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ART EDUCATION: HOW THE VISUAL ARTS ARE CRITICAL IN STUDENT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

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NICOLE J. DICKENSON

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ART EDUCATION: HOW THE VISUAL ARTS ARE CRITICAL IN STUDENT SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This literature review explores the different components that make up art education and how they impact student social and emotional development and well-being. Social and emotional development is defined before going into detail about what the visual arts teach and how they can be an oasis for students that enjoy expressing themselves and have different ways of thinking, all while helping other students develop those skills. There is an overview of the Studio Habits of Mind: Develop Craft, Understand Art Worlds, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, Reflect, and Stretch and Explore, and how these habits encourage social-emotional development in students. Creativity and a focus on child-centered learning is also discussed with regards to the benefits to students as they grow as artists and as well-rounded individuals. Possible solutions for schools and districts are provided to help support the visual arts and student well-being, and the thesis concludes with why the visual arts are vital to schools and are critical to the success of students trying to prepare for the future.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As a teacher relatively new to the field of education it is easy to get overwhelmed.

Despite the amount of preparation teachers go through in college and the semester of student teaching preservice teachers endure, the learning curve is overwhelming. The first few years of teaching, regardless of content area, are spent looking for answers and solutions to curriculum ideas, how to better manage your classroom, how to connect to that one student, how to get everything prepped and graded, and when to fit in all of those district initiatives and staff meetings. As an art teacher there can be entirely different challenges on top of that. Trying to learn over 500 names across multiple grade levels, and trying to feel like a valued part of the school, when in reality, being a specialist can be somewhat isolating. Eventually though, while teaching always remains a challenge, that mountain of a learning curve starts to flatten out and things become somewhat less overwhelming.

As that haziness of the first few years of teaching starts to clear up, it becomes a good time to reflect on those initial teaching goals were and to think about future goals. All of those buzz-words that have been floating around and topics that have been touched on at Professional Learning Community meetings start to ruminate, and questions start to arise once summer break begins and there is time to reflect on the year. As an art teacher, initial goals included having students that were engaged and completely inspired by the visual arts and their teacher's passion for it. Where students felt comfortable being themselves in the classroom, were working to become creative, thoughtful, well-rounded individuals, and where the school and district found art to be invaluable. "In art education, our goal has to do with helping students become more human through art by having them value art as an important

aspect of their lives, “ (Effland, 1976). How does an art teacher get to this point? Is it realistic? After years of teaching the realization came that being an art teacher is an invaluable position in a school; people just do not always realize it.

Purpose and Guiding Questions

Because there seemed to be a growing need in schools to readdress the emotional needs of their students as well as a desire for art teachers to help students develop a sense of self through art, the purpose of the literature review was to define the value K-12 visual art has on teaching the whole child. The guiding questions used to fulfill this purpose were: How does visual arts education support students social and emotional development? What can schools do to help the support the arts?

Visual Arts: Then and Now

As these questions were swirling around, the thought of the current education system versus how it has been historically, kept arising. It seems that the health of visual art education seems to rise and fall, either art is in or out. From the 1930s through the 1980s, an art teacher’s role was to motivate and support students as well as to provide resources and materials, but not to impede on the childrens’ own creative process (Zimmerman, 2009). It seemed to be more about the child and how to help them harness their own inner artist, and less about the teacher.

In the 1980s came more of a focus on subject matter and learning specific skills in art. From the 1980s and into the 1990s came a further focus on community and multicultural art. In addition, there became more of a focus on cultures as well as an emphasis on teaching the elements and principles of design and using them to help structure curriculum. The 2000s was

when the Studio Habits of Mind first appeared. They came from Project Zero, a research group at Harvard University, and it is with the Studio Habits of Mind that allow students to once again act as artists and engage in inquiry (Zimmerman, 2009).

In recent years, with testing and collecting *hard data* being on the forefront of everyone's mind, it seems that the visual arts are finding it difficult to be heard and seen as an invaluable part of education. While that does not mean that every art program is getting cut completely, it does seem that art teachers are fighting an uphill battle with sections getting dropped from schools, positions being made smaller, and budgets getting cut. "The art teacher is often given a double message. On the one hand, she is a valued staff member, but on the other hand, she is told her subject is not as important as the others," (Efland, 1976). Over and over again through this research it was said that what the arts teach is valuable and meaningful in how they help with student creativity, confidence and overall well-being, and yet, art educators still struggle to find a foothold in many districts throughout the country. Although the visual arts have national standards that are to be met by schools, a study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that from the 1999-2000 school year to the 2009-2010 school year, visual arts instruction has decreased from 87 percent to 83 percent nationally (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). In addition, a national survey of 349 school districts show that since the implementation of No Child Left Behind in 2001 up until 2007, 16 percent of districts decreased their elementary visual arts instruction time at an average of 57 minutes per week (McMurrer, 2008).

According to Perpich (2012), Minnesota has very strong art education policies in place, however, the follow through on how well they are implemented is disjointed. For example,

although K-12 schools in Minnesota are required by the state standards to offer three types of arts programs out of a possible list of five (visual arts, music, theater, dance, and media arts) only 28% of elementary schools and 48% of middle and high schools are actually following through on that requirement. At the elementary level, only 73% of schools offer visual arts courses, with a thankfully higher percentage at middle and high school levels at 90% and 98%, respectively (Perpich, 2012). But what seems especially concerning is that only 58% of Minnesota art teachers are full-time (Perpich, 2012). That puts 42% of the visual arts educators, who have chosen teaching as their career, at only part-time employment.

Not only does that raise questions as to how much time students are really getting to spend in the visual arts, but, also, the difficulty for the profession to retain quality visual arts teachers and keep moving their programs forward into the 21st century when they are not employed on a full-time basis. It makes it difficult to support a family and could require teachers to divert their full attention with the need to find a secondary job. It is time for visual art teachers to realize their subject matter's full potential, and advocate for themselves and show schools how valuable the arts really are for students. Art teachers cannot do it alone, however, so looking to administrators, parents, schools, districts and beyond for help seems to be key in really making changes happen.

Definition of Terms

This paper will discuss social and emotional development which is also known as emotional intelligence and is defined as how well a student is able to collaborate and work with others, how effectively they are able to learn, and being able to become successful members of society (Elias, 2003). In addition, there will be a section on the Studio Habits of Mind and their

connection to social and emotional development. The Studio Habits of Mind are eight ways to describe what the arts teach students and include: Develop Craft, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, Reflect, Stretch and Explore, and Understand Art Worlds (Hetland, 2013). Each of the eight habits will be further explained and defined within the literature review as to how they relate both to the visual arts as well as social and emotional development.

This paper will also discuss student creativity which, although difficult to define, is when a person can make things or ideas of originality, and they have imagination, a sense of inventiveness, and ingenuity (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). Creativity is about teaching students how to be problem-solvers and take risks as they try to think outside the box to come up with original ideas. Lastly, another main term used is Child-centered learning, which is also known as the Learner-Directed classroom and is where the child takes the lead on their learning. Child-centered learning also focuses on emotional development and defining and expressing one's self (Karkou and Glasman, 2004). In child-centered learning qualities like play, passion, and collaborating with others are just as important as any other skill taught in school (Fahey, 2012). It is about guiding students and teaching them skills, while also trusting them to be responsible and make their own choices about their learning.

Looking Forward

This literature review seeks to find some clarity and meaning behind two very important educational topics that often get put off for later. It seems as if teachers and schools are starting to tire of the constant testing and difficult requirements asked of them at the sacrifice of both their students' well-being and their development of their creative self. In the 21st century, it seems it is time for a change. The focus needs to be more on how do schools prepare

students to succeed in a future where society and technology are changing faster every day? It seems that in order to achieve that, students need to be creative in order to succeed later in life (Perpich, 2012). No matter what, it always needs to come back to the students and what is best for them and their development as well-rounded, well-adjusted members of society. This review will look to see how the arts support student social-emotional development, and why supporting the visual arts may be just what schools need.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this literature review was to uncover the different roles the visual arts play in supporting the whole child and their social and emotional development. Peer-reviewed articles and research papers, as well as research books, were found primarily through Bethel University's library research database, and Google Scholar. In addition, many articles were found through the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL.org) and their research studies, as well as research studies found through NAEA's (National Art Educators Association) website, Arteducators.org. Key words used in searching were, *visual arts, art education, social-emotional development, whole child, child-centered learning, and Studio Habits of Mind*.

