes. Some educators want the traditional content of art history, media technique, and other typical art content areas. Progressive art teachers feel a paradigm shift is needed to help art be more valuable to learners, administrators, schools, communities, and society at large (Davis, 2008, 2012b). While social emotional learning is currently a common topic in school settings (Elias & Arnold, 2006; Cohen, 1999; Hutzell, Russell, & Gross, 2010; Pasi, 2001), the combination of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018) and Biography-Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016) with social emotional learning was merged to form a study that can be of use to various school administrators as they plan for school improvement, furthering the value and relevance of art education in schools, and also providing needed curricular focus for schools whose culturally and linguistically diverse student populations are growing. More importantly, however, the significance of this study was that it used the power of art to help students understand themselves better, developing personal awareness, and identify and understand areas of growth as the weekly discussion topics evolved throughout the eight week art curriculum unit.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to the study:

1. **Researcher Perspective:** This researcher had been an art teacher for over 20 years in the United States when the study was conducted and had a wide variety of experience writing and implementing curriculum units similar in some ways to *I Am Me*. Additionally, the researcher had taught school in Uganda, Ecuador, and Switzerland, and had worked with refugee students in a variety of settings, so prior knowledge of the life experiences of some students had been a pedagogical tool the researcher had used for many years. The researcher made sure to encourage broad freedom in students' creative interpretation of the directions, decision making, and not portray biases that led students to making certain choices in creating their art projects or writing artists' statements.

2. **Participants Limited to One School:** Participants were selected from one school. The school was a diverse, urban school. This may have limited the scope of the study in that the results cannot be generalized to other schools, especially rural schools, or schools with less diversity.

3. **Language Fluency:** Students at the school where this researcher conducted the study spoke over sixty languages and multiple languages were spoken within the art classroom with participating students, although all students who participated in this study had the ability to read, write, and speak English. Extra preparation was done to ensure students understood directions and included individualized demonstrations for some students.

4. **Cultural Norms and Understandings:** Some students initially did not understand what it meant to define their own positive personal characteristics. Additionally, with newcomer

students in the class (recent immigrants) from various countries in the world, the definition of what was positive may have had some differing views, especially at the beginning of the unit.

5. Emotional Reactions of Students: As in all school assignments, sometimes teachers ask students to share personal stories such as writing autobiographical accounts of their summer vacation, writing about their family, or in the case of art, depicting these same kinds of topics in their art work. Writing and depicting self is normal in the school environment (Herrera, 2016). However, this researcher had a pre-arranged plan in place with the school art teacher who co-taught the art unit to follow already established school protocol for soothing any student who might have an emotional reaction to the unit. This researcher did contact the school principal about something that one student shared through their artwork as it seemed very significant and this researcher felt the student needed some follow-up. Many students shared difficult personal stories through their artwork—more than this researcher was expecting. While the storyboard project asked students to write about positive experiences reflecting self-esteem, there were some students that were not able to do so. This did create some mild emotional situations with students or some feelings of sadness, but overall there were no difficult situations to deal with throughout the research.

6. School Schedule and Attendance: Two school holidays that occurred on Mondays—the scheduled day for this research to occur—slowed the progress of the study and required this researcher to adapt the schedule by going on Friday. A tornado drill occurred the last week during the first class, causing this researcher to restructure the last week's session. Additionally, absences by students did impede some students from completing projects. This researcher went two extra days to help students complete the art projects as each week approximately one-third of the class was absent. The art teacher indicated that attendance was an issue at the school.

With the class sizes being so large, it was not possible to help students who were absent get caught up with all projects. While the school art teacher did help with some steps of the art projects on Tuesday through Friday, making up the missed projects was very difficult.

7. School Art Teacher: The school art teacher was going through great personal difficulty as the study began and moved from where she lived during the study. Additionally, the school art teacher and I had different styles of teaching which did cause some adjustment, yet the working relationship was very functional, pleasant, and efficient.

8. Self-Esteem Analysis: In using the DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996) early adolescent self-esteem categories of family, friends, activities, body image, and school, this researcher had to use qualitative judgement to decide if students' visual and verbal communication fit into one of those five categories. This researcher's own judgement affected the determination of self-esteem and this researcher needed to be careful and decisive in how these determinations were made.

Definition of Terms

1. *Aesthetics*- Appreciative of or responsive to what is beautiful or pleasurable to the senses. (Aesthetics, 2018).
2. *Art*- While the term art is hard to define in a way that is universally accepted, for this study art means any two-dimensional or three-dimensional handmade item, made using natural, traditional, or digital arts and crafts supplies. Art is also "the conscious use of skill and creative imagination especially in the production of aesthetic objects" (Art, 2018).

3. *Art Classroom*- A physical location within a public school where an art educator practices art pedagogy.
4. *Art Education*- The application of art skills and art pedagogy in the art classroom.
5. *Art Educator/Teacher*- For this study, art educator was defined as a person with a Bachelor's Degree in art education and currently a full-time art teacher in P-12 public schools. The term art educator is commonly used in art education.
6. *Art History*- The study of master artists, art styles and genres, and art from the past.
7. *Biography-Driven Instruction (BDI)*- "A unique combination of processes (contextual and situational) and actions (teacher and student) that guides reciprocal teaching and learning throughout the entire lesson. BDI strategies incorporate smaller, point-in-time activities, strategies, and techniques along the way" (Herrera, 2016, p. 151).
8. *Biopsychosocial*- Biopsychosocial is a hybrid word, combining biography, psychology, and social needs of the learner into one word and it originally came out of the medical field (Henriques, 2015). Herrera (2016) uses *biopsychosocial histories* as a "to refer to the biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of an individual's background" (Herrera, 2016, p. 151).
9. *Buoyancy*- The ability to quickly recover from discouragement or depression or the ability or tendency to float (Buoyancy, 2018). In this study, buoyancy was also used as a metaphor for lifting up, lifting up oneself, lifting up other people in students' lives, and having a positive outlook. It was also used to represent the ability to float or become lighter, as in the case of water lifting a boat up or air lifting a bird up.

10. *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse* (CLD)- This is the “favored term to refer to individuals whose culture and language are different from those of the dominant group” (Herrera, 2016, p. 152). Herrera (2016) prefers CLD over the term ESOL listed below.
11. *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (CRT)- This is a pedagogy that is student-centered. Students’ unique cultural strengths are nurtured and identified to promote a sense of well-being about the students’ cultural place within the context of the school, but also in society, as well as to promote cultural achievement (Gay, 2018).
12. *Curriculum/Curricula*- The lessons or content taught in a specific course in a school and typically refers to the specific learning standards, materials, and assignments a teacher uses to organize a particular class (Curriculum, 2015). The use of the word in the education field varies slightly from a dictionary definition of the word. For this research, this is the definition that was used. In educational settings, curricula is plural and typically means more than one course’s content.
13. *Elements of Art*- “Formal language for describing visual form; traditional elements included line, value, and color—contemporary versions usually include line, shape, color, texture, and value” (Carroll, 1998, p. 113)
14. *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL)-also known as *English as Second Language* (ESL)- While the criteria to qualify as an English Learner (EL) and be eligible for ESOL services vary from state to state in the United States and other country’s educational systems have their own method for designated language learners, for this study the state’s Department of Education definition was used. It specifies that to meet the criteria for ESOL services, a language other than English must be indicated on Home Language Surveys that schools are required to send home with students. The survey asks

what language the child first learned to speak, what language the child currently speaks at home, and what language adults speak at home and to the child. If another language besides English is listed, assessments must be given to students. If assessments indicate students are limited in any domain of English, students must receive ESOL services by a qualified, state ESOL endorsed teacher. Schools receive special funding for ESOL students in the state this research was conducted in (ESOL, 2017).

15. *Intercultural*- A way of describing a person's culture as being composed of many cultures and a term that also addresses interactions among cultures (Zimmerman, 2002).
16. *Meaning*- Something meant or intended, significant quality (Meaning, 2019).
17. *Meaningful*- Having meaning or purpose, significant (Meaningful, 2019).
18. *Medium/Media Technique*- Medium is the name of a singular art supply. Media is the name of multiple art supplies and the plural form of medium.
19. *Pedagogy*- The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept (Pedagogy, 2017).
20. *Principles of Design*- "The principles of design include ways that visual form can be organized to achieve unity, balance, and/or opposition" (Carroll, 1998, p. 113).
21. *Public School*- For the purpose of the study, public school is defined as any pre-school through twelfth grade school that is under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Education, free to all students, and receiving public tax dollars for budgetary needs. Another definition is a tax-supported, free school controlled by the local governmental authority (Public School, 2018).
22. *Self-esteem*- A confidence or satisfaction in oneself (Self-esteem, 2018).

23. *Storytelling*- For this research, storytelling meant that student-made art told a story to either themselves or to the viewer. Three main thematic interests manifest in storytelling including the relationships and dynamics of the people involved, the story content, and the techniques of telling the story (Maggio, 2014). Also, Olson (1998). defines storytelling as the act of sharing stories, either visually or verbally.

Conclusion

In the broader sense, 21st century school art education should be relevant to the school children that inhabit the earth and contend with its issues. Through a narrower lens, art education should be relevant to the identity of the learner in the local classroom. The 21st century phenomenon of a rapidly changing world with children and adults moving fluidly around the globe (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004) and the significant increase in culturally and linguistically diverse students within the United States(Herrera, 2016) should be driving the curriculum train with all educators working to educate all students in their classrooms with an intercultural goal. All students should feel welcome to share and tell their stories, bring their own biographies, psychologies, and social needs and abilities to the classroom, and feel nurtured in the school environment, thereby affirming their unique identity and nurturing their self-esteem. Art education can help students process their emotions and thoughts as artistic expression. Meaning is made when students express themselves artistically. When students feel good about themselves, confidence grows, and overall academic goals are much easier to accomplish (EduNova, 2012). Art education has the opportunity to play a more dominant role in the 21st century school and in students' educations. All stakeholders must contribute to an organized plan for students' success (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

By giving students an opportunity to make creative decisions through the implementation of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit and the *I Am Me Storyboard* project in this study, by giving them opportunity to incorporate the stories they chose to share visually and verbally and that revealed their varying levels of self-esteem, students' lived experiences informed their growth as self-esteem was studied and realized. Dewey (1934) argued that the arts are an experience. Olson (1998) notes that art tells stories, purposefully or accidentally, and also through visual and verbal means. Berman (1997) reminds society can only sustain itself for very long if its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills for caring for other human beings. The disjuncture between caring about and needing art in public schools, the relevance and validity or worth of art, and curricular choices that benefits the needs of *all* students becomes an important discussion in the holistic education of students as well as the overall goals for whole school success. In the next chapter this researcher will do an extensive review of the literature surrounding this case study.



Figure 1.4. Supplies for art projects. As this researcher prepared the verbal plan for the study, the artist-researcher planned the visual research—the supplies needed for the art projects.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

One of the most important and basic needs of people is to be able to communicate and express themselves. Humans have these skills from their first gasp of air as a newborn to their last gasp of air when they permanently leave the earth. Communication and expression can happen in many ways and through many forms. Educators commonly think of language in a variety of verbal forms (reading, writing, listening). Educators in the fine or expressive arts think in terms of verbal and visual communication and see visual art, dance, music, and drama as methods of communication. Regardless of which form of communication and expression a human being uses, life has richer and fuller experiences when people feel, understand, and share emotion. Sometimes, however, the communication—the broader meaning of words—is not words at all. It can be the hands, the eyes, the ears, what is felt, and what is smelled and tasted that give opportunity to communicate, each being a tool of words—verbally or visually. Yehuda Berg (2010), founder of the Kabbalah Centre, once said:

Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity. We can choose to use this force constructively with words of encouragement, or destructively using words of despair. Words have energy and power with the ability to help, to heal, to hinder, to hurt, to harm, to humiliate and to humble. (n.p.)

Teachers know the intent of Berg's words full well. Teaching is relational for one simple reason—teaching is about human beings (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Herrera, 2016; Klein, 2003; Leavy, 2018; Simpson, 1998a). Teachers continually seek ways to develop school curriculum that is more relevant to the students they teach and the lives they live. When the school

curriculum becomes more timely, relevant, valid for the learner, and creates more growth of knowledge, therefore affecting not only the life of the learner, but the greater life in which the learner lives, the curriculum is more successful for all students (Herrera, 2016).

The 21st century brings new challenges for education (Bey, 2017). Educators are seeking ways to adapt to teaching in a globalized world. The term globalization has materialized in recent years because of the speed of travel with which people can move around the globe and the ease of communication largely because of the Internet (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Adding to this issues, 68 million people are affected by forced migration and are fluidly and quickly moving about the earth. Rapid changes in demography and cultural diversity now exists all over the world and in areas that may have once been more mono-cultural in nature (UNHCR, 2017; Zhao, 2009). Education is affected by these world changes which also point focus to how to create intercultural classrooms (Zimmerman, 2002). As other educational content areas seek to find more relevance in the 21st century, so does art education (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017).

Art education commonly seeks to express and advocate for its relevance and validity in the school environment (Kukielski, 2017; Franklin, 2017). In searching for increased relevance of art education curriculum, content themes such as student biographies, psychologies, and social needs arise as potential topics (Campbell & Simmons III, 2012; Day & Hurwitz, 2012). *Biopsychosocial* is a hybrid word, combining biography, psychology, and the social needs of people into one word and it originally came out of the medical field (Henriques, 2015). Herrera (2016) uses *biopsychosocial histories* to refer to the complexities of the “biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of an individual’s background” (Herrera, 2016, p. 151). Human beings are complex, full of emotion and thought. Art making is also complex because in and through art a highly intricate web is woven of the visual language, the verbal language, and a

merger of the visual and verbal where one cannot be understood without the other (Leavy, 2015). Because of the complexity of both human beings and art making, art education can give the composite of both a place to communicate thought and emotion (Campbell & Simmons III, 2012; Kerlavage, 1998; Szekeley,1996).

Learners' artistic, academic, and personal skills and abilities grow through intensified, purposeful focus in broadening the thematic content of art education curriculum, bridging the gap between the three segments of biopsychosocial learning and the production of expression and learning. These topics might include the meaning and the effort to acquire self-esteem, exploring identity, focusing on positivity in an effort of self-analysis and reflection, and exploring uplifting and buoyant thought in the school environment and life. Embracing the differences of students through the curriculum is relevant 21st century pedagogy (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Timely, relevant curriculum is also needed to address the current needs of learners (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Specific curriculum development in and through art education provides inference and transfer to other areas of school and students' lives (see Table 2.1). According to Day and Hurwitz (2012):

The written curriculum should provide for differences, allowing teachers to adapt activities to the differences among individuals and groups. The needs, capacities, and dispositions of the children demand diversification of materials to be used, problems to be solved, and concepts to be introduced and reinforced. (p. 340)

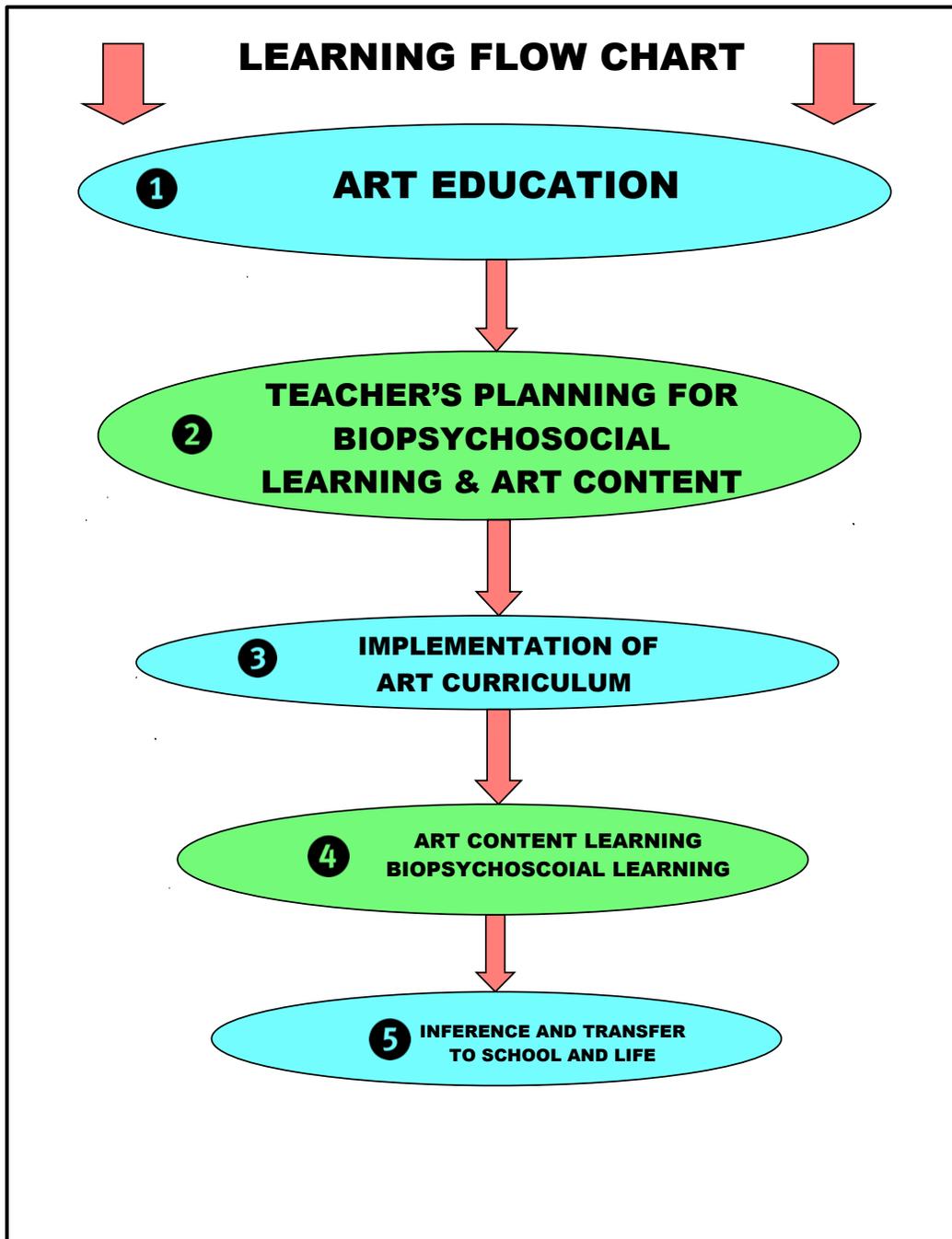


Figure 2.1. Learning flow chart. The above flow chart depicts the learning cycle of an art education curriculum unit through teacher planning, curriculum implementation, learning, and then the transfer of knowledge gained through art education to other aspects of school and students' lives.

Through meta-synthesis, this literature review addresses the growing body of knowledge in biopsychosocial art education that contributes to an important diversification of learning content for students (Cooper, 2017; Derakhshan & Singh, 2011; Paterson, 2012; Walsh, 2005) by examining themes of (a) art education and curriculum, (b) verbal and visual storytelling, and (c) Biography Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018). Meta-synthesis in qualitative research is when multiple individual studies that relate to a certain topic are used to arrive at new or enhanced learning about a particular study, providing a visionary outcome (Paterson, 2012). Through meta-synthesis (Walsh, 2005), as if weaving warp and weft threads on a loom, the research, practice, and theory presented in this literature review provide a framework for curriculum development in art education.

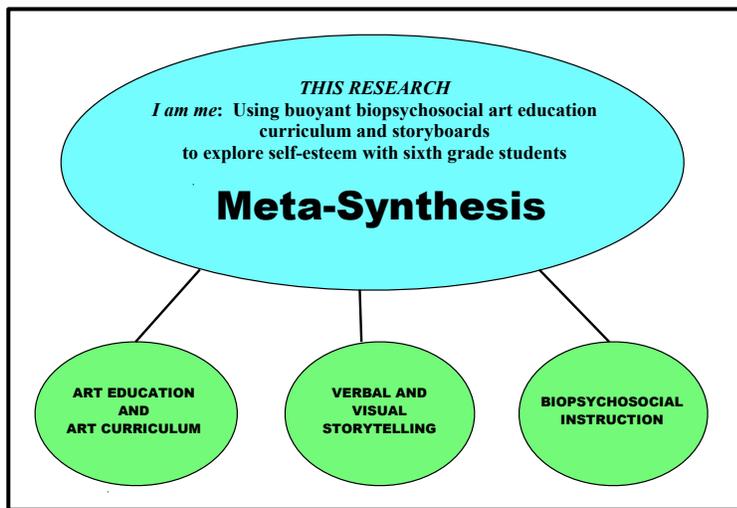


Figure 2.2. Meta-synthesis topics. Art education often involves a broad range of integrated topics in one lesson. In math, students study math, yet in and through art classes, students study many topics and themes, often within one art project. Because of this, this Arts Based Research investigation of art curriculum is also multi-faceted and is a meta-synthesis of art education and curriculum for middle school students, storytelling using a variety of communicative methods, and biopsychosocial learning or Biography Driven Instruction and Culturally Responsive Teaching. All three of these areas are investigated in this literature review to present one complex view of the *I Am Me* curriculum written for this study.

Purpose of the Review of the Literature

This chapter is divided into the sections of (a) grounding theoretical perspective, (b) historical context of the study, (c) synthesis of literature findings, (d) gaps and limitations of the literature, (e) indications for the future, and (f) unique contributions of the study. Theory, research, and practice are woven throughout this literature review.

Grounding Theoretical Perspective

Art is a way of knowing (Allen, 1995; Klein, 2003), gives opportunity to understand our biopsychosocial selves (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Leavy, 2015, 2018), and also tells stories (Maggio, 2014; Olson, 1998). Art can be complex and often functions in three zones of communication including the

- visual—what is processed through viewing and seeing;
- verbal—what is processed through reading, speaking, and hearing;
- and a unique combination of the visual and verbal—referred to as “vervisual” by this researcher, where both must be present for understanding to occur (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Leavy, 2015).

Through art making, students are fundamentally given the ability to make many choices (Eisner, 2002) including depicting and revealing their own visual, verbal, and visual/verbal stories that can exhibit positive or negative thought, depict self-esteem, reveal identity, and *buoyantly* lift oneself up—buoyant is used as a metaphor in the *I Am Me* curriculum to indicate tangible items that “lift up” such as a bird or balloon, or intangible emotions such as having a positive outlook in life— or sometimes reveal difficulties of life that can cause a student to have less positive emotions. In this chapter, Arts Based Research (ABR) will lay the theoretical

framework, built upon the foundational research of Eisner (2002) and Dewey (1934). In order to understand the importance of ABR, it is important to learn of its evolution as a research paradigm.

Historical Development of Arts Based Research

The foundational theories of Dewey (1934), Eisner (2002), and ABR (Leavy, 2018; Rolling, 2010) intertwine and build upon each other as bricks. The masonry of Eisner built upon Dewey. ABR is built upon Eisner. The theories of all three—ABR, Eisner, and Dewey—inform art education and Arts Based Research by arguing that art has multiple meanings, is exploratory, makes micro to macro connections, raises awareness, provides a setting for marginalized students and all students to communicate with a non-verbal language, welcomes cultural diversity and sensory experience, blends with the written language, and gives a complete, whole child, holistic experience to participants through art.

Dewey's historical contribution to Arts Based Research. While educators often think of Dewey (1934, 1938a, 1938b) as a philosopher of *education*, which he was, his work was also groundbreaking in relaying the importance of creativity in learning and had large implications for *art* education. More than a century later with major global changes due to the speed of communication and transportation among other things, researchers still turn to Dewey (1897) for guidance. While globalization is now affecting most of the entire world (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004), more than one hundred years ago Dewey (1897) theorized the importance of school work reflecting life, and his observation is still significant:

I believe that the school must represent present life—life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground. I believe that education which does not occur through forms of life, or that are worth living

for their own sake, is always a poor substitute for the genuine reality and tends to cramp and to deaden. (p. 293)

Dewey's (1934) educational theory views art as an experience and states that art has more value when people let go of the tradition associated with it. Dewey sees art as a vehicle to excite and ignite the imagination. Transformation happens in art when artists realize their experiences need expression (Dewey, 1934). Dewey's position is the act of experiencing art is of great value in the educational process, in growing the mind, and in creating society. Dewey believed the value of art was its perceptual experience, more so than making art. Guided by imagination, students can experience innovative and inventive growth through learning (Dewey, 1934).

Eisner's historical contribution to Arts Based Research. Eisner (1988a, 1998b, 2002) is credited with bringing the conversation about arts based theory to a more open, informed dialogue where the art experience is more fully connected to the dynamic physical and psychological needs of human beings to be expressive. Eisnerian theory contends that our environment is qualitative and is shaped by sights, sounds, tastes, and smells (Eisner, 1988a, 2002). "It's a process that is shaped by culture, influenced by language, impacted by beliefs, affected by values, and moderated by the distinctive features of that part of ourselves we sometimes describe as our individuality" (Eisner, 2002, p.1). Eisner (2002) describes senses as people's first avenues to consciousness and contends that humans have a unique ability to create culture. Eisner's (1988a, 1998b, 2002) theory states people have the ability to use imagination and creativity to think of and imagine unencountered possibilities and to share their private thoughts in public ways. Like Dewey (1934), his predecessor, Eisner (2002) felt that art was an experience created by the interaction with life. Through Eisner (2002), art education has become

more open minded to the learner, allowing imagination and choice to guide student artists and by allowing students to immerse themselves in the sensory experience of life.

Arts Based Research

Arts Based Research (ABR) is becoming a more commonly used informant in research. Arts based theory was first discussed by Eisner (Leavy, 2018). From the informed lens of Eisner, ABR is emerging as a methodology *or* theoretical framework, and no longer just an informant in research (Leavy, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2018; McNiff, 2008, 2017). Leavy (2018) builds upon McNiff (2008) and defines ABR as a process of inquiry where the researcher engages the making of art as a primary mode of inquiry, alone or in group settings, and argues that ABR could become a generalized way of conducting and analyzing research. McNiff (2008) defines ABR in this way:

Art-based research can be defined as systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. These inquiries are distinguished from research activities where the arts may play a significant role but are essentially used as data for investigations that take place within academic disciplines that utilize more traditional scientific, verbal, and mathematic descriptions and analysis of phenomena. (p. 29)

McNiff (2008) also explains the domain of art-based research—he does not call it Arts Based Research as Leavy (2018) does—as having a more concentrated “application of the larger epistemological process of artistic knowing and inquiry” (p. 29). McNiff states ABR has come into existence as a type of research because of the many higher education and professional research studies exploring its viability as a primary mode of inquiry in recent years. Prior to the

modern-day emphasis on ABR, McNiff posits that artists such as Pablo Picasso viewed their art making as research and through the lens of research.

Utilizing Arts Based Research. According to Leavy (2018), before people make an intellectual response to a stimulus, they have probably first had a visceral emotional or psychological response. The foundational premise of ABR is using art in biopsychosocial kinds of ways—examining the physical, psychological, and social being— as a research tool. Neuroscience has made recent discoveries that “indicate that art may have unmatched potential to promote deep engagement, make lasting impressions, and therefore possesses unlimited potential to education” (Leavy, 2018, p. 3). Researchers are looking for innovative ways to conduct research and are tapping into the power of the arts to do so (Holm, Sahistrom, & Zilliacus, 2017; Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2017). According to Leavy (2018), “ABR is a transdisciplinary approach to knowledge building that combines the tenets of the creative arts in research contexts” (p. 4). ABR adapts the tools of research—problem generation, data selection, analysis, and interpretation—and uses them for inquiry and to address research questions more holistically (Leavy, 2018). To many scholars, ABR is advancing from being simply a theoretical framework or methodology and becoming its own paradigm just as quantitative and qualitative research are (Gerber, Templeton, Chilton, Liebman, Manders, & Shim, 2012; Chilton & Leavy, 2014; Leavy, 2018; Neilson, 2004; Rolling, 2013).

Qualitative characteristics of Arts Based Research. Arts Based Research: (a) recognizes that art conveys truth(s); (b) recognizes art brings out knowledge of self and others; (3) values preverbal ways of knowing; and (4) encompasses multiple ways of knowing, such as sensory, kinesthetic, and imaginary knowing (Leavy, 2018). Art teachers have always explored and worked within the perimeters of psychology and ABR gives a closer link between the two

(Leavy, 2018). ABR has many similarities with qualitative research, according to Leavy (2018). Leavy (2018) posits that both paradigms (qualitative research and ABR) seek to illuminate the social world, strive to portray people and their circumstances with sensitivity, look for relationships between our lives and sociohistorical environments, challenge biases, and disrupt injustices. The strengths of ABR as summarized from Leavy (2009, 2018) include

- offering new insights, learning, and multiple meanings;
- describing, exploring, discovering, and problem solving;
- making micro to macro connections;
- functioning in the realms of thought that is holistic, provocative, and evocative;
- serving as a means to raise awareness through critical consciousness and empathy;
- usefulness in studies involving stereotypes, dominant ideologies, and marginalized perspectives and voices;
- organizing participatory opportunities;
- creating a multitude of meanings;
- and the capability of producing public scholarship and usefulness.

ABR requires creativity and innovation by researchers. The researcher or participants are not just making art, rather the researcher is looking beyond art to the larger goal. Arts based practitioners and researchers, according to Leavy (2018) need specific skills to conduct ABR research. Leavy argues that ABR researchers need to: (a) be flexible, open, and intuitive; (b) think conceptually, symbolically, and metaphorically; (c) use ethics and values; (d) think like an artist; and (e) think like a public intellectual.

Challenge with Arts Based Research. The challenge with ABR is how to analyze the data (Leavy, 2018). Finley (2008) argues that ABR is firmly planted as a methodology. The

methodology could be making art and analyzing it through an acute lens such as artists' interpretation of their work and artist statements (Finley, 2008; Leavy, 2018). While ABR is growing as a methodology of choice, at the very least, ABR easily functions as a theoretical framework (Leavy, 2009, 2015, 2018; McNiff, 2008). Essentially ABR struggles with the same types of research analysis that qualitative research evokes among the scientific research community (Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2008). When data is not the aggregates of populations and other means and modes that the scientific research community commonly investigates, and instead the data analysis involves the uniqueness of individual people's lives and activities by the informed opinion and narrative of the researcher, qualitative research must carefully navigate through methodology and theoretical framework that clearly defines the research (Stake, 1995). The final analysis must also be clearly communicated and supported by theory (Stake, 1995). Just as the quantitative researcher can sometimes feel unprepared to analyze qualitative data, ABR research can also cause more scrutiny as a research method and framework by non-art researchers (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

One question that causes some researchers issues with ABR is they do not know how to write the narrative for ABR research (Leavy, 2018). Generally, one has to speak or know a language to understand it. Can the same be said about art and ABR? Do researchers need to speak the *visual language* of art to be able to understand how to analyze the ABR data? That is highly likely according to Leavy (2018) and much like a culturally and linguistically diverse student can struggle with the dominant language of a school, some researchers struggle with ABR (Leavy, 2018; Herrera, 2016). Because art is so personal and art making involves many unique and individualized choices, a dilemma occurs in Arts Based Research when attempting to find logical, concrete ways to use the data for analysis. A researcher may need to view the data

through a more abstract lens (Leavy, 2016), much like qualitative research is done. While art based data such as color analysis, mark and symbol making, and image analysis—which are all three used in this *I Am Me* study—can be adapted for data analysis in Arts Based Research (Leavy, 2016), at least color analysis and to some degree mark making may need to be accompanied by an artist’s statement explaining the choices and reasons for the artist’s creative decisions.

Arts Based Research components of this study. Color analysis, mark making, and image analysis are summarized in the following section as Art Based Research components of this *I Am Me* research.

Color analysis. Extensive literature on the connection between emotion and color abounds. The literature also reveals that researchers contend that empirical, conclusive data does not exist on connecting specific colors in amassed ways with emotions (Ciotti, 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2007, 2014; Finlay, 2002; Lee & Andrade, 2010). For example, while an exhaustive search of the literature may find some studies in which the emotions produced by the color green were analyzed (Ciotti, 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2007, 2014), there is no generalized and summarized data that emphatically states that green evokes calmness, as many interior design books state (Beazley, 2004; Connors, 2006; Eiseman, 1998, 2003; Starmer, 2005).

A review of interior design books tends to reveal that research is rarely cited when a designer writes about the “mood” of color (Beazley, 2004; Connors, 2006; Eiseman, 1998, 2003; Starmer, 2005). Leatrice Eiseman (1998, 2003), founder of the Eiseman Center for Color Information and Training, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, and a color consultant for many industries, states that color is an individual preference and that people should use guided imagery to decide what colors they want to use—choosing colors that come

from their memories. Eiseman (2003) states that “there is no question that color wields a powerful psychological message” (p. 18), yet she cites no research to inform the psychology of color. Instead, Eiseman states that color is personal or cultural, and that the meanings are either “learned by association or inherently sensed” (2003, p. 18). One of the world’s color experts, Eiseman (2003) conveys the mood that color evokes in individuals is totally personal and dependent upon the person’s life, feelings, and experiences.

Essentially, color provides three main functions for human beings when they examine objects including (a) providing information, (b) creating composition, and (c) conveying expression (Zettl, 2005). The attributes of images, including color and shape, allow people to make judgements about what they see and, for example, distinguish an orange from an apple (Kuzinas, Noiret, Bianchi, & Laurent, 2016). In the 1660’s Sir Isaac Newton experimented with light and color, establishing the colors we see in white light and rainbows, and opening a pathway for hundreds of years of color investigation (Smithsonian Libraries, 2018).

While the effect of color is important in distinguishing items, the analysis of color is a controversial topic (Ciotti, 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2007, 2014; Finlay, 2002). Color psychology invokes a great deal of opinion among psychologists, artists, and designers, yet it is backed up with little generalization of data (Ciotti, 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2007, 2014; Finlay, 2002; Lee & Andrade, 2010). The many lists of moods and emotions that various colors evoke is really more opinion, than data driven research (Ciotti, 2014). Elliot and Maier (2007) state “color is a ubiquitous perceptual experience, yet little scientific information about the influence of color on affect, cognition, and behavior is available” (p. 250). Elliot and Maier (2014) conducted theoretical and empirical investigations of emerging empirical findings of the last ten years on the effects of color and psychological functioning and found:

. . . color can carry important meaning and can have an important impact on people's affect, cognition and behavior. The literature remains at a nascent stage of development, however, and we note that considerable work on boundary conditions, moderators, and real-world generalizability is needed before strong conceptual statements and recommendations for application are warranted. (p. 95)

There is an inexhaustible wealth of literature available on color and emotion. In regards to the psychological effects of color, a review of the literature reveals color research is often done on the brightness, darkness, or lightness of a hue or on gender preferences. Research demonstrates that "elements such as personal preference, experiences, upbringing, cultural differences, context, etc., often muddy the effect individual colors have on us" (Ciotti, 2014, p. 1). There is some research available to assist in color analysis, yet the best psychology of color use and color psychology actually comes from the stated thoughts, feelings, and emotions of people (Ciotti, 2014; Eiseman, 1998, 2003). Color is dependent upon personal experience (Ciotti, 2014; Eiseman, 1998, 2003).

In research conducted by Valdez and Mehrabian (1994), the connection between emotion and color was investigated. Valdez and Mehrabian report "much of the research on color and affect is weak on several grounds" (1994, p. 394). Their empirical investigation of color and affect reported two main problems (Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). The first problem found by Valdez and Mehrabian in a review of the literature was that research did not provide adequate controls or specification for color stimuli. Secondly, Valdez and Mehrabian's research indicated another problem with many research studies was they did not use sufficiently "reliable, valid, or comprehensive measures of emotional responses to color stimuli" (1994, p. 394). Valdez and Mehrabian's empirical review indicated a significant number of people that found that colors

such as white, light grey, or lighter tints of colors were “more pleasant, less arousing, and less dominance-inducing than are the less bright colors” (1994, p. 407), such as blacks, dark greys, and darker colors. Their study also found that darker colors tended to represent feelings of aggression, anger, hostility, displeasure, dominance, or high arousal. Valdez & Mehrabian’s results replicated Frank and Gilovich’s (1988). Damhorst and Reed (1986) also confirmed that darker colors represented power or dominance.

Bianchi et al. argue that color creates noticeable effect on emotions, noting that blues and greens are associated with positive emotions and browns and grey with negative emotions. El Sadek et al. (2013) found dark green was associated with calmness and relaxation. Color also creates affective value for the viewer meaning that people’s individual personalities, characteristics, and emotions influence their color choices and preferences (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994; Detenber, Simons, & Reiss, 2000; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994; Zentner, 2001; Zettl, 2005).

While research abounds on the use of color and the effects of color on emotions, the ultimate psychology of color really depends on the psychology of the viewer or creator and the reasons they are drawn to a color or choose a color. (Finlay, 2002). Research clearly shows that the most accurate color analysis will come from assessing people’s opinions and reasons for connecting to a color (Ciotti, 2014; Elliot & Maier, 2014; Finlay, 2002).

Mark-making and drawing. Mark and symbol making analysis comes out of decades of stage theory research. Kerlavage (1998) states:

Symbols are profound expressions of human nature. They occur in all cultures, in all time periods, and in varying degrees of complexity. Human communication depends largely on signs in the forms of spoken and written words, images, and gestures. Each

culture develops its own forms of communication within these symbols systems. Thus the sounds we make, the words and numbers we write, the gestures we make, and the images we draw are all symbols designed to convey information. (p. 30)

The very nature of art making, of placing images on a paper or canvas, uses marks and symbols to convey meaning (Kerlavage, 1998). Artists speak through the images they create and reveal creative intent and thought (Kerlavage, 1998). Through a knowledge of stage and mark-making theory, those who view art can gain basic understandings of the messages being communicated by child artists (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 1998).

Pre-service teachers learn of stage theory in teacher preparation programs in an effort to gain better understanding of their students' developmental abilities and to plan pedagogy related to students' abilities (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). While many stage theories exist, Day and Hurwitz have simplified stage theory to a three-step stage that is representative of mark making and symbolism in art production. Day and Hurwitz's stage theory is not rigidly situated in concrete levels, acutely organized by specific abilities at certain ages. Instead, they recognize that child and adolescent mark making ability is affected by a variety of components including the maturity of the child or adolescent, instructions given by a teacher, or as knowledge of the adult world of art and art making grows.

Stage one is called *The Manipulative Stage* and is refers to children two to five years of age in early childhood (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). In this phase, children mark, scribble, and draw as soon as they can hold a pencil or other instrument (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). It is called the manipulative stage because children manipulate media—pencils, crayons, paint, and so on— as much as their fine motor skills and cognitive processes allow. Stage two is *The Symbol Making Stage* and is refers to children ages six to nine, in approximately first to fourth grade (Day &

Hurwitz, 2012). In this stage, the child makes a connection between an image and an idea (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). The third stage moves into the preadolescent age-range of later elementary school or middle school students.

In the third stage, called *The Preadolescent Stage*, children are aged ten to twelve and in the fifth to eighth grade (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). The physical, mental, and social changes of adolescents help to define the symbolism of this stage. According to Day and Hurwitz, it is during this pre-adolescent stage that children pull back from making art and become critically aware of their skills or lack of skills. “Students become increasingly interested in social, political, and personal influences in art and respond to themes that will engage them in discussion as well as production” (Day & Hurwitz, 2012, p. 56). Kerlavage (1998) calls this stage *Artistic Challenges*. According to Kerlavage, learners of this age prefer to draw from observation, rather than their imaginations. This pre-adolescent stage of art making is affected by the emotions of older children, their developmental need of moving away from adults telling them what is right or wrong and to begin developing their own sense of rightness, and a need for independence (Kerlavage, 1998). Students of this age will “move from unconscious imaginative activity to critical awareness, develop visual attention to reality, express dissatisfaction with their visual representations, and place increasing emphasis on the final product rather than the working process” (Kerlavage, 2014, p. 54). The challenge with this stage of mark making is getting adolescents to share or convey the meaning of their abstract mark making (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 2014). A verbal or written artist statement of mark making and symbolic choices may be needed to fully understand adolescents’ mark making intent (Day & Hurwitz, 2012).

Image analysis. Image analysis techniques give researchers a method for analysis of pictures and images through an ABR lens. ABR is garnering social and human science attention as qualitative researchers continue to use more images in research and also use ABR to respond to particular questions and issues, both about the images and the narrative generated by image analysis (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2017; McNiff, 2017). Images are used in research in a variety of ways including assessing elusive aspects of knowledge, helping synthesize knowledge, looking at subjects in new ways, encouraging transparency and reflexivity in the research process, influencing ways of seeing and thinking, helping to disseminate research findings to larger and different audiences, and by helping researchers make theoretical statements (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2017). Research exists in examining facial expressions (Slessor, et al., 2014; Kaiser, Davey, Parkhouse, Meeres, & Scott, 2016). One study of note found that cultural differences clearly exist in processing and understanding facial expressions (Yan, Andrews, & Young, 2016). Essentially, a smile may not always be a smile (Yan, Andrews, & Young, 2016). To be culturally sensitive to facial expressions it may be necessary to have students in diverse settings explain their facial expressions (Yan, Andrews, & Young, 2016).

Arts Based Research and This Study

ABR is research that “searches for ways to utilize visual arts in studying the human experience in more complex ways” (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2017, p. 311). Both qualitative research and Arts Based Research give a more intimate, human way of seeing and knowing why people make the choices they make and why and how students grow and learn (Leavy, 2018). Through the anecdotal evidence of artifacts such as verbal and visual statements by artists, researchers can gain a better understanding of the complex creative choices of artists (Leavy, 2018).

Historical Context of Study

Building on the theoretical framework of ABR (Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2008), the history of the development of art education combined with, (a) the generation of art curriculum, (b) the way in which students share their identities through verbal and visual storytelling, and (c) the linking of social emotional or intercultural learning with art education suggest a more concentrated focus on these specific areas is plausible in using specific 21st century school art curriculum for a more significant purpose in student learning that goes above and beyond art content (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Davis, 2008, 2012b; Klein, 2003; Zimmerman, 2002).

Art Education and Curriculum

A relevant 21st century art education program should be engaging and relevant to students and also avoid what Heijnen (2015) calls yawning phenomenon—meaning that course activity should not be boring. According to Karpov (2014), students won't learn without interest in the subject. Smart and articulate students tend to accept the taught art curriculum (Davis, 2012b), even when it may have no relevance to them, as in the case of high school students being asked to design an LP cover—a long playing vinyl record album cover produced as protective covers for large records in the late 20th century— when they have no background knowledge of an LP cover (Heijnen, 2015). Timely, relevant curriculum is the goal of a relevant, progressive, meaningful art education program (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017; Heijnen, 2015).

Some art teachers have a better understanding of timely curricular relevance than others (Davis, 2012b). When art teachers have knowledgeable insight about advances in art education, the curriculum becomes broader in depth of topic, scope, and meaningfulness (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Franklin, 2017). Crawford (2004) indicates six reasons for using art education: (a) content becomes more accessible through visual learning; (b) joyful, active, engaged learning is induced;

(c) personal connections are made by students to the content; (d) understandings and expressions of abstract concepts occur; (e) higher-level thinking is stimulated; and (f) collaborative work skills and a sense of community are built. If art teachers use Eisner's (2002) belief that the arts help people look within and through something, art teachers could apply this same thought to planning curriculum. How can the art curriculum be broader, yet at the same time specific?

The globalized world (Stewart, 2010) is generating new thoughts and ideals toward the art education curriculum (Szekely, 1996). Current art teachers are exploring how to move beyond the typical and traditional art content of art history, media (art supplies) use and techniques, and investigations of *Elements of Art* and *Principles of Design* (essentially a vocabulary for art such as line, shape, color, form, emphasis, textures, and so on) to more timely, relevant curricular themes that encompass social justice, the environment, social emotional learning, STEAM, global studies, and so on (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Some scholars note many school art programs have not moved past the "old way" of teaching art (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006; Downing, 2005; Harland, 2008; Steers, 2007).

Leaders in the field of art education constantly strive for art education to be timely, relevant, and beyond useful in students' classrooms and lives (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017; Franklin, 2017). The fact is that many or most art teachers understand the relevance of art education in holistic learning of students (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017; Franklin, 2017), yet formally linking with school counselors and administrators to accomplish these goals happens less (Franklin, 2017). Additionally, art education is a field that must advocate at the local, state, and national level for its existence and so being timely and relevant is critical (Franklin, 2017). One way that art education can be more relevant is with focused emphasis on authentic curriculum and a more

authentic art education that is relevant to modern learners in a globalized world (Haanstra, 2001; Zimmerman, 2002).

Authentic art education. Folkert Haanstra (2001) researched authentic art education. Haanstra's theory is based on the authentic learning theory (Roelofs & Houtveen, 1999) in educational psychology *and* on developments in the field of art education. "Authentic learning takes place in relevant, practical, and real-life contexts in which students play an active, constructive, and reflexive role that includes communication and interaction with others" (Roelofs & Houtveen, 1999, p. 240). Authentic learning processes are grounded in realistic social-cultural activities (Franssen, Roelofs, & Terwel, 1995).

To assist 21st century art education in moving away from the traditional methods and topics of art education to a new way and new age of globalized enlightenment in the field, Haanstra (2001) built upon Roelofs and Houtveen's (1999) definition of authentic education by introducing authentic art education. Haanstra's (2001) four main design principles of authentic art education are briefly summarized here:

- Learning is aimed towards the culture and prior knowledge of the student. Learning respects students' opinion and interests.
- Learning outside of the school is important. Professional art is important to school art, just as an architectural engineering company and their work is important to education in that field. Learning is authentic when it has implications for the real world.
- Learning should be global, divergent, complex, be initiated by students, and exploratory.
- Learning should involve communication and cooperation. Peer evaluation is an important part of learning.

Art educators must have a keen awareness of the outside world and bring it into the classroom (Haanstra, 2001, 2010). According to Haanstra (2001, 2010), authentic art education is an instructional approach that criticizes traditional art education and demands more attention on contemporary art, contemporary ways of thinking and viewing art, art in professional fields, art themes, and a hyper-focus on learners' needs. Authentic art education does not mean "anything goes." Rather, it advocates for social-constructivist learning principles with the goal of making meaningful connections between the field of art and the needs and interests of students (Haanstra, 2001, 2010). Authentic art education is not necessarily a new way of thinking of art education; it is just a new way for some art educators to think. Authentic art education asks for art education to be *more* (Haanstra, 2001, 2010). Many art educators have been visionary in the purpose, role, and effects of art education for decades (Eisner, 2002; Franklin, 2017), yet other educators have lagged behind in relevance (Zimmerman, 2002).

Efland's identification of "school style art" in 1976 is an example of non-authentic art education. Efland (1976) found art done in schools was traditional, especially elementary schools, and was of a certain style with easy media, and produced without much cognitive strain. This "school style of art" did not give students choice. Haanstra (2001) found a global phenomenon in the type of art made in schools, especially elementary school art, with a certain "look" and "feel" common all over the world. Anderson and Milbrandt (1998) found that school art was highly controlled, had to be conservative, and was institutionalized because it must have that school art type of *look*. Anderson and Milbrandt (1998) state that school art is reminiscent of the modern art era when art was considered a pleasurable aesthetic. Lindström (2009) views art as a place where students can take a break from the cognitive thinking of school and where

students enjoy working with their hands instead of their brain. These research studies synthesize the trend of the simple in school art, especially elementary art.

While state and national standards mandate what must be taught in middle and high school, secondary art also has its prescribed contents, themes, and methods that tend to be popular to use (Davis, 2012b). Recent studies of secondary school art curriculum show that some school art programs are trapped in the traditional approach of art education—media technique, art history, aesthetics, and critique—and are not making art education relevant in students’ lives and behaviors as 21st century citizens (Buschkuhle, 2007; Downing, 2005; Duncum, 2007; Haanstra, 2010; Haanstra, Van Strien, & Wagenaar, 2009, Harland, 2008).

Artistic behaviors. Douglas and Jaquith (2009) discuss *artistic behaviors* as activities that sustain and inform the creative process. Artistic behaviors are a broad list of characteristics and topics and there is no way to specifically teach them (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Instead, teachers should have the goal of teaching *for* artistic behavior (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Douglas and Jaquith state these behaviors happen inside and outside the art classroom and support artistic inquiry and self-driven activities. “By setting up proper circumstances, teachers can create opportunities for a variety of artistic behavior to emerge and flourish” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 2). Artistic behaviors, according to Douglas and Jaquith, range from problem finding, problem solving, constructing knowledge, experimenting, and working habits to representing, reflecting, connecting, and valuing. Artistic behaviors contribute to the essence of planning and organizing as teachers so that students can be “given freedom to follow their ideas and to learn by taking risks” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 5). Taking into consideration the cultures of students in pedagogical planning broadens creative thought and behaviors (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Douglas & Jaquith, 2009)

Arts cultura. Davis (2008) defines *arts cultura* as “the ways in which the arts give form to and connect the many different definitions of culture that pervade our thought and language” (p. 21). Although Davis seems to describe culture or “cultura” through a narrow lens of thinking and communicating, the overall meaning of the term is broader where all students have a culture or worldview unique to themselves and solidifying their place within the larger shared human culture. Davis contends that the arts give shape to sense-making of culture. “In arts cultura, art educators recognize and frame curriculum around the role of making art in the expression of a continuum of views of culture” (p. 22). Davis lists four levels of culture: (a) the culture of the individual—the unique worldview and understanding of the student; (b) cultures present in communities—views of communities that the student is most closely associated with; (c) varying cultures of ethnicities and nationalities—worldviews held by geographic setting, political setting, or religious frameworks; and (4) the larger culture of being a part of the human race—the meaningful connection seen in the stories and self of human beings as they become expressive across the world. Davis’ four levels of culture are reflective of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory where the microsystem passes through the macrosystem, eventually reaching the chronosystem of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Davis, the arts give students a way to communicate their culture and to experience differences and similarities and also give educators a way to introduce students to cultural understandings, discoveries, and connections.

Emotional aspect of art. A discussion of art education cannot happen without including emotion either directly or indirectly as art conveys the emotion of the artist (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Zimmerman, 2002). “One of the obvious ways in which arts learning differs from other subjects is its deliberate focus on emotion” (Davis, 2012b). Students may express joy when

solving a math problem, they may feel sorry for the cat they dissect in biology, and they may feel outrage at injustices in history class, but “the expression of joy, compassion, or outrage is not a featured goal of learning in math, biology, or history” (p. 33). Emotions and their expression are often a frequent learning objective in the arts (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Davis, 2012b; Klein, 2003; Szekely, 1996). Spendlove (2007) found that emotion is manifested by the personality and emotions of the artist, the processes the artist uses, and the products the artist manipulates to convey the visual language of their artmaking. Brackett, Ebert, Hoffmann, Ivcevic, and Phan (2015) found that children learned to better use emotions to facilitate thinking through art making. Wright (2012) argues that the arts give a viable vehicle for children to use in conveying and representing their thoughts and feelings and often use the analogy and metaphor of art to exhibit these thoughts and emotions. This research, and a large abounding body of other research, confirm the use of art in both examining and teaching social and emotion learning (SEL).

Social emotional learning. SEL is a broad topic that should be encapsulated in learning for all students (Durlak, 2016). It serves an important purpose in art education (Bastos, 2010; Ebert, Hoffmann, Ivcevic, Phan, & Brackett, 2015; Chang, Lim, & Song, 2013; Russell & Hutzel, 2007; Sidney-Ando, 2014; Spendlove, 2007; Wright, 2012), yet it also serves a valid role in other pedagogical areas including educational settings involving culturally and linguistically diverse students (Herrera, 2016) and the sharing of verbal and visual stories in the school setting (Olson, 1998). SEL is defined as “the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others” (Cristóvão, Candeias, & Verdasca, 2017, abstract). According to Gay (2018), SEL “is particularly apropos because of its primary targets for reform (social and emotional skill development) and its correlations with

various forms of positive school performance” (p. 233). The intent of SEL is “creating learning environments that meet the needs of students for belonging, safety, and community, and thereby provide ideal conditions for high-quality academic, relational, and personal wellness” (Gay, 2018, p. 234). The American Institutes for Research states that developing social and emotional well-being is a key component in improving learning conditions (AIR, 2018).

Self-esteem and positivity through art production. The use of art in developing self-esteem is well documented. Self-esteem is defined by Eisenberg, Damon, and Harter (2006) and Roosa, Ruiz, and Gonzales (2002) as having a global evaluation of one’s own worth, meaning that one’s self-esteem is affected by internal and external factors and doesn’t only come from within our sense of self—our sense of place is also a determining factor. Stanley (2003) found that photography could be used to engage and empower adolescents. In a study by Matarasso (1997), 80% of those surveyed stated that art making activities increased their sense of self-worth and confidence. Hickman (2006) found that when students are given opportunity to assist and lead other students in art making, their self-esteem grows, even when some of the experiences are negative. Arslan (2014) found that the environment of the art classroom can help improve students’ self-esteem and positive opinions about themselves. Griffey (2003) found that school art classes gave high school Latinas with low self-esteem a buoyant boost or increase in feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Morin, Mañano, Marsh, Nagengast, and Janosz (2013) argue that students’ self-esteem is affected by personal experiences at school, school characteristics, and school climate. Two studies provide significant argument regarding sixth grade students. Witherspoon, Schotland, Way, and Hughes (2009) found self-esteem and having a feeling of connectedness in school were two related feelings found among sixth graders. Morrison, Cosden, O’Farrell, and Campos (2003) argue that peer self-concept and self-worth

were related to important relationships forming and bonding in school among sixth grade students. This reported research seems to indicate that self-esteem is related to the feeling of connectedness and belonging. Self-esteem resulting from connectedness is aligned with stage-environment theory (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Eccles & Roeser, 2009), which stresses the importance of (a) having relationships and a sense of belonging, (b) providing opportunity for independence and security, and (c) giving students opportunity for gaining competence and achievement in helping students gain self-esteem.

Cowan and Clover (1991) report five factors that function as antecedents of gaining an enhanced sense of self or gaining self-esteem through school art activities. Cowan and Clover call these factors (a) affiliation, (b) personal worth, (c) security, (d) accomplishment, and (e) opportunity for the expression of emotion or feeling and the therapeutic value created by tactile experiences.

- The affiliation factor is when a child feels bonded or as an accepted member of a group (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991). During art making, students who are outsiders, troubled, or loners can often be drawn into the mainstream group (Cowan & Clover, 1991).
- The personal worth factor involves children feeling special, unique, and that their ideas have value and worth (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991). They see their art making as a unique expression of their individuality (Cowan & Clover, 1991).
- The security factor means that a child is able to take risks—physical, social, or artistic risks (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991). In art making this child is able to accept either criticism or compliments (Cowan & Clover, 1991).

- The accomplishment factor means students feel a sense of accomplishment or achievement when a project is completed (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991). In art making, children feel pride while making their projects (Cowan & Clover, 1991).
- When the expression of emotion or feeling factor is at work, a child tends to freely talk about their art making and the feelings exhibited within their art (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991).

According to Cowan & Clover (1991):

High self-esteem is a consequence of having experienced meaningful success. The most meaningful way for teachers to help students feel self-esteem is to help them set meaningful goals that they can attain, and ask them to verbalize the relationship between their efforts and their accomplishments. (pp. 41-42)

The art classroom gives a variety of opportunities and experiences for adolescents to explore their identity and grow their self-esteem (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). The structure of art classes gives students a unique opportunity to self-direct their journey. Educators should be watchful that feelings of doubt, lack of self-worth, troubled minds, and behavior issues do not grow through art making and can guide learning in most cases through pedagogical choices and implemented strategies towards a more positive goal (Cowan & Clover, 1991). According to Wiesner-Groff (2018) educators can use a variety of strategies to build students' self-esteem (see Appendix B for more information on Wiesner-Groff's strategies for building self-esteem in the classroom). Some of Wiesner-Groff's strategies that apply to the art classroom in art specific ways include valuing students' individual strengths and abilities, establishing achievable goals, offering choices, and showing excitement about their progress.

