

PAINING A PICTURE OF CHANGE: VETERAN ART TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF  
STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE ART CLASSROOM

by

DREW BROWN

(Under the Direction of Carole Henry)

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examined veteran art teachers' perspectives of change with the recent implementation and increased emphases of Georgia's state visual arts standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students. To understand art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching had changed over time, data was constructed from interviews, field notes and documents such as lesson plans. Operating in a constructivist paradigm, I asked the following questions: How do teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction? How do teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction? How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards? How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work? Findings were discussed through four themes connected to three teachers' interwoven stories: art teachers building, art teachers surrendering, art teachers maintaining and art teachers evolving. To understand art teachers' experiences with change, I examined the data within the perspective of John Dewey's theory of experience. This study offered a deeper understanding of the impact of the national and state standards movements on art education. For policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and educators, this research can be used to extract

issues from the field in regard to planning for and teaching with state standards and implementing assessment strategies. Problematic issues in regard to art teachers' experiences with standards and assessments are explored. This research may also invoke questions and discussions about the direction of educational reform and standards implementation.

**INDEX WORDS:** Education standards, Performance standards, Standards-based teaching, Art education, Curriculum and planning, State standards, Accountability, Visual arts, Assessments

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## DEDICATION

To my husband Kirk who has supported me in my pursuit of this research with his kind words, gentle encouragement, and action around the house when I was not there.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKS	Academic Knowledge and Skills
ACSS	Apple County School System (pseudonym)
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
CCRPI	College and Career Ready Performance Index
CogAT	Cognitive Abilities Test
CRCT	Criterion Referenced Competency Test
CSC	County Standards and Curriculum (pseudonym)
DBAE	Discipline Based Art Education
ELA	English Language Arts
ELL	English Language Learners
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
GADOE	Georgia Department of Education
GAEA	Georgia Art Education Association
GHS GT	Georgia High School Graduation Test
GPS	Georgia Performance Standards
IASA	Improving America's Schools Act (1994)
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act

ITBS	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
LSPI	Local School Plan for Improvement
MENC	Music Educators National Conference
NAEA	National Art Education Association
NAME	National Association for Music Education
NCCAS	National Coalition for Core Arts Standards
NCEST	National Council on Education Standards and Testing
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NGA	National Governors Association
PBL	Project Based Learning
PLU	Professional Learning Unit
RBES	Results-Based Evaluation System
RT3	Race to the Top
SBR	Standards Based Reform
SPG	Student Performance Goal
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and math
STEAM	Science, technology, engineering, art and math
TAG	Talented and Gifted
TPAI	Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument
QCC	Quality Core Curriculum

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: PUZZLING OUT THE PROBLEM

Come gather 'round people  
Wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters  
Around you have grown  
And accept it that soon  
You'll be drenched to the bone  
If your time to you  
Is worth savin'  
Then you better start swimmin'  
Or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a-changin'.

- Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, (1963)

In 2010, Georgia's State Board of Education adopted new performance learning standards for visual arts, grades kindergarten through twelve. The study presented in this dissertation seeks to explore veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of state standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students.

Research has addressed standards-based education in the role of educational reform and, on the other hand, in the narrowing of the curriculum. Oreck (2006) states, "Pressure for immediate test score improvement and standardization of curriculum has limited the creativity and autonomy of teachers" (p. 2).

Over 20 years ago, Eisner (1994) warned:

The formulation of standards and the measurement of performance were intended to tidy up a messy system and to make teachers and school administrators truly accountable.

The aim was then, and is today, to systematize and standardize so that the public will

know which schools are performing well and which are not. There were to be then, and there are today, payments and penalties for performance. (p. 1)

Standards-based reform is perceived by some scholars as limiting the potential for creativity, critical thinking and relevance in today's world. Olivia Gude (2007) poses the question, "Has any art teacher ever reviewed the national or state standards for art education ...then declared, 'I feel so motivated to make some art!' I don't believe so, and this is why using standards as they are conventionally written is not an ideal structure on which to elaborate a curriculum" (para.1). Gude served on the visual arts writing team for the new National Coalition for Core Arts Standards adopted in 2014 (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, para. 3).

One of the most important studies to date, concerning NCLB and art education, is Sabol's (2010) seminal work, *NCLB: A Study of Its Impact on Art Education Programs*. In his report, Sabol describes the results of his survey of over 3000 art educators. He reports both the positive and negative consequences of NCLB on art education. While NCLB named the arts as a core area of learning, art educators reported negative impact in the areas of scheduling, workloads, and funding in art education.

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine art teachers' perspectives of change, the impact of the national and state standards movements on their teaching, and how they adapt instructional strategies in adherence to state standards. Problematic issues ensued through adoption of the standards will be examined as well. It is not the purpose of the study to define best practices in standards-based teaching, but rather to raise dialogue around standards implementation and the change perceived by teachers of art. The importance of the study lies in the potential to build meaning in the context of closely examining art educators' experiences with implementation of standards-based art curricula.

As an art educator in public schools since 1994, I have observed and experienced change across the years. From penciled-in lessons with bullet points to lessons written in required formats such as a color-coded seven step standards based lesson plans complete with daily essential questions, my planning and instruction for visual art classes has changed over time. The adoption of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) altered the world of education through its support of standards-based reform, increased accountability, funding changes and an expanded federal role in public education.

Thinking back to my first year of teaching (1994), I recall trying to stay one step ahead of the students. I created lessons around art media that interested me. In 1994, Disciplined Based Art History (DBAE) was still widely accepted as an overarching curricular framework (Dobbs, 1992). So, the four tenets of DBAE, art production, art history, criticism and aesthetics, guided my planning in the early years and still remain interwoven throughout my teaching today. I began my teaching career in Georgia in Gwinnett County Public Schools. In Gwinnett, art teachers used the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) which was the county's own version of standards aligned with Georgia's QCC (Quality Core Curriculum). It is customary that the largest school systems in Georgia have initiated their own standards aligned with state standards. The QCC functioned as a checklist for me. I checked off standards as we covered them and occasionally allowed those missed standards to spark new lessons. In the mid-1990s, there was no accountability for whether I covered the standards or documented the standards on my lessons.

The way in which art educators have adapted, resisted, embraced, welcomed and/or avoided sweeping change imposed by increased emphases on state standards is underexposed in the field of art education. Scholarly literature reveals that data collection related to standards-

based education in the broad sense of school reform is abundant. Martin-Kniep (2003) states, “The standards movement is no longer new. Virtually every state has generated standards for graduation and, in many cases, for student attainment at different stages of its K–12 curriculum” (p. 15). Nevertheless, we need more data specifically related to the usage of standards and assessments in the visual arts classroom.

In May 2013, Maureen Downey, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, reported, “Apparently in an effort to stave off a repeal of the Common Core State Standards adopted in 2009, Gov. Nathan Deal signed an executive order affirming state sovereignty in education, prohibiting a federal curriculum to be imposed in Georgia and banning collection of identifiable student data for the Feds” (para. 1). Clearly, there is a need to study the connection between teachers’ perceptions of teaching with performance standards and implications for state policy and federal involvement. The controversy over standards adoption continues, and numerous states are involved in dialogue around efforts to repeal Common Core standards adoption.

I was always intrigued by how teachers approached the standards and prioritized what they were teaching. What were their intrinsic motivations in thinking and planning for instruction? How much and to what extent are teachers guided by extrinsic policies? It was a natural choice for me to study a subject that I was so familiar with, yet had perplexed me over the years. From my own experience, I have witnessed that art teachers by-and-large write their own curricula. One of my administrators had been under the impression that art lessons were written by county personnel in the same way instructional units are handed to our TAG (Talented and Gifted) team. In fact, art teachers in my county write their own lessons and units. While we often share units of instruction, we are responsible for weekly lessons for six grade levels (K-5). I wondered what the intersection looked like where teachers approached the monumental task of

covering the GPS (Georgia Performance Standards) and designed and implemented their own original lessons. How were veteran teachers experiencing the increased emphases on standards and accountability measure that have been put in place in today's school systems? What could I learn from talking with veteran elementary school teachers about standards implementation? How had the changes shaped the teachers' attitudes and perceptions? How would my own understandings intersect with other teachers' perspectives? From this place of genuine interest and wondering, I began my research journey. I assembled my disjointed wonderings into a qualitative study.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

In spite of literature addressing the impact of policies aimed at school reform, the field lacks current research that addresses how standards are interpreted and experienced by classroom teachers, especially art teachers. This need for research includes a call for examination of teachers' perspectives of teaching and assessing student learning with state standards and assessment, especially in relation to their thinking, perceptions, and practices in the classroom. The impact of external accountability policies, such as those brought on by NCLB, has been touched on in regard to the arts as both a policy and curricular issue. Through examining teachers' perspectives of standards and accountability, the proposed study has the potential to contribute to the current discussion by adding new meaning to our understanding of the disconnect between the understanding of teachers' experiences and perceptions and policy implementation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students. My research questions were:

1. How do art teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
2. How do art teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
3. How do art teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?
4. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?

### **Significance of the Study**

The intent of this research was to explore art teachers' perspectives and experiences with standards implementation in their work with elementary level visual arts students. What can we learn from three teachers working in one school system in Georgia who each experienced change in their own unique way? What differences and commonalities are revealed in regard to how teachers incorporated the standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction? What are teachers' reflections as a result of using the GPS standards? What can we learn from these teachers as they describe how their teaching has changed over time?

The significance of this study lies in the potential to build meaning through a close examination of art educators' experiences with standards-based art curricula. In this dissertation, teachers' voices will be heard through a re-telling of narratives regarding perceptions of student learning and assessment practices in standards based classrooms. University of Georgia Art

Education Professor Dr. Carole Henry states, “This is a real need in the field, not only in Georgia but also nationally as there is often a disconnect between educational theory, policy, and classroom practice” (personal communication, April 26, 2012). Results from this study could inform how state policy is linked to classroom practices and how teachers make meaning of the state standards and accountability practices.

The field of art education would could benefit from this research, which will interprets how art teachers connect state policies (implementation of standards and accountability) with their own curriculum design and implementation. For graduate students and art educators, this research offers a deeper understanding of the impact of national and/or state standards movements on art education. For policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and educators, this research could be used to extract issues from the field such as instructional strategies and/or problematic issues for teachers seeking to implement performance standards and adhere to policy. For humankind, this study can shed light on how policy implementation in education effects affects the perceptions of teachers of young learners, especially in the area of art education.

This dissertation begins with a review of literature in Chapter 2. My approach to the literature review was to begin with a discussion of standards based reform on the national level and state level. I then progressed to a discussion of influential policies and initiatives with a focus on the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. I reviewed empirical literature connected to teachers’ experiences with standards based reform. Later in the chapter, I address my theoretical framework in regard to John Dewey’s theory of experience. Also included in Chapter 2 is a discussion of my pilot study conducted in 2013. In Chapter 3, I will outline the qualitative study design, my constructivist paradigm, and my use of narrative synthesis as an approach to the

analysis of data. Chapter 4 will give descriptions of Apple County (pseudonym), the schools, and the teachers in this study. Chapters 5 through 8 analyze the findings through a re-telling of the teachers' perspectives using the themes of art teachers building, art teachers surrendering, art teachers maintaining, and art teachers evolving. Chapter 9 provides a profile of an outlier by recalling the story of teacher who had a strikingly different perspective from the participants in this study. In Chapter 10, I conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for practitioners, policy makers and the field of art education as a whole.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To establish a contextual understanding for this study, it is first necessary to seek understanding of the basic tenets of the national standards-based reform movement. In this review of literature, I will discuss the impact of the adoption of standards in regard to classroom practices, student achievement and accountability. From this understanding, I will describe the origin of the national visual arts standards unveiled in 1994. Next, I will briefly describe the newly adopted arts standards released by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS). Next, I will describe state level standards-based reform with an emphasis on Georgia's change from the Quality Core Curriculum to Performance Standards. I will discuss federally funded projects and initiatives shaping veteran teachers' current attitudes and experiences. In doing so, I will briefly discuss the influence of the *No Child Left Behind* policy on teachers in art education, Common Core State Standards and the federal Race to the Top grant initiative. Furthermore, a review of empirical studies examining teachers' experiences with standards based reform is especially helpful in framing the scope of my own study.

#### **Standards-Based Reform on the National Level**

Goertz (2008) states, "Education standards have been expressed through laws, common curriculum and textbooks, and entrance requirements for more than 200 years" (p. 53).

Standards-based reform first gained momentum in 1983, under President Ronald Reagan. With federal educational goals and objectives highlighted in the influential work, *A Nation at Risk*, (released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education under former U.S. Secretary

of Education Terrel H. Bell), conversation and controversy surrounded the current state of education in the United States. The widely publicized report declared, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (U.S. Department of Education, 1983) (A Nation at Risk section, para. 1). Action was spurred among lawmakers to remedy the deficit in education.

Debray (2006) recounts, "The standards movement reached its high point following the 1989 Charlottesville governors' summit, at which six National Education Goals were adopted, and the National Education Goals Panel was created to monitor progress toward them. Various federal commissions, including the bipartisan National Commission on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST), recommended a federal role for helping states set benchmarks for what students should know and be able to do at different grade levels" (p. 27). In 1991 *America 2000* was initiated by President George Bush. In 1994, President Clinton expanded the effort with *Goals 2000: Educate American Act* which sought to provide funding to make the U.S. first in mathematics in the world. Clinton's mandate emphasized pre-kindergarten education, sought to eliminate adult illiteracy, and make every school drug-free and safe (Relic, 2012). Goertz explains how these ideas were incorporated into federal policy, beginning with the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) in 1994, "which required states to develop challenging content standards in at least reading and mathematics, create high quality assessments to measure performance against these standards, and have local districts identify low performing schools for assistance" (p. 54). IASA and Goals 2000 prodded states to advance their overall standards-based reforms for all students and directed the \$11 billion allocation of Title I toward helping children in poverty meet the new state standards. Goertz surmises that Goals 2000 legislation

“provided funding for states and localities to design the components of a standards-based system and to build the capacity of local districts to implement these reforms” (p. 54).

Baker, Hannaway and Shepard (2009) relate how the Clinton administration enacted the 1994 reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). This vision for an educational system revamped with standards-based reform was carried forward under the George W. Bush administration with the highly controversial *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). Under NCLB, the substance and academic content of standards has remained the responsibility of states (Goertz, p. 54). Schwartz (2009) states, “A cornerstone premise of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) is that the federal government can ensure that all states adopt rigorous, broad education standards and aligned curricula and assessment instruments” (p. 185).

According to the National Academy of Education (2009), content standards describe the subject matter of what students should know and be able to do. Performance standards describe at what level students should be able to perform and are likely to be connected to standardized test scores. Schwartz (2009) argues that the standards movement attempts to “apply well-established principles of effective organizational development and behavior to the K-12 sector” (p. 185). Disparagingly, Baker, Hannaway, and Shepard (2009) state, “Ambitious rhetoric has called for systemic reform and profound changes in curriculum and assessments to enable higher levels of learning. In reality, however, implementation of standards has frequently resulted in a much more familiar policy of test-based accountability, whereby test items often become crude proxies for the standards” (p. 1).

NCLB supports standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education. Dr. Diane Ravitch, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education in the George W. Bush

administration and former member of NAEP's (National Assessment of Educational Progress) governing board, urged serious discussion of a national curriculum, arguing that states should set high standards and accountability measures. At one time an advocate of standardized testing, Ravitch pushed for a national curriculum aligned to NAEP standards, which include tests in key subjects including the arts, aligned with international tests. Since serving under the Bush administration, Ravitch has reversed her philosophy and no longer backs national standards (Chapman, 2007). Ravitch (2013) outlines her frustration with the school-reform movement in her newest book, *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*. Ravitch argues against the validity of standardized test results, international test scores, and teacher accountability measures associated with student test scores. She posits that lawmakers should instead enact measures against poverty and racial and socioeconomic inequities to improve the plight of families and children in the United States.

In *Preparing Teachers of Art* (Day, 1997) Goodwin asks, "Does America Need National Teaching Standards?" Goodwin states, "Teachers are being held more accountable for student achievement—a departure from the 1980s, when teacher accountability was measured by on-the-job evaluations and written tests" (p. 111). Goodwin points out the growing interest in the development and implementation of content and student standards in the arts in the mid 1980s. He traces an evolution of educational priorities from the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* and Goodlad's study of teacher education published in 1990 to the 1994 National Education Goals Report indicating marginal educational gains in a scrutinizing examination of the American education system.

In the paper, *Standards-Based Reform in the United States: History, Research, and Future Directions*, commissioned by the Center on Education Policy for its project *Rethinking*

*the Federal Role in Education*, Hamilton, Stecher, and Yuan (2008) state that there has been considerable research on the implementation of standards-based reform (SBR) and the impact of its various components. The authors outline several lines of investigation, including: 1) Research examining the quality of the standards. A review of this research work suggests that there continues to be a lack of unanimity regarding the features of high-quality standards. It is not uncommon for state standards to receive high ratings from one organization and criticism from another entity. 2) Research addressing the critical question of how SBR affects what educators carry out in the classroom. Most research relevant to SBR has focused on the connection between high-stakes standardized tests and educators' practices. The prevalence of research regarding the impact of testing rather than the impact of standards indicates that standards-based reform has given way to "test-based reform," a system in which the test rather than the standards communicates expectations and drives practice. Studies of relationships between high-stakes testing and school/classroom practices indicate that high-stakes testing systems influence the work of teachers and administrators. Some changes in practices include providing additional instruction to low-performing students and taking steps to align the school curriculum across grades. Other changes, such as shifting resources from untested subjects to tested subjects or focusing on specific test item styles or formats, raise concerns about possible negative effects on the quality of instruction (Hamilton et al., 2008).

Hamilton et al. (2008) state that teachers have maintained a high level of autonomy in how they teach, and that SBR (or its proxy, test based reform) typically does not produce fundamental changes in pedagogy. Thus, while the impact of SBR does appear to impact educators' practices, it does not always do so in consistent or predictable ways.

### **Standards-Based Reform and Classroom Practices**

According to Hamilton (2003, 2008) at the classroom level, teachers have reported loss of instructional time in non-tested subjects in order to provide more instruction in tested subjects. Reallocation of instructional time was also found across tested and non-tested content and skills within subjects: teachers reported devoting more attention to material that is included in the test and skipping or understating material that is not tested (Hamilton, 2003; Hamilton et al., 2008). Qualitative research on teachers' responses to high-stakes tests provides additional evidence of instructional changes in response to the test formats and accountability measures (Hamilton et al., 2008).

### **Standards-Based Reform and Student Achievement**

Improved student achievement is widely viewed as the primary goal of SBR. Measuring student achievement in regard to SBR is difficult due to the variation in state standards and accountability tests across states. Recent gains on state accountability tests suggest that achievement in some states as measured by state tests has increased since the enactment of *No Child Left Behind*. These gains could be due to test-based reform, to other reforms taking place at the same time, or to a phenomenon called score inflation (i.e., score increases on high-stakes tests that primarily reflect narrow test-preparation activities geared toward a specific test). The exact reasons for gains in test scores remains unclear (Hamilton et al., 2008).

Establishing a direct causal relationship between SBR and achievement is also difficult due to the existence of various coexisting education reform efforts. It is challenging to distinguish the state and district characteristics that influence the extent to which accountability policies were enacted, thus making it difficult to assess the real effect of SBR on achievement.

## **Standards-Based Reform and Accountability**

One approach for examining the influence of SBR is to study relationships between accountability policies and student achievement. Carnoy and Loeb (2002) examined the relationship between the strength of state accountability and achievement gains students made on the NAEP mathematics tests in 1996 to 2000. They reported that 8th-graders in states with strong accountability systems improved more than students in states with weak or nonexistent accountability systems on the NAEP mathematics test (1996 to 2000). Jacob (2005) reported that students in the Chicago Public Schools increased their mathematics and reading achievement scores after the implementation of an accountability policy in 1996 to 97. Hanushek and Raymond (2005) found a positive relationship between the implementation of accountability policy and achievement gains, 1992 to 2002, in 42 states (Hamilton et al., 2008).

The achievement gains that accompanied the introduction of stronger accountability systems suggest a positive link between SBR and achievement, at least in the area of math and reading test scores. However, many questions that are critical to fully understanding the effect of SBR on achievement remain unaddressed, including how to measure true achievement gains and how to identify the direct contribution of standards based reform. There is a need for more research to address these issues. (Hamilton et al., 2008).

## **National Arts Standards**

Goertz (2010) states, “Although the public is divided in its support of the NCLB Act (Rose and Gallup 2007), the concept of higher academic content and performance standards is generally accepted among the public, educators, and policy makers (p. 55).” Arts educators are included among those who have supported the development of standards. In this section, I will

outline the history of the National Visual Arts Standards accepted by the Department of Education in 1994 and the release of the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) in 2014.

In January 1992, the National Council on Education Standards and Testing (NCEST) called for a system of voluntary national standards and assessments in the "core" subjects of math, English, science, history, and geography, with other subjects to follow. The arts were the first of the other subjects to receive federal funding. With the passage of the national reform legislation *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* in 1994, the arts were recognized for the first time as a core academic subject.

According to the website for the National Association for Music Education (NAME), (formerly known as the Music Educators National Conference-MENC), MENC on behalf of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, received a total of \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop voluntary national standards for each of the four arts disciplines—music, visual arts, theatre, and dance—in grades K-12. This work took place from June 1992 to June 1994. Providing a basis for constructing new curricula, these voluntary standards describe the knowledge, skills, and understanding that all students should acquire in the arts. Monitored by the National Committee for Standards in the Arts, the project included representatives from education, business, government, and the arts. A. Graham Down, president of the Council for Basic Education, chaired the National Committee (The National Standards for Arts Education: A Brief History, n.d.)

Task forces from each of the four organizations in the Consortium drafted the standards, which described the accepted level of content that all students should acquire in the arts for a well-rounded education. According to NAME website:

For each discipline, the content standards are pedagogically coherent and consider the special needs of children from diverse cultural backgrounds, children with disabilities, and technology's role in teaching the arts. The standards are organized into three sections by grade level: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. Within each section are content standards that specify what the student should know and be able to do in the arts disciplines. (The National Standards for Arts Education: A Brief History, para.5)

After two years of deliberations over their development, the arts standards were approved by the National Committee on January 31, 1994. On March 11, 1994, the final document, the National Standards for Arts Education, was presented to U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley at a press conference in Washington, D.C. at the National Press Club. Under a grant to MENC from the Catherine T. and John D. MacArthur Foundation and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, a twelve-member task force was appointed to develop issues and strategy papers that addressed the implementation of the arts standards among various constituencies. These papers have been published in a book entitled *Perspectives on Implementation Arts Education Standards for American's Students* (The National Standards for Arts Education: A Brief History, n.d.)

NAEA was quick to recognize that, although in a constant state of flux, standards-based reform, in 1994, was now a permanent part of our educational culture. Jeanne Rollins, NAEA, states:

These standards offer one road map for competence and educational effectiveness, but without casting a mold into which all visual arts programs must fit. The standards are intended to focus on the student learning results that come from basic education, not how art is to be taught. The matter of curriculum and teaching strategies are decisions for the

states, school districts, and art teachers. It is our hope to provide art education goals and not a national curriculum; we do believe the standards can improve multiple types of art instruction. (Preface section The National Visual Arts Standards, para. 4)

Since the adoption of The National Visual Arts Standards in 1994, widespread change has occurred in the U.S educational system. In keeping with the shift toward performance standards, which outline not only what students should know and be able to do but also on what level students should perform, the newly formed partnership of organizations and states, National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) is currently leading the revision the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education. This work began in summer 2011 (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards).