The purpose of this literature review is to define the value K-12 visual art has on teaching the whole child. The guiding questions used to fulfill this purpose were: How does visual arts education support students social and emotional development? What can schools do to help the support the arts? This chapter first discusses social-emotional development followed by visual arts education. Next, the eight Studio Habits of Mind are defined and connected to social-emotional learning. Then, creativity in the art room is described as it relates to the well-being of children, and the benefits of child-centered learning in the art room are explained. Finally, solutions schools can take to help support the arts and social-emotional learning are explored.

Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development is also known as emotional intelligence, and it is the skills students develop so they can be successful in school and life, such as being able to collaborate

with others, be effective, and become productive members of society (Elias, 2003). Social and emotional skills should be encouraged in schools because they develop learning that, “can be said to touch both the ‘head’ and the ‘heart’ and the result is classrooms that are run better and students who are more inspired,” (Elias, 2003, p. 3).

Overall, when asked what their hopes are for their children, adults may say they want them to be well-balanced and well-adjusted individuals who are confident in themselves and their abilities. Parents and teachers alike hope for their children to develop skills that help them to be successful with their social and emotional intelligence. These include: being literate, having an understanding of math and science, being problem-solvers, being responsible for their own well-being, having successful social relationships, being respectful and caring of others, being future ready, and having good moral character (Elias, 2003). While many people would agree that this is what they want for their children, the focus academically, from both parents and schools, seems to be on literacy and mathematics; the two areas that perhaps are the most easily measured.

Howard Gardner (2008) believes there are five different types of minds we should be helping children develop: the Disciplined Mind, the Synthesizing Mind, the Creating Mind, the Respectful Mind, and the Ethical mind. These mindsets are ones that every person possesses, but there needs to be time and attention put into them to help children flourish. In addition, the five mindsets help to prepare students later on for what the real world is like. The workplace of the 21st century does not rely on employees to be able to memorize facts and statistics, but rather they value those who can be innovative, and can find information and collaborate with others.

The first mindset is the Disciplined Mind, which is about students being able to master and self-motivate to practice different skills, hobbies, and/or subjects. The second, the Synthesizing Mind, focuses on developing the mind to be able to take in information and be able to not only make sense of it, but know what items are *big picture* and what details are important and useful (Gardner, 2008). This mind is important in today's day and age when people have easily accessible information and technology at their fingertips. It is now necessary for people to learn how to filter out what information is important and what is not is crucial. The third mindset, the Creating Mind, is a social skill that teaches a person how to harness their inner inventor. Creative people are okay with failure because they understand that taking risks is a part of learning. Creative people also understand that finding unique ideas can help a person stand out and make a difference (Gardner, 2008). In addition, the Creating Mind is valuable to the workforce. Creativity is seen as a skill that is gaining importance in the business world, according to a survey completed by business professionals (Kalish, 2009). The fourth mindset is the Respectful Mind, which is teaching others to trust, to avoid snap judgments, and to celebrate people and groups of all kinds. Lastly, the fifth mindset is the Ethical Mind and it is the mindset of considering what is right for all, not only what is best for a one person. The Ethical Mind teaches people to think outside themselves and how their actions affect those around them (Gardner, 2008).

These five mindsets can help students grow to be emotionally and socially balanced individuals by teaching them to respond with good, thoughtful decisions and actions when they come upon something unforeseen. A person declaring that the five mindsets and social-emotional development are an important part of education is not enough. Even going through

the occasional social-emotional learning activity is not enough. Social and emotional development need to become an every day part of school life so that students realize that the importance of engaging in the practice of social-emotional lessons instead of merely getting through them without thought or care (Claxton, Costa, & Kallick, 2016).

Part of the struggle schools face with social and emotional development is there is a often unconscious bias that such areas of academics are not as important as math, reading, or other subjects that produce *hard data*. People often refer to emotional and social skills, creative thinking, and critical thinking as *soft skills*, which indicates on some level that they are not as critical or hold as much value as other skills students learn in school. *Soft skills* have continually gotten pushed aside with the nation's focus on testing and gathering of data, because they are not easily measured by a test, but in fact require face-to-face interaction and observation to see growth (Claxton, Costa, & Kallick, 2016).

A lack of social and emotional skills have been shown to follow children throughout their lives. "If education focuses primarily on knowledge acquisition, students are unlikely to learn to behave as democratic citizens must--that is, as active, informed, ethical participants in shaping our collective futures" (Hetland, 2013, p. 67). Research done by Jones, Greenberg, and Crowley (2015) showed that measuring social-emotional skills when students first enter school can be a good indicator of students' strengths and weaknesses in their development and can help better identify those students who may need interventions. Students in the same study that were lacking in their social-emotional skills early in their schooling were shown to be much more likely to have issues with the law, substance abuse, and struggled more academically and in the workforce (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015).

In the classroom, teachers are pressured to prepare students for state and/or national testing, instead of being allowed the flexibility to teach the whole student. Additionally, many schools work to add more math and more reading into their school day, often at the expense of classes like visual arts, music, band, and physical education; areas where kids are more free to be kids and stretch their minds in more organic ways. According to Kalish (2009), “more math and reading instruction may sound like a good thing--that is, until you realize what is being eliminated to make room for it” (p.83). One may wonder, if schools give students opportunities to express themselves and take care their whole mind and body, will they may be more emotionally as well as mentally prepared for the academic challenges they face? “ It is only when students are physically present, and are mentally ready to learn that they can make the most of the opportunities schools provide” (OECD, 2013, p. 22).

Visual Art Education

Knowing how valuable social and emotional development is for students, this section seeks to understand what visual art education teaches students as well as why the arts are valuable to student social and emotional development. The visual arts are ingrained in people’s everyday life so much so that they easily get overlooked, and like social and emotional intelligence, are often undervalued. It appears easy to forget that it is designers, innovators, and artists who created or were involved in essentially all aspects of our built world that society uses on a day-to-day basis. According to Winner and Simmons (1992),

The creation and production of art represents human achievement at its highest.

Exercising hand, heart and mind together develops important mental skills such as symbol use, analysis, problem solving, invention and reflection...exactly the sort of

independent intellectual activity that distinguishes thinkers, inventors, and leaders. (p.8)

From visual art in our homes and galleries and television shows watched for entertainment, to clothes and fashion, to furniture and spaces people work and live in; all of these creations are made by people that have studied the visual arts. While not every student may grow up to be a graphic designer or an interior designer, visual arts education has a unique advantage in providing students with a multitude of different learning styles and encourages students to problem-solve and explore different options; more often than not, in art and in the real world, there is not just one way to complete a task. Burton (2009) states that, “with art, they (children) all develop flexible and free minds able to construct and express personal meaning” (p. 335).

In recent years, schools have focused more and more on testing and data. Working day-to-day in a school often comes down to numbers. These numbers are not only used to determine how well a student is doing, but can also become a reflection of a teacher’s ability to instruct. With the importance being placed on testing in the areas such as literacy and math, it is easy to understand why other subjects get ignored. Although this may benefit testing, it neglects to help the whole child and their need to explore different ways of thinking and being.

Art education is beneficial to students in so many ways. It has been consistently linked to higher academic achievement for students in their studies (DeMoss & Morris, 2002). Students who have had art education throughout their K-12 school years are not only found to have higher GPAs than those without art, but they are much more likely to graduate with a four-year college degree (Catterall et al., 2012). These students were also found to be more

well-rounded individuals and take interest in extracurricular activities, volunteer, and/or be part of school government (Catterall et al., 2012).

Art can be an oasis for students who do not thrive in tested subjects such as math and reading and can be a place where they feel successful. For students who do well in a traditional classroom setting, the art room can be a place that provides unique challenges outside of their comfort zone. The visual arts are a great place for differentiation and having the capability to meet childrens' needs wherever they are. Two students working on the same project could have end results that look completely different depending on how they solved the problem presented to them. In addition, the visual arts cover skills that are not tackled by standardized tests such as visual spatial, reflection, self-criticism, and problem-solving and experimentation (Winner & Hetland, 2008). Boyd (2011) offers the following thoughts on how the visual arts impact children:

Art contributes to the individual child by: developing the full variety of human intelligence, developing the ability for creative thought and action, the education of feeling and sensibility, the exploration of values, enhancing understanding of cultural changes and differences, and developing physical and perceptual skills (p.3).