Categorizing self-esteem. According to DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996), three basic or primary contexts of early adolescent development—family, friends, and school— and two salient domains of early adolescents’ experience— involvement in activities and body image, are prevalent categories in analyzing adolescent self-esteem. DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips and Lease reported that research done prior to their study on adolescent self-esteem had not proven consequential in identifying context for the development of self-esteem. In their study, the development and use of a Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ) allowed them to survey adolescents using a developmental-ecological framework. The five areas of adolescent self-esteem that DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease identified now run throughout a vast amount of research done on self-esteem with this age of student (Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Morin, Maïano, Marsh, Nagengast, & Janosz, 2013; Morrison, Cosden, O’Farrell, & Campos, 2003; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Witherspoon, Schotland, Way, & Hughes, 2009).

Implications for art teaching. In 1949, James Mursell said that “teaching may best be defined as the organization of learning. In effect, teaching uses Paterson’s (2012) theory of meta-synthesis to assemble a montage of topics into one unit or lesson. It follows, therefore, that the problem of successful teaching is to organize learning for authentic results” (p. 233). Learning, according to Haanstra (2001), Heijnen (2015), and Roelofs and Houtveen (1999), is a process during which the learner acquires important insights for himself or herself, departing from intrinsic motivation, and building on existing knowledge, in well-designed lesson in which teachers focus on the learning process more than acquiring knowledge. Teachers play many roles, yet Wiggins and McTighe (2006) summarize three important roles as (a) didactic (direct) instruction, (b) constructivist facilitation, and (c) coaching for performance. When teachers

teach for understanding, the role of the teacher or the way a teacher wants to cover a topic must sometimes change.

In order to be viable members of 21st century society driven by innovation and creativity, students need the ability to be inventive (Dede, 2010). Gardner (1999) writes that future citizens should learn distinctive ways of examining and thinking about the world, as seen in science, history, and the arts. Art education gives students that distinctive way of examination by helping students learn to “build” from the ground up with teachers that allow risk, surprise, and confusion to generate new understandings (Schön, 1991). Herrington and Reeves (2011) state that good curriculum planning “enable teachers and instructional designers to use well-researched ideas as guidelines for their own efforts to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes” (p. 595).

Skills learned in art education are likely to transfer to others areas of students’ school efforts according to Eisner (2002). Goldstein, Vincent-Lancrin, and Winner (2013) conducted a large-scale study on the transfer effects of art education to other school subjects and in the development of creativity and critical thinking. They concluded that the Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan’s (2013) *arts habits of mind* create learning skills that transfer to other aspects of school. Art habits of mind are (a) craft development, (b) engagement, (c) persistence, (d) reflection, and (e) observation (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013). Well-designed art curriculum, based on the research, can contribute extensively to overall, holistic student learning, especially in the areas of biography, psychology, and social growth.

The middle school years. Middle school aged students are a unique and often active blend of child and adult, a unique combination of the playfulness of one and the questioning of the other. Their biographies, their psychologies, and their social growth become more

pronounced and developed (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Because of these developmental aspects of the middle school aged student, early adolescents can become disengaged in school and this can be a visible problem in school art classes (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Extensive research has been done on stage and environment levels of middle school students (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1997; Eccles & Midgley, 1989, Eccles & Roeser, 2009). Eccles is a leading researcher in the field of middle school students. Various studies completed by Eccles discuss the problem of a misalignment between typical middle school environments and young people's development causing disengagement. At a time when adolescents want more individualism, purpose, and respect from adults, schools become more teacher-directed and students have less opportunity to make decisions (Barber et. al. 1997), which causes most middle school students to develop a more negative opinion of school (Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). Other researchers state that students' perceptions of lack of individualism, connectedness, and competence in the classroom lead to disengagement (Osterman & Pace, 1999; Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

Middle school art education. In order to understand middle school students and their art making abilities, it is helpful to understand behavior development that affects learning in art. Kerlavage (1998) explains that a holistic understanding of students will allow better understanding of artistic development. Art begins with mark making. Mark making—drawing, doodling, and sketching— tends to be developmental in nature and students' abilities and the marks students make tells the intended artists' stories (Kerlavage, 1998). Kerlavage (1998) explains six areas of behavior development that affect developmental learning in art including (a) cognitive, (b) emotional and moral, (c) social, (d) language, (e) physical and perceptual, and (f) aesthetic.

Middle school students bring their cognition with them to class. In cognitive development, mental activities such as symbolizing, remembering, creating, problem solving, fantasizing, and categorizing are examples of processes that lead to knowing (Kerlavage, 1998). Cognition is the act of perceiving or knowing (Kerlavage, 1998). Kerlavage states that the development of these abilities is essential to the growth of artistic understanding. Many theories of cognitive development exist, but stage theories (theories that divide child development into stages of behavior and cognition) are relevant for art education (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1997; Eccles & Midgley, 1989, Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Kerlavage, 1998). Various theory by Case (1985), Fischer (1987), Gardner (1983, 1990), Inhelder (1967), Piaget and Inhelder (1969), Lowenfeld (1952), Piaget (1926, 1951), and Vygotsky (1986) all have particularities that directly inform art education. These various theories address the defined stages children move through, describe how children transform and organize information in different ways and at varying rates, maintain that learning is affected by outside influences, and that all children do not develop at the same pace (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1997; Eccles & Midgley, 1989, Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Kerlavage, 1998.) Cognitive growth travels through stages, is affected by culture and life experiences, and is different for all children.

Emotion is generally visible or not visible in adolescents, depending on the day, their mood, or their desire to let their emotion be known (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 1998). In emotional and moral development, children and adolescents usually develop through emotional stages in a sequential order (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Erikson, 1950; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006; Kerlavage, 1998; Kohlberg, 1984; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Essentially, these studies state that emotion plays a vital role in all areas of development.

Social development is highly complex, evolves very early in a child's life, and refers to the understanding of self, other people, and relationships (Kerlavage, 1998). Middle school students can often ride a wave of emotion from the high of happiness to the low of self-doubt and feelings of inferiority (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 1998). Social understanding develops by understanding one's own behavior to participating in complex situations involving understanding others' thoughts and behavior (Kerlavage, 1998). Herrera (2016) places importance on social development in whole child learning.

Two other forms of development are language and also the physical or perceptual development of children and adolescents. In developing language, one of the most phenomenal achievements of human beings, children acquire the basis for human communication (Kerlavage, 1998). Skinner (1957) and Chomsky (1969, 1976) explain that language is learned through a series of cognitive stages that involve auditory processing and visual understanding. In regards to physical and perceptual development, compared to other animals, humans go through a long period of physical development to reach adulthood (Kerlavage, 2018). The development of the perceptual and sensory modes of the human body also evolves slowly from simple to eventually complex understanding (Kerlavage, 2018). According to Kerlavage, by the time adolescents reach middle school many have developed language and communication skills, yet others struggle with linguistic understanding or even auditory processing. Kerlavage also contends that middle school students function all over the metaphorical road map on perceptual and physical development, especially younger middle school students such as sixth graders.

In the last stage of aesthetic development, learners view, interact with, make, and gain understanding of their art, the art of other people, and the world around them (Kerlavage, 1998).

Baldwin (1989), Day and Hurwitz (2012), Hobbs & Salome (1991), and Housen (1983), Parsons (1987) suggest that children go through varying stages of understanding and appreciating art.

Artistic behaviors. Pennisi (2013) asks teachers to encourage middle school students to make their own decisions in the classroom, even though this is a hard concept for teachers to grasp. Instead of focusing on what students do not know and whether skills and goals can be accomplished, Pennisi's art education research shows teachers should ask students to begin with ideas they are committed to and then make their school work connect to these ideas. Seeing students as capable, thinking individuals instead of human beings in need of being controlled or fixed will create engagement in the classroom (Pennisi, 2013). Pennisi also mentions the importance of visual and verbal reflection with middle school students. "If a required art class can be reconceptualized as a place for philosophical, cultural, and critical inquiry, then perhaps art can be understood as a site where adolescents have opportunities to question, reflect on, and interact with the world" (Pennisi, 2013, p. 137). According to Day and Hurwitz (2012), Pennisi (2013), and Zimmerman (2002), critical thinking through the processes of art making and art education assists middle school students in conveying thoughts and growing their knowledge base through critical inquiry.

Middle school curriculum. Day and Hurwitz (2012) explain that curriculum is actually a variety of educational components including (a) content that is planned for student learning, (b) actual instruction that takes place in the classroom, (c) what students learn, and (d) the life and school experience of the learner. Several factors influence the curriculum including meeting the needs, capacities, and diversifications of students, the values of the local community and larger society, local social issues and values (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). National, state, and local standards provide guidance in determining art curricular content (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Middle

school art specialists have the large task of generating the scope of learning and the sequence (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Day and Hurwitz also state this curriculum must take into account the developmental, cognitive, and emotional abilities of students.

Miller and Wolcott (1996) cite the middle school curriculum as complex because of the “intense, life-shifting experiences” (p. 12) of children of this age, approximately 11 years of age to around 14 year of age. Bracey (1993) says this time period in students’ lives should be called the “muddle school” instead of middle school because so many children are in a state of mental pause. This is in part because of the shift from the nurturing, loving, joyful, energetic, and protective atmosphere of the elementary school to a new environment that includes everything from social pressure to academic expectations (Miller & Wolcott, 1996). “Just as these youngsters are bidding for more autonomy, the middle school controls them more; just as they are entering a period of increased self-consciousness, the middle school promotes social comparison” (Bracy, 1993, p. 731). Art education can give students tools to help the progression from muddle to middle learning (Bracey, 1993).

Meaningful middle-school learning. Middle school curriculum needs to be sensitive to the unique needs of this age group of students during this time of contradictions (Miller & Wolcott, 1996). Johnson (1992) states the time period of middle school, a time of transition from childhood to adolescence, is extremely important and critical in child development. Miller and Wolcott state that middle school students vacillate from periods of hyper-awareness of everything around them to periods of total self-absorbency, turning everything around them out. They “beg for intellectual stimulation while at the same time they try to be cool and focus on their friends, ignoring the teacher” (Miller & Wolcott, 1996, p. 12). The challenge for art

teachers is how to plan meaningful, engaging curriculum that perks the curiosity and imagination of young adolescents.

Many middle schools offer teacher-invented art projects through known ways of teaching art education (Szekely, 1996). Instead of old ways of making, using, and viewing art, according to Szelekly teachers should give students opportunities to examine and discover art, “stimulating independent thinking and open students’ eyes to art in their own lives and in the environment” (1996, p. 101). Middle school art classes should not be offered from the context of solutions, but rather as meaningful and “exciting personal adventures in learning to discover art” (Szekely, 1996, p. 112). Middle school students will “respond well to knowing the art world has not been pre-invented for them, that their contributions and ideas are still welcome” (Szekely, 1996, p. 112). Through art, middle school students can participate in a transition period where through freedom of voice, storytelling, sharing and observing, and making things they find they can play “almost as freely as they used to as children” (Szekely, 1996, p. 112).

Literature on the engagement of middle school students is plentiful. Some literature describes undesirable settings where middle school students feel silenced or that the adults in charge of them in educational settings do not care about (Cushman, 2005; Erickson & Schultz, 1992; Garcia, Kilgore, Rodriguez & Thomas, 1995; Intrator & Kunzman, 2009). Other research depicts adolescents who feel irrelevant or ignored in schools (Phelan, Davidson, & Yu, 1998; Fine, 1991; Nieto, 1994; Sadowski, 2005; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). Researchers and practitioners can learn from the bounty of research reporting what is not ideal for middle school curriculum development.

Practices and subpractices for middle school curriculum development. Miller and Wolcott (1996) reference four primary practices for the development of middle school

curriculum and 9 sub-practices that when utilized will provide substantive, meaningful art curriculum. Miller and Wolcott's four primary practices involve fostering (a) positive attitudes and perceptions, (b) the acquisition and integrating of knowledge, (c) the use of meaningful knowledge, and (d) productive habits of mind.

The nine sub-practices in Miller and Wolcott's (1996) curriculum model involve

- creating a positive classroom environment where all students feel accepted;
- developing lessons students deem as valuable, feel they have opportunity to complete successfully, and planning for the conveyance of clear directions and expectations;
- helping students connect current knowledge to new information;
- helping students understand and construct models or scenarios of skills and processes;
- helping students refine and expand knowledge with critical thinking strategies such as comparing, classifying, inducing, deducing, abstracting, analyzing, and articulating;
- involving students in application-oriented use of knowledge and long term projects that involve decision-making, investigation and inquiry, experimentation, problem-solving, and innovation;
- helping students gain skills to self-direct their thinking;
- helping students be sensitive to the feeling and level of knowledge of others, be clear and seek clarity, be accurate and seek accuracy, be open-minded, restrain from impulsivity, take position when needed;
- helping students develop creative thinking skills such as engaging in tasks when they don't know the answers, push the limits of their abilities and knowledge, learn to evaluate, learn to view new ways of viewing a situation outside standard conventional boundaries.

Miller and Wolcott (1996) state:

To ensure these objectives are met, art educators must design and implement art programs at the middle school level which broaden students' understanding of art and make production more meaningful. There is also a need for flexible, multiple models providing teachers with various routes by which to develop individual curricula targets to the school system, the school, and varying groups of students. (p. 14)

Miller and Wolcott argue that middle school students need to be challenged intellectually and creatively in the art program and are completely capable of and willing to “deal with complex, challenging concepts and activities” (p. 14). Linderman (1971) reports that even as early as 1970's, art teachers wanted to approach middle school art from a contemporary context, to use motivation as a spark for intellectual challenge to thought.

Mindfulness with middle school students. Mindfulness may play a role in addressing the needs of the middle school student and their adolescent characteristics when implemented in the curriculum. “Mindfulness is defined as” paying attention with kindness and curiosity to what is happening inside and around oneself, such as being fully present and compassionate with oneself and others” (Mathiesen, Unsworth, & Viafora, 2014). Unique from therapeutic interventions, mindfulness exercises benefit both the student and the teacher (Mathiesen, Unsworth, & Viafora, 2014). An eight-week study conducted by Mathiesen, Unsworth and Viafora (2014) was conducted with 48 students from three classrooms in varying schools. Students participated in mindfulness activities for 45 minutes a week for eight weeks. The classroom teacher was asked to remain in the room and participate in the activities. Class generally began with a “mindful listening exercise, followed by mindful eating, and then a short class discussion of the previous week's home practice exercises” (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014, p. 1183). Additionally,

a new exercise was introduced each week exploring different themes. Topics that were addressed were “taking exams, mindfulness of pleasant experiences, managing difficult emotions, or attention to kindness towards self and others” (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014, p. 1183). Unexpected benefits of the mindfulness class activities were students reporting general well-being, ability to deal better with stress and anger, and these were especially revealed by adolescents experiencing serious life challenges (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014). The study concluded that “the door is open for researchers to continue to courageously explore different settings and institutions that serve youth with disadvantaged backgrounds” (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014, p. 1189). Implications of the study suggest that at-risk youth may uniquely benefit from “skills that empower them to more effectively self-regulate their difficult feelings, improve attention, and manage stress” (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014, p. 1189).

Mind frames for middle school teachers. Just as mindfulness adapts into the school curriculum, mindfulness practices can be employed by teachers (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014). Hattie (2012) describes eight mind frames that every educator should have underpinning their every action, decision, and belief in themselves as evaluators, change agents, adaptive learning experts, seekers of feedback about impact, and developers of trust. As early adolescence and middle school can be challenging for teachers, these mind frames are helpful in reaching the middle school student (Hattie, 2012). Teachers should share the “power, fun, and impact we have on learning” (Hattie, 2012, p. 181). Hattie’s (2012) theory is that as teachers and school leaders develop these mind frame ways of thinking, the more impact there will be on students learning. Hattie’s eight mind frames are summarized here:

- Mind frame 1: Teachers believe their most fundamental task is to evaluate themselves and the impact their teaching has on students' learning and achievement.
- Mind frame 2: Teachers believe that students' successes and failures are directly attributable to the teacher and what they did or did not do.
- Mind frame 3: Teachers talk more about the learning than the teaching.
- Mind frame 4: Teachers view assessment as feedback about their teaching and impact.
- Mind frame 5: Teachers lead dialogue, not monologue.
- Mind frame 6: Teachers do more than "their best" and instead enjoy the challenge.
- Mind frame 7: Teachers believe it is their job to develop positive relationships within the classroom.
- Mind frame 8: Teachers use the language of learning with all people they come in contact with.

These eight mind frames equip and empower teachers with important pedagogical practice to successfully engage middle school students. Mind frames essentially "frame" teachers thought processes in planning and providing instruction and are an important tool and strategy for reaching the "muddle" school (Hattie, 2012). When teachers think clearly about these mind frames they will have more impact on students, providing an engaging environment for meaningful learning (Hattie, 2012).

Storytelling in Art Education

As teachers seek pedagogical tools and teaching strategies to provide maximum impact, storytelling should be something they reach for in their teacher tool box often and in a variety of ways (Olson, 1998). When school curriculum gives students an opportunity to tell their personal stories, or certain aspects of their story, students can learn more about themselves, gain skills that will help them in related areas, share their stories with others, help create meaning as they connect one aspect of life to another and also connect themselves to school and life, and they can help create community within the classroom, elevating the intercultural element of the class (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998). Art gives meaning, and when driven by the curriculum choices of art teachers and shaped by the creative choices of the student, art making in schools reflects holistic learning, and tells and shares important stories (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998). The stories students tell are either verbal or visual, and sometimes can be a unique combination of both the verbal and visual, meaning both means of communication are needed to understand the story (Olson, 1998). Sometimes the stories are symbolic and only the artist understands them (Olson, 1998) and other times the stories are verbally explained. As an example, music communicates much more than the listener may realize (Clemons & Clemons, 2013). Many have seen Disney's movie, *The Lion King* and probably know the opening song, *The Circle of Life*, both of which are iconic arts based representations of the movie. The lyrics of *The Circle of Life* written by Tim Rice tell a story. Most think it's a story of a baby lion who must grow up and become King, but there is much more story to the lyrics. The artist conveys the story through the lyrics that many may not even understand, but they know the song full well. The song starts out in the language of Zulu before switching to English (Shamsian, 2018). These are the words the animals of the African savannah sing:

*Nants ingonyanma bagithi Baba
Sithi uhm ingonyamna*

*Nants ingonyamna bagithi Baba
Sithi uhhmm ingonyama
Ingonyana
Siyo Ngoba
Ingonyama
Ingonyama nengw enamabala*

If a person speaks Zulu—one of the official languages of South Africa, these lyrics would easily be understood. An American teacher in a diverse school setting may have a student who speaks and understands Zulu. It is also possible that if a teacher used this song as part of unit or lesson content that no one in the school would know the meaning of the words, yet would sing and utilize the words as if they did. Anyone who does not understand Zulu would only be able to imagine, or maybe stress over, the meaning of the words. This is the English translation:

*Here comes a lion, Father
Oh yes it's a lion*

*Here comes a lion, Father
Oh yes it's a lion
A lion
We're going to conquer a lion
A lion and a leopard come to this open place*

What many do not know is *The Circle of Life* is a multicultural song. The opening is sung in Zulu (Shamsian, 2018). The characters in *The Lion King* have Swahili names, according to Shamsian, a language of eastern and southeastern Africa, and some of the story elements are from the Masai people and tradition of the Kenya and Tanzania area and who have their own languages. *The Lion King* is not a product of one nation, it is pan-Africanism, with universal values (Shamsian, 2018). What is unique about this *story* is that many people know the song, but very few know the story. Art—music is one of the four strands of fine arts education, which include drama, dance, music, and visual arts— gives this story a connective power to its creative

visualization. Remembering Leavy (2015), a verbal, visual, and verbal/visual language exists in and through the song. People can also hear the song differently. “Even with careful listening, everyone hears a slightly different version, interpreting the stories within the context of this or her own internal dialogue” (Arnold, 1996, p. 21). The lyricist told the story he wanted to tell; the listener hears what they want to hear; and the researcher investigates, as do students.

Definition of storytelling. Storytelling is “the oral presentation of a story from memory by an individual to a person or group, teller and listener interact as transmitters and receivers of thoughts and ideas” (Gallets, 2005, p. 10). This definition, and others, assumes that the transmission of stories involves only words, yet stories are expressed with verbal and visual language (Olson, 1998). Those who tell stories reveal aspects of their identity (Olson, 1998).

According to Olson:

Visual and verbal forms of expression are simply two sides of the same coin, each contributing to the value and purpose of story. The concept of story is the inherent and natural link between the image and the word and enables a full range of expression and communication. (p. 179)

Storytelling through art. Artists have always told stories through their art making. Some storytelling through art is elaborate and may take months or years to complete. Other stories told through art can be simple and quick to complete. All stories carry meaning, whether elaborate or simple in nature. “Using both the image and the word to tell stories has continued to be a powerful and effective practice throughout history to communicate a range of personal experiences and insights to others” (Olson, 1998, p. 164). Stories are an effective method of communication method and part of our natural language ability (Olson, 1998).

Communicating through story is evidenced by Biblical stories and historical events being transmitted to illiterate parishioners during the Middle Ages by various tapestries, stained-glass windows, altar paintings, and sculptures (Olson, 1998). The Battle of Hastings in the year 1066 is depicted on the famous Bayeux Tapestry. Seventy-nine panels depict how William the Conqueror became the King of England. Various paintings from early America depict the harsh realities of black slaves. Helen Cordero of Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico in the United States was known for her famous Pueblo Story Teller clay dolls, which were a visual rendition of a verbal story and were sculpted seated, telling stories to children. In the past, courtroom artists drew scenes from courtrooms during legal proceedings.

Both fine and folk artists tell stories with their art, as do school children (Olson, 1998). Retablos made in Peru told stories of politics, life, tragedy, comedy, and love. Molas from Panama and fisherman's cable knit sweater patterns from Ireland tell the story of belonging, specifically detailing a geographic area or group to which a person belongs. Huichol yarn painting tells the story of prayer and the mind's yearning for a productive corn crop. Pottery of Native Americans tell stories of life, spirituality, and reverence. Adire cloth, tie dying, and batik from Nigeria identify what part of the country you live in.

Some of these stories are realistic and easily understood by the viewer. Some are stylized and only the artist knows the story. Modern day examples of storytelling are books, magazines, movies, video games, social media posts, emails, text messages, and other ways of communicating. Throughout history and the present, image and the word have been and are a powerful and effective practice to communicate personal thoughts, feelings, and insights to others (Olson, 1998).

Students and storytelling. It is educationally effective to tell children stories about their world and the many varied human experiences and to let them tell stories (Parkinson, 2011; Zipes, 1995). Stories provide meaning and valuable curricular content, engaging imagination, and creating rich, visual experiences. Stories give students complex and individualized settings for diverse options and ideas for their stories (Arnold, 1996). Stories allow young adolescents to add powerful themes and creativity to create the real or the imaginary (Arnold, 1996). Arnold states that one of the most important aspects of stories in art making is giving students “access to their emotional lives by illustrating problem-solving situations that mirror many of the dilemmas that they may encounter” (p. 21).

Storytelling is an important part of being a human being and art gives a vehicle for students to tell stories (Olson, 1998). All students have stories, and although a commonality that all students in a classroom have, all students’ stories are different. According to Olson (1998):

I believe that the most important purpose of art is to tell a story—to share one’s interests and concerns, one’s personal view of the world, one’s joys and sorrows, to touch the life of another. I argue that the vast majority of art either relates to story in and of itself or relates in some way to the individual artist’s life and is therefore a part of the artist’s personal narrative. All art encompasses a story, in one way or another. (p. 168)

Telling stories is an important way for people of all ages, ethnicities, and cultures to communicate (Olson, 1998). Storytelling gives people a way to order, reflect, and makes sense of life experiences (Olson, 1998). Winner (1985) reports that storytelling, or narrative, is a way for a child to understand himself or herself and the world in which they live and must also cope with. Winner continues that through telling stories, children create situations completely suited

to their own needs and desires and deal with children's own needs either directly or symbolically. Kuyvenhoven (2009) reported that children struggled with details of story associated with stories from lessons and the analysis of it, but children wrote and spoke freely about story details when from their own stories or imagination. Many studies report the unique correlation between storytelling and visual art: Bequette (2014), Rhoades, Dallacqua, Kersten, Merry, & Miller (2015), Duncam (2009), Kuyvenhoven (2009), Williams (2011), and Zander (2007). Allen (1998) found that storytelling promotes self-esteem. McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007) found that autobiographical stories not only affect who a person is and their own self-concept, they also provide a direction for future self-development. Plummer (2001) suggests storytelling as a classroom strategy for building self-esteem in students. Allen (1998), McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007), and Plummer (2001) contend that through the sharing of stories the classroom becomes an opportunity for intercultural bonding of students to each other as well as individual growth from sharing of stories.

Symbolic self-portraits in art making. Through storytelling students reveal their sense of self and gives clues as to who they want to become (Allen, 1998; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Olson, 1998). In particular, one study by Olson (1998) addresses symbolic self-portraits as art curriculum. Olson (1998) reports the benefits of this self-portrait project as (a) furthering the understanding of how images communicate, (b) giving opportunity for students to depict what is important to them to say, (c) using the power of the visual image as a vehicle for verbal translation, (d) gaining an appreciation for the role of the unconscious in the artistic process, (e) communicating feelings or insights that artists are not aware they have, and (f) demonstrating the power of imagery to tell stories and the close relationship between the visual and the verbal. Each of these studies portrays the relevance of storytelling in art making, art curriculum, and

describe exact circumstances when the visual word and the spoken or written word merged to make greater meaning. Coles (1992) writes that people carry their stories with them on any trip they take and owe it to each other to respect each other's stories and learn from them. Coles adds that children are also carrying their stories with them and these stories are begging to be told. The art classroom is the ideal environment to encourage storytelling (Olson, 1998).

Biopsychosocial Education

Biopsychosocial is a hybrid word—meaning the word was generated from combining parts of others words—biography, psychology, and social needs of the learner into one word; it originally came out of the medical field (Henriques, 2015). First used by Engel (1977) as terminology to replace or add to the term psychosomatic medicine, the biopsychosocial model of medicine and psychiatry essentially operates under the basic assumption “that all illnesses are the result of a complex reciprocal interaction of biological, psychological and social factors” (p. 203). In the early 21st century the term biopsychosocial appears to have crossed over from the medical field to the education field when it was used in medical education and then as psychological therapy in special education (Kupersanin, 2002). The value of the biopsychosocial approach in education, as Herrera (2016) explains, is one of a holistic approach to understanding students. Students are human beings with language and communication abilities, with stories, and they also bring their cultures through their biographies, psychologies, and social needs and skills to school (Nakazawa, 2015). Biography refers to students' physical self, psychology refers to their emotional self, and social refers to the human need to socialize, relate, and interact with others (Herrera, 2016). Children's biopsychosocial selves are ever present in both their school efforts and personal lives (Nakazawa, 2015). In order to understand the importance of biopsychosocial education, the historical development of multicultural education leading to

intercultural education, the development of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018), and the development and use biography driven teaching strategies (Herrera, 2016) will be reviewed in this section.

Biopsychosocial emphasis in art education. While multicultural education (Banks, 2009) was the foundation for Culturally Relevant Teaching (Gay, 2018), Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2016) added another layer to both of these constructs by further stressing the importance of the human element, the human connection in learning, and the value of including the varying emotions and feelings of the learner in their education. According to Cowan and Clover (1991), Eisenberg, Damon, and Harter (2006), and Roosa, Ruiz, and Gonzales (2002), students' self-esteem is directly related to their biographies, the other emotions they live with, and life structures and supports—essentially their biopsychosocial selves. Additionally, the work of Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, and Jozefowicz (1997), Eccles and Midgley (1989), and Eccles and Roeser (2009) supports the importance of the middle school environment aligning with school curriculum in a way that confirms BDI's use. Day and Hurwitz (2012) unpack the ability of art education to incorporate students biopsychosocial needs into curriculum. Biopsychosocial art education brings BDI into the art education arena and gives students opportunities to explore their biopsychosocial identities in art education. By incorporating the cultures of their biographies, their emotions, and their social experiences into student art making and art learning, art education provides more personalized, meaningful learning for all students within the school, facilitating intercultural learning that benefits the entire school community.

Through the implementation of biopsychosocial learning in art education, students holistic growth happens more fully as their microspheres and macrospheres (Bronfenbrenner,

1979) merge through the learning environment. “The process of creating art can be a tool to assess the feelings and perceptions of children’s internal worlds and permits communication between their inner and outer affective spheres” (Green, Baggerly, Nowicki, & Lotz, 2017, p. 248). Green and Drewes (2013) report that the use of expressive arts with P-12 (pre-school through 12th grade) students has demonstrated development in children’s individual feelings of security and stress levels related to school anxiety. Sherman (1983) reminds that cognitive and affective are two different human characteristics that manifest themselves in art making. Sherman also states that most art educators belong “to one camp or the other” (1983, p. 39) meaning that it can be common for an art teacher to mainly focus on the cognitive process of creative thought or the emotional aspect of art making. This trend is for art educators to focus mainly on one or the other—the cognitive or the emotional thought—thereby tending to not address one important human and student need during art classes supports a pathway for a 21st century merger of both.

School need for biopsychosocial emphasis in education. As school administrators and educators in the United States seek to prepare students of growing diversity, and welcome immigrant students to the school, the art curriculum has the potential to play an important role in the 21st century American school (Lovano-Kerr, 2008). While the phrase “21st century” may be over used in educational and other narrative, it refers to a phenomenal global change due to global interrelatedness and interconnectedness that humanity now experiences due to technology, the speed of communication, and the ability to travel across the world rapidly (Lovano-Kerr, 2008). In some respects, it is a monorail right out of the monoculture. American schools are experiencing great change, as is most of the world (Lovano-Kerr, 2008). The number of English language learners (ELL) is increasing rapidly in the United States (NCES, 2017). With 4.8

million ELL students in the United States in 2015 (NCES, 2018a), The National Center for Education Statistics states that there were 9.4% more ELL students in 2014-15 than in 2013-14, with steady increases for several years prior (NCES, 2017, 2018a). Additionally, the American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau shows in its most recent report that 381 languages are spoken in in the United States by people five years old and older (Ryan, 2013). These numbers indicate that our schools are becoming much more diverse. The increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners is an important reason for art education to broaden its normative cultural lens to include a wider array of multicultural or intercultural education components, culturally responsive pedagogy, social emotional learning, and biography driven teaching in a curriculum of meta-synthesis (Buholtz, Casillas, & Lee, 2017) with other art education content.

Multicultural education. Stepping backwards in educational history, multicultural education was the forerunner of biopsychosocial education, and multicultural education led to Culturally Relevant Teaching (Gay, 2018). The word “multicultural” refers to “a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups. People live alongside of one another, but each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other” (Multicultural, 2018). The call for multicultural education grew out of the need for more ethnicities and cultures to be recognized in Western education besides the White American culture (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education came about in the 1970’s because schools in the United States had been established to further democracy and allegiance to the nation, yet some people of varying ethnicities, races, and cultures felt disenfranchised by this purpose (Banks, 2009). This democracy also came at the expense of many ethnic groups (Banks, 2009). It was illegal to educate some and others received unequal education (Banks, 2009). All students should be seen

as citizens and given the right to take an active role in the system of democratic ideals, but schools must facilitate an understanding of cultural knowledge and how to students' cultures fit within mainstream thinking (Banks, 2009; Kim, 2011).

Interconnectedness in the school classroom. Banks (2009) and Kim (2011) state that marginalized students who do not have a firm positive cultural identification will not see the value in helping other marginalized groups, and thereby not contributing to an intercultural community. Teachers, therefore, have the responsibility to impart knowledge that students will need to be vital members of ethnic communities of other cultures, the mainstream culture, and the global community in an interrelated, intercultural way (Banks, 2009; Kim, 2011; Lovano-Kerr, 2008). Schools are an important resource in assisting students in developing understandings of cultural, community, state, national, and global awareness, that are constantly changing and interconnected (Banks, 2004). The classroom can become a microcosm of the greater community or society where democratic principles are taught to all students with regards to human rights (Banks, 2009).

Fair and equitable education for all. Banks (2009) gives schools a large challenge to be the cornerstone of a fair and equitable education for all students, but Gay (2018) emphatically states that teachers cannot teach what they do not know. While teaching should have always been culturally responsive to all ethnicities, multicultural education began due to concerns about racial and ethnic inequities that were seen in education (Gay, 2018). Although more ideological and theoretical than pragmatic, Gay (2018) reports “growth in the field of educating to and through cultural, ethnic, racial, and social diversity has occurred” (p. xxix) in the last few years. According to Gay, these changes are not radical or profound and are essentially “extensions of

previously established patterns and trends in multiculturally based teaching and learning” (2018, p. xxx).

With the United States experiencing its largest growth in immigrants since the early 1900’s (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), educators must be well prepared and informed to provide the most welcoming and academic setting possible for students (Gay, 2018; Herrera, 2016; Lovano-Kerr, 2008). In 2016, the United States had 45 million residents that were foreign born, the largest population of foreign born residents of any nation (Pew Research Center, 2015; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018). With the U.S. Census Bureau projecting that people of color will make up 56.4 percent of the U.S. population by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015), there is even more urgency in situating all schools—rural and urban— in the United States to be prepared for administering multicultural (Banks, 2019), Biography Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016), Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018).

Multicultural reform in education. Banks (2019) posits the multicultural reform movement is “designed to make some major changes in the education of students” (p. 1). Many scholars believe that a multitude of “school, college, and university practices related to race, ethnicity, language, religion, and gender are harmful to students and reinforce many of the stereotypes and discriminatory practices in Western societies” (Banks, 2019, p. 1). The definition of multicultural education according to Banks is “an idea of concept, an educational reform movement, and a process” (2019, p. 1). Multicultural education focuses on both the single and interactive nature of “race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, language, exceptionality, sexual orientation, and religion” (Banks, 2019, p. 2) influencing student learning and behavior. Multicultural education assumes that when people learn more about and become better

acquainted with other cultures, they will gain greater self-understanding (Banks, 2019). The following list summarizes goals of multicultural education according to Banks:

- To help individuals view themselves from the perspective of other cultures, gaining a better understanding of self.
- Provide students with cultural, ethnic, and language alternatives.
- Provide students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their own cultures, the mainstream culture, and across other cultures.
- To reduce pain and discrimination.
- To help students to obtain reading, writing, and math skills needed to function in the 21st century, and leveling out the job field so that students from developing countries can compete successfully with students from developed countries.

Banks (2019) articulates how education in a pluralistic society should be affirming and also help students understand their home and community cultures, free them from boundaries of culture, create and maintain a sense of civic-mindedness working for the common good, and should help students gain knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to help society be more just and equitable for all citizens. While critics of multicultural education claim this kind of educational focus will polarize and divide the United States (Banks, 2019), data from the U.S. Census Bureau demonstrate why schools should have a serious lens on multicultural education. Though major population centers in the United States may have larger populations of varying ethnicities, rural America is also experiencing this change in demographic as well (Lichter, 2012). Regardless of location, 21st century American education must drill down and acutely focus on how to be inclusive of all students within the school (Banks, 2019). Using a biography-driven teaching protocol (Herrera, 2016), and thinking of education through the lens

of many cultures coming together to be educated are two viable pathways (Banks, 2019; Gay, 2018).

Multicultural research regarding education. Research by Poulter, Riitaoja, & Kuusisto, (2014) furthers the work of Banks (2004, 2009), and examines how the liberal-secular foundation of multicultural education believes they offer politically neutral education, but are blind to practices which discriminate and have other ideals for religions and non-Western worldviews. Lastikka and Lipponen (2016) give a lens to immigrant children and parents, with four themes emerging from their research as important when working with immigrant families: (a) creating opportunity for conversation and understanding, (b) promoting linguistic and cultural diversity, (c) cooperative effort and partnership, (d) providing individualized attention and support. While some researchers view multicultural education through an activist lens, Yilmaz's (2016) research of teachers finds it is important for teachers to have positive attitudes when working with multicultural students. Ciullo and Troiani (1988) discovered that when children were excluded from group activity, they became more sensitive to the feelings of children of other ethnicities. McGregor (1993) used meta-analysis to examine the effects of antiracist teaching and role-playing in reducing racial prejudice and found that both are equally effective. Aboud and Doyle (1996) found that children's racial evaluations were influenced by talking to friends with different racial prejudices than their own. Communication, or lack thereof, seems to be a common thread of importance in a review of various multicultural studies offering speculation or attribution to the notion that in a multicultural setting various ethnicities and cultures function more separately than interconnected in their goals.

Intercultural education. Intercultural relationships differ from multicultural relationships. Intercultural means that a community has "a deep understanding and respect for

all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships” (Intercultural, 2018). Everyone learns from each other and no one is left out (Intercultural, 2018). Intercultural education as an applied term first appeared in the United States in the early 20th century in an effort to assist immigrants who were primarily European into the American society (Zimmerman, 2002). Intercultural education first resonated with supporters of multicultural education because it taught cross-cultural communication skills and addressed prejudice in the American society (Zimmerman, 2002). Stephan and Stephan (2013) state that practitioners and researchers of intercultural relations “not only seek to understand culture, the humanly created world, but they try to understand the interfaces between cultures and then use that knowledge to reduce the friction at these interfaces” (p. 277). Researchers have reached a point in time when they can develop better techniques and programs relevant to intercultural relations based on the wealth of research evidence (Stephen & Stephen, 2013). Stephen and Stephen developed an evidence-based approach for intercultural relations, based heavily on their own culture and Western education and science. Admittedly, Stephen and Stephen state everyone wears some of the blinders that are imposed by their own cultures as well as other biases they may have. In fact, these biases are a part of the problem with the effectiveness of intercultural relations (Stephen & Stephen, 2013). Intercultural relations is a climax of many contexts (Stephen & Stephen, 2013):

It involves combining knowledge learned about human behavior from the social sciences, physical sciences, and the arts and humanities and bringing it to bear on our study of cultures and their interfaces. We rely on anthropology, psychology, sociology, communication, political science, history, and economics, as well as biology, physics,

chemistry, physiology, art, religion, literature, and philosophy to help us understand what cultures are and how they were created. (p. 279)

Intercultural classrooms. When the tenants of multicultural education transform into an intercultural focus within the school classroom, a sense of community will grow. Intercultural interaction between students and within the classroom can reduce prejudice, help students learn norms to navigate through the school system and environment, and benefit students' identity formation (Wentzel, Baker, & Russell, 2012; Gurin, Nagda, & Sorensen, 2011; Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Yoon, 2012). Art teachers should be empowered to develop their own programs and not get bogged down in standardized curricula (Zimmerman, 2005). Zimmerman indicates that art curriculum should be sensitive to multicultural education, based in both community needs and global issues, and how the curriculum could be integrated interculturally. According to Zimmerman (2005):

Art teachers should be considered caretakers of teaching and learning as related to the world's art in the broadest sense including the land and environments in which they teach and reside. Through the concept of interculturality they can help their students scale mountains so that when they go up a mountain they will descend with different understandings than when they began their ascent. They can also help their students make equitable decisions about which mountains should be kept sacred and they should attempt to climb. (p. 12)

Zimmerman argues that in order for classrooms to be places for reflective-decision making, nourishment of thinking, and examination of ideas, problems and values, that intercultural concepts must be used to open students' minds to the great outdoors and the mountains waiting to be scaled. While a variety of classroom strategies exist and are available through many

curriculum choices, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessments states that intercultural education respects and celebrates the *normality* of diversity (Dice Project, 2018). Learners are sensitized to the idea that there is variety in the ways of life, customs, and the worldviews of human beings (Dice Project, 2018). Intercultural education unites diversity through the lens of enrichment for all students in a classroom or school, equal in their human rights, and promoting the values that build equality (Dice Project, 2018).

Intercultural education in the art classroom. Art education provides an opportunity to teach intercultural values to students (Zimmerman, 2002). In regards to art education, Zimmerman (2002) said:

If we as art teachers want our classrooms to be places for reflective-decision making, where thinking processes are constantly nourished and problems, ideas, and values can be freely examined, then intercultural concepts need to be introduced that open doors and students' minds to the greater world beyond their classrooms and communities. (p. 78-79)

Zimmerman (2002, 2015), a leader in intercultural art education, solidly believes that art curriculum, the art classroom, and the activities and planning of the art teacher can be utilized more fully in holistic learning of all students and in developing an interconnected community with the classroom among students.

Intercultural research regarding art education. da Silva and Villas-Boas (2006) used UNESCO's 'learning how to live together' goal as a starting point to examine how art education can promote the aims of intercultural education. Using the power of artistic images from different cultures to analyze the change in students' perceptions of cultural differences, they explored how art could be used to help students and classrooms could develop more accepting

attitudes of students of different ethnic and cultural groups. Using a ‘Draw-Two-Persons Test,’ they measured and analyzed students’ choices and growth, finding that focus on others and not just self had benefit. Bianchi (2011) found that engaging diverse students in conversation through art education and art making enriched their own and others’ experiences in a variety of socio-cultural contexts. Zimmerman (2015) argues that contemporary art education must be reconceptualized to reflect contemporary times, providing a setting for all students to learn in an intercultural manner.

Culturally responsive teaching. Gay’s (2018) research on culturally responsive pedagogy grew out of multicultural education and is firmly planted in a need for more and better communication between students, teachers, schools, and communities. Both communication and teaching are journeys with straight, zig zagged, and curvilinear lines that hop, jump, and move at varying speeds and with varying degrees of emphasis, as art education would explain it. Ayers (2001) describes three important phases of the teaching journey with language, almost creating a visual image—a painting of thought—of the journey:

A first step is becoming the student to your students, uncovering the fellow creatures who must be partners to the enterprise. Another is creating an environment for learning, a nurturing and challenging space in which to travel. And finally, the teacher must begin work on the intricate, many-tiered bridges that will fill up the space, connecting all the dreams, hopes, skills, experiences, and knowledge students bring to class with deeper and wider ways of knowing. (p. 122)

While a famous Norman Rockwell (well known American folk artist) painting is idyllic, whimsical, and full of human detail, perhaps a better metaphor for multicultural education in the 21st century would be a merger of Rockwell, with Ernie Barnes (modern African American

painter), You Jin (modern Asian painter), Cundo Bermúdez (modern Latino painter), and an unending list of diverse artists from many people groups of gender, culture, religion, and ethnicity in a multicultural extravaganza of color and emotion.

Visual arts and culturally responsive teaching. Interestingly, although Gay (2018) does not mention visual arts as important in Culturally Responsive Teaching, art and culture do merge in an essentially meaningful way, as does art and English as Second Language Programs (ESL) (Eubanks, 2002; Muldoon, 1994; Schoff, 2016). Culturally Responsive Teaching is stronger with the addition of visual art (Wong & Pēna, 2017; Goldman, 2017; Lee, 2012; Lee, 2012; Thomas, 2016). Culturally Responsive Teaching is really a merger or meta-synthesis of many content areas—including art, coming together to advance learning (Wong & Pēna 2017; Goldman, 2017; Lee, 2012; Thomas, 2016).

Aim of culturally responsive teaching. The aim of culturally responsive pedagogy is to “empower ethnically, diverse students through academic success, cultural affiliation, and personal efficacy” (Gay, 2018, p. 142). Knowledge must be accessible and it must be connected to students’ lives outside of school (Gay, 2018). Knowledge has no power all by itself (Sleeter & Grant, 1991). Information and skills that are powerful to students only become so through connecting education with students’ needs, interests, aspirations, desires, and purposes (Gay, 2018). In order to connect education to students’ lives, needs, and interests, students must be included in constructing educational content. According to Gay, this does not mean students have to assist with all decisions, nor does it mean they should be taught only things they want to learn. Gay demands that relevant content is taught in relevant ways that all students will understand.

In regard to Culturally Responsive Teaching, Gay summarizes (2018):

The ethic of caring constitutes the ideological grounding, cultural communication is the tool, curriculum content about ethnic and cultural diversity is the resource, and instruction is the actual praxis of culturally responsive teaching. Instruction combines all the other components into coherent configurations and puts them into action to expedite learning. It is the engagement, the interactions, the dialectic discourse of students and teachers in the processes of teaching and learning. Interactional processes are absolutely imperative to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching. They can nullify, enrich, counteract, or complement other components of teaching. (p. 203)

Davis (2012a), Doyle (2011), Glasgrov and Hicks (2009), Howe (1999), Ormrod (1995), and Rodriguez, Bellanca, and Esparza (2017) espouse several generally accepted principles of culturally diverse instructional bridging and contextualizing of learning. Gay (2018) summarizes these principles as:

- Begin with students existing knowledge (principle of similarity).
- Prior success creates future effort and success (principle of efficacy).
- New knowledge is learned easier and retained longer when connected to prior knowledge and learning (principle of congruity).
- Reducing the strangeness or unfamiliarity of new knowledge for students increases engagement (principle of familiarity).
- Organizational and structural factors of how a student learns have more effect on new learning than the amount of prior knowledge students possess (principle of transactionalism).
- Understanding how students organize knowledge is essential to learning new knowledge (principle of cognitive mapping).

- If students think they can learn, they will learn (principle of confidence and efficacy).
- The social, physical, emotional, psychological, cultural, political, and ethical dispositions, developments, and experiences of students are significant in the overall learning process (principle of holistic education).
- Students' lives and experiences outside of school matter and can complement and help build in school learning (principle of scaffolding).

Equally as important as the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching are the learning styles of CLD students. "Learning styles are the processes individuals habitually use for cognitive problem-solving and for showing what they know and are capable of doing" (Gay, 2018, p. 205). While they do not indicate the ability to learn material, they do indicate "preferences individuals have for perceiving and processing information" (Gay, 2018, p. 205). This means that students with equal capability to learn, but different learning styles may have different levels of success in learning within the same learning situation (Boykin & Bailey, 2000). Gay's eight learning style dimensions are summarized here:

- Procedural—Preferred way of learning involves direct teaching, inquiry, or discovery.
- Communicative—Preferred organization of thoughts in written and spoken form.
- Substantive—Preferred content (Gay mentions fine arts) involves "memorizing, describing, analyzing, classifying, or criticizing" (Gay, 2018, p. 208).
- Environmental—"Preferred physical, social, and interpersonal settings for learning. . ."
- (Gay, 2018, p. 208).
- Organizational—"Preferred structural arrangements for work and study space" (Gay, 2018, p. 208).

- Perceptual—“Preferred sensory stimulation for receiving, processing, and transmitting information” (Gay, 2018, p. 208).
- Relational—Preferred interpersonal and social interactions in the learning space.
- Motivations—Preferred stimulations or incentives that evoke learning, competition, accomplishment, cooperation, harmony, or integrity.

Essential teaching components. Gay (2018) states that some educators believe that good teaching has nothing to do with race, gender, class, ethnicity, or culture of students and teachers, but argues that these diverse characteristics of students should be known and seen, and teaching should be adapted to suit all students’ individualizations. Examples Gay gives are of intentional or unintentional mistakes teachers can make such as asking students to sit still for long periods of time and admonishing students to look at the teacher when spoken to, actions that are either not done or forbidden in some cultures. “Decontextualizing teaching and learning from the ethnicities, cultures, and experiences of students minimizes the chance that their achievement potential will ever be fully realized” (Gay, 2018, p. 30). Teachers must understand students’ individuality (Gay, 2018).

Improving culturally diverse curriculum. Gay (2018) focuses on reading, writing, math, and science as the main focus in Culturally Responsive Teaching. Several ways to improve culturally diverse curriculum, according to Gay, are: (a) to use more cultural content in all school curricula; (b) to ensure curriculum about ethnically diverse groups is accurate, comprehensible, and authentic; (c) that curriculum should include knowledge across ethnic groups about lives, experiences, and unique contributions of various ethnic groups; (d) to provide students with updated information about groups of color to correct existing knowledge and fill voids in knowledge; and (e) to use a variety of resources from different content areas “including

textbooks, literature, mass media, music, personal experiences, and social science research” (Gay, 2018, p. 193). Culturally responsive pedagogy is essentially about honoring the individual and making the individual a part of the whole.

Biography driven instruction. Through Biography Driven Instruction (BDI), Herrera (2016) moves Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2018) to a more noticeable emotive and relational human pedagogical strategy where all students are loved and revered by each other, by their teachers, and by the educational system. Although focused on culture and linguistics as its main tenants, BDI integrates well with art education and incorporates many visual instructional strategies. Herrera also builds on the work of Collier and Thomas (1997, 1999, 2012), Krashen (1985), and Vygotsky and Cole (1978). “Love, laughter, and life” (Herrera, 2016, p. 27) are a part of Herrera’s theory for working with CLD students, yet she asserts that all students need the biopsychosocial element in pedagogical planning, instruction, and experience. Herrera (2016) states:

I believe that understanding the sociocultural dimension of each student beyond our standard school-initiated definitions and moving toward a pedagogy that encompasses and is defined by the content of life, love, and laughter can lead to a new way of using students’ experiences to ensure their academic success. (p. 27)

The CLD term is much more inclusive of diverse student than terms such as English as Second Language (ESL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) (Herrera, 2016). Herrera sees these historically commonly used terms (such as ESL or LEP) as having a deficit perspective. In other words, the terms take something “away” from students. Herrera states the CLD term *adds* something to students. One has a negative connotation, one has a positive connotation. Gorski (2010) calls this the deficit perspective and the asset perspective. Additive programs focus on

“the holistic development of CLD students and using their biographies to guide instruction, we can respond to their social, cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs in a more comprehensive manner” (Herrera, 2016, p. 7).

Deficit or asset perspective. Teachers can also function from this deficit or asset perspective. Nieto (1996) and Villegas and Lucas’ (2007) research show that many teachers operate from a deficit perspective, viewing their students as from a lower social rank. Teachers who have affirming views on culture and diversity understand that students from non-dominant groups are very willing and capable learners who need to be taught with academic rigor (Villegas & Lucas, 2007).

According to Collier and Thomas (1999, 2012), rigorous, longitudinal research regarding the best programs for CLD students gets bogged down by politics and in the process, students get left behind. Herrera (2016) summarizes the national trend of urgently moving students rapidly through grade-level sequencing as one that affects both how prepared teachers are for CLD students and achievement acquired by CLD students. Herrera contends the “how to?” question is what is important in teaching CLD students. This same “how to?” mode of inquiry is what drives case study.

Development of biography-driven culturally responsive instructional method.

Herrera’s (2016) biography-driven instructional method is built upon the theory of Krashen (1985) and Vygotsky and Cole (1978). Krashen espouses *input hypothesis* and describes it as $i + 1$. Krashen’s research continues to guide teacher practice in regard to how people acquire a second language. A simple way to summarize Krashen’s formula is the small ‘*i*’ represents people’s current language use. The ‘1’ represents the addition of language that is just outside of their current reach, driving the learning. Vygotsky and Cole’s *zone of proximal development*

(ZPD) is when the distance between actual and potential development levels grows. In actual development, the student participates in individual learning (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). With the addition teaching or guidance by teachers or peers, learning accelerates to the level the student can potentially reach because of the addition of support structures. Vygotsky and Cole (1978) explains teaching for all learners:

Instruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development. It then awakens and rouses to life those functions which are in a stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development. It is in this way that instruction plays an extremely important role in development. (p. 278).

When learning is organized around the constructs of Collier and Thomas (1999, 2012), Herrera (2016), Krashen (1985), and Vygotsky and Cole (1978) teaching becomes *all-learner* centered. Herrera adds a 21st century component of the biopsychosocial characteristic to her construct, and asks educators to make learning enthusiastic, engaging, challenging, and exciting. Taking students *one step beyond* will drive learning to new levels of accomplishment, while creating community and comfort in the classroom (Herrera, 2016). According to Herrera, in “classrooms where the culture and language of CLD students are not valued, the brain often shuts down, and little or no thinking takes place” (2016, p. 12). For maximizing thinking, the classroom must be designed for the learner (Burden, 2017; Delaney, 1998; Herrera, 2016), but Herrera states that teachers need to help students organize their brain space, and she argues that organized and prepared teachers create a better learning environment for CLD and all students.

Curriculum planning. As described by Walqui (2000), in an effective classroom environment “teachers and students together construct a culture that values the strengths of all participants and respects their interests, abilities, languages, and dialects” (p. 1). The roles of

students and teachers shift from being the learner, the teacher, and the expert (Walqui, 2000).

Herrera list three phases of lesson planning that “bring school and learning to life” (2016, p. 12).

Herrera’s three phases are summarized:

1. Activation—teachers must look for ways to incorporate students’ prior knowledge.

Using prior knowledge and experiences gained at home, students complete a lesson in which the teacher creates a culturally responsive learning context. The teacher is an observer. Tasks ask students to “share and record initial insights and connections to the lesson topic, concepts, or vocabulary, based on their background knowledge” (Herrera, 2016, p. 73).

2. Connection—since the human brain only holds new information for 30 seconds (Sousa, 2011) before determining if the information is useful, teachers can use what they know of students’ prior knowledge to create engagement and relevance of new learning, making those connections from prior to present learning. Teachers facilitate and culturally negotiate learning with students, taking what students already know and transforming it to the unknown. Using rigor and relevance, lesson activities include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students work to construct meaning, being affirmed by the teacher. Various grouping strategies are used to create collective, collaborative, and individual learning settings.

3. Affirmation—all learners need to have their learning affirmed and affirmation must be given in a way that lets students know their learning was worth the effort. During this phase, the teacher uses evidence of student learning and understanding to authentically affirm learning. Growth and mastery are both celebrated, and important criterion for

teaching CLD students (and all students). Reflection of the learning process is an important concluding activity.

Use of communication. Herrera's (2016) biography driven instructional method, and the written, spoken, and visual communication it requires, parallels with the use of language and communication in art education. Essentially, the themes of Eisner (2002), Dewey (1934), Gay (2018), and Banks (2019) all circulate around the need for better communication between students and teachers, between teachers and parents, and between the school and families. Christensen (2000) summarizes the simplistic need of communication in education:

What might a language full of nouns tell us about a culture? How about a language full of verbs? A language with no past tense? No future tense? A language with no word for 'read' or 'write'? A language with six words for love? (p. 106).

Boggs (1985) Herrera (2016), and McDaniel, Samovar, and Porter (2012), all posit that communication is much more than the written and spoken language, as does Arts Based Research (Leavy, 2018). "Understanding that students use their culturally bound systems to communicate during the lesson moves us to recognize that we must structure and manage our own communication styles to establish conditions that will encourage students to bring their identities into every act of communication" (Herrera, 2016, p. 37).

Herrera (2016) also complements Eisner's (2002) theory that literacy does not just develop from text and that many cultural forms express meaning. Daiute (2014) refers to the diversity principle in analyzing students' narrative or their use of words and word choices. The diversity principle refers to differences within and across individual students and groups stances as narrators of their own story—feelings, purposes, and thoughts—in relation to their audience.

Kim (2016) was “drawn to narrative inquiry by its approachability, artistic, quality, and non-pedantic nature that values stories of laypeople” (p. 1).

