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Effect of community-based art education on student perceptions

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EFFECT OF COMMUNITY-BASED ART EDUCATION ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

By

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ABSTRACT

The qualitative, classroom-based, case study, researched the effect of a community-based art education unit on high school student’s perceptions of their community. The seventeen students in the high school sculpture class studied the theme, Main Street vs. Superstores, by conducting visual ethnographical and internet research. In groups the students created sculptures to be displayed at the local community library. The researcher conducted the class in a constructivist teaching style to allow the students an opportunity to create their own understanding during the unit. Data was collected about the students’ perceptions and knowledge of their community, before, during, and after the study. Data was collected through surveys, interviews, videotaped class discussions, reflection papers, field notes, and the finished sculptures. The significant findings showed an increase in student knowledge about their community and a positive effect on the student’s perceptions of their community. The study also provided an opportunity for student’s to voice their concerns about local issues and increased collaboration in the classroom. Further research could analyze the effect of incorporating several community-based art education units into an art class to see if the shift in the student’s perceptions would be more dramatic and if the students would become more involved in local community organizations.

Keywords: Community-based art education, Student Perception, Visual Ethnography, Main Street vs. Superstores
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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background to the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Goals</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose, Importance and Applications of CBAE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Function of Public Art with CBAE</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s Perspectives on Community</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drawbacks to CBAE

Conclusion

Tactic Understanding

Theoretical Understanding

3. METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

Research Methods

Data Collection

Data Analysis

4. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Significance of the Study

Bias and Validity

Analysis of Data

Pre-Unit Data Analysis

Lesson One Data Analysis

Lesson Two Data Analysis

Lesson Three Data Analysis

Main Street vs. Superstore Article

Visual Ethnography

Sculpture Proposals

Sculpture Construction

Group Interviews

Lesson Four Data Analysis

Post-Unit Data Analysis

Results
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Data Collection Techniques</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Pre-Unit Survey Results</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Post-Unit Survey Results</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Student Perspective of the Community</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Example of Student Visual Ethnography</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Finished Hand Sculpture</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Hand Detail</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Community-based art education can “strengthen children’s connections to others, to their region, land, and to overcome the alienation, and isolation that is often associated with modern society” (Gray & Graham, 2007, p. 304). The separation that modern students feel from their communities has resonated with me over my last eight years at Collinsville High School in Collinsville, Illinois. Collinsville is located near St. Louis, Missouri and has a diverse population of students from a multitude of backgrounds. In my classroom the students learn about studio practices in drawing, painting and sculpture, as well as about themselves. One area that I have neglected to have the students learn about is their community. This topic that I have ignored could very well be the key to providing my students with a sense of belonging. This chapter will introduce the purpose and motivation behind the study, research goals and questions, conceptual and theoretical framework, and the significance and limitations of the study.

Background to the Study

Community-based art education has a range of purposes such as teaching traditional skills and knowledge, learning about local cultures and designing projects that encourage social change (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 10). The area of social change will be focused on for this study. Will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the students’ research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community? During the classroom-based, action research study, the effectiveness of community-based art education was analyzed.

Applying community-based art education can provide real-world content for students to “become creators of knowledge” and teachers serve as mentors or guides through the exploration
The goal was for the students to use collaboration, cooperation, and research to create a group sculpture that focused on a local social issue. Through this process students were able to voice concerns about their community and promote social change through the creation of public art.

**Research Goals**

The practical goals were to have students learn about their community, empower the students to voice their concerns about local issues, and promote involvement in the community through the creation of public art. During adolescence students need to develop a social self as part of a community, so this is an opportune age to encourage students to become involved (Kerlavage, 1998). Organizations, clubs, and sports are all important communities that many students become involved in during high school. Unfortunately, when students graduate they often are unable to find those types of groups to help them establish a communal feeling again. Providing an opportunity for the sculpture students to learn about the community may encourage them to seek out ways to be active and promote positive changes in the future.