The National Association for Music Education (NAME) and National Art Education Association (NAEA) are focused on the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS). Currently, NCCAS standards chairs from each of the five arts disciplines and Project Director Philip Shepherd have been working with national writing teams in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts to create grade-level standards. NCCAS leadership, with over sixty writers, has created a new framework for arts learning. The new NCCAS standards were adopted in 2014 for PreK-12 arts standards in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts. (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, para. 1-6).

The standards, utilizing the “Understanding by Design” approach to curriculum development formulated by assessment authorities Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005), are linked to each artistic process in grades preK-8, with assessments at benchmark grades two, five, and high school. The voluntary National Core Arts Standards were written to guide arts

curriculum, instruction, and assessment. According to the website, the new standards emphasize the process-oriented nature of the arts and arts learning (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework, p. 6).

The format and design of this new set of standards are purported to be “different”, changing the manner in which art educators interact with standards and assessments. The new standards do not seek to define or disseminate lists of what students should know and be able to do. These “new standards are measurable and attainable learning events based on artistic goals” (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework, p. 7, para. 17). It is reported that these standards are being developed with the consideration of current trends in the field of public education, including the Common Core State Standards. Educators familiar with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, in particular, may find similarities in structure that will aid in the implementation of the National Core Arts Standards. Also, educators will find differences in content and presentation that stem from the unique nature and traditions of each art form (National Core Arts Standards: A Conceptual Framework, p. 7).

### **Standards-Based Education in Georgia**

As required by state law, the Quality Basic Education Act of 1985, Georgia must uphold a curriculum that details what students are expected to know in each subject and grade. According to the state board of education, the standardized Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for grades three through eight and the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) for grade eleven must be aligned with that curriculum. Over the last several years, Georgia has adopted a new set of standards, the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

In January 2002, a Phi Delta Kappa audit named several shortfalls in the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC): it lacked depth, could not be covered in a reasonable amount of time, and

was not aligned with national standards. According to the report, the state had not provided a usable and effective curriculum to guide instruction and many systems had to pay consultants to pare down the topics to a manageable level that may or may not align with standardized tests. The report concluded that Georgia's students have not performed well on state or national tests, such as the SAT, due in part to the inadequacy of the QCC ("Georgia Performance Standards", 2012).

The audit prompted the state government, along with the State Board of Education, to create a revised and strengthened curriculum. Statewide assessments were to support the GPS in an effort to align teaching and to provide guidelines for schools, students, and test makers. The GPS were the result of months of work by teacher teams, state and national specialists, and consultants. Teams examined national standards from high-performing states such as Michigan, Texas, and North Carolina, and nations such as Japan, and consulted the guidelines of national groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Performance standards were set to go into much greater depth than the content standards used in the previous curriculum. The new Georgia performance standards incorporated the content standards (which simply tells the teacher what a student is expected to know) and provided suggested tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary. The GPS includes standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, foreign language, career and technical education, health, physical education, and fine arts ("Georgia Performance Standards, GPS", 2012). Adoption of new standards in the subject area of language arts took

place in 2004, while math, science and social studies were phased in (2004-2012). In 2010, Georgia's State Board of Education adopted new performance learning standards for visual arts, grades kindergarten through twelve.

### **Georgia's Visual Arts Standards**

Hamilton et al. (2008) surmise that while the focus of most standards-based reform systems has been on mathematics and reading, states have adopted academic content standards for other subjects including history/social studies, science, arts, and physical education. The existence of these standards reflects a broad consensus that well-educated citizens need to know more than mathematics and reading. According to Georgia's Department of Education, The Georgia Performance Standards for Fine Arts are based on The National Standards for Arts Education. The National Standards outline what every K-12 student should know and be able to do in the arts. The GaDOE Georgia Standards website (2011) states:

As described in the National Standards for Arts Education, arts education benefits both student and society. The arts cultivate the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. The Georgia Performance Standards support the arts in the "academic" standing in that mere participation is not the same as education. The standards affirm that discipline and rigor are critical to high academic achievement. Performance-based assessment has long been used in the arts that include the practice of portfolio review in the visual arts and the assessment of performance skills through auditions used in dance, music, and theatre. The content of the

standards for the arts attends to creating, performing, and responding, which is consistent with and informs the perspective of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (Georgia Standards, Fine Arts section, para.2)

### **Influential Policy and Initiatives in Standards-Based Reform**

In examining initiatives and projects in the convoluted world of standards-based reform, three areas call for close examination. First, *The No Child Left Behind Act* is a powerful and controversial policy that changed the landscape of American education. Second, the recent adoption of the Common Core State Standards by 45 states establishes the reality that stakeholders in U.S education have a desire to regulate and homogenize education goals and practices. Last, the Race to the Top grant program is currently guiding decisions by stakeholders and administrators and steering the direction of education in many states and school systems. In the next section, I will briefly explain the surrounding factors of each of these three phenomena in American education and attempt to connect their significance to art education.

#### **NCLB**

In a seminal work, Bob Sabol, Ph.D. Purdue University, published *NCLB: A Study of Its Impact on Art Education Programs*, supported by a grant from the National Art Education Association. Sabol (2010) states, “NCLB has caused the American public to focus its attention on the purposes of education in the United States and its expectations for the education systems in the nation” (p. 5). Sabol points out that inclusion of the arts as one of the core subjects is of utmost importance in federal legislation. In his report, Sabol describes the results of his survey of over 3000 art educators. He reports both the positive and negative consequences of NCLB on art education. In the areas of staffing, teaching loads, and enrollments, art education programs have experienced limited negative consequences because of *No Child Left Behind*. In addition, *No*

*Child Left Behind* has created a number of negative affects on art education programs in the areas of scheduling and funding. According to Sabol (2010), art educators generally have negative attitudes about the overall impact NCLB has had on art education programming. Many respondents suggested that instead of improving the status of art education, NCLB has contributed to furthering its marginalization and diminishing the status of art education.

Beveridge (2010) states, “Some of the short-term effects of this law (NCLB) have troubling implications for subjects that are not evaluated for the purposes of determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a measure that serves as the basis for all federal funding” (p. 4). While fine art (art and music) is named as a core subject, only reading, writing, and math skills are evaluated for AYP. One problematic area stemming from the role of NCLB is connected to AYP and funding. Another problematic trend discussed by Costantino (2009) is that of decreased instructional time for art and music. This deficiency in scheduling results from the narrowing of the curriculum with increased accountability emphasis on reading and math. Furthermore, Costantino states that “instructional time decreases are more pronounced in schools serving a majority of low-income and minority students and schools designated as failing according to NCLB guidelines” (p. 70). Indeed, administrators have been forced to react in respect to both funding and scheduling to be in compliance with the requirements of NCLB.

According to Benham-Deal (2007), time (or lack of it) is an issue for teachers across many disciplines. Many researchers have discussed how emphases on math and language arts, brought about by NCLB, has cut into available instruction time for other subjects causing problematic issues for teachers and learners.

## **Common Core State Standards**

The latest trend in standards to sweep the nation is the Common Core State Standards initiative. The Common Core State Standards project details benchmarks for K-12 students in English and math and describes what students should know to be fully prepared to compete successfully in the global economy (Mission statement section, para.1). The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and seeks to establish conformity in education standards across the states. At the onset of state accountability and mandatory tests of student achievement, the nation's governors and corporate leaders founded Achieve, Inc. in 1996 as a bi-partisan organization to raise academic standards, graduation requirements, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability. The Common Core State Standards have been adopted by forty-five states and three territories, some of which adopted Common Core to comply with Race to the Top federal grant requirements. Although community members, educators, policy makers, and researchers are not in concordance regarding the implementation and the quality of the Common Core State Standards, that discussion is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

In order to draw the attention of decision-makers regarding the educational relevance of art, Sabol (2012) speaks to the importance of the role of the National Art Education Association in assembling teams of writers to develop art standards that are consistent with the Common Core State Standards. "The Common Core Standards can be taught rather successfully in the arts classroom if the instruction is focused on using language arts and math to learn about art," Sabol says. That wasn't always the case under No Child Left Behind, Sabol says, noting that art teachers found themselves being forced to teach math and language arts during art class, and not necessarily by tying their lessons into art. In some cases, art courses were eliminated altogether.

In a position paper, Cardany (2013) supports the integration of common core in music education. She provides music educators with information to aid in managing the impact their state's adoption of the Common Core Standards. Cardany discusses English/language arts (ELA) and reading, with a focus on their alignment with typical music experiences in elementary general music classrooms. Cardany gives examples of sample texts and materials for use in attaining the standards. Cardany suggests some specialists are seeking to integrate Common Core standards into their own subject-area curricula, thus changing the way lessons are delivered.

### **Race to the Top in Georgia**

The Race to the Top fund was a \$4 billion grant initiated by the U.S. Department of Education under the administration of President Obama. Through Race to the Top, states were asked to advance reforms around four specific areas: 1. Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy, 2. Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction, 3. Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, 4. Turning around the lowest-achieving schools. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Race to the Top website:

Awards in Race to the Top will go to States that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform. Race to the Top winners will help trail-blaze effective reforms and will work on reforms that can transform our schools for decades to come. (Program Description section, para. 2)

Race to the Top funds were provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to support new approaches to school improvement. The funds are made

available in the form of competitive grants to encourage and reward states that are creating conditions for education innovation and reform (Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) Plan section, para. 1). As stated in *Race to the Top, Georgia Report Year Two*, Georgia's RT3 application sets forth the goal of equipping all Georgia students, "through effective teachers and leaders and through creating the right conditions in Georgia's schools and classrooms, with the knowledge and skills to empower them to 1) graduate from high school, 2) be successful in college and/or professional careers, and 3) be competitive with their peers throughout the United States and the world" (Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) Plan section, para. 2).

Georgia's application was prepared through a partnership between the Governor's Office, the Georgia Department of Education, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and education stakeholders. The state was awarded \$400 million to implement its Race to the Top plan, and the State Board of Education has direct accountability for the grant. As a grant winner, Georgia is partnering with 26 school systems around the state. According to the GaDOE website, half of the awarded funds will remain at the state level, and half will go directly to partnering local education authorities and school districts via their Title I formula. These districts, which make up 40 percent of public school students, 46 percent of Georgia's students in poverty, 53 percent of Georgia's African American students, 48 percent of Hispanics and 68 percent of the state's lowest achieving schools, are: Atlanta, Ben Hill, Bibb, Burke, Carrollton, Cherokee, Clayton, Dade, DeKalb, Dougherty, Gainesville, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Meriwether, Muscogee, Apple, Pulaski, Rabun, Richmond, Rockdale, Savannah-Chatham, Spalding, Treutlen, Valdosta and White ("Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) Plan section, para. 4).

Although the direct impact of RT3 on art teachers is unknown, the top down focus continues to be on English/language arts and mathematics. One area of RT3 emphasizes STEM,

curriculum meant to improve learning in science, technology, engineering and math. Arts advocates have suggested shifting to an emphasis on STEAM or science, technology, engineering, ART and math. While Race to the Top brings much-needed funds to the states, these funds, however, do come at some cost. In an interview conducted by del Rio (2014), art educator Michael Bell states:

As an artist I understand the value and the impact a quality arts education can have on children’s lives in public education ... the major problem I see (is) with the federal government controlling public education under the guise of President Obama’s “Race to the Top” (RT3) program, which in my opinion marginalizes the arts and any other areas not deemed a “major tested content area, such as Math or Reading. ... it’s brought major politics into the equation. Since individual States have to apply for Race to the Top funds, they also have to adopt the feds Common Core Standards, and many other “strings attached.” The funds won at the State level are distributed based on socio-economic status and the incentives are so great at the State level to win these funds that political pressure is put on State School Superintendents to apply and win these funds. Individual counties and districts also have to purchase the RT3 software for the national collection of student data and analysis (which is also sketchy in my opinion, at best). (Interview with Michael Bell, para.2)

Table 1

*State and National Benchmarks in Standards Based Reform*

Year	Benchmarks
1965	<i>Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)</i> signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson who place full educational opportunity as the first national goal (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, n.d.).
1983	<i>A Nation at Risk</i> was published.

1985	Georgia adopted the <i>Quality Basic Education Act of 1985</i> .
1988	Georgia adopted the <i>Quality Core Curriculum</i> for visual art.
1989	<i>Six National Education Goals</i> were adopted at the Charlottesville Governor's Summit.
1991	<i>America 2000</i> was initiated by President George Bush.
1994	Goals 2000: Educate America Act, initiated by President Bill Clinton, expanded America 2000.
1994	Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).
1994	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is reauthorized.
1994	National Visual Arts standards adopted by National Art Education Association.
2001	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was adopted.
2004-2012	Adoption of Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in language arts, math, science and social studies.
2009	Common Core Standards adopted in Georgia.
2009	Race to the Top funds were provided by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).
2010	Bob Sabol published NCLB: A Study of its Impact on Art Education Programs.
2010	Georgia adopted Georgia Performance Standards for visual arts.
2014	Georgia pulls away from Common Core Standards (not repealed but no longer required).
2014	Student Performance Goal standardized testing begins in visual arts in Apple County. Called Student Learning Objective (SLO) testing in some school districts.
2014	The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) launched the 2014 National Core Arts Standards.

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### **Teachers' Experiences with Standards-Based Reform**

Some knowledge and speculation about art teachers' experiences with standards-based curricula is revealed through scholarly literature. In the following section, I review empirical studies in detail in order to mesh their significance with my own experiences and my research. In

this explorative review of literature, I sought out studies examining the relationship between the impact of standards adoption to arts education and/or areas that fall outside of general education, such as music and physical education.

Abelmann and Elmore (1999) outlined a working theory for their study focusing primarily on schools and how schools construct their own conceptions of accountability. Their working theory puts forth a set of relationships among three factors: individual conceptions of responsibility; shared expectations among school participants and stakeholders; and internal and external accountability mechanisms. The researchers conducted case studies in twenty schools in major metropolitan areas on the east coast and west coast of the United States. Abelmann and Elmore (1999) state, “Schools form their conceptions of accountability from a variety of sources, including individual teachers’ and administrators’ beliefs about teaching and learning, their shared conceptions of who their students are, the routines they develop for getting their work done, and external expectations from parents, communities and the administrative agencies under which they work” (p. 3). The researchers deliberately did not seek schools that were operating in strong and obtrusive external accountability systems. Their research did suggest “that the attitudes, values, and beliefs of individual teachers and administrators— about what students can do, about what they can expect of each other, and about the relative influence of student, family, community, and school on student learning— are key factors in determining the solutions that schools construct to the accountability problem” (1999, pp. 42-43). The report of this study, aptly named *When Accountability Knocks, Will Anyone Answer?* suggests that many educators simply do not believe that they have the capacity to influence student learning in the ways that external accountability systems suggest they should. The researchers conclude that external

accountability systems will be relatively powerless in the absence of changed conceptions of individual responsibility and collective expectations within schools (Ablemann & Elmore, 1999).

Oreck (2006) examined six schools where the arts have been introduced into many pre-service and in-service professional development programs for general education teachers. At the time of this arts integration effort, pressure for immediate test-score improvement and standardization of curriculum had limited the creativity and autonomy of teachers. Oreck's study, *Artistic Choices: A Study of Teachers Who Use the Arts in the Classroom*, is the qualitative portion of a mixed-methods investigation of teachers across the U.S., involving six New York City elementary school teachers who found ways to use the arts in their classrooms on a regular basis despite the pressures they faced. The study investigated the personal characteristics and the factors that supported or constrained arts use in teaching. The results suggest that general creative and artistic attitudes rather than specific artistic skills are key to arts education implementation. A willingness to push boundaries and take risks defined this group of teachers. The strongest motivation for teachers to use the arts was their awareness of the diversity of learning styles and needs among their students. The teachers articulated a variety of ways in which arts-based professional development experiences encouraged them to bring their creativity into the classroom, expand their teaching repertoire, and find effective ways to incorporate the arts in the academic curriculum.

Benham-Deal, Jenkins, Wallhead, and Byra (2007) published a study, *The Impact of State Standards on Physical Education in Wyoming--A Decade of Change*, with a striking resemblance to my own research quest. The major difference in this study, aside from being focused on physical education, was the approach to methodology. Benham-Deal administered a questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions. Three distinct themes relating to

the impact of state standards on their physical education programs were seen in their analysis of data: (a) alignment of curriculum and instruction, (b) type and frequency of assessment, and (c) barriers and facilitators to effectiveness in meeting the standards. The most dominant perceived barrier to meeting the state standards that teachers reported was the issue of lack of time.

Frequently, participants stated that although the state standards created a much-needed framework to focus student learning, they still didn't have enough time to instruct and assess students. This particular finding was consistent with my own pilot study. Lack of time on the part of teachers is a perpetual problem, ranging from lack of student contact time to the need for more time for planning and collaboration with other teachers.

Benham-Deal et al. (2007) surmised that the overall attitude among teacher participants for adoption of standards based learning in this study was positive. The motivation of teachers to align their physical education programs with the state standards seems to have been sustained. Furthermore, teachers perceive administrative personnel to be more supportive of the physical education program since adoption of the standards.

In *Teacher Perspectives on No Child Left Behind and Arts Education: A Case Study*, Spohn (2008) investigated the condition of a public school arts education program in relation to No Child Left Behind. She examines teachers' perspectives of their experiences under the federal policy. Spohn used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate her research purpose in one Ohio public school district. The data collected revealed changes in the arts education curriculum, particularly in music. Teacher interviews were used in data collection and resulted in a description of the decrease in arts learning opportunities and the challenges that exist for arts education funding under NCLB. The data collection and analysis illustrated how administrative decisions made to improve test scores and accommodate policies mandated by

NCLB put forth obstacles and barriers for arts education. Data from this study indicate that both arts teachers and non-arts teachers believe instructional time and classroom practices have been altered in the district to accommodate NCLB requirements, resulting in a loss of both access to and learning in the arts.

Another study bearing some resemblance to my own pilot study, originated in Great Britain. Troman (2008) interviewed teachers new to the profession as well as experienced teachers in a study conducted to document changes in primary grades teachers' identity, commitment and perspectives of teaching. The research aimed to provide in-depth knowledge of schools engaged in performance-based learning and teachers' experiences in their work of teaching. Themes in the data reveal changed commitments and professional identities. The teachers who had an initial vocational commitment and strong service ethic were the older participants. Younger teachers stressed the importance of time compatibility for family-friendly work and childcare. The non-tangible rewards of teaching provided the main basis of commitment and professional work satisfaction. Teacher strategies emerged as important and differentiated in performative school cultures. Teachers mediated policy to develop creative approaches to increase test scores and/or to ameliorate the worst effects of testing. Increased effort and commitment from the teachers was noted, while their priorities were to hold onto their humanistic values and their self-esteem. Also noted were teachers' abilities to find ways of relating to rapidly changing policies and work contexts. Based on evidence from this study, teaching may no longer be considered as a job for life, and work may no longer be the major area of human activity around which personal and occupational identities are formed.

Ormond (2011) examined pedagogical shifts in art history teaching that have developed as a response to the implementation of a standards-based assessment regime. The specific

characteristics of art history standards-based assessment in the context of New Zealand secondary schools are explained in this study to demonstrate how an exacting form of assessment has led teachers to transform their practices to target precise assessment outcomes. The article also examines the complexities of facilitating effective learning for a skills-focused assessment program alongside an existing and demanding art history course. The researchers found assessment has, unintentionally, created shifts in the knowledge expectations of both students and teachers and changes in pedagogy as teachers align content with assessment practices.

As demonstrated in the five aforementioned studies, some researchers have focused on teachers' experiences with standards-based education and assessment. Research has addressed standards-based education in the role of educational reform and, on the other hand, in the narrowing of the curriculum. Several findings emerge from these five studies: 1) Teachers have both positive and negative perspectives regarding the impact of teaching with standards in relationship with teaching conditions and student learning. Some teachers view SBR as positive for advocacy reasons, such as increased support for their programs. Others see SBR as negative because of the obstacles it presents in their work. 2) Obstacles presented by SBR include lack of time for proper implementation, as well as time taken away from non-tested subjects, such as art and music. In fact, multiple studies report loss of access to the arts due to constraints brought on by NCLB. 3) SBR has resulted in teachers changing their strategies for teaching and mediating policy. Self-identity for new teachers may not be tied to the work place in the same way veteran teachers connect to occupational identity. 4) While pedagogical shifts connected to standards implementation has not been widely documented, changes in pedagogy have resulted from the implementation of test-based reform.

Tracing progress among the various entities, projects, and movements in standards-based school reform initiatives is complex work. Making meaningful connections between standards-based reform and change in arts education has been a primary goal for me. As the National Core Arts Standards were recently rolled out for visual art, music, dance and theater, researchers will serve the field well to study standards-based reform in the context of art education. The NAEA Visual Arts Standards (1994) states, “Arts education standards can make a difference because, in the end, they speak powerfully to two fundamental issues that spread through all of education—quality and accountability. They help ensure that the study of the arts is disciplined and well focused, and that arts instruction has a point of reference for assessing its results” (p. 3). Robert Sweeney (2014), editor of *Arts Education Journal*, deduces, “Standards are not inherently oppressive. All artists work within certain conditions, which provide the ability for cultural norms to be identified and potentially challenged” (p. 5).

The accountability movement has been widely researched and documented. In my review of literature, it was important for me to put my study into context among the research that relates to national trends in other subject areas. I found Benham-Deal’s (2007) research, conducted in Wyoming, to be of particular interest. Benham-Deal’s research questions were similar to those of this study except relating to physical education instead of visual arts. Benham-Deal conducted a mixed-methods study finding that teachers’ perceptions and experiences with of standards-implementation physical fitness education in Wyoming was positive. Ormond’s study (2011) reported that assessments had caused shifts in knowledge expectation and pedagogy on the parts of both student and teacher. Conducted in New Zealand, this study indicates that issues surrounding standards-implementation and assessments are not bound to the United States. This

study underlined the importance of continuing with my own work. The work of Abelman and Elmore (1999) spurred me to look more closely at the issue of school accountability and to begin linking those ideas to my own findings.

### **Theoretical Framework**

After reviewing the literature and conducting a pilot study, one theory in particular has emerged to influence the orientation of my study: John Dewey's theory of experience (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 1998). In an effort to establish a relationship with my research purpose, I will discuss aspects of Dewey's understanding of experience. My research was characterized by a constant ebb and flow of personal understanding, juxtaposed with social and material influences of real world interactions.