Once teachers understand that language, literacy, and learning are highly affected by students’ cultures and communities, the biopsychosocial element of learning will help narrow the achievement gap in students. Herrera’s (2016) instructional model projects the importance of creativity in whole child education. Herrera also understands that learning should start with what a student already knows and build upon it. This model of building knowledge can happen in every content area, not just in literacy based classes. Most students want to be successful. Students do not want to be asked to do something that is completely out of reach (Herrera, 2016). Instead, students want to be able to feel proud of their accomplishments and show and demonstrate to others that they have learned something. This aligns to Dewey’s (1934) theory of education having the greater role of advancing society, and Eisner’s (2002) that education should be shaped by sensory experiences. Vygotsky and Cole’s (1978) theory also mentions fossilized behavior as behaviors that have gone away because of a very long period of non-use and become fossilized. As Herrera states, “the journey is truly the destination” (2016, p. 15). Herrera’s understanding of multicultural education involves much more than the inequity in education or the lack of cultural knowledge in education (a deficit view of teaching) and instead looks at the human relations aspect of teaching (an additive view of teaching). Herrera (2016) brings the human touch to instruction:

I believe that understanding the sociocultural dimension of each student beyond our standard school-initiated definitions and moving toward a pedagogy that encompasses and is defined by the content of life, love, and laughter can lead to a new way of using

students' experiences to ensure their academic success . . . take time to create an ecology of laughter and joy in your practice. (p. 27)

There are those in education who tend to shy away from narrative about love, joy, emotion, even hugging, and life issues, but Herrera understands the importance of the human relational element of the teacher student relationship.

Use of art. Herrera's (2016) biography driven instructional method is highly suggestive of varying art education modalities and strategies of teaching, some strategies are simple and hinted at in instruction and other strategies use art to achieve deeper understanding between the verbal word and the visual image. Meta-synthesis of art, storytelling, and biopsychosocial learning happen easily through two simple activities described in Herrera, Kavimandan, and Holmes' (2011) *Topic in Pictures and Words* (p. 27-33) and Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, and Wessels' (2013) *Picture This* (p. 22-23). Marzano (2004) explains students can comprehend the content better when they understand the essential vocabulary they hear and read during lessons, but according to Herrera, Kavimandan and Holmes (2011), "just knowing the vocabulary does not ensure that students will comprehend the author's message" (p. 27). Students can be unaware of the information that "everyone else knows" because it is implied in the learning, rather than overtly discussed.

Herrera, Kavimandan, and Holmes (2011) have developed a simple instructional strategy called *Topics in Pictures and Words* to facilitate students drawing upon their own mental images, which are determined by their cultural and language knowledge, to understand lesson content. Students use "both linguistic and nonlinguistic representations" (Herrera, 2011, p. 27) to create collages of mental images and words to assist with conceptual understanding, yet unique to their biography. Herrera, Kavimandan, and Holmes also state "this strategy helps students to

document their thought process for themselves and for others using the frame of pictures and words” (2011, p. 28). Herrera, Homes, and Kavimandan also use Krashen’s (1985) *i + 1* theory and build it into *i+tpsI*, a biography-driven responsive grouping instructional tool. In *i+tpsI*, the small ‘*i*’ represents people’s current language use. The students’ current language and biography is built further by *t*=total group, *p*=partner, *s*=small group, *I*=individual collaborations and individualized work through a variety of activities that are activating, connection, and affirming. In *Picture This*, Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, and Wessels (2013) teachers select three images to support students’ acquisition of vocabulary terms, and students then record what they see and think by viewing the images. Later, students revisit the images and words through a matching activity. “Making word meanings and relationships visible is a powerful way to involve students in actively constructing the meaning of words” (Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, and Wessels, 2013, p. 22). *Picture This* uses visuals and peer discussion to develop student understanding as well as vocabulary growth.

Herrera’s (2016) *Linking Language Strategy* uses images to illustrate concepts to target vocabulary learning, activate background knowledge, and link learning of words to image (p. 97). When students can make connections between the verbal language and the visual language, there is greater chance of academic success (Herrera, 2016). Essentially, Herrera’s biography-driven instructional method uses core art education principles for learning—both contexts use images (visual language) to teach literacy (verbal language).

Another parallel between Herrera’s (2016) instructional model and art education is idealism. According to Herrera, teaching happens in the idealistic world because there are no limits to what teachers can facilitate happening. This is the most basic premise of art education. Eisner’s (2002) theory states there are no rights or wrongs in art education, problems can have

more than one solution, and through the arts we can teach children to think within and through objects, not just about them. Through the visual arts, all children can tell their stories (Olson, 1998).

Synthesis of Literature Discovery

Using metaphor, the three contexts in this literature review of art education and art curriculum development, storytelling, and biopsychosocial context blend like the dynamic colors and robust emotion of Faith Ringold quilts (Biography, 2018). Ringold, known as an iconic contemporary American artist, was denied enrollment at an arts college, but her work is now in the Guggenheim Museum (Biography, 2018).

As an African American woman born in 1930, Ringold began a series of paintings called *American People* while working as a public school teacher in which she portrayed a female's perspective of the civil rights movement (Biography, 2018). In the 1980's she began a quilt series that she is best known for, and then began writing and illustrating children's books. Ringold's paintings and quilts tell real stories from her imagination and thoughts that are heartfelt, emotional, colorful, full of life and joy, even sometimes in the midst of harsh reality. One of her iconic quilts, *Tar Beach*, was made into a children's book that she also authored. It tells the story of a young girl in the Harlem area of New York City having picnics up on the rooftop of the building in which her family lived.



Figure 2.3. Faith Ringold's Tar Beach quilt. Faith Ringold's Tar Beach quilt later became the subject of a children's book that she authored. Retrieved from: <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3719>

Ringold's work as an artist and her art story parallels with the need for meaningful art curriculum. Ringold told her story often through her artwork and it changed her life. Art education and art curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial focus and learning have the ability to merge as the fundamental foundations of these three contexts, and then use them as the tools to help learner's grow and discover their own stories. It is only through investigation, critical thinking, and analysis that discovery is made.

The personal stories of teachers also demonstrate the fundamentals of art education and art curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial focus uniting as tools for teachers to advance their pedagogical skills, planning, and curriculum development in intercultural ways for *all* students as in this testimony of a teacher (Donnelly, 2018):

When I began my career as an educator 16 years ago I was under the false mindset that my job was to teach academic skills. And then I entered graduate school at Bank Street College of Education and started working with children. Children are organic beings and do not fit on a page in an academic curriculum guide. Like all people, children come to your learning environment with their own history, personality and learning style. I quickly learned that as an educator my job was to be the facilitator of learning situations, a protector of their emotional well-beings and a guide towards their own knowledge. My mission was to help slowly expand their world views, to see past their own experiences and have empathy and understanding for others. (p. 9)

Donnelly learned, through experience, that her role as an educator was much more than “teaching.” Teachers take organic beings (students) and help them grow into human beings.

Essentially, meta-synthesis of this literature review on art making and art curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial learning can be exhibited through specific art projects chosen by art teachers for curricular use. In art projects where students’ investigate their sense of self and place, students have opportunity to: (a) use art to share who they are—their biopsychosocial selves and the story they want to share— and the emotion they choose to convey; (b) they use critical thinking and analysis to choose colors, develop symbolic patterns and design, and make other creative choices; (c) they use self-reflection to determine how to position subjects or lay out composition; and (d) they can use creativity and linguistic skills—verbal and visual language—to convey meaning through activities such as artists’ statements. These types of art projects, based on the literature, will guide students through projects that give them opportunity to share their own biography, psychology and emotions, social needs, and thoughts with creative storytelling through art making that can also lead to investigations of self-esteem. This literature

review confirms that a study merging the three contexts of art curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial focus could usher in a new, more formal, holistic genre of 21st century art curriculum benefitting contemporary students. A meta-synthesis of the most similar themes emerging from all three main contextual areas of this literature review are listed below, using art terms as metaphor, and focused on the middle school students' perspective. These four synthesized themes are:

1. "Sketch" their own learning: Middle school students can become easily bored. Their attention span comes and goes. Students who are given general perimeters for art assignments, projects, or lessons will be more successful if they are given opportunity to individualize and *personalize* their efforts (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Heijnen, 2015; Herrera, 2016; Olson, 1998)
2. "Paint" the journey: Students come to class with prior or background knowledge and their own stories already in development. These stories go on each subsequent learning journey with students. The focus of real learning shouldn't be the end product, the *journey* of discovery should be the goal (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Haanstra, 2001; Herrera, 2016; Kerlavage, 1998; Klein, 2003).
3. "Depict" their culture and stories: All students have their own biographies, stories, and cultural characteristics and experiences. Learning should allow students opportunity to include their individual biographies and biopsychosocial selves into their art projects and assignments while becoming an *intercultural* part of the classroom community (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Haanstra, 2001; Herrera, 2016; Klein, 2003; Olson, 1998; Zimmerman, 2002).
4. "Blend" verbal, visual, and verbal/visual language: Students learn better when they

connect images and words (Delaney, 1998; Leavy, 2015, 2017; Herrera, 2016). In art, students communicate with three languages, the visual, the verbal, and a unique combination of the visual and verbal (Eisner, 2002; Leavy, 2018). Art, storytelling, and biopsychosocial exploration all uniquely use the power of the image and these three forms of communication.

Gaps and Limitations of the Literature

While literature abounds regarding the use of art with storytelling (Allen, 1998; Bequette, 2014; Rhoades, Dallacqua, Kersten, Merry, & Miller, 2015; Duncam, 2009; Kuyvenhoven; 2009; McLean, Pasupathi, & Pals, 2007; Plummer, 2001; Williams, 2011; Zander, 2007), art with social emotional learning (Bastos, 2010; Ebert, Hoffmann, Ivcevic, Phan, & Brackett, 2015; Chang, Lim, & Song, 2013; Davis, 2012b; Eisner, 2002; Klein, 2003; Russell & Hutzel, 2007; Sidney-Ando, 2014; Spendlove, 2007; Szekely, 1996; Wright, 2012), and art with culturally responsive pedagogy (Wong & Pēna, 2017; Eubanks, 2002; Goldman, 2017; Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes 2011; Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, & Wessels, 2013; Marzano, 2004; Muldoon, 1994; Lee, 2012; Schoff, 2016; Thomas, 2016), some puzzling gaps exist.

Some of these gaps are:

1. If the literature review reveals a wealth of research on using art education to address the social emotional needs of school students, and if school administration are concerned with the emotional health of students (Anderson & Cardoza, 2016; Borsuk, 2018; Wallace editorial team, 2018), a gap exists in evidence that art is used in this context.

2. Since art is produced through and by emotion and students often reveal their biopsychosocial selves through their art making, art educators should be prepared to assist students with difficult emotions that come out in art making. In a lengthy review of the course requirements for top ten art education programs in the United States (Universities.com, 2018), this researcher found art education teacher preparatory programs do not generally require courses in art therapy or social emotional training in understanding art and art making. University preparatory programs are laden with courses with art media technique, yet courses that examine art therapy or social emotional learning are not generally a required course. The literature review reveals only a few university or design schools' art education programs have art therapy courses, pre-certificates in art therapy, or dual degrees in art education and adaptive art (a type of art therapy—art therapy is a graduate level degree) (AC, 2018; IUPUI, 2018; Universities.com, 2018).
3. Finally, research proves that art education is a viable way to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse students, yet emphasis on art is not generally being included in a more formal way as part of students' individual education plans as recommended by various school administrators and staff. And likewise, art education university preparatory programs typically do not include specific *art* related courses in diversity or intercultural choice, particularly with ELL students, in the classroom through art making. Teacher preparatory programs typically require diversity courses, but a review of available literature seems to mostly indicate that graduate degrees in art education require a diversity in art education course, yet undergraduate degrees in art

education do not offer art-specific diversity courses (TC/AAE, 2018; Universities.com, 2018).

The larger question is if so much research exists stating the importance of art and art education in understanding the emotional issues of children, in developing or enhancing self-esteem in students, in how to recognize and decipher emotional issues and storytelling through children's art making, and if using visual language assists culturally and linguistically diverse students be more successful academically, then why are schools not using art education in more pronounced, formal ways to contribute to students' overall academic and personal success? Why are art teachers not working with school counselors and administrators to develop meaningful, 21st century art curriculum that address larger school issues in a more formal way?

A meta-synthesis of the literature suggests that a potential review of art teacher program course requirements may be needed and that supplemental teaching badges or microcredentials in social emotional learning may have important merit for art teachers, and other teachers. Research shows programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) may increase positive student behaviors and learning when incorporated with *other* school approaches, yet addressing only behavior and academics is not enough (Ryoo, Hong, Bart, Shin, & Bradshaw, 2018). Finally, if school administrators are concerned about the anxiety and trauma of their students, about the biopsychosocial selves of their students, student behavior, and about the success of all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students in a globally interconnected world (Herrera, 2016; Lovano-Kerr, 1985), why is art not a part of the administrative discussion in more formal ways for these challenging 21st century issues in American school education?

Indications for the Future of Art Education

More than ever, the United States must focus on preparing students for opportunities in global settings and for more diverse interactions in their own communities (Stewart, 2010). Culture and biography can be included in art curriculum in ways that differ from only studying the culture of a certain region, country, or continent, but rather gives students opportunity to bring their own culture to class, creating an intercultural community within the classroom and school. This is important in 21st century United States classrooms as “we have not emphasized global knowledge and skills in our schools. Indeed, compared to their peers in other countries, U.S. students are woefully ignorant of other world cultures, international issues, and foreign languages” (Stewart, 2010, pg. 100). According to Stewart (2010), “education as usual just won’t do” (p. 101). American schools once made the transition from the teaching skills needed in an agriculture based society to the needs of a society experiencing the industrial revolution (Stewart, 2010). The challenge is for all content areas in school programs, art included, to transform for the use of real, meaningful 21st century skills. American students need global literacy, knowledge of other regions and cultures, other economies, and global issues (Stewart, 2010). Students need skills to communicate in multiple languages, work in cross-cultural teams, and make connections with information learned about others (Herrera, 2016).

School curriculum can be a useful tool in the acquisition of these tools of human knowledge and understanding, including art education (Stewart, 2010). Practitioners also conduct professional research through pedagogy and gain insight from experimental efforts in implementing new curricula. Walter Peyton College Preparatory High School in Chicago, which is an inner-city magnet school, requires all students to study one language the school offers for four years of high school and also participate in a home-stay exchange in a country where the

language they studied is spoken (Stewart, 2010). At The John Stanford International School in Washington, students spend half the day studying literature, math, and literature science in Japanese or Spanish and then spend the other half of the day in history class and learning to read and write in English (Asia Society, 2018). Schools like these demonstrate intense focus on creating multiculture out of monoculture. They are dynamic creators of meaning and much is to be learned from this kind of practice. Schools are an assemblage of individuals, a collage of many parts into one large canvas, with different understandings and values, but with individual stories and biographies all attempting to become an intercultural community of learners.

Guimarães (2012) uses the metaphor of a quilt (as Ringold did with *Tar Beach*), a patching and piecing of fabrics of all shapes and colors, to describe the multicultural school setting of culturally quilted pedagogical territory, where identity “is made up of a patchwork of cultural traditions and polyphonic, socially built spaces” (p. 60) and where teachers need to understand the complexity of the cultural landscape. When teachers understand the “quilted territory comprised of conflicted spaces and diverse living experiences, that when interweaved, generate new meanings” (Guimarães, p. 60) learners will truly benefit. How many years has mankind been saying *the future is here?* It is. Art education can be a relevant part of 21st century learning in ways that brings joy to the journey and knowledge and meaning to the learner.

Conclusion

This literature review provides meta-synthesis of meaningful art education, curriculum development and implementation, and storytelling as they relate to the biopsychosocial needs of students, leading to pedagogical and curricular choices that assist in generating self-esteem and positivity in middle school student learning in and through an intercultural school art program.

The literature review demonstrates how these themes are intertwined in research, theory, and practice. The literature review also clearly explains how these contexts blend to form the pedagogical foundation of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit and the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project for this study. The learner benefits when meaningful, authentic, nurturing, intercultural curriculum is planned, taught, and focused on developing the whole creative child. Art education has an opportunity to weave self, place, interculturalality, biography, psychology, and social needs through artistic, visual, meaningful storytelling that produces a tapestry of growth for students. According to Crawford (2004):

When we weave subjects together and invite personal, feeling-based response we get fresh thinking and intellectual excitement. In fact, some of our best thinking comes from having the freedom to discern relationships. As new information comes into our brains, we make meaning by seeking connections to what we already know. We can hardly understand the information, much less use and remember it, unless we can connect it to other information, to feelings, to how we understand the world so far, to an association or image that flies through our minds at the moment. (p. 160)

While 21st century education asks stakeholders to focus on relevant content and meaningful pedagogy, this is not a new phenomenon. During other times in American history, such as at the beginning of the industrial revolution, educational programs also had to examine the relevance of the content being taught (Zhao, 2009). With more people moving around the globe than ever before in known history, it is imperative that art education focuses on new information and research, making meaningful connections, and adapting curriculum to embrace the needs of the 21st century student (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017; Franklin, 2017). Hattie (2012) simply summarizes the role of education and educators to “know thy impact” (p. 192). This

literature review provides impactful theory, research, and practice for the *I Am Me* research study. In the next chapter, research methodology will be presented.



Figure 2.4. Smithville USA art classroom.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

This chapter conveys all aspects of the research methodology used in the *I Am Me* research and is organized into sections including (a) purpose of the study, (b) research questions, (c) research design, (d) means of data collection, (e) means of data analysis, and (f) triangulation of data. Instrumental, single case study is a complex methodology. The case study is the *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* curriculum unit written for the study by this researcher. The curriculum unit includes the content unit plan, lesson plans, and all artifacts produced by students. The research question of whether or not art curriculum of this type can have broader use and meaning in 21st century art education is addressed through an overarching instrumental case (Stake, 1995) methodological approach. Arts Based Research, built upon the theory of various arts based researchers including Leavy (2018), Eisner (2002), and Dewey (1934), was the theoretical framework, and was used to guide this study with integrity for art education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how biopsychosocial (Henriques, 2015) art education curriculum might become more relevant and useful in 21st century schools through an instrumental case study and the specific implementation of the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project, which is part of a larger curriculum unit of the same title written for this research. An instrumental case study is appropriate when the case's focus is used for a purpose or issue beyond the actual case (Grandy, 2010; Stake, 1995). According to Stake, case is determined by either the case or the issue. Intrinsic case study focuses on case as the dominant issue, yet

instrumental case study focuses on the issue raised by the case (Grandy, 2010; Stake 1995). For this research, this means that while the storyboards were the actual case study, the more important aspect of this instrumental case study was the issue of whether or not art education curriculum could become more relevant in students' learning and the school. The issue was whether or not curriculum, such as the *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* unit, could help art education be more relevant in schools in regards to the holistic growth and education of students. This research provided an avenue for students to focus on and nurture the human characteristics of positivity, buoyancy, and self-esteem through a rich, pedagogical eight-session art unit. Although this research was focused on the art curriculum unit written for this study, including student's art making and other activities or artifacts produced by the curriculum unit, it only had a lens for the teaching and researching of the *I Am Me* art curriculum and the use of this kind of art curriculum in the holistic learning and benefit of students within the school setting where the research was conducted. Dewey (1934) articulated the relevance and importance of art as experience to all of society, but also in the lives of those who experience it.

Research Question

This research was guided by this main question: In what ways do sixth graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project? This research was also guided by these two related sub-questions: How can an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom? How can art curriculum such as the *I Am Me* curriculum unit produce more relevant, meaningful 21st century learning above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?

Research Design

The *I Am Me* study utilized a qualitative, instrumental, single case study design as the methodology. Qualitative research uses an inductive method of comparing rich, descriptive narratives and works well with both visual and verbal communication (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research methods are often used with small groups of people, situated within their normal setting (Huberman, Miles, & Saldana, 2014). Stake (1995) posits that qualitative case study emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequence of contextual happenings, and the wholeness of the case subject, all of which apply to this research.

Case Study

According to Stake (1995), “case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Stake points out that while a leaf or a toothpick have unique complexity, they generally are not unique enough to become a case study when taken outside of their contexts. In other words, Stake admonishes researchers to make sure that case studies choose significant topics. “We study case when it itself is of very special interest” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). “Case” is the object of a case study and Stake reports that case study looks for “the detail of the interaction with its contexts” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Yin (2018) argues “case study research comprises an all-encompassing mode of inquiry, with its own logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (p. 16). While Stake’s definition of case study is straightforward and simple, Yin’s definition is complex and more defensive of case study as a viable social science research methodology. Yin states that case study is empirical research that (a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context (as opposed to a scientific lab), especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and

context may not be clearly evident. Stake gives case study a second definition because in the real world “phenomenon and context are not always sharply distinguishable in real-world business” (1995, p. 15). Stake notes other methodological characteristics of case study’s value being used when there are many more variables of interest besides data points, using prior theoretical propositions to guide the methodology of case, and using multiple sources of data that need triangulation. Furthermore, case must ask how or why (Yin, 2018). Both definitions of case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) proposed a potential, robust, methodological path for *I Am Me*.

Undefined protocols of case study. Case study is emerging as a viable methodology in the social sciences (Yin, 2018), but according to Yazan (2015) though case study is used frequently in qualitative research, it has undefined protocols that can sometimes cause confusion about its definition. According to Liang (2018), case study does not have to be a classroom of students or a group of teachers. Instead, Liang argues case study can be a specific curriculum or a specific art project, and Yin and Stake report that case can be humans or “other” units of measurement and data gathering. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) state that case study can be about a *process*. Since art making is a process, this confirms that an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* could be the case. In this study, case was both a unit—an identifiable item or object— and a process, the *I Am Me Storyboard* curriculum unit and the key art project, the *I Am Me Storyboard*.

Description of this case study. This case study was both holistic and instrumental. In holistic analysis, the researcher examines the whole case and uses descriptive analysis of themes, interpretations, or assertions based on the entire case (Stake, 1995). The case study was the *I Am Me* curriculum unit and the artifacts it produced. Instrumental case study, according to Stake, is when the case is used to understand something else, rather than the exact case. For example,

while students were making the *I Am Me Storyboard* project the curriculum unit, the storyboards, and evidence of self-esteem were the focus of the main research questions, yet as a part of instrumental case study the overall unit was instrumental in gaining understanding of whether or not art curriculum such as *I Am Me* could have larger meaning for art curricular choices and the holistic learning of students. The data regarding creating an intercultural community within the classroom came from the implementation of the unit and students' written or verbal artist statements, as well as the researcher's field notes. The data for the potential for more meaningful 21st century art curriculum was derived from the overall success of the unit, students' success with the unit, the researcher's field notes, and interviews with the licensed school art teacher who co-taught the unit with the researcher.

Setting

Maxwell (2013), Stake (1995), and Yin (2018) emphasize a well-defined setting. The setting for this study was bound by:

1. Time and date: This researcher needed to conduct the research on Mondays. Two sixth grade art classes met on Mondays as part of the regular school schedule at Smithville USA Middle School.
2. Geographic location: The school was set within a large urban population center and within driving distance of this researcher's university. The study was also bound by the research being conducted within the art classroom at Smithville USA Middle School.
3. Student demographics: The school setting chosen for this study was highly diverse in order to correlate to the study's intent to examine the art program's relevance in 21st century schools, many of which are affected by globalization and have a large population of culturally and linguistically diverse students (Herrera, 2016).

4. Grade level of students: The study was conducted at a middle school, which served sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. This study was conducted specifically with sixth grade students because these young adolescents were making the important transition from elementary school to middle school and most were also becoming teenagers.

The study took place in the spring of 2019 at urban Smithville USA Middle School (SUMS), (a pseudonym). SUMS student population in the 2017-18 school year was 723 students (378 males, 345 females), 235 of whom were in Grade 6 (NCES, 2018)—the grade level of this study. The school was a Title I school, 574 students were free lunch eligible, and 60 students were reduced lunch eligible, with a student to teacher ratio of 12:01 (NCES, 2018). Out of 723 students, 110 were enrolled as white by ethnicity; 72 students were two or more races, 275 were Hispanic, 216 were black, 42 were Asian, and 6 were American Indian or Alaskan Native (NCES, 2018). SUMS's district website reported district students came from 96 countries with more than 119 languages spoken in the homes of district students (source anonymous because of pseudonym use for school name).

The setting was chosen for both purpose and convenience. The setting was purposeful in that a highly diverse school setting was chosen in order to gain rich, relevant data applicable to culturally and linguistically diverse schools. The setting was also convenient in that it was within driving distance of the researcher's university and grade levels were chosen in part because they met on Mondays when the researcher was available to conduct the research.

This researcher co-taught *I Am Me* with the school's art teacher who was licensed in art education through the state she teaches in to two sixth-grade classes on Mondays in the school art room. The school principal was fully supportive of the study. School schedules and special

activities affected some of the classes from doing all eight lessons on Mondays and two weeks were added to the study towards the end of the research.

Population Sample

This case study involved teaching the *I Am Me* curriculum unit, including the storyboard project, to a total of 70 sixth-grade students assigned to two art classes by normal school administration methods prior to the school year beginning at SUMS. The focus of this qualitative research was the art making, not the students, yet it is vital to understand that a key component of the unit was not just the making of art projects, but the writing of artists' statements for each phase of art making—this is a highly normal function in art education. To define the sample, however, the data gathering was conducted on the storyboard art project made by a mixed sample of 36 students in Class #1 and 34 students in Class #2. Participants in the Monday sixth-grade art classes were both males and females. The sample was a convenience sample (Marshall, 1996) because of how enrollment was conducted at the school and the fact that this researcher could only co-teach the art classes to the sixth grade classes available on the regular Monday school schedule. The sample was purposeful because a highly diverse school was chosen in order to produce data that was more relevant for a broad spectrum of schools. Banks and McGee Banks (2010) mention that a human relations approach to multicultural education challenges schools to help “students learn to live together harmoniously in a world that is becoming smaller and smaller” (p. 64). Merriam (2009) accords that purposeful sampling is motivated by what the researcher wants to discover and know and that a sample must be chosen which can reveal the most to the researcher. In this research study, in addition to knowing the results of the implementation of the curriculum unit, the researcher also wanted to know if art

education could become more relevant in the dynamics of diverse 21st century schools through art curriculum choices.

Each participant could choose to self-identify as male or female, immigrant or non-immigrant, and by ethnicity in a survey that was sent home to parents prior to the research beginning. This survey was sent home to parents with a consent-to-participate form (see Appendix C to see the parent permission form) developed specifically for this research. Parents chose whether or not to have their child participate and also freely choose what information to share on the consent form. Parents chose to complete the survey and also chose or chose not to have their child participate in the art project. The survey was translated using the school's normal protocol for converting documents written in English to a language the parents could understand as was needed. Parents were also given an opportunity to meet with a school representative to better understand the survey if they so chose. If parents chose for their students to not participate, the students could leave class at SUMS for other normal routines such as tutoring or other needs-based activities, yet 100% of parents gave permission for students to participate by the second week of the study. Only six parents had not given permission for the first week of the study and those students went to the school library. Students also completed a student assent form essentially stating that they wanted to or did not want to participate in the study (see Appendix D to see the assent form). All students signed the assent form and participated by the second week when all parent permission had been obtained.

Protocol for Unexpected Issues

No unusual problems or risks were anticipated with participants, the co-teacher, or the school since the research was conducted in SUMS's regular art classes, yet the school had protocol in place for the principal, art teacher, or counselor for any issues that arose. All schools

have occasional issues with students, facilities, and other factors that teachers must be ready to handle with expediency. This is part of the teaching profession and not unusual. Teaching involves human beings so the biopsychosocial aspects of each student are a part of the student's school day interactions (Herrera, 2016). Some possible research problems anticipated for this study were:

- **Logistics:** This researcher intended to drive to SUMS each week to co-teach the lesson with the art teacher. This researcher provided the *I Am Me* unit plan and all art supplies to the art teacher in advance of beginning the research so she could familiarize herself with the unit and teach it in this researcher's absence. There was the possibility of the art teacher being absent, in which case the school would assign a substitute teacher to teach with this researcher. Additionally, school schedules could have become a deterrent to completing the research in eight sessions, ideally over eight weeks, because of unforeseen assemblies, drills, and other school events. Two additional weeks at the end of the unit were set aside in case some of the classes got off schedule. One tornado drill and two Monday holidays did require the schedule to be somewhat altered.
- **Issues with participants:** Occasionally, but not often, a very small percentage of students may become withdrawn through the topic of an art project because of emotions or memories it activates. If a student became agitated, withdrawn, started crying, or refused to participate during class, SUMS had protocol in place to follow. Schools have normal protocol to follow in situations where students are distressed and even procedures mandated by school administration. Art teachers are keenly aware of this protocol due to the nature of art making. This researcher depended on the expertise of the art teacher who co-taught the curriculum to help determine procedures to implement, based on the

art teacher's knowledge of individual students and their specific needs. The first step was for the classroom art teacher to comfort the student and provide normal, classroom assistance for a student in need. If the student was inconsolable, the classroom teacher would follow normal school protocol and contact the school counselor for assistance. This school protocol was complied with at all times.

- **Language:** With over 60 languages spoken at SUMS (personal communication, SUMS Principal, 2018), it was of utmost importance to develop teaching protocol with the school's art teacher. This researcher used teaching strategies similar to what the art teacher used. A pre-research evaluation of students was done so that this researcher could meet the needs of the students. A biography card, adapted from Herrera's *CLD Student Biography Card* (see Appendix E to see Herrera's biography card) (2016, pp. 62-63), was sent home with each student to fill out with a parent. If they chose to do so, parents indicated the language used at home on the biography card. Parents also indicated students' first language if they chose to do so. The teacher completed a portion of the biography card. For this study, this document was called the *I Am Me Biography Card* (see Appendix F to see the biography card developed for this study). This researcher used information gained from these documents to have a better understanding of participants' language abilities so teaching of the unit met the needs of all students in the classroom. Since art is a visual language, researcher-made-samples of the various art projects helped students understand the goals. This researcher also offered process and progress exemplars, which meant participants were shown samples of each art project in varying stages of completion so they fully understood each day's goals in stages by viewing the exact part of the project to be done on any given day. This researcher was

also prepared to make visual flash cards with images and words in English and students' first languages if the pre-unit biography card indicated this will be useful. Additionally, speaking slow, offering one-on-one assistance, and demonstrations were used as teaching strategies. Doing whole class demonstrations and also small group or individual student demonstrations is important and commonly used in art education. This researcher was prepared to make a word wall of key words in English and the first languages of students in the two participating sixth-grade classes, again based on the biography card results, if needed. The goal of school pedagogy and interactions with the learner should be additive in nature, and not subtractive (Herrera, 2016). This means that through teaching the art unit, emphasis was placed on including students first languages, especially if they were spoken at home, as well as English, in an effort to help all students feel comfortable and welcomed in the classroom. These strategies also affirmed the students' whole self and culture within the art classroom.

Protection of Human Subjects

The human rights of children are defined by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (O'Neil, 2013). This convention offers a framework for research involving children. Essentially, the convention fundamentally indicates that researchers should support and conduct research that helps children be "considered full participants in the communities of which they are a part, and of which they will be a part" (O'Neil, 2013, np). O'Neil reports the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) requires researchers of children to take extra care to protect the rights and interests of children, while providing structure and analysis for the research to be beneficial. Researching children is different than conducting research with adults (O'Neil, 2013). According to O'Neil, in research

adult's potential harm is weighed against potential benefits to both the individual *and* society. Research for children must be structured differently, according to O'Neill. Children cannot give their own informed consent to participate, so researchers must provide more protection for children. Researchers in the United States are not allowed to consider the benefit to society at large when conducting research on children (O'Neil, 2013). Any potential harm to children must be focused on the potential benefit to child participants (O'Neil, 2013). Avoiding all harm can mean that important research benefitting children will not be conducted, and research needs to be rethought in regard to research on healthy children, even though much research is done on sick children (O'Neil, 2013). All protocol regarding this study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix G).

The ethical responsibilities and human rights concerns regarding children were upheld by the *I Am Me* study. The focus was positivity, buoyancy, self-esteem, sharing who students were, and learning to communicate their cultures and their biopsychosocial (Herrera, 2016) selves within the community of the classroom and the school. The study was relational, as teaching is relational. The study gave students a chance to say, "This is me!" This research project was not about benefitting society, although all positive pedagogy in schools that produces well-intentioned academic, cognitive, emotional, and social benefits for children does benefit society (Dewey, 1934). This project was simply about using art to nurture self-esteem in students, which research proves will transfer to other aspects of students' learning and the whole school environment (Day & Hurwitz; Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012; Leavy, 2018). This research was about whether or not school art programs could be more relevant in meeting the needs of all students in 21st schools.

The following is a list of items planned to ensure the protection of human rights for this research:

- A clear, easy to read informed consent form was sent home to all parents. Parents, after reading the form, chose whether or not to allow their child to participate in the research involving art and storyboards. This informed consent form was sent home through the normal, established school protocol for obtaining parent permission for various school purposes. For CLD students, the school had protocol in place to offer translation or interpretation of this document for parents as needed. The researcher coordinated this with school administration through the art teacher. If there had been students who did not receive parent permission to participate, the school had normal and common protocol in place for removing students from the class for tutoring, special services, and leadership purposes.
- There was a large digital photograph placed on students' storyboards. While it is completely normal and acceptable to display the art project in the final art show within the school building, any photographic images the researcher took of the art projects—as ABR theoretical framework deemed important—had the faces blurred using Photoshop before being shared in this research, and also at conferences, in slide shows, or in other presentations or papers.
- While it is common in research to keep participants anonymous, the *I Am Me* project allowed students to use their name as one of the 15 words they chose to place on their storyboards. Like the facial images, these names were blurred out when research was shared anywhere outside of the school building. Since the storyboard art project was specifically asked students to be personal and share characteristics about themselves or

words they associated with themselves and their lives, students were allowed to use their names if they chose to do so. No written data analyses, findings, or implications for the future included student names. All storyboards were assigned a number and individual storyboards were referred to by that number in verbal or written analysis. Students kept their own storyboards.

- This research involved positivity, buoyancy, and self-esteem, which are all characteristics that should elevate the human spirit and evoke good emotions. This is normal curriculum in art education (Davis, 2008; Davis, 2012; Leavy, 2018). In the simplest of human terms, everyone should like to feel good and through art that is possible.

Means of Data Collection

The single case design of *I Am Me* gave a rich and impactful platform for the nuances, contextual sequences, and the overall unique qualities of the *I Am Me Storyboards* to emerge. This case study produced large quantities of data in the art and the artists' statements. Stake (1995) reminds that in case study a researcher collects more data than there is opportunity to analyze and stresses importance on spending the "best analytic time on the best data" (p. 84). This section explains the eight data sources.

First, it is important to describe the storyboard project. The researcher gathered data from aspects of the storyboard project, which was part of a larger curriculum unit the researcher wrote for this study. The storyboards were done on a 12" x 18" canvas covered board and were completed in various stages. First, students chose one color and did monochromatic painting of the background. Monochromatic painting is when a color, for example blue, is used and the artist adds varying amounts of usually white or black to the blue paint to make other shades

(darker colors) and tints (lighter colors). Secondly, students were asked to divide the storyboards into three segments. They used symbolism to design a geometric pattern representing their past, present, and future. They then painted these geometric patterns on their storyboard in the designated sections. Digital portraits were taken of students to place on the storyboards. Students wrote fifteen words representing love, laughter, and life (Herrera, 2016) on various papers and using various fonts and letter shapes and sizes. Using assemblage technique (mounting and preserving techniques), the photographic image and words were collaged onto the storyboard to complete the project.

Data was gathered from the storyboards to find meaning. One way that data gives meaning was through observing patterns that students chose to use. Eight sources of data were collected and examined for patterns. “The search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency, for consistency within certain conditions, which we call correspondence” (Stake, 1995, p. 78). Stake argues that sometimes meaning comes from a single piece of evidence, but that generally meaning comes from repeated reappearance of patterns. *I Am Me* investigated both the visual and verbal communication of participants for patterns.

Data Sources

All *I Am Me* data sources were components of the actual storyboard art project and the verbal or written artist statements that corresponded to each data sources, and also included the researcher’s field notes, pre-unit surveys, and interviews. The researcher’s field notes included notes on planning, developing, and preparation for the implementation of the curriculum unit. All data sources provided rich data for the central research question for this study, which investigated how students exhibited self-esteem through a biopsychosocial (Herrera, 2016) art project that was a part of an art curriculum unit written for this study. All data was analyzed for

positive, buoyant choices and narrative expressing self-esteem through artistic and word choices. The results of the data, and a derivative of the literature review, indicated whether or not this research indicated meaningful curricular choices in art education, meaningful learning for sixth grade students that had the potential to contribute to the holistic learning of students, and also whether or not this art curriculum unit helped to generate intercultural narrative within the classroom where students learned from each other. Essentially the main research question directly related to the storyboard project and the artist's statements associated with it, which was the main product of the case study and the related questions addressed the larger aspect of this broader "instrumental" case study, which allowed the actual case study to be a tool for making larger statements about the curriculum. The data was gleaned from all 70 students in two art classes where the research was conducted in order to provide enough artifacts and anecdotes to see patterns develop in the data. The following Table 3.1 summarizes how the questions was addressed by the data:



Figure 3.1. Bird mask art project. The first project of the unit was the bird mask. Students worked collaboratively to complete masks. Masks were used as a metaphor for the word buoyant.

Table 3.1

Research Questions with Corresponding Data Sources

RESEARCH QUESTION	CORRESPONDING DATA SOURCE
In what ways do sixth graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) color choice and artists' statements (b) geometric design and artists' statement (c) digital images and artists' statements (d) word choice and artists' statements (e) final storyboard, final written and verbal artists' statements (f) researcher's field notes
How can art curriculum such as the <i>I Am Me</i> curriculum unit produce more relevant, meaningful 21st century learning above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) all art phases and all written or verbal artist statements (b) informal interviews of art teacher (c) researcher's field notes
How can an art project such as the <i>I Am Me Storyboard</i> help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>I Am Me Biography Card</i> (b) all art phases and all written or verbal artist statements (c) researcher's field notes (d) informal interviews of art teacher

The data points are listed below:

1. Project Step #1/Color Choice: The researcher categorized all students' color choices for the storyboard backgrounds into self-esteem categories and reviewed artists' statements about the monochromatic color choice students made for the background of the storyboard (see Appendix H to view the color choice artist statement). The researcher attempted to understand reasons for students' color choice, including the science and mood of color theory, through available research (Baldwin, 1989; Bourgeois-Bailletti & Cerbus, 1977; Isaacs, 1980; Kerlavage, 1998; Mollica, 2013). Research indicated that color choice was actually based more on personal

and cultural reasons than data-driven science and mood theory (Ciotti, 2014) so students' artist statements were important in analyzing color choice.

2. Project Step #2/Geometric Design: This researcher reviewed all geometric design worksheets (see Appendix I) and geometric design artists' statements (see Appendix J) regarding the meaning and symbolism of three sections of geometric designs students painted on the background (Einarsdottir, 2008; Kerlavage, 1998; Papandrea, 2012). The geometric patterns were assigned EASEA categories. The students' artist statements in which they described the meaning of the symbolic geometric design were used to develop these EASEA categories that were influenced by art education stage theory of mark making and symbolic representation (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 1998).

3. Project Step #2/ Digital Photos: This researcher planned to review facial expressions of all students in the digital images taken for the storyboards, looking for patterns, and planned to categorize simple EASEA categories of facial expressions. While patterns of facial expressions could have developed out of an analysis of the digital images of students, the photos were intended to be examined for basic expressions such as sad face, a happy face, a funny expression on their face, and so on. Children convey thoughts and feelings through facial expressions (Ellis et. al., 1997; Guarnera, Hichy, Cascio, & Carrubba, 2015; LoBue & Thrasher, 2015), yet smiling or not-smiling and other types of facial expressions in photography can also be related to cultural norms and may not completely reveal the student's intent (Yan, Andrews, & Young, 2016). Students' verbal artist statements could reveal important details about their facial expression choice.

4. Project Step #3/Characteristic Words: Students wrote fifteen words on the word choice worksheet of which five represented love, five represented laughter, and five represented

life (see Appendix K). This researcher reviewed students' word worksheets and word choice artist statements (see Appendix L) and made EASEA category assignments based on a list of 15 words students wrote on provided worksheets about their positive characteristics. Building on the biography-driven instructional model of Herrera (2016), students were asked to write five words that signified what they loved, five words that signified what made them laugh, and five words that signified their life (Farber & Doolin, 2011; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Herrera, 2016). It was possible that students would not be able to think of positive words or 15 positive words. Students were encouraged to write the 15 words of their choice-regardless of the attribute of the word.

5. Project Step #5/Final Storyboard and Art Show: Students were observed at a student art show held during class while sharing the story of their *I Am Me Storyboards*. Through the final storyboard written or verbal artist statement (see Appendix M), the researcher learned of students' storyboard choices. The researcher also observed students' descriptions of their storyboards if they chose to explain the storyboard in an in-class art gallery show. Patterns were EASEA categorized as students made their own decisions about what to share publicly with the class about their artwork (Wellman & Bey, 2015; Bresba, 2009; Lackey, 2015; Rubin, 2005).

6. Researcher's Field Notes: The researcher took field notes during all phases of the research including during the planning, development, and implementation of the curriculum unit. Records of anecdotal narrative and comments made by students regarding color, geometric design, facial expression, and word choices while working on their art projects were recorded. This anecdotal data contributed to the researcher's overall data analysis and interpretation. Field notes also addressed observations of self-esteem, struggle, student engagement, relevance, and physical, emotional, and sociological characteristics of student participants and the two

overall class periods where the research was conducted. This researcher took notes on informal interviews with the art teacher, all observations, and document and artifact analysis. According to Yin (2018), field notes are generally the most common component of a case study data base and can be collected through a variety of settings and experiences of the researcher.

Additionally, field notes taken during other activities of the study gave this researcher an opportunity to record and examine other aspects of the Arts Based Research (ABR) theoretical framework. One important ABR function was this researcher also made a variety of storyboards throughout the research timeline. Specifically, through the creation of sixteen storyboards throughout the duration of the study with varying themes and purposes, this researcher literally experienced similar kinds of cognitive, creative, and emotional choices that the student participants experienced as they made their storyboards. This ABR action helped this researcher develop a better understanding of students' visual, verbal, and vervisual decision making and communication conveyed throughout the study.

7. *I Am Me Biography Card*: Language assessments, as shared by students, their families, and their classroom teacher, were used to both develop and conduct teaching the *I Am Me Unit* through eight sessions, and to help prepare the researcher for working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students. The *I Am Me Biography Card* (see Appendix F) was completed by parents or a family member. Herrera (2016) states that teachers need to assess and understand students varying language acquisition accomplishments so they “can appropriately scaffold and support their learning though our teaching strategies” (p. 33). Various standardized tests and informal observations of students' second language acquisition (SLA) assists teachers in planning more effectively (Herrera, 2016). The biography card gave the researcher a better

understanding of how to pedagogically deliver the *I Am Me Unit*. Data from the document was used in the final analysis.

8. Informal Interviews with Art Teacher: A pre and post interview was conducted with the school art teacher using a semi-structured format.

The following table (Table 3.2) summarizes pre-unit and post-unit data instruments and artifacts:

Table 3.2

Data Sources—I Am Me Pre-Unit and Post-Unit.

PRE-UNIT DATA SOURCES	POST-UNIT DATA SOURCES
FIELD NOTES: Researcher’s field notes regarding planning and preparation. INTERVIEW: Informal, semi-structured, pre-unit interview with the art teacher.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher’s field notes regarding implementation of the curriculum unit and the <i>I Am Me Storyboard</i> project. INTERVIEW: Informal, semi-structured post-unit interview with the art teacher.
RESEARCHER’S PILOT STUDY FINDINGS	ART PROJECT AND ARTISTS’ STATEMENTS: <i>I Am Me Storyboard</i> art project and all artists’ statements.
EXISTING THEORY	MATRICES OF DATA
<i>I Am Me</i> BIOGRAPHY CARD	<i>I Am Me</i> BIOGRAPHY CARD

Pre-Unit Interview Questions for Art Teacher

The following five questions were administered in a pre-unit, informal, semi-structured interview of the SUMS art teacher:

1. Would you describe any art units or lessons you have developed and teach that focus on self-esteem?
2. How have you seen prior evidence of an intercultural community materialize in the two sixth

grade classes participating in this research?

3. What is your overall assessment of the self-esteem of the students in these two classes?
4. Do you have any unique problems or issues in these two classes that could cause a potential problem or issue with the teaching of this research curriculum?
5. Which students, in your opinion, will need additional linguistic assistance so that they understand the curriculum directions? What strategies do you typically use to help these students be able to fully participate? (This information was also gathered from the parent consent form and biography card sent home for parents to fill out. The ESL teacher also was consulted regarding each student's ability to complete the written artist statements and regarding modifications that needed to be made for students who could not complete the statement.)

Post-Unit Interview Questions for Art Teacher

The following five questions were administered in a post-unit, informal, semi-structured interview of the SUMS art teacher:

1. How would you describe the usefulness of this curriculum in addressing the existence or development of self-esteem in students?
2. Do you think as a result of participating in this research with the *I Am Me* unit that you may implement curriculum like this in the future, why or why not?
3. Did you see the intercultural community in your classroom grow during the teaching of the curriculum unit and in what ways?
4. What do you think happened well during the unit and what would you change about the curriculum?
5. How has teaching this curriculum unit impacted you?

The following table (Table 3.3) summarizes during-unit data instruments and artifacts:

Table 3.3

Data Sources—During I Am Me Unit

LESSON ONE: TELL (Bird mask & Intro to Storyboard)	LESSON TWO: his/herSTORY (Arpillera & Storyboard Background)	LESSON THREE: OBLIQUE (Hot Air Balloon, Storyboard Geometric Design)	LESSON FOUR: UNIQUE (Sun Paper Weaving & Storyboard Photos & 15 Words)
PRE-UNIT INTERVIEW: Prior to the first lesson, the researcher will interview the art teacher.	STORYBOARD BACKGROUND COLOR: Students' color choice and artists' statements.	STORYBOARD GEOMETRIC DESIGN: Students' geometric designs and artists' statements.	STORYBOARD 15 WORDS: Students' 15 total words representing love, laughter, and life. Photo pose. Artists' statements for both.
FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.
LESSON FIVE: GLOW (Stone Fish Painting & Storyboard 15 Words)	LESSON SIX: HONE (Finish Storyboards)	LESSON SEVEN: THINK (Finish Storyboards)	LESSON EIGHT: SHARE (Finish Storyboards)
STORYBOARD 15 WORDS: Students' 5 words representing love, laughter, and life (total of 15 words) and artists' statements.	FINAL ARTISTS' STATEMENTS	FINAL ARTISTS STATEMENTS	IN-CLASS GALLERY SHOW ARTISTS' STATEMENTS
FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes.	FIELD NOTES: Researcher's informal observations and field notes. POST-UNIT INTERVIEW: Interview with art teacher once unit completed.

***I Am Me* Art Curriculum Unit**

The complete title of the art unit, which was the case study and that lasted eight weeks with one class session per week per class (plus was extended for two weeks due to school schedule issues), was *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* (see Appendix N to see the entire unit plan and all lesson plans). This researcher wrote the unit specifically for this case study research (see Table 3.3 for a summary of the unit). The unit had a variety of activities and six total art projects, but the storyboard project that served as the case for this study was built slowly over eight weeks, giving students time to think through each phase of development. Kay (1998) calls this kind of educational method when a unit of instruction has multiple layers of experience and participation an “elegant problem” (p. 281). So often in art education in lower levels of schools, art projects are short and rushed, and secondary art projects can often be long fine arts studies. Kay argues that art units should be detailed problem exercises of thought that allow creative teaching to provide the proper environment for the development of creative thought. Kay’s list of components of elegant problems in art education guided the curriculum research process of this study and is briefly summarized here. According to Kay, the curriculum should

- engage both elementary and secondary aged students;
- address varying skill levels, abilities, and engagement levels;
- lend itself to many kind of solutions by many problem solvers;
- provide opportunity for fluency of responses;
- give many choices and responses opportunity to develop;
- be elaborate, often original, with variability in length, width, and depth of examination;
- be novel and inventive;
- be well-structured and well-composed;

- encourage the four strands of creative thought—flexibility, fluency, elaboration, and originality of response;
- be of a topic worth solving or exploring;
- allow technical and intellectual growth;
- be responsive to various levels of students’ expertise; and
- stimulate elegant solutions.

Elegant problems (Kay, 1998) present the kind of phenomenon that is needed in qualitative research (Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018), and because of this compatibility with qualitative inquiry, they also work well with case study methodology (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). An elegant art education problem, the *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy Unit*, gave this case study a higher level of thinking in art education (Kay, 1998).

The unit is briefly summarized here:

THOUGHTS is an acronym. Each letter of the acronym consists of a symbolic word for each of the eight lessons:

T=Tell	(students TELL about themselves)
H=his/herStory	(students share their STORY)
O=Oblique	(students examine OBLIQUE thoughts)
U=Unique	(students reveal what makes them UNIQUE and happy)
G=Glow	(students share what makes them GLOW personally)
H=Hone	(students HONE and dream about their future)
T=Think	(students THINK of how to achieve goals)
S=Share	(students SHARE projects and their visual/verbal story through art)

The unit asked students to “*TELL* your *his/herStory* . . . *OBLIQUE* and *UNIQUE*, *GLOW* and *HONE*, *THINK* and *SHARE!*” Students shared emotion and stories every day in art classes, yet community must be present for students to freely express themselves (Burden, 2007; Estes, Gunter, & Schwab, 2003; Herrera, 2016; Leavy, 2018). In her work with culturally and

linguistically diverse students, such as students in this Smithville USA study, Herrera (2016) takes pedagogy to a relational level stating that it's important for students and teachers to share love, laughter, and life. This is important to all students, as also recognized by Herrera. Through various zones of creative thought, this curriculum will guide student participants into a place of community through art making as they discover more about themselves. By focusing on positive attributes and characteristics, students' self-esteem was nurtured and potentially contributed to learner growth and a positive personal outlook, which may influence future art education curriculum and holistic learning of students within the school environment. The following Table 3.4 summarizes the *I Am Me* curriculum unit.

Table 3.4

Unit Plan Summary for the I Am Me Unit

WEEK	ACRONYM	QUESTION	PROJECT	ART FOCUS	DESCRIPTION
1	TELL (Tell about yourself.)	Who are you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bird Masks •Discussion & Examples of Storyboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Create •Imagination •Storytelling •Assemblage •3D Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-Esteem •Positivity •Buoyancy •Buoyant Focus: Birds
2	his/herSTORY (Share your story.)	What is your story? Why is life like a journey? How is a journey a story?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Chilean Arpilleras •Storyboard Background 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hue •Shades •Tints •Collage •Sewing •Painting •Photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family & Community •Journey •Buoyant Focus: Aspects of our Story
3	OBLIQUE (Examine oblique thoughts.)	What color are your rays?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nigerian-Inspired Hot Air Balloons •Storyboard Geometric Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lines •Angles •Shapes •Painting •Assemblage •Photography •Painting •Photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Personality ^aDiversity •Community •Buoyant Focus: Balloons

4	UNIQUE (Reveal what makes you unique and happy.)	What makes you happy? Do we get to tell our story? Do we get to help choose our journey?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sun Paper Weaving •Storyboard Photos •Storyboard Words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Self-Portraits •Composition •Expression •Painting •Weaving •Assemblage •Word Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Happiness •Brightness •Buoyant Focus: Sun
5	GLOW (What makes you personally glow?)	What makes you special?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Painted Stone Fish •Storyboard Words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Emphasis •Texture •Rhythm •Painting •Assemblage •Collage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Specialness •Characteristics •Buoyancy: Boat & Fish
6	HONE (Hone and dream about your future.)	What would you like to do when you grow up?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Storyboard Assembly •Final Artists' Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Balance •Unity •Aesthetics •Painting •Assemblage •Collage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Future •Buoyant Focus: Dreams
7	THINK (Think of how to achieve goals.)	Can you or will you be buoyant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Storyboard Assembly •Final Artists' Statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Visual Language •Verbal Visual •Vervisual Language •Painting •Assemblage •Collage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Careers •Buoyant Focus: Goals
8	SHARE (Share projects and tell visual/verbal story.)	How can you be buoyant and what have you learned from this art unit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Storyboard Assembly •Final Artists' statements •In-Class Art Show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Art Appreciation •Gallery •Sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Past, Present, Future •Buoyant Focus: Intercultural Community

Project Timeline

The following Table 3.5 summarized the approximate timeline to complete the research:

Table 3.5

Estimated Timeline for Research

RESEARCH ACTIVITY	LOCATION	TIMELINE
Unit Writing & Design, Supply Gathering, Coordination with Smithville USA	University Office, Researcher's Home Art Studio	3 Weeks
Pilot Study	Anytown USA Boys & Girls Club	1 Week
Data Collection: Pre-Unit	University Office, Smithville USA Middle School	2 Weeks
Data Collection: Lesson One	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Two	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Three	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Four	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Five	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Six	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Seven	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Lesson Eight	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Collection: Post-Unit	University Middle School, Smithville USA Middle School	3 Weeks
Art Show	Smithville USA Middle School	1 Week
Data Analysis	University Office	4 Weeks
Report	University Office	3 Weeks
	TOTAL TIMELINE:	25 Weeks

Implications from the Pilot Study

The pilot study was completed at a local Boys and Girls Club. A qualitative, Arts Based Research (ABR) focus was used to pilot the final project — the storyboard art project, which was the main art project of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit—the case study— and helped to refine the overall question for the case study. According to Yin (2018), pilot cases can provide important “information about relevant field questions and about the logistics of the field inquiry” (p. 108).

Fourteen students participated in the unit, made all the art projects, completed the unit activities, and made the storyboards.

The pilot study confirmed that this researcher needed to have a well-designed plan to address students' linguistic abilities to understand the project. One young female from Nepal spoke no English and the project proved to be difficult for her because this researcher and the two assistant teachers could not communicate with her using verbal or written communication. Instead, all communication with the female was visual, using demonstration and hand signals. As a result of this, the planning of this study included a biography card in order for this researcher to work collectively with the art teacher so that students at Smithville would understand directions for the art unit and storyboard project.

The pilot was used for a variety of reasons including planning purposes. Because of the pilot study this researcher decided to change the background color to a monochromatic color scheme because with so many colors of acrylic paint to choose from, some young students muddled the colors all together into various shades of brown, which effected the aesthetic quality. Additionally, the number of words planned for students was decreased from 30 to 15. Many students found it difficult to write ten words for each of the three categories. Writing five words will be much easier for students.

The pilot study also revealed that participants especially enjoyed sharing about themselves through their art project. Participants storyboards offered noticeable parallels from students' moods and behavior in art camp to their word and color choice. Interestingly, a highlight of the pilot study was that two students who were noticeably anxious and using disruptive behavior in camp class shared their most personal aspects on their storyboards. This

researcher was surprised by how much these two students liked the storyboard project and how happy they were at the end of the project as they shared their story with the art camp children.

Means of Data Analysis

Eight primary sources of data were identified to answer the research questions.

Those eight data sources were: (a) color choice of students for their storyboard background and artist statement (see Appendix H); (b) geometric designs for three segments representing past, present, future and artist statement (see Appendix I and Appendix J); (c) 15 words representing love, laughter, and life and artist statement (see Appendix K and Appendix L); (d) digital photo expression and verbal artist statement; (e) student art show and final storyboard artist statement (see Appendix M); (f) researcher's field notes; (g) the *I Am Me Biography Card* (see Appendix F); and (h) informal pre-unit and post-unit interviews of the art teacher. The following section outlines coding that was done on the data, triangulation of data, and analysis.