**Research Questions**

The question that this action research project studied was; will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions of their community? This local issue that the students researched was the Superstore vs. Main Street dilemma. This topic was chosen because the community has a large region that is filled with chain stores such as Wal-Mart, Mc Donalds, Home Depot and Walgreens, as well as having a historic main street that is striving to compete and stay in business. Therefore the students will have some experience with the topic before they
start the research. “Starting where the students live and with familiarity of their own neighborhood is a foundation to build other information and content” (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009, p. 10).

The study, a classroom-based, action research project that utilizes a community-based art education unit was conducted in my sculpture class. This class was chosen by purposeful selection because the students range in age, race, and this is most of the student’s first art class with me as their instructor. The students were randomly assigned to six groups of two to three students to research and create sculptures that focus on the issue of Superstores vs. Main Street. The students provided data through written statements, surveys, group interviews and classroom discussions. Field notes documenting observations and the unit and lesson plans provided additional information that was reviewed during the study. The data was analyzed to determine the effectiveness of community-based art education in my classroom in regards to student’s perspectives on their community. The results of the study will determine if community-based art education units would be useful to incorporate into my other studio classes.

**Conceptual Framework**

The qualitative methods that were utilized in the study include; pre and post unit surveys, group interviews, written work by the students, and classroom observations. The data was a combination of formal and informal interactions. The data was reread and coded to determine organizational categories for the information. The coded data from the beginning, middle, and end of the study were compared to check for changes in students’ perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge about their communities. The results of the analysis are displayed in a matrix. The
surveys, interviews, written documents and observations were triangulated to reduce the chance of researcher bias.

The researcher’s prior experience with community-based art education has involved reading the literature. Social-commentary units have been incorporated in other classes, but it has never been directly related to the local communities. Many of the students seem to have a negative outlook on their community and are uninvolved. The researcher is involved in a local organization in the community and finds the experience incredibly rewarding. It is important that student participants be informed about their own communities, so they are aware of ways that they can also be involved and have a voice in community issues.

Theoretical Framework

Community-based art education (CBAE) uses the local community or region as inspiration for teaching students about traditional skills, local cultures, and issues. CBAE has been credited with enhancing “skill development, collaboration, communication, and empowerment” (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 11). CBAE encourages real world content and problem solving by having the teachers serve as mentors and for students to take responsibility for their own learning (Stephens, 2006, p. 45).

Lawton (2010) discussed a successful CBAE research study that was conducted at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The study had university art education and art studio majors work with a local homeless shelter to learn about homelessness and create two large quilts that are on public display. The quilts were sewn by the university students, but the panels were created by the homeless. The interactions between the two groups succeeded in the goal of breaking down stereotypes about homelessness.
Villeneuve and Sheppard (2009) reviewed the use of CBAE in a middle-school art class to encourage students to take pride in their community. Frenchtown was struggling with many issues and students had been swayed by the media to have a negative view of their community. Students learned about their community and began to “show a sense of ownership” and “to see that what they were doing was important” (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009, p. 11-12).

Community-based art education focuses on local community, but the concepts that are learned by the students extend beyond their hometowns. Clark and Zimmerman (2000) stated that “students who studied their local cultures have a basis for understanding the arts of cultures in other places beyond their local community” (p. 38). A similar concept was introduced by Lai and Ball (2002) when they acknowledged that by having students study local art they “understand the position of the community in relation to its bioregion, state, nation, and the planet” (p. 48).

Research has shown that CBAE can encourage community pride, increase awareness about local issues, collaboration, communication, and skills. All of these ideas will be addressed in the CBAE unit that will be presented and the effectiveness of the unit will be determined by the students’ perspectives about their community at the end of the study.