John Dewey (1938):

In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it. (cited in Boydston, 1981, p. 251 and Clandinin, 2013, p. 14)

Dewey (1938) made a distinction among three kinds of experience that can occur in schools and in life. Experience, for Dewey, was the means through which educational processes work. In his Theory of Experience, Dewey described the educational experience. According to Dewey, this type of experience fosters growth in human intelligence, and nurtures curiosity. Educational experience can occur whenever human beings interact with the world. Dewey's preeminent concern was the educator's role in creating an educational environment providing continuity within an experience-based model of student learning. While I examined teachers' perceptions of their own experiences, I sought to provide continuity by relating the educators'

experience through narrative telling. I wanted to understand stories of how educators' outlooks on teaching art had changed over time in regard to standards-based accountability. Narrative inquiry became a way for me to explore and understand their experiences. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) explain:

Dewey's ontology is not transcendental, it is transactional. The epistemological implications of this view are nothing short of revolutionary. It implies that the regulative ideal for inquiry is not to generate an exclusively faithful representation of reality independent of the knower. The regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new relation between a human being and her environment—her life, community, world. (p. 14)

Dewey (1938) emphasized experience, experiential learning, and freedom to learn in his concept of progressive education. In addition to promoting the idea that students should be led to realize their full potential, Dewey acknowledged that education and schooling are instrumental in creating social change and reform (Smith, 2011). Dewey stressed the significance of the quality of an educational experience and argues that education and learning are social and interactive processes. He also stressed that school is a social institution through which social reform can and should take place. Dewey implied that the mission of school was to educate; the significance of what transpires in school during the educational process is subject to criteria that allows educational value to be appraised (p. 98).

### **Pilot Study**

I conducted a pilot case study, *The Pendulum Swings: Painting a Picture of Change in the Art Classroom* (Brown, 2012). The purpose of my pilot study was to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increased emphases of standards on their work with elementary visual arts students. Since the pilot study, I have slightly

changed my research questions to aid in the exploration of my research purpose. Both the context of the study and the nuances of meaning gained in pilot interviews have steered me in somewhat different directions. Although I still believe that understanding how teachers incorporate the standards in their thinking and planning for instruction is of utmost importance (research question one), I have added a question that will address how teachers incorporate the standards in their thinking and planning for assessment. The pilot study also inspired me to dig deeper into the question of accountability in teachers' daily work with students.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of my pilot study was to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work.

My research questions included the following:

1. How do teachers incorporate the standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
2. How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time?
3. What have teachers learned as a result of using the GPS standards?

### **Research Design**

The pilot case study was designed to gain data for understanding the case at hand through in-depth interviews and examination of documents and field notes. Quality was ensured through multiple sources of data, ongoing dialogue with fellow researchers, and triangulation.

Triangulation was accomplished by comparing the data for accurate understanding (Mason, 2002). Member checking was attempted with one participant. Case study, utilizing interviews, documents and field notes, was chosen because the qualitative interview is an excellent vehicle to begin to discover teachers' perspectives and how they give meaning to teaching with the state standards. Interviewing even a small sample of people can begin to reveal similarities and

differences in meaning held by the participants. A recorded, structured interview of approximately one hour was conducted with each participant. I recorded ongoing reflection of the research questions in my field notes.

Several steps were used to analyze the data. The three interviews were transcribed from digital recordings. I looked for the interviewees' understandings and accounts of using the state standards in their teaching. My own interpretation of how the participants made sense of the phenomena of using the state standards played an important part of interpretation. I read the data from a reflexive standpoint, seeking to explore my role and perspective in the process of data generation and interpretation of data.

The interviews were coded for how the participants discussed their experiences in regard to the research questions and interview guide. These codes addressed many categories and were narrowed down to: standards (change, planning, implementation), lessons, creativity concerns, challenges with change, enduring practices in teaching, focus on curriculum, and strategy for change and transition. Major themes were derived from this careful coding which including a search for repetition of words and phrases across the three interviews. The major themes or assertions from the data were:

1. Elementary art teachers experienced challenges with change brought on by greater emphases on standards-based teaching.
2. Elementary art teachers adapted to the new standards-based teaching by using various strategies in their thinking and planning for instruction.
3. Veteran elementary art teachers have enduring practices and beliefs in teaching.

The categories generally focused on the language used to describe unique experiences and events over time while art teachers transitioned to teaching with the Georgia Performance Standards.

## **Participant Selection**

The three participants were art teachers from the Atlanta Metro area with elementary level teaching experience. Like the participants in my dissertation study, each teacher had at least fifteen years of teaching experience, and the group of participants represented various demographics. However, the participants in the pilot case study were from three different school systems. It was my desire to interview three teachers with varying backgrounds of education, experience, and styles of teaching. One teacher from York County Schools (pseudonyms were used throughout to ensure confidentiality) taught in a Title I school and holds a Master's degree in arts integration. One teacher from Fort County Schools held a Master's degree in art education and taught in an upper socioeconomic area. The teacher from Harkins County Schools was a writer for the Georgia Performance Standards in visual arts and has held numerous teaching positions, kindergarten through university level. Two of the teachers have held a position on the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA) Board of Directors. I sought to include teachers who hold state certification for teaching and who met the criteria of being interested and engaged with the profession of teaching visual art.

## **Findings**

This pilot study was about teachers' perspectives of change, how they articulated change, how they had changed with the Georgia Performance Standards, how they maneuvered through change, what they have learned through change and how they experienced change in their thinking, planning and implementation practices in the classroom. Major themes for this study were discerned after careful coding, including a search for repetition of words and phrases across the three interviews, a broad categorization of themes and a clustering of similar thematic pieces of evidence. The major themes or assertions from the data were:

1. Elementary art teachers experienced challenges with change brought on by greater emphases on standards-based teaching.
2. Elementary art teachers adapted to the new standards-based teaching by using various strategies in their thinking and planning for instruction.
3. Veteran elementary art teachers have constant and ever-present individual traits and beliefs in teaching that are not likely to change.

These categories generally focused on the language used to describe unique experiences and events over time while art teachers transitioned to teaching with the Georgia Performance Standards and were determined with the research questions in mind.

Dewey (1938) makes a strong case for the importance of education not only as a place to gain content knowledge, but also as a place to learn how to live. According to participants Julia (pseudonym) and Steve (pseudonym), school is a place to learn, live, grow and have fun. School is a place to be a creative learner and to learn to think more creatively. Steve believed that “we’re destroying a lot of the progress we’ve made in the last hundred years... in terms of education.” Steve deemed that children learn as much from what we do and how we react, as they learn from what we teach. “I mean I don’t care how many standards you post, I don’t care; they watch you. If you are going to teach creativity, you have to be a creative person.” The literature supported the idea set forth by Steve and Julia that standards alone are not enough to stimulate learners’ anticipation and participation in learning. Making connections is an important part of Dewey’s philosophy as well. Dewey (1938) believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum, and all students should have the opportunity to take part in their own learning. Evidence in the pilot study showed that these art

teachers were changing with the new standards of teaching and learning while retaining their collective belief that schools must do more than deliver content.

Specific strategies for changing with increased emphases on the standards were evident in the data. These teachers had soul-searched and collaborated for successful implementation of the standards without giving up their ideas on theme-based teaching and teaching with humor, fun and individual style. Much could be learned from the participants as they mapped out their strategies for understanding and implementing the standards in their planning. The pilot study yielded data that inspired me to continue my research in the area of perceptions of change with increased emphases on the standards. For my dissertation, I added research questions that increased the focus on discussions surrounding assessments and accountability.

In the pilot study, Steve talked about methodically plotting and planning for each quarter, meticulously trying to include the overwhelming numbers of standards required for an elementary art classroom. Julia was a connoisseur, seeking to develop the ability to appreciate situations and make use a wide array of information. Eisner (1998) developed his idea of educational connoisseurship and says connoisseurs must place experiences and understandings in a wider context. Connoisseurship is something to strive for, as Julia strived to see and understand the standards in the context of her curriculum. The bringing together of the different elements of the standards into a whole curriculum involves creativity and artistry. It requires time, and these teachers desired to have more time to properly plan and implement the standards.

Criticism, as Dewey pointed out in *Art as Experience* (1934), has at its end the re-education of perception. The task of the critic is to help us to see. Steve helped me to see his perceived drawbacks with increased emphases on the standards. Criticism can be approached as the process of enabling others to see the qualities of something. Eisner (1998) states, “Effective

criticism functions as the midwife to perception. It helps it come into being, then later refines it and helps it to become more acute” (p. 8). Steve was able to step back and view the situation and articulate his own experiences as a critic, thus helping the reader to see more clearly and through a different lens. Karen, having co-written the elementary level standards, understood and appreciated an inherent worth in beginning her lessons with the end in mind. Karen’s thinking seems aligned with Chapman (1982), cited in the review of literature, who criticized art teachers for disorganized and indiscriminate teaching and a lack of thorough understanding of what knowledge and skills are worthwhile.

After conducting the pilot study, I surmised that further research was needed to understand how teachers experience change with newly adopted standards. More individual stories of veteran art teachers needed to be told as the profession seemed to be rapidly progressing in terms of implementation of standards based reform and accountability. I chose to look for those stories, and I created a dissertation with a narrative approach to telling veteran art teachers’ stories of change and how policies were affecting their work with students. The standards-based education movement is not new. Most states have adopted standards for teaching and learning, and the National Art Education Association has rewritten national standards along with a consortium from other areas of the arts, music, dance and theatre. With top-down efforts to bestow more standards upon educators, it is through the close examination of what teachers experience that we may continue to learn.

### **Critical Reflections**

I conducted the three interviews in the pilot study outside of the schools of the art teachers. I wrote, “Ideally I would interview them in their art rooms. Maybe after trust is established, they would be more comfortable in their own settings.” I was able to accomplish this

task in the dissertation study by interviewing two of three participants in their art rooms. All three pilot study participants seemed pleased to participate off-site (at one participant's parents' home, in my own art room, and at my home). After my pilot study, I wondered if teachers were still feeling overwhelmed about using the documented standards. Did educational leadership provide training and planning time to aid the teachers in sorting through the vast amount of materials associated with standards and assessments? Are there "tricks," tips and shortcuts that could be shared to help teachers? Were teachers just "thrown to the wolves" in regard to using the GPS? I considered these ponderings when I designed my study for my dissertation.

As a researcher, it was my responsibility to portray the pilot case study with care and honesty, and I sought to do exactly that. The pilot study inspired my dissertation with the hope that others could gain understanding of how art teachers experience change with the implementation of standards-based teaching and how standards-based teaching changes art teachers' thoughts and planning for instruction. I believe that most knowledge is unique to the individual and individual interpretation is informed by prior experience. For me, the pilot case study was worth my exploration, time and attention. Participant Steve (pseudonym) said that no one ever asks teachers what they think. I did.

As I alluded to earlier, conversations in my pilot study interviews indicated that the participating teachers were seeking dialogue about assessments. I associated this trend with accountability issues in art education and specifically, accountability in standards-based teaching and learning. I surmised that standards-based reform and assessment are inseparable at this time. Exploring the ways in which teachers plan for assessment is essential to understanding how teaching and learning in the art classroom has changed over time. The accountability movement is rapidly moving into areas other than math, science, social studies and language arts. Therefore,

close examination of art teachers' perspectives of how their teaching has aligned with increased measures of accountability could add nuanced meaning to current curricular and policy debates

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

As I designed and refined the methodology for this study, I began to reflect on how the body of literature would inform and shape this study. My interest lies in understanding teachers' perspectives of change across time with increased emphases on state visual arts standards. Based on personal experience in schools, my relationships with art teachers on both personal and professional levels, and my reading on social media/art teacher chats, I have been struck by the contrast and variety of ways that teachers respond and react to increased emphases on state standards and accountability. My limited observations led me to seriously question what I would find if given the opportunity to take a very close look at teachers' perspectives of the aforementioned changes across time. What would I learn if I gave teachers an opportunity to voice their points of view? A gap in literature indicated art teachers' viewpoints of the state standards had not been researched or documented. The way teachers in the visual arts have experienced this change could inform actions in policy and decisions making processes of local school and county level administration.

#### **Paradigm**

This qualitative study was carried out using a constructivist paradigm with elements of narrative inquiry. My qualitative approach is rooted in a constructivist paradigm with the assumption that knowledge, meaning and understanding are "individual constructions of reality" and "knowledge is constructed rather than discovered" (Stake, 1995, p. 99). In the constructivist

paradigm, knowledge is created by players actively involved in the research process. The product of this research emerges from my own subjectivity and my analytical lens.

As a constructivist researcher, my goal was to understand multiple constructions of meaning and to offer an “interpretation of someone else’s interpretation of reality” (Merriam, 1995, p. 54). I sought to understand the complex world of the teacher from the teachers’ point of view (Schwandt, 1998). Schwandt (1998) states, “what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind (p.236). Clandinin (2013) defines narrative inquiry as “an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (p. 17). The methodology of narrative inquiry fits well with Dewey’s pragmatism as outlined in the Theoretical Framework section of this paper.

From the inception of study, I have sought to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with visual arts students. I learned from my review of literature that visual art teachers had not been provided a voice in which to address standard-based reform and the accountability measures in place in today’s school systems. Moreover, what had been published to date, overwhelmingly addressed the theories and goals behind the implementation of content and performance standards, rather than teachers’ experiences and perceptions with the implementation of standards and assessments in their work with students.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with visual arts students. My research questions include the following:

1. How do art teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
2. How do art teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
3. How do art teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?
4. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?

### **Theoretical Assumptions**

Perhaps one of the most daunting tasks, and at the same time, most intriguing tasks for the novice researcher is dealing with theoretical assumptions. The researcher most likely knows no other subject better than one's self, but identifying what we take for granted in connection with our research can be a challenge. Dealing with theoretical assumptions means that one will examine one's self in relation to the research topic and "consider relevant issues and implications for research design related to what interview data can tell us about a specific topic" (Roulston, 2010, p.3). In my personal experience, I have noted that many dissertations are immensely personal to the researcher. Researchers choose work that they care about. In order to ensure quality, the researcher must examine his/her own preconceived notions.

Writing from a reflexive point of view can strengthen the research. Charmaz (2006) warns the researcher to examine extant theories and to avoid "forcing our preconceptions on the data we code" (p. 67). I have given a lot of consideration to this notion, especially since I fit the criteria for the participants in my study. "Every researcher holds preconceptions that influence, but may not determine, what we attend to and how we make sense of it" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 67).

Roulston (2010) states, “The theoretical assumptions of the researcher—whether explicit or not—inform the design of the interview studies and interview questions, as well as the analysis and representation of the data” (p. 3).

Mishler noted, in conversation with Clandinin and Murphy (2007), “narrative inquirers need to make visible in their research texts the processes by which they chose to foreground particular stories” (p. 50). Gergen (2003) cautions against deconstructing narratives into coded piles and directing attention away from narrative thinking. There is comfort in Clandinin’s (2013) words for the budding researcher:

Moving from field texts to interim and final research texts is a complicated and iterative process, full of twists and turns. There is no linear unfolding of data gathering to data analysis to publishing research findings. Narrative inquirers continue to live in relational ways with participants, although in less intense ways, throughout the process of moving from field texts to research texts. (p. 49)

### **Research Design**

In order to explore my research questions, I studied the experiences of three veteran art teachers in three different elementary schools in one school district. In order to understand teachers’ perceptions and experiences with standards-based curricula and accountability, qualitative interviews, observations and documents were included as data for this study. The overall timeline for this study was approximately seventeen months. I interviewed the three participants two times each from June 2014 through February 2015. Transcription and analysis was ongoing through July 2015. From July-September 2015, I read and re-read the interviews, coded, categorized and determined common themes with respect to the research questions. I also began triangulation by aligning themes with the documents and data collected during

observations. During fall 2015, I interpreted the data and conducted member-checking. The outcome of the study is my dissertation, written from a constructivist paradigm, describing the teachers' perspectives and experiences in respect to increased emphases on standards-based curricula and accountability.

### **Participant Selection**

Small-scale sampling was chosen as I sought rich and detailed data that focused on “particularization rather than generalization” (Stake, 1995, pp.7-8). Criteria for selection of teachers included:

1. Full time art teachers within Apple County
2. Veteran teachers with at least 15 years experience
3. Teachers who have demonstrated a high level of engagement in their profession on the school level, system level and/or professional organization.

I began recruitment by emailing the two lead elementary art teachers in Apple County. I invited the lead teachers to recommend other teachers who would fit the criteria. This approach was in congruence with snowball sampling. Atkinson and Flint (2004) state, “Snowball sampling may be defined as a technique for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other actors” (Snowball Sampling, para.1). The two lead teachers submitted about seven names in total, and three names were common to both lists. I sorted those recommendations according to the schools with a desire to include three schools with different demographics. I found one teacher was in a suburban school with a more homogeneous setting; one teacher was in an urban school with a more multicultural population, and one teacher was in a rural school with a mixed population. Originally, I had contemplated recruiting teachers from three different school districts as I did in my pilot study. However, the

prospect of researching within one school district promised some alignment when considering the top-down policies of accountability that had been put into place from the district level. Of the potential participants, many were colleagues whom I already had some prior contact with through professional organization memberships. However, I deliberately selected one participant with whom I had no prior contact. I contacted each participant via email with a letter of invitation. The three participants that I selected based on criteria and school settings immediately accepted, so I did not need to resort to the remainder of the recommendations that were given to me by the lead teachers.

I communicated by email with the participants to request an interview and set up an interview appointment. Copies of the participant consent forms were included in the email invitations to participants (Appendix B). Participants were given the opportunity to review the details of the study and data collection methods. They agreed to participate via email response. At that time, locations of the interviews were determined. I interviewed two teachers on site at the schools. The third teacher was interviewed off-site by request, and we met at a neutral location (local restaurant) for both face-to-face interviews.

The three participants were career art teachers. All of the teachers taught in Apple County Public Schools (pseudonym) at the time of the interviews. Two of the teachers began their teaching careers in Apple. The third teacher had taught in several states, including Florida and Massachusetts. I sought to include teachers who held state certification for teaching art and who met the criteria of being interested and highly engaged with the profession of teaching visual art. The teachers were informed that pseudonyms would be used, thus risk would be diminished.

Simons (2009) makes the point that the researcher should select people and events in the case from which the most can be learned about the issue in question. Importantly, when invited

to participate, each teacher expressed a willingness to discuss their experiences with standards implementation in their daily practices.

### **Collecting and Generating Data**

To inform my research questions, I relied on the following data sources: qualitative interviews, observations, and document review.

#### **Interviews**

A total of six recorded, structured interviews of approximately sixty minutes each were conducted. I interviewed each of the veteran art teachers during two separate interview sessions. I created a list of formal interview questions in the form of an interview guide (see Appendix D). The second interview guide (see Appendix F) was constructed based on what I learned from the first interviews, gaps that I saw, and questions that I sought to explore. I recorded each participant using my iPhone and converted the files to my laptop following the interviews. Also, each participant signed a consent to interview form (see Appendix B). The six qualitative interviews were the primary source of data collection in this study. In-depth interviewing was chosen as the primary method of data generation because the qualitative interview offered a portal of discovery into how teachers give meaning to teaching with the state standards. Interviewing even a small sample of people can begin to reveal similarities and differences in meaning held by the participants. This qualitative study consisted of data including interview transcripts in which the participants discussed their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge.

#### **Observations**

In field notes, I begin to form my own perceptions and aim at a comprehensive view of the setting. Field notes revealed descriptions of what I saw during observations, notes about the

interviewees, and my own reflections as the researcher. Observations were made during classroom visits without students being present with two participants. The third participant was interviewed off site and field notes were recorded during and after the interview. Immediate reflective comments were also recorded in field notes (prior to transcribing the interview). Ongoing reflections of the research questions were recorded in field notes, and photographs were taken in the field.

### **Documents**

Prior (2003) states, “Determining how documents are consumed and used in organizational settings—that is, how they function—should form an important part of any social scientific project” (p. 26). Demographic data forms (see Appendix E) were collected from each participant to lend understanding of the experiences and backgrounds of the participants. Documents also included lesson plans and district and state documents. Documents of various types, including accountability reports and local school plans for improvement, were obtained to help establish the context of teaching in Apple County. Photographs of student work were submitted by participant, Tess. I have included those photographs to enhance the narrative re-telling but not for analysis in and of themselves. Document analysis of lesson plans was included as a data source. After requesting materials such as lesson plans from the participants, I analyzed three lesson plans from one participant, the only one to respond to this request. (See Figure 1 for a summative look at data collection and corresponding research questions.)

Table 2

#### *Research Questions & Data Collection Methods*

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Documents/Visual Methods</b>
1. How do teachers incorporate the state standards in their	X	Observed and made field notes at Dave’s and Janice’s school	X

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Documents/Visual Methods</b>
thinking and planning for art instruction?		settings during interviews; Field notes were made during Tess's off-site interviews.	
2. How do teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?	X	Same as above	X
3. How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of the standards?	X		X
4. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?	X	Same as above	

## **Analysis**

Mason (2002) advises researchers to read all data from an interpretative and reflexive standpoint. This qualitative research study is my construction, a written version of what I believe the data means. In this strain of reading data, I searched for the interviewees' understandings and accounts of using the state performance standards in their teaching. I read the data from a reflexive standpoint, seeking to explore my role and perspective in the process of data generation and interpretation of data. My research questions were at the forefront of my thinking as I engaged with the perceptions (and stories) of the participants and myself.

To analyze the data for this study, I read through all interview transcripts and field notes, with my four research questions in mind. To analyze the data, I initially coded the transcripts and

field notes for themes and re-occurring language. Then, I re-read to construct focused coding. Coding also helped me stay close to the data, although in the back of my mind, I had concern about the loss of nuanced meaning. I determined that the teachers' stories needed to be grouped under overarching themes, but that I would need to allow each teacher to retain his/her voice by actually telling their stories with excerpts from interviews. In that way, I could highlight similarities in experience through a narrative approach. At the same time, I could tell disparate stories of experience within the derived themes.

**Analyzing interview and observation data.** The three interviews and field notes were coded for how the participants discussed their experiences in regard to the research questions and interview guide. "Coding means categorizing segments of data with a short name that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data. Your codes show how you select, separate, and sort data to begin an analytic accounting of them" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 43). These codes addressed initial categories and more focused categories. Next, the materials were reviewed and themes were clustered into assertions. Assertions are categorical statements drawn from the data. Stake (1995) states, "Assertions are a form of generalization" (p. 9). "For assertions, we draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivation may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, assertions from other researchers" (Stake, p. 12). These assertions became headings for subsequent chapters of analysis.

My coding generally focused on the language used to describe unique experiences and events over time while art teachers transitioned to teaching with the Georgia Performance Standards. I coded the materials and then grouped the codes to form themes. I transitioned those into assertions after going back and forth with the interview data. I questioned. How many themes were appropriate? Which themes could be combined with other themes? Did my

language accurately describe the meaning of the data? Was I being careful to depict what was evidenced in the data, without adding too much and without taking away nuanced meaning? I returned to the interview data to search for confirming stories that would support the assertions from different points of view. Lastly, I examined the assertions to explore commonalities and differences between the participants' perceptions and experiences. Disconfirming evidence was sought that contradicted the coded data. Variety in data was noted as much as possible within the context of each thread.

I interpreted the data by utilizing narrative synthesis (derived from Polkinghorne, 1995 and Cleaver, 2009) that derives themes from "within" the data and moves "outward" from each participant's experiences to wider concepts. This equates with the process of finding elements within storied data to form a further story or "picture" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). The term analysis also refers to the procedures of coding, categorizing, and theme generation, which enable me to organize and make sense of the data in order to re-tell the stories of my participants.