In addition, the arts have been found to be an effective way for students to cope with emotional struggles due to mental health issues or with situations at home or at school. They are a way to get students to work in groups and create something artistic that can impact the students' classroom, the school, the district, or the community. In addition to helping those who are struggling emotionally, the visual arts have been shown to act in a preventative

manner as well in supporting students' well-being and helping them stay balanced (Karkou & Glasman, 2004).

Like any other subject matter, art educators are bound to standards . These standards are put in place with the intention of ensuring that all students in the public education system are provided with an equitable baseline of learning. However, a challenge to visual arts is that this area tends to get downsized when districts are making budget cuts and lack funding. When art programs get cut, some districts claim that they are meeting those standards in the students' homeroom class or at the secondary level, awarding visual arts credit for courses that clearly do not fit in that category. Other schools or districts do not even attempt to meet art standards in their schools. In fact, 12% of school districts in the United States do not provide any sort of art instruction at all (Kalish, 2009).

Why is having visual art standards being taught by classroom teachers a problem? It is an issue because classroom teachers are not licensed to teach visual arts and do not receive adequate training in such areas through their schooling. There are many complex topics covered in the arts, and with all of the other standards and subject matter that classroom teachers are required to meet and everything that is on a classroom teacher's agenda, it really is not reasonable to expect them to teach the visual arts as comprehensively and to the same capacity as a licensed visual arts teacher. While the concept of integrating art into the classroom can be effective, if done properly and as a supplement to an full-bodied art class, it should not act as a replacement for a stand-alone art class taught by a trained, licensed visual arts teacher. Visual arts educators know that teaching art is about so much more just making art. "When the arts are appropriately used, they can contribute towards the personal well-

being and social integration of school students. Thus, the capacity of children to learn and achieve can be facilitated and ultimately strengthened” (Karkou & Glasman, 2004, p.58). In addition, studies have also shown that the more years students have art in school and practice drawing skills, the better students are at generating ideas, tapping into their creativity, and problem solving (Rostan, 2010). Embedded within good art teaching are teachers who teach the standards, ensure that work is age appropriate, give students structure and choice, have students respond to artwork, teach what it means to present work to others, and help to build connections between art and life. Also, visual art teachers naturally teach what is called the Studio Habits of Mind; it is these Habits of Mind that become the core of what art teachers do in addition to the strong impact they have on student emotional intelligence (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013).

Studio Habits of Mind and Social Emotional Development

The Studio Habits of Mind are the result of a research project led by Project Zero, a research group that was created at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in order to study education in the arts (Tishman & Palmer, 2006). The eight Studio Habits of Mind that effective art teachers should integrate into their everyday teaching are as follows: Develop Craft, Understand Art Worlds, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, Reflect, and Stretch and Explore (Hetland et al., 2013). The Studio Habits of Mind work together and are usually taught in a multilayered way (Hetland, 2013). All of the Studio Habits of Mind are directly related to the visual arts as a subject, but they also all have applications that can be utilized outside of the art room and contribute to students’ overall well-being.

The Studio Habits of Mind are something done naturally in the visual arts classroom. Teachers use them to enhance student progress in art, however they have so much value beyond that as they pertain to student social and emotional learning, and utilizing different ways of thinking and being. "Educational experiences marked by instruction that uses different modalities are most likely to reach all children and allow them to build their skills and feel that the classroom is suited to their preferred way of learning" (Elias, 2003, p. 19). The Studio Habits of Mind hold so much value because they allow teachers to differentiate and take multiple approaches in their teaching, such as allowing time for exploration, sketch book work for ideation, skill builders, group work, and individual projects. The Studio Habits of Mind also allow teachers to model for students different ways of thinking and seeing the world (Essig, 2013).

Develop Craft

Develop Craft is the first Studio Habit of Mind and is the one most closely linked to the making of art. It is through Develop Craft that students learn new techniques and how to work with different materials as well as how to take care of their tools and respect the art room routine (Hetland et al., 2013). During Develop Craft, students become aware of the abilities of different uses for tools and materials, and how they could use them for varying works of art (Winner et al, 2006). It is often during this time that instructors demonstrate how to complete a particular skill or give a short lecture (Hetland et al., 2013).

With Develop Craft, teachers provide students with mini-lessons or a closed lesson, meaning that it is a short lesson that focuses on teaching a specific skill or technique so that they can then use those skills to create something of their own. However, it is important to

note that if teachers only taught Develop Craft, then students would be very good at artistic skills, but they would not be artists. Develop Craft alone would teach students the skills of making art without the ideas behind those skills. However, students need to develop their craft and have this skill base in order to successfully actualize their creative ideas.

Develop Craft and Social-Emotional Learning. By teaching students skills in the art room that they can then immediately apply and practice, they build confidence as well as a sense of power and ownership. “The arts provide students with knowledge, skills, and appreciation of separate art forms” (Karkou & Glasman, 2004, p. 57). With Develop Craft, teachers are providing students with skills that can be applied later in their own artwork. This is a different approach to teaching than what many may be used to, in which the skills builders were the project.

Many teachers still do practice teaching to the skill, however. When teachers and students can support the notion that learning a new skill requires practice, often without a final product, then that can become very empowering for all. Practicing skills without an end product allows teachers to see the progress and process of student work as well as make sure that their students are meeting the required skills and standards. Plus, it provides students with an entire toolbox of artistic knowledge as well as self-confidence; they are able to utilize their newfound skills to develop creative solutions to whatever artistic problem they face.

Understand Art Worlds

Understand Art Worlds is another Studio Habit of Mind most commonly associated with visual art education. It is through Understand Art Worlds that students learn about art history, artists, different genres of art, and how different artists work in the real world (Hetland et al,

2013). Understand Art Worlds also teaches students about, “finding their own relationship to today’s art world,” (Winner et al, 2006, p. 16). In addition, Understand Art Worlds helps students learn about how visual art is created all over the world in different cultures and communities, and is a way for students to look outside of what they know and better understand another person’s perspective (Hetland et al, 2013). This Studio Habits of Mind also teach students about the art community and the different ways that art can be displayed such as in galleries and museums (Winner et al, 2006). Understand Art Worlds is critical in enlightening students to the art that is all around them, however, if art classes were only about Develop Craft and Understand Art Worlds, then students would essentially be making replicas of famous art, instead of coming up with their own works of art.

Understand Art Worlds and Social-Emotional Learning . Understand Art Worlds helps to teach students how to make connections to themselves as well as the world around them. By looking at art from different people, cultures, and times, students can learn to see both the differences and similarities between themselves and other people and communities. A part of social-emotional development is teaching students how to care for others and value the differences in people because it is those differences in opinion and values among people that makes a community stronger (Elias, 2003). If people all thought the same way, then society would not have many of the great innovations in technology, science, medicine, and art that are so often taken for granted in today’s world. Understand Art Worlds can also help students to build connections between their own classmates and develop friendships and camaraderie with one another, which in turn helps students become more caring (Elias, 2003).

Engage and Persist

The third Studio Habit of Mind is Engage and Persist. With the Habit of Mind of Engage and Persist, art teachers thoughtfully prepare projects and learning activities that get students excited and eager to participate. Moreover, art teachers using Engage and Persist are encouraging their students to put their own personality and interests into their artwork. By encouraging personalization, students are more likely to be engaged, inspired, and motivated to do their work, perhaps not even realizing they are engaged in a learning activity (Hetland et al, 2013).

In addition to being engaged, art teachers encourage persistence. Teachers remind their students to not give up on their projects or ideas. Teachers show their students how to endure with an idea or concept despite facing challenges. Teachers also work to encourage students to work through problems and to let them evolve as needed (Winner et al, 2006).

Engage and Persist are a natural pair because as Hetland et al. (2013) states, “engagement is what makes someone want to persist,” (p.52). When students enjoy what the learning experience they are taking part in then they are more likely to find the value in the lesson and persevere on, despite challenges they may encounter. Art teachers help to encourage student perseverance by giving students choice in their work and by allowing students time to make decisions about what they want out of their art and what they need to in order to be prepared whether it is doing research, creating sketches, or reworking a section (Hetland et al, 2013). Teachers can also help with Engage and Persist by supporting their students and their student’s efforts as well as help their students to focus on the positive aspects of their artwork.