**Significance of the Study**

Uniqueness in a community often stems from historic aspects such as main street businesses. In a postmodern society where families are having to move more often and communities are becoming increasingly similar due to large corporate businesses, it is not a surprise that “people feel detached from the place where they live and have no particular sense of belonging or responsibility toward their communities” (Gray & Graham, 2007, p. 303). The
effectiveness of a community-based art education unit was analyzed during the action research. Could a community-based art education unit begin to reestablish a sense of belonging and civic responsibility in high school students?

Dewey’s stated that experiences are “to be judged by its effect on the individual’s present and future and the way he or she contributes to society through the collective experiences” (Abarca, 2010, p. 87). During this study the student’s experience was measured by the perceptions that they have before, during and after the community-based unit. If the unit was successful at promoting a feeling of belonging, civic responsibility, or pride through an increase of knowledge and awareness of the community, the students and the community would benefit greatly.

**Limitations of the Study**

Several limitations exist in the study. One factor is the time restrictions. The finished sculptures will be exhibited in the main street area of Collinsville, but that will not occur until after the study. Therefore, data that could be used from the exhibit such as a record of statements from the gallery and the students’ reactions to having a public show will not be incorporated into the data.

Another limitation is that the class has seventeen students, so the groups were not even. Most groups had three students and one group had two. This slightly changed the functioning of the groups because the responsibilities of the members were different.

The last limitation is that the unit focused on the community of Collinsville and several of the students are from surrounding towns. This could potentially result is less interest from these students since the community is not their hometown.
Conclusion

Was learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community? The goals of this study are to analyze the effectiveness of a community-based art education unit in regard to the unit’s ability to influence students’ perceptions, attitudes and knowledge about their communities. If students develop community pride and civic responsibility as a result of community-based art education it would prove that this type of curriculum should be incorporated into my other studio classes for the betterment of the students and the community. In chapter two, the conceptual framework for the study will be presented in detail.

Definition of Terms

Community-based art education is a form of art education that focuses on the local community or region as inspiration for the curriculum. Community-based art education can have a variety of purposes that include; “teaching traditional art skills and knowledge, appreciating local cultures with no intent of social reconstruction, and projects that are designed for social change” (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 10). The unit in the study will be using the concept of designing projects for social change.

Perception Insight, intuition, or knowledge gained by perceiving. Perception is the process of becoming aware of something.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Question

Will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the student’s research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions of their community? Literature suggests that community-based art education has a positive effect on student’s perceptions of their community, so it will be the educational theory that will be applied during the study. This chapter will discuss the conceptual framework for the action research project, literature about community-based education, and will conclude with tacit and theoretical understanding.

Conceptual Framework

The prior knowledge that the researcher brings to the study is an understanding of community-based art education that was achieved by studying the literature. The researcher’s prior experience of using social issues as themes for art units, and experiences with student’s negative perceptions of their communities as well as the researchers own experience with community service organizations all contribute to the prior knowledge of the study. The research will revolve around the effectiveness of community-based art education. Effectiveness will be determined by the student’s perceptions of their communities, and if the students feel empowered to voice concerns and take an interest in community issues. Constraints that exist in the study include time restrictions, uneven group sizes for the project and the focus of the social issue was on one community, instead of all of the communities that go to the high school.

The qualitative action research study involved seventeen students in the sculpture class at Collinsville High School in Collinsville, Illinois. The students were placed in randomly selected
groups. The study used six groups: five groups with three students and one group with two. The students worked together to create a free-standing sculpture that addresses the local social issue, main street vs. superstore. The students used internet research and micro-ethnographic research of locations to inspire their choices about the sculpture designs. Micro-ethnographic research has students focus on a location for a short amount of time by visiting the location and writing descriptions, taking field notes, taking pictures or creating sketches (Powell, 2010). The student’s research influenced their choices and the group wrote a sculpture proposal that was approved before they created the finished piece. The finished pieces will be publically displayed, but due to time constraints that will occur after the study has ended. Data that was collected during the community-based art education unit included; a pre and post unit survey, field notes, videotaped class discussions, group written sculpture proposals and critiques, videotaped group interviews, and individual reflection statements.