**Analyzing documents.** My analysis of district and state documents helped inform my interviews and observations at the schools. The district level documents also helped inform my analysis of school-level data as described by the teachers. This information provided by both the documents and the teacher participants aided in understanding the details and intents of the policies being implemented. For example, by reading Apple County's Accountability Report, I was able to better understand and discuss how the district emphasizes areas of accountability and how those policies effect teachers work with students. An examination of lesson plans helped me understand how teachers prioritize information. The three lesson plans submitted by Janice also

helped me understand how she planned for instruction and assessments. The demographic data supported an understanding of the participants in the variety of their experiences and the make-up of their individual schools.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Quality**

The quality of a research study begins with the data. Quality is ensured through gathering multiple sources of data, sustaining ongoing dialogue with fellow researchers, and triangulation. Protocols for “getting it right” in qualitative research are known as triangulation (Stake, 1995, p. 107). Triangulation is accomplished by comparing the data for accurate understanding (Mason, 2002). Stake (1995) cautions, “The problem of triangulation is complex because so many qualitative researchers subscribe a little bit or a lot to an epistemology called “constructivism”” (p. 108). Constructing meaning in qualitative research signifies that the researcher provides the reader with lots of thick description for their own interpretation. This is not to say that triangulation is not valuable but acknowledges that qualitative research can include multiple views and often steers clear of one correct view (Stake, 1995).

Through member checking, the participants examined preliminary versions of writing for accuracy and acceptability (Stake, 1995). I submitted Chapters 4 through 10 of the study to the participants to allow them to respond and comment in return. Two of the participants responded with feedback and corrections. This exchange contributed to the trustworthiness of representation. Additionally, the participants, their schools and school system are known in this study by pseudonyms, minimizing contextual information to protect their identities.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Eisner (1998) makes clear the value and advantage of qualitative inquiry to the educational researcher seeking to describe the experiences of participants in today’s schools. He

states, “To know what schools are like, their strengths and their weaknesses, we need to be able to see what occurs in them, and we need to be able to tell others what we have seen in ways that are vivid and insightful (p. 22). Qualitative methods permit inquiry into issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance. However, this study does have limitations.

Certainly, there are limitations to this qualitative study incorporating elements of narrative. My study looks closely at a small sample and brings forth the data by accentuating the interwoven individual stories. This design limits the generalizability of the study, but allows an in depth look at the teachers’ experiences. The participant selection included three teachers. This is a relatively small sample and contributes to the limitations of the study. The fact that I used my contacts in the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA) to begin my recruiting process could be seen as a limitation. My past status as president of GAEA could be a limitation, as the participants were aware that I held a statewide leadership role in art education. This awareness could influence participant responses in the interview settings. In this qualitative study, the findings are my own construction of meaning, therefore some would consider my bias as the qualitative researcher as a another limitation. My subjectivity statement, which follows, highlights my personal involvement. Examining my subjectivity is essential to understanding, retelling and analyzing the data at hand.

### **Audio Recording and Photographs**

A digital recording device was used during the interviews, so that I could fully transcribe the interviews. I read the transcriptions for the purpose of generating data for the research study. The entire length of the study was from June 2014-December 2016, thus the recording will be destroyed by May 2016.

With consent of participants, I have included photographs of student work, bulletin boards and displays. These photographs were limited to bulletin boards, displays, and curricular material and did not include pictures of teachers or students. All participants provided initials on a consent form allowing the use of photographs, as described above. They were told that they could still participate in this study even if they were not willing to have the photographs shared in publications or presentations.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The data collected from this study did not identify participants directly. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym in the study. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight. I will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without the written consent of participants, unless required by law.

### **Subjectivities Statement**

I am an elementary art teacher in Fulton County. I teach approximately 700 elementary art students, six classes per day, five days per week. Each student spends forty-five minutes per week in art. I have experience teaching in both elementary and secondary visual arts programs in public schools. On the university level, I have taught various courses as an adjunct instructor at Georgia State University, Georgia Regents University and Kennesaw State University. The content for those courses included visual art for the elementary classroom, humanities/art history, and introduction to art education. Having begun my teaching career in 1994, I have witnessed the standards-based movement in education take hold in our country and, specifically, in the state of Georgia. In the Fulton County School System, the visual arts standards have been interpreted by a team of teachers and rolled out to teachers as the Fulton County Standards and Curriculum.

While living in Augusta Georgia, I was the Associate Curator for Education at the Morris Museum of Art. As a museum educator, I linked tours to the state standards in visual arts, language arts, math, science and social studies. Documentation of standards was required by school systems for field trip approvals. Linking museum tours to standards not only aided teachers who were fulfilling their obligation to meet state performance standards, it helped teachers gain approval for school field trips. My desire to explore teachers' experiences with the state standards stemmed from my curiosity and intent upon delving into how standards-based art curricula is manifested in the classroom.

I brought a great number of subjectivities to the study of utilization of state standards in the elementary art curriculum. I teach standards-based lessons and sometimes find the standards either overwhelming or cumbersome. At the same time, I rely on the standards for an appropriate framework in which to design the content and context of my lessons. While researching how other teachers approach standards-based planning and implementation of lessons, I have not gathered information to assess the effectiveness of the standards but rather to investigate how the state standards are experienced, evidenced in the classroom and disclosed to students. Furthermore, I did not explore student success, but rather teachers' experiences, perceptions, and recollections of lesson planning, curricula planning and student acquisition connected to the state standards. It is my hope to better understand and share the linkage between state policy and classroom instructional practice.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESCRIPTION OF APPLE COUNTY, SCHOOLS, AND PARTICIPANTS

#### **Apple County**

Apple County School System (ACSS) is one of Georgia's largest school systems. Apple County literature designates Apple as distinguished from other public school systems by its strong curriculum, expert teachers, well-equipped facilities, parental involvement and community support. PCSS serves over 170,000 students. The class of 2015 boasted more than 11,000 graduates. Considered one the nation's top urban school districts, at least 83% of graduates planned to go to college last year. Apple County has developed a curriculum that targets "essential knowledge and skills." Overall, ACSS did well on the Georgia College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) which takes into account achievement, progress, and achievement gap closure. The district index scores for elementary, middle, and high school surpassed the state's averages.

The Local School Plan for Improvement (LSPI) for each school in Apple County, begins with the following statement:

Accountability and flexibility are hallmarks of Apple County Public Schools' success. Key to that success is ensuring that each school community understands the progress being made by its schools, as well as what plans will drive improvement. Each school creates a collaborative LSPI, with targeted goals based on student achievement results. These goals are dynamic like our schools, and are updated to reflect changes that occur in schools. Data is used to determine areas needing improvement and to identify,

measurable, annual objectives. Schools then determine how to use research-based strategies to achieve these goals, using flexibility as needed. The LSPI development process involves teachers, parents, and community members, so the entire school community has the opportunity to be involved in conversations about school improvement.

Apple County School's accountability system for improving schools is called the Results-Based Evaluation System (RBES). According to the Accountability Report, Issued 2014-15, "RBES fairly and systematically measures a school's progress, providing a process that clearly communicates expectations; reviews, monitors, and supports school performance; and evaluates that performance."

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) is Georgia's statewide accountability system. In 2012, federal education officials approved Georgia's newly developed CCRPI to replace the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure under the federal *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* Act. In April 2014, the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) released CCRPI data for the 2012-13 school year, and recalculated CCRPI scores for the 2011-12 school year so that the two years could be accurately compared. The CCRPI assesses how well students are prepared for college and careers and ensures that schools are focused on improving achievement among all students.

The index measures progress on accountability indicators such as content mastery, student attendance, and preparation for the next school level. Schools earn CCRPI points based on indicators that vary by grade and school level and align with measures of college-and career-readiness. Schools may earn up to a set number of points in three main categories, for a total of 100 possible points, with an additional 10 possible challenge points. At the elementary level,

schools earn CCRPI achievement points tied to a number of factors, including the percentages of students reading at grade level, the percentage of students learning English who are making academic progress, the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in grade-level instruction, and the percentage of students exceeding CRCT (now *Georgia Milestones*) standards (a predictor for high school graduation). Schools may “exceed the bar” for participation levels in advanced classes, world languages, fine arts, and career awareness. Schools in which teachers use data for planning individualized instruction and those with STEM certification may earn extra points as well. Innovative practices with demonstrated achievement gains and interventions that result in a positive school climate also may earn challenge points. As the new Georgia Milestones Assessment System replaces the CRCT and writing tests as measures of achievement, accountability measures for CCRPI will be changed to reflect the new assessment system.

Apple County schools adhere to CCRPI guidelines through the measure of student learning in regard to the school system’s curriculum, the County Standards and Curriculum (CSC) (Pseudonym). In 2014-15, Apple County Schools used the state’s new *Georgia Milestones Assessment System* as a measure of learning. Georgia students in grades 3 and 5 also took a state writing assessment. Test results are meant to be used by teachers to identify individual student strengths and weaknesses and by the state to gauge the quality of education throughout Georgia. At selected grade levels, these state assessments are used as Gateway tests for promotion.

### **Waterfalls Elementary**

Waterfalls Elementary was originally built in 1966. Its history plays a rich part in the history of Apple County. With an enrollment of 1400 students, Waterfalls Elementary is a school that celebrates diversity. Ninety-six percent of its students are minority and over 40 different

languages are spoken at Waterfalls. The first teacher for English to Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) was hired in 1988; as of 2015, the school had nine teachers for this program. Currently, there are 77 classroom teachers including special areas, special education and gifted and talented. Another 31 teachers make up additional support staff, paraprofessionals, English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and early intervention teachers. “The school and community are proud of the various cultures represented at the school” (History of Waterfalls Elementary (pseudonym) School, n.d.).

Table 3

*Waterfalls Student Data (2011-12 to 2013-14)*

	School Year		
	11-12	12-13	13-14
Enrollment	1002	1039	1069
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	8%	7%	6%
Black/African American	19%	22%	24%
Hispanic or Latino, <i>any race</i>	69%	68%	66%
Multiracial, <i>two or more races</i>	1%	1%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	3%	2%	2%
Special Education	9%	9%	9%
ESOL	65%	64%	62%
Free/Reduced Lunch	96%	97%	94%
Average Attendance	97%	96%	96%

*Note:* Table adapted from “Waterfalls Accountability Report 2014-15” (Pseudonym).

**Waterfalls Elementary Art Teacher: Dave**

Dave is the art teacher at Waterfalls Elementary in Apple County. He is a veteran art teacher having spent 25 years in the art classroom. He taught in the regular classroom, 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> grades, approximately 10 years. When I met Dave for our first interview, we met at a local

bookstore, a neutral site. Dave, dressed in his weekend gear of jeans and a collared shirt, greeted me with a big smile. In his mid-50's, Dave never expressed a desire to retire from teaching. In fact, he seems to be an exuberant and young-at-heart teacher. He has relocated several times, allowing him to teach in small community in Massachusetts, in Florida and in Georgia.

Reflecting on my first interview with Dave, I read back over my research journal. I had written down some things that I wished I'd done differently in the interview. I think my first interview guide was slightly too cumbersome. After my pilot study, I was ready to jump into questions about assessments and accountability. I focused a little too much on what Dave did, instead of what he thought about teaching (his perceptions). I used the word accountability too much! In fact, I asked him about his perceptions of accountability without differentiating between system accountability, teacher accountability or student accountability. I believe some of my questions could have been confusing at first. But Dave was patient and kind, and he answered. These reflections have weighed heavily on my mind, and I am glad to have a chance to write them in this final report.

I went on to construct a second interview guide. For the second interview, Dave and I met at his school. The new facility was beautiful, having opened its doors in 2011. Dave gave me a tour of his room, showing me his systems for classroom management and new technologies that enable him to bring the cutting edge of new interfaces to his students. The second interview was less awkward. We talked more about Dave's journey as an art teacher and his practices, perceptions and beliefs. I was touched when he said, "No one has ever asked me what I think, so I was really happy when you asked me to do these interviews" (research journal, 2015).

### Pinedale Elementary

Pinedale Elementary consistently performs in the top twenty percent of the elementary schools in Apple County in the areas of literacy and mathematics as measured by the Georgia Milestones and the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS). Currently, Pinedale has a total enrollment of approximately 780 students. The staff is comprised of 41 teachers with 9 support staff. Support staff at Pinedale includes paraprofessional staff members and special education teachers. The long term goal at Pinedale is to “be a place where everyone thinks and works together, where teaching and learning is interactive, where small group inquiry crosses the curriculum, and technology expands student and teacher learning beyond the walls of the classroom” (Local School Plan for Improvement Pinedale Elementary (pseudonym) School, 2014-15).

Table 4

*Pinedale Student Data (2011-12 to 2013-14)*

	School Year		
	11-12	12-13	13-14
Enrollment	769	787	773
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	6%	6%	5%
Black/African American	13%	13%	12%
Hispanic or Latino, <i>any race</i>	11%	12%	12%
Multiracial, <i>two or more races</i>	4%	5%	4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%	1%
White	66%	65%	66%
Special Education	10%	11%	11%
ESOL	9%	8%	9%
Free/Reduced Lunch	27%	29%	24%
Average Attendance	97%	96%	97%

*Note:* Table adapted from “Pinedale Accountability Report 2014-15” (Pseudonym).

**Pinedale Elementary Art Teacher and Project-Based Learning Teacher: Tess**

Tess began her teaching career over twenty years ago in Apple County. She was drawn to teaching art because she loved working with children and identified a passion for creating early in her years as an undergraduate. She moved from coastal Georgia to accept a job in Apple. While she began her career in a very culturally diverse elementary school, she transferred to a suburban school five years ago. When I initially interviewed Tess, she was the sole art teacher at her school. Since then, Tess has transitioned to a new job as the Project-Based Visual Arts Teacher on the Inquiry Team. Another teacher was hired to teach the traditional art program, while Tess now serves on a team of facilitators for the project-based learning program. She was invited to take this position when her principal recognized her as a creative thinker and someone who could inspire children to think creatively.

“Project Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge’ (What is Project Based Learning (PBL)? n.d.).

**Rivers Elementary**

Rivers Elementary opened its doors in 2003 to 930 children and 68 teachers and staff members. Enrollment at Rivers has grown to serve approximately 1,100 students in 2015 and approximately 120 teachers and staff members. The school’s mission “to provide a safe, nurturing environment of academic excellence which will encourage children to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens in a global community” is recited each morning.

During its charter year, the students and teachers established the school’s norms of behavior. A Rivers student is responsible, ready to learn, honest, disciplined, accountable, and respectful (Results-Based Evaluation System Accountability Report, Issued 2014-15).

Table 5

*Rivers Student Data (2011-12 to 2013-14)*

	School Year		
	11-12	12-13	13-14
Enrollment	1169	1113	1140
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	4%	4%	4%
Black/African American	13%	13%	12%
Hispanic or Latino, <i>any race</i>	10%	10%	10%
Multiracial, <i>two or more races</i>	4%	4%	4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	68%	69%	71%
Special Education	13%	13%	14%
ESOL	6%	8%	7%
Free/Reduced Lunch	25%	26%	24%
Average Attendance	97%	96%	97%

*Note:* Table adapted from “Rivers Accountability Report 2014-15” (Pseudonym).

### **Rivers Elementary Art Teacher: Janice**

Janice has taught at three elementary schools in Apple County. She volunteered to transfer to new Rivers Elementary in order to start the art program there. Janice has always thrived on change, so she embraced the challenges that came with starting a new art program. She defines herself as a life-long learner who recently earned her PhD in art. Janice moved around a lot during her formative years. She was born in Queens, New York but lived abroad for much of her childhood. Because of this experience, Janice loved the challenge of learning about new populations, learning new curriculum, and being able to connect with the community around her.

As a first year art teacher, Janice attended the state conference with the Georgia Art Education Association. That experience led her to get involved with writing the first set of

guidelines for the visual arts issued by the State Board of Education. Those initial guidelines, the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), were adopted around 1987 and were replaced by the Georgia Performance Standards. Janice has been teaching for 30 years in total.

Table 6

*Demographic Data for Participants*

<b>Demographic Data for Participants</b>	<b>Dave</b>	<b>Tess</b>	<b>Janice</b>
1. Gender	Male	Female	Female
2. How do you describe yourself?	White, non-Hispanic, non-Latino	White, non-Hispanic, non-Latino	White, non-Hispanic, non-Latino
3. Age range	50-59	40-49	50-59
4. How do you classify your current teaching arrangement?	Teach art full time	Teach art full time (at 1 <sup>st</sup> interview); Project-Based Learning (PBL) teacher in visual arts (at 2 <sup>nd</sup> interview)	Teach art full time
5. Approximately how many children do you teach?	1200	780	1100
6. At how many schools do you teach art?	1	1	1
7. What kind of schools do you teach in?	Public	Public	Public
8. Kind of certificate do you held	General elementary education; Art Education	Art Education	Art Education
9. Type of certificate held	Regular, standard, professional	Regular, standard, professional	Regular, standard, professional
10. Degree, year, major, minor	Bachelor's, 1978, Art Education, Education	Bachelor's, 1994; Art Education; Master's, 1998; Elementary	Bachelor's, 1978; Master's, 1991; Specialist, 2001; Doctorate, 2011.

		Education, Integrated Learning	All degrees in Art; Art Education.
11. Years employed as a teacher	35	20	30
12. Years employed as an art teacher	25	20	30

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*Note:* Demographic data for participants collected and compiled from demographic data forms.

### **Interwoven Threads and Stories of Change**

The next four chapters describe my analysis of the interview data. The research questions that connected to each theme are also referenced at the beginning of each chapter. The chapters are arranged by themes and assertions as follows:

Chapter 6: Art Teachers Building: Art teachers build curricula. The art teachers in this study adapted and created lessons and strategies to accommodate the external factors of accountability that pressed upon their work with students.

Chapter 7: Art Teachers Surrendering: The art teachers in this study have surrendered freedom, time and the “creative edge” to accommodate the external factors of accountability including standards implementation and increased assessments.

Chapter 8: Art Teachers Maintaining: The art teachers in this study have maintained their ideals and clung to their desires to engage in good teaching practices; to hold onto the joy they find in teaching; to promote positivity and fun in the classroom; and to allow kids to be kids.

Chapter 9: Art Teachers Evolving: The art teachers in this study indicated that self-perceptions have evolved into that of “professional”. These art teachers are in flux with their roles at their work places. The review of literature connected visual arts education in Apple County to the bigger picture of national trends concerning alignment of state standards, effects of testing on instruction, and performance-based accountability systems. Themes in the following sections

illustrate how this picture of standards-implementation and assessment systems is manifested in the classrooms and careers of these three teachers.

For the purpose of this study, I sought to examine how veteran art teachers' perspectives have changed related to the increased emphases on the state standards. The threads of commonality constructed from my interview data suggest that perspectives have shifted, actions have been taken, advancements have been made, sacrifices have been made, perceptions of self have changed, emotions have been tapped, and teachers have adapted. The art teaching profession, as a whole, is evolving. In the following chapters, I will explore these themes and assertions by taking a close look at the interview data through narrative inquiry and stepping in and out of the total picture as researcher, educator, and veteran art teacher.

Accounts of assessments in the visual arts, issuing rubrics, administering tests, and collected grades came to the forefront when discussing the impact of standards adoption in Georgia. Analysis of the data from the pilot study led me to believe that I needed to spend time discussing ways in which teachers navigate and experience accountability measures including student assessments and teacher evaluations. Herman (2003) states, "The time many teachers acknowledge spending in test preparation makes obvious that the test, rather than the standards, may become the primary target in teachers' curricular plans, at least at some times during the year" (p.149). In the following sections, interplay of how standards and assessments have permeated elementary visual arts education with three teachers in Apple County, Georgia is examined.

## CHAPTER 5

### ART TEACHERS BUILDING

*Research Question 1: How do art teachers incorporate the state performance standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction? Research Question 2: How do art teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?*

The veteran art teachers in my study have designed curricula to meet state standards, changing the way they teach for at least a portion of the school year. They collaborate with colleagues and have adapted their teaching to follow state and county requirements. Herman (2003) states, “Results from nearly every study indicate, indeed, that teachers pay attention to what is tested and adapt their curriculum and teaching accordingly (p. 147). Certainly, one would not expect to find enthusiastic, participatory elementary art teachers (part of my criteria in sampling) in a static form of teaching, unchanged across the years. These art teachers adapted and created lessons and strategies to accommodate the external factors of accountability that press upon their work with students.

#### **Building Strategies for Test Success**

In discussing how her teaching has changed over the years, Tess recalled a lesson in which Apple County fourth graders focus on landscape composition in art: foreground, middle ground, background, and perspective. The Georgia Performance Standards and CSC (County Standards and Curriculum) call for fourth graders to also focus on color schemes: monochromatic, neutral, and tertiary. Tess discusses the lesson and its connection to the SPG

(Student Performance Goal) county wide standardized testing in Apple County which includes a pre-test and post-test. The fourth grade Georgia Performance Standards are included in the appendix (see Appendix F).

Tess:

*Nobody is going to know that's going to be a big push on this 20-point exam until they get it. My thinking is that as soon as you issue that test, you're going to go ahead and start making sure that you do things throughout the year even though they might have been things that you would not have normally already planned or that you had never done before. Or, you know that you're going to do specifically so that when those kids get those post-tests back (that is exactly the same), you get the numbers that you need.*

Tess alludes to how planning for the post-test presents a disadvantage to students and teachers. In her estimation, some teachers who could “hit” certain County Standards and Curriculum (CSC) with their strengths (“maybe they’re really into fiber”) will forego spending more time in their area of expertise to insure that students have adequately acquired enough knowledge to score well on the Student Performance Goals (SPG) standardized tests. Another disadvantage is that the teacher may not be able to allow or encourage students to follow their own interests. Constructing a custom-made curriculum to fit the interests and personality of the class or grade level is not likely to be possible with accountability measures such as the SPG testing in place for visual arts students. She explains, “When you find that fifth grade, as a whole, their personality just tends to learn towards three-dimensional but you don’t have time to just say, you know what, let’s do a little bit more of this because you love it and you’re good at it and I can teach CSC that relate to color by doing clay.” Tess suggests teachers will have to stick with the guided plan and leave out the customization of the curriculum.

When I asked Janice to recall a recent art lesson and tell me about how that lesson has been changed or modified because of standards-based teaching, she quickly remembered her turtle lesson, which focused on painting a color scheme using tints and shades of complementary colors which are opposite colors on the color wheel.

Janice:

*Second graders are doing the Student Performance Goal (SPG) testing. And we're working with tints and shades so we did tinted turtles. We used paper plates, and I gave them colors and then white and black paint. They created tints and shades to create a turtle shell. I wanted to make sure that they understood complementary colors because that's on the test. So they already knew what complementary colors were and they know how to use a color wheel, which I think is important for them to know how to use a color wheel. And so they had to take their turtle shell and whatever color it was, find the complementary color. Using construction paper, they created a head and if they wanted to give the turtle feet and a tail, they could do that if they wanted to. If they wanted to do patterns on their turtle's head, feet and tail, they could do that too. And so I limited them in that they had to do the complementary color for that. So I altered that.*

*In the past, I would have been doing tints and shades, but I wouldn't have made them use just the complementary color. I would have let them decide-- what color scheme do you want to use? Do you want to use warm colors? I would have given them much more freedom, whereas I narrowed it down because I'm really wanting to make sure they understand what complementary colors are because of the test.*

Janice disclosed her feelings about changing the way she taught the turtle lesson:

*It's ok. I don't do a lot of the same things year after year because I like variety myself but I did this because I knew I could get several concepts in at the same time and we talked about line of symmetry in making him symmetrical. I felt like there was very little creativity involved in it so the kids were... Was it successful? It depends on what you want as successful. Yeah, they were able to use a complementary color and, yeah, they made a turtle, but they all looked very similar, and I just don't like that. I like when they do things a little different.*

Janice's experience points to the possible effects of narrowing the curriculum in the visual arts in order to achieve the goal for the test. The students' freedom to choose and to express their designs within a much larger set of constraints has been revoked due to test preparation. It should be noted however, that this type of adjustment was not applied to all lessons throughout year, as evidenced in the next sections. Teachers perform a delicate dance between emphasizing concepts they know will be tested and teaching for expression, creativity, and exploration. I struggle with the same challenge in my own art teaching: How do we prepare students adequately for the tests and how much time should be dedicated to the endeavor?