Engage and Persist and Social Emotional Learning. Gaining a strong work ethic through Engage and Persist in the art room can take students a long way in life. Students being engaged in what they are doing, namely the arts, has been shown to cut down on biases students may have, help students to control aggression, boost self-esteem, and encourage students to become more social (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000). Naturally, when students are engaged in what they are learning, they are enjoying themselves and having fun. “As students find purpose in their engagement with art... (they) gain power over their concerns through the act of artmaking,” (Carroll, 2006, p.19).

Over time, students will correlate the positiveness of Engage and Persist with their teacher as well as the engaging subject matter, and the art room will become seen as a safe, welcoming place in the school. The art room is a great place for positivity to start and for tenacity to be nurtured with the hopes that a positive mindset can spread throughout the school. In addition, as students are enjoying themselves and becoming engaged in their visual arts learning, their teachers are guiding and encouraging them to take risks and push through and persevere through the challenges that come along. This teaches students how to deal with struggles, it gives them grit, and helps to develop an awareness about facing challenges can helps students reach their full potential. The lesson of perseverance teaches intrinsic motivation, and ultimately builds student confidence.

Envision

Fourth in the list of Studio Habits of Mind is Envision. Envision is all about imagination. Envision teaches students about figuring out a problem and coming up with an solution before pencil has been put to paper (Winner et al, 2006). When students enter the art room and are

given a project or an art challenge, they are more than likely asked to use their minds to imagine what they want their project to look like (Hetland et al, 2013). Students can then capture their ideas by doing thumbnail sketches or practice drawing. While in the middle of a project, students may have to Envision when they are trying to edit or make changes to their artwork. Teachers may also challenge students to create work entirely from their imagination and determine all the different possibilities there could be in their artwork. The Studio Habit of Envision requires not only an *alertness* for students to know when they need to reexamine their art, but also the awareness that taking the time to Envision, instead of going straight right into the final draft of their artwork, actually makes their art stronger and can save them from complications later on (Hetland et al, 2013).

Envision and Social Emotional Learning. By teaching students to Envision, they learn how to look ahead and set goals for themselves and what they want to achieve in their artwork. Art teachers help students learn how to picture their desired end result and work with them to get positive results. “When their learning is presented in terms of understandable goals... children become more engaged and focused and less likely to exhibit behavior problems,” (Elias, 2003, p.14). Envision can also better help students anticipate challenges they may face in their artwork and therefore prepare them different ways to problem-solve solutions if something is not going quite as planned (Elias, 2003).

Express

The fifth Studio Habit of Mind is Express. Express helps to teach students how to find meaning in art and make it personal for them. Making artwork personal applies not only to students’ own artwork, but is also about students making personal connections to the artwork

of others as well. Express in visual art is using images as a way to symbolize deeper meaning without using words, and it goes beyond what the image depicts literally and tries to convey something more (Hetland et al, 2013). Artwork that uses the Studio Habit of Express is on the next level. No longer is the artwork of students viewed as craft projects, but the artwork has a deeper meaning to the students and to the viewers. Express requires students to take ownership of their artwork and to be responsible for not only the artwork, but the ideas behind it (Hetland et al, 2013). Students that Express are using the skills they have learned previously and harnessing them in a way that allows them to express personal emotion, thoughts, ideas, and stories.

Express and Social Emotional Learning. The Studio Habit of Express also helps with social and emotional learning. When a person does not know themselves well, then it can be difficult to find pathways of expression. Two skills to help students learn how to Express is first, for them to work on describing their emotions and what they feel and secondly to practicing looking at artwork and having discussions about what emotions they believe it is conveying. Express helps to teach students to be responsible with their emotions and know how to be mature and manage their feelings so that they do not become overwhelming (Elias, 2003).

Teachers can work to guide students and teach them appropriate behaviors in the classroom and in society so that they know what to expect in different situations. When students learn to express themselves in art, they learn more about who they are and what they like and dislike as artists, as well as what their strengths and weaknesses are. Learning more about themselves and their emotions can help students become more empathetic towards others and how they might feel in certain situations (Elias, 2003). In the art room, showing

students works of art and having discussions about how they may have been created or what the artist was going through can help students gain perspective on how situations make others feel.

Observe

Observe is the sixth Studio Habit of Mind. In the art room, students learn to use observation constantly. Students Observe the artwork of others, they Observe objects and the space around them, and they Observe their own work as well (Hetland et al, 2013). The Studio Habit of Observe is about more than just looking; it is about really taking the time to notice details that often get overlooked and looking at objects from different perspectives (Winner et al, 2006). Art teachers help with this by walking students through the elements and principles of different works of art. Taking time to show students how to look closer helps students to better understand what they are looking for and allows the them to see things differently than they did before. Observe also allows students to recognize nuances of the world around them, and to be more independent as they work on their art and make corrections. Students begin to notice if, for example, an object in their drawing does not look or feel quite right and through observation, are able to identify the problem and know how they can correct it (Hetland et al, 2013). Observe also a way for students to know when they have finished a piece instead of having to ask the instructor if they are done. Students may even realize that once they start to Observe things more closely in the art room, then it is a difficult habit to break. Students may start to be more aware of things in their everyday life and making connections, which in turn can lead to envisioning different ideas and artistic opportunities.

Observe and Social Emotional Learning. In the 21st century, it is not only easy for people to get distracted by all of their *smart* technology, (phones, tvs, computers, watches, etc) but it has become a way of life for many. It is far too easy to get caught up in multitasking and trying to juggle so many things at one time that nothing is done well. Details get brushed aside, and things go unnoticed. When adults model being distracted and unobservant, they are unknowingly sending messages to the children around them that it acceptable behavior. Adults are unknowingly showing students that this anti-social behavior where people are constantly distracted expected, normal behavior.

What teachers in the visual arts room have students practice through the Studio Habit of Observe is to solely focus on one thing. "Through choosing their focus instead of allowing their attention to be pulled toward the most compelling sensation of the moment, children learn that they do not need to respond to emotional impulses unthinkingly," (Brouillette, 2010, p. 19). Students gradually learn to let chaos of the world around them fall away and find what is most important. With Observe, students learn to take the time to find the details in an object, person, or place that make it unique and special. As students start to Observe the world around them, they will begin to notice more and become more curious about how the world works, (The College Board, 2012). Students engage with Observe by taking interest an object, person or place as they Observe and note the lighting, the texture, as well as the shapes that create it. Art teachers understand the importance of slowing down and taking the time to make connections and look at things from every angle to gain understanding and work to teach that to their students as well as model it in everyday practice.

Reflect

Reflect is the seventh Studio Habit of Mind that art teachers utilize in their classrooms. There are two forms of Reflect in art: question and explain, and evaluate. Question and explain is a time for students to consider and question their own work as well as a time to justify and explain their choices and process to others (Winner et al, 2006). Evaluating, on the other hand teaches students how to look at artwork and determine what works and what does not work as well as what changes, if any should be made (Hetland et al, 2013). This could be concerning students' own personal artwork or the artwork of others.

When using the Habit of Mind Reflect, students learn more about themselves as artists and what they value in artwork. Art teachers lead students through this process by asking them leading questions to get students thinking about the artistic decisions they are making (Winner et al, 2006). Reflect also teaches students to slow down and take the time to make sure that they are being considerate with their art and the artwork of others, as well as learning how to describe the characteristics of a work of art. Teaching students how to use Reflect is a way for students to develop independence and create their own thoughts and opinions about art and the world around. Reflect also teaches students to be free thinkers and for them to know where they stand in life (Hetland et al, 2013).

Reflect and Social Emotional Learning. In the art room, students are taught to Reflect on their work as well as the work of others. Students learn to respect what others think and what others are able to create. Being emotionally well means using the golden rule and treating others with respect as well as being accepting of differing opinions. Students, as they share their ideas, whether it be on an individual work or a group project, learn how to compromise

and come to resolutions that work for everyone. Students may become more social and emotionally intelligent as they come to the realization that it is acceptable to ask for help, and getting help is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of knowing how to be resourceful and understand the value in teamwork (Elias, 2003). Helping students to share their artwork and their ideas and discoveries allows students to learn from each other, understand different ways of thinking, and learn how to revise artwork based on feedback.