While qualitative research (Creswell and Poth, 2018), ABR (Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018), and case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) complement each other well, all three also add to the ambiguity of this study's design. Qualitative research is highly dependent upon the researcher's unbiased opinion (Creswell & Poth, 2018), ABR is still growing in its definition as a theoretical framework (or even a methodology) (Leavy, 2018), and when case study moved into the social sciences as a methodology it also became less easy to define than when used in quantitative research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Liang, 2018). When compounded with the uniqueness of doing this research study involving art curriculum and the general "openness" of art making, this study and the way in which it was designed required great focus in planning this instrumental case study methodology. In fact, with qualitative research

having so many attributes that are similar with art education, Creswell and Poth (2018) use an art-based analogy of weaving and a loom to describe qualitative inquiry:

We think metaphorically of qualitative research as an intricate fabric comprising minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material. This fabric is not explained easily or simply. Like the loom on which fabric is woven, general assumptions and interpretive frameworks hold qualitative research together . . . This field has many different individuals with different perspectives who are on their own looms creating the fabric of qualitative research. Aside from these differences, the creative artists have the common task of making a fabric. (p. 41)

Qualitative research—in this study qualitative case study research—and ABR framework use the same synergy. Janesick (2001) states that the researcher is the instrument in both ABR and qualitative research. Leavy (2018) argues both practices are holistic and dynamic, involving reflection description, problem formulation and problem solving, and the ability to tap into, identify, and explain the role of intuition and creativity in the research process” (p. 9). Growth has occurred in the research field since Knowles and Cole (2008) released groundbreaking analysis of using art in research. Perhaps the effective partnering of qualitative research through case study and ABR is because artistic behavior come from habits of mind, ways of looking and working, and these criteria give the behavior of art and artful processes of thinking and image a pathway for ABR researchers to know and understand qualitative research (Carroll, 1998). With scholarly, cognitive qualitative research woven with ABR’s seeing and knowing the image and emotion, this case study was designed in a way to provide quality data analysis, which had a focus on being trustworthy and unbiased.

This research used Stake's (1995) directive to take the data apart during analysis, understanding it and making sense of it in ordinary ways, proceeding from an etic focus to more emic centered focus. The data points and sources were constantly compared as they were generated. This study used Stake and also Creswell and Poth's (2018) four criteria for meaning of data including (a) categorical aggregation (researcher will summarize or distribute categories of data and specifically look for a variety of instances from the data to hopefully discover relevant meanings), (b) direct interpretation (researcher will draw key meanings from any and all instances and specifically look at a single instance and draw meaning from that), (c) establishment of patterns (researcher will look for noted consistency within various conditions and specifically look for patterns between two or more categories using a word table), and (d) naturalistic generalizations (researcher will make interpretations based mostly on experiences and specifically generalize what can be learned from the case, applying learning to the population of the case, or transfer learning to similar contexts).

Data analysis, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), is a spiral, another art-based analogy. Through an art lens, a spiral is a curvilinear line, and is not a flat line that goes straight across a horizon, but has loops, twists, and turns. Creswell and Poth call this a "data analysis spiral" and it will be used as a road map to guide and analyze data over the mountains and through the caverns of this research study. This researcher moved in analytical circles, entering the spiral at the widest point with the gathered data, and move in circular fashion looping around and around through the vast amount of data, tightening the circle, in order to develop a narrative of the research. Creswell and Poth describe the metaphor of loops in the data spiral. This researcher used Creswell and Poth's "looping" strategy to examine data in the following manner:

- Data management was the first loop. Data was organized in digital files and given EASEA coding.
- The second loop was reading and memoing ideas explicit in the data. In this phase, this researcher read, reflected, made notes, and became familiar with the data. “Memos are short phrases, ideas, or key concepts that occur to the reader” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 188).
- The third loop of analysis was describing and classifying the EASEA categories into themes and this is the heart of qualitative research. “Here, researchers build detailed descriptions, apply codes, develop themes or dimensions, and provide an interpretation in light of their own views or views of perspectives in the literature. Detailed description means that authors describe what they see” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 189). A list of initial categories was made by this researcher based on patterns that emerged in data sources and not the lengthy lists beginning researchers sometimes make. This process was in effect lean coding of EASEA categories. Lean coding usually begins with five to six coding categories and then expands as the data is read and reread. In this research the coding of categories centered around the first loop of data and the five broad EASEA categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996) and this is where the focus remained, although the data was then disaggregated into more specific and detailed loops of codes to better understand the data. Creswell and Poth contend that a common mistake made in coding data is coding too much data so this study built upon the stream-lined EASEA categories.

- The fourth loop was developing and accessing interpretations. Essentially, interpretation meant abstracting thoughts and ideas past the coding of EASEA categories and then organizing them into broader units of abstraction. This researcher was highly watchful for alternative understandings that did not coincide with the goals of this research and some of these findings are reported in chapter 4. Additionally, in this loop—conducted at the end of the study—this researcher identified six students whose final storyboards exhibited all five EASEA categories and then revisited these six students’ five individual art phases and five artist statements for further analysis. The storyboard efforts of these six students throughout all five storyboard data phases of the study were followed in order to demonstrate the ways self-esteem was exhibited by students as the study progressed.
- The last phase of data analysis was representing and visualizing the data. This researcher made data matrices in this phase. Matrices were to cross-reference and compare categories in order to establish a larger picture of the data patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Matrices were made for male and female students, immigrant and non-immigrant, and class #1 and Class #2.

Coding for This Study

Referring more extensively to Creswell and Poth’s (2018) third loop of data analysis, data was analyzed by using various coding strategies. As noted in Maxwell (2013), analyzing data involves looking for similar relations that involve common features. Data involving emotions, awareness, revelations, and realizations can be fractured from art output by coding of the meaning of images used by the artists and artist statement comments. Using the EASEA categories of family, friends, activities, body image, and school gave a lens and a focus to the act

of coding and led to attribution of students art making and artists' statements into the five EASEA categories. Maxwell (2013) suggests that researchers code data contiguously, organizationally, substantively, emically, and theoretically. The following is a brief description of data coding (Maxwell, 2013) that was done in this study:

- **Contiguous Relationships**—Contiguous relationships include examining how one creative decision affects another. In this study, relationships were identified between students' visual intent and their verbal description in an effort to determine the presence of the five EASEA categories, as it was not always obvious.
- **Organizational Categories**—Organizational categories are topics that the researcher deems important to investigate or that appear useful. “Organizational categories function primarily as bins for sorting the data for further analysis” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 106). The five EASEA categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, BI=Body Image, and S=School functioned as the organizational categories.
- **Substantive Categories**—Substantive categories include coding for participants' beliefs and conceptual understandings. Using this categorical analysis, the research sometimes had to make qualitative assumptions as to EASEA categories about what students meant when they drew something or did not write about their intent in specific detail.
- **Emic categories**—Emic categories allow the researcher to analyze participants' words and narrative through a cultural lens. Students' cultural intent was evident all throughout data analysis and allowed the researcher to address the intercultural sub-question.
- **Theoretical categories**—Theoretical categories allow the researcher to place coded data into more specific framework. This type of categorical analysis allowed the researcher to

make generalizations regarding emerging themes or implications for future research and teaching.

Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) indicate that coding is deep qualitative reflection and provides multifaceted analysis and interpretation of the meaning of the overall data. Another important aspect of data analysis in this study involved attempting to record episodes of meaning on the topic of self-esteem by students, especially the six focus students. Student artist statements were analyzed for what these participants learned or discovered on their own through the action of reflection (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). By conducting the research in two sixth-grade school classes, cross-case analysis gave applicability of findings to other settings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Coding was also disaggregated by whether or not students self-identified on the biography card sent home for parents to complete as immigrant or non-immigrant students and males and females. Finally, a network model was made to depict overall nodes of connection, summary, and assertion (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The goal was to look for evidence of self-esteem through a qualitative analysis of the data.

Triangulation

Stake (1995) cautions researchers in their “search both for accuracy and alternative explanations, we need discipline, we need protocols which do not depend on mere intuition and good intention to get it right” (p. 107). In qualitative research, Stake calls these protocols triangulation. A strength of case study is that it lends itself well to a variety of intensive, qualitative data needed to assemble and triangulate trustworthiness of research regarding an individual person, a group of people, or a unit (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Triangulation of data generated by this study ensured continuity and consistency in findings across all data sources.

Another strength of case study design is that case is a bounded study, which determines findings from multiple sources of data (Yin, 2009). This assists with trustworthiness of data analysis.

Four forms of trustworthiness of data analysis, as reported by Olivia (2018), were a part of the protocol for this study including: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) confirmability, and (d) dependability. According to Yin (2013), case study consists of an investigation of a specific phenomenon in a real-world context. By designing the methodology with trustworthiness in mind, the overall results of the study were more likely to be replicated in subsequent research or settings (Krefting, 1990; Olivia, 2018; Yin, 2013).

Kim (2016) reports that respondent-generated visual data, such as the art projects students in this study made, is growing in importance as a data type in social and human sciences. Analyzing data ran the risk of being highly affected by this researcher's professional experiences so data triangulation was highly important in this study. Triangulation uses multiple methods to examine the same topic, strengthening a study by providing differing perspectives to develop a deeper understanding of the study's focus (Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1983). Data was triangulated by:

- The evidence of the artwork (the visual language) was used to gain meaning.
- The evidence of the official curriculum unit's written or verbal artists' statements (the verbal language) was combined with the evidence from the artwork to gain meaning and ensured that the researcher understood what the students' intent was in art making choices.
- Peer debriefing—another art teacher respected in the field of art education reviewed this researcher's analysis, findings, and implications for relevancy, bias, and appropriate understandings in terms of art education and relevance (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Yin,

2018). This art teacher was selected based on having a national perspective regarding art education, credentials in the field of art education, and experience as a curriculum developer. This art teacher was found and identified through the National Art Education Association as a member and leader in art education, was the NAEA California Art Educator of the Year, and is a professor at a California university.

When conducting research with children, triangulation of data seems especially important. This research examined the curriculum, the resulting artwork and official artists' statements which were both products of the curriculum unit activities, not the children. Yet, because the two are so closely linked—a child made the artwork and then wrote or spoke about the art in their official artist statement—this researcher valued the integrity of triangulation. Member checking by the students was not done because it was determined that children were not mature enough to process the results or understand this study. The art teacher was debriefed with a post-interview.

Conclusion

In this chapter, this researcher discussed the methodology for *I Am Me* research. The research questions, research design, means of data collection, an explanation of the Arts Based Research theoretical framework's practical application to the case study methodology, means of data analysis, and triangulation of data were discussed. Strategies for problems and protection of human rights were also discussed. The findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Findings

Introduction



Figure 4.1. M7's storyboard. The above storyboard was done by an immigrant student who showed a gain in self-esteem during the teaching of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit.

In this qualitative research, the exhibition of self-esteem in students' storyboard art projects was examined. The study was an instrumental, single case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The case study was the *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* art unit (see Appendix N) curriculum developed by the researcher for this study and, specifically, its key art project, the *I Am Me Storyboard*. The unit was taught over eight weeks at Smithville USA Middle School, but this researcher went the week before the unit began to greet students and also extended the unit for two weeks at the end, due to a school holiday and needing more time to complete unit activities. The instrumental purpose (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) of the study was to inquire as to whether or not curriculum like *I Am Me* could be meaningful, above and beyond art content, in the middle school art curriculum and create an intercultural classroom community. While the curriculum unit was specifically designed to teach and investigate self-esteem with students, the main research question of the study examined the exhibition of self-esteem in the unit's main art project—the *I Am Me Storyboard*. The sub-questions of the research assist in addressing the instrumental nature of the study. The curriculum unit was co-taught by this researcher and the school art teacher. In the case of this study, the researcher was both researcher and co-teacher.

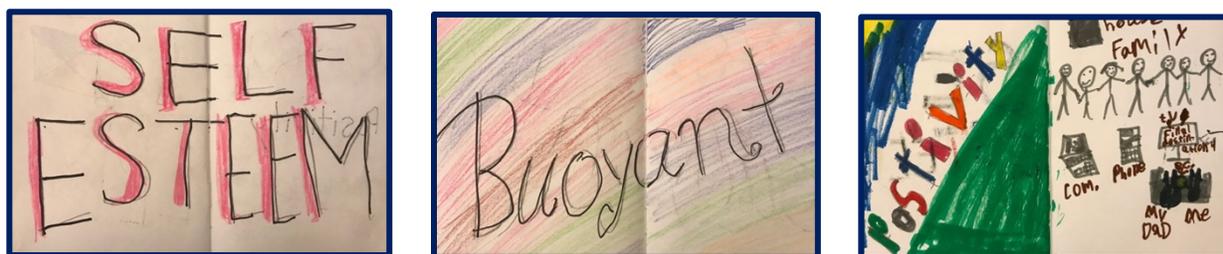


Figure 4.2. Students' sketchbook drawings. Self-esteem was the theme of the *I Am Me* curriculum. Buoyancy was used as a metaphor to teach self-esteem. Having a positive attitude was a key focus.

In this chapter, the evidence of data collected during the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project and associated curriculum unit developed for this study is presented. Participants' visual and

verbal communications were extracted from the data based on the theme of self-esteem, using DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease's (1996) five categories of early adolescent self-esteem, which in this chapter will be referred to by the acronym EASEA, meaning Early Adolescent Self-Esteem Analysis. These five self-esteem categories are F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School. Relevant comments from the participants' written or verbal artist statements for each phase of the storyboard project were analyzed and reported in this chapter, as well as analysis of their art making, both of which met the criteria set forth for the case study methodology and using Arts Based Research as a theoretical framework in making or gaining understandings of self-esteem using normative, art education qualitative judgements that art educators and researchers make about art.

Research Questions

This study is directed by the following main research question: In what ways do sixth graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project? The study is also guided by these two research sub-questions: How can an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom? How can curriculum such as the *I Am Me* curriculum produce relevant, meaningful 21st century learning that goes above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?

Verbalization and Visualization of Case Data

Three Zones of Analysis

Data in this qualitative case study used Arts Based Research (ABR) as theoretical framework—which is a framework that uses art not only as a data source, but also uses art skills,

product or output, and knowledge and creative thinking to analyze and interpret findings (Leavy, 2018). While ABR may seem abstract or vague to some (Leavy, 2015, 2018), to those who immerse their thinking within the known realm of art and art education, ABR holds logic for creative analysis (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2017; Leavy, 2015, 2018; McNiff, 2017). According to Leavy, and other ABR researchers, it is time for research practices to modernize and align with what is going on in the world so our most urgent problems will align with our best ways to solve them (2018, 2019). This data from this study of curriculum indicates that a freshening in art education, where students biographies, their emotions and inner thoughts that affect their outer being, and the lived experiences of their lives as they navigate relationships and daily lives, can have meaningful implementation in art education. In order to understand the data more fully, data were analyzed through three lenses or zones of communication. These three zones were:

Zone 1-visual communication. A significant portion of the case study data was the visual communication (the drawing and painting) of the curriculum unit. An analysis was done in the visual zone of communication, which included an analysis of the curriculum's storyboard art project's artistry and craftsmanship, sketches and drawings done on unit worksheets and artists' statements, sketchbook efforts, and a second layer of analysis that was done observing and interpreting students' creative choices and thought for the other five unit art projects. Visual analysis is done when the artistry, art project, drawing and sketching, and non-verbal creativity is analyzed for intent and meaning (Leavy, 2018). Leavy (2018) reports research conducted on how the human brain functions while engaged in creative practice. It is clear to Leavy that our brain responds "in critical ways as we engage in art making, as we enter 'flow' states of

creativity” (2018, p. 7). Students creative choices were converted into aesthetics that conveyed meaning for them, and ultimately this study.

Zone 2-visual communication. Another significant part of the case study data was students’ various verbal communication (the written and spoken communication). An analysis was done in the verbal zone of communication, which included the written field notes of the researcher, interview recordings and transcriptions, the biography card, and written or spoken answers to prompts and questions on student artists’ sketchbooks, worksheets, and artist statements. Observations of various discussions, whether with the whole class, table groups, or individual students were also analyzed. Stories were told both through discussion and art making. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) state, “Words, especially organized into incidents or stories, have a concrete, vivid, and meaningful flavor that often proves far more convincing to a reader—another researcher, a policymaker, or a practitioner—than pages of summarized numbers” (p. 4). The visual data—the drawing and painting— generated by the study provided meaning on its own that could be interpreted by any viewer, but the visual data became much richer descriptions of meaning when the artists used words to explain their artistry and creative choices. Students written and spoken communication gave meaning to the stories they chose to tell.

Zone 3-visual and verbal communication (vervisual communication). Finally, the vervisual communication of students was important case study data. An analysis was done in the third zone of communication where the visual and the verbal must exist in partnership with each other, collectively telling the stories the artists wanted to tell in more specific detail. Throughout this chapter, this researcher will refer to this third zone as *vervisual* communication. As case data was analyzed, it became apparent that much of the data—or the student artists’ intent— could

not be understood simply in the visual form or the verbal form. The analysis of the data often required a vervisual analysis to fully understand students' communication motives. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) state that "qualitative data are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of human processes" and since the discipline and content area of art and art education aligns so fully with qualitative research (Eisner, 2002), the vervisual data of this study provided the most significant and obvious way to fracture, examine, and spiral the meaning students made as they participated in the curriculum unit. The huge amount of data for this study were richly stratified into horizontal and vertical layers of meaning and metaphor, with rich verbal narratives and visual artifacts—the stories the student participants told— both contributing to the analysis.

The three V's. These three zones of analysis—the visual, verbal, and vervisual—are referred to as the 3Vs, as an acronym, in this study. The case study data points were planned in order to provide varying levels phenomenological variety as students progressed through the various phases of the unit plan. These well-designed and strategic areas of chronological curriculum content of the I Am Me Unit flow through the various storyboard phases and provide instructional and environmental settings for students' creative and cognitive decision making to freely unfold, leading to fruitful explanations available as research findings (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 1994). In artistic, simplistic terms, because students wrote about what they drew, the researcher had the rich narrative of students' descriptions of *why* they drew what they drew.

Eight Data Points

Eight different research data points were utilized in this case study of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit including (a) the biography card completed by parents (see Appendix F), (b) the pre- and post-interview with the school art teacher, (c) the researcher's field notes, (d) the

storyboard color choice and artist statement for that phase of the project (see Appendix H), (e) the geometric design and artist statement for that phase of the project (see Appendix I and Appendix J), (f) the photo pose and verbal artist statement for that phase of the art project, (g) the words chosen by students for their storyboard and the artist statement for that phase of the art project (see Appendix K and Appendix L), and (h) the final storyboard and final artist statement (see Appendix M). All data points except for the biography card and teacher interviews were analyzed with visual, verbal, and vervisual qualitative interpretation. The biography card and teacher interviews were only analyzed for verbal analysis. Finally, the photo pose and artist statement were not used as data due to time constraints when photos were being taken at the school, but are included in this chapter as the photos were a part of the initial plan.

Data Synthesis Using Existing Early Adolescent Self-Esteem Analysis

The data was analyzed using EASEA , which was derived from DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996). Each visual phase of the storyboard project and each verbal artist statement was examined for evidence of student designations reflecting family, friends, activities, body image, or school. No distinctions were made by the researcher to only score seemingly positive connotations of these five categories, referred to as EASEA in this study which is an acronym developed by this researcher, and each reference to these five EASEA categories was given one point in scoring. Scoring categories were designated as F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School. Cumulatively, the eight data sources revealed vast quantities of important qualitative data that could be synthesized and interpreted to develop the findings related to self-esteem and findings directly related to the relevancy of implementing curriculum like *I Am Me* in middle school art classes, yet as the main research question is addressed, data will be refined down to evidence of EASEA.

Looping strategy. Looping strategy was used to process and interpret the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Multiple layers of looping through the various data points—repetitively going back through the data—brought self-esteem themes and interpretations to the forefront of analysis (see Table 4.1). The first loop involved lean coding of students visual and verbal responses in the five EASEA categories (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease, 1996). These five areas of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School were used to produce the most generalized and first loop of data. Then, the data associated with these five categories was analyzed for emerging ideas and themes as the stories students told either visually or verbally were further analyzed in subsequent loops through the data. Vervisual analysis became important in the second loop of data as connections between the visual and verbal intent of student artists were further explored. The reported storyboard data in this chapter represents the importance of the need for vervisual analysis in this social emotional learning curriculum study. When middle school students fully engage with the curriculum’s activities and listen silently with a highly engaged demeanor to the lesson’s opening dialogue, and participate fully in discussion, sharing their thoughts, opinions, ideas, and growth in obvious ways, such as in this *I Am Me* study, the data produced by this kind of curriculum implores careful analytical review (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002; Crawford, 2004; Estes, Schwab, & Gunter, 2003).

Meta-Synthetization of the Data

This study was a meta-synthesis of: (a) a variety of topics—art education curriculum, storytelling, and biopsychosocial learning; (b) art education combined with other content areas; (c) combined with three broad research paradigms—qualitative research, ABR theoretical framework, and case study methodology; and (d) a meta-synthesis of the curriculum’s data.

While art is generally complex, abstract, and hard to define (Day & Hurwitz, 2012), and art education is often an elegant problem of layers of content (Kerlavage, 1998) that provide a broad education in knowing and learning (Eisner, 2016), data in this study was specifically planned to unpack the meaning made by student artists through all phases of the curriculum's implementation. This study planned to take a complex, abstract discipline—art—and analyze it with as much qualitative, definitive research analysis as was possible.

Meta-Synthesis—Art Education Curriculum, Storytelling, Biopsychosocial Learning

This study began with a meta-synthesis of three distinct areas including, (a) art education curriculum for middle school students (Bey, 2017; Gude, 2017; Heijnen, 2015), (b) storytelling in art education (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998), and (c) a biopsychosocial focus in art education using biography driven instructional methods (Herrera, 2016) and culturally responsive or relevant teaching (Gay, 2018; Zimmerman, 2002, 2015). While some school content areas can be very ordered and sequential, such as math and exploring proper grammar rules or learning the appropriate use of English in written and spoken form, art education in schools is a complex, vastly broad content area with art educators having literally thousands of thematic choices to teach when implementing one individual art education standard. By merging important scholarly work in these three mentioned fields, more robust, meaningful art curriculum (Crawford, 2004; Estes, Schwab, & Gunter, 2003) was developed for the *I Am Me* unit. In art education, the word “meaningful” means that higher level thinking, critical thinking, thematic choices, cross-curricular integrations, and/or student realizations above and beyond mere art media and technique—putting paint on a canvas— occurred (Crawford, 2004; Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Estes, Schwab, & Gunter, 2003; Kay, 1998; Leavy, 2018; Simpson, 1998b, 1998c).

Meta-Synthesis of Art and Other Content Areas

Art content—therefore the art curriculum—encompasses the media, technique, and knowledge and history of art, but also brings into the art classroom such interdisciplinary connections as exploring the thrill of discovering a new planet, the uncovering of a new indigenous people’s village along a local Kansas river, endearing novel and book studies, and exploring delicious fractions that otherwise are known as a Wayne Thiebaud cake paintings, as well as thousands upon thousands of curricular thematic options. Art can narrow its focus down to microscopic concentrations or incorporate many broad layers of knowledge from a variety of genres and fields. Curricular integrations maximize the impact of art curriculum (Crawford, 2004; Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Eisner, 2002)

Implementation of state visual art standards. Various State Departments of Education visual arts standards give art educators the opportunity to explore hundreds of thousands of themes and topics in planning curriculum (KSDE Visual Arts Standards, 2019). State educational visual arts standards are often intentionally broad and sweeping in order to give these most creative of teachers—the art teachers— expressive and aesthetic freedom to incorporate their own artistic talents, skills, or interests into the classroom. The art teacher is told to incorporate history, but not which famous Kansan or which famous artist and, of course, there are many from which to choose. This broadness of application of content theme also allows curriculum such as *I Am Me* to be implemented in middle school. The Kansas Department of Education 6th grade visual arts standards that apply to the *I Am Me* curriculum unit are “Creating: Cr1.2.6-Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art” (KSDE Visual Arts Standards, 2019) or “Connecting: Cn10.1.6-Generate a collection of ideas reflecting current interests and concerns that could be investigated in art-making” (KSDE Visual Arts Standards,

2019). In order to illustrate the broadness of the visual arts standards, the following example of a Kansas Department of Education (KSDE) Visual Arts Standard is given, and the Kansas Visual Arts Standards are identical to the new National Core Arts Standards:

Grade 7: CONNECTING-Process Component: Relate
Enduring Understandings & Essential Questions

EU: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions and analysis of art.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: VA:Cn11.1.7

- Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. (KSDE Visual Arts Standards, 2019)

As seen in the above standard, the overall theme is that people get ideas from their art and learn about society, culture, and history from the art they make. Art educators implementing this standard can teach about any time in history, any society or culture, and any geographical place to achieve the standard. That is a grand universe of possibilities.

Each lesson an art teacher implements can have multiple layers of standards, objectives, cross-curricular integrations from a variety of other content areas, and art education themes or philosophies—such as a social emotional learning theme as in the *I Am Me* curriculum unit— as well as specific intent and focus towards art media technique and use and art education vocabulary and topics. Crawford (2004) states art education should represent a wide and broad list of purposes including making content more accessible, encouraging active and joyful learning experiences, helping students make personal connections to content, helping students abstract and explore concepts, use higher level thinking, and build community. Just as curriculum and content implementation in art education should have multiple layers of intent as stated by Crawford, the data and findings from this single case study of curriculum are a part of a loftier, grander instrumental study to explore the relevance of this type of biopsychosocial theme and storytelling in art education curriculum. By the integration of social emotional learning into

the storyboard art project, students made more meaningful connections between the content and life.

Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Research, Arts Based Research, and Case Study

Qualitative research (Creswell and Poth, 2018), ABR (Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018), and case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) complement each other well, yet all three also add to the ambiguity of designing a study such as this. Since all three of these paradigms are known to be broad in interpretation and usage, this researcher needed to be disciplined in how to incorporate all three together in analyzing the data. Qualitative research is highly dependent upon the researcher's unbiased opinion or analysis of the collected data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Although embraced fully by art education, ABR is still growing in its definition as a theoretical framework (or even a methodology) (Leavy, 2018). And, when case study moved into the social sciences as a methodology it also became less easy to define than when used in quantitative research (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Liang, 2018). When compounded with the uniqueness of doing this art-specific research study of art curriculum and the general abstract or personalized nature of art making, this study and the way in which it was designed required great focus in planning the case study methodology and analyzing the data with consistency and integrity.

In this case study, qualitative research and ABR framework use the same synergy. Janesick (2001) states that the researcher is the instrument in both ABR and qualitative research. Leavy (2018) argues both practices are holistic and dynamic, involving reflection description, problem formulation and problem solving, and the ability to tap into, identify, and explain the role of intuition and creativity in the research process" (p. 9). Growth has occurred in the research field since Knowles and Cole (2008) released groundbreaking analysis of using art

based research in the changing world of research and scholarship, noting that 1997 was a pivotal year for arts informed research with the formation of a sub-group of this name with the American Educational Research Association. Perhaps the effective partnering of qualitative research through case study and ABR is because artistic behavior come from habits of mind, ways of looking and working, and these criteria give the behavior of art and artful processes of thinking and image a pathway for ABR researchers to know and understand qualitative research (Carroll, 1998). With scholarly, cognitive, qualitative research woven with ABR's way of seeing and knowing the image and emotion, this case study was designed in a way to provide quality data analysis that was trustworthy and unbiased.

In this *I Am Me* research, case study gave a highly focused way to explore the curriculum through its planning, development, implementation, and assessments associated with the curriculum, as well as the overall analysis of the curriculum. The use of case study in this specific research represents an examination of the overall process of the curriculum (Liang, 2018; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009), yet is focused on the actual data provided by the storyboard art project to address the main research question. Case study provides much in the way of rich data (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) and therefore a challenge for qualitative researchers is which data holds the most significance.

Meta-Synthesis of Curriculum Data

Within each of the storyboard steps—which were also data points—for each of the 70 students, an overall qualitative analysis of student effort on the storyboard project was made, attribution of self-esteem using EASEA categories was completed (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996), emerging themes were memoed or noted, and then rich and fruitful (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 1994) qualitative interpretations were made. A visual

examination, verbal examination, and vervisual examination of the curriculum data done. For example, it was important for this researcher to not simply deduce that a student loved music because of all of the musical notes and instruments she drew, but rather understand from her written artist statements that music is her “*escape from life.*” As data was analyzed, this researcher compared visual depictions with verbal meanings assigned by students to develop vervisual understanding of student intent.

Additionally, richer meaning and descriptions were gathered and analyzed from the storyboard steps and artists’ statements of six individual students, purposefully selected at the end of the research for analysis because at some point during the research their art project work or artist statements revealed either a growth or gain in self-esteem or the presence of self-esteem in all five of the EASEA categories. A gain or growth of self-esteem was determined in three of these six students because no EASEA categories could be assigned initially to their first two session’s artwork and artist statements, but after some implementation with the curriculum, EASEA categories began to be exhibited in their data points and eventually all EASEA categories were present in their curriculum unit artifacts. Three of the six students exhibited evidence of all EASEA categories from the beginning lesson of the curriculum unit. Using these six students to portray and present the research data, the researcher was able to better convey how self-esteem was depicted in more personal ways by students. Rather than analyzing six different students in each category—background color, geometric design, photo pose, word choice, final storyboard project— or only the most obvious visual, verbal, or vervisual evidence of self-esteem by individual students in each category, this researcher chose to do a deeper, linear analysis of six individual students’ artmaking and written or verbal artist statements across the eight weeks and report the fruitful findings.

The findings in this chapter are based on the creative thoughts and artistic journey of both the whole group and these six individual students. In essence, a meta-synthesis of the data was done (a) on all seventy students using EASEA and (b) was done horizontally across all data points for the same six individual students with evidence from their artmaking and artists' statements analyzed from the beginning of the unit to the end., and (c) by analyzing the EASEA results of two more groups—male/female students and immigrant/non-immigrant students at the end of the curriculum unit.

Demographic Description

Smithville USA Middle School

The case study of the curriculum was conducted at Smithville USA Middle School in two sixth art grade classes. The study began on the first Monday after the December school break and continued for nine weeks. The curriculum unit's eight lesson plans were implemented as one research session each, occurring on Mondays except when Monday was a school holiday. A 9th and 10th session was added to help students get art work done because of absenteeism. An in-class art show held during the 11th session was originally planned to be at the 8th session, but a change was made in the unit because more time was needed. Throughout this chapter the word session means one school sixth grade art class period, 50 minutes in length.

Attendance. Attendance was always in flux. Both classes had several students permanently leave the school during the first two weeks of the new semester in January. Both classes originally had 40 students. Each day of class approximately one-fourth to one-third of the students were absent. The school commonly dealt with enrollment issues and students

enrolled and withdrew often. Students wore uniforms to school each day as part of school attendance rules.

Demographic classification. Class #1 had 36 students. The ethnic make-up of the class was 17 African-American students, 12 Latino students, one Asian student, and six Caucasian students. The class had 15 male students and 21 female students. There were 20 students who were 11 years old, 14 students who were 12 years old, and two students of whose parents did not share their age on the take-home biography card for this research. The class had seven newcomer students—resettled children who are refugees or other recent immigrants—who had been in the United States less than three years and 12 ELL students. Class #2 had 34 students, of which five were special education students. The ethnic make-up of Class #2 was six African-American students, 20 Latino students, and eight Caucasian students. The class had 13 male students and 21 female students. There were 16 students who were 11 years old, 15 students who were 12 years old, one 13-year-old student, and two 14-year-old students. The class had three newcomer students and six ELL students.

Low academic and socio-economic performance. Smithville USA Middle School was an inner-city school in a major population center in the mid-western United States. For 2018-19, Smithville was designated as a Title 1 School with an 84.57 percent poverty rate of students and their families by the state Department of Education in the state in which it exists. Title 1 Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is a federal program which provides funds to high-poverty schools in order to help students (United States Department of Education, 2016). In the recent past, the school ranked as the lowest performing middle school in its state (Refuge in the Heartland, 2018), although during the year this research was conducted, it received notification that it had risen to the next highest academic ranking category (personal

communication, Smithville literacy specialist, March 11, 2019). This accomplishment came with a perceived penalty, however, as reward for doing better academically was less funding from the state.

Art classroom. The art classroom provided the setting for the case study of the curriculum and was a large room with an abundance of storage, a three-bin industrial sink, kiln, the store room was stocked with art supplies, and it had a laptop, projector, and white board. The class had no visible artistic design and only one piece of art was on display in the classroom and one small bulletin board had a positive message on it. The walls of the class were mainly bare, except for five very large posters of rules. The classroom was not always tidy and student work tended to noticeably and frequently get lost, although each student and class had an organized closet of drawers to keep their artwork in from day to day. For this research study, each student was given a 12 1/2" x 18 1/2" envelope in which to keep all of their various art projects, worksheets, and sketchbook, yet some were misplaced or lost from week to week. The art classes were very large which made teaching a challenge for the art teacher and this researcher.

Class #1-Energetic and Loud

On the first day the curriculum was taught, field notes made by this researcher described Class #1, which met from 9:30 a.m.-10:20 a.m., as *energetic* and *very loud*. They did not tend to stay in their seats, were social and active, and it was challenging to get students focused and on task. The sixth-grade students at Smithville USA Middle School rotate elective classes every nine weeks, so upon this researcher's first visit to the school, students had only been in the art class for three days. Because of their short time in the class, the teacher had not yet been able to establish familiarity with her classroom management strategies.

As this researcher prepared for the second session one week later, she consulted with the school's ESOL teacher and newcomer coordinator to plan strategies to maximize student engagement. This researcher used the established school call and response behavior command, used positive incentive and prizes to reward appropriate behavior, and used a strategy that this researcher developed as a classroom teacher that involved a numerical countdown in order to help students stay on task, focused, and achieving the necessary goal. From the second session to the last session, students responded noticeably to implemented behavioral strategies. While many students did not seem fully engaged with the unit's art projects the first two weeks, students gradually became more noticeably engaged over subsequent weeks. There were some students, however, that noticeably expressed enjoyment of and interest in art and were engaged from the first session of the unit with self-esteem being reflected in their first week's artist statements.

Class #2-Attentive and Studious

On the first day of curriculum implementation, the researcher's field notes described this class, which met from 10:30 a.m.-11:20 a.m., as *attentive* and *studious*. Field notes indicated the students listened and were respectful of this researcher/co-teacher and also the classroom teacher who was a co-teacher. This class was extremely different in behavior and engagement than the first class. They listened more attentively than Class #1, engaged in discussion with more dialogue, and put more effort and concentration into their art projects beginning the first session of the unit. The repeatedly engaged behavior of this class each week exhausted prizes this researcher brought to reward engagement and expected classroom behavior. They listened attentively, worked diligently on projects, contributed extensively to both art projects and artists' statements, and they also cleaned up efficiently. They spoke to and engaged with this researcher

from the first day and participated extensively in discussions, further developing their own understandings of curriculum unit expectations. This class had five special education students, two were very low functioning and three were high functioning.



Figure 4.3. Class #2's bird masks.

Biography Card

Parents were asked to complete biography cards (see Appendix F), if they chose to do so, that were developed and based on Herrera's (2016) biography card. When the research's required parental permission form was sent home to parents for signatures prior to the research commencing, this optional biography card was also sent home for parents to complete. The biography card asked a variety of questions including where the student was born, what language was predominantly spoken at home, the child's creative abilities, the parents' levels of creativity on a scale of one to five, and other questions related to the study. The biography card did not appear to be a good indicator of whether or not students were immigrants as 26 of 70 parents left that question blank, yet some students revealed this information in their artists' statements.

Co-Teacher

The school art teacher and this researcher co-taught the unit. This researcher was the lead teacher and the school art teacher assisted as that was her preference. During the time period the unit was co-taught, the art teacher was experiencing some personal difficulties and was also questioning continuing in the education profession. She was very easy to work with and very

patient with students, yet self-designated herself as disorganized. Some comments from the pre- and post-interview conducted with the art teacher are situated within this section and chapter in order to provide nuances of the overall classroom environment and experience for students as this case study of curriculum was conducted.

Pre-interview. The pre-interview with the art teacher was conducted on the day the unit began. The pre-interview revealed that the art teacher's professional opinion was that the students at Smithville USA Middle School could not do as highly skilled kinds of art projects as the students in her former school in a rural, upper mid-western state. The following are some important comments from the interview:

- *"I was nervous wondering what would be expected of me."*
The co-teacher, although she had been provided with a digital copy and hard copy of the unit plan and time to plan and prepare, had some nervousness about the study happening in her classroom.
- *"I taught middle school in [state in the northern United States]. It was rural and white. It's tougher here, the kids, you know, they are tougher, there is a lot more attitude, you have to earn their trust, it really is a trust thing, they kind of have to get to know you a little bit before they trust you."*
She thought Smithville USA students were skeptical and initially untrusting of teachers.
- *"Last semester was chaotic, the dynamic was chaos, there were days that I just needed to make it through."*
The teacher was frustrated with the behavior of the past semester's sixth graders.
- *"By the end of last semester, I was like do I really want to come back, but then there is this student and that student I want to be there for."*
The teacher indicated that while the job is very hard, there are students who are really engaged and make her job worthwhile.
- *"You know they try that [to challenge the teacher] and think they will get a rise out of us. The best thing you can do is just ignore it."*
The teacher shared that sometimes she has to selectively ignore certain behaviors because acknowledging them gives attention to the behavior, which is sometimes what the student wants.
- *"I think there was a LOT for these kids."*
The teacher said this as she indicated that the art projects in this unit might be too difficult for her students.

I Am Me Storyboard Data

The curriculum unit's storyboard art project was designed to be an artifact from which to gather the case study's visual, verbal, and vervisual data. The storyboard was the key art project for the curriculum and was built slowly over seven weeks. Through the combination of visual, verbal, and vervisual storytelling, an art project—such as the *I Am Me Storyboard*—conveys information an artist wishes to share. The student participants in this case study of curriculum had multiple opportunities to develop, grow, and share the specific parts of their own story they wanted to divulge through their art making as the curriculum unfolded each week of the case study. The researcher did not require certain components to be in their stories or give specific directions. All directions were an overview of what was to be done aesthetically and the basic art making steps, but students made their own constructive, creative, and cognitive choices on how to interpret each step. The goal of the curriculum unit was for students to convey or exhibit creative and emotional thought that they deemed important as they progressed through each week's activities. The five storyboard steps that were designed to give students an opportunity to share aspects of their personal stories included: (a) the color they chose for the background and why; (b) the three geometric designs they chose for the background representing their past, present, and future and why; (c) their stance or pose in the digital photo of themselves and why; (d) the 15 words they chose to use with five representing love, five representing laughter, and five presenting life and why; and (e) the final storyboard project and the sharing of it in an in-class art show. *Why* is a question that is often asked in art education. In this case study of curriculum, artist statement worksheets—a common practice in art education—were developed for students to complete at the end of each of the five phases of making the storyboard in order to extend and broaden student learning and realization of artistic choices (see Appendix H-N).

The Self-Esteem of Middle School Students

Middle school students in this study revealed many varied and wide ranging examples of the EASEA categories in their verbal, visual, and vervisual communication. Students shared their love of sports and participating in musical activities, their participation in many activities outside of school, their various friendships and special family members, animals that were special to them, a few teachers, and a lengthy list of things that made them happy or brought them joy in life. Crawford (2004) and Herrera (2016) remind educators and researchers of the importance of joy in learning.

Folk Taxonomy

Folk taxonomy proved to be an important part of the middle school culture (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) and was seen frequently in the data. Words such as *cool*, *crush* (girlfriend or boyfriend), *frand* indicating a friend or friends, Fortnite™ or a capital *F* in script format with a horizontal line intended to represent Fortnite™, and other references to video games by name were viewed repeatedly in the students' written artist statements and on some of their artwork. On more than one occasion, this researcher had to ask an eleven-year-old or twelve-year-old what a word or symbol meant. Yet, upon developing an understanding of how the folk taxonomy was implemented in various students' lives, it was often determined that the activity wasn't just a solo activity participated in by lonely early adolescent children, but whole networks of frands were established around activities of choice and some students had different frands for different activities.

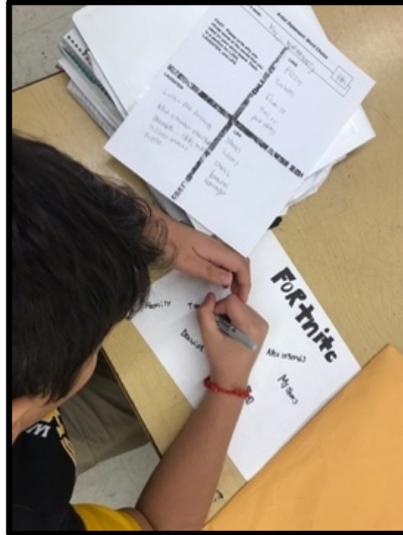


Figure 4.4. Use of folk taxonomy. Folk taxonomy was used by Smithville USA students. Fortnite™ was a popular example.

Emotion

Emotions were highly noticeable in the data. Students shared a variety of positive emotions about their life, things they love, and things that make them laugh. Data analysis noted the joys of sixth-grade students as it related to self-esteem in curriculum activity. Some students also chose to share more serious stories, connected them to emotions they felt, and expressed these emotions and the stories associated with them in their visual and verbal curriculum unit artifacts. Although this study did not have the purpose of exploring anxiety or trauma, the freedom of students' artistic choices led some students to depict or write about difficult aspects of life that were on their mind when they made their various art projects and completed curriculum steps. Two newcomer students, previously refugees, shared difficult life experiences and visualized these stories in serious ways as they completed various steps of curriculum associated with the storyboard. Multiple students shared that their parents were in jail through their art making. Some of the students shared why their parent was in jail. Two foster children shared how not being able to live with their family made them feel. One student indicated that

there were “two of her,” the regular one and the real one; she also commented at another time that the story she shared on her storyboard was not the real one and that the real story was too bad to tell. One girl depicted and wrote about tragic details of her brother’s death. The data told the rich, human narrative that Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994) report as the robust layers of qualitative research. With some students revealing varying levels of anxiety or trauma in their art making (Day & Hurwitz, 2012), the data must report this as significant in this study and a topic for future research in the field of art education.

Progression of Curriculum Unit

The curriculum unit specifically planned to build student’s knowledge of self-esteem in an age appropriate, logical, sequential way over the eight sessions. Each session of the curriculum focused on the key words of self-esteem and positivity, yet used the word “buoyancy” and tangible objects that float such as birds, hot air balloons, fish, and planets as a metaphor to assist students in learning the social emotional content. Then, once students understood the concept of self-esteem and knew what buoyant meant, the intent of learning elevated to the intangible exploration of emotion and the self-study of biopsychosocial components of students’ lives, with a deeper investigation of self-esteem through the curriculum. Students made a total of six art projects, which each helped drive students’ understandings of the concept of self-esteem in sequential steps. Both the storyboard, which built slowly over the length of the curriculum unit, and the students did indeed tell a story. Crawford (2004) and Estes, Schwab, and Gunter (2003) both report of importance of this scaffolded, broad, cross-curricular, higher level thinking kind of art education curriculum. Estes, Schwab, and Gunter’s (2003) Values Development Model of Instruction was fully implemented in the planning, development, and implementation of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit.

Significance of Five Storyboard Data Points

The most significant data gathering steps of the curriculum unit were the geometric design, word choice, and final storyboard phases of the storyboard project. These three curriculum phases provided creative choice and opportunity for students that ranged from subtle to bold expression of their thought. The written or verbal artist statements also gave students an opportunity to write about their own imagery and creative decisions in more detailed ways, furthering understanding of the drawings. For example, the student who drew soccer balls or soccer fields for the past, present, and future in varying ways had opportunity to write that he had played soccer since he was a little boy, now played on the school soccer team, and he hoped someday he could go to college to play soccer. By drawing and writing his experience with soccer, the boy realized a great many skills he had learned from soccer over time and this led him to think about other areas of his life where growth could occur. This is real life learning (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002). The viewer may or may not have been able to tell the real story only from the artwork by the soccer player.

While used as a final data source, the color choice data point was not as significant as originally planned because a decision was made to put out only six to eight colors of paint at the painting station, instead of a tub with twenty or thirty colors, and let students chose from only the small selection of provided paint colors. There were several reasons for this. The art teacher was absent on the background painting day so this researcher was teaching with the help of a substitute teacher who was not an art teacher. Due to the large class size, there was concern that all of the students' backgrounds would not have time to get painted during the 50-minute art class as the art teacher only wanted one painting station in order to curtail making a mess in the classroom with paint. By giving students fewer colors to choose from, students needed less time

to think about the color they wanted to use, but also had less opportunity to choose a color of importance to them. It was important for the background painting to be completed in one class period, so this phase had to be done with expediency.

Additionally, the photo pose choice step did not provide rich data due to issues with implementation this phase of the curriculum and ultimately was not used in the final analysis. Middle school students in this study did not like getting their portrait photos taken, which was a surprise for this researcher in the age of selfies. While lining students up to take their portraits, this researcher had to coax all students into getting their photos taken. Some of the students exhibited discomfort when the photos were being taken and this caused the photo taking session to go much slower than anticipated towards the end of class and as the bell for dismissal approached. This researcher attributed this to the photos being taken in the classroom where all the other students could essentially watch and suggests in future application of this curriculum that the portrait photos are taken in an adjacent room with only a few students in line and the photographer/teacher. It became more important to “just get the photo taken” so this researcher would have the digital files to print off 8” x 10” images of students to have for the following week of class. There was not time for students to think of a pose. Art teachers are used to having to rush in art classes to get projects finished, which tends to go against the known norm in artistic activity that creative thought takes time to develop (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). The curriculum unit was designed to give students eight weeks to develop, unfold, and emotionally unpack their creative thought, yet some of the functional aspects of the research were rushed due to teaching this unit in another art teacher’s class, because of school schedules and unexpected activities such as tornado drills, and because this researcher could only drive to Smithville once a week. The following photos reveal some of the portrait photos that were taken:



Figure 4.5. Students' photo poses. The above images demonstrate some of the range of emotion students exhibited in their portrait session. A rushed experience did not allow students to create a meaningful pose.

Looping Strategy Analysis

Creswell and Poth's (2018) Looping Strategy, although a reverse type of looping strategy, was used to examine the data with more acute attention given to the geometric design, word choice, and final storyboard. The first loop of data analysis involved identifying any artwork or

artist statements that depicted or wrote about one of the five EASEA categories and organizing the data into digital files and spreadsheets, as well as hard copy files for all of the student artists' statements. Multiple spreadsheets were made including one for each class, and then separating out the data for males and females, and also for immigrant and non-immigrant students. The second data loop involved reading the data and making memos of ideas evolving from EASEA categories. The third data loop described students' choices into emerging themes. The fourth data loop developed interpretations. The last phase of data analysis involved visualizing and representing the data.

The following Figure 4.6 shows a flow of data analysis through the looping spiral of analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The first loop at the top of the spiral shows the broad self-esteem data themes of family, friends, activities, body image, and school (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996). Descending to the second loop, the data tightened as reading and memoing of the the loop one categories became more focused as emerging stories that were exhibited or recorded on such topics as classmates, crushes, teachers, sports, parents, grandparents, being happy or proud, video games, and animals. In the third loop emerging themes of stories were identified for more in-depth analysis. These themes involved students thinking of their futures and goal setting, aspects of their lives that were difficult such as a parent in jail for life and social emotional ramifications, choosing to only tell part of their stories or give hints of their lives, and the connection or realization of how important their family and friends were to them. On Figure 4.6, the fourth loop shows interpretations of the data and implications for the future that began to develop from data analysis and which will also be discussed in chapter five:

Self-Esteem Looping Analysis

Data from the five phases of the *I Am Me Storyboard* project and corresponding artists' statements have been analyzed using looping strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2018), although a reverse type of looping strategy was used where the data was first coded into five identified categories and then broke into more specific stories through each subsequent and tighter loop. The loops progress from (1) data management and the five EASEA categories, to (2) reading and memoing the main emerging stories, to (3) classifying specific stories, (4) developing interpretations related to data and stories, and (5) representing and visualizing data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this data loop, the evidence of data comes from visual, verbal, and visual/verbal (vervisual) communication and data, interpretation of all curriculum artifacts, and attempting to understand the meanings students convey or exhibit through art making (Renning, 2019).

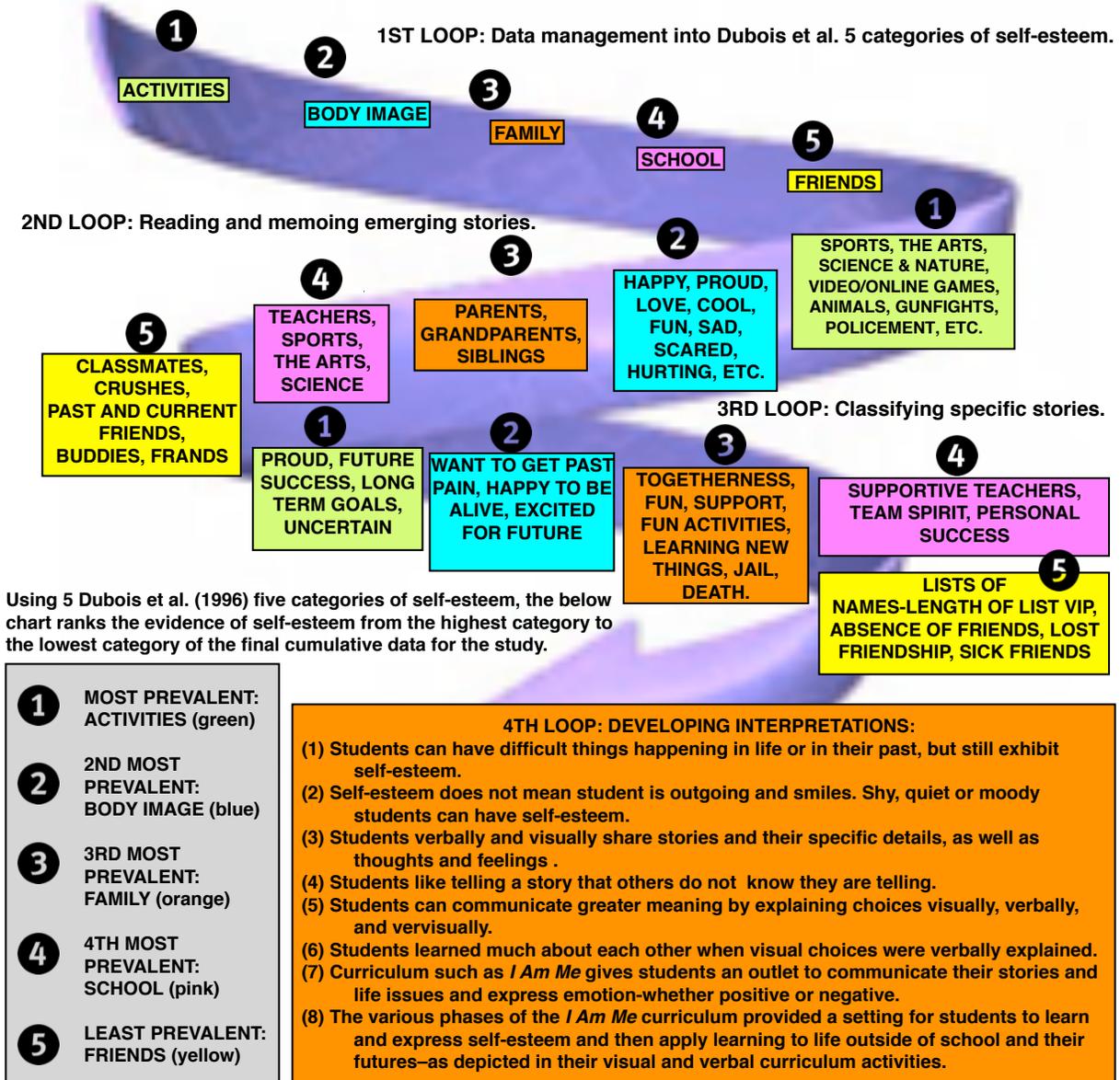


Figure 4.6. Self-Esteem looping analysis.

Analyzing Data for Evidence of Self-Esteem

Evidence of self-esteem was analyzed using EASEA, as previously described in this chapter. The implementation of EASEA directly addressed the main research question which asked how students exhibited self-esteem in the storyboard art project. Data was reviewed for evidence of EASEA categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, S=School, and B=Body Image. B=Body Image was interpreted as physical or psychological. Initially, this researcher thought that the focus of analysis needed to be those statements and words that reflected societal norms of positive attitude and positive thought, yet a decision emerged from the reviewing the data to go deeper in the research and include words and drawings that might reflect negative kinds of statements and thought as also representative of the B=Body Image category (the physical or psychological responses, often an emotion). The researcher decided to implement the research strategy that simply writing a negative thought did not mean a student did not have self-esteem. The research question focused on the exhibition of self-esteem. Judgements were not made as to positive or negative self-esteem or high or low self-esteem. Data was coded by the EASEA framework. The first loop through the data categorized artwork and artist statements into family, friends, activities, body image, and school categories by scoring one point each time one of the categories was observed in student work. With each loop through the data, more in-depth stories emerged within each of the EASEA categories.

After synthesizing the various storyboard data for a lengthy time period and making a variety of thematic spreadsheets, this researcher realized that there was depth to the research that was not anticipated. For example, the presence of self-esteem was obvious in the M25 and F25 students because of their pleasant demeanor in class and all of the information they shared about themselves and their lives through their art making and artist statements. Yet, the M7 student

exhibited undesirable moods in the classroom at the beginning of this art curriculum unit, was non-communicative in class during the first two weeks, did not fully participate in the storyboard activities the first two weeks of class, and had experienced trauma that he depicted in his week 3 artwork. His initial project work did not indicate EASEA. Through observation, informal in-class interviews while the student worked, and by this researcher's and the school's intervention, a transformation occurred during the ten calendar weeks that transpired from the beginning to end of the implementation of this curriculum unit and research. Essentially, a student that this researcher in no way thought exhibited EASEA at the beginning of the unit, actually did appear to exhibit EASEA as the unit progressed—it was layered under this student's complicated life experiences which he shared through the storyboard phases. The more he shared through the unit activities, the more noticeable his engagement in class projects became and the more detailed his artmaking and artist statements became. It appeared the planning and design of the curriculum unit allowed growth of the learner in this situation that not only affected his performance in art class, but that would most likely assist in other areas of school and life.

Therefore, in the overall review and analysis of both positive or negative responses on the artist's statements based on societal norms, responses were scored in one of the EASEA categories because the student felt confident enough to answer the question, even if their answer described difficult life experiences. Simply having experienced difficulties in life was not transcribed into no self-esteem in the final EASEA analyses. Sad or other less desirable moods or human behaviors or presumably negative thoughts were not used as indicators of no self-esteem—an adolescent student can be direct, honest, not positive in demeanor, and still have self-esteem (Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1998). In fact, being able to express concern for

problems or difficulties of life may, in fact, be an indicator of self-esteem (Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989).

In the following section, a brief summary will be given for each phase of the curriculum's main storyboard project's five data points. Additionally, the efforts of the six individual focus students will be reported in all five of the storyboard data points. These individual students' efforts will demonstrate and give examples of the ways self-esteem was exhibited in student work as the curriculum unit helped the learner grow their understanding of the meaning of self-esteem. Prior to the data representation, a brief description will be given of each of the six focus students and their artmaking.