Herman (2003) states:

A number of researchers, using surveys of teachers, interview studies, and extended case studies, provided evidence that traditional standardized tests were having adverse effects on the quality of curriculum and classroom learning. Under pressure to help students do well on such tests, teachers and administrators tended to focus their efforts on test content, to mimic the tests' multiple choice formats in classroom curriculum, and to devote more and more time to preparing students to do well on the tests. The net effect

was a narrowing of the curriculum to the basic skills assessed and a neglect of complex thinking skills and other subject areas that were not assessed. (p. 145)

### **Building through Technology**

Both Dave and Janice expressed their desires to making their art lessons connect to the daily lives of students through increased use of technology. Georgia's Performance Standards for visual arts are divided into modules: 1. Meaning and Creative Thinking 2. Contextual Understanding 3. Production 4. Assessment and Reflection 5. Connections. It was a priority for Janice and Dave to connect to what is important to students and part of connecting to today's student is through utilizing various means of technology in the classroom. In GPS Connections, "the student makes connections to other disciplines and the world through the visual arts (National Standard 6) (p.4). Janice pointed out how students' interests have changed from generation to generation.

Janice:

*The connections now might be more geared toward technology and what they experience in technology and music versus maybe roller-skating out in the street or riding their bikes. I still try to expose them to as many different media as possible. I feel like if they don't get it in elementary school, they may never get that experience so I want them to experience as much as possible. What has changed is that I've been able to bring the museum into the art room using technology, where we go on virtual tours of a museum. Which is really cool.*

Dave related how technology has impacted his teaching and the challenges that have come with increased use of technology.

Dave:

*We have all kinds of technology. We were given Kindles. I have two Kindles for my classroom and what I did was, unbeknownst cause I didn't know it was something I had to have checked. I downloaded some apps that offered a different kind of museum search. The kids could go in and museum search. There was a doodle one, there was a puzzle making one – just different things that were kind of cool. I downloaded them and then I found out that I was supposed to have all this approved. So I've been waiting for approval since November.*

The equipment in Dave's classroom was ample: a Mimeo, two laptops, four cameras, and a class-wide public address system with teacher microphones. His students had recently been working on stop-action animation. Through the use of technology, teachers in this study were able to meet motivate and tie into students' interests while also meeting their criteria using increased technology in the classroom.

### **Building Strategies for Assessments**

Outside of SPG (Student Performance Goals) testing, Tess focused on creating her own performance-based assessments. She believed that a performance-based assessment more closely aligns “with what happens in art.” Tess noted that Georgia's teacher evaluation system emphasizes multiple methods of assessment with students. According to Tess, teachers must “step out and give a variety of different assessment methods.”

The Georgia Department of Education has defined ten performance standards with indicators for Teacher Assessments on Performance Standards. Teacher Performance Standard #5 outlines Assessment Strategies. In Assessment Strategies, “The teacher systematically chooses a variety of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies and instruments

that are valid and appropriate for the content and student population. (Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards Reference Sheet, July, 16, 2012).

Tess creates both student self-evaluation rubrics and teacher-oriented rubrics. She believes these types of assessments could also be implemented in the Student Performance Goal (SPG) testing system, which is currently a paper-and-pencil multiple-choice assessment. When collecting mid-year assessment data with second grade, Tess designed and implemented an assessment game. She assigned a score to each child generated from a color game between peers. For her, this demonstrated that hands-on assessments were possible for her students. She states, “It was revealing to me as far as the data that was necessary, and it also was continuing that exposure and learning about color, which was what the focus was.” The data was recorded manually from a scorecard used in the game. The midyear assessment provided data to fulfill RBES (Results Based Evaluation System) which is part of her teacher evaluation. The pre- and post- data was entered in her gradebook.

Janice’s story of building assessment strategies seems to corroborate with Tess’s experiences. Janice described her increased focus on assessments.

Janice:

*Because of what’s happening now, I really looked closely at how I evaluate and assess more than what I’m teaching...I’m looking at what the students are actually learning and retaining. So I’ve had a big flip in that aspect. I still begin with the standards, but now what I do is I take those and I’ll take assessment and see what is it exactly I want them to leave knowing. What are my essential questions? What is it that I really want them to know? And now I’m looking at that and making sure that-meet-in-between fills both of those areas. ... I’m trying to do a lot of formative assessment each day and the only art*

*teacher with 1200 students, that's a lot of kids. I had to come up with strategies where I could really figure out and know what these kids are doing and I needed it to be something quick, fast, and easy for me to access.*

*I really want to know more with the assessing – formative assessment – I want to know what they are taking away and I have found that I can't always hear what they're taking away because even though I'm talking to all of the kids, it's not always about their art. It's about them cause I want to know them as people and so I've come up with so many different strategies to do quick assessments.*

Janice shared how she is able to assess many students in a short forty-five minute class period by giving several examples of strategies she has developed.

### **Janice's Quick Assessments**

In the following sections, I outline Janice's quick assessments for working with large numbers of students in the limited time of one class period. These assessments are examples of how Janice has built a climate for collecting data from students while adhering to her need to make the data collection quick and efficient, within her time constraints.

**Quick assessment #1:** *What stuck with me in art.* Students write their names, class codes and whatever “stuck with them” that day on a sticky (Post-it) note.

Janice:

*As they're leaving, they stick 'em on the door. And I might ask one or two questions because in a forty-five minute period, to get an introduction, to work and to do a closure and to do an assessment – think about it. Forty-five minutes to do four different things? You know? That's less than eight minutes per...with transition...so keeping that in mind, what are things that can be done quickly. This can be done in 2-3 minutes easily. And so*

*that gives more time for the kids to work because the application is so important, the application of knowledge is so important and for those kids to have that time...they need that time to do that. We need time to process what we're doing. So, we don't give our students that processing time. That's kind of crazy.*



Figure 1. “What Stuck with me in Art” quick assessment

### **Quick assessment #2: The walkabout.**

Janice:

*Students walk about the room and ask questions directed at their fellow students questions. They act as experts in different areas: production, drawing. I'll use a check sheet for a quick scan. If everyone is where they are supposed to be, it's a check but I*

*don't even put the check there because I'm not going to take the time, I just look at those kids that are struggling and I'll find their names on my roll and I'll put a little minus underneath that day. I have written what we were doing at the top, so it keeps me very organized. There's a lot of organization upfront but it makes the whole year so easy. And then anyone that's gone above and beyond, I'll put a little star or a little plus and I'll put a little note out to the side what they were doing. A lot of times I'll pull their papers to use as exemplars in the next class for that class period. In addition, we'll do quick stand up critiques sometimes, where we choose five to eight students' work to critique real quick.*

**Quick assessment #3: The magic paintbrush.**

Janice:

*The Magic Paintbrush... Kids got to hold it, they tell about something specific in their artwork. I set a criteria for sharing: make it worthwhile, somebody else would find interesting. Also, I created magnifiers so students could investigate and solve a mystery in someone else's work. This is art criticism and aesthetics that we're talking about right now. The kids love doing that type of thing. They love talking about their own work and the work of others. And they love doing group critiques. They like table or partner or whole-class. And so that all becomes part of assessment-- so it's looking at the students' knowledge, what they've learned, and what they remember. It's not a paper/pencil test.*

**Quick assessment #4: Fun fact.** Students or groups of students write and post a fun fact.

Janice:

*They write it down and post it up for me. And so that lets me know...those are just ways that my teaching has changed. Before I would ask the whole group a question and I*

*would say as a closure, ok, who can tell me the three primary colors? Or who can tell me what direction are my arms moving in? Are they diagonal, vertical, horizontal...but it didn't tell me what each individual knew. It told me what the group knew.*

Janice changes her means of assessment to keep it fresh and interesting for the students. "I love constantly doing something different." As a member of the Apple County writing team for the SPG tests, Janice has written several evaluations that are currently used throughout the county. She is also going to be doing a video on the subject of assessment to be shared with teachers throughout the county.

Janice states:

*The SCS, the performance standards (GPS), and the national standards drive assessment. You have to assess something. What are you assessing? It all goes back to those standards, those objectives. So, all of my assessment is built on that. I look at what the kids are doing, but I'm really looking at that beginning phase, those essential questions that we're using and questioning in those standards. So all the assessment goes performance-based in here. You can make assessment fun for kids. You've got to. I'm a very quick "think on my feet" teacher. That goes back to my mother who was 17 when she had me, so I was very independent child because I had to do a lot.*

Janice is constantly working to improve her methods of instruction and assessments and to share her work with others. The theory of action underlying new accountability systems substantiates her work. One of the tenets of the theory is that improved instruction and higher levels of performance will result in higher levels of students learning. The idea supporting the theory of action is that if teachers are working harder to teach and students working harder to

learn, better interaction around content will be the result. In the theory of action, assessments also will help promote good instruction by providing feedback on student performance (Fuhrman, 2003).

### **Building Together: Increased Collaboration with Colleagues**

All of the participants brought forth discussion pertaining to increased collaboration with their colleagues since adoption of the state standards. In the past, art teachers worked in isolation as many teachers were the singular art teacher in their schools. These three art teachers now collaborate on a regular basis with other art teachers in Apple County. Properly understanding the benefits of collaboration could be achieved by examining the organizational context of the school system. Situating these cases of collaboration in a larger body of literature on the subject of collaboration would extend beyond the scope of this study. It should be noted, however, the advent of professional learning communities, informal planning with colleagues, and networking with other teachers via technology are just a few of the ways that visual arts teachers are coming together to share ideas in Apple County.

Dave spoke about future plans in relation to using the GPS in his art curriculum. He was excited by the increased collaboration among art teachers in Apple County. He spoke about a Professional Learning Community being formed by art teachers that would earn credit in the form of Professional Learning Units (PLUs) toward recertification. In keeping with national trends, Apple County is supportive of collaboration. Apple gives release time (or paid professional leave time) for professional conferences. Dave advises new teachers to seek out experienced art teachers for help in implementing the state standards into their own lesson planning. He also advises colleagues to check their respective counties for resources concerning standards and assessments.

The art teachers in this study adapted and expanded their ways of teaching to focus on state standards. In doing so, the teachers also spent time designing and building new lessons and assessments to accompany standards-based lessons. The teachers were enthusiastic about building performance-based assessments. In performance-based assessments, students show what they know through the act of making art or through creating a product that displays their understanding of the targeted learning goal. The teachers in this study spoke in favor of performance assessments over the use of multiple-choice tests. It was their collective opinion that performance based assessments, even fun assessments and/or teacher observations, could be reveal the most accurate data about student learning. In my discussions with these teachers, it became apparent that they wanted to build curricula by following the path of learning set forth by the Georgia Performance Standards. Documents such as lesson plans supported this idea of building curricula.

When examining lesson plans submitted by Janice, I considered *Research Question 1: "How do teachers incorporate the standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?"* Where were the standards listed in the lesson? Were they incorporated at the beginning, middle or end of the lesson? Were the standards detailed or brief? Was the language of the standards woven throughout lesson? Instead of trying to answer questions about the meaning of a document, Prior suggests that we look at what "is referenced within documents" (p. 122). By closely examining the chronology and categories of the lesson, I could discover what was referenced within the document. In contrast to older lesson plans where the standards were listed at the end of the lesson, I observed the standards section in newer lessons was listed prominently on page one. Another interesting observation is that in the newer lessons, the assessments section is listed after the standards section, whereas in the older lessons, the assessments (if present) are

generally listed at the end. The standards sections in these three lessons (documents 1, 2, 3) is further broken down into the categories: Meaning and Creative Thinking, Production, Assessment and Reflection, and Connections. Some of the language in the standards was woven throughout the body of the lesson. Within each category, the standards for learning describe what students should do or will do within the context of the lesson. The procedures and step-by-step directions in the newer lessons seems brief in comparison to some of the older lessons, revealing that the audience may extend beyond practicing art teachers. It would stand to reason that practicing art teachers would appreciate explicit procedures. The new lessons seem to document the standards and assessments for which the art teacher is being held accountable.

My own reflexivity must be considered at this point in the analysis. As an art teacher who actually writes my own lessons (not included in this study), I have observed that in recent years we art teachers write not only for ourselves and to share with other teachers, we document what we are teaching for those who are dictating what needs to be taught by way of the standards. The arrangement of the text of the lesson, in the amount of space dedicated to standards/assessments and the amount of detail to which the standards are being addressed support my reflexive analysis. It should be noted that only Janice submitted lesson plans for the study, so this analysis is limited to my review of three lessons from one participant, Janice.

In this chapter, *Art Teachers Building*, we see that meeting the requirements of teaching state standards and adhering to accountability systems encouraged teachers to create and adopt new content. While teachers wrote new assessments and built strategies for test success, it should be noted that teaching to the test “may in part be a survival instinct” (Herman, p. 159, 2003). A lack of more extensive effective strategies can cause teachers to work within constraints and narrow curriculum for desired results in testing. While collaboration and increased use of

technology was useful to these teachers in building capacity to meet new requirements, these teachers need coordinated systems of continued professional development with increased collaboration among colleagues. Professional development programs aligned with understanding of standards based instruction and assessment could help these teachers meet the increasing demands and expectations of the state and county school systems.

## CHAPTER 6

### ART TEACHERS SURRENDERING

*Research Question 3: How do art teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards? Research Question 4: How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?*

Art teachers have surrendered freedom, time and the “creative edge” to accommodate the external factors of accountability including standards implementation and increased assessment. Art teachers who began their careers in the late 1980s and early 1990s had autonomy to teach as they wished. In Lowenfeld’s (1949/1987) seminal book, *Creative and Mental Growth*, the author argues that children are the essence of society. For Lowenfeld, creative and intellectual growth was the basis of any educational system. The purpose of Lowenfeld’s research was to create a case for understanding the importance of making education a joyful and meaningful experience. The text focuses on the creative growth of students and their artistic development. For many art educators, this book was the ultimate reference guide for teaching and the “keeper” from college textbooks. Originally published in 1949, *Creative and Mental Growth* offered the notion that the value of the art-making experience was in the process of creating art. The presupposition is that the art-making experience is crucial to the learning processes of children. Lowenfeld posits that as children grow and experience the world in both physical and psychological settings, their physical, mental, and creative growth also changes. I set forth the idea that many veteran art

teachers began their careers on a foundation of philosophy at least partially developed from the ideals of Lowenfeld. The 8<sup>th</sup> edition was published in 1987. Lowenfeld's voice echoes through the voices of the teachers in my study.

Another major influential approach to art education, Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE), gained momentum in the 1980s. DBAE was developed by the Getty Center for Arts Education, a division of the J. Paul Getty Trust, which is a private foundation dedicated to the visual arts and humanities. DBAE incorporated the study of four parent disciplines, art history, art production, art criticism, and aesthetics. Greer (1984) stated, "When art is taught with this kind of structure, it answers critics who maintain that art education has little to do with art. The artworks of children become examples of concepts learned, in addition to being expressive efforts" (p.212). However, the place the teachers began their careers—a place where experiences are provided, processes are emphasized, and creativity is the focus—is evolving. That evolution can be seen in the ways in which teachers are surrendering to aspects of a new version of art education where products must be produced as evidence of knowledge and engaging in creative processes is not enough to meet the requirements of state and county policies.

### **Surrendering Freedom**

In the following section, the teachers discuss what they have surrendered in their standards-driven world of teaching. These teachers discuss susceptibility to pressures from their school system about high student performance and curricula constraints.

Tess:

*I remember creating those year-long curriculums that were just out of nothing but driving down the highway talking on the phone to your friend all afternoon and coming up with these wild ideas, and we would do it for a year. And it was good, solid teaching*

*and it could be standard-based but it wasn't standard-driven. I don't think that really is existing very much anymore. Now we have this SPG standardized testing in art and you have limited class time with your kids and you administer that SPG at the beginning of the year and you go, "Oh holy cow", I've got to make sure I teach this, this and this. So... whatever wild ideas you might have developed driving down the highway that afternoon might have to be tweaked a little so that you can teach what you have to teach. Not that you wouldn't have taught it anyways but we're teaching for the assessment. I mean-- just like everybody else now.*

Dave:

*When I first started teaching, I was fresh out of college and I was scared to death. I was hired at an elementary school that was first-third grade only and I called up my college professor the week before school started and I said, I have no idea what I'm doing. I don't know what to do. And he said, just go have fun. There was no guide to follow. It was just teach art. So a lot of it was hit or miss in the beginning. And I found that after maybe three months of doing this, I just thoroughly enjoyed it. I mean there were long hours, planning and work and research, but it was just fun. When I see that, I think back on that...there was free reign then. It was, you could do almost anything you wanted. Every year has gotten just a little bit more, a little tighter...to the point where I've kind of lost all that...I can't... think today, you know, it's snowing out so I think I'm gonna do something with snow. You know? I can't do that. I have to stick with a certain plan. It has to be a certain way. How does that tie in? You know? That's the creative edge that's lost. Janice's responses also reflected a wistfulness to be able to return to the days of having freedom in teaching. Now, she often feels that she is "not getting everything in."*

Janice:

*I think sometimes I let assessment, more now than ever, drive my teaching, especially with the SPGs that we've got right now or the standardized pre- and post-test, so I'm gearing so much towards making sure these kids know those items that are going to be tested on at the end of April or beginning of May. Before, I was not concerned about that; I knew my students were growing. I knew my students were succeeding. I saw growth in them individually through what they were producing and now we're taking the standardized testing and kids that have always been really successful in the art room, it doesn't always come across clearly that they are successful because it's a multiple-choice question with just one answer. It's kind of hard to give one answer because sometimes kids...you want them to think outside the box and so they see other possibilities sometimes and so there are some things that are definitely correct. What are the three primary colors? But sometimes some of the images that were on the test with symmetry, the kids might select it because they were looking at how the shapes were symmetrical, shapes that were used within the mask and so...that's symmetry but you can't hear a child explaining this is symmetrical because this is a triangle right here, this is a square right here and those are symmetrical shapes. This over here, this blobby thing, which is in the center for a nose, that's an organic shape and it is not symmetrical. Well, the child is right. But the question, the answer was wrong because of it not being a triangle and a triangle. Does that make sense? So, it's really a shame.*

Janice goes on to express her desire for a different kind of assessment that would allow students to show their knowledge through performance rather than recall.

Janice:

*I really wish we could do performance-based assessment but in order to do performance-based assessment, that means that a level of trust is going to have to be given to us that I am not seeing the state being willing to give up to us. When I say us, I mean teachers in general, not just art teachers. Because art is performance-based and there are multiple ways to come to a solution and there is not always one right answer for everything. As a matter of fact, I really don't want every child to come up with the exact same thing at the end of a lesson or unit or whatever it is. I want them to think. I want them to be diverse. I want them to be those divergent thinkers. I want those kids to be problem-solvers and I want them to be dreamers. I want them to come up with solutions to everyday problems and to notice the hooks on a cricket's legs and say, they that's almost like what Velcro looks like. I want them to make those connections and observations. I don't want them to just say, well, one plus one is always going to be two. I think we're doing such a disservice and it makes me sad. And when I see that we pull in our special ed kids that are expected to take these tests and they're crying...it's just, what are we doing to our children and what are we teaching them? We're not teaching them to think. I think we're doing such a disservice. Other countries are looking at us and we're looking at other countries for ideas and solutions to being at the top but when it all comes right down to it, I think just giving our kids those tools to really learn how to think for themselves and to make judgments cause that's really what they need more than anything.*

To situate Janice's predicament into today's context of standards-based reform, Herman (2003) offers understanding. Herman posits, "A focus on the test rather than the standards also means that what gets tested gets taught, and what does not get tested may get less attention or may not

get taught at all. WYTIWYG—what you test is what you get—is a continuing truism in the work of standards-based assessment” (p. 150). Even though standards-based teaching has taken away full autonomy in curriculum design for the teacher, it should be noted that the Georgia Performance Standards do not dictate how teachers should teach, how long they should spend on a standard or how they should assess that standard. Standardized testing, now in place, demands that teachers alter pedagogy for desired results.

### **Surrendering Curiosity**

Curious students explore and investigate while they learn. The term “curiosity” also denotes a desire to learn through gaining skills and knowledge. Some believe that curiosity and motivation for learning go hand in hand.

Janice:

*I love it when I see kids taking what is considered traditional, even just a crayon, and then doing something different with it. Even if it's getting the blow dryer and playing around with the melting, and experimenting and investigating. I want students to be curious and I feel like with the testing that we're doing, we're really snuffing out that light of curiosity. And that's sad to take that away from society. I think that standardized testing is doing that. I find myself making sure they understand what a color wheel is, and it's good to know a color wheel. I like to relate it as a recipe. But in the big scheme of things, isn't it ok if they just know how to mix colors and how to apply colors and use color to express mood and feelings and to be able to read color in an advertisement when they're looking in a magazine and understand what the company is trying to persuade them to do? Do they really need to know the order on the color wheel? I mean, do they? If they're not going into art...I don't think they need to know that. I don't know. Maybe*

*that's not a great example because they need to know how to use one but I don't know if they need to have it memorized. It's a tool. It's something they can access. I want them to know how to use it and apply it.*

Research supports the idea that curiosity prepares the brain for learning. Stenger (2014) discusses how and why curiosity enhances learning.

Stenger (2014) explains:

The researchers found that, once the subjects' curiosity had been piqued by the right question, they were better at learning and remembering completely unrelated information.

One of the study's co-authors, Dr. Matthias Gruber, explains that this is because curiosity puts the brain in a state that allows it to learn and retain any kind of information, like a vortex that sucks in what you are motivated to learn, and also everything around it.

(para.6)

If curiosity prepares students to learn and makes learning more rewarding, how can we as educators afford to allow curiosity to be snuffed out? Certainly, Janice's comments about surrendering curiosity raise concern over the effects of standardized testing in the visual arts.

### **Surrendering Imaginative Play**

Dave expressed lament for the kindergarten of a bygone era when playtime and activities were built around centers encouraged skills building and creative growth. Curwood (n.d.) explains, "Countless school districts have promoted "academic kindergartens" where five-year-olds are more likely to encounter skill-and-drill exercises and nightly homework than unstructured, imaginative playtime. With so much pressure to teach essential literary and math skills, many kindergarten teachers, and even prekindergarten teachers say that time for free play and exploration is increasingly limited" (Curwood, para. 2).