Stretch and Explore

Last but not least is the eighth Studio Habit of Stretch and Explore. Stretch and Explore is all about teaching students to be open to new ideas and taking on challenges (Hetland et al, 2013). There are three parts to Stretch and Explore: play, learning from mistakes, and embracing opportunity and taking risks (Hetland, 2013). Students should be encouraged to play with materials and try new techniques without fear of judgement and without worrying that they will have to submit a first attempt art project for a grade. Stretch and Explore allows students time to experiment without the fear that something has to look one way in particular, and gives students time to just enjoy making art. Next, Stretch and Explore teaches students that in art it is okay to take risks and think outside the box, which not only helps students to develop more creative projects but it teaches them how to problem-solve and know that “mistakes are opportunities” (Hetland et al, 2013, p. 91). Making a mistake in art often leads to new discoveries, or a solution to a problem that had not been thought of before. “Mistakes are a potential source of ideas for new projects and investigations,” (Hetland, 2013, p. 69). Stretch and Explore can also become a learning point and time for reflection on how to correct the mistake later on future work.

Teachers encourage their students to go past what they have tried before with their artwork and see what happens (Winner et al, 2006). Many times it is through students' exploration of materials and techniques that great new discoveries happen, and teachers help with this process by encouraging their students to try new things and to challenge themselves. When students feel like they are in a safe learning environment with low-pressure, then they will be less afraid to take risks with their art. Teachers can also help by creating projects that are more open-ended so that students can have the freedom to explore options within their art (Hetland et al, 2013). Keeping in mind, however, that they should still be helping students create quality artwork that they can be proud of.

Stretch and Explore and Social Emotional Learning. Students learn to come up with the best solution for their artwork by taking responsibility and trying to problem-solve by exploring different avenues and thinking creatively (Elias, 2003). Through the Studio Habit of Mind Stretch and Explore, teachers encourage students to go beyond what is comfortable and do not lead students through each step, but rather provide students with open-ended questions to solve. According to Elias (2003), social and emotional learning should incorporate a variety of different teaching styles to help students that have different types of learning need. Asking questions to get students to think and modeling to students the different possibilities shows students that most of the time, there is not just one right way of doing things, because the world is not black and white. Through Stretch and Explore, and by guiding students to be curious about trying new artistic skills, art teachers not only help students to feel ownership in their work, but also help them to feel more confident in the classroom and their abilities (Elias, 2003).

Art, Creativity, and the Child

The visual arts benefit students by encouraging and developing creativity. Creativity and the arts have always been closely linked together, however, while creativity is fostered in the art room, the benefits of a creative mind go far beyond that. (Karkou & Glasman, 2004).

Creativity, at its core, pushes against the edges of the known and bursts open new perspectives, shifting the sense of what is possible or even real...(it) makes new things and makes old things new--new problems, new solutions, new realities--things not conceived before, (Hetland, 2013, p.68).

Creativity is teaching the mind to think outside conventional norms and to be innovative and divergent. "Arts education is needed to foster a widespread creative life which counterbalances the forces of mass production and mass consumption in a materialistic society," (Boyd, 2011, p. 2) Creativity is also something that is expressed in all sorts of different ways, not only with the visual arts, painting, drawing, sculpture, etc, but also through music, theater, dance, and personal self-expression (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015).

Children are born with creative minds and they try to find ways to express themselves and make meaning of the world around them. However, students also need outlets to practice their creativity and a place where they can improve upon their creativity so that it grows with them as they get older. As students grow up and start getting close to their middle school years they become more focused on trying to fit within the status quo and follow what everyone else is doing (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). Without opportunities like the visual arts, students' sense of creativity becomes weaker and it becomes easier to go along with what their peers are doing and choosing safer paths. Art-making can be intimidating to some students because they have

to take their art seriously and put their ideas and skills out there for others to see (Gude, 2010). However, teachers, particularly visual arts teachers, work to fight against the creativity plateau children face and help them build up the social and emotional skills of motivation, communication-self-expression, and collaboration that enhance their overall creativity (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). Art class, because it is a place where children can be creative and explore new ideas, can be very enjoyable and self-fulfilling to students.

Through working in the art classroom, children are learning how to better express themselves. As they create art, students are practicing how to better explain their ideas to others, and learning how to describe things in a way that allow other people (viewers) to relate to their thoughts and artwork (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). By improving their communication skills, students start to feel like they are heard and have a voice of their own. Students are learning to, “behave as democratic citizens—that is, as active, informed, ethical participants in shaping our collective futures,” (Hetland, 2013, p. 67). These new social skills start to build children’s self-confidence and makes them feel connected to art, their peers, and the world around them. What is more, is that as students practice creativity, they develop self-efficacy, learn how to believe in themselves, and feel prepared to face life’s problems (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015).

Teachers help to build a sense of self-efficacy by showing how much they support their students, and by providing positive feedback that reflects a student’s hardwork and effort. Teachers can also encourage student creativity and self-efficacy by placing importance on the process of creating over the outcome, because this encourages students to take more risks and feel less pressure to be perfect (Hadiani & Jaeger, 2015). Too often adults expect children’s art to look a certain way and claim it would better if a shape were changed or that the drawing

does not look finished, when in reality, the child was perfectly happy with the result of their artistic efforts. While of course teachers have to ensure that they are meeting learning targets and covering standards, “the standards, as currently written, do little to foster consideration of the sorts of experiences that can empower students to be aware of and act on internal knowing and experiencing,” (Gude, 2010, p. 34). Learning in the art room can happen in a much more open and creative way that allows for student input while also meeting standards. Teachers and parents need to make sure that they are promoting creativity in all of its forms and are being careful not to stifle a child’s own personal creativity because of their own personal aesthetics.

Motivation is another large struggle students deal with in school, but is an essential piece of being successful later on in life. A study by Rostan (2010), showed a connection between art and motivation and found that more training in the arts led to increased motivation in students completing their work and getting things done. In addition, according to DeMoss and Morris (2002), student involvement in the arts lead to a positive relationship with their other studies as well as helping with student motivation long-term.

One of the biggest challenges for teachers is to get students intrinsically motivated where they want to try a new skill or work on a project because they finding it meaningful and fulfilling. When students are only motivated extrinsically, they are less motivated to do anything but what is required of them in order to get a reward. In other words, they are less likely to be creative (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). On the other hand, when students become intrinsically motivated, they naturally challenge themselves and are more creative because they are able to see the personal value in what they are doing.

However, that is not to say that extrinsic motivation does not have its place in the art classroom, or to help student well-being. Extrinsic motivation can be an effective way to get young students to try something new and challenging for the first time, until they realize that it is not something to fear, but is enjoyable to them (Hadani, H., & Jaeger, G., 2015). Once that realization happens, then it is best to let a children's intrinsic motivation take over.

There are many ways that teachers can promote creativity and motivation in the art classroom. A primary way teachers can promote motivation is by giving students choice in their art projects. By allowing students to have some say in what they are creating, they become more eager to work on their projects and have more ownership and pride in what they are creating (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). "If...children have been offered constructive learning experiences in the visual arts that respect their subject matter interests, they are more likely to continue in their creative development than those who have not," (Burton, 2009, p. 328). Teachers can provide more structure to open-ended lessons by providing a theme for the artwork or a specific medium to use. Another way to help is for teachers to show students their own working process and how skills, techniques, and artistic ventures do not naturally start out perfect, but take time and practice. This life lesson teaches students that they need to be patient with themselves as they work on their art and are learning new skills. Teachers can also make sure to celebrate the little accomplishments like students achieve when they have worked hard on a project and were engaged throughout the process without any promises of external rewards. In addition, another valuable habit for teachers to do to strengthen their lessons and encourage creativity is to constantly find ways to improve their lessons from year to year and allow themselves to be vulnerable enough to ask students ways the assignments or

projects could be better (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). According to Burton (2009), if teachers work to celebrate their students' diversity in the art room through their lessons and by showing artwork from other communities and cultures, then they can provide a large amount of inspiration for students and motivate them to be engaged in the learning process.

Creativity and collaboration also come together in the art room. "If our own creativity allows for connection of seemingly unrelated ideas, then collaboration can provide opportunities to share diverse ideas amongst others," (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015, p. 40).