Biopsychosocial description of six individual students. In the following section, a description will be given of the six individual students' art making and other curriculum unit activities that were shared throughout the data reporting in an effort for the stories they shared as a part of the curriculum to be more fully understood. These six purposefully selected participants—three males and three females—who stood out as either gaining or having self-esteem as data analysis was done at the end of the research—are described in more detail in order to depict how self-esteem was specifically manifested or learned throughout the curriculum unit, which was the purpose of this study. Each student is identified by coded number. Biopsychosocial—biographical, psychological, and social descriptions—information will be shared for each of the six students in order to introduce them in this next section. Then, their specific details as related to the actual data phases will be shared in the specific storyboard data phase sections.

Individual art student-F4. F4, an African-American, immigrant, female student,

was 11 years old and was observed and recorded in this researcher's field notes as a very quiet student, almost rude in demeanor by American societal norms, and occasionally was seen rolling her eyes apparently at other students. She had been in the United States for two years and was a newcomer student—a resettled student, a former refugee from Africa. During the 3rd week, this researcher made field notes about each student, after getting to know them better, so that their storyboard data could be more fully examined. The field journal entry regarding F4 was: *“Frowns, no eye contact, lack of self-esteem, self-judges, thinks others are mean to her, tiny, beautiful but doesn't think she is based on her second written artist statement.”* She also seemed uncomfortable when this researcher would quietly bend down and try to interact with her and did not want any attention directed toward her. As the curriculum unit progressed, this student revealed having self-esteem and personal regard using EASEA. Her artist statements revealed that the immaturity and rude behavior of others *“got on her nerves”* and she tended to write about that on her artist statements, explaining that she did not like the way that American students behave in class.

On one of her storyboard segments—the geometric design worksheet—she drew a picture of three girls talking and two of the girls telling the girl in the middle that she was ugly and rude. She depicted a difference in how she was able to interact with girls in Africa and girls at Smithville USA.

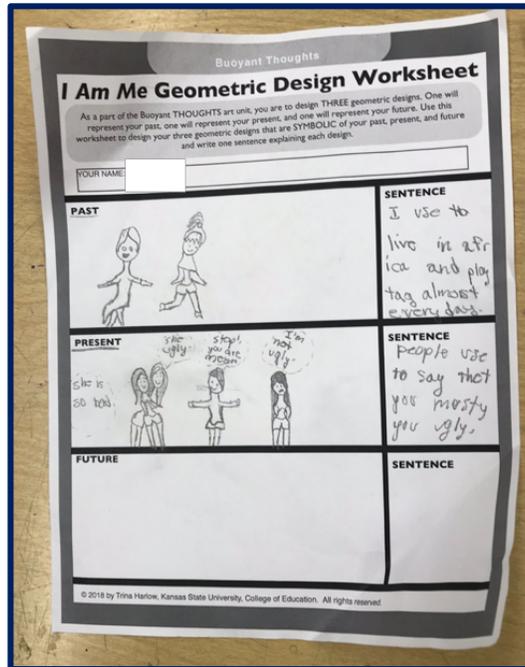


Figure 4.7. Geometric design worksheet of F4. The above image was the geometric design worksheet done by F4. In the images and written descriptions, she described an idyllic time in Africa playing nicely with girls and a time at Smithville USA with other girls that was not pleasant for her and where she was potentially being bullied.

Later, F4 shared this experience again with the girls she deemed as unfriendly and rude on her final artist statement, but on the final artist statement she shared a third drawing where in the future there were two girls standing beside each other, seemingly enjoying each other's company. She attributed this last drawing of the two girls as hope for the future. She turned in all assignments, finished all projects, turned in all worksheets and artist statements, listened when the teacher was talking, and had generally observable appropriate classroom behavior. F4 provided important data for this study by exhibiting that being a quiet student who was observed occasionally being rude in no way indicated a lack of self-esteem.

Her art work was outstanding from an aesthetic perspective. While making her artwork she seemed to intently focus on the creative zone, she did not need to ask questions because she listened well to the co-teachers and all directions, and she seemed to possess a high degree of

creative skill. Writing appeared to be fairly easy for her and she completed almost all parts of each artist's statements. Her story board word choice revealed her life was filled with a love of horses, swimming, having a bike, being very excited to own a car and drive in a car wherever her family went in Smithville USA rather than walking as they did in Africa, enjoying riding a motorcycle, painting, drawing, and traveling. On her artist statements she wrote of the love she had for her family and that they caused her laughter and joy.

At the last session at Smithville, F4 came quietly over to a corner of the classroom where this researcher was, not wanting to draw attention to herself, and without saying anything leaned into the researcher and held out a tiny piece of notebook paper that had been folded many times to fit in the palm of her hand. She simply said *"thank you"* very quietly and held her palm out. It was an unforgettable gesture from a student participant to this researcher as teacher (see Image 4.8). This juxtaposed gesture of what seemed like an observed seemingly rude student in the study giving the only thank you note given to the researcher by a student participant is a powerful piece of data.



Figure 4.8. F4's unit art projects. Most of her unit art projects are visible in the above image. All of her art making showed a high degree of skill for a middle school student.

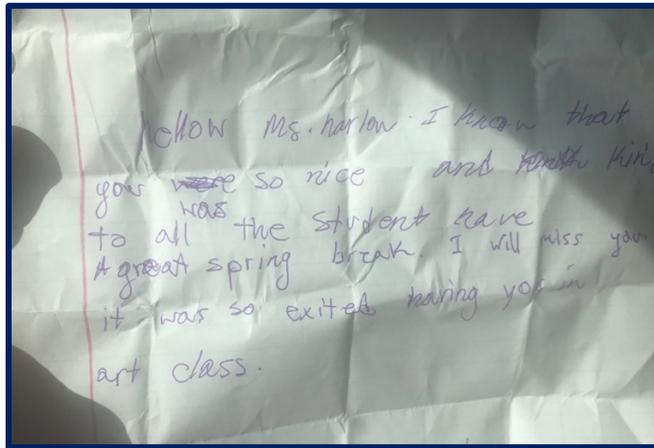


Figure 4.9. Note from F4. The above image is the note that F4 gave to this researcher on the last day of research.

Individual art student-M4. M4, an African-American, non-immigrant, male student, was 11 years old, was one of the few quiet students in the class, and had a polite and pleasant demeanor in class. He was born in Smithville and had lived there all of his life. His artist statements and storyboard clearly indicated a supportive, loving family that he was very close to and who helped him with his struggles although he never specifically identified the struggles. His eyes were always watching the center of learning in the classroom and he frequently raised his hands to answer questions. When students gave one word to describe themselves, he confidently said “*smart.*” During the length of the *I Am Me* unit, M4 confidently answered questions in a non-assuming, humble, but assured type of way. His answers were always soft in volume, but he was confident he knew the answer. He did not appear to need to prove himself to anyone at any time in this class of active adolescents, and he was observed taking satisfaction in being able to answer a question. He exhibited a love of learning in his curriculum unit journal, artist statements, and classroom discussion participation.

His art making skills were fairly poor from an aesthetic perspective and his projects were often messy. From the researcher’s observations, he did not appear frustrated that his artwork

was so untidy and lacking in good craftsmanship—he may not have known this. He was confident in his academic skills and felt very good about himself and revealed this during class discussions and artist statements, expressing these self-assessments in verbal and written curriculum activities.

This researcher was drawn to this student because he clearly had observable self-esteem from the first day of the curriculum unit’s implementation and this was confirmed by the EASEA of his efforts on artifacts and participation in lesson one. He appeared to be intelligent by his ability to answer questions in class, confident, studious, and made diligent efforts to complete all six art projects and his sketchbook. His attendance was an issue as he missed two weeks of class towards the end of the unit and did not get to finish assembling his storyboard because of these absences, yet his storyboard effort, artist statements, and observations of this student provided EASEA indicators. Additionally, attendance was not an indicator of self-esteem in this study.



Figure 4.10. M4’s unit art projects. Generally, his painting was aesthetically poor and he did not finish all projects due to absenteeism.

Individual art student-M7. M7, an African-American, immigrant, male student, was 12 years old and was originally from a country in western Africa. His family came to the United States as refugees to resettle in Smithville USA. He was the youngest child in a family of seven siblings. Some of his artist statements and storyboard work clearly indicated that he was very close to his family and often exhibited great love for them by what he wrote, as well as his church, and literally loved “*everyone*” he knew. He wrote of his love for animals.

At the first session of the unit, M7 was completely quiet making no sound, did not interact with others, stayed completely to himself, and did not move his mouth ever—only his eyes. This researcher had been a classroom teacher for over two decades when the research was conducted and brought much experience with child behavior to the sessions at Smithville USA Middle School and had also interacted with many emotional children. Her prior experience helped her to realize that this was a different kind of situation with a student than she had previously experienced with children. When asked a word that described himself at the first session, he did speak and mumbled “*football*” quickly and quietly. This was the only word he spoke in class the first two weeks. He caused no problems in class. During the first two sessions, however, his general physical appearance and participatory demeanor led this researcher to make an assumption that this student did not have self-esteem.

During the third session of the unit, the students did their geometric designs for their storyboards. As this researcher circulated the classroom, M7’s geometric design was startling and it told a traumatic story (see Figure 4.11). He did not draw three symbols as the instructions asked. Instead, he drew two comic-strip-like drawings of two stick people figures, one with a gun and shooting the other person. Knowing to approach M7 quietly and not make him feel uncomfortable, this researcher leaned down close to him and pointed to the words and asked, “*Is*

this you (referring to the stick figure with the gun)?" He looked solemnly into the researcher's eyes and nodded his head in affirmation. Following IRB protocol, this researcher notified the school principal that M7 shared something very difficult through his art making that day in class and by his own choice, knowing there might have been potential for this to have been the first time M7 had shared this story. The school counselor and other professional staff immediately intervened with M7. The next week during class his body language, facial expressions, and general demeanor were completely different and he participated and spoke in class, even smiled, making eye contact with this researcher. The transformation was obvious and observable. M7 fully engaged with all art projects and class sessions after this experience.

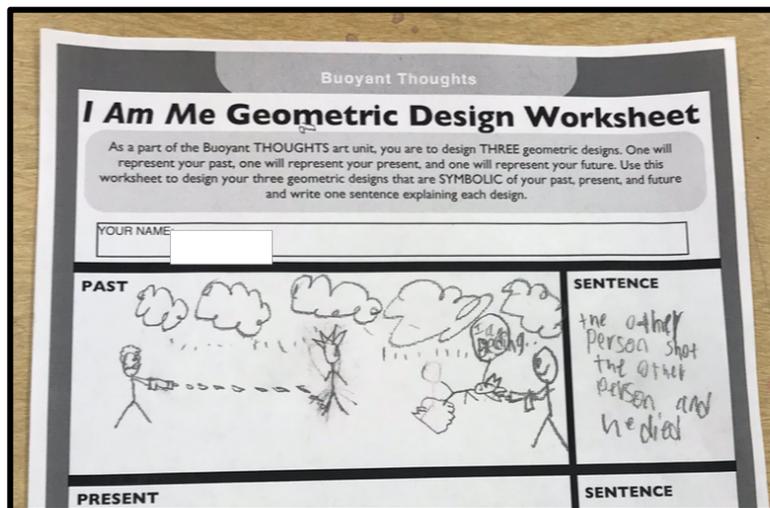


Figure 4.11. M7's geometric design worksheet. The above geometric design tells M7's story of being involved in a gun altercation in Africa.

M7's artwork exhibited higher level aesthetics and artistic ability. His art projects and sketchbook reflected a high degree of creative thought and ability, as well as the development of thought on his artist's statements beginning the third week. He continued to share some of his difficult life experiences throughout all of the curriculum unit's activities and it appeared to be important to him to do so.

Individual art student-F25. F25, a Latino female student, was 11 years old and was a very quiet girl who only spoke occasionally in class and while she seemed to want to answer questions during the opening discussion each week, she did so quietly. Her eyes were always on the center of learning within the classroom and always projected interest in the art curriculum unit. She tended to have a light, pleasant smile on her face at all times. The word she used to describe herself at the first session was “*volleyball.*” She did not exude much in the way of public excitement or expression as the curriculum unit began and was observed sitting quietly and following the art teacher’s class behavior expectations. At the beginning of the unit, this researcher questioned in her field notes whether or not this student would have a high degree of self-esteem due to observed shyness. F25 listened to all curriculum content as it was delivered and was always respectful to the co-teachers, yet she often remained quiet. She was quite timid when asked if she would help pass out papers or other supplies. F25 appeared to be comfortable and content simply sitting in her chair and doing the curriculum unit activities. She interacted pleasantly with her peers.

She made great effort to complete all art projects and was often the last one done with projects. She was very creative and all art projects she made as part of the curriculum unit reflected this. She often politely asked questions as she completed projects, wanting to make sure she was meeting project criteria. She spent a noticeable amount of time writing her artist statements each week. Her artist’s statements and storyboard work clearly indicated she loved her family, loved to spend time with them, and had family game night every week. Observing F25 progress through the multiple weeks of the unit was also important for this study, as analysis of the progression of her artwork and artist’s statements revealed that very shy, quiet students can exhibit self-esteem.



Figure 4.13. F25's unit art projects. F25 was very creative. Her artwork exhibited good craftsmanship and a sense of order, compositional thought, or repetition.

Individual art student-M25. M25, a non-immigrant, male student of unreported ethnicity on the biography card for this research, was 11 years old. His father was in the United States military and he was born on a military base in another country. He was a polite and respectful student during class. He rarely left his seat. He generally did not answer questions, but always appeared to be listening to directions by the co-teachers. He was the kind of student that art teachers sometimes do not have time to interact very much with in short art classes because their classroom demeanor is not loud, social, or problematic and they are always quietly doing what they are supposed to do during class. He did not engage in class discussion by answering questions and did not call attention to himself. M25 always talked pleasantly and softly to his table group, he also smiled and interacted with them, and also smiled and made eye contact with this researcher.

His art making skill was average in ability and quality, but he completed every project and every artist statement and was never absent. On the EASEA scale, four of the categories were evident in his work (FR=Friends, A=Activities, S=School, and B=Body image) during the first four data point phases of the storyboard, yet he did not mention his family in any way until the last artist statement. M25 excelled as a soccer player and he mentioned this on his artist statements and storyboard work. By his own assessment, he was a very good soccer player. He was fairly tall and muscular for his age. His future plans included playing soccer in high school and college.



Figure 4.14. M25's unit art projects. He was preparing for the in-class art show. e did not want anyone to see the photo of himself on his hot air balloon and had turned that project over.

Individual art student-F41. F41, a Caucasian, non-immigrant, female student, was 12 years old and grew up in Smithville USA. She was a completely engaged student, always watching the center of learning, always answering questions in a completely confident way. She sat up straight and attentive in her chair, facing this researcher during class discussions. While

she was not loud, she spoke with volume in her voice when she answered questions. She wanted to answer questions so frequently that this researcher would sometimes look to the other side of the room so other students could answer and participate. While she did not smile very much in class, she did not frown, and was generally all business. Her demeanor was always pleasant in class and her behavior always met the art teacher's publicized expectations. She did well in school academically, kept herself very organized in class, and was always prepared and ready to start class when the bell rang. She did not interact very much with other students at her table. Instead, she was generally always focused on her art projects and unit activities and seemed focused on doing a good job in completing the curriculum assignments. She was generally comfortable speaking with the school art teacher and this researcher.

Her art projects were always well done from an aesthetic perspective and her artist statements were generally well thought out and completed. F41 was guarded in her storytelling through her art making, revealing only minimum detail of stories she wanted to tell. Her artist statements indicated that she had been through some very difficult things in life, but she never shared what they were. One of her artist statements revealed missing her brother, who she loved to play with and who was close to her age, and who had moved to another state at the beginning of this school year—that was the only obviously personal thing not involving her activities, school experiences, and friends she shared through the storyboard project. She used the word “*difficulties*” but did not indicate what those difficulties were. Her written artist's statements and storyboard work also indicated that she had self-esteem in all five areas of EASEA.



Figure 4.15. F41's unit art projects. F41 was a good artist, her work had good craftsmanship, and all projects were finished as were all artist's statements.

Analysis of Five Storyboard Steps

In the following section, an analysis of each of the five steps of the storyboard project will be given. The analysis will be divided into sections that include:

- Class #1
- Class #2
- Individual Student-F4
- Individual Student-M4
- Individual Student-F7
- Individual Student-F25
- Individual Student-M25
- Individual Student -F41

EASEA categories will be used to conduct the analysis and are based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996). The Dubois et al. adolescent self-esteem research reported that early adolescent students typically show self-esteem in the five categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School. These five categories were used to give designations to each phase's artist statement, geometric design worksheet, word choice

worksheet, and each of the five artistic steps of the storyboard project. The EASEA categories determined by this researcher will be displayed as a table in each of the five storyboard phase analysis sections below. Finally, the EASEA data will be synthesized into tables that show a comparison between Class #1 and Class #2, male and female students, and immigrant and non-immigrant students in order to provide deeper segments of data visualization and to see patterns that emerged.

While the EASEA categories provide a way to analyze how self-esteem was exhibited in student work, this researcher had to be decisive in attributing any word or image to the associated EASEA category (F, FR, A, B, or S) and not make judgements that a word did not apply because it seemed negative or vague. For example, if the drawing or word was about family, the art product or art statement was categorized as an F=Family, regardless of whether or not it was a positive sentiment. Additionally, this researcher had to use qualitative judgement to decide if the students' verbal communication, and in some cases visual communication, should not be counted as self-esteem. This attribution of EASEA categories was affected by this researcher's own judgements and the researcher made every effort to be broad thinking and unbiased in decision making.

Storyboard Color Choice–Step #1

The following images are from students' effort on the background color choice phase of the storyboard art project and data analysis follows the images:



Artist's Statement: Color Choice

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE COLOR CHOICE FOR YOUR STORY BOARD ART PROJECT:

1. What color did you use? Black

2. Why did you choose this color? (Please write all the reasons you can think of for choosing this color.) I choose Black because it's like my heart and my soul.

3. Does this color make you: (circle one)

Very Happy Happy Sad Very Sad

Silly Creative None of the Above

Artist's Statement: Color Choice

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS REGARDING THE COLOR CHOICE FOR YOUR STORY BOARD ART PROJECT:

1. What color did you use? Blue

2. Why did you choose this color? (Please write all the reasons you can think of for choosing this color.) I chose it because I was going to make a galaxy because I was going to try to be an astronaut but I'm going to try to become a soccer player

3. Does this color make you: (circle one)

Very Happy Happy Sad Very Sad

Silly Creative None of the Above

Figure 4.16. Storyboard color choice images. In the above images, top row, left to right—students completed the first phase of the storyboard by painting a pure color of their choice in the midground which was the middle third of the canvas. Then, they painted a tint of the color—using the addition of white—to the background which was the upper third of the canvas, and a shade of the color—adding the addition of black—to the foreground which was the lower third of the canvas. Bottom row, two of the artists' statements for this project phase.

The storyboard background color choice was the first decision that students made for their storyboard art project. The original plan was to have students choose the color they wanted to use from 30-40 colors of acrylic paint and then paint the storyboard canvas-covered 11"x17" board into three sections. The bottom third of the canvas—also known as the foreground—was to be a shade, meaning some black would be added to the paint. The midground was to be the pure

color the student chose. The background—the upper portion of the canvas—was to be tint with white being added to students' color choice. The storyboard had a monochromatic color scheme meaning that the canvas was painted using one color of paint, plus the addition of black and white paint to the selected color for a lighter tint and a darker shade of the color. The original plan was to give students a large amount of choice in colors, letting them personalize their storyboards with a color they selected for a reason important to them. The color was to be a part of their storytelling. Due to the large class size, amount of time available to paint, and the teacher's absence that day, only six to eight color choices were available as the painting station needed to be set up prior to class starting and there was some concern that all students would not have time to finish. Additionally, the teacher did not want painting done all over the classroom, so only one painting station was set up and this limited space for available paint choices.

Students did have some choice of color as they were able to choose from eight colors. It did not have the intended effect as there was not as much choice as planned, students did not have time to think about their color choice as the painting had to happen very quickly, and since the painting station was crowded with many students painting at one time, it was observed that some students seemed to use the color closest to where they found a place to stand while painting. This data point had been very important in the pilot study, yet was not as useful at Smithville USA because of on-site limitations. The color choice was an important part of the curriculum and in a class where the teacher of record was teaching the curriculum every day for eight weeks, the color choice phase would have had more time to be developed properly. The following table presents the EASEA categories assigned to students' artist statement comments:

Table 4.1

Color Choice–EASEA Categories (based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Class #1	0	0	3	21	7
Class #2	2	1	3	19	1
TOTAL	2	1	6	40	8

Note. 7 unanswered questions. 0 trauma reflecting comments.

In the above table, it is evident that B=Body Image was the most frequent consideration in choosing the reason for the color students chose to use. B=Body image was used in this study to indicate a physical or psychological expression representing the mind and body. Students had an emotional reaction with the color and wrote things like *“it’s my favorite color”* or *“it makes me happy.”* Students responses were not discounted if they seemed negative, because having a negative opinion about a color is not an indicator of no self-esteem.

Class #1. Of the 36 students in the class, only 25 completed the storyboard canvas color due to absences and the remainder of the students had to be given pre-painted storyboards completed by the researcher. During implementation of this curriculum unit in future teaching by other teachers of record, this painting phase could have happened over the course of more than one day or absent students could have made up the painting session when they returned to school. This is a summary of chosen colors: 4-red, 7-blue, 4-pink, 1-purple, 1-orange, 3-green, 3-turquoise, 2-black (black was not a choice and only on the table to make the shade section, but two students used it as their color). On their written artist statements, thirteen students stated the most common reason for using certain colors was it was their favorite color or they liked it. Four students did not answer the question. Two students said there was not a color they wanted to

use. The following are various answers from students who wrote a wrote specific reason: “reminds me of space” and being an “astronaut” (blue), “playing soccer” (blue), a “swimming pool” (blue), “money”(green), “grass” (green), “because she is always nice and tries to be helpful” (green), and “was the color of blood with no oxygen” (blue), “black is her life” (black), “like her heart and soul” (black), and closest to him at the table (red). Students were also asked to choose one word from a provided list on the artist statement to describe how their storyboard color made them feel. This multiple-choice question on the artist statement was purposefully provided in case some students could not write out an answer in sentence form. The results were as follows and students could check more than one mood: 10-no answer, 12-creative, 13-happy, 2-sad, 1-silly, and 1 hand wrote “because I liked it.” The range of reasons for using the colors and the mood the color evoked in the students demonstrated the various ways that students thought about their color choice. Ten students’ answers showed creative and higher-level thought, meaning that these students thought about a deeper answer than just liking the color, in the reason for their choice.

Class #2. Of the 34 students in the class, only 23 students painted their storyboard canvas color due to excessive absences. The other eleven students were given a pre-painted storyboard done by the researcher as circumstances outside of the researcher’s control did not allow them to make up the painting session when they returned. This is a summary of chosen colors: 2-red, 6-blue, 2-pink, 5-purple, 4-orange, 1-green, and 3-turquoise. On their artists’ statements, eleven students stated the most common reason for using certain colors was because it was their favorite color or they liked it. Two students did not answer the question. One student said because the color was in front of them. The following are various answers from students who wrote a wrote specific reason: “because it’s cold outside” (blue), “reminds me of a

memory” (pink), *“its a heart-warming color”* (pink), *“moms favorite color”* and *“she was a diverse person with diverse interests”* and *“the color is diverse”* (orange), *“remyndud them of a sports team”* (orange), two students indicated the color was creative or bright (red), one mixed her own colors (darker blue color than provided), and one said it was a hot color (orange). Students were asked to choose one word from a provided list on the artist statement to describe how their storyboard color made them feel. Again, this multiple-choice question was purposefully provided in case some students could not write out an answer in sentence form. The results were as follows and students could check more than one mood: 5-no answer, 17-creative, 15-happy, 1-silly, and no students selected sad. As with Class #1, the range of reasons for using certain colors and the moods colors evoked in the students demonstrated various ways that students thought about their color choices. Eight students’ answers showed a creative and higher-level thought in the reason for their choice that detailed more than simply liking the color.

Six focus students.

- F4, female, African-American, immigrant:** Color chosen-pink. This student wrote *“the color shines”* and was *“light”*, that she *“liked light colors”*, and her color made her feel *“happy and creative.”* Her performance on this phase of the project showed that she listened and followed directions.
- M4, male, African-American, non-immigrant:** Color chosen-turquoise. This student wrote the color *“reminded him of a pool”* and made him *“very happy.”* His artist statement demonstrated a connection from the color blue to a tangible object—a swimming pool—and showed that he listened to the directions and made the connection between color and thought.
- M7, male, African-American, immigrant:** Color chosen-red. This student did not write about the color and did not complete any of his artist’s statement for this phase of the completion. This researcher had been told the student, even though a newcomer student, could write, speak, and understand English well. On this particular day of unit implementation, this researcher wondered if she had made an error on this student’s ability to communicate in English as he neither spoke or wrote.

•**F25, female, Latino, immigrant:** Color chosen-blue. On her artist’s statement, this student confidently wrote with proper grammar and complete sentences that she liked the color, that it was a happy color, and it made her feel happy. She was very engaged in painting her storyboard and writing her artist’s statement.

•**M25, African-American, unreported ethnicity, non-immigrant, military-born in another country:** Color chosen-orange. On his artist statement, this student wrote that he chose blue because it was in front of him and was “cool.” He also stated that the color made him very happy. He was attentive and completed the assignment.

•**F41, female, Caucasian, non-immigrant:** Color chosen-blue. On her artist statement, this student wrote that the color she chose was her favorite color and made her happy. She was attentive, focused intently on the color choice activity, and appeared to enjoy artmaking.

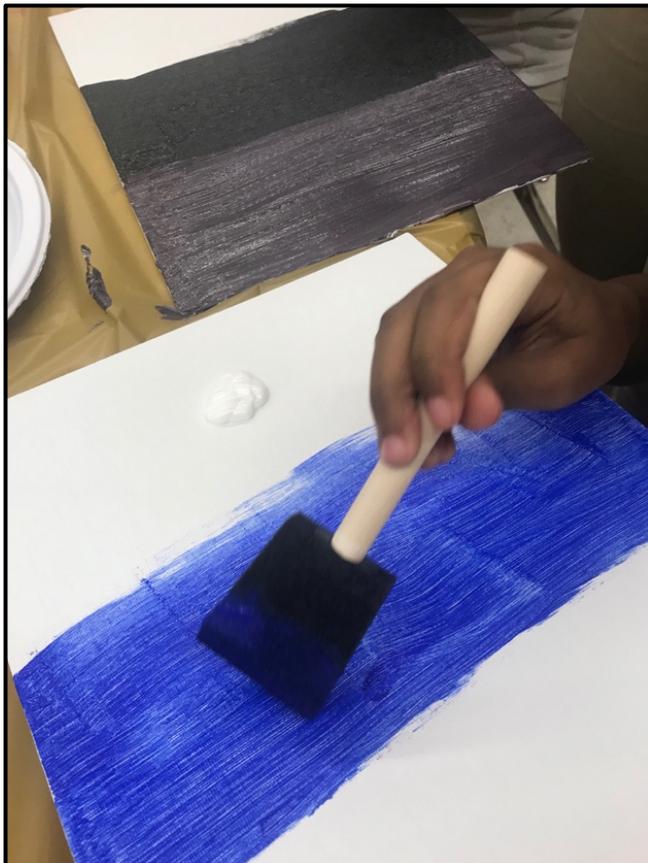


Figure 4.17. Painting the midground.

Storyboard Geometric Design–Step #2

The following images are from students' efforts on the geometric design phase of the storyboard art project and data analysis follows the images:

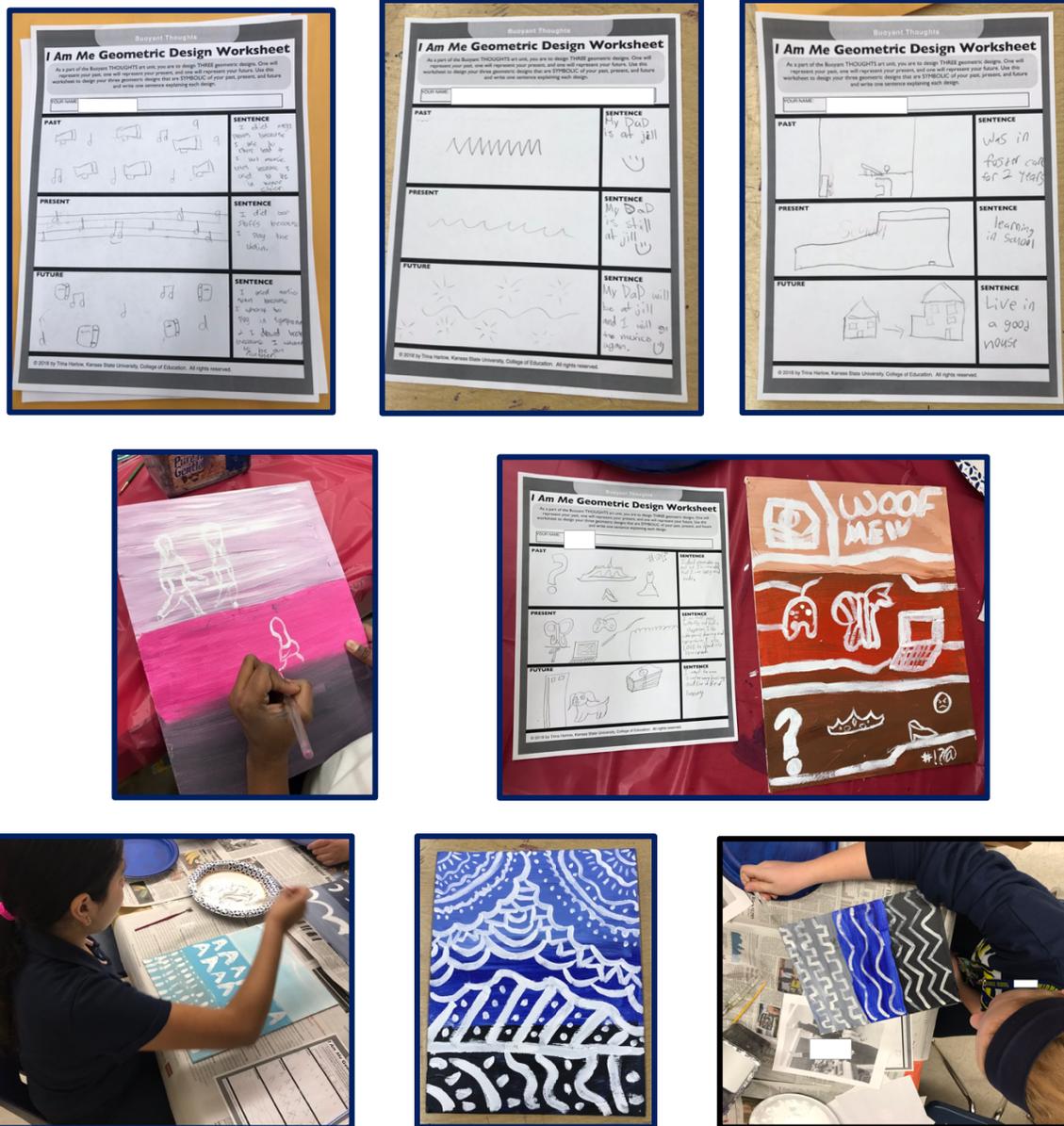


Figure 4.18. Geometric design phase. The above images show student efforts to complete the geometric design worksheet, drawing a symbol representing their past, present, and future, and then painting the design with white acrylic paint on the storyboard.

Painting geometric designs of symbols representing the past, present, and future was the second phase of the storyboard art project. In this phase, students completed a sketching worksheet where they designed one geometric design or simple symbol that told a visual story and represented something that was important or special to them about their past, present and future. Students were told it could be anything they had experienced and that they wanted to represent by a simple symbol of meaning or metaphor that they would then replicate with repetition on each of the three painted sections of the canvas background. Many examples of previously made storyboards were shown to students so that they would fully understand the meaning of symbolism of thought. Students used white acrylic paint and a small paintbrush to paint these symbols on each of the three monochromatic background sections of the canvas storyboard. This data point proved to be highly revealing and the most important data point for the study. It had also been revealing in the pilot study. Many students (81) drew symbols for various activities they participate in or enjoy. Emotions were mentioned 42 times. Many students did not know what to write about their future, yet designing symbols or writing about their past or present seemed easy. Class #1 had ten entries that indicated a severe anxiety, stress, and/or in two cases, a trauma. Class #2 had no entries indicating anxiety, stress, or trauma. These ten entries were extreme and obvious cases of anxiety, stress, and/or trauma because the students drew highly stressful and/or traumatic events. The data revealed that this second phase of the curriculum case study allowed students to communicate stories more fully and both visually and verbally.

Table 4.2

Geometric Design– EASEA Categories (based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Class #1	7	0	33	27	0
Class #2	4	0	48	15	16
TOTAL	11	0	81	42	16

Note. 23 unanswered questions. 10 trauma reflecting comments.

In the above table, a conclusion can be made that A=Activities was the most important consideration when students drew a symbolic geometric design to represent their past, present, and future. B=Body image—meaning physical or psychological aspects of the students—had the second highest score. Students in Class #2 also mentioned S=School more noticeably than Class #1 did, and again, Class #2 was observed as being more academic and studious by this researcher in her field notes from the first week of the research.

Class #1. Of the 36 students in the class, 28 completed the storyboard geometric design phase. Answers on the artist statement showed some creative and higher-level thought in the reason for their choice of symbol, meaning that some of these students thought about a deeper answer than just drawing a shape to randomly or meaninglessly represent their past, present, and future. Many students developed unique geometric symbols or drawings that represented meaning they wanted to convey, yet a noticeable number of students left the past, present, or future space empty on their worksheet or wrote vague sentences of not knowing what they will do or how they feel. More left the future space on the sketching worksheet empty than on the past or present section. Ten entries indicated that students did not know how to represent their past or perhaps did not understand the instructions and were left blank or “*I don’t know*” or

something similar was written. EASEA results were: 33-A, 27-B, F-7, 38-unsure answers were indicated and ten different worksheet entries by students indicated the presence of possible and potentially obvious anxiety, serious stress, or trauma.

Class #2. Of the 34 students in the class, 28 completed the storyboard geometric design phase. Responses showed more higher-level thought, meaning that some of these students thought about a deeper answer than just drawing a shape to randomly or meaninglessly represent their past, present, and future, in the reason for their choice than Class #1, which aligned with this researcher's field notes observations from the first week the unit was implemented that Class #2's overall nature as a class was to be more focused. Less students in Class #2 left blanks or answered with "*I don't know*" or something similar on the geometric design worksheet than in Class #1—a total of 16 in Class #2 as opposed to 38 in Class #1. Students in this class depicted or wrote about many activities including playing princesses, horses, cheerleading, playing the violin, being an author, drawing, being a nurse, soccer, baseball, football, basketball, being a veterinarian, playing video games, and You Tube. Responses in this class tended to reflect some unusual types of activities (violin, horses in the inner city) and even a high degree of imagination (playing princesses or being a butterfly half the time). Responses in this class were also more noticeable in the S=School category as compared to Class #1, with responses involving school, going to college, mentioning specific teachers, getting straight A's, and becoming a veterinarian. Results on the EASEA scale were: 48-A, 15-B, S-16, F-4, Fr-0, and 16-unsure with no students responding in a way that indicated stress, severe anxiety, or trauma. Sixteen entries indicated that students did not know how to represent their past or perhaps did not understand the instructions and were left blank or "*I don't know*" or something similar was written, as opposed

to 38 students in Class #1 who responded that they did not know how to depict their past, present, or future with a symbol.

Six focus students.

•**F4, female, African-American, immigrant:** For her past, this student drew a picture of playing in Africa with girlfriends. For her present, she drew a picture of having a girl on either side of her telling her she was rude and ugly. She wrote for her past: *"I used to live in Africa and play tag almost everyday."* For her present she wrote, *"People use to say that you nasty, you ugly."* The drawing had words stating *"she is so bad," "she ugly,"* and showed her saying *"stop, you are mean,"* and *"I'm not ugly."* She did not draw a symbol for the future. These symbols were recorded as B=Body Image and F=Friends.

•**M4, male, African-American, non-immigrant:** This student drew small round circles for his past and wrote that he had tons of marbles. He drew horizontal and vertical wavy lines and wrote that his life has ups and downs in the present. He drew arrows going in all directions and wrote that he did not know where his future was going for his future. These symbols were recorded as A=Activities and B=Body Image.

•**M7, male, African-American, immigrant:** This student drew a very difficult picture of two stick figure people, one with a mohawk and a long gun, facing another person with a spike hairstyle. He drew a second drawing showing one person shooting the other person, with the shot person laying on the ground with blood coming out of him and a thought bubble that said, *"I'm bleeding."* He wrote *"the other person shot the other person, and he died."* There were many clouds in the sky. He only completed the symbol for his past and did not draw a symbol for the present or future. His EASEA score was a B=Body Image.

•**F25, female, Latino, immigrant:** This student drew the letter i and this appeared to correlate with the artist statement sentence for the past of *"when I was in elementary I would get improvement needed"* indicating her grade was "I" for improvement needed. For the present she drew A's and wrote *"I have straight A's."* For the future she drew wavy horizontal lines and wrote *"I want to learn how to swim in deep water and I want to live near the beach."* Her EASEA scores were A=Activities, B=Body Image.

•**M25, male, unreported ethnicity, non-immigrant:** This student drew footballs and football goals for his past and wrote *"I used to like football."* For his present he drew a soccer ball and goal and wrote *"I like soccer and games."* He did not complete the future box. His EASEA score was A=Activities and B=Body Image.

F41, female, Caucasian, non-immigrant: This student drew megaphones and music notes for her past and wrote *“I did mega phones because I use to cheer lead and I put music notes because I used to be in honor choir.”* For her present she drew a musical score and wrote *“I did bar staffs because I play the violin.”* For the future she drew music notes and a book and wrote *“I used music notes because I want to play in symphonies and I drew books because I want to be an author.”* Her EASEA scores were A=Activities and B=Body Image.



Figure 4.19. Painting geometric designs or symbols.

Storyboard Photo Pose-Step #3

The following images are from students' participation in the photo pose phase of the storyboard art project and data analysis follows the images:

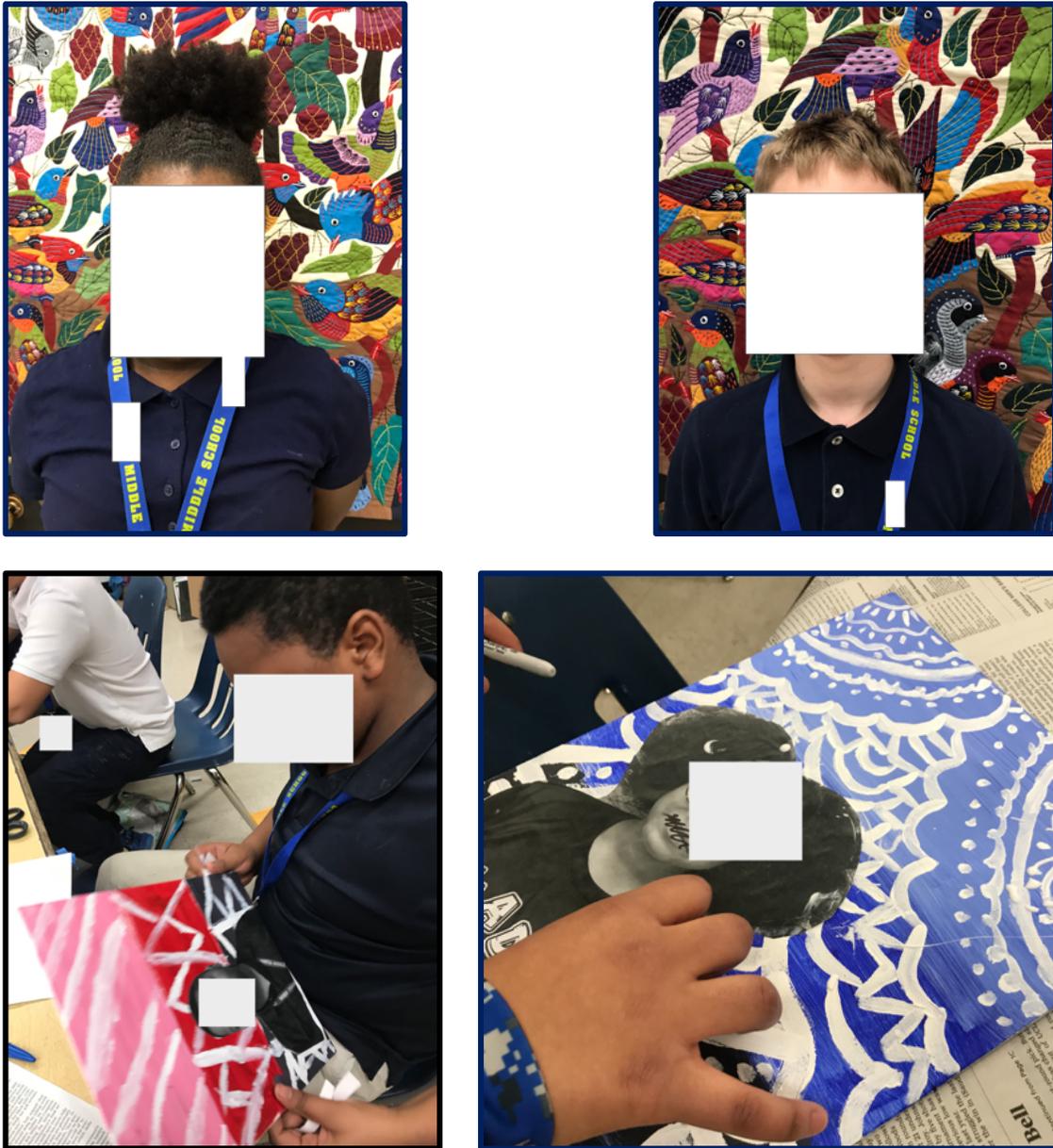


Figure 4.20. Portrait phase. Students' portrait poses are above, as well as an image of two students adhering their photo to the storyboard.

The storyboard photo pose was the third phase of the storyboard project. This phase was only mildly useful in the pilot study and consideration was given to not using it as a data point in the Smithville USA study as plans were being made to conduct the research. However, the decision was made to go ahead and use it in case it provided important data in this diverse, urban middle school. For this step of art making, a close-up photo of each student's shoulders and face was taken. After the photos were printed, students cut the photo out and adhered it to the canvas background of the storyboard using a glue-like sealer called Modge Podge™. The photos were large and intended to fill approximately half the canvas space. In the pilot study and other community organizations in which the storyboard project was tested, there were no problems with students wanting their photos taken. Yet, at Smithville USA a majority of students felt awkward getting their photo made and actually made the process of taking the photos quite difficult. With nearly 40 students per class in short 50-minute classes, there was not enough time to take the photos, especially since students' feelings of awkwardness slowed the process. This phase of data gathering was really insignificant in the study and is not being used as data. This phase of the storyboard curriculum could be important in future implementation of this curriculum unit in other school art classes, but some changes would need to be made in how it was administered—students should go in a room separate from the art classroom to have their photo taken, individual student's photos should not be taken in front of the entire class of students, and the photos should be taken over a few class periods so as not to rush students and give them time to process their physical position, expression, and appearance in their photos. In a class where the teacher of record is leading this unit and where the photos could be taken over a period of days, time could also be given to a digital photography lesson and portrait photography could be more of a focus.

Table 4.3

Photo Pose– EASEA Categories (based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Class #1	0	0	0	34	0
Class #2	0	0	0	32	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	66*	0

Note. *These results will not be factored into the overall study’s chart of Early Adolescent Self-Esteem (EASEA). Students did not have time to make decisions regarding the pose they would take in the photos. They were not asked to complete the artist statement as they would not have been able to answer the questions. The data would not have been relevant. 4 students’ photos were not taken due to absenteeism.

In the photo source data point, only one student’s pose stood out as not reflecting a positive body image. In fact, this one student, M11, seemed genuinely pained at having his photo taken and this is evidenced in his body language as described below, yet it also correlates with his performance on other storyboard data points. The photo pose data does provide some insight into the overall self-esteem of Smithville USA sixth grade students, but is also unreliable as the students were simply lined up and the photos were taken too quickly for students to think about a pose, so therefore the data from this data point was not used in the final analysis.

Class #1. Of the 36 students in the class, 35 had their photo portrait taken by this researcher. This class was rushed due to time constraints to take their photos. With so many students in the class, there was not time to coax each student into getting their photo made. This researcher made a point to take the hot air balloon photo first, the week prior, so that these photo pose portraits would not be the first time the students had their photo made with this researcher in case some students would feel awkward getting their photo taken. Even so, the majority of students were uncomfortable getting their photo taken and a shortage of time to do so caused issues of this data being reliable. So many students were absent each day that it also took three

different sessions to get all of students' photos taken. There was no need to have students analyze their photos by completing the artist statement as there was no time for students to think of what expression to make. Even with how rushed the photo session was, some students did make facial expressions that were different than just facing the camera and smiling.

Class #2. Of the 34 students in the class, 34 had their photo portrait taken by this researcher. Absenteeism made it difficult to get all students' portrait pictures taken in a timely manner and in an organized way. This class also had to have a rushed photo session, but some difficulties that occurred with Class #1 had been adjusted and the photo taking occurred in a more orderly system with this class. The data was unreliable and the artist statement was not completed.

Six focus students.

- F4, female, African-American, immigrant:** This student made no eye contact and looked slightly down and to the right side, with her head tilted slightly down, yet a soft smile on her face. She seemed to feel awkward getting her photo taken. This response to having her photo taken could had a cultural reason.
- M4, male, African-American, non-immigrant:** This student looked directly into the camera, head tilted back very slightly and confidently, smiled and showed teeth in the smile. He seemed to enjoy getting his photo made.
- M7, male, African-American, immigrant:** This student made no eye contact and looked slightly down and to the left, with his head tilted slightly down. There was no expression on his face. He showed no emotion and was completely silent as his photo was made. This response to having his photo taken could had a cultural reason.
- F25, female, Latino, immigrant:** This student tilted her head very slightly to the right, looked at the camera, and her eyes and her mouth smiled a soft, pleasant smile. She seemed timid to while having her photo taken, but did so without expressing this.
- M25, male, unreported ethnicity, non-immigrant:** This student looked straight into the camera and smiled softly. He didn't feel awkward getting his picture taken.

•**F41, female, Caucasian, non-immigrant:** This student tilted her head and high ponytail slightly to the right, made eye contact with the camera looking directly into it, and smiled a big smile with expressive eyes. As a member of the *selfie-generation*, she seemed to take time to make a *selfie pose*.

Storyboard Word Choice-Step #4

The following images are from students' efforts in writing 15 words representing love, life, and laughter (Herrera, 2016) for the storyboard project. Data analysis follows the images:

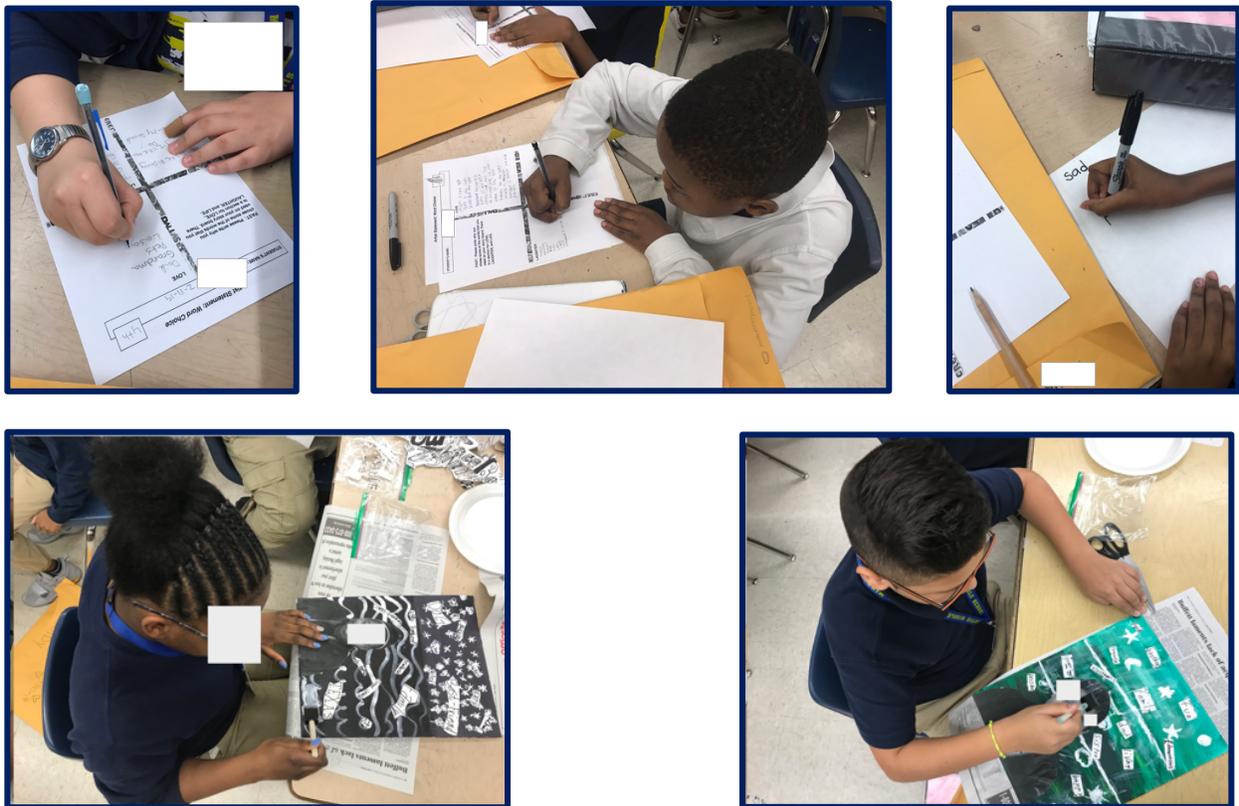


Figure 4.21. Development of storyboard words. Students had freedom to write fifteen words of their choice and that represented love, life, and laughter (Herrera, 2016).

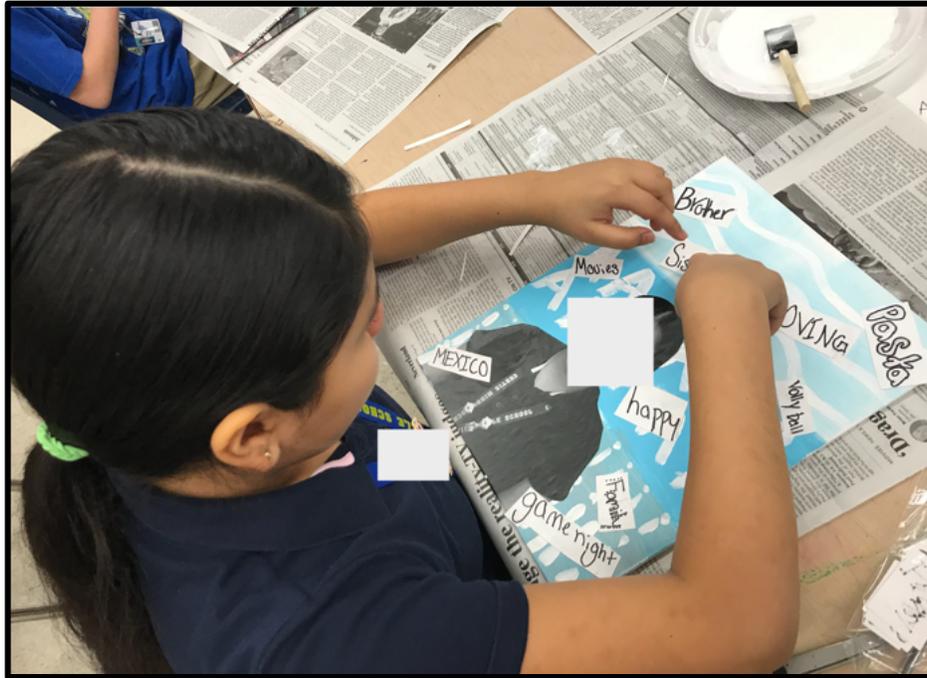


Figure 4.22. Word choice phase. Students developed their 15 words and then adhered them to the storyboard.

The storyboard word choice was the fourth stage of the art project. It was a highly significant and important phase of the storyboard completion and this case study on curriculum. Students were to write a total of fifteen words. Five words were to represent life. Five words were to represent people or things they love. Five words were to represent people or things that make them laugh. Their words could also be emotions or feelings. No boundaries or requirements were given for what the words could be except that they were school appropriate words. Students were not led by this researcher into writing certain kinds of words or given any kind of prompting. Students wrote the words on a worksheet that was divided into the love, life, and laughter sections (Herrera, 2016). These words were later written with permanent markers on high quality white paper, cut out, and sealed with a glue-like substance called Modge Podge™ on the painted canvas storyboard.

Table 4.4

Word Choice– EASEA Categories (based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Class #1	33	28	31	23	20
Class #2	15	14	17	10	15
TOTAL	48	42	48	33	35

Note. 3 unanswered questions. 0 trauma reflecting comments.

In the above table, a conclusion can be made that the overall EASEA categories were much more balanced and answers were divided more evenly across the five categories than in other data points of the storyboard. A=Activities and F=Family, however, had the highest score when students chose words to represent love, life and laughter (Herrera, 2016), yet FR=Friends was close in significance. B=Body Image and S=School were also noticeably present in student responses. Class #1, however, scored higher on F=Family than Class #2 did. Class #1 had a 13-point spread from their highest score of F=Family to their lowest score of S=School. Class #2's scores were fairly consistent across the EASEA categories. Class #2's highest score was A=Activities and was 7 points higher than their lowest score on Body Image. There was less variation in Class #2's scores than Class #1's. Overall F=Family and A=Activities tied for the highest EASEA score.

Class #1. Of the 36 students in this class, 34 completed the word choice worksheet and artist statement giving this data point with this class the highest completion rate of the various data point activities. Student responses indicated a fairly average spread across the five EASEA. While F=Family predominated the responses, they were closely followed by A=Activities and FR=Friends. B=Body Image and S=School also had a significant amount of responses. Some of

the words that stood out were church, God, long lists of animals, death, fire, biological dad, yoyos, Cobrs™, money, excited to be able to go everywhere in car or on a motorcycle now here in America, bipolar, jail, SnapChat™, Instagram™, YouTube™, Fortnite™, and “*school, ya have to go.*” Mom was mentioned on many of the worksheets. Many family members, friends, and activities were mentioned.

Class #2. Of the 34 students in the class, 15 did not complete the word choice worksheet, which also made it difficult for them to complete the artist statements. There were extenuating circumstances that led to so many students not completing the worksheet due to some school scheduling of emergency drills. A=Activities predominated the responses, followed closely by F=Family, FR=Friends, and S=School. The class had been described as studious and attentive by the researcher in her field journal at the beginning of the study, so it seems acceptable that A=Activities was important to this class and B=Body Image showed lower significance. Some of the words that stood out were social media, Vines™, Mexican food, coloring YouTube™, Fortnite™, Apex™, Harry Potter™, orchestra, memes, Mexico, and Texas.

Six focus students.

•**F4, female, African-American, immigrant:** This researcher made an assumption at the beginning of this unit that this student probably would not exhibit self-esteem. She did not show physical demeanor known to express friendliness to the researcher or classmates, did not smile, rolled her eyes noticeably a few times, and did not interact with anyone around her or speak. She wrote of other girls being mean and rude to her on her geometric design worksheet. However, as the unit progressed this researcher noticed very clear exhibitions of self-esteem. The words she wrote for the word choice worksheet involved family and many involved or skilled activities and emotions. She expressed delight in being able to have their own car in the United States and also a motorcycle, not having to walk everywhere her family went. Some of the words she wrote were swimming, painting, art, traveling, Africa, car, health, and her family and friends. Her storyboard words revealed all five EASEA categories.