Dave:

*It's sad because I hear Kindergarten teachers saying that we don't have time to teach cutting anymore. They've taken all of what they call "playtime" for kindergarten out. All that's gone. They want all academics. Working in a kitchen and playing kitchen and cooking and playing with cars and trucks and building roads and stuff...construction is gone. That's left upon me. Now I have to teach how you hold your scissors, how you cut with scissors, how you glue, how you color, how you paint, how you hold the paintbrush. None of that is done in the classroom anymore.*

Drew:

And the lack of the centers in the primary grades I think is something that is really common throughout Georgia. I'm not sure about the rest of the United States, but I have heard other teachers say the same thing.

Dave:

*It affects their learning. It affects me. It affects everything. I just don't understand that.*

There is little doubt that *No Child Left Behind* played a role in determining the right time for children to learn to read. Schools have effectively gained a year to prepare for third grade testing by converting to academic kindergartens. Research backs up the notion that imaginative play is the catalyst for social, physical, emotional, and moral development in young children. "Kindergartners use imaginative play to make sense of the world around them—and lay the critical groundwork for the understanding of words and numbers" (Curwood, para. 4)

Teachers across the nation have removed the play kitchens to make space for math and reading stations. Dress-up areas have been removed. The blocks are gone, in an effort to ratchet up academic expectations. Certainly, some kindergarten teachers find ample ways to teach

creatively and engage students in imaginative play that connects to academic learning, but the opportunities for opportunities for show and tell and artistic play have given way to the demands for greater academic achievement (Hemphill, 2006).

### **Loss of Instructional Time with Students**

Veteran art teachers have surrendered certain aspects of their teaching to meet the state standards and accountability measures. Tess recalls having to cancel art classes so she could monitor students during standardized testing.

Tess:

*I would have never imagined in a million years that I would have been pulled for a week's worth of classes for multiple grade levels to administer county assessments, multiple times per year... and that happens. I would have never imagined in a million years that we would have had standardized testing that began to surface in visual arts like SPGs and all that sort of stuff and it has happened. It's (teaching) changed considerably. The duties I believe are a little bit greater. I mean I feel like we work a little bit harder and maybe almost sometimes seem a little bit less appreciated, so you need to make sure that you're not doing this so you get a big giant pat on the back. You're doing it because you love it.*

Dave laments a similar situation at his school in Apple County.

Dave:

*Testing has never interfered at all with my teaching up until...I would say in the last five years. The CRCT, the old standardized test before Georgia Milestones, – when the testing was going on, I wasn't teaching. Some years, we had a limited art schedule in the afternoon after the testing was done. That was the only thing that was really affected.*

*Now in the last five years, they started pulling us for proctoring so we had to proctor CRCT, and then this year we had to proctor CogAT testing and ITBS. When the new milestones come out, I'm sure we're going to have to proctor for that, as well, as they do a post test...I think there's another post-test that we have to proctor as well. That's outside of our visual arts SPGs, then we have to do our SPGs, which is now...I mean really when it comes down to it, we lose probably two months of teaching just testing.*

Tess :

*I remember the days when the teachers would come down and say, we're getting ready to do a big unit on rocks. Is there anything that you might could throw at 'em? Or you might have one class out of a grade level that's doing a big play and you want to let those children take a day or so to really work on backdrop design. I feel like we may be in a position now where, it's like, I don't have that flexibility, as just that artist in the building, as well as the art teacher, where I could just, you know, throw my hands up and say yes, let's go outside today and find rocks and look at them and talk about the colors in the rocks because I've gotta hit perspective.*

An abundance of literature addresses the loss of instructional time due to students testing. One study by Howard Nelson (2013), *Testing More, Teaching Less: What America's Obsession with Student Testing Costs in Money and Lost Instructional Time* outlines the costs of testing and suggests that cutting testing time and costs in half in two mid-size urban school districts would yield significant gains to the instructional day and free up funds in the budget to aid better alignment of the tests to the standards.

### **Surrendering Control: Concern with Alignment of State Standards**

Misalignment of standards and the SPG student assessment in Apple County is presenting difficulty for teachers. All three participants in this study presented misalignment with the standards as a major problem with standardized testing in the arts. When teachers administer standardized tests, they are placed in a situation where they must wait and watch. When misalignments or test bias is presented, the teachers may be able to give constructive feedback for corrective procedures. Each participant said they were aware of the work that Apple County was doing to examine and correct misalignments. Admittedly, the participants related that SPG testing in Apple is a new process, and it is their hope that testing can be improved over time to better represent learning in visual arts. Tess explained her frustration, “If the County Standards and Curriculum say that students will understand the role of an artist, it does not call for students to recite or list. However, the assessments are asking students to perform this type of recall. I don’t really believe that they (the tests) match up with what our standards are.”

Implementing standards-based strategies suggests acceptance of a common theory of action (Rothman, 2003). This theory suggests that an aligned system of standards, assessments, and accountability can raise student performance (Elmore & Rothman, 1999). Rothman states, “The most significant criterion for assessments that is implied by the theory of standards-based reform is alignment” (p. 97). Rothman suggests that tests should provide information on student progress and measure the expectations of standards. In conclusion, Rothman states, “Aligned assessment also helps ensure that teaching students to do well on the tests means that students learn what they need to know to meet the standards—not just what they need to know to answer test question” (p. 97).

Tess suggests the standards need to be more specific to improve the alignment or the tests need to be changed. “When you say that they understand something...or they’re exposed to it (as the standards call for), if I want to expose a second grader to the primary colors, that’s what I’m going to give them. You know? Then I have to go with my SPG assessment, and I have to have them list it. Or recite it. So I’m teaching to achieve the scores. I’ve never focused on teaching it so that I could get the score for it.” In reconciling the situation, Tess says “I get it. It is a lower that leads to a higher but sometimes I think that our lower is addressed differently than everybody else’s.”

Rothman (2003) clarifies, “True alignment means that the content of the tests reflects that of the standards; it is also important that the tests do not include extraneous content that would send mixed signals to schools about what is important for students to learn. To be aligned the tests should match the depth of the standards, --that is, the extent of the cognitive abilities the standards student to demonstrate—and the breadth of the standards—that is, the range of knowledge and skills included in the standards” (pp. 97-98).

### **Surrendering to Inconsistencies with Test Administration**

Dave discussed the challenges and inconsistencies with visual arts SPG testing. At Waterfalls Elementary, special education students require the same modifications that they are given for test-taking in their own classroom. Thurlow (2003) states, “There is no doubt that today’s schools are more diverse than they have ever been. This diversity presents many challenges; disabilities and English language learners (ELLs) (p. 115). In Georgia, ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) is the acronym used.

Dave:

*This was difficult because we (specials teachers) didn't learn that information until halfway through the testing period. ...They were supposed to have small group testing so all the rest of the kids...and they needed all the questions read to them, whereas like 4<sup>th</sup> grade...they read the test themselves. So, up until that point, they were reading the test themselves and then they were telling me, well you did that wrong, you needed to do it small group. So, again, those were the inconsistencies that they needed to really iron out before this test was implemented that they didn't iron out. But all of our ESOL students if they were...they have a level one, level two, level three and level four...and level ones and twos I believe are the ones with very limited or no English-speaking, and I think we did not have to test ones and twos. But threes and fours were not exempt from the testing.*

Drew:

So, with the testing modifications, my understanding is that when the students are taking their regular annual standardized test, that extra staff would be brought in to administer tests to those small groups and to help with those modifications. What kind of support are you given or will you be given?

Dave:

*When I asked, because we were taken out of our classrooms to proctor for CogAT testing...Apple County tests a lot and I had to be there for ITBS testing and CogAT testing so I lost about two weeks' worth of teaching doing testing. And when I told them that they said that anything over thirty students in a classroom should have a proctor. My administration said we have nobody to do that so you get no proctor.*

In her discussion of assessment accommodations, Thurlow (2003) elaborates, “Assessment accommodations are changes in assessment materials or procedures that enable the student’s knowledge and skills to be assessed rather than the student’s disabilities or limited English proficiency” (p. 122). We are reminded of the recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). While IDEA provided children with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, ESEA used the phrase “all students” when it clarified the way Title I programs were to be evaluated (Thurlow, p. 118). Dave’s experience brings about questions: How are accommodations being implemented? What criteria should differentiate testing in the visual arts in regard to what accommodations a student needs? Are teachers being supported in their effort to uphold the tenets of ESEA and IDEA? Thurlow states, “The saying ‘all means all’ creates numerous difficulties when it comes to accountability systems because not “all” students can take the same assessment in the standard way” (p. 132).

Like Dave, Janice also found challenges with the GPS and incurring SPG testing. She and her county fine arts supervisor attended a state meeting on the student learning objectives and state assessments. Janice did not like that “everything was being driven by paper/pencil assessment.” At the state meeting, Janice reviewed the “bubble-in” assessment prototypes to used with fine arts students.

Janice:

*The arts should not be solely evaluated on that type of assessment. I understand the reasoning behind it because when you are a teacher like myself who has 1200 kids and you have to give and assess something that they want every art teacher in the state to*

*assess and do a comparative, you have to have that consistency. I totally get that. But it is very bothersome to me as that so many people are using that as the one and all. And that's not the end all. That's just a snapshot of what some students know because there are other kids that can show you what they know through performance versus through bubbling in a question. And then you throw into that mix all our ESOL kids, who can't always read everything or they don't understand the language because what one person that may have written that calls "implied texture", I may call it something totally different—"visual texture". And so the kids have not learned...they don't know that implied and visual textures are the same thing. So, there's this language that happens.*

In examining the effects of testing on instruction, Herman (p. 141) posits, "Effects on instruction...appeared very different when tests or others assessments used more performance-oriented items, rather than multiple choice formats. However, as experience with these direct measures grew, their potential for influencing teaching and learning became more apparent" (p. 145-146).

In *Experience and Education*, Dewey (1938) discussed school reform and emphasizes his theory of experience in transforming teachers into effective educators. Dewey's philosophy was counterintuitive to the idea that learning should be teacher-directed, and curriculum should consist of rote memorization of facts. Dewey posited that traditional education was based on strict discipline and structure while progressive school reform was less structured and student-directed. Dewey was opposed to scripted lessons and, instead, he spoke of the teacher as an agent of change. He believed that educators must expand on their students' knowledge by introducing new problems that build upon the student's prior knowledge (Dewey, 1938). Dewey explored the

problematic relationship of progressive education views and conservative views on education. Dewey's conjecture of this tension between conservative and progressive school is timely, even today.

Janice recalls another story that has stayed with her through the years.

Janice:

*I love this analogy of the black banana. We were assessing one of the state tests and one of the things that came out was that there was a question about yellow bananas. And I don't remember exactly what the question was but there were so many kids in the Appalachian area that totally missed that question and they checked off "black bananas". Within their community, the foods that were donated by the time they got bananas they were so ripe, that that's the color they thought. It was a color question. What are the color of bananas? Yellow, black, red, orange...and so many of those kids checked black because that's what they knew. And so here, we have to be very careful when we're writing assessments and you have to look at your population and your community and what are their experiences? What do they know as the color of bananas? Here in this area of the world, they know yellow bananas but you go up to some of these other areas outside of Macon, you had kids that lived in homes with dirt floors. They might think bananas are black because that's what they get. Or brown. So I thought that...when we were looking at that and looking at those test questions...it was like I bet I know why. Think about this. And they were like, that's exactly why! And so, that was a question that was re-written and thrown out.*

Drew:

Classic test bias.

Janice:

*Yes! Classic test bias! But I think we have that also happen. And it's hard not to have that happen. It's really hard but I just look at the language of art and how that has changed so much and because art people are who they are, they like to give their own words and meanings. And so that really hinders reliability of the tests sometimes.*

Janice's comments raise the question of fairness of standardized tests. As an acknowledgment of the inherent economic and racial inequity of standardized testing, stakeholders in education should consider the overreliance on standardized testing in public schools, especially in the area of art.

### **Loss of Collegiality**

Dave used to have a principal when he first began teaching who would come in the morning and join in with his lessons. When Dave was holding a class discussion, the principal would join in and "start talking about things that were going on".

Dave:

*I try to get other people to do that, and they're much more standoffish. They come in with the tablet now, and they're just typing away and writing and then they leave. And they usually leave a little note on my desk saying thank you for letting me observe. I like being personal with the person. I like them coming in and being part of what's going on. I've invited my principal to come in, just to come in because I told her at the beginning of the year I had some exciting new things in my classroom I wanted to show her. And she never came. But I understand also we're a huge school.*

Dave discusses the expectations that have come with the adoption of standards. "We have to have our lesson plans clearly visible. They have to know what standards are being taught. They

have to know the accommodations that are being made for students and modifications for students of special needs. We have the essential questions that we are supposed to be asking at the beginning or during the lesson. So it's like an informal assessment with every class that we teach." Figure 2 features the white board documentation of Dave's essential questions. External accountability factors have effected teachers' perceptions and the ways in which they approach teaching.

What does it mean to surrender? In this study, I suggest that it means to yield. These art teachers have yielded in order to adjust to standards based reform in the classroom. Two decades ago, art teachers had the freedom to choose how to fully implement the curriculum. Content standards were issued in the mid 1980s, and teachers used those standards as guidelines and checklists. In more recent years, performance standards, along with testing, have brought higher levels of accountability. Janice acknowledged that assessments activities were extinguishing the light of curiosity. Dave witnessed the negative effects in art classes of the abolition of imaginative play in kindergarten classes. Both Tess and Dave had concerns about the loss of instructional time due to testing. All three teachers spoke about test alignment and test administration concerns, especially with special populations. However, they acknowledged that standardized testing in art is relatively new, and Apple County was working to align future assessments. Dave related a story of surrendering collegiality with his administrators. In the current climate of education, human interaction seems to have given way to evaluations and data collections to measure effectiveness.

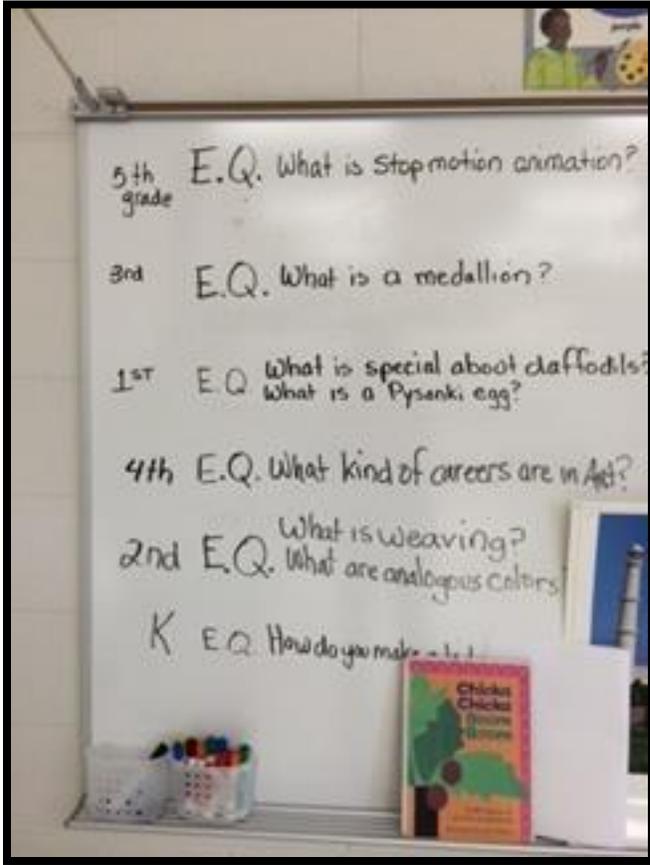


Figure 2. Essential Questions Accompany Every Lesson.

## CHAPTER 7

### ART TEACHERS MAINTAINING IDEALS AND VALUES

*Research Question 1: How do art teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for instruction? Research Question 3: How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?*

In the midst of adjusting to new strategies for teaching and assessing in the art room, these three art teachers have maintained certain beliefs about what good teaching means. In examining what *has* changed for teachers over time, it is also necessary to examine what *has not* changed. What values have these teachers maintained in regard to their thinking and planning for instruction? The participants in my study expressed a desire to adhere to what is best for their students. These experienced teachers never spoke of “burn out” or counting the days until retirement. On the contrary, each participant related stories of providing positive learning experiences and setting up a positive classroom environment for their art students. In this section, I will outline some of the principles that these veteran teachers are seeking to preserve in their teaching. Several of the topics that came to the forefront in my talks with teachers were not new ideas, but strategies that are regarded as tried-and-true in the classroom. One such strategy is the use of the “hook” to motivate and capture the interest of students. Janice talks about “the hook” as a motivational activity for her students. She has always begun each art class with a special question or by handing each child something to spark their wonder and curiosity upon entering the art room.

Janice:

*I always start out with a motivation. I always have, with every class, and it's something different. It could be that they are looking around the room for a clue as to what the lesson is going to be about. Something hidden. Or it could be a song or a poem or a story. It could be just asking them a question or giving them something when they walk in – a piece of string and getting them to think about what it is that we're going to be doing. It piques their curiosity. So that's something that has not changed for me.*

In the following sections, I will outline several tenets of teaching that the teachers in this study discussed. Inquiry-based teaching, in which the teachers ask questions to promote higher order thinking, was one of the most important practices named by all three teachers. Exposing students to a wide range of materials and activities was important to these teachers who want to help students connect to the world around them. Advanced planning procedures and good classroom management practices were two areas prioritized by my participants. Promoting a positive classroom, seizing the teachable moment and bringing fun into the art class were also enduring habits for these teachers.

### **Inquiry-Based Teaching**

All three teachers mentioned the use of questions as an important part of their teaching philosophy and practice. They want students to ask “why” and to be given the opportunity to explore. The art classroom is a natural place for exploration. Janice uses an inquiry-based teaching method, using questions to draw out and build upon prior knowledge. She says, “I still have what I call ‘the meat,’ meaning that she teaches core objectives.” However, her lessons are largely about process rather than product, in keeping with Lowenfeld’s philosophy of art education. When not engaged in test preparation, Janice delights in her students’ exploration of

materials. She encourages students to discover on their own whenever possible. For in-depth exploration, she teaches lessons that span across multiple art periods, giving students time to immerse in understanding through exploration of art media and concepts. Janice closes every lesson with questions checking for understanding and giving her students time to reflect.

At Pinedale Elementary where Tess teaches, project-based learning has been fully implemented with the school following a school-wide inquiry model of instruction. For Tess, it's a systematic way of children taking more ownership over their learning. Students learn skills in academic areas and use inquiry processes to explore their interests. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is research-driven and, at Pinedale, Tess has been named as art specialist. She works with the PBL team of academic inquiry coaches made up of the technology specialist and the media specialists. "We're a team that make up what's called the inquiry team and so if the kids choose to do art for their project, they work with me. If they choose to do something with technology, they work with the LSTC technologist specialists and so on."

### **Exposing Students to Art Media and Long Range Planning**

Janice says, "I still try to expose them to as many different media as possible. I feel like if they don't get it in elementary school, they may never get that experience so I want them to experience as much as possible." She likes to bring out her collections and carefully unwrap artifacts for her students. Janice enjoys creating mystery for her students. She has always wanted to motivate them and engage her students. Allowing them to hold something that could be a museum piece sets a special tone in the art room. Janice says she has always strived to inspire students in this way, and she plans to continue drawing students to the mystery of art.

Janice stated that she has always subscribed to practices that are regarded as good solid teaching and classroom management. She said, "In my first few years, I was pretty much flying

by the seat of my pants trying to figure things out as I went. But I started planning out several weeks to make sure that I used the elements and principles of art.” She based her lessons around teaching the elements and principles and, presently, she continues her long range planning in that manner.

### **Seizing the Teachable Moment**

When I asked Janice what had not changed in her teaching, she mentioned that she has and always will “seize the teachable moment.” Tess mentioned in her interview that teaching off the cuff was more difficult in today’s school where everything taught is supposed to be on the lesson plan and teachers are expected to constantly tie into the standards for the particular lesson. Janice recounted a favorite story in our interview.

Janice:

*I was being observed by the principal, and one of the kids dropped a container of orange paint. It hit flat down and the lid was not on, so orange paint went up and flew down. All over the floor, and you could have heard a pin drop because they were all – Ahhh. I said, ‘Oh my gosh, this is great! Look at this!’ Because we had been talking about shapes. I said, ‘This orange splot, what kind of shape is this?’ We talked about what kind of a shape it was and that it was organic or free-form. Instead of flipping out, I took that as a moment to: 1. Save this kid who was horrified and 2. We turned it into a teachable moment. We cleaned it up, and we got orange all over ourselves, but it was such a great teachable moment. I remember... the principal in her evaluation and she talked about it turning into such a great learning experience for these kids. We ended up taking handprints and putting them all over the paper that was out on the table. But it turned*

*into a really teachable moment, so I still do that. And that was a risk for me to do. I was very unsure; it was in my earlier years. But anyway, I still do take the advantage of those teachable moments.*

### **Promoting a Positive Classroom**

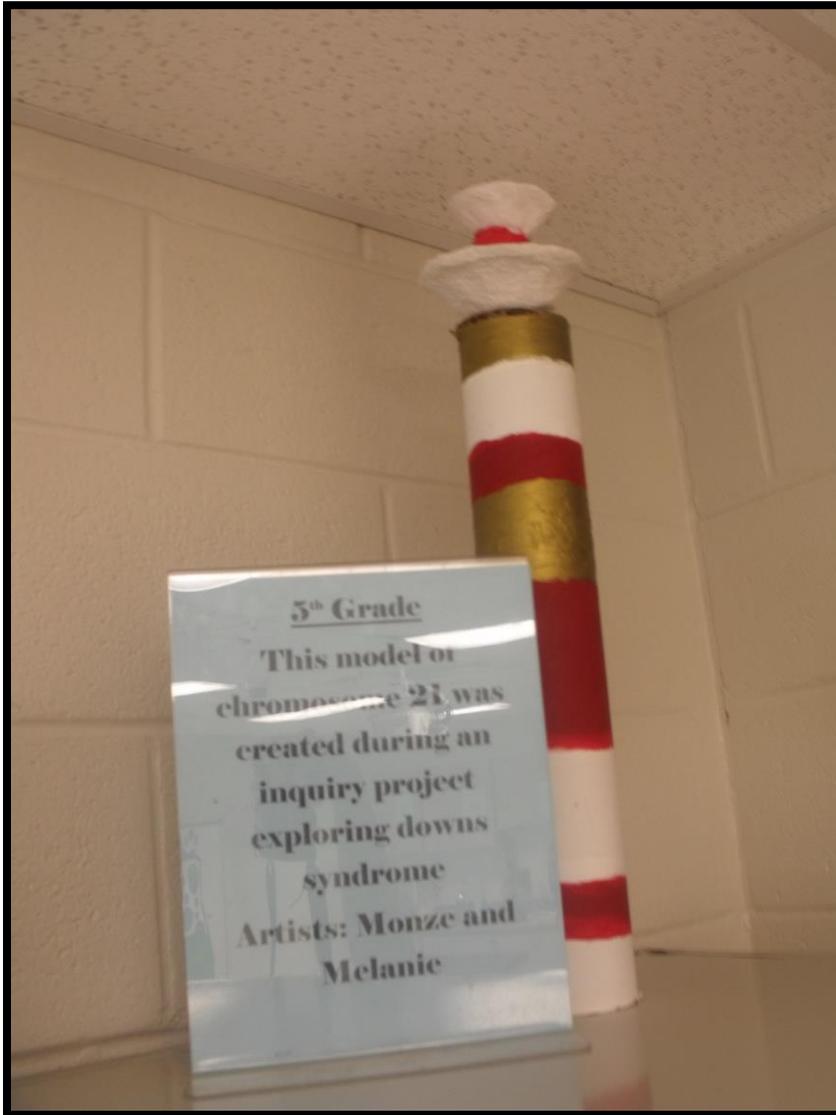
Tess promotes a positive environment in her art room. She likes for “her children” to smile and talk to each other. She likes to play music. Recently, she has been providing more choice-based activities inspired by research that she has been conducting on choice-based art. In choice-based art, she explains, children are able to select how they want to express themselves. When she was still in the traditional art room, she implemented some choice-based lessons with success and had gotten further away from the product being the most important thing in her curriculum. She wants the learning experience of making art to be pleasurable for students, while focusing on the thinking behind the art-making process.