Collaboration in the art room can help students share their creative ideas and open their eyes up to new ways of thinking and problem solving. "While carrying out group tasks in the arts, students learn initiative, leadership, respect for others and how to compromise, " (Brouillette, 2010, p. 18). Furthermore, in a safe, supportive environment, collaboration can help students create projects that are above and beyond what one person could have created by themselves (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). Artistic development not only relies on the students as individuals, but also how their artistic actions are received by their peers (Brouillette, 2010). Group work and collaboration can be a difficult thing for students to do. Some students like to take over projects and make it their own, while others, who may have great ideas, are too timid to share them with the group. However, by taking the time to teach students what it means to collaborate together, then they will be much more successful at it in the classroom and later on in the workplace (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015).

Teachers should encourage their students to share their ideas with their peers. In the art room, students can use sketchbooks to envision and ideate so that they can then share with others to get different opinions. Teachers can also have students work in pairs to help students

collaborate and build off on another's ideas in order to create something together (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015). Art teachers often have students sit in pairs or groups so that they can easily work as a team. "While carrying out cooperative tasks, children learn initiative, leadership, and respect for others' ideas, as well as the reality that they cannot have their own way all of the time" (Brouillette, 2010, p. 18). In the art classroom, it is also important that teachers help teach students to be respectful of one another when they do not agree on a concept or artistic vision and teach them to understand that it is okay to have different opinions. Group work can open the door for teachers to teach students that every student's voice should be heard and that their ideas are valid (Hadani & Jaeger, 2015).

The visual arts in schools are changing and they are diverging away from lessons students follow from a strictly teacher-directed project. In this type of lesson, students may have some choices within projects, but ultimately, the look and idea behind it are driven by the instructor. While students still do projects in the art room, the focus is now moving toward placing much more on the child and having them make choices and decisions about their artwork and how they want to show their learning. Art teachers are now seeing art as a way to lead to deeper learning, explore new ways of thinking and open the floor to great discussions (LaJevic, 2013). Like social-emotional development, creativity is often undervalued because of its *softness* or in other words, it is difficult to measure. When it comes to schools trying to measure students' creativity, it is harder because schools are not used to assessing creativity like they do science or writing (Zimmerman, 2009).

Creativity does have ways to be measured, however. E Paul Torrance (2003) started developing the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking in 1958 at the University of Minnesota. The

test was created to be a way to measure creativity for children as young as five all the way up through adulthood. The Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking were also made to be able to successfully measure students of all types (Torrance, 2003), and do not discriminate against gender, race, community status, language background, socioeconomic status, or culture (Kim, 2011). Since the tests were introduced, they have been found to be predictably valid (Torrance, 2003). The Torrance Tests of Creativity scores people for different forms of creativity; Fluency, Originality, Elaboration, Abstractness of Titles, Resistance to Premature Closure, and Creative Strengths (Kim, 2011).

The trouble is, however, that studies have shown that the scores on the Torrance Tests of Creativity have been decreasing since the 1990s (Kim, 2011). These decreases have many implications. The researcher said,

The significant decrease of Strengths scores... indicates that over the last 20 years children have become less emotionally expressive, less energetic, less talkative and verbally expressive, less humorous, less imaginative, less unconventional, less lively and passionate, less perceptive, less apt to connect seemingly irrelevant things, less synthesizing, and less likely to see things from a different angle, (Kim, 2011, p.292).

The consequences of falling test scores on creativity may sound overwhelming and they are. Creativity should not be undervalued and should be more of a consideration in the academic community. Too often *soft skills* like creativity are assumed to be a trait that a person either has or has not. It is just the opposite, however. Everyone is born with the capacity to be creative, but it is a skill that needs to be nurtured and practiced or else it will never grow. Students that learn how to problem-solve dilemmas that arise while working on their projects come up with

more creative solutions. By allowing students to develop their creative mind and devoting more time to that in schools, teachers can help to increase creativity in students and better prepare them for the future (Kim, 2011).

As students work on their creativity in the art room they are using Studio Habits of Mind to become better problem-solvers, digging deep emotionally to express themselves, and being able to set and meet goals. The Studio Habits of Mind not only help students' noncognitive skills but are traits that assist them when they face similar situations in other subject areas (Zimmerman, 2009). Creative people are also known for being playful, wanting to try and experience new things, and being introspective (Gude, 2010). Burton (2009) feels that, "Adolescents who have benefitted from continuous art experiences through their childhood are likely to weather the conflicts of adolescence and re-discover their expressive voices more easily than those who have not" (p.332). As students get older, they tend to become less willing to take risks and push for creative thinking, preferring to blend in with the crowd (The College Board, 2012). The visual arts can be a relief from that and with continual arts from kindergarten through their senior year, students can continue to get positive messaging about the value in art and creativity as well as reap more benefits of social-emotional skill development throughout their life.

In addition to gaining an expressive voice, learning to be creative can help students speak out in a new way, participate in life, rather than shy away, and be more receptive of others (Burton, 2009). Students use hands-on learning to gain experience and test out solutions to their artwork, and as with the process of art and the Studio Habits of Mind, they then learn to reflect on what they have done, thinking about what went well, and what could be improved

(Marshall, 2010). This way of thinking can really help students learn how to think things through and not always rely on impulse, whether it be with their school work, or social interactions.

In the art room, students learn that it is a place that is safe for them to share and celebrate their thoughts and ideas as unique individuals and that they are encouraged to do so in order to be successful (Gude, 2010). In the visual arts classroom, emotions, experiences, and dreams are just as important to the artistic process as skill based work (Marshall, 2010). Through visual arts creativity, students are able to focus more on themselves, celebrate what is unique about them, and reflect on the thoughts and ideas of others, which helps students to become more socially competent and aware, as well as emotionally balanced.

Child-Centered Learning in the Visual Arts

Child-centered learning is valuable in the visual arts. Art education has come a long way since being thought of as craft time, or making teacher-directed drawings. While skill-builders are important in Developing Craft and are essential in their place in the art room, the goal for much of time spent in art class should to be focused on the child, not the teacher. “(We should be) teaching *children* about art rather than teaching *art* to children,” (Olson, 2003, p. 35). The child comes first. That is not to say that child-centered teaching is easy. With child-centered learning, teachers can not just teach to the book, because they are striving for more and are working to get more out of the student learning experience. Child-centered learning requires teachers to listen to what students want and need, to work to get to know their students’ interests outside of school, and to design lessons with their students in mind (Olson, 2003). “Children’s learning experiences should originate from children’s life experiences, not those of adults” (New, 2007, p. 53).

Just like it is important for children to feel safe in order for them to show their creative mind, students also need to feel safe with child-centered learning so that they know it is okay to be vulnerable and speak out personally about what they think and feel (Carroll, 2006). Building that trust with students is critical, because when students know that their teacher believes in them, then they will be ready for the opportunities and challenges that come their way. Without students being engaged and putting in their own effort, child-centered learning can come to a stand-still. However, with time, and consistency, students will gradually become more comfortable with their new found educational freedom and eventually take ownership of their learning. In this way, child-centered learning will go far beyond what much of teacher-centered learning can do. However, to gain trust from students, teachers need to go beyond just stating that it is okay to try new things and Stretch and Explore; they need to model it themselves (Carroll, 2006).

Teachers can show students first hand what it means to take on challenges in their artwork and even show students what happens when they, as teachers, make mistakes. A valuable lesson for students to learn is the understanding that even art teachers do not always draw or make things perfectly every time. This lesson also provides students a learning opportunity for them to understand how to handle and react when they make their own mistakes as they witness their teachers reaction to making a mistake. Another great lesson for students to learn in the child-centered art room is that they are not there to prove anything to anyone, but in fact are there to learn and grow and improve (Carroll, 2006). Students are in the art classroom to learn from each others differences and celebrate them and it is a place where one person's great idea does not take away from another's.

One of the biggest take aways of the value of child-centered learning in the art room is how studies have shown that by tapping into students' personal lives and their social-emotional well-being, that students were better able to find meaning in their artwork and push further with their work. How do teachers achieve this and get students to open up? One way is to guide students through open-ended questions (Carroll, 2006). Asking students, "What if...?" gets their minds to wonder and imagine possible solutions to a problem with no one correct answer (Carroll, 2006). Teachers can present students with themes to build their art around, which can provide both structure as well as artistic and personal freedom (Carroll, 2006).