•**M4, male, African-American, non-immigrant:** This student appeared to be able to easily do assignments and apply logic and memory to his thinking. He seemed intelligent because of how he answered discussion questions in class. He also frequently expressed happiness. Some of the words he mentioned were yoyo, horses—writing that he laughed when he rode horses, games, cars, television, that his grandmother passed away, and in regards to traveling he wrote “*I love outside of what I know.*” In the end, he did not collage his words to his storyboard as he was absent for two weeks, but he developed the words on his worksheet. His storyboard words represented all five EASEA categories.

•**M7, male, African-American, immigrant:** As the unit progressed to this stage, this student had physically and psychologically transformed into a more engaged, involved student than he had been the first two weeks of the curriculum unit implementation. This was a significant finding and indicative of the curriculum unit’s effectiveness in teaching self-esteem and demonstrated that the student was making meaning out of his learning. M7’s word worksheet was full of many more words than 15. He essentially wrote that he loved everything and everybody in the world. He made lists of everything he loved, everyone he loved, and then when he had exhausted that list, he wrote he loved everybody and everything. He wrote lists of animals that he loved including rabbits and tigers. He was able to transfer many of these words to his storyboard, which had many more than 15 words. His storyboard was highly aesthetic and artistic (see Figure 4.1). His storyboard words represented all five EASEA categories.

•**F25, female, Latino, immigrant:** This student’s word choice reflected her assessment of happy and good life. She wrote about game nights, pasta dinners, movies, various family members, friends that make her laugh, baking, volleyball, Mexico, Texas, Kansas, traveling, and loving and being happy. Her storyboard words represented all five EASEA categories.

•**M25, male, non-reported, non-immigrant:** This student’s word choice reflected his assessment of being fortunate to have a happy and good life. He wrote about babies, dogs, games and jokes, soccer, his family, school, math, and food. He mentioned the word fail but was referring to video game fails which was often expressed as folk taxonomy by many students and was not written as a negative event. His overall storyboard focus exhibited positive, involved aspects of his life. His storyboard words represented all five of the EASEA categories.

Final Storyboard-5th Step

The following images are of students' final storyboards. Storyboard images are also included throughout this chapter and others in this dissertation. Data analysis follows the images:

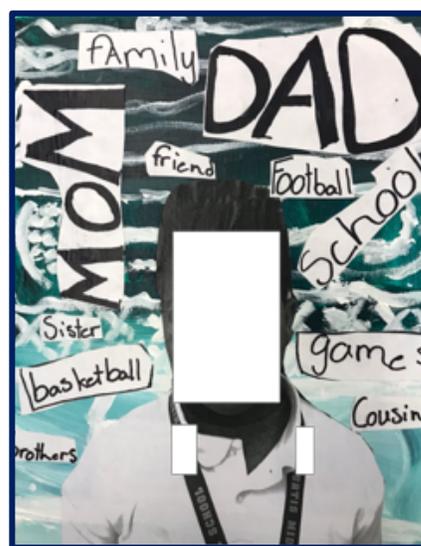


Figure 4.23. Completed storyboards of various students. Left to right, M13, F13, F32, M14.

The fifth stage of the storyboard data was the completed storyboards. This also included completing the final storyboard artist statement, which one entire class period was devoted to completing as this activity was highly important for the curriculum unit's final activity. Overall, the storyboards turned out exceptionally well from a creative and cognitive viewpoint as the product of an art curriculum unit. From an artistic point of view and analysis, how composed and balanced the storyboards looked when completed was a highly interesting aspect of this case study and one that is significant for the inclusion of Arts Based Research as the theoretical framework for the study. All students' completed storyboards looked aesthetically pleasing in their final stage of completion. The five phases of the storyboard project tended to be compatible with each other once assembled and tended to create a unique and aesthetic looking piece of art. It is almost as if the sensory capabilities of each student in painting, drawing, cutting, and writing functioned as their own individual languages on their completed storyboard project. It is as if the way an individual student moved a paint brush had a rhythm and movement that matched the way they painted their geometric design and wrote or cut out their words. There tended to be a visible rhythm or blending of each storyboard, adding to its aesthetic look. When the five stages were assembled all together into the final storyboard, it made a cohesive piece of art.

The final storyboard written artist statements, or verbal final artist statements made during the in-class art show, were important for the final analysis of data. While quite a few of the written artists' statements had answers such as "*nothing*" or "*IDK*," many students richly reported the meaningful learning that occurred for them during the implementation of the curriculum unit. These were some of the final artist statement comments:

- *“It’s very creative, and fun to make. It can show the things that makes your personality. It can bring positivity to people.” (M2)*
- *“I like that during the making of the project you could think about the things that make you happy.” (F20)*
- *“Yes it all about my father rithe now my dad is a jell and I can see or talk to him so mostly is about him.” (F8)*
- *“The most important word is FAMILY my family shows me everything helps me and they help w/my bad days.” (F11)*
- *“I feel the storyboard says a lot about you and you have to be brave enough to write everything you’ve been through. People get to know me better and know what I’ve been through.” (F12)*
- *“Yes, my storyboard tells a story about me, my life, my day, and about my family. My story board tells me how challenging and happy my life is.” (F6)*
- *“We see evidence because there are some srong wrong words on it and some sad one and some happy ones so we all have self esteem and have little self esteem.” (F14)*
- *“Because I wrote tears because sometimes I feel sad and sometimes I want to cry but I donot and I wrote family and friends because that makes me happy.” (F13)*
- *“Rancho. It’s like where it has a lot of cows and chickens, etc. it means to me because this place mean something to me and one day I would live there.” (M19)*

The complexity of the storyboards, indeed, tells a story of multiple layers of thought, life experiences, and interests. As one student (F41) said privately to this researcher at the very end of class on the last session day, the thing that she liked the most about the storyboard project was that a person could tell a story that no one would know or be able to figure out. This researcher was the special guardian of 70 private stories, including some that were very revealing, and all seeming to be very special or important to the storyteller. As art often does, the storyboards told cherished stories, provided a means to get to know someone better, and in some cases, told the difficult stories that some of the students chose to tell. The number of difficult stories and heartaches that students shared, on one hand, surprised this researcher, on the other hand it did not. The design of the curriculum was intentionally scaffolded to provide a pathway to freedom in storytelling and the building of self-esteem for students, yet a window of choice was left open for students to personalize their stories in the way in which they wanted to. The curriculum, as developed and planned to teach self-esteem and then analyze the data for evidence of self-esteem, worked. The best attribute of the *I Am Me* curriculum from an artistic point of view was students were the one driving the information shared in their stories. They had a need to tell the story they chose to tell and the storyboards and the students' artist statements are the evidence of their choices.

In-class art show. As a part of the curriculum, an in-class art show was held on the last day of class. All six art projects that students completed for the *I Am Me* unit were placed on the classroom tables and arranged with each students' projects grouped together. Students participated in a Gallery Walk & Talk where they moved around the classroom, viewing each other's art projects and talking about them. Then, this researcher led a Drag & Brag where students who so chose could share their project(s) with the class, drag the projects to the front of

the room and brag about what they liked about their art projects. Several students in each class wanted to share their storyboard with their peers. Students were observed exhibiting pride in their completed storyboards and those who shared storyboard stories publicly seemed to want to tell the class “their story.”

A significant number of the Smithville USA students, however, seemed embarrassed when their storyboards were initially shown to the class during the Walk & Talk because of their photos being on them. Reasons ranged from not liking their photo to just simply being embarrassed to have a large photo of themselves on display. As often happens in a school classroom, sometimes a thought or expression that is verbalized by one student spreads throughout the classroom and that seemed to be a trend as the hot air balloon project that had students’ photos on it and the storyboards were passed out for the art show. This researcher led a discussion about being proud of their artwork and complimented students for their final storyboards. This seemed to calm the chatter about their photos. Rather than delve too deeply into possible developmental embarrassment with the photography phenomenon, it seems like a potential topic for a future digital research study in which an analysis is done of the selfie-generation’s thoughts and feelings about personal photos seen in public displays.

The *I Am Me* curriculum produced a richly layered story for each student artist and students attributed a variety of layers of meaning to their individual storyboards. As they completed each week’s lesson and learned more of self-esteem each week, students’ knowledge of self-esteem grew and the way in which they depicted it on the various storyboard phases expanded. By the time students completed the final storyboard artist statement, it seemed from the data that their understanding of self-esteem had changed from focusing more on fluid EASEA categories that may change more often in life and over time—those of friends, school,

and emotions— and focus had grown over the five data phases of the storyboard project in the two EASEA areas of family and activities with many mentioning activities they wanted to participate in during their futures or for life.

Table 4.5

Final Storyboard– EASEA Categories (based on DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Class #1	18	6	8	11	4
Class #2	21	9	12	0	2
TOTAL	39	15	20	11	6

Note. 12 unanswered questions. 0 trauma reflecting comments.

In Table 4.5, it can be clearly seen that F=Family mattered the most to the Smithville USA students on their final artist statements and the importance of F=Family was almost double that of the next category, which was A=Activities. FR=Friends and B=Body Image categories were third and fourth in order and were actually very similar in importance to the Smithville USA students. S=School was not referenced frequently, at least not frequently enough to have more than six artist statement responses. Class #1 and Class #2 seemed to have similar EASEA category rankings with one exception—Class #1 placed B=Body Image as second in importance and Class #2 placed A=Activities as second in importance, with Class #2 having no reported responses that were in the B=Body Image category.

Six focus students.

•F4, female, African-American, immigrant.

F4's artist statement revealed that she believed she had self-esteem because she could *"talk about past, present, and future."* She said the most important words on her storyboard were the members of her family and the word family because *"I really love my family."* She also wrote that *"what I like about my project is it was so amazing and fun! I like the coloring, the drawing, and the painting."* F4 was talented artistically and this was observed throughout the curriculum unit activities. Her storyboard words were embellished with decorative lines and she chose to paint complicated symbols behind the words representing the past, present, and future. She chose to describe herself as she sees herself on her storyboard, or perhaps as she wants to be—it is impossible to know from her storyboard artist statement if these are qualities she possesses or wants to possess. While she does not seem to interact very intimately with her peers in class, she is clearly close to her family. F4's final artist statement was highly detailed and revealed all 5 EASEA categories.

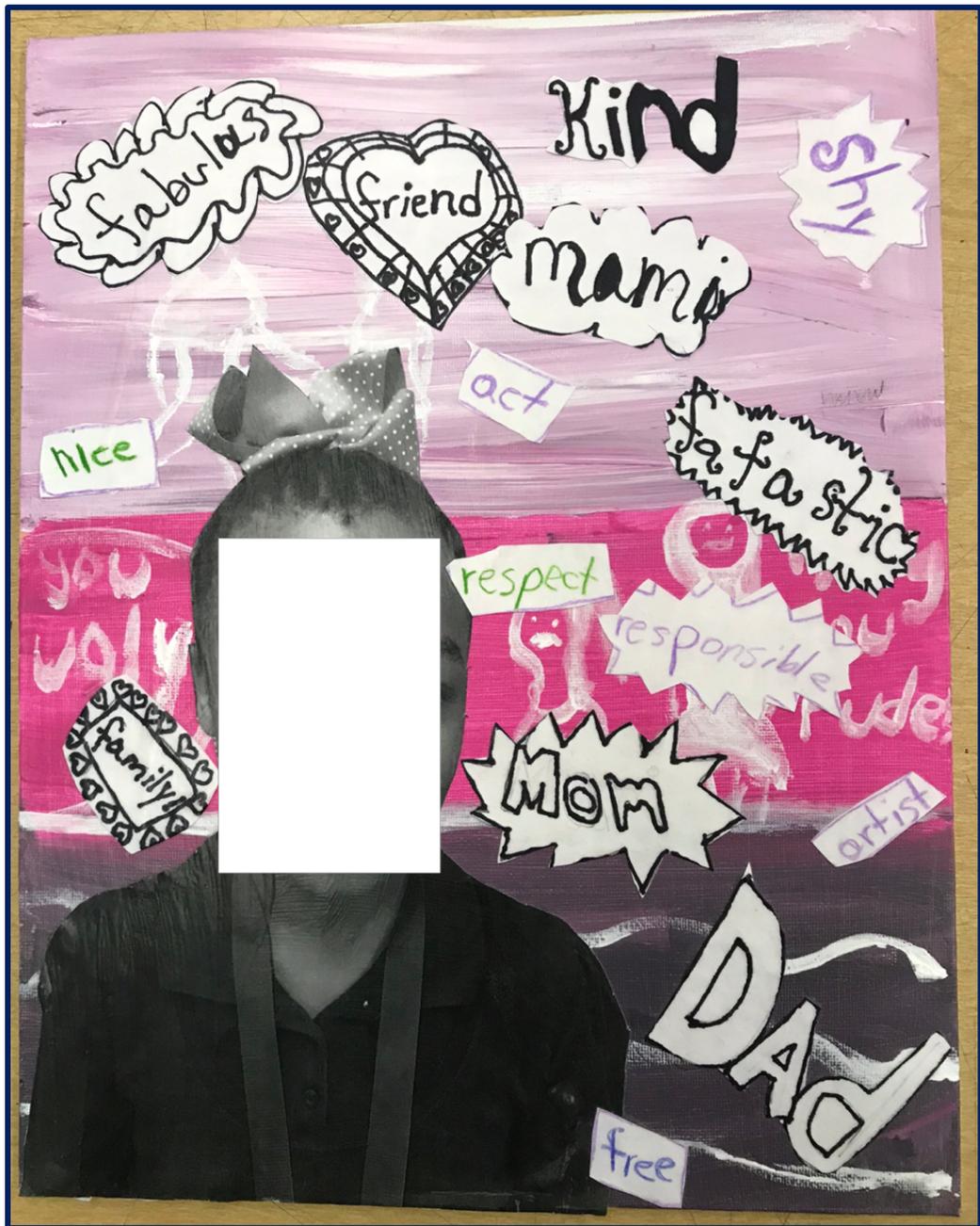


Figure 4.24. F4's completed storyboard. F4's storyboard was creative, expressive, and conveyed many emotions. The words expressed the importance of family and friends. She also stated that she was free, both on her storyboard and on her artist statement. She also wrote the word art and explained on her artist statement that she loved art. Her geometric design underneath the words told a story of bullying.

•M4, male, African-American, non-immigrant.

M4's artist statement proudly proclaimed that he "*had a lot of self-esteem!*"

He believed he had self-esteem because he used the words myself and me often when he wrote and spoke (although his words did not get collaged to the board because of two absences and his words were misplaced) and because he smiled. He wrote family was his favorite word "*because I know if I get down I know my family will pull me up again or they'll help me through it.*" He never shared what "it" might have been. He liked the contrast of the light and dark colors. His photo revealed his confidence as he smiled and looked directly at the camera and his geometric design had deep meaning to him, and represented abstract thoughts of affection he received when he was a little boy, having a busy life now, and not sure what his future would be.

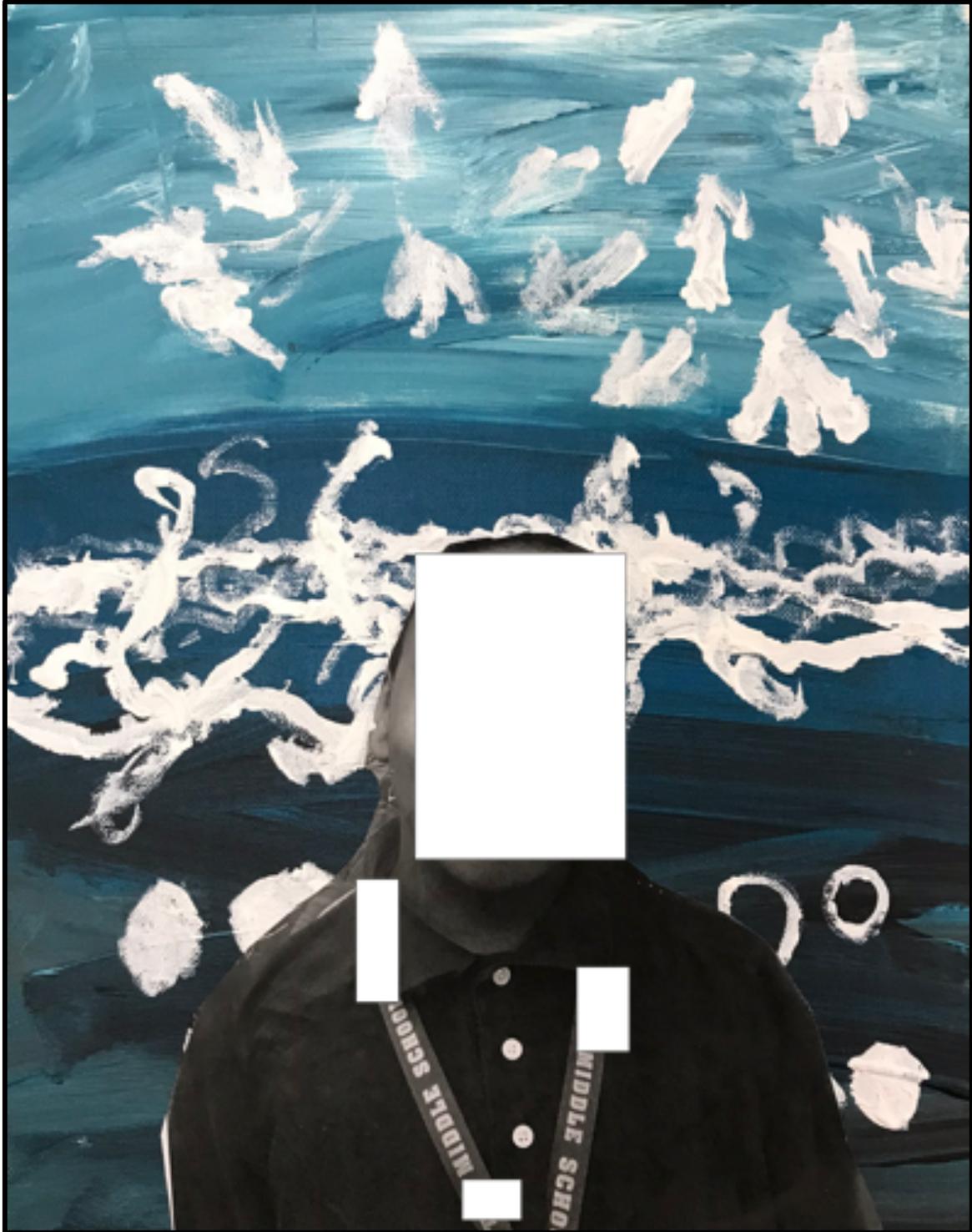


Figure 4.25. M4's completed storyboard. While he was absent from class several times towards the end of the curriculum unit's implementation when the storyboards were being finalized, his lack of creative skill was overpowered by his positive attitude.

•M7, male, African-American, immigrant.

M7's artist statement revealed that he believed he had self-esteem. He also wrote that *"everyone does everything humans animals."* Regarding evidence of self-esteem on his storyboard he wrote, *"because its just to breve and to show your work rather you din you rather didn't do your work. Like love people everybody is good nobody is bad everybody has a heart."* When asked what story is told on his storyboard he wrote *"it tells about my mom sister cousins friends familys animals music space. I care about family friends animals music."* He also drew a chain of human stick figures, twelve of them across the paper, holding hands and singing with musical notes and the written words *"la, la, la."* He wrote what he liked most about his storyboard was *"its great I don't care if anyone else says its bad or good everyones is good and great."* This student showed a gain of self-esteem throughout the curriculum implementation. On the geometric design phase, he drew a human stick figure with a gun shooting another person. His storyboard words represented all five categories of EASEA and he included many more words than fifteen. His storyboard told an intimate, detailed story of his past, and reflected how self-esteem looked to him as he learned of its meaning during the teaching and implementation of this curriculum unit. He indicated that he had been involved with this shooting in Africa before coming to the U.S. as a refugee. As the art making and artist's statements built to the final storyboard phase of this curriculum unit, he gained skills and knowledge that helped him unpack some of his anxiety and his difficult memories, as observed by this researcher. The implementation of the curriculum helped M7 express himself through his drawings, learn what self-esteem was, and learn through this art curriculum that he could move on from the difficulties of the past and focus on his own life and his personal beneficial qualities with a greater understanding of self-esteem.



Figure 4.26. M7's completed storyboard. His storyboard phases and artist's statements initially told a seriously deep, highly difficult story juxtaposed with a large love of family, friends, life, and animals. As the curriculum unit progressed and he learned more about self-esteem, his thoughts turned to more positive aspects of his own life now as a student at Smithville Middle School. His final storyboard reflects all EASEA categories.

•F25, female, Latino, immigrant.

F25's final artist statement revealed that she believed she had self-esteem. She wrote that *"I see evidence of self-esteem in my art project because I feel proud of what I did."* She wrote the word *"family"* was special to her *"because they have been with me since I was born and they make me smile when I am sad."* F25 wrote that what she liked about her art project was *"how we did the background and people won't know what it means and you are the only one who knows what it means."* She liked her photo the least. She concluded by saying *"if I could change one thing about my project it would be to cut the words better because I think I can cut them better."* Her storyboard told a visual story of setting goals in that she wanted to learn how to swim by the symbolism of the color turquoise, of the various grades she has made in varying time periods of school, of wanting to go to college, and confidence in looking at the camera and smiling as she had her photo made. Her verbal communication shared a love of family, activities with family such as having family game night and making pasta and baking with her family, of playing volleyball in school, of traveling and her life in Kansas and Mexico, and other activities. Her storyboard phases proclaimed her pride in her life, her family, and in herself. F25's final storyboard efforts exhibited all five EASEA categories.

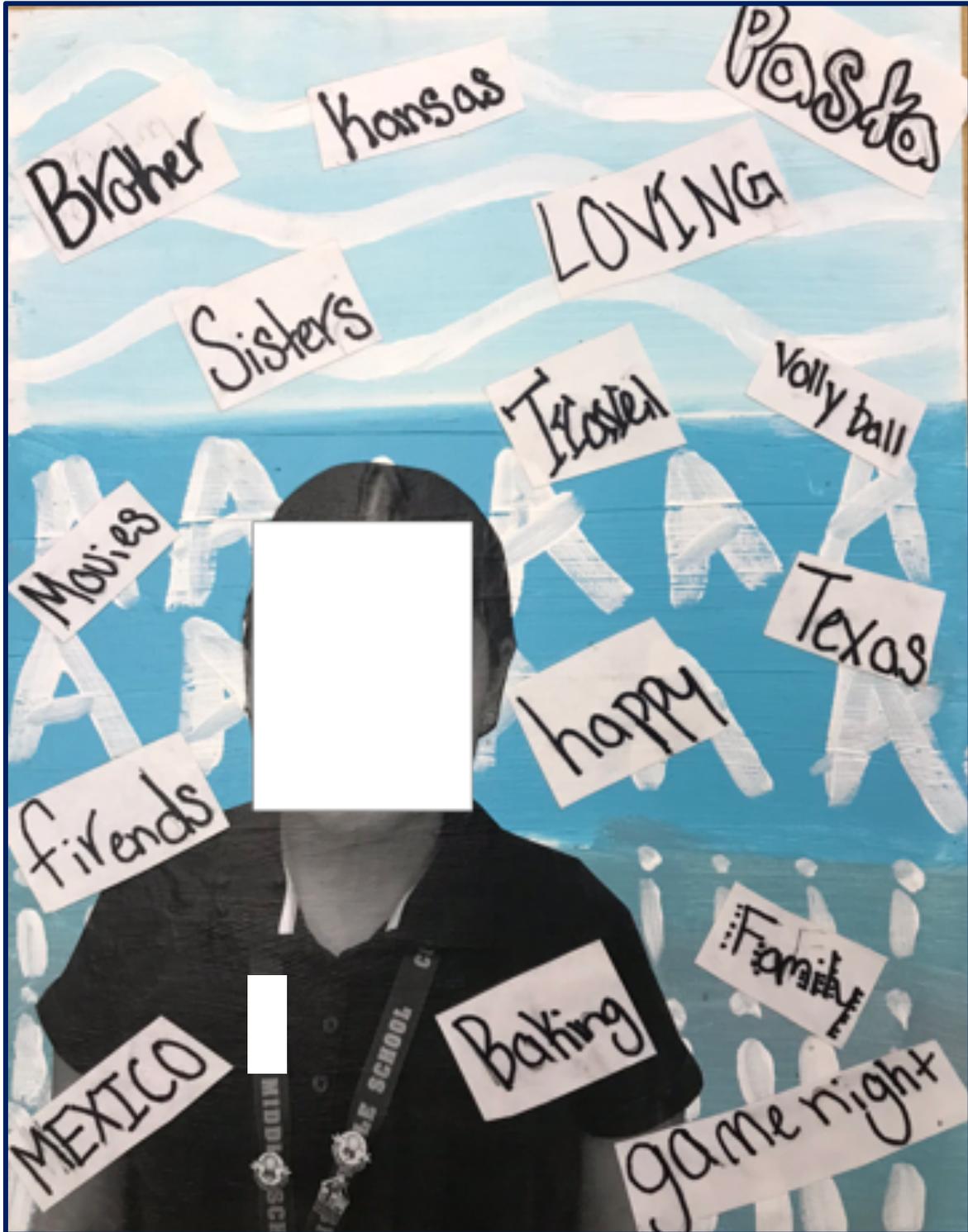


Figure 4.27. F25's completed storyboard. The story she shared was whimsical and happy, yet she reported on her final artist's statement that she embedded a story that only she knew within the storyboard.

•M25, male, non-reported ethnicity, non-immigrant.

M25's artist statement revealed that he believed he had self-esteem. He believed he had self-esteem because "*when I see my cousin I try to help my family.*" He wrote that he can help his cousin's family because "*things are going well for my family.*" His storyboard tells a story about part of his life. He mentioned family on his storyboard because he lives with them, yet this was his first mention of family during the entire curriculum unit. He mentioned soccer because he had played since kindergarten and he also mentioned soccer on every storyboard phase. He liked his geometric symbols the most. They were a graduated series representing how soccer had grown in complexity and become more challenging for him over the years. Soccer was a part of his past, present, and he hoped it to be a part of his future and appeared to be important to his sense of self-esteem. If he could have done something differently to his storyboard, he would have added Japan where he was born on a military base and his current hometown of Smithville USA. His storyboard artist statement was only somewhat revealing in a depth of personal sharing and thought; he tended to not share emotion. This student tended to exhibit self-esteem from the first session at Smithville USA, had good behavior in class, was never absent, and completed all art projects, worksheets, and artist statements. He was always pleasant, respectful, and interacted quietly and in socially appropriate ways with his table group peers. His final storyboard represented all five EASEA categories.

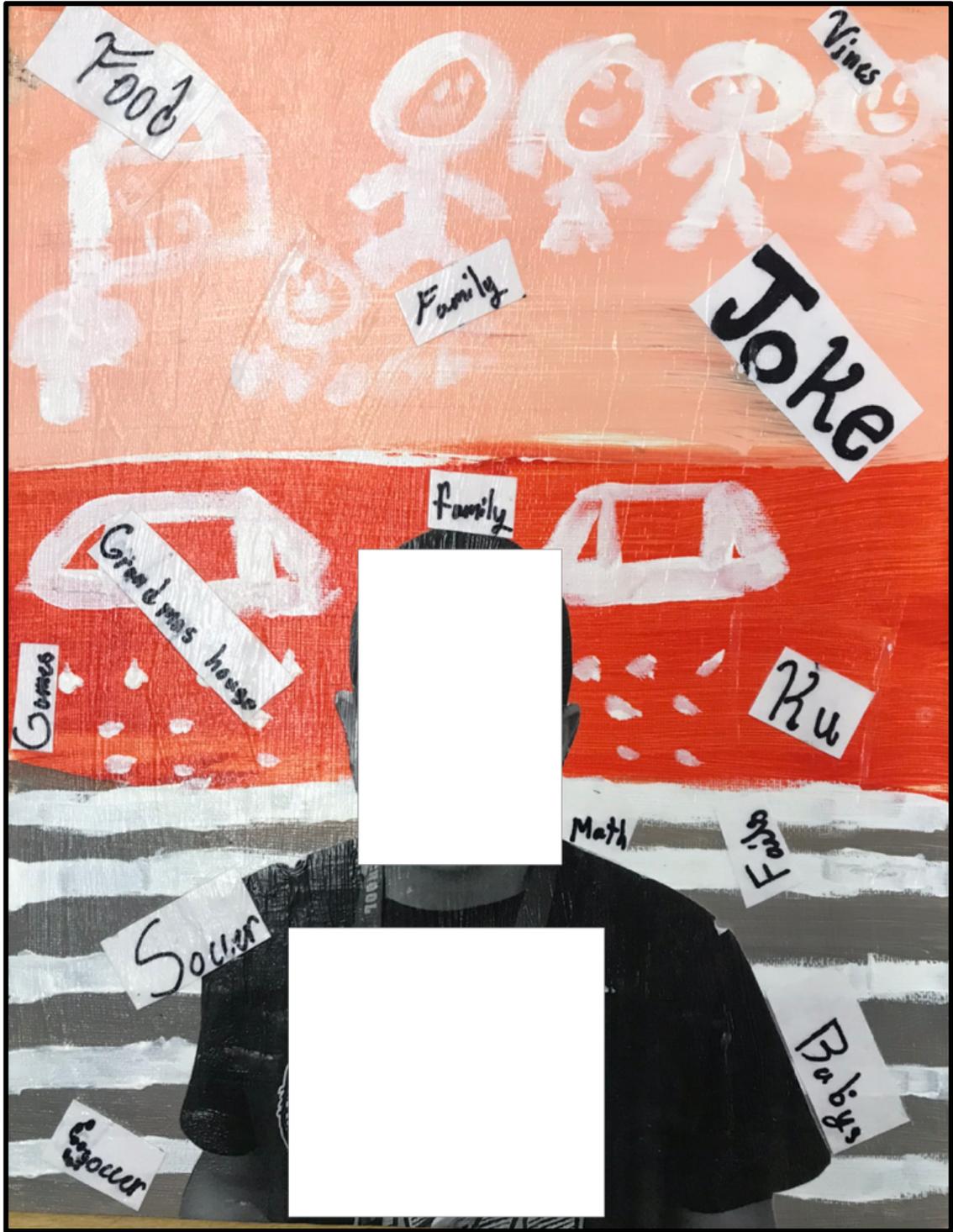


Figure 4.28. M25's completed storyboard. His storyboard centered on soccer, something very important to him, in his geometric designs, his word choices, and his final artist statement.

•F41, female, Caucasian, non-immigrant.

F41's artist statement revealed that she believed she had self-esteem "about 70% of the time." She wrote that evidence of self-esteem was seen on her storyboard because "I see self-esteem by not being afraid to be proud of my story and words. There are some words that are a little personal but I'm not afraid to tell a story with them." She said that every word had a story behind it, but her personal favorite was "Bubby. Bubby is my brother and my brother is my favorite sibling. We are the closest and we do almost everything together. He moved away to Florida the first month of school and I think about him almost every day." While she liked the color she chose and the patterns she painted, she liked the words the most "because that's what tells the story." She didn't like how some of her words reminded her of some sad memories. If she were to change one thing, she reflectively wrote that she would have picked better words and changed some of her patterns to make it more interesting. Her final storyboard revealed all five EASEA categories and a wide variety of experiences, as well as mentioning the loss of a loved one that was special to her by the use of the word "death."

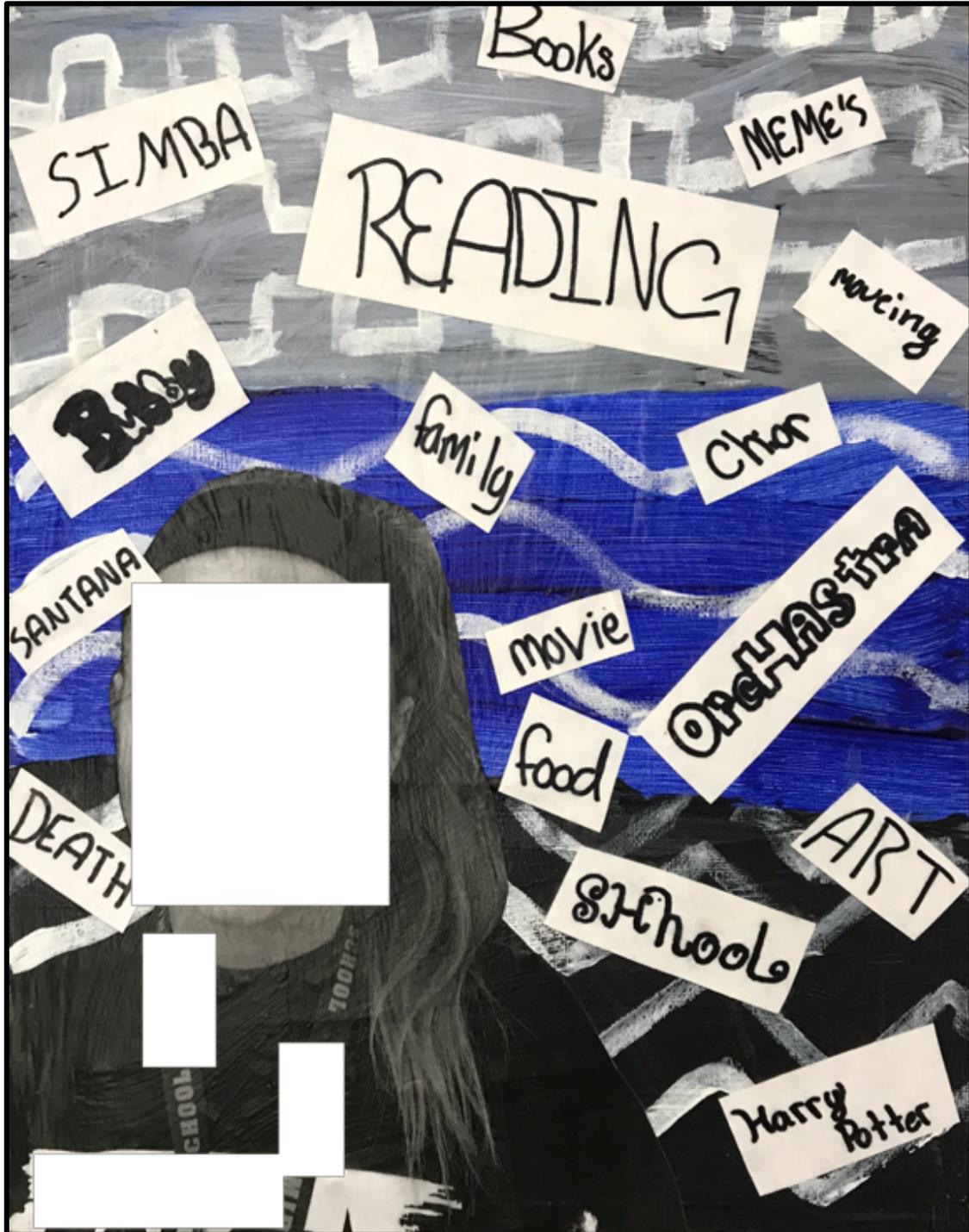


Figure 4.29. F41's completed storyboard. In her own words, her storyboard told of happiness and heartache, and she kept some of the meaning private, although it clearly expressed all five EASEA categories in the storyboard art phases and various artist's statements.

Comparative Results-EASEA Categories

The following six tables summarize the overall EASEA scoring in the five categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School. Tables are included for EASEA totals for Class #1 and Class #2, male and female EASEA categories, and immigrant and non-immigrant EASEA categories.

Table 4.6

EASEA Categories – Class #1 (36 Students in Class)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	0	0	3	21	7
Geometric Design	7	0	33	27	0
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	33	28	31	23	20
Final Storyboard	18	6	8	11	4
	58	34	75	82	31

Note. 25 unanswered questions, 10 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table, Class #1 had the highest responses in the category of B=Body Image. A=Activities were second in importance. F=Family was reported third in frequency, followed by FR=Friends, and then S=School. These scores seemed to align with the researcher's field notes assessment of this class being loud and social after the first session, meaning this scoring seems indicative of this class being obviously emotional within class with each other due to the high B=Body Image score. Their emotions were a significant part of their life. School was less significant than friends although scoring was very close.

Table 4.7

EASEA Categories – Class #2 (34 Students in Class)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	2	1	3	19	1
Geometric Design	4	0	48	15	16
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	15	14	17	10	15
Final Storyboard	21	9	12	0	2
	42	24	80	44	34

Note. 20 unanswered questions, no trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table, Class #2 had the highest responses in the category of A=Activities. B=Body Image was second in importance, which consisted of responses relating to students' physical bodies and their psychological responses, yet F=Family was reported as a very close third in frequency, followed by S=School and then, lastly, FR=Friends. These scores seemed to align with the researcher's field notes assessment of this class being studious and attentive after the first session. Their activities were important to them, and school was more important than friends.

Table 4.8

EASEA Categories – Total of Both Classes (70 Students)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	2	1	6	40	8
Geometric Design	11	0	81	42	16
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	48	42	48	33	35
Final Storyboard	39	15	20	11	6
	100	58	155	126	65

Note. 45 unanswered questions, 10 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table which is a total for all 70 students in the study, the highest response category was A=Activity. B=Body Image was second in importance. F=Family was reported third in frequency, followed by S=School and FR=Friends. These scores seemed to indicate that what middle school students did outside of school or extra-curricular school activities were overall very important to them. The scores also indicated that middle school students in this study were significantly affected by B=Body Image (and generally their emotions as reported in their artists' statements). F=Family was also significant in the final overall EASEA table, yet the final artist statement EASEA table—the fifth phase of the storyboard project—revealed that during the last phase of storyboard completion, students scored their family as highest in importance. This indicates that as students moved through the curriculum unit's topic of self-esteem and learned more about it, they began to more purposefully include their family in their artist statements. S=School and F=Friends were much lower in importance.

Table 4.9

EASEA Categories – Female Students (43 female students)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	2	1	2	28	6
Geometric Design	7	0	44	32	8
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	27	27	26	22	20
Final Storyboard	27	11	14	10	5
	63	39	86	92	39

Note. 24 unanswered questions. 9 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scoring on the above table, female students had the highest responses in the category of B=Body Image, which consisted of responses relating to students' physical bodies and their psychological or emotional responses. A=Activities were second in importance to females. F=Family was reported third in frequency. The scores for FR=Friend and S=School were identical and were the lowest scores. These scores seemed to indicate that the artwork and artist statements of females in this study were most affected or concerned about their bodies and their emotions in regards to expressing self-esteem and making cognitive and creative decisions. The data also reflected that nine of the ten trauma reflecting comments, which was not a part of this study's focus but revealed by the data, occurred with the female students.

Table 4.10

EASEA Categories – Male Students (27 male students)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	0	0	4	12	2
Geometric Design	4	0	37	10	8
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	21	15	22	11	15
Final Storyboard	12	4	6	1	1
	37	19	69	34	26

Note. 21 unanswered questions. 1 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table, male students had the highest responses in the category of A=Activities. F=Family was second, yet B=Body Image was a close third, S=School was fourth, and FR=Friends was the least important. These scores seem to indicate that male students conveyed through their art making and artist statements that they were most concerned about or affected by their A=Activities and F=Friends were least important in this study. The data also reflects that one of the ten trauma reflecting comments occurred with the male students.

Table 4.11

EASEA Categories – Immigrant (29 students)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	1	1	1	14	7
Geometric Design	6	0	28	22	7
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	17	14	16	13	11
Final Storyboard	19	5	5	8	4
	43	20	50	57	29

Note. 19 unanswered questions. 7 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table, immigrant students had the highest responses in the category of B=Body Image, which consisted of responses relating to students' physical bodies and their psychological responses. A=Activities were second in importance to immigrant students. F=Family was reported third in frequency. The score for S=School was fourth and FR=Friend was the lowest score. These scores extracted from the students' art making and artist statements during this study seemed to indicate that the immigrant students were affected most by their physical or psychological being. The data also reflects that seven of the ten trauma reflecting comments occurred with the immigrant students.

Table 4.12

EASEA Categories – Non-Immigrant (41 students)

CLASS	FAMILY	FRIENDS	ACTIVITIES	BODY IMAGE	SCHOOL
Color Choice	1	0	5	26	1
Geometric Design	5	0	53	20	9
Photo Pose					
Word Choice	31	28	32	20	24
Final Storyboard	20	10	15	3	2
	57	38	105	69	36

Note. 26 unanswered questions. 3 trauma reflecting comments.

According to the EASEA scores on the above table, non-immigrant students had the highest responses in the category of A=Activity. B=Body Image was second in importance to non-immigrant students.. F=Family was reported third in frequency. The score for FR=Friend and S=School were fairly close and were the lowest scores. These scores extracted from the curriculum’s art making and artist statements seemed to indicate that the non-immigrant students kept busy with activities. Friends and school were less important than their families. Non-immigrant students’ top two scoring categories were opposite that of immigrant students. Immigrant students’ top score was B=Body Image and non-immigrant was A=Activity. Immigrant students’ second score was A=Activity and non-immigrants was B=Body Image. The data also reflects that three of the ten trauma reflecting comments occurred with the non-immigrant students which were a larger percentage of total students in the study. More trauma reflecting responses occurred with the immigrant students that were a smaller percentage of students in this study.

Trauma Reflecting Comments and Drawings

Although this study did not seek to study trauma, data regarding trauma reflecting comments were produced by student participants in both the visual and verbal artifacts of the curriculum unit, and therefore were recorded as they were important student revelations. The ten trauma reflecting comments were made during the first three weeks of the curriculum by students. These trauma reflecting comments ranged from being involved in a gun altercation in Africa, to being placed in foster care in traumatic circumstances and the events associated with this, fathers in jail, living in a dangerous place, and the death of a brother. Significant in this case study—the curriculum unit—was that the geometric design phase was where all of the trauma reflecting comments were made. These events were first drawn by the students, and then the students added verbal meaning to their drawings—both on the written portion of the geometric design worksheet or on later artists’ statements. This seems to align with Eisner’s (2016) belief that the arts give children opportunities to say things they could not otherwise say.

Post-Interview

As the research came to a conclusion, a post-interview was conducted with the art teacher on the last day of the unit. The post-interview revealed that the art teacher had been personally and professionally encouraged and affected by the unit and its social emotional theme of self-esteem, positivity, and buoyancy. The art teacher’s post-research/post-unit comments provide valuable insight into the overall effect of the case study curriculum from both an adult and a teacher’s point of view. The following are some important comments from the interview:

- *“I think this type of curriculum really opens up conversations with the kids. I think it’s a really good idea. When I teach, I’m usually about the standard and what I need to do—the elements [elements of art]and principles [principles of design].”*

At the conclusion of the unit, the art teacher felt there was an important need for this type of biopsychosocial curriculum. While she reports mainly teaching the standards, the state’s visual arts standards fully allow for curriculum with personal themes, such as self-esteem.

- *“I think if we were going to do this [incorporate biopsychosocial topics], I would do it on Monday and all we do is talk about stuff, we don’t even make anything. Tuesday we start the project.”*

The teacher’s enthusiasm for this curriculum was causing her to begin to plan how she could incorporate lesson themes such as self-esteem into her classroom.

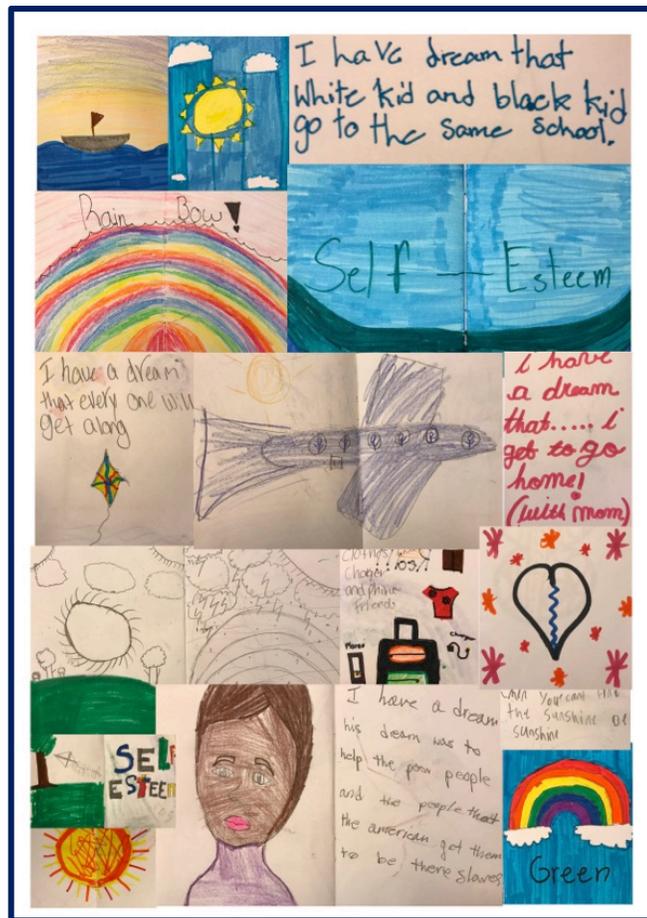


Figure 4.30. Students’ sketchbook entries. The above image is a collage of varying students sketchbook pages, addressing *I Am Me* unit sketchbook prompts.

- *“No, I really don’t see that sort of thing. Everyone seems very respectful of each other.”*
The teacher shared that she did not notice any racial, ethnic, or cultural division in her classroom. However, students’ sketchbook entries for the curriculum unit clearly mention racial concerns.
- *“It did. Everybody struggles with self-esteem. It was really good that you brought it in and we don’t always feel good about ourselves, even as an adult, life isn’t always easy.”*

Oh yeah, I've had a lot of stress in my life, in the last couple months, last couple years, it's kind of good to remember you are more than just a teacher, you are a person."

When the teacher was asked if the unit topic of self-esteem affected her as she listened to this researcher leading the opening discussion each week, she indicated that it helped her a great deal as her own life had been very difficult in recent months, even years.

- *"Not at all! I felt unprepared, I was failing, I had an amazing principal that helped."*

When asked if she felt prepared to deal with the emotional messages students put in their art making, she indicated that she was in no way prepared for some of the stories children tell in their art projects.

- *"The painting!"*

When the art teacher was asked what she viewed as the biggest weakness of the unit, she said without hesitation that the painting was difficult. She felt the students did not know how to paint and also were very messy in her art classroom when they painted. She doesn't typically paint with sixth graders since she only has them in class for nine weeks of the school year.

Triangulation of Data

In this *I Am Me* study, this researcher heeded Stake's (1995) caution that qualitative researchers that conduct case study need to plan protocol to report data which does not depend on intuition or good intentions for analysis. The protocols Stake refers to are the triangulation of data in order to report trustworthy data. Triangulation of data generated by this study worked to ensure continuity and consistency in findings across all of the five storyboard data points and was enhanced by this researcher's field notes, pre and post interview with the school art teacher, and parents' comments on the biography card. By deriving conclusions from multiple sources of data on the storyboard—including the first four phases of the storyboard art making and first four artist statements, and not just gathering qualitative data from the final storyboards and final artist statements (Yin, 2009)—this study had more robust and trustworthy data to analyze self-esteem in and through art making and art unit activities. By analyzing the data from three zones of communication—the visual, the verbal, and the vervisual—a variety of credible data was extracted from the curriculum unit and planned data points, providing greater understanding of the

meaning making of student participants. The triangulation of data in this study provided for more credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable analysis (Krefting, 1990; Olivia, 2018; Yin, 2013).

Kim (2016) reported that visual data generated by participants, such as the art projects made by students in this study, is growing in importance as a data source in social and human science research. Although this researcher attempted to analyze all data with integrity and ethics, analyzing data ran the risk of being highly affected by this researcher's professional experiences in art education and as a school art teacher for more than two decades, so data triangulation was highly important in this study. Triangulation uses multiple methods to examine the same topic, strengthening a study by providing differing perspectives to develop a deeper understanding of the study's focus (Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 1983). Multiple data sources, as previously mentioned, provided for greater integrity in determining results. Planned data triangulation was by:

- The visual communication: Since this was an art focused study, the art making was an important aspect of reporting findings. Creative and aesthetic choices students made happened both during the actual art making and the decisions they made that informed their artistic choices (Eisner, 2002). Yet, the visual communication would not have been completely reliable or usable in some cases without the verbal communication which explained students' artistic decisions, so essentially the verbal and visual communication either confirmed or did not confirm the researcher's assumptions or findings. Visual communication was the color students chose for the storyboard background, their three geometric designs that symbolized their past, present, and future, and then the overall composition of their final storyboard. The artists' written statements, in which they

answered questions and wrote of reasons for making the artistic choices on the storyboard visual phases, provided vervisual analysis where the visual and the verbal communication were used together for the final analysis.

- The verbal communication: The verbal communication planned for this study was an important aspect of triangulation. While the study was intentionally planned to allow student participants to explain their art making and creative choices through written artist statements—something common and important in art education—this researcher knew this would allow greater understandings to develop in the case study’s analysis. As the study commenced, it became very apparent that the students’ verbal communication—their written or spoken artist statements— was needed and of vital importance in fully understanding the artistic choices and decisions that students made. Additionally, on the five words representing love, life, and laughter (Herrera, 2016), it was important to read or know the meaning of words that students shared. As mentioned in the visual communication section above, this vervisual communication was what gave the reporting of findings more credibility in this study.
- Peer debriefing: Dr. Barbara Hughes of San José State University’s Department of Art and Art History and the Bay Area California Arts Project provided peer debriefing for this research. Dr. Hughes is an expert with credentials in the field of art education, an active National Art Education Association (NAEA) member, and was the 2019 NAEA California Art Educator of the Year. Dr. Hughes reviewed the findings of the study for relevancy, bias, and appropriate understandings in terms of art education and relevance, as well as integrity of analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Yin, 2018). Dr. Hughes’ peer debriefing brought a national perspective regarding art education, credentials in the field

of art education, and experience as a curriculum developer to this study. Dr. Hughes felt the data was correctly reported and supported this researcher's reporting of findings. Dr. Hughes also suggested a future study that more fully explored the efforts of special needs students, such as the five special needs students in Class #2, and their participation in the unit on self-esteem and storyboard making. She reported the study was a "very interesting project and powerful findings" (personal communication, April 2, 2019). She thought the unit had great potential to create classroom community and particularly liked how the findings reported the efforts of the six individual students throughout the data. She felt that following these six students progress throughout the study's data points was highly informative, interesting, and lent credibility and visualization to the findings.

Emerging Themes Based on Research Questions

The EASEA categories revealed themes which emerged as the findings were reanalyzed and explored in accord with other data sources. In the following section, the case study of the curriculum is analyzed by stating emerging themes for all three questions—the main question regarding self-esteem, the first sub-question regarding an intercultural community within the classroom, and the second sub-question regarding meaningful learning in the art classroom. While the main question speaks to the case study, which was the curriculum unit, the sub-questions address the instrumental nature of this case study and address ways in which the curriculum can be used for the larger purpose of developing an intercultural community through the art classroom experience regarding the curriculum unit and providing meaningful learning, above and beyond art content in the art classroom. Emerging themes from data analysis are summarized below and will be expanded in chapter five:

Research Question #1. In what ways do sixth graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project?

Theme 1. Students told recognizable visual stories that depicted components of self-esteem. Many students told recognizable stories of the EASEA categories of self-esteem through the various visual components of the storyboards in which no verbal description was needed to understand the visibility of self-esteem. Many students depicted important aspects of their lives in their geometric designs that represented their past, present, or future. Some students made visual creative choices in how they embellished their word art for the storyboards with stick figures or other simple drawings such as hearts. A significant development of the research, although this research did not set out to study trauma, was noticing that all ten of the trauma reflecting comments that students wrote first started out as visual depictions or drawings of the trauma.

Theme 2. Students told understandable verbal stories that revealed components of self-esteem. Many students wrote written descriptions on artists' statements of meaningful aspects of their life, things they enjoyed doing, people that they loved or spent time with, and memories. Students also frequently wrote about emotions or emotional thoughts or feelings they had towards themselves, others, or a life event. As an example, while a student had drawn symbols of three musical instruments for her geometric design suggesting an interest in music, upon reading her artist statement it was learned that music was her escape from a difficult life.

Theme 3. Students told stories in implicit or explicit ways in which the visual artifact and the verbal artist statement were both needed to understand the story of revealed self-esteem. Students both drew and wrote in obvious ways about life experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Three students drew school images and wrote of three different teachers

that had been a positive impact on their lives. Many students drew images that reminded them of playing when they were a child and then later wrote of them—of playing princesses, their favorite dog or cat, or a friend from when they were much younger, yet it took their artists’ statements to fully understand the meaning of simple drawings of symbols. For example, a cone was drawn to represent a princess hat, yet this researcher would not have been able to determine the princess aspect from the drawing. Some students shared limited information about their geometric design drawings, only sharing part of the story behind the drawing. One student, who drew three different square houses for his past, present, and future, drew about living in a foster home, living in an old and small house now, and hoping for a better house in the future. He wrote that he lived in foster care and that he “loved his family,” but he revealed no other information. His geometric drawings of various houses in his past, present, and future would not have revealed his foster care and life story if he had not written about it later on his final artist statement. Other students drew various images representing their grandparents and later wrote on artists’ statements that they liked to go to their grandparent’s house—chips and salsa were drawn and written about and driving trucks or baking. One boy wrote about his dad quite often or wrote the word dad frequently. Later on, his final artist statement revealed that he remembered when his dad “*loved them*”—in past tense. Other students drew very detailed drawings with thought bubbles that told many details of the stories they were drawing.

Theme 4. Students actually revealed more of themselves because of the feeling of anonymity they had with their artwork. Many students either stated or wrote that they liked being able to communicate their stories without others knowing what story they were telling. Students reported this anonymity gave them more freedom to share the stories they wanted to share because they controlled how much of the story was revealed. Stories that were not shared

completely may have been either happy or difficult stories. Some students freely shared stories, while others shared only parts of the personal story they wanted to convey. One student said the best part of the storyboard project was no one knew what she was really saying on her storyboard. For all of the known stories from the visual and verbal representation, there were sure to have been many stories that were only covertly shared.

Research Sub-Question #2. How can an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom?

Theme 1. Students were given a platform for sharing aspects of their culture and biographies of life, if they so chose, with their table groups and with the whole class. While teaching content and curriculum in art education can often be focused on educational state standards, thematic planning, and specific art content, the *I Am Me* curriculum unit and the storyboard art project gave students an opportunity to share aspects of their life through their artwork and artist statements, and also gave students an opportunity to share varying aspects of their lives with the class. Students had complete freedom to share cultural aspects of their lives, but were not led into doing so. One example was a Latino student who was an American citizen, but who was born in Japan and lived on a United States military base for several years, telling his classmates for the first time of his international birth and life through his storyboard. Other students in the class did not know he had been born in a country overseas and as a result of this art project the student shared more details about his life with the class. Another student shared how much she loved to bake with her grandmother and learn old family recipes from Mexico. Several boys wrote about or drew images representing their grandmothers' Mexican food. The curriculum gave students an opportunity to share information semi-publicly or publicly in class that they may not otherwise have had opportunity to share.

Theme 2. Students learned of commonalities they had with other students.