Tess:

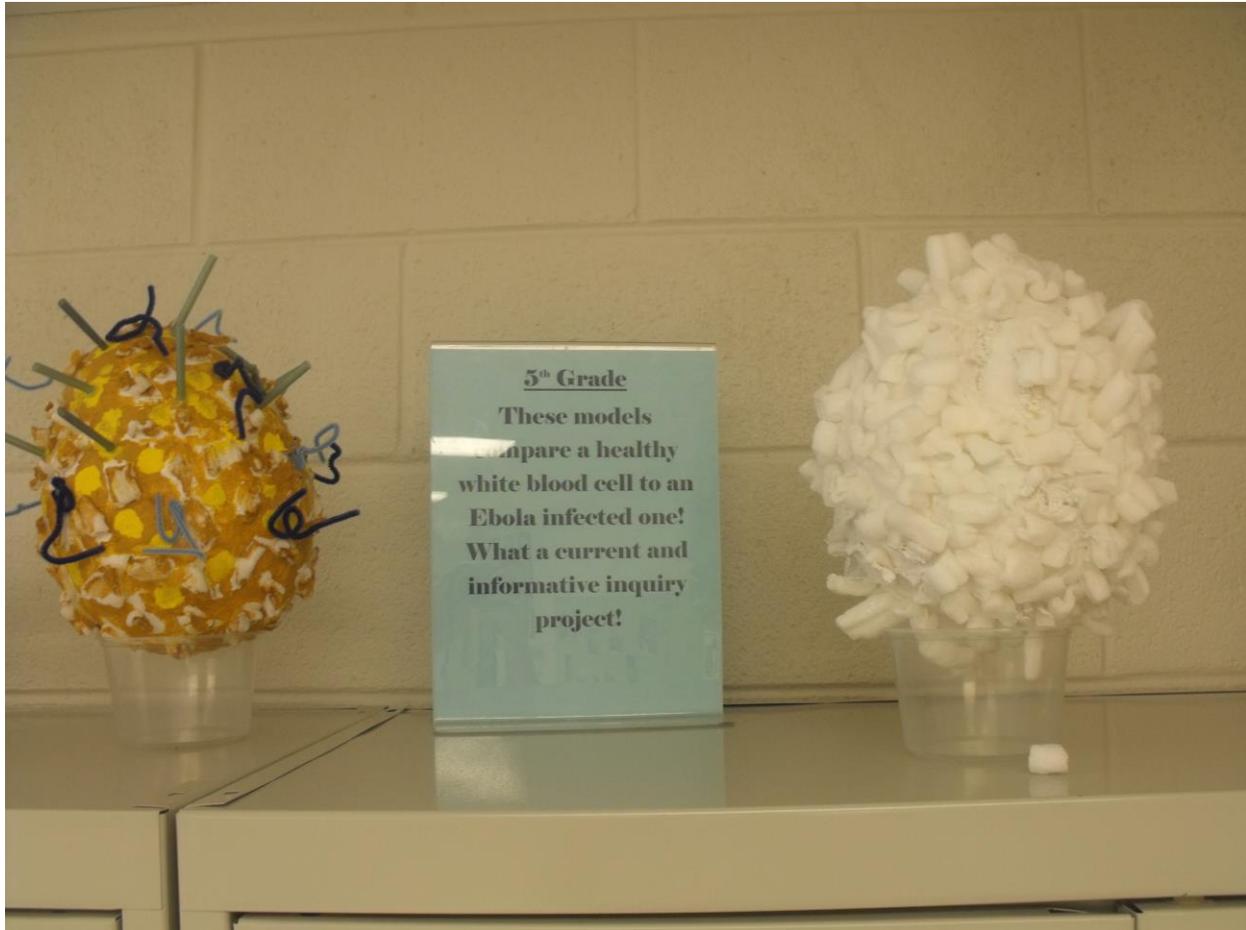
*I used to feel like if I had a whole day where the kids just sketched out their ideas or their plan that that was almost like a wasted day. I was so busy, like wanting to get the paint and everything out. But I’m so much more relaxed with that. I feel like creativity comes out more when they have that time to kind of process what their goal is. And they think it through.*

Tess still gets joy giving her students time to engage in creative endeavors. With a focus on Project Based Learning (PBL), she does not see a whole class at one time. As the traditional art teacher, everyone was learning the same concept, using the same materials, and focusing on the same skills. Now Tess coaches her students to create in the manner that they have chosen to create. Students ask for guidance on material usage or advice on a particular style for the pieces

that they want to create. Tess will guide them, but as the PBL coach, she does not teach her own curriculum. “I’m teaching them what they’re asking me to teach them.” (See Figures 1 and 2.)



*Figure 3.* Model of Chromosome from student in Project-Based Learning.



*Figure 4.* Model of white blood cells (healthy and infected) from student in Project-Based Learning.

### **Maintaining Enthusiasm**

Janice says, “I think my enthusiasm in teaching has not changed. I still get really excited. I’m still very silly in the classroom. On Fridays, we have funny accent Friday. I talk in a British accent because it’s Friday. Or we have Mime Monday or Musical Monday and the kids love it. It’s just a little bit of crazy but the kids love it, so it engages them.”

Contemplating how veteran teachers set forth on their journeys of art teaching, I dug out some of my old textbooks. Describing the role of the dedicated teachers, Wachowiak and Clements (1993) explicate, “A positive, cheerful and outgoing personality is a major asset for

teachers of art. Teachers must learn in sometimes difficult and trying situations to be patient, calm, and resolute. Children want to believe in their teachers” (p. 77). I believe many art teachers took heed to these words in their formative years as pre-service teachers. Some of these traits can be attributed to personality, but the art teachers in my study consistently carried out the characteristics of enthusiasm and a seemingly authentic desire to establish a positive rapport with their students. My interview transcripts told a story of positive teachers who were adapting to the current requirements in their state and in Apple County School System. In spite of the challenges they faced with increased measures of accountability, enthusiasm and humor displayed in their classroom stories hinted at the satisfaction they felt as art teachers.

### **Benefiting the Kids**

Both Janice and Dave had difficulty meeting the academic goals set per county requirements for the now defunct Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument (TPAI). Both teachers seem to have accepted the fact that the TPAI academic goals were almost unattainable, and both teachers have had positive experiences with administrators who were supportive after the goals were not met. Their priorities seem to lie in doing what is best for students and not in meeting the county’s requirements. The TPAI seemed to foreshadow today’s more stringent tools for teacher accountability and teacher performance assessment.

Janice:

*I think one of the things that I’ve been really consistent with and it really happened after that third year of teaching is, I kind of decided early on that everything I did was going to benefit the kids. It wasn’t going to benefit what some administrator wanted to see. And if wasn’t what they wanted, well that’s okay. That was too bad. I know with TPAI, I had some of the lowest testing kids doing the best work. A test score on a standardized test*

*does not say whether Johnny can manipulate clay. It came up that I was not following that protocol and thank god I had a principal that stood up for me.*

### **Finding the Fun**

Dave believes in instilling confidence in his students. He says, “They have to be given the chance to try. I always tell the kids that I never want to hear, ‘I can’t do it.’” He encourages his students to ask ‘Why?’ He wants to make learning fun for his students, and he seems to be able to manipulate his goal setting so that he can continue to strive for fun in his classroom.

Dave:

*I still try to find the fun. I definitely try to find the fun. I kind of buck the system a lot of times and people don’t like me when I do that. The school goals are tied in to academics. So, we’re made to write two goals, one academic goal and one art goal. And then we have to figure out how we’re going to accomplish that. And a lot of times that doesn’t work for me because if I don’t...I spend more time in my field of art because that’s what it is. The academic goal is just sometimes impossible to achieve. So, I find myself trying to manipulate myself into that role to try to get there. And that’s difficult.*

### **Kids are Kids**

Drew:

Are there any other areas of art teaching that you think for you haven’t really changed since you began?

*Dave: Kids are kids. Most times, I know what they’re going do. Kids don’t change. In a way, kids with video games and all that kind of stuff, their attention spans get shorter and shorter. Even the older ones, that used to be able to handle three, four, five step directions, can only handle one- maybe two-step directions. They get completely lost*

*after that. They space out when I'm talking. I'm giving directions and they're just all of a sudden in another world. But the things that kids know intrinsically haven't changed. with paint and that kind of thing. I do find that they don't have as much practice anymore. I have to show them, but they still learn the same way.*

Janice:

*I've always looked at growth as students' advancing in whatever medium they're working in, knowing how to use that medium, learning how to use that medium. For solid colors to blending and modeling with those colors. So that's growth. You don't see arms, legs, baselines, background, foreground...you don't see that in a bubble-in sheet. out of a flat piece of paper – that's stable and can take maybe the weight of something, the basis, maybe use them and apply them in new and different ways.*

One enduring belief of these teachers is that children are still inherently the same today as they always have been. As mentioned, factors such as increased use of technology affect the way we connect with students, but these veteran teachers believe that the basic developmental stages of growth have remained the same. This awareness seemed important to these teachers in that they understood what it means to teach a child, regardless of the systemic changes that were in motion.

These veteran teachers have maintained their ideals and put their values into practice through holding onto what they believe is best for students. Janice spoke about “the hook” as a motivation for students. “The hook” plays a huge role in what she believes to be important in student engagement. All three teachers ask questions and encourage their students to do the same. The art classes were based in experiential learning. For Dewey (1938), this meant being

engaged in a memorable experience and trying to find meaning in the intersections between their thoughts and the concepts learned in class.

## CHAPTER 8

### ART TEACHERS EVOLVING

*Research Question 3: How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards? Research Question 4: How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?*

#### **Validating the Profession of Teaching Art**

As these art teachers evolved over the years, they expanded their capacity to respond to the accountability system set in place by the state and county school systems. Both Tess and Janice discuss the legitimacy they feel standards based reform has brought to the field of art education. Dave brought a slightly different view of the evolution of this position as art teacher. Tess regards the Georgia Performance Standards as valuable to educators because the standards provide an organized set of goals.

Tess states:

*I think that it validates our profession because we do have a charge with our children and we're responsible for making sure that they get what they need. I think it also is very important because as children progress out of the elementary level and move on to middle and high school, you can do your best to ensure that they've got the tools and the resources needed that they can move forward with the arts.*

Janice believes the state standards bring great value to art education in Georgia.

Janice:

*It's not just art for art's sake. It gives legitimacy to what we are doing that we are teaching something. This is not just "come in and color." The kids are learning, and they're not just learning superficially, they are learning deeply and they are learning how to make connections to real life situations and to other area subject areas. I feel like the arts are really the bridge or the glue that holds all of the other curricular activities together so when you don't have that, you have a collapse in learning that takes place. And things don't hold together and the kids are not able to transfer knowledge as easily into other area of their life. So the arts help that happen. The arts help make the connections so that students can cross over. I know I'm using this as a total analogy but they can cross over from academic life into real life. That's what I feel like the AKS and SPGs have given us-- that glue that we need to hold all these pieces together.*

Janice says the standards supports what she is doing in the classroom. "The standards substantiate my teaching. It just validates what I do as a teacher, as an art teacher".

Dave agrees that implementing the GPS into his elementary classroom art teaching practices has been positive. He states, "Well, I think it's a good thing, not that I didn't think I was a good teacher to begin with. I always knew I was. I always knew that the kids enjoyed being in art. I knew that they always created great things, but it's giving me a better idea of foundational things that help them to learn to create better art. "

Dave strongly believes art teachers should be hired and perceived as professionals.

Dave:

*We all go to college. Some of us go to college even longer than others. And years of experiences also start to add up. All of those things make you who you are and what kind*

*of a teacher you are. And yet we have people that sit back and say I want to direct you on how you should go and what you should do. And when I first started, that wasn't the case. When I first started, there was no curriculum. I made my own curriculum. There were no standards. I just thought of things that would be fun for the kids but also a learning experience. I said that I need them to learn. That was my whole thing--they don't just come in to do something fun, there's a reason behind whatever we do.*

Dave discusses integrating other subject areas into his art lessons. He has developed lessons that integrated art with social studies, math and science. He has always connected his lessons to other subject areas. Dave made a point to tell me that he liked the fact that he was able to initiate the interdisciplinary lessons. However, Dave is concerned that in today's schools with top-down accountability, teachers may not be trusted as professionals.

*Dave: Nobody stood over me and said 'Are you doing this?' and they have a checklist and they checked off things, which they do now. I mean we have six observations a year and I think that's over-kill for someone who's been teaching 35 years. Here in Apple County, tenured or non-tenured, teachers get observed six times a year. I was instructed on how to be a good professional. I had the experience on how to be a professional and yet you don't trust me to be the professional.*

Tess and Janice suggest the adoption of art standards has brought "the glue" that holds together the curriculum and validates the art teaching profession. Dave's discourse somewhat contradicts the discussion from Tess and Janice. While he believes that the Georgia Performance Standards have been positive for the profession, he doesn't believe that art teachers are always regarded as professionals. He wants to be trusted as a professional and cites six observations per year as a sign of distrust and intrusion for a veteran teacher.

### **Evolving Ideas of Success**

A successful art program may no longer be evidenced by hallway displays, bulletin boards and visual documentation of the students' work. Dave's experience hints that success in the art room will soon be defined by test scores, performance goals and meeting county and state requirements.

Dave:

*Well, this is just to give you an idea. I was always under the impression that art was made to make the world more beautiful and we do that. We hang it, we display it for years and years, that's what I did all the time. I constantly would be out displaying art and putting it up all around the school. And last year, my principal approached me about hanging art. She suggested that it tends to make everything look a little trashy. And I took affront to that but at the same time, I thought to myself, well this is going to make my life a whole lot easier because now I'm not spending all my time displaying art. So it's accountability around the school when you think about it. Now when I hang art, it has to be purposeful so I have an area just outside my room that I call Featured Artists and I hang their artwork but I have to also attach the standards that I'm working with, as well as the across-the-curriculum standards that are in that as well. So...I felt hurt. But I thought, it's in her eyes. I've told other colleagues like in passing in talking...and they're shocked. They are just completely shocked. I said I was at first but I've gotten over it. It's her school. She's the principal so...it's sort of like you know, whoever your boss is, you have to do what your boss asks you to do.*

### **Evolving with Enduring Beliefs**

I asked the three teachers what they believed about teaching after so many years in the classroom.

Dave:

*In a narrow sense, I think that art education is here to stay. I don't think it's going to go anywhere. I think that sometimes the importance falls to the wayside, but I think people do understand, when I say people I mean "higher ups", understand the importance of art education. I think they see the relevance. I mean, we're always being told at meetings and conventions, you are your own advocate. If you're going to sell your subject area, you're the best person to do it. I do that quite often and try to make people understand that. I don't think art education will go anywhere. I don't think it will grow much from where it is. Does that mean that they can't cut it for a year or two? They could. But it will come back. I just, I mean as I told you before, when you see that kindergarten kids can't hold scissors or they can't paint with the paintbrush, those are skills they need at some point in their life and they're never going to learn them if they don't get to do it. So if they take it out of the regular education classroom, they will at least, have it in the art room.*

After 29 years of teaching, Janice believes that providing an art education is a vital part of educating the whole child.

Janice:

*I think that when they take the arts out of school, they're gonna really take the heart out of education. And I know it's happening in some places. And it's really sad and if you think about our world, look around us. I believe strongly that art education keeps so many kids in school. I believe that there are so many kids that come to school because of*

*the arts programs. I believe that if we take that away, we may as well just tell them to stop thinking. I'm just so afraid that if they do take the arts out, we're going lose so much innovation. It is about innovation. Innovation happens in the art room and in the music room. That's where it starts. It starts right in Pre-K at those little tables. And in the hallway with mom's lipstick on the wall.*

In this study, the idea of self-identity was a topic with all three teachers. These art teachers want to be viewed as professionals, and they believe that standards implementation has helped validate their profession and the study of art as a core subject area. The teachers in this study want to be trusted as professionals, but these art teachers, especially Dave, felt trust fell short in the face of accountability. These teachers were unsure about the future of art education but unanimously believed in the importance of art education. As discussed earlier, Tess's role has completely changed from being in the position of traditional art teacher to serving in the role of Project-Based Learning Teacher in visual arts. This shift indicated another aspect of the evolving role of art teacher. The evolution of art teachers' roles and self-perceptions, in context of the shifting place of art education in education as a whole, is a topic worthy of further exploration as schools strive to meet the demands of educating our students for today's standards based classroom.

## CHAPTER 9

## DESCRIPTION OF AN OUTLIER

I scoff at pettiness that plays so rough  
Walk upside down inside handcuffs  
Kick my legs to crash it off  
Say okay, I've had enough  
What else can you show me?

-Bob Dylan, *It's All Right Ma, I'm Only Bleeding*, (1965)

In an effort to show what my data did not reveal for this study, I bring forth the abbreviated story of one participant from my pilot study. Since he participated in the pilot, I will not reveal direct interpretation of the data here. His case became an outlier in the context of my research. It is important to note that some teachers do not fall into the legions of teachers who have adapted so well to standards implementation and increased testing in visual arts. Steve Madison (pseudonym) had been teaching for 23 years at the time of our interview and he is now retired. He began his career with Fort County Schools and has taught in several schools within the same county. Steve experienced numerous challenges with the change brought on by greater emphases on standards-based teaching. He experienced trials and disappointments with the implementation of GPS in his teaching. "To me it's just sort of eviscerated the joy out of what it is I enjoyed about teaching art so much. It's that spontaneity, that sense of play...I am trying to model a certain type of creativity...so to translate that to these standards...it's like I don't think I can really model what it is to be an artist, what it is to be a creative individual" (personal communication, 2012). Several times, Steve spoke of being observed and waiting to be observed by his superiors. "To a certain extent, dog-and-pony for them. You start thinking of the ten elements that they are looking for...Unfortunately, you switch from being a teacher to being a

showman. There is a lot of apprehension that your heart rate does increase a bit when someone walks in the door. It is just not relaxed. There's no sense of collegiality anymore...I guess collegiality is the best term for that because now it's them against us. And that's how I feel and feel like it is really lining up that way" (personal communication, 2012).

Steve was also challenged by lack of time. He began to turn down teachers when they asked for special lessons for their students because planning and teaching for the GPS was so time-consuming. He administered tests to his students and calculated that one set of elementary level quarterly exams would take an extra two and half weeks of work to grade and enter into the grading system. Steve spoke of developmentally inappropriate content required by the standards, such as having each elementary level child keep a portfolio. Ultimately, for Steve, his dismay with the GPS relates back to his belief that one notion of education embraces learning and making connection, while the other tenet is to make good quality citizens "who will march lock step to what they are supposed to do." (personal communication, 2012). "We are getting a whole lot of lock step. The pendulum swings. It always does. Even though it is couched in 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, if you look at the way it is being implemented and this whole emphasis on data...That is some scary stuff..." (personal communication, 2012).

"Every critic has a bias, a predilection that is bound up with the very existence of insight, and to do so without surrendering the instinctive preferences from which are derived direction and sincerity" (Dewey, 1934). The year after I interviewed Steve, he left the teaching profession. From my observation, Steve was an expert at meeting the measures of accountability set before him. His lessons were meticulously written, and his assessments were methodically administered. Recording grades for over 700 children per year was an arduous and time-

consuming task for Steve. Instead of joining the ranks of teachers who continued to adapt and evolve, Steve decided it was time to exit the profession.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSION: POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Dewey (1934) discussed education as a guideline of the process of coming to share in social consciousness. As a qualitative study, this dissertation employed aspects of narrative analysis to examine veteran art teachers' perceptions of change with increased emphases on standards and assessments. Narrative synthesis offered an approach to understanding the teachers' experiences through a re-telling of their stories regarding their daily work with accountability. Many aspects of this study paralleled my pilot case study. I kept the study focused on three participants while I explored the aforementioned research purpose. The teachers in this study had a wide of experiences and perceptions in regard to change brought on by implementation of state standards and increased accountability. The different methods of data collection consistently demonstrated the four themes illustrated of Art Teachers Building, Art Teachers Surrendering, Art Teachers Maintaining and Art Teachers Evolving in regard to the research questions.

#### **The Research Questions**

Schools are increasingly operating within states and districts in which performance standards have been defined and implemented. The Georgia Performance Standards indicate what students should know and be able to do and at what level. My focus was on how veteran art teachers at three schools were experiencing and responding to change incurred by standards-based reform and accountability systems are in place. Most of the relevant literature that I brought forth focused on the theory and history of standards-based reform, not on how this

reform is perceived and experienced by practitioners in the visual arts. This study examines, through a re-telling of stories, how art teachers often grapple with the demands of their school system and state level requirements.

I did not set out to fully answer the research questions in this study in an unequivocal manner. I did not think that endeavor would be possible. I sought to explore each question thoroughly, to inspire dialogue, and to spur further study. I knew that the area in which I chose to work was vast, and I would only scratch the surface of understanding by giving these teachers an opportunity to tell their stories of change regarding standards-based reform in the art classroom. In addition, I analyzed data in the form of observations and documents to lend validity and quality through the process of triangulation. The information in this study is current as of one year ago (2014) as the area policy in education is ever-changing.

Chapters 5 to 8 aimed to open the discussion regarding the following research questions:

1. How do art teachers incorporate the state performance standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
2. How do art teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
3. How do art teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?
4. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work?

Key findings included:

- Art teachers in this study have built new curricula to incorporate the state performance standards in their thinking and planning for instruction. The teachers in this study were in favor of having a set of standards to use as a “roadmap” for

instruction. They pulled from prior experience with the QCC (content standards) and began to think in terms of beginning with the end in mind. In other words, the teachers strategized by determining what the students should know at the end of the lessons in regard to the standards.

- These art teachers have created their own assessments in regard to the Georgia Performance Standards. These teachers are now very interested in knowing what their students are learning. In the past, it seemed the teachers were satisfied to teach and move through the curricula without checking for individual understanding from students. Now, the teachers have developed formative assessments to measure students learning.
- These art teachers were excited about developing new curricula and accompanying performance assessments. They want learning to be fun and enjoyable for students, while they measure student performance through observation and student art products.
- Overall, these art teachers were not in favor of multiple-choice tests in art. For example, these teachers believed the SPG standardized testing in art brought forth much anxiety for children while the SPG was not an accurate measure of art knowledge.
- These art teachers were willing to surrender certain aspects of teaching: Freedom to teach what they desired, control over testing, and time spent on experimentation and exploration in art. These art teachers have adhered to state requirements in arts learning and desire to be counted as professionals in that undertaking.