Giving students a say in how they execute their artwork (as it fits within a theme or answers an essential question) is a great way for students to use their personal voice and express themselves (Carroll, 2006). The art room can also be a place of dialog and great conversations amongst students and teachers about a variety of topics as they relate to art and self, and can be used as tool for brainstorming and reflection (Carroll, 2006). Child-centered learning is about providing students with ways to not only improve their artistic skills and knowledge, but also to help students harness them to explore other sides of themselves, figure what they value, and make connections with one another, with art, and the world around them (Carroll, 2006). In a way, art teachers are using child-centered visual arts as a tool or medium for engagement and deeper learning of their social and emotional skills.

School Solutions

There are many ways that schools can help suport student social and emotional development and art education. However, a struggle for schools is trying to fit it all in. With rigorous standards being passed down from the national and state level as well as various

district initiatives flowing in and out, it is difficult for teachers to do anything but get in the required standards which mostly focus on strictly academics, i.e. literacy, math, and science.

However, as Maurice Elias (2003) states,

Schools must become better at guiding children toward becoming literate, responsible, non-violent, drug-free and caring adults...there is danger to each of us--locally and globally--when children grow up with knowledge but without social emotional skills and a strong moral compass (p. 7).

Schools need to realize that they have so much potential to be havens for their students. With the right tools, schools, elementary, middle, and high schools can help inspire and teach students to be creative and ethical as well as empower them to create a bright future for themselves and society (Hetland, 2013).

The Arts Education Partnership (2011) states that schools can commit to the visual arts by creating a school initiative supporting the visual arts, by creating school environment robust with the arts, and considering revising the budget, time, and resources in order to incorporate more arts. By developing a commitment and school-wide plan to embrace the arts, schools set the precedent that the arts, and child-centered social-emotional learning are just as important as any other subject matter. It is important to remember however, that as with any sort of school or district initiative, it takes time for the full effect to become realized. According to Elias (2003), it takes two or three years for social-emotional projects to become fully effective where teachers feel confident in their skills and it becomes an ingrained part of school culture. That being said, it is important that all the teachers and school staff understand the importance of an initiative such as social-emotional development and the arts and for the school to be sure

that everyone is on board. It just takes a few school staff to not follow through on an initiative to undo a lot of the art and social and emotional learning that is trying to take place.

Along with a commitment to the arts to encourage social and emotional wellness, schools can also commit to becoming places where students build lasting relationships. Schools should be places where students feel valued as individuals and know that their teachers care about them (Elias, 2003). Simple strategies such as saying hello to students when they enter the classroom, giving students time to reflect on their learning and what they want to learn, and getting to know students hobbies and interests beyond academics are all simple ways for teachers to show that they care (Elias, 2003). In addition, teachers can work to create a classroom environment where it is an everyday occurrence to have students working together, helping each other out, and speaking to each other in a positive, supportive way (Elias, 2003). It is easy to imagine how these small environmental changes could over time have a profound effect on how students view not only their school experience, but how they view themselves over the course of their K-12 academic career.

It is a struggle for schools to find time for visual art teachers to collaborate. Schools may encourage the idea of collaboration, but oftentimes, that time is given to grade level teams and not to specialists or else there is not common time between specialists and classroom teachers (McDowell, 2009). Integrating the arts in other subject matter classrooms can be a successful way to encourage the transfer of the Studio Habits of Mind that students are learning in their visual arts class. However, art teachers need to be given time to not only collaborate with other grade levels, but with each other as well in order to make that a success.

Teachers may have to be creative to make this kind of collaboration happen. Possibilities could be using common lunch times or informal once a month morning coffee meetings, for example. A study by Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles (2000), states that,

The beneficial effects of arts learning appear to be intensified by mediating variables: the central role of administrative support—school principals who make possible adequate and flexible arts programming, including integrating the arts within the general classroom; teachers who are confident and innovative in their approaches to learning and who have strong professional interest, and enjoy collaborating with other arts and classroom teachers (p. 254).

The arts have value in themselves as a stand alone subject with the added advantage of also being able to have a great impact in other subject areas with regards to student well-being (McDowell, 2009). “A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding. Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize and self-assess,” (McDowell, 2009, p.3).

Parents can also be a huge help in supporting visual arts and an emotionally rich school environment. After all, what parent would not want a school that supports their whole child, and not just their core-academics? Encouraging parents to support the arts through volunteering can help them get a front row glimpse into the value that the arts provide to their children (Arts Education Partnership, 2011). For parents that are unable to volunteer during the school day, there are many other ways to support the art room and their child’s school. “At some schools, parents provide the ‘behind the scenes’ support that can keep a program

running, whether it is raising funds, writing grants, volunteer activities or even direct advocacy” (Arts Education Partnership, 2011, p. 4). Schools also often have parent teacher organizations that meet outside of school day that can help with fundraisers and support students. Even the simple act of donating unneeded items to the art room is a small way to make a big impact in the functioning of the art program.

Families enjoy feeling like they are part of the school community and providing projects that include them, opportunities to help, keeping channels of communication open, and simply creating an open friendly school can go a long way (Elias, 2003). Just as people say a smile is infectious, having a school, teachers, and staff that support students and families with love and care can really create a huge positive impact on students and their parents. Parents can also be a strong voice for advocating for even more visual arts, as well as social-emotional development by being a part of committees, speaking to the school board, and writing to state representatives (Arts Education Partnership, 2011). By putting the school’s art program on display through school art shows or even district art shows, it not only allows for families to see evidence of student learning in the art room, but it makes the visual arts more visible so that families become more enriched with the program and come out to support the arts. Other places to display student art are district offices, where administration can see it, and local libraries, where community members can see it. Although it is not easy, art education has the potential to make a huge difference in students’ well-being.

CHAPTER III: Discussion and Conclusion

This literature review sought to answer many questions about the relationship between children's social and emotional development and the visual arts. Both the visual arts and children's emotional intelligence are undervalued in much of today's schools. They are for the most part viewed as *soft skills*, and while people view them as skills and traits that are valued, they are often seen as less important than subjects like math and literacy that can provide hard data on achievement. However, throughout the reviewed literature, it seems clear that creativity, artistic inquiry, and emotional intelligence are more important now than they have ever been before as students face the fast changing nature of the 21st century.

Professional Application

The hope of this literature review was to make the connections between the visual arts and student emotional and social well-being more transparent. Social and emotional development is how well students are able to collaborate and work with others, how effectively they are able to learn, and their ability to become successful members of society (Elias, 2003). It is about the well-being of children and how they are doing on a personal level rather than a purely academic one. Some might argue that social and emotional development should lie simply within the parent's responsibility, but schools need to take a part of that responsibility as well because they are the ones who see students every day in a social setting. When children are not doing well on an emotional level, then it makes tackling the academic side that much harder.

In the visual arts classroom, teachers can apply Gardner's five mindsets to help encourage the social-emotional wellness of their students. The five mindsets are: the

Disciplined Mind, the Synthesizing Mind, the Creating Mind, the Respectful Mind, and the Ethical Mind (Gardner, 2008). The Disciplined Mind teaches persistence and is where students learn how to motivate themselves to practice skills. In the art room, this could be students working on practicing techniques for a future project. The Synthesizing Mind is about students learning how to process information and make sense of it. An example in the visual arts is students learning how to observe artwork and understand how the elements and principles were used to create it as well as which parts of an artwork are more important than others. The Creating Mind teaches children how to be inventive and come up with original ideas (Gardner, 2008). Students in the art room develop their Creating Mind by envisioning ideas for a work of art and by exploring with new techniques and materials.

The Respectful Mind is about students learning how to trust and how to avoid judging others. In the visual arts, students use the Respectful Mind when they respond to art and are considerate of others' opinions. Students are also using the Respectful Mind when they encourage other students' artistic choices and are able to compromise during group projects. Lastly, the Ethical Mind helps students learn how their actions affect others (Gardner, 2008). An example of the Ethical Mind in the art room is when students learn that time is limited and valuable and if one student distracts the rest of the class, then that time is lost for everyone. Another example of a teachable moment for the Ethical Mind is the use of classroom materials. If students misuse or waste materials, then there may not be enough for later or for other students to use.