Throughout the various phases of the storyboard project, students learned of similarities and commonalities they had with other students while they worked at their table groups. Students were heard discussing words they chose for the word choice phase. As an example, a student who has immigrated from Africa, who had been very quiet up until this point and who tended to keep his storyboard somewhat hidden from view while he worked on it, was heard explaining that a drawing he was making of stick figure people singing was an event he remembered from living in Africa. He also shared the thought of this event when he made his bird mask, which was one of the other five art projects for the curriculum unit. A girl at his table spoke to him of her dance recital. Information was exchanged. While the curriculum gave these two students an opportunity to share celebratory aspects of their former lives, the curriculum also gave them a way to see similarities in their lives.

Theme 3. Students had a compassionate response to classmates' stories or the emotions that telling stories evoked. During the various weeks of the storyboard project work, many students shared intimate details of their cultures and biographies with each other. Some shared subtle details and others felt comfortable opening up and sharing many aspects of their lives—whether positive or negative aspects. As an example, one girl shared a great deal of information in her geometric design about a difficult experience she had when she was several years younger. She wanted to tell the story, yet it caused an emotional reaction in her and other students of varying ethnicities nearby consoled her, when prior to this there had not been much interaction between these students. Varying and unique aspects of her life had been very difficult for her. The students who consoled her did not draw attention to what she was sharing or repeat details so that they could be heard by others in the room. Instead, they simply spoke to

her more, smiled at her, and complimented her work saying “*good job.*” Another example was a Latino girl who wanted to share some very difficult circumstances about her father being in jail for life, yet she remained guarded in what she shared but communicated how difficult his absence was in her life. While the curriculum gave these bereaved students a way to share their feelings through their art making, it also gave students a way to interact with each other in an intercultural way and through social emotional experience as they experienced more personal ways of interacting with each other.

Research Sub-Question #3. How can curriculum such as the *I Am Me* curriculum produce relevant, meaningful 21st century learning that goes above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?

Theme 1. The therapeutic aspect of art making gave students a platform to share personal details. Throughout the unit, students shared life issues, family challenges, societal problems, successes, and enjoyable aspects of life with each other. The phases of the storyboard project gave students an opportunity to tell their stories, yet only the stories they wanted to tell. As previously stated, many students chose to share difficult things they dealt with in life and an obvious emotional release also occurred. In some cases, a great transformation happened in the students’ overall demeanor after sharing both visual and verbal aspects of their story. Other unit art projects, such as the arpillera project, gave students an opportunity to share important places from their lives, places that many of the students missed. In the images below, one student shared the village where he used to live in Africa. Another student shared a waterfall and a beautiful jungle where she had lived in Mexico. The curriculum unit gave students a way to make meaning of their lives outside of the classroom, which according to Gay (2018) and Herrera (2016) is of vital importance.



Figure 4.31. Arpillera art project. The *I Am Me* curriculum unit’s arpillera project gave students an opportunity to share about a special place on the earth to them.

Theme 2. This curriculum unit taught students content knowledge, a way to cognitively and creatively process the content, how to make collaborative decisions, and a way to experience growth through the process. The *I Am Me* curriculum unit gave students a platform and a space in time in which to talk to each other and share personal aspects of their life with each other as they worked on the unit’s six art projects. Students tended to not interact very personally with each other as the unit began, but by sharing their story each week on the storyboard projects, students began to interact with each other in more personal ways. As students worked on their bird masks—the unit’s first art project—students had to move around the room to various stations, work together, make quick creative choices, and focus on the skill of assemblage. They learned more about each other as they worked collaboratively together to understand the skill of putting the masks together and ways to make their simple bird masks have a much higher level of creativity. The curriculum unit, although an art unit, taught students much more than art.



Figure 4.32. Bird mask art project. Colorful bird masks were made as a metaphor for buoyancy.

Theme 3. This curriculum unit successfully taught the important human characteristic of self-esteem through the vehicle of art. Students used higher level thinking to make connections between the content of self-esteem, positivity, and buoyancy and their lives. Students were highly engaged and also listened intently each week in the opening discussion as the topic of self-esteem was addressed and discussed. Students expressed great interest in learning what self-esteem was, how to improve their self-esteem, and how to use self-esteem for their success, based on the questions students asked in the opening session each week. Students learned that one does not have to have a problem-free life to have self-esteem. The act of first depicting a story with artistic symbolism helped students develop ideas and thought, and then led to sharing deeper meaning through their creative choices, art making, and verbal explanations. Another project of the curriculum unit, the Nigerian-inspired hot air balloon was used as a metaphor to teach students about self-esteem by equating it with positivity and buoyancy—by focusing on aspects of life that are uplifting and that make us feel good or are positive influences. The metaphor of buoyancy, spread all throughout the curriculum unit, helped the unit have much larger pedagogical content and effect than only teaching art media and technique and used metaphor to teach the content of the curriculum.



Figure 4.33. Nigerian-inspired hot air balloon art project. Hot air balloons were made as a metaphor for focusing on things that lift people up in life.

Theme 4. The curriculum addressed some of the social emotional needs of students.

Schools curriculum can sometimes focus more on the content and less on students' biopsychosocial needs (Herrera, 2016). It is difficult for a student to do the daily art project or complete the daily math lesson if they are burdened by life and life situations. By the curriculum's focus on the human characteristic of self-esteem and relating it to tangible objects and intangible emotions, students learned more than art during their art making. They learned more personal life skills that would be of use to them as they grew and developed through adolescence and into adulthood. One of the curriculum unit's art projects, the woven paper sun, had students think about how each student is composed of many traits, all woven together, and how having a positive outlook in life and a bright and sunny disposition could help them have stronger life traits woven together, creating a resilience and fortitude for being successful as a student and in life. A book was read to both classes about a very unique fish. The book conveyed the message that students are each unique. The fish painted stones inspired by the book gave students time to think about and process the story while they painted fish. The curriculum unit used the vehicle of art to teach social emotional learning through art education.



Figure 4.34. Sun paper weaving and painted fish rock projects. Sun paper weavings and fish painted rocks reminded students to focus on buoyancy and things that lift them up in life.

Conclusion

In this chapter, this researcher described the demographics of participants and presented the data from the study, addressing the research questions. A meta-analysis of self-esteem framework was summarized in regard to the data analysis. Storyboard data was reported. Emerging themes related to the research questions were presented. This complex study was not a finely tuned focus on one essential central issue, but rather was a metasynthesis of several topics with several art projects, all working as a symphonic discovery of how visual, verbal and

vervisual decisions work together to produce artwork with broader, more known meaning, and how the art curriculum can contribute to the intercultural community within the classroom and expand to the school environment. While the single-case case study was the curriculum, the instrumental case study nature of this case reported data that can address the larger purpose of art education in the 21st century. In the next chapter, conclusions and discussions will be presented and recommendations for future teaching and future research will be suggested.

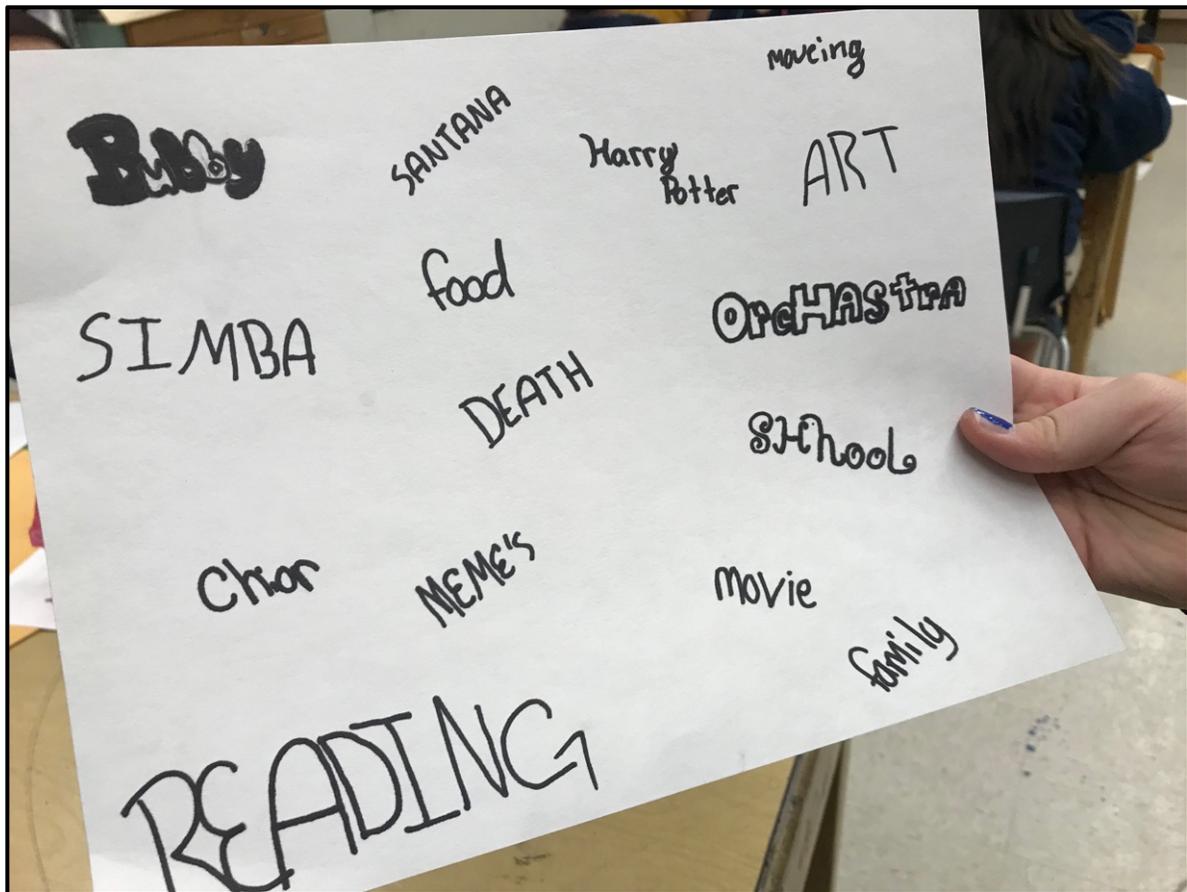


Figure 4.35. Word art for storyboard. The words students chose to convey had meaning to them—telling a story they wanted to tell through their art making. When the verbal communication of the words was combined with the visual aspect of art making, the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project became a deeper piece of art, carrying a powerful message that the artist wanted to tell.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions, Discussions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The 21st century brings the most significant change for the human being since they first walked the earth (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). From smoke signals to the homing pigeon and from the telegraph to the yottabyte, mankind has been ingeniously searching for ways to communicate since the beginning of time. This quest, led by creative thinkers and brilliant inventors, was driven by a need to understand others. No matter how simple or complex the invention, the need to communicate drove people to seek ways in which to do so. Regardless of what the found mechanism was, people needed a way to communicate visually—so they could see and understand the intended message without a common language, and they needed a way to verbalize the communication—so they could read or process the message and so they could hear it. From the beginning of time, humans being have used the arts for communication, so much so that in modern times, the arts are called humanities. The unique attributes of verbal, visual, and vervisual—a combination of the verbal and visual—communication allows mankind to gain understandings of that which they seek to solve.

21st century learning continues the ever-present quest for communication. Education in the era of the yottabyte—which is one septillion bytes in the computer world—requires students to think critically, communicate, collaborate, and incorporate creative thought into their academic work and school efforts (Berkowicz & Myers, 2015) because no matter how sophisticated our technological abilities become, at the core, human beings still have an intrinsic need to communicate with each other—to know and be known. The challenge for educators becomes how to use their abilities to communicate to effectively guide the learning. No matter how common the metallic and plastic devices of 21st century life become, they will always be not

only invented, but also monitored and maintained, by flesh and blood human beings—human beings with emotion, who can celebrate and commiserate within the same 60-seconds of time. Students bring these emotions to school—emotions that are affected by the joys in their lives and the anxiety or the traumas they encounter. According to Torres (2019), “educators have the unique responsibility of delivering content as well as helping students to move in the direction of personal growth and development” (n.p.). Educators, and therefore the curriculum they teach, have the unique responsibility to help their students learn identified content and grow as human beings.

The *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* curriculum written for this instrumental, single case study research and its six art projects, including the more intensified focus on the *I Am Me Storyboard* art project, provided a means through art education to direct student learning toward biopsychosocial growth and development in the area of self-esteem and positivity, using the word buoyancy as a metaphor for learning these concepts. Simply stated, the art curriculum, delivered and guided by the teacher, embraced and modified by the students, in and through art, becomes a tool of inquiry or higher-level learning in art education. The curriculum content is an intervention that students intercept and then they apply that knowledge to their own spectrum on the learning scale and at their own point of need. As this research has proven, relevant art curriculum begins a collaboration in which students and teachers partner to both learn the subject’s content and explore personal growth. Day and Hurwitz (2012) and Leavy (2015) report three ways of knowing and communicating—verbal, visual and the verbal/visual (labeled vervisual by this researcher)—are critical to not only art and art making, as well as to the knowledge conveyed in the physical learning spaces and places of art education, but also to students’ lives.

This chapter provides fruitful meaning that grew out of verbal, visual, and vervisual human communication in this study and also what was learned and observed from the evidence provided by the curriculum, the participants, and the eight data points. The exhibition of self-esteem was reported in Chapter 4 using the early adolescent self-esteem analysis of DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, and Lease (1996)—called EASEA by this researcher— as a means of gathering evidence, additional emerging categories were reported, and this chapter builds upon that data. This chapter provides discussion and conclusions of the findings based on the research questions. In addition, this chapter presents implications for further research and teaching practice.

Discussions and Conclusions Based on Findings

In this section, a discussion of the curriculum unit—the case study—and also the research question and sub-questions will provide concluding analysis of the *I Am Me* study based upon evidence presented in Chapter 4.

***I Am Me* Curriculum Unit Discussion and Conclusion**

As the *I Am Me* curriculum unit written for this study progressed from the first day onward, this researcher found that assumptions made while developing the curriculum applied successfully to the teaching of the concept of self-esteem. Students clearly understood the metaphor of buoyancy and the progression of tangible items or things that float, fly, or are lifted up—birds, balloons, planets, fish, airplanes— to intangible emotions or characteristics such as self-esteem that from a human behavior or emotive way lift oneself up as a human being. Each week the lesson discussion which covered the daily topic, the essential question, and an aspect of self-esteem, as well as a review from previous weeks, was met with a high level of engagement in the

art classroom. Students in both classes beginning week three were completely quiet as they listened intently to the opening and participated in the opening discussion. As students engaged with the weekly lessons, their participation clearly indicated that they were both interested in the topic of self-esteem and generally seemed to be hearing new information.

The five weekly art projects of bird masks, arpilleras paper collages, hot air balloon paintings and collages, sun painted paper weavings and collages, and the painted fish rocks each helped teach a concept of self-esteem and build the learning towards a greater meaning of self-esteem. The storyboard art project, as in the pilot study and various other pilots with university students and art teachers, provided greater interest and impact than this researcher initially had planned. The personal nature of the storyboard in which a student or person investigates themselves and their thoughts about themselves and their lives deeply motivates the artist in almost all cases, to a surprising level of participation, thought, and engagement. As the curriculum unit progressed from week five to week six, it became apparent that peer mentoring was happening in the classroom during the opening discussion and that students were helping to both teach the developing concept of self-esteem and answering each other's questions with more scholarly discourse that was not the norm during other parts of class when students tended to exhibit normative middle school emotion and socialization.

Students learned what self-esteem was, how to gain or have self-esteem, and how to use self-esteem in their lives for their own success in school and life. Additionally, the school art teacher was highly affected physically and psychologically by the lessons on self-esteem and a transformation was seen in her opinion of social emotional learning curriculum, as evidenced by her pre and post interview results in chapter four. This researcher also saw a transformation in her own understandings of self-esteem, especially in the ability of a teacher to be able to discern

whether or not a student has self-esteem using EASEA categories as evidence. Professional judgements as to whether or not a student has self-esteem can be biased and not evidence based, yet using an indicator such as EASEA helps determine more accurate results. According to this research, varying levels of emotion in the classroom and behavior did not always correlate with EASEA designations given to students. Some students with less desirable classroom behavior had EASEA scores in all five categories. This researcher was proven wrong on several occasions when she made a qualitative judgement based on field note classroom environmental observations that certain students most likely did not have self-esteem during week one and week two, only to find out beginning week three that the students did have self-esteem based on the EASEA evidence. Self-esteem is a multi-layered, multi-faceted, and obvious meta-synthesis of the human being.

The evidence was much more complex than what this researcher initially expected and as each session transpired, the way in which self-esteem was viewed and processed by each individual student was transformed. In fact, after the first session/lesson one this researcher thought, based on the norms of middle school behavior that had been present on the first day and because middle school students are not easily drawn into a discussion that is longer than one-word iterations and answers, it was entirely possible that this research would literally provide nothing useful. While this researcher and most likely the co-teacher were having these thoughts about the potential effectiveness of this study, the brilliance of well-written, well-designed art curriculum joined the research effort and proved its invaluable usefulness. The conclusion of both the researcher and art teacher who both co-taught this unit was that this curriculum unit produced meaningful learning, helped create an intercultural classroom, and gave a method to teach self-esteem to students and produce artifacts that confirm the gain of knowledge.

The final in-class art gallery show was a highlight of the curriculum unit. All six of each student's art projects were on display at their table and all students in the class had opportunity to move about the art classroom and view all art projects completed during the *I Am Me* Unit. Students were also given an opportunity to speak to the class about their art project(s). While this researcher did not expect many of these middle school students to speak to the class about their projects, it was actually the opposite. Many students took turns standing up and proudly showing their storyboards, although most were timid about their artwork with photos showing at the beginning of class on this day, and told of the most important aspects of their storyboard to the class. Students who shared were visibly and genuinely proud of their achievement, many commenting on how hard it was to share something personal even though they wanted to do so, or that this would be a treasured possession. One girl stated that she thought she *“had self-esteem before this but now she knows what it is better and she knows she can do better in school because she knows.”* Another boy proudly told of his family, how much they mean to him, and mentioned that *“sometimes problems make you forget about the good stuff. I liked this because it made me think about the good stuff.”*

Researcher's realization regarding assessment of self-esteem in students.

Additionally, this researcher knew from the outset of this study that people can go through difficult experiences in life, write or speak about them, and still have self-esteem. What surprised this researcher and was a discovery of the research was that an experienced teacher—such as the researcher— can make a knowledgeable judgement about the behaviors, or lack of behaviors, that a student exhibits and believe a student probably does not have self-esteem, only to find out they do. This case study provided important insight into teaching and learning.

Research Question #1. In what ways do 6th graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a storyboard project?

Conclusion A. Students expressed self-esteem using visual communication. Art is a way of knowing (Allen, 1995; Klein, 2003). Eisner's (1988a, 1998b, 2002) art education theory states that people have the ability to use creativity and imagination to share private thoughts in public ways. Eisner's theory also states that in and through the arts, children are able to communicate (1988a, 1998b, 2002). Davis (2008) explains the four levels that communicate culture as individual cultures, community cultures, cultures of ethnicity, and the culture of being a human being. Dewey (1938) argues that educators need to understand the nature of students' human experience. In this study, the theories of Allen, Klein, Eisner, Davis, Dewey, and other scholars were built upon to understand the use and conveyance of students' visual communication. Arts Based Research (ABR) provided a lens to view students' unique visual communications in this study (Holm, Sahlstrom, & Zilliacus, 2017; Leavy, 2018; McNiff, 2017). According to Leavy, Arts Based Research provides several key truths to researchers and evidence of these truths existed in this study. Those truths were that art brings out knowledge in self and others, values preverbal ways of knowing, and includes multiple ways of knowing, such as sensory, kinesthetic, and imaginary (Leavy, 2018). In this study, students communicated with visual expression—drawing, painting, art making— as they first began building their own stories for their storyboards.

One way that students expressed self-esteem in their storyboard project was through visual illustration of thought or symbolism, even metaphor. The *I Am Me* curriculum was designed so that students' knowledge of self-esteem would grow through each of the eight sessions of this study. In this research, one significant way that students' exhibited self-esteem in the storyboard project was as visual drawings in the geometric design phase. Symbols, such

as those drawn by students in this study, were in many cases profound expression of human nature (Kerlavage, 1998). In this geometric design phase, students were asked to draw three simple symbols that represented their past, present, and future. Mark making is a way to communicate visually and these geometric or symbolic drawings did exactly that (Kerlavage, 1998).

In the geometric phase, many students drew tangible items that were a part of their life—dance shoes, basketball goals, a chicken symbolizing a rancho, and musical notes are examples. Some students drew symbols that conveyed biopsychosocial emotion such as confusion or unsureness by drawing question marks or arrows going in every direction. Students used purposeful drawing of symbols to convey meaning and the students spoke through the images they created. In this study, students’ simple drawings of violins, soccer balls, wavy lines, and stick figures with guns conveyed the intended meaning students wanted to share as part of their individual stories.

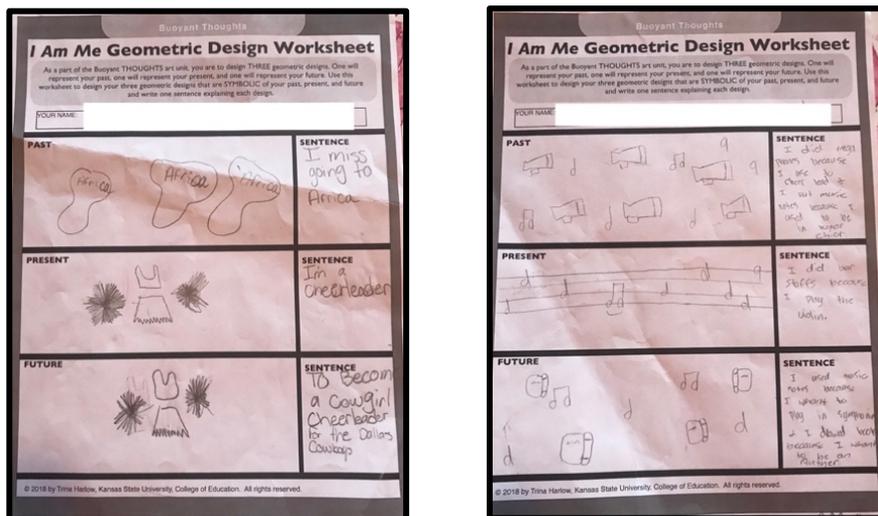


Figure 5.1. Geometric design worksheet exhibiting cheerleading. The geometric design worksheet on the left exhibited an interest in cheerleading and the one on the right expressed interest in music, both were labeled as A=Activities in the EASEA category.

The geometric design phase gave 6th-grade students opportunity to share deep thoughts and emotions. Day and Hurwitz (2012) state that the physical, mental, and social changes of adolescents affect their use of symbolism. Although this study was not planned to study severe anxiety or trauma, a significant finding of this study was that all ten trauma reflecting messages were first conveyed as simple line drawings—visual communication—in the geometric design phase of the storyboard project. Then, after these trauma reflecting drawings had been done, students took the next step to write about them using written communication. The traumatic experiences were first drawn; then these experiences were written about to extend the meaning of what the student had drawn. One boy, M7, drew a very difficult and horrific experience he had in an African country involving a gun altercation. M7's progression from the beginning of the unit to the end is the most obvious confirmation from this study that curriculum such as *I Am Me* has a role in middle school art programs in assisting students with problems they have experienced. Through the implementation of the curriculum and also the school's intervention, M7 exhibited tremendous growth as a student during the ten weeks of the curriculum unit's implementation. Another girl, F5, drew images that represented being taken away from her parents, her dad being in jail, an image of her with suitcase packed at her foster home ready to go back to her real home with her biological parents, and her hope that her Nana would welcome the girl to come live with her in the future.

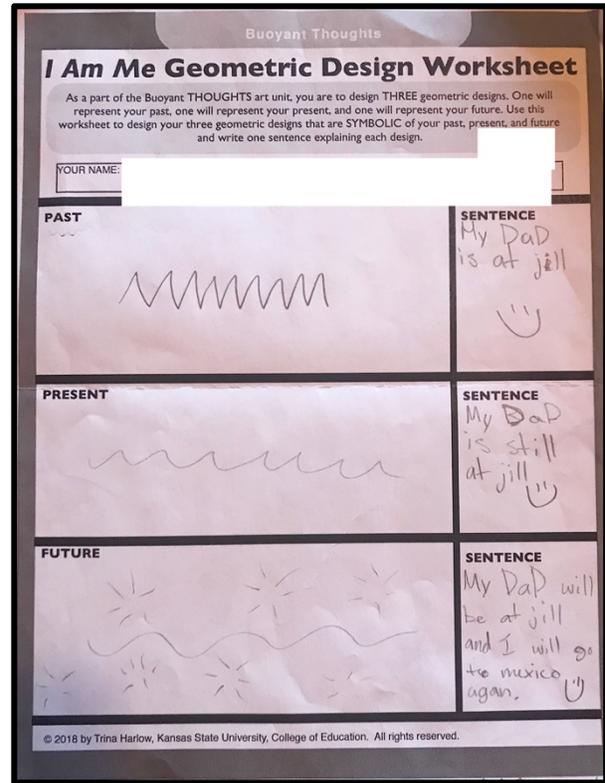
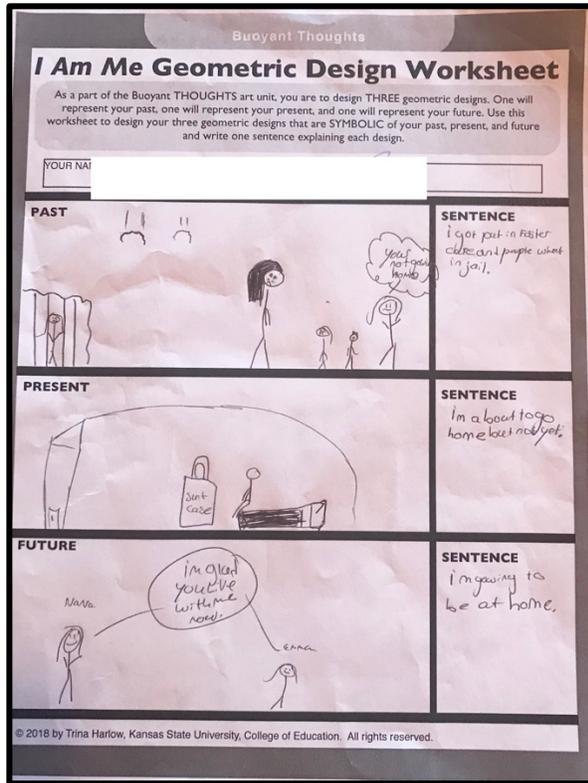


Figure 5.2. Traumatic experiences depicted on geometric design worksheet. The image on the left shows the geometric drawings of a F5, depicting her feelings about being taken away from her parents and placed in foster care; at least one parent is now in jail. The image on the right is F9's symbolism for her dad being in jail during her past, present, and future.

Kerlavage (1998) states that students of this age want to develop their own sense of rightness and not be told what to draw. As the *I Am Me* curriculum was planned, students in this study were given the freedom to draw what they wanted—they were not given prompts, such as draw your first house as a symbol, or draw your favorite activity. Many students in this study commented on liking the freedom to draw exactly what they wanted. Others commented on liking that their drawing was private if they wanted it to be, meaning that in some cases only the artist knew the meaning of the symbolism. It is possible that students actually revealed more of themselves than they otherwise would have because of the feeling of anonymity they had with their artwork. It is possible that this was a catalyst to students then explaining even more about their drawing in the written phase. Some students freely shared stories, while others shared only

parts of the personal stories. One student said the best part of the storyboard project was no one knew what she was really saying. For all of the known stories from the visual representations of story, there were surely many stories that were only covertly shared or known only by the artist.

While there were some students who did not draw their geometric design symbols in that portion of the study, and some were seen staring indecisively into the distance as they thought about what to draw, most students seemed comfortable drawing symbols that conveyed meaning. Research shows it can be difficult to get adolescents to share or convey the meaning of their abstract mark making (Day & Hurwitz, 2012; Kerlavage, 2014). Symbolism is complicated and requires students to think in metaphor. An observation of this researcher regarding students' symbolism, however, was that a soccer ball might not have been drawn because the student played soccer; perhaps the soccer ball was drawn because the student had always wanted to play soccer and had never been able to do so. Students geometric designs communicated a variety of story—some rich on meaning and some that were not explained, stories of both of joy and celebration and of worry and fear—and did give evidence of self-esteem in all five of the EASEA categories.

The final storyboard phase also provided visual evidence of self-esteem. When the storyboards were completely assembled and all project components were seen together in final form, students' color choice, geometric design, photo pose, and word choice all worked together to tell a personalized story. One profound observation regarding the storyboards aesthetic appearance was it seemed as if students (a) motion of painted strokes, (b) movement of linear geometric design painting, and (c) rhythm of their handwriting on their fifteen words all blended together symphonically with a tempo, or pattern, or rhythm that created a language of movement on the canvas board background. Rather than a particular student's various individual elements

clashing with each other on the boards, instead they worked in tandem—almost as if it became a unique language owned only by the artist. This was a surprising discovery of this research and it was an observation the researcher made while examining the completed storyboards. Usually in student art making, there are some completed artworks that look outstanding and some that don't turn out well at all, however in the storyboard project, it was really surprising that they all had a nice, aesthetic quality. While making this observation of how well the projects turned out, the researcher noticed a flow or rhythm with each one. This aesthetic quality of each storyboard tends to align with various independent aspects of important stage theory research done in art education (Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, & Jozefowicz, 1997; Eccles & Midgley, 1989, Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Kerlavage, 1998; Case, 1985; Fischer, 1987; Gardner, 1983, 1990). The observation of this symphonic blending of the various storyboard stages into one final art project that seemed to portray an individual, visual rhythm for each student seemed to be a new discovery of this research.



Figure 5.3. EASEA reflected on storyboards. F17's storyboard, left, contains several of the EASEA categories. This storyboard tells a story of family and friends, togetherness, and enjoying life's activities. M28's storyboard, right, also exhibits EASEA self-esteem categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, and A=Activities. It tells a story of connectedness and purpose.

Conclusion B. Students expressed self-esteem using verbal communication.

In analyzing the self-esteem exhibited by students in this study, prior theory reported in the literature review provided deep analysis and understanding of students' efforts in the *I Am Me* unit. Eisenberg, Damon, and Harter (2006) and Roosa, Ruiz, and Gonzales (2002) defined self-esteem as having a global evaluation of one's own worth, meaning that students' self-esteem does not just come from their opinion of themselves, but is affected by their experiences and lives. Matarasso (1997) stated that students' sense of self-worth and confidence was improved through art making. Hickman (2006) found that peers self-esteem grows when they learn from or assist classmates. Arslan (2014), Griffey (2003), Morin, Maïano, Marsh, Nagengast, and Janosz (2013)) found that the environment of the art classroom can help improve students' self-esteem and positive opinions about themselves. Other studies provided significant argument regarding sixth grade students feelings of connectedness, self-concept, self-worth, and needing a sense of accomplishment or a competence of achievement (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Cowan & Clover, 1991; DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996; Eccles & Roeser, 2009; Morrison, Cosden, O'Farrell, & Campos, 2003; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Witherspoon, Schotland, Way, & Hughes, 2009). According to Day and Hurwitz (2012), the art classroom gives a variety of opportunities and experiences for adolescents to explore their identity and grow their self-esteem (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Some of Wiesner-Groff's (2018) strategies for building students' self-esteem were applied to this study and included using the art classroom in art specific ways to show value to students' individual strengths and abilities, establish achievable goals, offer choices, and show excitement about their progress. While students were being observed for verbal exhibition of self-esteem, the researcher was also providing instruction designed to provide both the knowledge and setting for self-esteem to be manifested.

The *I Am Me* curriculum specifically included several opportunities for verbal communication that could express and exhibit self-esteem. Through the written or spoken artists' statements for each of the five stages of the storyboard project—color choice, geometric design, photo pose, word choice, and final storyboard completion—students could write and share narrative regarding their own stories. Additionally, the geometric design worksheet, which had a place for students to write a sentence about their geometric, symbolic drawings, and the word choice worksheet, which also asked students to write why they chose certain words, provided a place for more verbally elaboration. Students were given opportunities to answer prompts, either visually or verbally, in their unit sketchbooks. Specifically, the artists' statements and worksheets were analyzed for evidence of the five EASEA categories. While many students did not verbally elaborate on their artists' statements, and some did not answer the questions, a significant number of students revealed the purpose of their creative intent or their thoughts and emotions associated with the various project phases of their storyboards. Students wrote simple and short verbal answers or more specific reasons for their artistic phase choices.

The color choice artist statement did not seem to be as useful of data as intended as the actual act of students choosing their background colors did not happen as originally planned, instead less colors were available and time was rushed. While students did provide evidence on their color choice artist statements that was used for data, the development of thought was not as significant in color theory evaluation as it was originally planned to be. Additionally, students had no time to think of a pose for their photo portraits because the classes were very large and time was short, so the photo pose artist statements were not a good data source were not used as data in this study as originally planned. These are the unexpected limitations that can happen when conducting research in a real school classroom.

The artists statements from the geometric design, word choice, and final storyboard phases were highly relevant to this study and exhibited self-esteem in the EASEA categories (DuBois, Felner, Brand, Phillips, & Lease, 1996). The following are some of verbal the comments from the various phases of artists statements, followed by the student identification number, and the EASEA categories exhibited (F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, S=School):

Color choice artist statement.

- *“I chose it [blue] because I was going to make a galaxy because I was going to try to be an astronaut but Im going to try to become a soccer player.”* (M2), B A
- *“I chose red because it is my favorite color.”* (F38), B

Geometric design artist statement.

- *“Musical Notes-When I was a little kid I liked to sing and listen to music. Baseball, soccer ball, basketball-Now I like sports. Happy face, sad face. When I grow up I want to be an actor.”* (F3), A, B
- *“Princesses-I used to like to princesses. Horse-I like horses. Question marks-I don’t know what will happen in the future with me.”* (F40), A, B

Word choice artist statement.

- *“[Smithville]-where I live is dangerous, being careful.”* M5, B
- *“Math-because I’m smart and I like it a lot.”* (M25), A, B, S

Final storyboard artist statement.

- *“it’s very creative, and fun to make. it can show the things that makes your personality. it can bring positivity to people.”* (M3), B

- *“We get to do new things and learn how to use different things. People get to know me better and know what ive been through. Yes, I have self-esteem. I feel like the story board says a lot about you and you have to be brave enough to write everything you’ve been through. I want people to know that I appieate my family because theyre always there for me in my easy/hard times in life.”* (F12), F, B
- *“I think that this art teacher inspired me to give hard work and a lot of thought into this project. And I put my family and my best friend and I loved it. I think I do have self-esteem at least some of it but I do feel like I have self esteem because I wrote tears because sometimes I feel sad and sometimes I want to cry but I do not and I wrote family and friends because that makes me happy. My words that I loved in my story bord are god and family because that is my life and that makes me happy.”* (F13), F, FR, B, S
- *“The most important words are luis my friend and my family and also my crush tristiana.”* (M24), F, FR
- *“A word that is specile to me is family because they have been with me since I was born and they make me smile when I am sad.”* (F25), F, B
- *“It tells about everything about my life and I wrote about love, cool, and some difficult things. 1-colorado 2-teachers 3-cousins 4-sisters.”* (F27), F, A, B, S
- *“I don’t have self-esteem you can see that I put sad El Salvador Usulután laughter crying.”* (F34), A, B
- *“you see self-esteem in my storyboard is my face you see me smile”* (F38), B
- *“I see self-esteem by not being afraid to be proud of my story and words. There are some words that are a little personal but I’m not afraid to tell a story with them. Every word has a story behind it, but my personal favorite is the word bubby. ‘Bubby’ is my*

brother and my brother is my favorite sibling. We are the closest and we do almost everything together. He moved away to florida the first month of school and I think about him almost everyday.” (F41), F, A, B

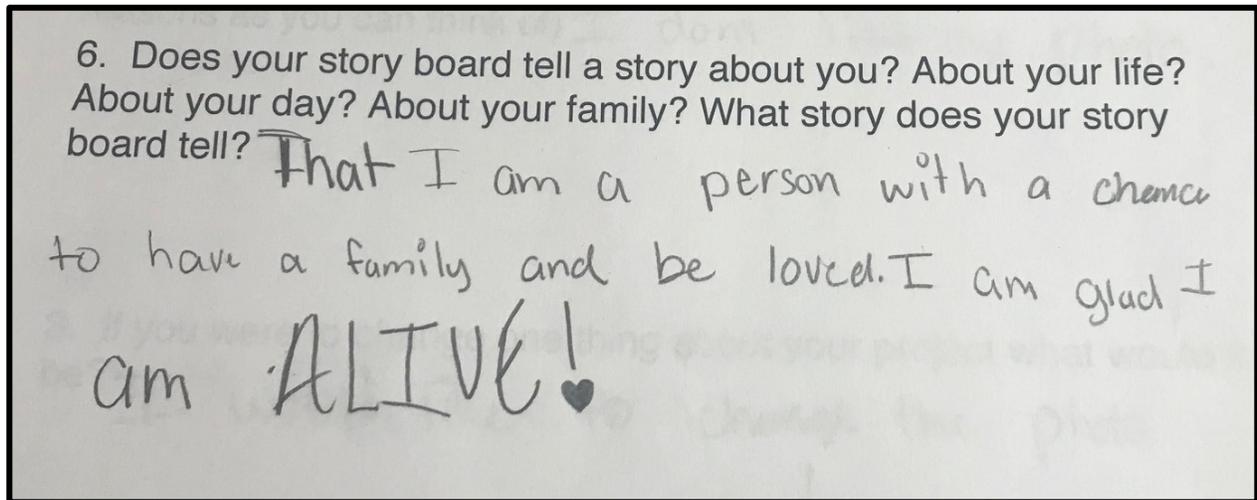


Figure 5.4. F40’s “I am alive!” note. In the above image, F40 states that her storyboard exhibits that she is ALIVE! EASEA categorizing was F=Family and B=Body Image.

According to Day and Hurwitz (2012) and Kerlavage (1998), emotion is either visible or not visible in adolescents school work and is dependent upon their mood, the day of the week, or their willingness to let their emotion be known. Multiple students in this study wrote or spoke of their choice to tell their story or that they were brave and told their story (F12, F41). Students wrote about many people in their lives and activities or objects that made them happy (M24, F25, M25). They also wrote about life’s difficulties and how that made them feel (M5, F13, F34).

Emotions were significantly present in this study. Emotions were categorized in the EASEA category of B=Body Image, which was used for physical or psychological data. Many studies state that emotion is important in the development of adolescents (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Erikson, 1950; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006; Kerlavage, 1998; Kohlberg, 1984). Social development is also vital, yet highly complex in middle school students’ lives and it is constantly in a state of evolving (Kerlavage, 1998). When

this study was ending, one student who earlier had placed the name of friend on her storyboard was no longer friends with the girl so she covered the former friend's name with another piece of paper.

The written artists' statements and the spoken comments of students conveyed the story the artists wanted to tell and revealed evidence of self-esteem. The act of completing an artist statement is by its very nature an act of mindfulness. Mathiesen, Unsworth, and Viafora (2014) stated that mindfulness exercises benefitted both the student and the teacher in a study they completed and that the mindfulness exercises students did had unexpected benefits on student well-being. The Mathiesen, Unsworth and Viafora study also found that mindfulness exercises helped students better deal with stress and anger. A unique outcome of their study was that at-risk youth uniquely benefitted from the skills they gained from mindfulness experiences (Mathiesen, Unsworth & Viafora, 2014). The Smithville USA students were highly diverse, it was a low socio-economic level school, and was ranked in the lowest academic category by the state Department of Education. Students verbal communication showed growth in many of the students, but nearly all learned ways in which to think about self-esteem, positivity, and buoyancy and this new knowledge will be applied to their life as students at Smithville USA Middle School and beyond.

Additionally, the verbal evidence of storytelling was highly visible in this study. Storytelling is a pedagogical tool for art teachers (Olson, 1998). All students told stories that made them laugh, feel loved, and shared aspects of their lives, yet the storyboard project became a tool for Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2016) because the project gave culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students an opportunity to incorporate culture, use words of their first language if they desired, and be noticeably more emotive and relational from a human

perspective. The storyboard project also gave CLD students an opportunity to share from their own cultural or linguistic perspective, which is important according to Herrera.

The curriculum and written activities gave students an opportunity to tell their personal stories, or certain aspects of their story, students learned more about themselves, gained skills that helped them in related areas, and they began to share their stories with others, which created meaning as they connected one aspect of life to another and connected themselves to school and life (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998). Those who tell stories reveal aspects of their identity, such as self-esteem (Olson, 1998). In this study, stories were told through the artists' statements of traveling to Mexico, living in Kansas, riding horses and motorcycles, of buying a car in the United States and not having to walk everywhere they went, of going to Grandma's house, of liking pasta and chips and salsa, of being a soccer player, of playing with brothers and sisters, of learning, of happy occasions, and terrible tragedies. As students communicated their verbal thoughts, meaning grew in their minds and they also shared these meanings with those who sat near them in class.

Conclusion C. Students expressed self-esteem using a third method of communication—vervisual— where the visual and verbal message had to be used in companionship for understandings to develop. The foundational theories of Dewey (1934), Eisner (2002), and ABR (Leavy, 2018; Rolling, 2010) build upon each other, yet their basic precepts also intertwine. Leavy (2018) built upon Eisner (2002) and Eisner built upon Dewey (1934). The theories of all three—ABR, Eisner, and Dewey— inform art education and Arts Based Research by arguing that art has multiple meanings, is exploratory, makes micro to macro connections, raises awareness, provides a setting for marginalized students and all students to communicate with a non-verbal language, welcomes cultural diversity and sensory experience,

blends with the written language, and gives a complete, whole child, holistic experience to students through art. This study built upon existing theory that suggests that art making efforts can have multiple meanings and grow the magnitude of that meaning as an art project progresses through varying phases of development. The existing theory provided in the literature review also confirms that art functions in a third realm of communication where the verbal and visual must sometimes be used together (Eisner, 2002; Leavy, 2018). This researcher calls this third zone of communication the “vervisual” phase and developed this term as a part of this research.

A major vervisual observation of this *I Am Me* research and one that indicates the importance of Arts Based Research as a paradigm of academic, scholarly research was the noted significance of the geometric design phase. This phase—when students drew symbols to represent their past, present, and future—was a catalytic moment for many students, between themselves, their drawings, and their thoughts. Students begin to share their thoughts and feelings more openly. Some of these symbolic drawings would not have had meaning to this researcher without the written statement that accompanied them in which some students shared rich description of their drawings. Some students shared guarded descriptions, yet most shared some kind of meaning. The partnership of the drawn symbol and the written artist statement merged to form a third way to communicate—the vervisual zone of communication—helping the researcher to better understand the student artist’s intent. It was a simple process. The student artist created the artwork. The student artist wrote about the artwork. This two-step process helped (a) others understand the artist’s intent and (b) assisted the artist in developing deeper meaning associated with their own intent as an artist. An example is a series of wavy lines, which could have meant that life was full of uncertainties as it seemed to on some students’

geometric design worksheets, meant that F25 hoped to someday learn how to swim and live at the beach.

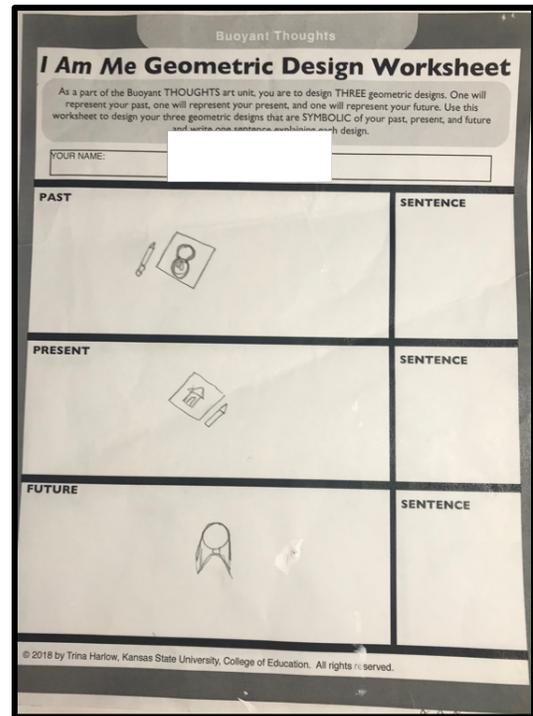
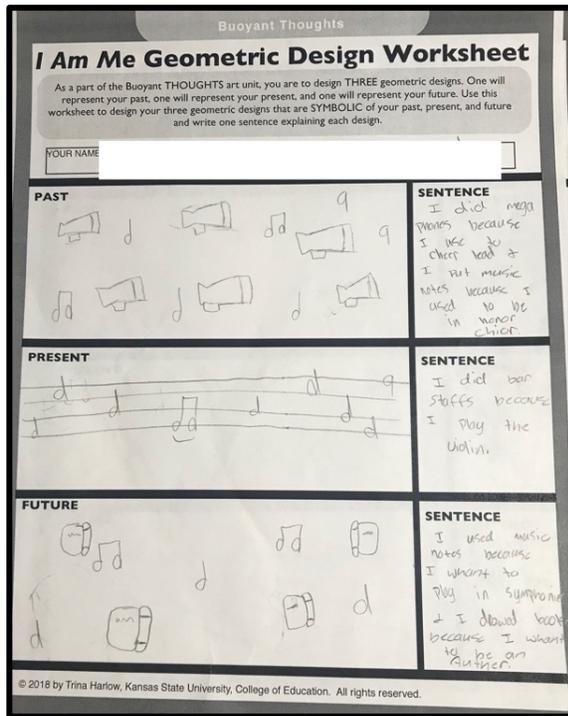


Figure 5.5. Vervisual storyboard communication. The above image on the left functions as vervisual communication. The musical notes only tell a story of music, yet when combined with the written description we learn that F41 was in choir, played the violin, and wants to play in a symphony when she grows up. In the image on the right, F28 drew geometric symbolism, but because she did not write a written description there is only vague ability to recognize what she was drawing and even less ability to fully understand her meaning.

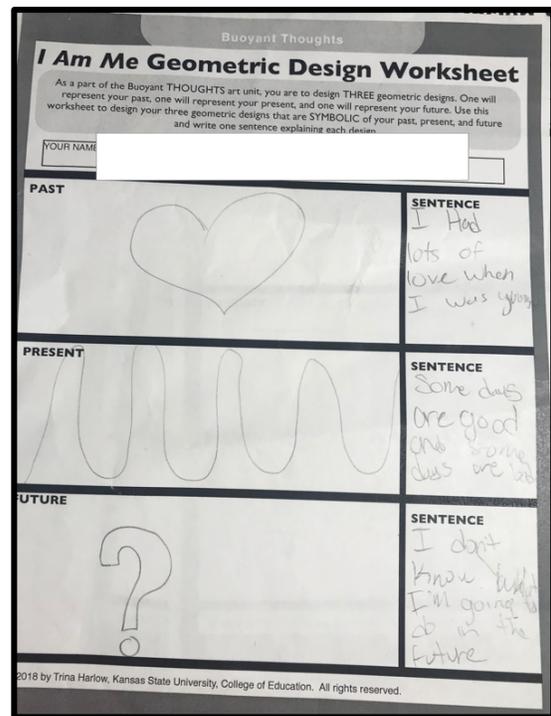
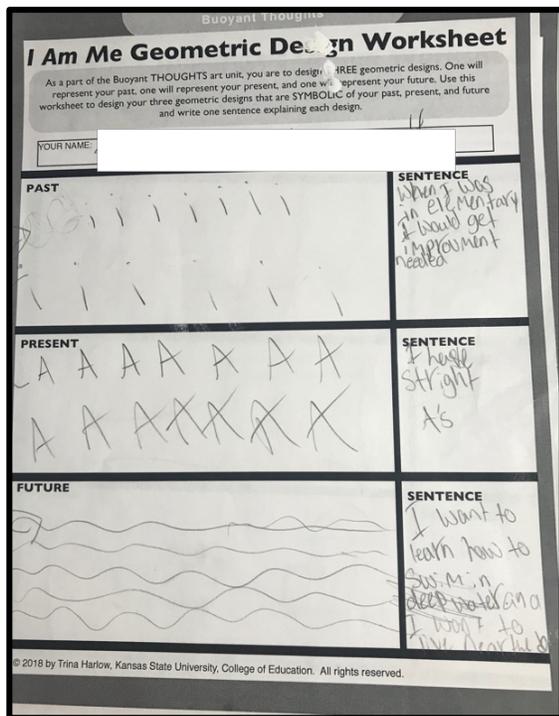


Figure 5.6. Vervisual storyboard communication. In the image on the left and right, wavy lines can be seen. On the left, F25 drew wavy lines because she wants to “learn how to swim in deep water” and “wants to live near the beach.” On the right, F37 drew wavy lines to represent that “some days are good and some days are bad.” The symbol of wavy lines had two different meanings and it took vervisual understanding to realize students’ meaning.

When school biopsychosocial curriculum gives students an opportunity to vervisually tell their personal stories, or certain aspects of their story, students learn more about themselves (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998). Students gain skills that will help them in other areas, share their stories with others, help create meaning as they connect one aspect of life to another and also connect themselves to school and life, and they can help create community within the classroom, elevating the intercultural element of the class (Kerlavage, 1998; Olson, 1998). The storyboard project was much more than aesthetic art to hang on the wall. Each storyboard represented a multi-step process of thought development for each student and portrayed exactly the story that the student wanted to share.

Research Question #2. How can an art project such as the *I Am Me Storyboard* help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom?

Conclusion A. Through the design of the various storyboard steps, students were seen and heard exchanging cultural aspects of their lives and their biographies in more intimate ways within their small groups and with the whole class, often surprising their classmates with new knowledge. To really understand the true nature of a person or a culture, one must reach deep into the varying layers of inner spirit, soul, and real life (Dewey, 1983; Zhao, 2009) and give them opportunity to share about the people or things they love, things that cause them laughter, and other aspects of their life or their biographies (Herrera, 2016). This is Biography Driven Instruction (BDI) (Herrera, 2016) and it aligns with a biopsychosocial approach in art education. This study takes Herrera’s research proven method of Biography Driven Instruction and builds upon it, bringing the principles of BDI into the art classroom. By giving all students an opportunity to share their stories, BDI was implemented as a pedagogical tool in this art curriculum unit. Specifically, as immigrant children—such as some students at Smithville USA—navigate the acculturation process within the school environment, being able to tell their stories and share aspects of their lives that are important to them to share with others is highly valuable. This study suggests that art education classes, not just ESOL classes or Newcomer Programs within schools, can play an important role in helping immigrant students feel welcome and present in their new school environment. Art is about emotion and emotion will always have an academic home in art education. According to Zhao (2009), simply memorizing facts about a culture does not teach one about the culture—one must experience it within its context for true understanding. When the ability to experience culture within its context happens in the school classroom, students can move across cultures and exist in an intercultural community or cross-cultural environment (Zhao, 2009). “Cross-cultural

competency first and foremost includes a deep understanding and appreciation of different cultures” (Zhao, 2009, p. 173). Allen (1998), McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007), and Plummer (2001) contend that through sharing stories, the classroom becomes an opportunity for intercultural bonding of students to each other and students grow individually from the sharing of stories.

In the biopsychosocial *I Am Me* curriculum study, this individual growth was in the area of self-esteem, learning what it was, how to recognize it, and how to have more self-esteem and self-regard in one’s life. Yet, students also grew their own knowledge about self-esteem by interacting with classmates, learning of their interests, and cultures. Though Zhao reports it is important to know basic aspects of culture—factual knowledge about countries, including geography, politics, and histories, Zhao also states that knowing values, behaviors, and customs—those things that are sometimes not easy to explicitly describe—are also important. “Culture is learned” (Zhao, 2009, p. 173), it is not transferred by genetics, and more importantly to this study, culture can be learned by others. Even so, members of a certain culture may find it difficult to explain that culture to others because it is so innate in their life and existence (Zhao, 2009), yet a project like the storyboard gave students opportunity to share about the rancho, dancing in Africa, Father Jesus, and other aspects of culture.

While teaching content in art education can often be focused on educational state standards, thematic planning, and specific art content, the storyboard art project gave students an opportunity to share aspects of their life through their artwork and artist statements, and also gave students an opportunity to share with the class. As Zimmerman (2005) contends, through art education students learn interculturality—they learn what mountains to climb and learn climbing skills for that mountain and they also learn which mountains to keep sacred. One

student, M19, possibly shared the most about his culture with his table group as he talked about the chickens and cows on his Grandpa's rancho in Mexico, his love for chips and salsa, and what Father Jesus meant to him. He wants to go live on the rancho someday. His classmates wanted to know more about the rancho and when he would go live there. Another example was when M25, an American citizen his entire life but who was born in Japan on a United States military base, told his classmates that he was born in Japan for the first time and his experiences associated with living in that country for many years. His classmates were very surprised to learn this. As a result of the storyboard project, students shared more details with the class about their lives than they typically do and those students who sat at table groups with students who shared cultural information learned more about the various cultures.

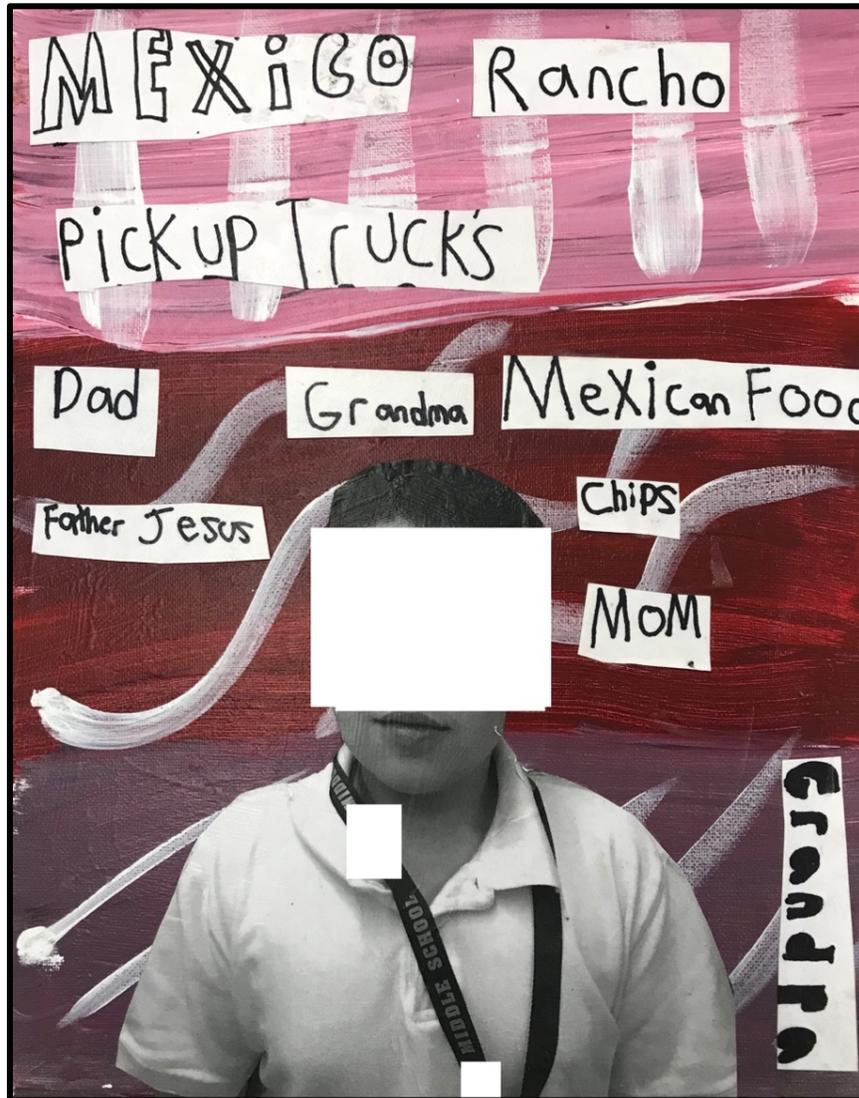


Figure 5.7. Intercultural communication on storyboards. In the above image, M19 shared many aspects of his culture. While the foreground and midground geometric designs represented activities he participated in and the straight vertical lines of the top section represented that he didn't know when he would get to live in Mexico, the words M19 chose were very special to him and represented his culture and family. He wrote of Mexico, the rancho, and pick-up trucks because they were a part of his experience when he went to his Grandpa's home in Mexico. He wrote of his grandma making homemade chips and salsa for him and of the importance of Father Jesus in his family's life. His mother is an anchor for him in life. The students at his table group learned quite a bit about Mexican rancho's from M19 while they worked on their storyboards. M19's storyboard reflected EASEA categories of F=Family, A=Activities, and B=Body Image.