- Art teachers in this study have maintained enduring beliefs in their teaching. With accountability measures in place, veteran art teachers continue to practice their teaching with their personal values in place. Those values include commitments to motivate students to learn and teach students to question. These art teachers want to promote a positive learning environment, benefiting the students and allowing them to have fun while learning.
- Art teachers in this study were evolving. Although each participant spoke of the importance of art and the necessity of an art education for every child, they discussed how progress in the art room is measured differently than in years before.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that teachers were strongly impacted by standards-based reform and measures of accountability in their daily work with students. However, a complex picture emerges, sometimes with contradictory evidence. These teachers' perceptions varied, as outlined above, and ran the gamut from eagerly embracing performance standards as a framework for planning to guardedly preparing themselves and their students for increased standardized assessments and evaluations. On one hand, increased emphasis on state standards was regarded as a positive change for visual arts, giving validity to the art teaching profession and lending a roadmap to learning for both teachers and students. On the other hand, accountability measures were fraught with challenges including misalignments in testing, inconsistencies in test administration, and fundamental problems on behalf of these teachers with the idea of multiple choice standardized testing in art as a viable measure for achievement. If we assume that the goal of accountability systems is improvement in student learning, it is helpful to examine the changes that teachers have undergone to perform in these systems. Standardized

assessment may be one way systems purport to measure improvement, but we should be cognizant of the notion that standards reform and testing alone does not necessarily promote improvement in student learning.

Eisner (1998) stressed that art education is integral to education as a whole, environment shapes artistic attitudes, and art education makes unique contributions to learning. Eisner stated, “Experience has its genesis in our transaction with the qualities of which our environment consists” (p. 17). He recalled Dewey’s (1934) distinction between two modes of attention: recognition and perception. Recognition is part of the process of experience involving categorization: the exploration of qualities that are named and classified. The process of visual exploration, according to Dewey, is perception. Eisner encourages the researcher to “experience the quality of place, to conceptualize their relationships, to experience the shifting pervasive qualities that permeate those relationships, and, not least, to imagine and render them through the text” (p. 20). The point is to understand that “the episode as lived has passed; the text as written lives” (p. 21). Eisner explicates that qualitative inquiry and writing are used to recount the experience of a particular state of affairs, “to grasp how it was” and to represent the case at hand through text. “It is through qualitative inquiry, the intelligent apprehension of the qualitative work, that we *make sense*” (Eisner, p. 21). In this study, I hope that I have *made sense* of the particular state of affairs regarding the three veteran art teachers in this study.

While adopting new content and pedagogy could be considered positive in regard to improvements in teaching, we must be careful to not compromise broader goals in teaching and learning, especially in regard to a narrowing of the art curriculum. Apple County and others could benefit from providing professional development to address assessment design, test alignment, and strategy formulation for reaching targeted goals. Furthermore, coordinated

systems for collaboration with veteran teachers as teacher-leaders could contribute to increased dialogue and understanding in meeting the demand and expectations incurred by current accountability systems.

It is my hope that this study will spawn further discussion and open dialogue among all stakeholders surrounding the direction of visual arts education in the context of standards-based reform. Eisner eloquently explains perception and experience, and it is apparent that his theory has been informed by Dewey's writing. "To imagine is to generate images; to see is to experience qualities. Both the content of the world and the content of our imagination are dependent upon qualities. It is through perception of qualities—not only those we can see, but those we experience through any of our sense—that our consciousness comes into being" (Eisner, p.1). Eisner helps us to understand that complex social institutions such as schools are saturated with the "perception of qualities", and the qualitative researcher can lend understanding to the meaning of those qualities and the value we assign to them.

Through careful qualitative description and an assimilation of narratives, I have had the opportunity to explore veteran art teachers' perspectives and perceptions. It is through the re-telling of these teachers' stories and intertwining of their narratives, that we may examine how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students. As a qualitative researcher, it was my desire to tell the stories of three veteran art teachers by taking a close look at their perceptions of change in regard to standards based reform. I hope that their stories have generated images for the reader and painted a picture of change in the art classroom. Experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. Wherever one positions oneself in the continuum—the

imagined now, some imagined past, or some imagined future—each point has a past experiential base and leads to an experiential future (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 2).

### **Implications for Practice**

My intent to explore veteran art teachers' experiences with the state standards stems from not only my own classroom experiences as an elementary art teacher but also my desire to question and explore how the sweeping change brought on by standards-based curricula is perceived and experienced by other art teachers. Through this study, we may better understand how these teachers perceive the impact of national and state standards movements on their teaching and how they characterize accountability in their work. It was not the purpose of the study to define best practices or generalize findings, but rather to invoke dialogue around standards implementation, assessment and accountability in the context of educational reform and about how change is perceived by the participants in the study.

Certain issues have surfaced in this study, and it is recommended that policy makers, administrators and stakeholders consider these issues in order to develop their own perspectives. First, I posit that the teachers in this study perceived standardized testing in the visual arts as a hindrance in the advancement of art education when the testing was administered as multiple-choice questions. These art teachers prefer performance-based assessments that can more appropriately measure what students know. Teachers view the misalignment of standardized testing as an impediment to success, although they are watching and waiting for improvements to be made. Art teachers perceive a loss of freedom in planning their curricula and a loss of collegiality with administration regarding the increased systems of accountability. The elementary art teachers in this study perceived an encumbrance with loss of instructional time due to the demands of testing.

However, these three teachers view the adoption of visual arts standards as a positive change. Overall, these educators believed that standards give teachers and students a pathway for learning. The teachers in this study perceived that they are viewed as professionals to a greater extent since adoption of the visual arts standards.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Areas in need of additional evaluation include: a broader sample of teachers to examine perceptions in a variety of accountability systems, closer examination of testing procedures and strategies in visual arts across the nation, and an exploration of teachers' perceptions of teacher evaluation systems put into place with standards-based reform. I recommend increased dialogue around the effects of testing in visual arts and around what differentiates art from other subject areas. In other words, policymakers, administrators, educators, parents, and other stakeholders need to seriously consider the effects of applying a one-size-fits-all system of accountability across arts classes and other core academics.

This study revealed notable aspects of teachers maintaining values and preserving teaching practices when not practicing for the test. Certainly, it should be noted that not all grade levels are currently tested in the SPG system in Apple County, so now is an optimal time to evaluate and discuss these ideas.

This study was about teachers' perspectives of change, how they articulate change, how they have changed with the Georgia Performance Standards, how they maneuver policy change, what they have learned through change and how they experience change in their thinking, planning and implementation practices in the classroom. This research aimed to provide a greater understanding of the relationship between elementary art teachers and the policies related to performance standards and assessments that bear influence on their work. My work with Tess,

Janice, and Dave raises questions about the prospects of art education and what will define successful art programs in the future.

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APPENDIX A  
IRB PROTOCOL



Phone 706-542-3199

Office of the Vice President for Research  
*Institutional Review Board*

Fax 706-542-3660

**APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL**

April 29, 2014

Dear Carole Henry:

On 4/29/2014, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	The Pendulum Swings: Veteran Art Teachers' Perspectives of Change in the Art Classroom in Regard to Performance Standards and Accountability
Investigator:	Carole Henry
IRB ID:	STUDY00000973
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

The IRB approved the protocol from 4/29/2014.

To document consent, use the consent documents that were approved and stamped by the IRB. Go to the Documents tab to download them.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

Larry Nackerud, Ph.D.  
University of Georgia  
Institutional Review Board Chairperson

**1) Protocol Title:**

The Pendulum Swings: Veteran Art Teachers' Perspectives of Change in the Art Classroom in Regard to Performance Standards and Accountability

**2) Research Design and Methods**

The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with visual arts students. My research questions include the following:

1. How do teachers incorporate the state performance standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
  - a. How do teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?
2. How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?
3. What do teachers believe about accountability in their daily work?

The research design for the proposed qualitative case study is to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews in order to understand teachers' perceptions and experiences with standards-based curricula and accountability. Qualitative interviews are the primary data source. Document analysis of lesson plans will also be included as a data source. Ongoing reflection of the research questions will be recorded in field notes by the researcher.

In regard to participants for the study, I intend to interview three veteran art teachers, each with at least fifteen years of teaching experience. The group of participants will represent various demographics from three different school systems and varying backgrounds of education and experience. A recorded, structured interview of approximately 75-90 minutes will be conducted with each participant.

**3) Study Timelines**

**June 2014:** I will invite participants to enroll in the study via email invitation. I will meet with each of the three participants one time for the face-to-face interview session of 75-90 minutes. I

will transcribe the interviews and collect and analyze documents (lesson plans from teachers).

The documents will consist of lesson plans contributed by participant teachers.

**July 2014:** Begin initial interview analysis and document analysis of lesson plans submitted by teachers.

**August 2014:** Continue analysis of interviews and document analysis of lesson plans.

**September-October 2014:** Analysis of field notes taken during observations with ongoing interview analysis and document analysis.

**November-December 2014:** At this stage, I will employ member-checking by allowing participants to examine initial interview analyses for accuracy. Member-checking can be conducted via email or face-to-face meeting depending on preference of participant. Continue data analysis of field notes and documents.

**Jan-April 2015:** Write the research results and complete dissertation.

#### **4) Procedures Involved**

I will create a list of formal interview questions and contact each participant via email to request an interview and set up an interview appointment. When participants are secured through email, the location of the interview will be determined. I am willing to meet with participants in a neutral location for the face-to-face interview. I will supply a digital recorder and the consent to interview form. It is my goal for each interview to last 75-90 minutes to allow for in-depth exploration of the questions. This amount of time should be adequate enough to collect initial information without overwhelming the participant. I will collect information from each teacher at the interview such as name, school, contact information, gender, grade levels taught, highest degree earned, current teaching position and other information that the participant would like to share (through a written questionnaire). Interviewees will be informed that pseudonyms will be used when transcribing the interview. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed.

For the proposed study, each teacher will be interviewed one time. The overall timeline for this study is approximately ten months. It is my desire to have a week or so between interviews in which to transcribe data collection; the goal is to finish the interviewing and transcribing processes within 4-5 weeks. Initial interview analysis will take place from July-August 2014. During the fall 2014 semester, I will interpret the data in written form and conduct member-checking.

From Jan-April 2015, I plan to write up the research results and meet with committee members. The outcome of the study will be a dissertation written from a phenomenological point

of view describing the teachers' perspectives and experiences in respect to increased emphases on standards-based curricula and accountability.

### **5) Data**

Interviews: Qualitative interviews will be the primary source of data collection in this study. In-depth interviewing was chosen as the primary method of data generation because the qualitative interview is an excellent vehicle to begin the discovery process of how the sample of teachers gives meaning to teaching with the state standards. Interviewing even a small sample of people can begin to reveal similarities and differences in meaning held by the participants. Field notes taken by the researcher will reveal descriptions of the setting, the interviewee and the researcher. Field notes are necessary because the setting will influence the interview. Immediate reflective comments may also be recorded in field notes (prior to transcribing the interview).

Ongoing reflection of the research questions will be recorded in field notes by the researcher.

Documents (lesson plans): In order to understand how art teachers perceive their work with implementation of performance standards, this research study will examine lesson plans and related materials contributed by each teacher. If teachers are able to contribute lessons written over a span of time, analyses will be conducted in regard to how those documents have changed over time in content and format. Through field notes, I will form my own perceptions of the data and aim at a comprehensive view of the setting. I seek a narrow scope and focus in my observations in keeping with my purpose of examining art teachers' perceptions of performance standards and accountability in their work.

### **6) Data Analysis**

To analyze the data in an inductive manner, the three interviews will be coded for how the participants discuss their experiences in regard to the research questions and interview guide. These codes will address initial categories. Next the materials will be reviewed and themes will be clustered into assertions.

Categories will generally focus on the language used to describe unique experiences and events over time while art teachers transitioned to teaching with the Georgia Performance Standards. Disconfirming evidence will be sought that contradicts the coded data. Any variety in data will be noted within the context of each theme.

The proposed qualitative research study will be my construction, a written version of

what I believe the data means. In this strain of reading data, I am looking for the interviewees' understandings and accounts of using the state performance standards in their teaching. My own interpretation of how the participants make sense of the phenomena of using the state standards will play an important part of interpretation. I will read the data from a reflexive standpoint, seeking to explore my role and perspective in the process of data generation and interpretation of data.

### **Protection of Human Subjects (Approval of IRB)**

#### **Risks and discomforts**

I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

#### **Benefits**

The field of art education would benefit from this research, which will interpret how art teachers connect state policies (implementation of standards and accountability) with their own curriculum design and implementation. For graduate students and art educators, this research offers a deeper understanding of the impact of national and/or state standards movements on art education. For policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and educators, this research could be used to extract issues from the field such as instructional strategies and/or problematic issues for teachers seeking to implement performance standards and adhere to policy. For humankind, this study can shed light on how policy implementation in education effects the perceptions of teachers of young learners, especially in the area of art education. No external incentives for participation will be granted (monetary or non-monetary).

#### **Audio/Video Recording**

A digital recording device will be used during the interviews, so that I can fully transcribe the interviews. I will read the transcription for the purpose of generating data for the research study. After the interview is conducted, transcribed and analyzed, I will destroy the digital recording. The entire length of the study was from June 2014-December 2016, thus the recording will be destroyed by May 2016.

With consent of participants, I have included photographs of student work, bulletin boards and displays. These photographs were limited to bulletin boards, displays, and curricular material and did not include pictures of teachers or students. All participants provided initials on a consent form allowing the use of photographs, as described above. They were told that they could still participate in this study even if they are not willing to have the photographs shared in publications or presentations.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The data collected from this study did not identify participants directly. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym in the study. Identifiable data will be used only by the researcher and will be stored electronically by the researcher until the end of the project in December 2015 (to be destroyed in May 2016).

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight. I will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without the written consent of participants, unless required by law.

### **Taking part is voluntary**

Participants' involvement in the study is voluntary, and they may choose not to participate or to stop at any time.

## APPENDIX B

## CONSENT FORM

**THE PENDULUM SWINGS: VETERAN ART TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES OF  
CHANGE IN THE ART CLASSROOM****Researcher's Statement**

I am asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you the information about the study so you can decide whether to be in the study or not. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

**Principal Investigator:** Drew Brown  
Lamar Dodd School of Art  
browndrew@uga.edu, dpbrown99@yahoo.com  
404-971-6094 (mobile)

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with visual arts students. You are being asked to participate in the study because you are a veteran teacher in the state of Georgia with at least fifteen years of experience who has demonstrated a high level of engagement in your profession.

### **Study Procedures**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to ...

- Participate in two interviews lasting 60 minutes in which I will interview you according to a structured interview guide that I will have prepared prior to the interview meeting. The face-to-face interview may be conducted at a site that we agree upon. I will record the interview with a digital recorder and transcribe it word for word. You will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your anonymity. Your school's name will also be assigned a pseudonym.
- You are invited to contribute lesson plans or materials related to the study purpose (such as photographs of your bulletin boards or wall displays). Please bring copies (not originals) to the interview if possible. If you have old lessons and more recent lessons, those will be helpful in my looking at changes in content or format over time.

The interview guide is designed to help me gain insight into how your perspective of teaching has changed over time with increased emphases of state performance learning standards on your work with visual arts students. In addition, there are questions regarding your perceptions of accountability in general education and, specifically, in your own experiences as an art educator.

After the interview is conducted, transcribed and analyzed, I will destroy the digital recording. The entire expected length of the study will span from June 2014-May 2015.

I would like to conduct the initial interview in June 2014 and the second interview no later than December 2014. I will contact you to arrange a time for you to review the data that I have written up and check it for accuracy.

### **Risks and discomforts**

- ❖ I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

### **Benefits**

- The field of art education would benefit from this research, which will interpret how art teachers connect state policies (implementation of standards and accountability) with their own curriculum design and implementation.
- For graduate students and art educators, this research offers a deeper understanding of the impact of national and/or state standards movements on art education.
- For policymakers, stakeholders, administrators, and educators, this research could be used to extract issues from the field such as instructional strategies and/or problematic issues for teachers seeking to implement performance standards and adhere to policy.
- For humankind, this study can shed light on how policy implementation in education effects the perceptions of teachers of young learners, especially in the area of art education.

**No external incentives for participation will be granted (monetary or non-monetary).**

### **Audio/Video Recording**

A digital recording device will be used during the interview, so that I can fully transcribe our interview. I will read the transcription for the purpose of generating data for the research study. After the interview is conducted, transcribed and analyzed, I will destroy the digital recording. The entire expected length of the study will span from June 2014-May 2015, thus the recording will be destroyed by May 2015.

With your consent, I would like to use your lesson plans or other materials related to the study purpose (such as photographs of your bulletin boards or wall displays). These photographs should be limited to bulletin boards, displays, and curricular material but will not include pictures of you or any of your students. With your permission, I may want to use the photographs/record for activities beyond research analysis (e.g., in publications, presentations). Please provide initials below if you agree to allow use of photographs, as described above. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the photographs shared in publications or presentations.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not want to have photographs of my materials (bulletin boards, displays, curricula materials) shared.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am willing to have photographs of my materials (bulletin boards, displays, curricula materials) shared.

### **Privacy/Confidentiality**

The data collected from this study will not identify you directly. You will be assigned a pseudonym in the study. Identifiable data will be used only by the researcher and will be stored electronically by the researcher until the end of the project in May 2015.

The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at the University of Georgia responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.

### **Taking part is voluntary**

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to withdraw from the study, the information that can be identified as yours will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed, unless you make a written request to remove, return, or destroy the information.

**If you have questions**

The main researcher conducting this study is Drew Brown, under the supervision of Principal Investigator/Major Professor Dr. Carole Henry at the University of Georgia. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact drew9999@uga.edu or at 404-971-6094. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

**Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:**

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

APPENDIX C  
RECRUITMENT LETTER

**Script for email recruitment letter:**

Dear Colleague,

As you may already know, I am currently a graduate student, under the direction of Dr. Carole Henry in the Lamar Dodd School of Art, Department of Art Education at The University of Georgia. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study entitled **THE PENDULUM SWINGS: VETERAN ART TEACHERS PERSPECTIVES OF CHANGE IN THE ART CLASSROOM**. The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with visual arts students.

**You are being asked to participate in the study because you are a veteran teacher in the state of Georgia with at least fifteen years of experience who has demonstrated a high level of engagement in your profession.**

Your participation will involve two interviews lasting approximately 60 minutes each in which I will interview you according to a structured interview guide that I will have prepared prior to the interview meeting. The face-to-face interview may be conducted at a site that we agree upon. I will record the interview with a digital recorder and transcribe it for the study. Also, through

your participation, you are invited to contribute lesson plans and/or photographs of bulletin boards or wall displays especially those pertaining to the use of performance standards or assessments.

Please respond to this email if you are interested in participating in the study. I will be securing only three colleagues for the study, so let me know as soon as possible if you are interested. I hope to communicate with you before the end of May 2014 to confirm participation. Also, I welcome recommendations from you for other colleagues that may fit the criteria: 1) veteran teachers in GA with 15 years experience 2) teachers who have demonstrated a high level of engagement in their profession on the school level, system level and/or professional organization.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call me at (404) 971-6094 or send an e-mail to [drew9999@uga.edu](mailto:drew9999@uga.edu). Questions may also be directed to Dr. Carole Henry at [ckhenry@uga.edu](mailto:ckhenry@uga.edu).

Thank you for your consideration, and I hope to hear from you soon!

Drew Brown

Art Educator/UGA Graduate Student

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW GUIDE ONE

**(The participants will hear the following script during the recorded interview.)**

#### **Questions for Proposed Study**

**Researcher: Drew Brown**

The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students. My research questions include the following:

1. How do teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?

- How do teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?

2. How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?

3. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work with students?

1. Tell me where you teach and how you came to teach here.
2. How long have you been teaching art lessons connected to the state or national standards?
3. Think back to when you used the QCC as your standards for lesson plan writing and curriculum design. Tell me about that.
4. What was the transition like for you when the State Board of Education adopted the new

Georgia Performance Standards for art?

5. What value do the recently adopted state standards, the GPS (Georgia Performance Standards) in visual arts bring to art education in Georgia?
6. What value do the recently adopted state standards, the GPS (Georgia Performance Standards) in visual arts bring to your teaching?
7. Tell me about your approach for preparing student assessments connected to the state standards.
8. What stands out for you in your experiences with assessing learning with the GPS?
9. Do you find certain aspects of teaching and assessing with the GPS to be rewarding?
10. What aspects of student assessment with the GPS do you find the most difficult?
11. Think back to before the GPS adoption. Tell me how accountability for learning looked in those times.
12. Tell me how you are held accountable for student learning since incorporating the GPS into lesson planning.
13. Tell me how accountability in other areas of your school may effect your work with your students.
14. What are your perspectives about accountability with the GPS in an elementary art classroom? (Probes: What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks?)
15. Tell me about your future plans in relation to using the GPS in your planning your curriculum and assessments.

16. If you were advising a new teacher about how to assess the state standards into their own lesson planning, what would you tell them?

17. What haven't I asked that you would like to add?

APPENDIX E  
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA QUESTIONNAIRE

## 1. Gender

Male                   Female

## 2. How do you describe yourself?

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White, non-Hispanic, non-Latino

Other  Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Check the box for your age range:

20-29 years

30-39 years

40-49 years

50-59 years

Over 60 years

4. How do you classify your current teaching arrangement?

- Teach art full time
- Teach art part time
- Other (specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

5. Approximately how many children do you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

6. At how many schools do you teach art? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What kind of school do you teach in?

- Public
- Private

8. Please check the box next to the teaching certificate you hold.

- General elementary education
- Art education
- Other (specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please check the box next to the type of certificate:

- Regular, standard, professional
- Probationary

Provisional, temporary, or emergency

10. Please check the box next to the degree(s) you hold, and write in the year you received your degree (s) and your major and minor fields of study for each degree.

Degree	Year	Major field	Minor field
Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/>			
Master's <input type="checkbox"/>			
Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/>			
Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Specify) _____			

11. a. Including this year, how many years have you been employed as a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_

*(Include years spent teaching both full and part time, and in both public and private schools.*

*Exclude time spent student teaching or as a teacher's aide.)*

11.b. How many years have you taught art? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

## INTERVIEW GUIDE TWO

**(The participants will hear the following script during the recorded interview.)**

**Questions for Proposed Study**

**Researcher: Drew Brown**

*The purpose of this study is to understand veteran art teachers' perspectives on how their teaching has changed over time with increasing emphases of standards on their work with elementary level visual arts students. My research questions include the following:*

*1. How do teachers incorporate the state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?*

- *How do teachers incorporate assessment of state standards in their thinking and planning for art instruction?*

*2. How do teachers describe how their teaching has changed over time with implementation of state standards?*

*3. How do art teachers characterize accountability in their daily work with students?*

18. What attracted you to the field of teaching art?

19. What have you valued most about your teaching career?

20. Let's imagine that you have been invited to be part of a panel at a local university to talk to pre-service students in art education. You've been asked to talk about how teaching has changed across the years. What would you say? (Is there any other advice that you'd like to offer?)

21. What areas of teaching would you like to import from the “old days” (pre-standards based) if you were able to do so?
22. Tell me about the areas of your work with students that have not changed over the years?
23. Can you recall a recent art lesson and tell me about how that lesson has changed or been modified because of standards-based teaching?
24. What haven't I asked that you would like to add?
25. After \_\_\_\_+ years of teaching, what do you believe about art education?