The visual arts are an important subject for many reasons and should be an integral part of any school curriculum. The visual arts have the capability for meeting children wherever they

are and allow them to be successful in a personal way. Students that struggle throughout the day in their regular studies may find they can be themselves in the art room, free to explore personal topics of interests. With visual art, there is the natural capability for it to be continually challenging, full of endless problems to solve, materials to experiment with, and topics to learn about. It truly is a place for all students. The arts can help fill in the gaps left by more traditional subjects in that they emphasize developing the skills of problem solving, collaboration, creativity, and the Studio Habits of Mind. Studies have found that students who have been involved in the arts throughout their K-12 schooling go on to become more well-rounded individuals, as well as do better academically than those without art exposure (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012).

Art teachers should take advantage of the many social-emotional opportunities that their subject matter provides students. By placing the importance on children, visual art teachers can more strongly consider what the learning experience is for their students. Teachers can provide students with choices to make independent decisions on their artwork to help them personalize it, while also offering students themes and learning targets to guide them so that they feel supported.

Visual art teachers often struggle with a lack of time. However, incorporating time for utilizing all of the Studio Habits of Mind into visual art curriculum has countless benefits for student well-being. The Studio Habits of Mind are: Develop Craft, Understand Art Worlds, Engage and Persist, Envision, Express, Observe, and Reflect (Hetland et al., 2013). With practice, Studio Habits, such as Envision can be implemented through sketchbooks as students come up with ideas for a project. Sketchbooks can also be used as a way for students to Stretch and

Explore as they try new materials or practice a new skill. Students can learn how to Observe and Reflect by concluding classes with a discussion of an artistic work. By allowing students to make choices in their artwork, they are able to better Express themselves and make their learning personal to them. These are just a few of the many ways the Studio Habits of Mind can be easily integrated into the visual arts classroom as well as simple examples of why the Studio Habits of Mind make the visual arts so critical to educating the whole child.

Creativity is a takeaway from the art room that along with the Studio Habits of Mind can follow students throughout their lives. After all, every child is creative and the art teacher can nurture and encourage this natural ability. It is the art teacher's job to use the Studio Habits to encourage and motivate students to find their expressive and artistic voice and to help them stretch their creative muscles. Creativity, knowing how to problem-solve, and finding unique solutions is a valuable life skill. In the visual arts students are given opportunities to interpret ideas, solve problems, and go beyond the ordinary. Students gain confidence in their artistic skills and are unafraid to be the unique artist that they are.

When art teachers teach in a child-centered manner with students as the artists, the Studio Habits of Mind help strengthen students' emotional intelligence as they build confidence in their abilities. "Many feel that education would be vastly improved if greater attention were given to this fundamental human need to interpret and express our individual and shared experiences," (New, 2007, p.50). The visual arts do exactly that. Placing learning into the students' hands with art materials helps them to find meaning in what they are studying. Giving students the opportunity to apply the artistic skills that they are being taught in their own way that makes sense to them allows for deeper engagement and connections to the

subject matter. The visual arts act as a natural way to differentiate in the classroom so that students get what they need to be successful, because every artistic solution is different.

The arts help to provide and showcase the many different ways there are to understand something, problem-solve, or learn (Karkou & Glasman, 2004). This is a critical lesson for students to understand because they learn that their work does not have to be like everyone else's. That can be very liberating and confidence-boosting. Once skills are taught, students are able to work more independently. Teachers are empowered to move around the classroom supporting students, providing motivation, encouraging creative problem-solving, and helping students ideate. In addition, when students are immersed and excited about what they are doing it makes reflecting on their work, as well as sharing and presenting their art, easier and more enjoyable.

The education system would benefit by recognizing that teachers should be teaching visual arts along with the subjects that are required for standardized testing (Kim, 2011). There are many ways to teach and measure a child's learning. "The increased emphasis on standardized testing may have shifted the emphasis in schools toward drill exercises and rote learning, and away from critical, creative thinking," (Kim, 2011, p.293). That is not to say that math and literacy are not important, but when the visual arts are eliminated to make room for more math and English, other important learning opportunities where students can learn about who they are as individual end up getting sacrificed. "Art touches everyone. It both influences and is influenced by life. Art-making is an integral aspect of human existence, " (Bates, 2000, p. 131).

By restricting programs like the visual arts, opportunities for students to stretch and use their creative minds are taken away (Kim, 2011). By supporting the arts and their efforts in developing the whole child, schools can make a meaningful impact on students' lives. It has been thought that when students are more well-adjusted and confident in themselves and have creative outlets, they are able to achieve more in other areas of their life. "Art is an expression of the authentic self, one's own culture, a global perspective and life in general," (Bates, 2000, p. 131). A child's education should provide opportunities to develop their whole-self and allow them be creative and expressive (New, 2007).

Visual arts teachers, with the implementation of the child-centered classroom, the Studio Habits of Mind, and creativity strategies may experience increased enthusiasm from their students as well as an increase in student confidence. Students may even try to take their project home with them or come in outside of class time so they can continue to work on their art. Teachers themselves may find further inspiration to find social-emotional professional development in their area. If a teacher has a visual art professional learning community (PLC), collaborating on opportunities to integrate social-emotional learning into their classrooms could be a goal that is worked on together. Art teachers may also be motivated to do further research on different choice-based curriculums such as Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) or Understanding by Design (UbD) that could work for their students.

Limitations of the Research

There were limitations to this literature review. It was difficult to find research that encompassed both emotional-social development and the visual arts. There were articles, books, and research that discussed them as individual topics, but not a considerable amount

that discussed them together and how they benefit student development. However, when articles about the visual arts and the Studio Habits were read next to articles describing the characteristics and traits of emotional-social development, the similarities, overlaps, and connections between the two areas were clear. It seemed that much of the current research available has to do with students of lower socioeconomic status and/or is focused more on the high-school age group, whereas this literature review looked at students K-12 as a whole.

Implications for Future Research

It would be useful to see research that looks into successful strategies for the visual art classroom that help teachers enhance the social and emotional learning that is already taking place with the Studio Habits of Mind. While there is information about the need for art education in schools along with more implementation of social-emotional learning, there was not much practical information about specific applications teachers can take to enhance students' learning.

Another area of interest is the assessment of art and emotional intelligence. Is it important to assess student progress in creative processes and/or their social-emotional development and wellbeing? If so, what are some effective ways to do so? It would be interesting to see studies that looked at the frequency and length of art classes, and if having more or fewer frequent visual art classes for longer or shorter amounts of time has an impact on student well-being.

In addition, it would be interesting to see studies that compared and contrasted art programs that used different art curriculum approaches, such as the Studio Habits of Mind and Discipline-Based Art Education, which allows for limited choices within projects and is more

subject-centered. These studies could assess students on a social-emotional scale and would help to determine if the type of art instruction students receive has an impact on student social-emotional skills.

Conclusion

This review sought to find connections between two important educational topics that seem to be undervalued in the high stakes testing environment of today's schools. The visual arts and social-emotional experiences strengthen students and their schools. The visual arts are critical in the education of students and their social and emotional well-being. Not only do they teach students artistic skills, but they help students to develop Studio Habits of Mind and creativity that strengthens their confidence and capabilities as citizens of the 21st century.

The arts are a connector in that they teach to the spirit of children. They provide students with the skills that they can take with them through every subject matter, every job, and every relationship they encounter throughout their lives. The visual arts not only feed the artistic needs of children, but their emotional and social needs as well. The arts are vital to schools and they are critical to the success of students trying to prepare for the future. When it comes down to it, people are not remembered for how many equations they memorized, or how great their spelling was, but they are remembered for the lives they touched and the impact they had on others.

For visual art teachers, it is easy to get overwhelmed with all of the goals and tasks they seek to accomplish. Educators often have some ambitious goals in mind such as: teaching engaged and inspired students, having students build skills with confidence, and teaching students to become thoughtful and well-rounded individuals. Visual arts teachers want to

deliver an art program where teachers, administration, parents, and community see the value in what the visual arts have to offer. These goals are not only possible to achieve, but are necessary for the future well-being of our students and a society where creativity and social skills are valuable work and life skills. By teaching the visual arts and guiding our students with the Studio Habits of Mind, encouraging creativity, and taking a child-centered approach, we allow students to develop fully their individuality and the freedom of becoming the best versions of themselves.

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