Conclusion B. Students learned of commonalities they have with other students.

Throughout the various phases of the storyboard project and weekly curriculum discussions, students learned of the uniqueness of their classmates as they worked at their table groups or participated in class discussions. Through intentional planning for the development of interculturalism (Zimmerman, 2002), the *I Am Me* curriculum gave students a setting to examine and share their own ideas and values with the class, opening their peers' minds to a world broader in the richness and fullness of description than the one in their own minds. Building upon Zimmerman's (2015) argument, this study confirmed that a reconceptualizing of art education to reflect contemporary times by giving all students opportunities to learn in intercultural settings has merit in the art classroom. Bianchi (2011) found that engaging diverse students in through art education and art making enriched their own and others' experiences. This study gave students opportunity to explore their culture through their biographies, their psychologies, and their life's social structures in prominent or subtle ways, such as F28 stating that "*pink reminds me of a memory*" or more explicit ways such as F31 loving Texas and crawfish and missing her grandparents.

Cowan and Clover (1991) wrote of five factors that function as antecedents for students to gain an enhanced sense of self or gain self-esteem through art making. These five factors are feeling affiliated or bonded to their art or an art class, sharing or growing in their sense of personal worth because their art making is an expression of who they are as individuals, taking risks and being comfortable doing so in art, feeling a sense of accomplishment and pride in their work, and when emotion is involved in the art work—students tend to talk freely about their art making (Borba, 1987; Cowan & Clover, 1991).

In the *I Am Me* curriculum, the process of working from art project planning to implementation and completion gave students to an opportunity to talk about their artwork. Herrera (2016) states that students “bring more than their backpacks to school” (p. 1). Students bring the “intrinsic traits and lived experiences that shape their knowledge, skills, and learning styles” (Herrera, 2016, p. 1) to school, essentially, they bring the fullness of who they are as human beings to school. As previously stated, for immigrant students curriculum such as *I Am Me* is important for teachers to implement because it has the potential to affect the conditions of the school, the learning environment, the culture of schools, and can bring change for a better school environment for all students in the building, not just those in the dominant culture. Students can learn to embrace their differences through art making, but realize through those differences that they have many commonalities with their peers. Implementation of the *I Am Me* curriculum suggests the school art program can be a stakeholder in generating student success that transfers to other aspect of school and life. In various phases of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit, students were overheard exchanging information with their peers. As students drew geometric designs, they were heard discussing specific details regarding their drawings. A student, who had immigrated from Africa, who had been very quiet up until this point, and who tended to keep his storyboard somewhat hidden from view while he worked on it, was heard explaining that a drawing he was making of stick figure people singing and dancing was an event he remembered from when he lived in Africa. The bird mask project also reminded him of this celebration in Africa. A girl at his table told him that his drawing reminded her of her dance recital when she was five years old. Other students were heard having lengthy discussions with each other about the fifteen words they chose to use. Information was exchanged and CLD

students were given a direct opportunity to share aspects of their life and culture. All students experienced growth through the sharing of their creative and cognitive decisions.

Conclusion C. Students had compassionate responses to classmates' stories or the emotions evoked by storytelling. Building on Kerlavage (1998), as students planned, interacted with their art, and completed their art, they gained more understanding of their artistic choices, as did other students. Baldwin (1989), Day and Hurwitz (2012), Hobbs and Salome (1991), Housen (1983), and Parsons (1987) suggest that children go through varying stages of understanding and appreciating art and varying understandings developing during the building of storyboards. As the *I Am Me* curriculum unfolded session after session, students began to share details of their storyboard, even if timidly, and students began to learn more about each other. The more confidence and more self-esteem a student exhibited, the easier it was for them to both share their own story or listen to that of their peers. One girl shared a great deal of information in her geometric design about a very difficult experience she had when she was several years younger. She wanted to tell the story, yet it caused an emotional reaction in her, and students nearby consoled her. They did not draw attention to what she was sharing or repeat specific details. Instead, they simply spoke to her, smiled at her, complimented her work saying “*good job.*” There was noticeable bonding and support between an African-American and this Caucasian girl who shared the difficult memory. Both girls realized they each had struggles. Later in the morning, this researcher saw these two girls walking side by side to the tornado shelter for a scheduled drill with visible kinship. While the teacher said she did not notice any racial division in her art classes, this researcher did notice the Caucasian students, who were the minority race in the classroom, did not interact or speak very much to the students sitting around them in either of the classes where this research was conducted. This intercultural exchange between these two

girls proved to be another strength of the *I Am Me* curriculum because as students, or people, get to know each other better and become more familiar with each other, more opportunity for an intercultural community develops.

Research question #3. How can curriculum such as the *I Am Me* curriculum produce meaningful 21st century learning above and beyond the art content for sixth grade students?

Conclusion A. The *I Am Me* curriculum gave students an effective place and space within the school environment to share personal details and experience personal growth.

Throughout the unit, students shared life issues, family challenges, societal problems, successes, and enjoyable aspects of life with each other. Day and Hurwitz (2012) explain that curriculum serves a variety of purposes. Curriculum is not just for planning instruction, it is also to prepare for teaching to the life and school experiences of the learner (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). Several factors influence curriculum—meeting the needs, capacities, and diversifications of students, the values of the local community and larger society, and local social issues and values (Day & Hurwitz, 2012). While national, state, and local standards provide guidance in determining art curricular content (Day & Hurwitz, 2012), always central to teacher’s focus are student needs. Middle school art specialists have the large task of generating the scope and sequence of learning in the art program (Day & Hurwitz, 2012), yet also must take into account the developmental, cognitive, and emotional abilities of students. Middle school is a time when children are experiencing life shifts as they begin to transition from being a child to becoming an adolescent (Miller and Wolcott, 1996). Art education can give students tools to help this middle school adolescent progression (Bracey, 1993).

The various phases of the storyboard art project gave students an opportunity to learn media skills associated with acrylic painting, drawing, designing word fonts, and assemblage and

collage and to also learn art concepts such as composition, emphasis, and reflection, but the storyboard also gave students an opportunity to tell their stories—only the stories they wanted to tell, and to share them with a biopsychosocial criterion if they chose to do so. Many students chose to share difficult things they dealt with in life and for some students there was an obvious emotional release. While art teachers are not art therapists, many times an art teacher is put in the position of counselor with students who have cathartic moments during their art making.

In some instances in this study, a great transformation happened in the students' overall demeanor as the visual and verbal aspects of their stories unfolded. It seemed some students decided to like themselves more as the curriculum content on self-esteem was presented each week. Others realized that they needed to focus more on self-improvement, such as one girl who realized during the opening discussion of the third session that she talked too much—she did, and through this art curriculum she realized this about herself. Other unit art projects, such as the arpillera project, gave students an opportunity to share important places from their lives and that their hearts missed. Immigrant students expressed the benefits of sharing their biographies and cultures with their peers through their art making and their peers benefitted by learning of important aspects of immigrant students' lives that they chose to share.

The therapeutic aspect of the *I Am Me* curriculum was multi-directional—from student to self, from student to student, from teacher to student, and honestly, from the art teacher to herself. Biopsychosocial growth happened all around the classroom from the very first session. As the unit's key words of TELL, his/herSTORY, OBLIQUE, UNIQUE, GLOW, HONE, THINK, AND SHARE—an acronym for THOUGHTS—were presented in each session's opening discussion, students indeed engaged, to the point that they literally did not talk—which was highly unusual— and either directly participated in the discussion or listened intently. It was as if these

students were hearing this concept for the very first time and it captured their curiosity. Students learned what self-esteem was, how it relates to having a positive attitude, and the word buoyancy was used as a metaphor for lifting oneself up in life. The curriculum was the intervention and art and art making helped students learn more about self-care and self-esteem.

For some students, learning about the concept of self-esteem caused introspective reflection and self-analysis; it caused other students to deal with life experiences that were difficult for them. Each student grew at the level of growth that they personally welcomed and accepted. It was highly therapeutic. Students shared meaningful stories of their lives in a variety of ways in the unit, not just through the storyboard project. In the images below, students conveyed other meaningful personal stories through the arpillera project of the second session. One student recreated her home where she used to live in Africa.



Figure 5.8. Arpillera project. Students created a paper collage of a special place on the earth to them for the *I Am Me* curriculum unit's Peruvian arpillera-inspired project.

Conclusion B. The *I Am Me* curriculum successfully used varying methods of storytelling to give students opportunity to experience both cognitive and creative growth.

The Biography Driven Instruction (Herrera, 2016) methods of the *I Am Me* curriculum unit gave students a platform in which to talk to their peers and share personal aspects of their lives, all while teaching the concept of self-esteem. The curriculum's intense focus on storytelling gave

students opportunity to both grow as students and human beings and also to share their life experiences with others. Kuyvenhoven (2009) states that the sharing of stories is an important pedagogical strategy. According to Kerlavage (1998) and Olson (1998), well-written, well-planned curriculum sets the stage for student storytelling. Winner (1985) reported that storytelling, or narrative, was a way for a child to understand himself or herself better and the world in which they live and must also cope with. Winner also stated that through telling stories, children create situations completely suited to their own needs either directly or symbolically. Kuyvenhoven (2009) reported that children wrote and spoke freely about their own stories. Many studies reported the unique correlation between storytelling and visual art: Bequette (2014), Rhoades, Dallacqua, Kersten, Merry, & Miller (2015), Duncam (2009), Williams (2011), and Zander (2007). Allen (1998) found that storytelling promotes self-esteem. McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals (2007) found that autobiographical stories not only affect who a person is and their own self-concept, they also provide a direction for future self-development. Plummer (2001) suggested storytelling as a classroom strategy for building self-esteem in students.

The first two weeks of the research, about half the students in the two Smithville USA Middle School classes were so social and interactive with each other that it was sometimes difficult to teach, but they were not very intimate and personal with each other. As the storyboard phases progressed and students were asked to dig deeply into their own story and what aspect of their story they wanted to share, students slowly began sharing their stories with peers at their table group or those who sat behind them. The creative and cognitive discussions about their storyboard phases with their peers elevated the impact of the curriculum unit.

Additionally, the first project of the unit asked students if they were a bird, what kind of bird would they be? Then, students were asked to make an imaginary bird mask. Strategically

starting the unit in the field of the creative and imaginary and slowly narrowing the lens to the cognitive and real was one of the strengths of the *I Am Me* curriculum.



Figure 5.9. Bird mask art project. Colorful bird masks were made as a metaphor for buoyancy.

Conclusion C. The *I Am Me* curriculum successfully taught important human characteristics. Students use higher level thinking to make connections between content and life. The themes of self-esteem, positivity, and buoyancy were introduced the first week of the *I Am Me* unit and each subsequent week built upon the knowledge of the previous week. After eight weeks of exploring self-esteem, students had a much more knowledgeable understanding of what self-esteem was, how to have it, and how to use it in their lives. Students with self-esteem developed a better understanding of it and better understood how to use it as a tool in school and their lives.

Those students who shared more difficult life experiences through their art making and artists' statements learned more about these difficulties as they took time to focus on these various situations. These students also learned that the fact that a person has difficulties in life does not mean they do not have self-esteem. This topic of how to navigate difficulties in life evolved into a frequent part of the opening discussion during weeks three, four, and five.

Students also learned some processing skills through art making that was of benefit to challenges in their lives. By drawing a story first, even with artistic symbolism, students

developed ideas and thoughts—joyous and happy thoughts or troubling thoughts, and then shared deeper meaning about their creative choices through various aspects of the curriculum activities. Art making deepened their thoughts and the stories they told; it gave them a language and a way to communicate. One very significant example was that the geometric design phase of the storyboard project provided completely unanticipated data for this study. On all of the artists' statements for both classes—70 students—all ten trauma reflecting responses developed out of what students first drew on their geometric design worksheet. Students who shared very difficult life experiences in this curriculum unit first drew them, then wrote about them, and this exemplifies biopsychosocial learning in the art classroom—each of these difficult stories could be broken down by the students' biographies or cultures, their emotions, and their social experiences. The *I Am Me* curriculum and all of the art projects associated with it brought BDI (Herrera, 2016) strategies into the classroom through the biopsychosocial approach in art education. Furthermore, data analysis for this study did not record having difficult life-experiences as lack of self-esteem; rather this qualitative study viewed the human act of sharing weaknesses and difficulties as an act of exhibiting self-esteem and self-care.

Another project of the curriculum unit, the Nigerian-inspired hot air balloon, was used as a metaphor to teach students about self-esteem through equating it with positivity and buoyancy. Just as it was important for students to bring their own cultures, biographies, and stories to their art making, an important aspect of the planning of the *I Am Me* curriculum was the incorporation of globally-inspired art projects. The day the Nigerian-inspired hot air balloon project was introduced in class, this researcher wore a skirt made of Nigerian adire cloth, hung several other pieces of Nigerian fiber arts on the bulletin board, and noticed that several of the African newcomer students acknowledged the use of and recognized the cloth.



Figure 5.10. Nigerian-inspired hot air balloon art project. Hot air balloons were made as a metaphor for focusing on objects that lift people up in life.

Conclusion D. The *I Am Me* curriculum addressed social emotional needs of students and therefore had implications for their future. Schools can sometimes focus more on the academic content and less on students' biopsychosocial needs (Herrera, 2016). It can be difficult for a student to do the daily math lesson if they are burdened by life and life situations, yet often students find a psychological release in art making. By the curriculum's focus on the human characteristic of self-esteem and relating it to tangible objects and intangible emotions, students learned more than art during their art making. Weekly sketchbook prompts provided as part of the curriculum gave students an opportunity to write more personal, guarded, and private thoughts and feelings about the topic of self-esteem. One girl (F32) wrote that "*the words* [her 15 words she chose for her storyboard] *show proof of my loneliness & hardships of health and surgery. Next surgery April 1st. It vaguely talks about my life. The story it tells is that I may be a lonely and constantly ill kid, but I still have a passion for art and animals.*" The curriculum helped this girl journal her thoughts and feelings about her health, yet the unit also helped her think more positively as she concluded with the comment about her love of art and animals. This

curriculum appeared to give students a way to address personal aspects of their lives—their biographies, psychologies, and social needs— and that would be useful to them as they grew and developed through adolescence and become adults (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002).

One of the curriculum unit's art projects, the woven paper sun, had students think about how each student is composed of many traits, all woven together, and how having a positive outlook in life and a bright and sunny disposition can help them have better human traits woven together and directing their lives. A book was read to both classes, *Only One You* by Linda Kranz, about a unique fish and the book explored the topic that everyone is unique. Middle school students apparently still like to be read to because the room was totally silent while the book was read. The metaphor of the fish inspired the fish painted stones art project. Students had time to think about and process the story while they painted the fish. The combined efforts of the six art projects and all the curriculum activities guided students on a journey of personal exploration, while at the same time learning many art media skills and techniques, and built foundational life skills that went above and beyond the art making.

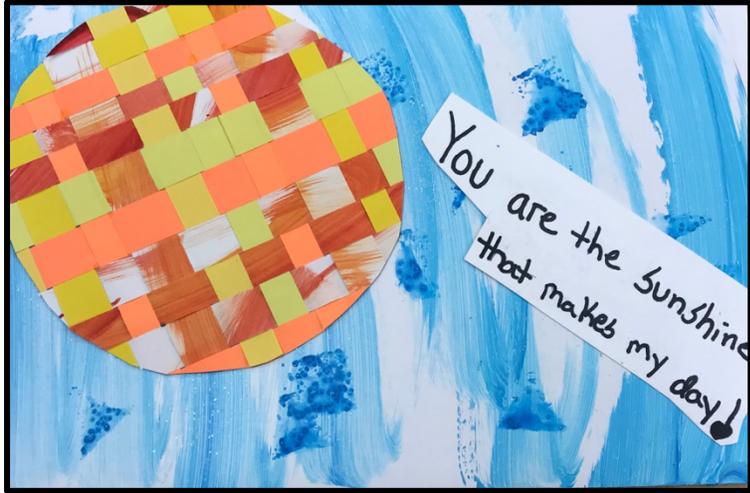


Figure 5.11. Sun paper weaving and painted fish rocks art projects. These two art projects reminded students to focus on buoyancy and things that lift them up in life.

Suggestions for Future Practice

Implementation of *I Am Me* Curriculum by Teacher of Record

While in this research, the researcher and the art teacher co-taught the unit, essentially what happened was the researcher introduced each of the eight topics once a week for eight weeks on Monday, delivering the main theme of the lesson. The art teacher then attempted to finish the items that needed done during the week. There were many extenuating factors that did not allow each week's projects to get finished during the remaining four days of the week. Some of these factors included illness and absences of students, students losing projects within the art classroom, whether or not the art teacher had the time to give students to work on projects during the week, absences of the art teacher because of moving her home and other personal issues, student engagement, and students' varying personal levels of being responsible for finishing their work. In order to compensate for the variety of circumstances that made it difficult to get projects finished during the rest of the week—Tuesday through Friday, as much as possible was done in a rushed fashion on Monday when this researcher could be at the school, with the school art teacher helping as opportunity presented itself during the rest of the week. Obviously, the researcher did not have the relationship with students that the school art teacher had and so one implication for future practice is that if this unit is taught solely by the teacher of record in the classroom, there is the potential for the learning outcomes to be even greater than they were in this research. If the teacher of record is fully engaged in teaching the unit five days a week for eight weeks, this unit will potentially have even more impact. Consideration will need to be given to providing training for art teachers who may implement and teach this curriculum unit, as not all art teachers may have the knowledge base or ability to teach a social emotional learning, biopsychosocial art curriculum unit such as *I Am Me*.

Even with some complications in project completion, the curriculum unit's implementation was highly successful in producing meaningful learning in art education, above and beyond art content, yet the art content in this curriculum unit was also of an elevated higher level art media use and skill technique. This unit has great potential to be used in school art curriculum, because of both art media and technique and the content of self-esteem, and could be adapted for any age group of students. The art projects could become simpler or more complex for varying ages of students. The concept of self-esteem could also be adjusted for age appropriateness.

This curriculum will be much more meaningful with students having more time to understand the concept of self-esteem and make the six art projects if each of the eight lesson plans last five days (one week). On day one of each week (a) the main self-esteem concept for the week could be taught (acronym of THOUGHTS words), (b) the essential question could be discussed, and (c) the topic of buoyancy for that particular week's lesson could be discussed. Then on day two, the (a) weekly art project could be introduced and started, (b) the storyboard phase could be explained, and (c) more detail could be discussed about the storyboard project. On the third through the fourth day of the unit, students could have studio time to work on (a) the lesson's specific art project, (b) the storyboard phase of the week, and (c) the sketchbook entry for the week. Finally, on the fifth day of the week, the artist statements could be completed and a concluding discussion could be held. By focusing on each week's lesson for five days or class periods, the overarching theme of self-esteem and each week's plan to build the concept of self-esteem in stages would have more time to be understood and processed by students. Students would also have more time to make the art projects. This researcher firmly believes that creative thought needs time to develop and should not be rushed. In conclusion, this curriculum unit will

be a meaningful and useful eight-week art unit and could be extended easily into a ninth week with some additional culminating activities and an in-class art show, functioning as one nine-week unit. The potential of this *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* curriculum will only grow in impact if the unit is a five-day a week, nine week curriculum unit. The curriculum could also be adapted by art teachers to teach other personal characteristics and life skills.

Implementation of *I Am Me* Curriculum in Collaboration with School Counselor

Evidence from this research conducted on self-esteem suggests that this biopsychosocial curriculum would provide an important way for the school art teacher and school counselor to work in tandem to coordinate a social emotional learning curriculum unit for targeted grades of students, using art education in a more holistic, whole child way within the overall school setting. This could be done with all grade levels of students within the school or could be done strategically with targeted grades. Perhaps each year the art teacher and school counselor could choose a personality characteristic, trait, or life skill and collaborate in writing an art unit associated with the topic of choice. Additionally, this researcher is interested in writing a curriculum series such as this, which could be purchased by art teachers, counselors, or schools. This researcher is also interested in co-developing this series of art curriculum in collaboration with a school counselor or professor in school counseling.

Suggestions for Future Research

Implementation of *I Am Me* Curriculum in Newcomer Programs

Based on the success of the immigrant students at Smithville USA Middle School with this art curriculum, and specifically newcomer students or some who had just graduated from the newcomer program, this curriculum unit could be further researched by being taught in school

newcomer programs, where in addition to ESOL and the implementation of Biography Driven Instruction strategies (Herrera, 2016), newcomer programs could use this biopsychosocial approach in art making to investigate students' biopsychosocial-selves and share their stories through creative thought. Using art education in this way with newcomer students could assist the growth and learning of this intercultural community of students who have come from all over the world and help them feel more validated and welcomed in the program and school by having an opportunity to share about their cultures and biographies and what is important to them. Giving newcomer students an opportunity to make the *I Am Me Storyboard*, share it with students in the newcomer program, and then share it with the all students in the school would be a quality acculturation strategy and would be achieved through art making. "While there is a need for teachers to impart information, while the lecture format is indeed efficient, and while teachers do and should know more than students, there is a major need for teachers also to listen to the students' learning" (Hattie, 2012, p. 186). While teachers would lead instruction of the *I Am Me Unit* and projects such as the *I Am Me Storyboard*, newcomer students would learn from each other and the teachers would learn a great deal more information from students; students would essentially be given power over the direction of learning. Evidence from this study suggests that this curriculum has important potential for newcomer programs and further research should be conducted using this curriculum with newcomer programs.

Implementation of Biopsychosocial Art Education Course in University Art Education Programs

This study suggests that more research should be done on creating a social and emotional learning course for pre-service art education students and their program of studies. Results of the study seem to indicate that university pre-service teacher art education programs consider adding

at least one three hour credit course that investigates various aspects of social emotional learning that occurs in and through art making. Social emotional artistic learning (SEAL) is terminology beginning to be used in art education (Teach SEAL, 2019). Once art teachers are out in the field, they realize from their first day of teaching that they needed some training in art therapy and social emotional learning. Students' biopsychosocial stories are often displayed in students' art projects and teachers realize they need more training in recognizing and understanding emotional release in student art making. As a language arts teacher can recognize if a student is struggling with anxiety, depression, stress, or trauma from words they write, art teachers need to be able to understand the visual depiction of these same feelings. Examples of explicit ways that students draw from anxiety and trauma are when they generate real drawings of experiences such as the World Trade Center Towers collapsing in New York City or a car wreck (Malchiodi, 2007, 2012). More subtle ways of expressing anxiety and trauma (Malchiodi, 2007, 2012), and expressions that an untrained teacher could potentially miss are:

- placing large dark birds in the sky, or
- big, dark clouds in the sky,
- students augmenting their own shape in the art work,
- students placing themselves in some kind of restrictive container or space,
- drawing the insides of their body solid and black,
- using staccato motions to indicate tension,
- using shadows, and so on.

It would be of benefit to school art teachers to have training in the use of emotive symbolism, such as on the above list, by students in art making.

One suggestion would be to create a three-hour credit course called Social Emotional Artistic Learning (SEAL) for pre-service art teachers to take in their university art education programs. In this course, students would be introduced to the basics of art therapy foundations and skills, as well as curriculum writing for social emotional artistic learning. Social Emotional Artistic Learning I and II courses would also be another option to research and could be sequential courses where pre-service art teachers learn the fundamentals of social emotional artistic learning (art making) in one course and then how to write related curriculum, such as the *I Am Me* curriculum, in another course. Additionally, professional development seminars or workshops could be offered to provide professional development for practicing art educators and others regarding this same topic.

With principals and administrators (Wallace editorial team, 2018) reporting of great anxiety of students in their schools, the timing seems appropriate to shift a minimum of three credit hours of the 27 plus credit hours art education students spend learning the skills of the fine arts to also include a highly relevant and much-needed skill for teachers of social emotional artistic learning. While a survey of the top 20 art education programs in the United States only revealed three programs with a course similar to social emotional learning course, this topic may become more visible in art education programs of study as students' needs require more concentrated focus on anxiety and trauma. With some state Departments of Education developing social emotional standards for PK-12 students, it is even more timely for teachers to begin receiving more training in this field. Even so, it seems social and emotional learning should have always been a course for pre-service art teachers. For those art education programs wanting to be accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) or other visual art accrediting associations, this may also require the support of these agencies as

these visual arts accreditation agencies require a certain number of university credit hours in various fields of the visual arts and art education. Finally, perhaps a day is coming when schools who currently employ art teachers and behavioral therapists more commonly have art therapists teaching art classes—while this change may sound extreme to some educators including art educators, it may be a practical transformation for 21st century education and a vision for how education may need to change to meet the expanding needs of students.

Conclusion

Throughout history, art education has continually sought ways to be more viable in the school environment. Art teachers know full well that they often function at the lower end of importance on the academic spectrum—it's a fact in this field. Yet, those who work in the field of art education, both practice and research, also understand that art education is a viable and powerful tool not only to teach the creative arts, but also to advance academic performance and personal development of the learner which transfers from the classroom, to the school, and to society. The art classroom has the ability to turn a student's education into an inventive learning lab of discovery rather than an assembly line of production—this researcher read this comment many years ago and it inspired her through years of teaching art, yet a source for this profound comment many years later cannot be found. The 21st century comes with new challenges and frontiers for education and humanity. Art education—according to this research—is poised to become a more valuable tool for teachers, administrators, and the overall growth of students *if* art teachers think above and beyond the art content in the planning, development, and implementation of curriculum.

Social emotional learning (SEL), a needed and necessary skill for 21st century students, can become a credible content area in art education. According to Hattie (2012), a teacher's role is not to write curriculum in small, manageable parts; rather a teacher's role is to make decisions regarding how to challenge and engage students. This *I Am Me* research suggests that further research is needed regarding the possibility of changing pre-service art education programs to include at least one social emotional artistic learning course. Admittedly, not all art teachers possess the emotional or psychological maturity or knowledge to teach SEL units, but if art education teacher training programs begin to give pre-service teachers a foundation in SEL in and through the arts, as they do in other skills that art teachers must have, students and schools will have opportunity to benefit from this kind of learning. All pre-service teachers in all fields of education benefit from training in SEL and there is a growing focus to prepare pre-service teachers more fully for the emotional intelligence they need as educators.

As one student so eloquently put it, she didn't want the unit to be over and neither did this researcher. There is real power—perhaps yet unharnessed power—in art education to meet the needs of adolescents. It is time that art education is used for more meaningful learning—the kind that changes students' lives for the better, raises them up out of poverty, heals their trauma, helps their spirits soar, and unites them as a creative, artistic family within the four walls of the art room, yet also carries that intercultural spirit and skills learned in the art classroom out into the school, community, and society. It is time for art teachers from small rural schools to large, urban settings to use art and the art curriculum for grander, larger purpose in the school setting. It is also time to inform principals and superintendents of the capabilities of this powerful tool—ART—that is sits underutilized within their buildings. Dewey (1934) and Eisner (2002) claimed a loftier purpose for art education for many years, with Day and Hurwitz (2012), Gude (2007,

2017), Leavy (2018), Zimmerman (2002, 2005, 2015), this researcher, and others continuing to proclaim the power of art education for the learner. It's time for the substantial message of the value of biopsychosocial education to go mainstream in art education—teachers can teach and reach students in effective, relevant, meaningful ways through addressing their biographies, their psychologies, and their sociologies.

The profession of art education within the United States is a dynamic field that has produced brilliant educators—Dr. Elliot Eisner is an example of the talent of art education. Talented art educators instinctively feel or openly research what their students need to know—art is a way of knowing (Eisner, 2002; Torres, 2019). Students—and people in general—have an intrinsic need to communicate with each other—they want to know and to be known. As one often-expressive student (F9) who rarely worked on any art project in this research's curriculum unit stated, what she *“liked least about the storyboard project was painting and glueing and colors and washing hands and messes and my picture.”* What she *“liked most about the project was painting and glueing and picture and colors.”* Therein lies the challenge of middle school curriculum—meeting the needs of students. The point is, art education is a powerful tool that has yet to be fully tapped to its potential in the school environment. Informed educators—art educators—must reach deep into their core of professional knowledge and common sense as global citizens to lead 21st century students toward what comes after the yottabyte. Meaningful art education curriculum is a good starting point.

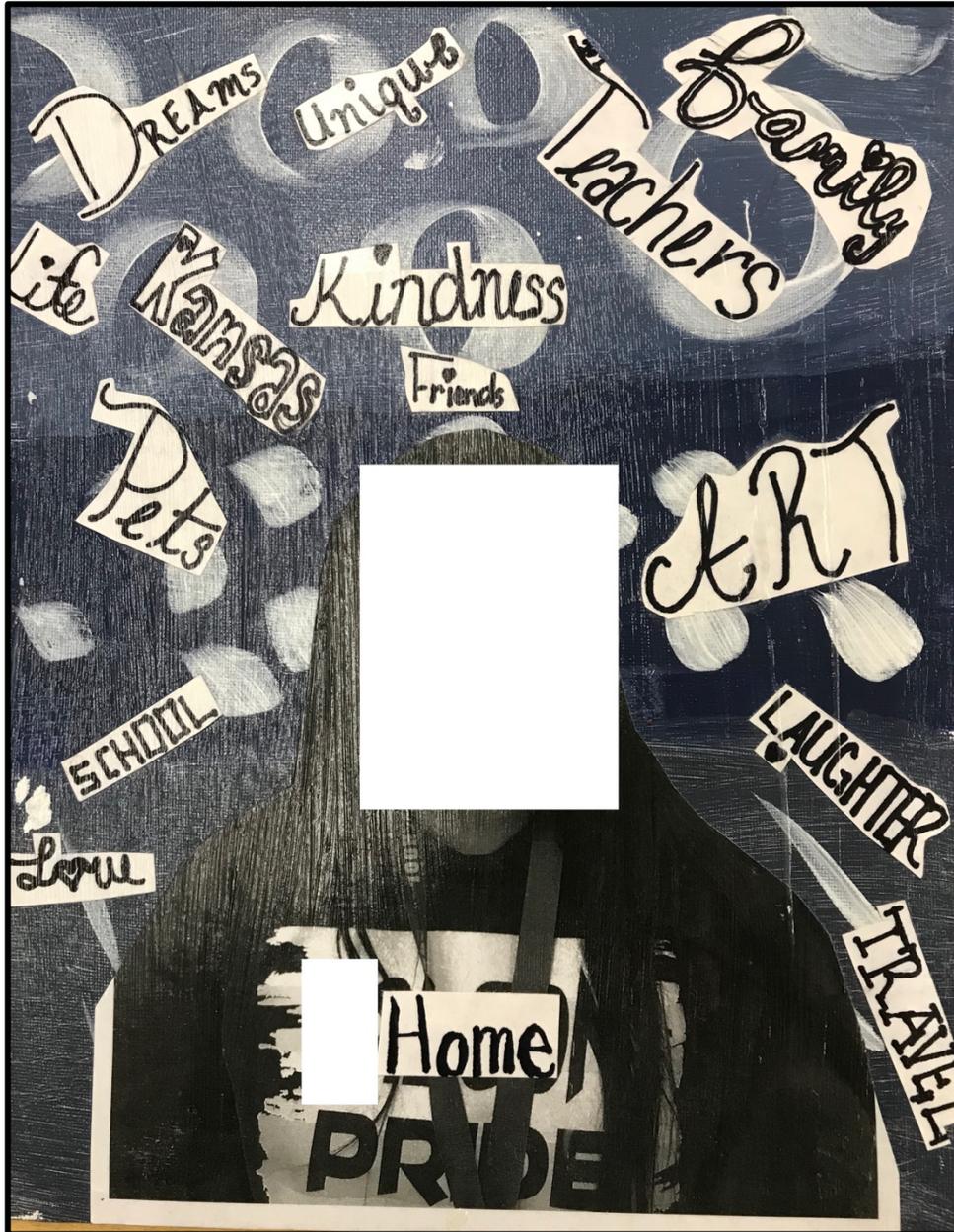


Figure 5.12. A storyboard depicting self-esteem-visually, verbally, and vervisually. In the above image, (F40) shared that art, her teachers, and school meant a lot to her. She loved to play princesses in her past, loved horses in her present, and was unsure what her future holds. The color of blue made her happy. Her artist's statement said she had many positive words, was thankful to have a family, and was glad to be ALIVE! Her storyboard exhibited all five EASEA categories of F=Family, FR=Friends, A=Activities, B=Body Image, and S=School. She has self-esteem.

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Appendix A - 10 Lessons the Arts Teach

10 Lessons the Arts Teach

By Elliot Eisner



- 1 The arts teach children to make **GOOD JUDGMENTS** about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
- 2 The arts teach children that problems can have **MORE** than **ONE** solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
- 3 The arts celebrate multiple **PERSPECTIVES**. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to **SEE** and **INTERPRET** the world.
- 4 The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the **ABILITY** and a **WILLINGNESS** to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.
- 5 The arts make **VIVID** the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can **KNOW**. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our **COGNITION**.
- 6 The arts teach students that **SMALL DIFFERENCES** can have **LARGE EFFECTS**. The arts traffic in subtleties.
- 7 The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which **IMAGES** become **REAL**.
- 8 The arts help **CHILDREN LEARN** to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them **FEEL**, they must reach into their **POETIC CAPACITIES** to find the words that will do the job.
- 9 The **ARTS ENABLE** us to have **EXPERIENCE** we can have from no other source and through such experience to **DISCOVER** the range and variety of what we are capable of **FEELING**.
- 10 The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults **BELIEVE** is **IMPORTANT**.

SOURCE: Eisner, E. (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, In Chapter 4, What the Arts Teach and How It Shows. (pp. 70-92). Yale University Press.

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National Art Education Association
www.arteducators.org

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Appendix B - Promoting Self-Esteem in the Classroom

Promoting Self-Esteem in the Classroom by Amanda Weisner-Groff

Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/promoting-self-esteem-in-the-classroom.html>

Building Self-Esteem

Once a classroom community is established, it is time to work on building your students' sense of confidence and self-esteem. As students begin developing self-esteem, academic competence will increase. Then, like a cycle of positivity, once academic competence increases, so will self-esteem. Aim to build students up according to various life areas (social, academic, cognitive), so they feel nurtured as a whole person, not just as your academic student. Here are some ways to build and promote self-esteem:

Value Students Individually

- Value students for his or her individual strengths and abilities.
- Do not compare students to one another.
- Teach students to recognize and value one another's differences.
- Give individual, rather than generic, whole group praise, so students can see how their individual contributions matter.
- Give high fives, handshakes, eye contact, and individual attention to your students.

Respect them, just as you want them to respect you.

Establish Goals, Allow Choices

- Establish realistic and achievable goals with your students.
- Break down large assignments, so students can manage their work without feeling overwhelmed and helpless.
- Help students develop decision-making and problem-solving skills.

- Offer choices so students can practice using decision-making skills.
- Discuss coping strategies for stress, times students are feeling low, or when students struggle with achieving a goal.

Be Sincere

- Offer only sincere interest in your students. Empty praise can let students down.
- Never use sarcasm, never mock your students' efforts, and never bring up their past failures.
- Show excitement in the progress students are making by displaying their achievements, no matter how small.
- Discuss your own failures, struggles, and fears with your students. Share coping strategies you have used, and ask for their input for what strategies you can use in the future.
- Teach students according to their learning styles and needs not according to your teaching style.
- Learn your students' strengths and interests so you can call upon those details to help motivate and encourage them when struggles or low-self-esteem kicks in.

Appendix C - Parent Permission Form

Permission for your Student to Participate in Art Activity Kansas State University College of Education Doctoral Student's Research Project "I Am Me" Story Board Art Project

Hello Smithville USA Middle School Parents,

My name is Trina Harlow. I work at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. I have been an elementary, middle, and high school art teacher for 24 years and I now teach people who are going to school at our university to become art teachers. I am working on my doctoral degree. I want to help school art curriculum through this project and research have new and better ideas for the 21st century and for students to share their lives, cultures, and experiences with each other to help all students get to know each other better. I have written an 8-day art project called I AM ME: THOUGHTS OF BUOYANCY which will be taught from (insert date) to (insert date). It is a happy art project where we talk about various things that make us feel good and be positive, make us feel better about ourselves, and that lift us up, so to speak, in life things we love, things that bring us laughter, and things about life. There are 5 art projects in the unit: A bird mask, a hot air balloon, a rock painted like a fish, and a paper weaving of a sun. The fifth project, and biggest project, is called the I Am Me Story Board. Students will paint the background with a color of their choice, make geometric designs that represent their past/present/and future, and write 15 words that represent their life to put on the story boards. We will also take their photograph to put on the story board. Students will share about their art project in either a written worksheet they write, called an Artist's Statement, or they will share it verbally with me. I will read their artist's statements. We also hope to have a school art show where we can display the art projects. I am also hopeful to share this project with other art teachers and other educators through various teaching publications and presentations I will make. Below are two photos of samples of the project:



There is really no unusual risk of any kind to your student. It is a very normal school art project and students get to decide exactly what they share since they are the artists. They will be making five art projects about a happy and positive theme. They get to choose what words they want to share. That is completely up to them. The art teacher, ESOL teacher, and myself will all help them with the word portion if they need help with English. Students names or facial images will not be shared publicly as a part of this research.

Your student can also quit the project if they would like to for any reason, but so far, all students I have done this project with have loved the project. Your student also does not have to participate. I have the attached consent form which gives your student permission to do the project signed and I must have it returned to the school by (insert date). This is a requirement for all university research that we do in schools. Also, I would appreciate it if you would please fill out the attached biography card. This will help me know your student and your family better as we begin the project.

In order for your student to participate you must sign this form and return it to school by [insert date].

If you have any questions at any time about the project, research questions, you or your student's rights, or if there is an injury, you can contact your school OR:

Trina Harlow
Researcher and co-art teacher for the project
Art Education Program coordinator and instructor
Kansas State University College of Education
tharlow@ksu.edu
972-532-5525

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects
203 Fairchild Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
(785) 532-3224

OR
Cheryl Doerr, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance
203 Fairchild Hall
Kansas State University
Manhattan, KS 66506
(785) 532-3224

ART PROJECT CONSENT FORM
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT
I AM ME: STORY BOARD ART PROJECT

PLEASE RETURN THIS CONSENT FORM TO SCHOOL BY [INSERT DATE]:

STUDENT'S FIRST AND LAST NAME, PLEASE PRINT:

1. I have read and understand the consent letter and form sent home with my student. I understand the project is research and that my student's participation is voluntary. I also understand that my student can withdraw from the project at any time for any reason.

→ PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:YES.....NO

2. I give permission for my student to willingly participate in the I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy Art Unit as described and my signature acknowledges that I do so and that I will be given a copy of the consent form once signed and dated.

→ PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:YES.....NO

3. I understand that if I have questions, I can contact Smithville USA art teacher, the school administration, the researcher (Trina Harlow) or the University Research Compliance Office at any time.

→ PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:YES.....NO

4. I have also completed the attached "BIOGRAPHY CARD" and have filled it out based on my student's abilities.

→ PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:YES.....NO

PLEASE PRINT PARENT'S FIRST AND LAST NAME (parent or guardian):

PLEASE SIGN PARENT'S SIGNATURE HERE:

PLEASE HAVE STUDENT SIGN SIGNATURE HERE:

TODAY'S DATE IS:

Please return to the school art teacher or the school office.

Appendix D - Student Assent Form

I Am Me: Thoughts of Buoyancy ¶

Doctoral Research ¶

Kansas State University ¶

College of Education ¶



ASSENT FORM FOR MINORS ¶



Students, ¶

Now that you have heard an explanation about the *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy* art project and the *I Am Me Story Board* art project by your art teacher, your principal, and Trina Harlow from Kansas State University, please sign this form and date it if you **agree to participate** in the 8-session art project and curriculum unit being co-taught by Trina Harlow from the College of Education at Kansas State University and your school art teacher: ¶



Print Your Name: _____ ¶



Write Your Signature: _____ ¶



Today's Date: _____ ¶

Appendix E - CLD Student Biography Card, Herrera (2016)

CLD Student Biography Card: Front	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Age: _____</p> <p>Grade: _____</p> <p>Country of Origin: _____</p> <p>Time in USA: _____</p> <p>L1: _____</p> <p>R: _____</p> <p>W: _____</p> <p>L2 Proficiency (LAS/IPT/Other):</p> <p>O: _____</p> <p>R: _____</p> <p>W: _____</p> <p>SLA: _____</p> <p>Student Processing:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Learning Style:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Prior Academic Experiences:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Preferred Grouping:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #cccccc; padding: 5px;">School-Situated</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>CLD Student Biography Cards can support teachers in documenting student progress, making decisions about grouping configurations, and continually scaffolding to meet students' sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs.</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Insert a photograph of the student (this is a helpful visual reminder for you as a teacher).</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Sociocultural</p> <p>Complete the student's demographic information by interviewing the student, his or her family, or a past teacher.</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Linguistic</p> <p>Step One: Determine (informally or formally):</p> <p>L1: Student's First Language</p> <p>R: First Language Reading Proficiency</p> <p>W: First Language Writing Proficiency</p> <p>Step Two: Determine the CLD student's English language proficiency (scores can be obtained from the district/school ESL teacher as needed).</p> <p>O: English Oral Proficiency (speaking/listening)</p> <p>R: English Reading Proficiency</p> <p>W: English Writing Proficiency</p> <p>SLA: Stage of Second Language Acquisition</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p>Cognitive</p> <p>How does the student process information (e.g., solve a math problem, complete a science experiment, summarize a story)?</p> <p>What learning style preferences should be taken into account for this student?</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Academic</p> <p>What prior academic experiences/exposure does the student have to promote content learning and transfer of knowledge?</p> <p>In what grouping configuration is the student most comfortable (i.e., total group, partner, small group, or independent)?</p> </div>

This material appears in *Biography-Driven Culturally Responsive Teaching, 2nd Edition*, by Socorro G. Herrera. © 2016 by Teachers College, Columbia University. For more information or to order, please visit: <http://store.tpress.com/0807757500.shtml>

CLD Student Biography Card: Back

Sociocultural Dimension
Home + Community + School =
 **Background Knowledge**

Linguistic Dimension
Valuing L1 & L2



Cognitive Dimension
Implications for Practice

Academic Dimension
State of Mind



Biography-Situated

Sociocultural

Consider insights gleaned from conversations and interactions with students, parents, and colleagues (in both academic and non-academic settings) about what brings the student **life, laughter, and love**.

- What assets does the student bring as a result of living within his or her culture and family?
- What role does the student play in the family? What is he or she learning in that role that would be of benefit at school?

Linguistic

Consider aspects of **comprehension, communication, and expression** in both the student's first language and second language.

- In what ways do the patterns of communication within the student's family and culture have the potential to be assets in the classroom?
- In what ways could these assets be used to increase the student's engagement and learning?

Cognitive

Consider ways the student's culture might influence how he or she **knows, thinks, and applies** new learning.

- In what ways does teaching align with patterns and expectations for knowing, thinking, and applying within the student's family and culture?
- In what ways can the student use his or her patterns of cognition as a resource to access information and demonstrate learning in the classroom?

Academic

Consider factors that are helping or hindering the student's **access** to equitable educational opportunities, **engagement** in instruction, and **hope** for success in the learning community and in the future.

- What resources are available to the student to set the stage for success in the classroom?
- What opportunities can be provided for the learner based on assets he or she has available at home?

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Appendix F - *I Am Me* Biography Card



Dear Parents and Families of 6th Grade Art Classes that meet on Monday:
 We will start the *I Am Me* art unit soon in your student's 6th grade art class. Not all 6th grade art classes are doing the project, only the classes that meet on Mondays. If you have given your child permission to participate in the art project, please complete this form as a family and have your child return it to their teacher. The **Art Project Consent Form** that gives your child permission to participate in the art project is stapled to the front of this **Biography Card** form. If you need assistance by a school translator or interpreter please have your child let the art teacher know as soon as possible. Thank you, Ms. Shamp (Curtis Middle School Art Teacher) and Trina Harlow (Art Education Coordinator at Kansas State University)

<p>TEACHER WILL PLACE A PHOTO OF YOUR STUDENT HERE.</p>	<p>NAME: _____</p> <p>AGE: _____ GRADE: _____</p> <p>COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: _____</p> <p>TIME IN USA: _____</p>
--	--

Please answer the following questions:

1. What is the main language spoken at home? _____
2. Does at least one adult in the home speak English? (circle one) YES NO
3. Does at least one adult in the home read English? (circle one) YES NO
4. Can at least one adult in the home write English? (circle one) YES NO
5. Do the parents or guardians of the student need an interpreter or translator?
If so, in what language? _____
6. Are the parents or guardians in the family artistic or creative? (circle one) YES NO
7. Please circle a number indicating how much your student likes art or is good at art. If you circle a "1" that means your child is not interested in art or not good at it. If you circle a "5" that means your child is very, very good at art or likes it very, very much. If you circle a 3 that means your student is somewhat good at art or likes art in an average way.

1 2 3 4 5 *Source: Adapted from Herrera (2016)*





STUDENT'S NAME: _____

BIOGRAPHY-SITUATED INFORMATION:

LINGUISTIC BIOGRAPHY: (determine informally or formally with school assistance)

L1: (student's first language): _____
R: (1st language reading proficiency) _____
W: (1st language writing proficiency) _____

L2 Proficiency:

O: (English oral proficiency, speaking & listening) _____
R: (English language reading proficiency) _____
W: (English language writing proficiency) _____
SLA: (Stage of second language acquisition) _____

ART Linguistic Notes: (How will student's linguistic patterns of communication at home and at school be an asset in art class?)

ART-1: (best language to use for student in art class) _____
ART-R: (best language for student to read directions) _____
ART-W: (best language for student to use to write artist's statements) _____

COGNITIVE BIOGRAPHY: (ability to process information and learning style)

Student Processing: _____
Learning Style: _____

ART Cognition Notes: (How can student use their patterns of cognition to acquire and demonstrate learning in art class?)

ACADEMIC BIOGRAPHY: (prior academic experiences and exposure to promote learning, grouping configuration that works best)

Prior Academic Experience: _____
Preferred Grouping: _____

ART Academic Notes: (What art class or school resources are available in the art class or school to help the student be successful in art? What opportunities need to be provided for student success in art class based on assets available at home?)

SOCIOCULTURAL BIOGRAPHY: (What assets does the student bring to art class based on their family or cultural experience at home? What bring the student life, laughter, and love?)

Source: Adapted from Herrera (2016)



Appendix G - IRB Approval Letter



University Research Compliance Office

TO: Dr. Debbie Mercer Proposal Number: 9344
Dean of Education
006 Bluemont Hall

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 12/05/2018

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "I am me: Using buoyant biopsychosocial art education curriculum and story boards to explore self-esteem with sixth grade students."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for one year from the date of this correspondence, pending "continuing review."**

APPROVAL DATE: 12/05/2018

EXPIRATION DATE: 12/05/2019

Several months prior to the expiration date listed, the IRB will solicit information from you for federally mandated "**continuing review**" of the research. Based on the review, the IRB may approve the activity for another year. **If continuing IRB approval is not granted, or the IRB fails to perform the continuing review before the expiration date noted above, the project will expire and the activity involving human subjects must be terminated on that date. Consequently, it is critical that you are responsive to the IRB request for information for continuing review if you want your project to continue.**

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

- There is no more than minimal risk to the subjects.
 There is greater than minimal risk to the subjects.

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review at least annually, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Appendix I - Geometric Design Worksheet

Buoyant Thoughts

I Am Me Geometric Design Worksheet

As a part of the Buoyant THOUGHTS art unit, you are to design THREE geometric designs. One will represent your past, one will represent your present, and one will represent your future. Use this worksheet to design your three geometric designs that are SYMBOLIC of your past, present, and future and write one sentence explaining each design.

YOUR NAME:

PAST	SENTENCE
PRESENT	SENTENCE
FUTURE	SENTENCE

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Appendix J - Geometric Design Artist Statement

Artist Statement: Word Choice

STUDENT'S NAME:

LOVE

PAST: Please write why you chose some of the words that you used on your story board. There is a section for LOVE, LAUGHTER, and LIFE.

LAUGHTER

LIFE

Appendix K - Word Choice Worksheet

Buoyant Thoughts

***I Am Me* Characteristic Words**

As a part of the Buoyant THOUGHTS art unit, you will choose 15 words that will become a part of your *I Am Me* Story Board art project. You are special and there are special words that describe YOU. As the artist, you get to choose your thoughts and the words for this project. This isn't math and there is not a right and wrong answer. You are the artist! So, write 5 words that describe what you think of when you think of the words LOVE, LIFE, and LAUGHTER. Then, you will place these words on your artist art project.

*Love, laughter, and life" is taken from Herrera (2016).

YOUR NAME:

LOVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Page 1

***I Am Me* Characteristic Words, cont.**

LAUGHTER

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

LIFE

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix L - Word Choice Artist Statement

Artist Statement: Word Choice

STUDENT'S NAME:

PAST: Please write why you chose some of the words that you used on your story board. There is a section for LOVE, LAUGHTER, and LIFE.

LOVE

LAUGHTER

LIFE



Appendix N - *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy Unit*

I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy

EXPLORING SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ART EDUCATION

CURRICULUM UNIT

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CURRICULUM UNIT

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I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy

EXPLORING SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL ART EDUCATION

ART CURRICULUM UNIT

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Storytelling is "the oral presentation of a story from memory by an individual to a person or group, teller and listener interact as transmitters and receivers of thoughts and ideas" (Gallets, 2005, p. 10). This definition, and others, assumes that the transmission of stories involves only words, yet stories are expressed with verbal and visual language (Olson, 1998). Those who tell

Visual and verbal forms of expression ar simply two sides of the same coin, each contributing to the value and purpose of story. The concept of story is the inherent and natural link between the image and the word and enables a full range of expression and communication. (p. 179)



INTRODUCTION

This 8-session art curriculum unit was taught as part of my doctoral degree research at Kansas State University's College of Education where I sought to obtain a doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction. By writing and exploring social and emotional learning through art education, I sought more relevant 21st century purposes for art education within the middle school art education program. Upon further study, this research could also be relevant in the elementary and high school art programs. This study is titled "I am me: Using buoyant biopsychosocial art education curriculum and story boards to explore self-esteem with sixth grade students." This study used qualitative research and an instrumental, single case study to answer the following main question and related questions:

In what ways do 6th graders exhibit self-esteem in various artistic phases of a story board art project?

- How can an art project such as the I Am Me Story Board help facilitate an intercultural community within the art classroom?
- How can curriculum such as the I Am Me art curriculum produce meaningful 21st century learning above and beyond art content for sixth grade students?

The unit consists of pre-unit activities, 8 art making sessions, and post-unit activities. I co-taught this art curriculum unit with the art teacher at Smithville USA Middle School at an urban, highly diverse school to two 6th grade classes. The unit focuses on an investigation of positivity and self-esteem through the use of the word BUOYANCY, meaning to uplift or be uplifting. 6th grade is when students typically transition as children from elementary school to middle school and becoming adolescents. This unit assists students' journey of discovery about who they are, what is important to them, their individual characteristics, and also how they function within the intercultural community of the classroom and school environment. Students make six art projects as a part of this unit and all focus on buoyancy: Bird Masks, Chilean Arpilleras, Nigerian Inspired Hot Air Balloons, Sun Paper Weaving, Stone Painted Fish, and the I Am Me Story Boards. The unit begins with an exploration of tangible objects of buoyancy and transitions to intangible aspects such as thoughts, feelings, and personality characteristics. The goal is for students to focus on good qualities within themselves, lifting themselves up with positivity, and also lifting others up.

THOUGHTS of Buoyancy

6TH GRADE ART UNIT



SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

“In contrast to logic or reason, a story is about emotion that gets staged over a sequence of dramatic moments, so you empathize with the characters without really thinking about it too much. It is a really powerful tool for imagining yourself in other people’s situations.”
-Ira Glass

SUBTHEMES	PROJECT	ARTISTIC BEHAVIOR	MATERIALS	TECHNIQUES	CONCEPTS
•TELL (Tell about yourself.)	•Bird Masks •Discussion & Examples of Story Board	•Create •Imagination •Storytelling	•Mask base, ribbon, various papers, trims. •Explain storyboards.	•Assemblage, 3D Design.	•Self-esteem •Positivity •Buoyancy: Birds
•his/herSTORY (Share your story.)	•Chilean Arpilleras •Story Board Background	•Hue •Shades •Tints	•Construction paper, painted paper, yarn. •Canvas, paint, digital camera.	•Collage, sewing. •Painting, photography.	•Family & Community •Journey •Buoyancy: Definition & Story
•OBLIQUE (Examine oblique thoughts.)	•Nigerian Hot Air Balloons •Story Board Geometric Design	•Lines •Angles •Shape	•Cardboard, paint, jute, digital image. •Canvas, digital image.	•Painting, assemblage, photography. •Painting, photography.	•Personality •Diversity •Community •Buoyant Focus: Balloons
•UNIQUE (Reveal what makes you unique & happy.)	•Sun Paper Weaving •Story Board Photos	•Self-Portraits •Composition •Expression	•Painted paper, cardboard, quotes. •Papers, permanent markers.	•Painting, weaving, assemblage, word art. •Word art.	•Happiness •Brightness •Buoyant Focus: Sun
•GLOW (What makes you personally glow?)	•Painted Stone Fish •Story Board Words	•Emphasis •Texture •Rhythm	•Stones, paint. •Papers, permanent markers, glue.	•Painting. •Assemblage and collage.	•Specialness •Characteristics •Buoyancy: Boat & Fish
•HONE (Hone & dream about your future.)	•Story Board Assembly	•Balance •Unity •Aesthetics	•Canvas, papers, permanent markers, paint, glue.	•Painting. •Assemblage and collage.	•Future •Buoyant Focus: Dreams
•THINK (Think of how to achieve goals.)	•Story Board Assembly	•Language: Visual Verbal Visual/Verbal	•Canvas, papers, permanent markers, paint, glue.	•Painting. •Assemblage and collage.	•Careers •Buoyant Focus: Goals
•SHARE (Share projects & tell visual/verbal story.)	•In-Class Gallery Show	•Art Appreciation	•All completed	•Gallery •Sharing	•Past, Present, Future •Buoyant Focus: Intercultural community

The *I Am Me: THOUGHTS of Buoyancy Unit* is ninety-one pages in length. A brief summary of this 8-week art education curriculum unit is provided here in this dissertation appendix. If you would like more information on the curriculum unit please contact Trina Harlow at tharlow@ksu.edu.