The community-based art education unit provided an opportunity for students to collaborate on a real-world issue to create an artwork that informs and/or persuades the public to reevaluate their perceptions. If the unit promoted positive changes in the student’s perspectives, civic responsibility, and pride, it will be useful to incorporate into other art education classes at Collinsville. A continuation of community-based art education could lead to increased involvement by the students and the art department in the community.
Table 2.1 Concept map for a study of student’s perception of their local community using CBAE

Review of the Literature

Community-based art education is a multi-faceted theory. In the following section the purpose, importance, and applications of community-based art education will be discussed in addition to the function of public art, and student attitudes and perceptions. The section will conclude with drawbacks to community-based art education.
Purpose, Importance and Applications of Community-Based Art Education

Community-based art education’s goal is to have students take interest in their local communities and promote involvement in the community by using the local community as content for units. Community-based art education has a variety of purposes that fall into three overlapping categories. One purpose is to “teach traditional skills and knowledge” such as folk art or regional arts (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 10). Another purpose is to help students learn about local cultures without the purpose of social change and the last purpose is to develop projects that are for social reconstruction (Ulbricht, 2005). The study will use the purpose of social reconstruction, which is also called, issue-orientated community-based arts education (Krensky, 2001).

“Finding our own ‘sense of place’ that connects us to a community, history, and culture is an important challenge in contemporary society” (Gray & Graham, 2007, p. 304). Community-based art education provides a way for students to create connections between their lives and the community if the learning is “grounded in local phenomena and personal experience” (Gray & Graham, 2007, p. 304). Museums and classrooms have found that this educational theory has been able to “promote civic engagement” by “connecting people with the issues that shape the communities to which they belong” (Ciardi, 2006, p. 72). Community-based art education focuses on local content, but the result of the theory is an increased awareness for regional and global concerns (Gradle, 2007). Asking students to “think globally, act locally” helps students understand how local action can impact other areas (Lai & Ball, 2002, p. 48). Community-based art education has also been associated with “enhanced skill development, collaboration, communication and empowerment” (Ulbricht, 2005, p. 11).
Community-based art education has been applied to various research studies. Studies have been successful in urban and rural settings. This successful educational theory has been applied with elementary, middle-school, high school, and university students. Community-based art education units have ranged from elementary students learning about their local community and creating interdisciplinary exhibits and performances (Marche, 1998) to university students working with local homeless individuals to create quilts for display (Lawton, 2010). All of the studies have recorded positive effects from the units of study. Villeneuve and Sheppard (2009) found that the middle school students developed a sense of ownership in the unit and viewed their work as important to the community.

Many large scale projects have developed from community-based art education units with the support of local community organizations. Middle school students worked with local community members to create a Peace Park, the students integrated language arts, social studies, science, and visual arts to create and promote the project (Kresnsky, 2001). The Peace Park was successful at unifying an economically and racially diverse community. A similar success story occurred when students in a low socio-economic neighborhood in Cincinnati, Ohio created murals in a local playground (Hutzel, 2007). By redesigning the space the students were able to reclaim the area for children and drive out the adults that had been selling drugs at the playground. Applications for community-based art education can be large scale and involve local community organizations or on a smaller scale in the classroom by having students “construct richer meaning and connections to their lives outside the classrooms” (Graham, 2007, p. 12).
The Function of Public Art with Community-Based Art Education

Public art can be divided into pre-modernist, modernist and postmodernist approaches. The postmodern approach lends itself to community-based art education. According to Russell (2004) pre-modernist sculpture is traditional and commemorates events, people, animals or mythical figures. Modernist sculpture focuses on formal properties and personal expression of the artist without concern for “social, moral, or political truths” (Russell, 2004, p. 20). The final approach is postmodern that “focuses on the social factors of a particular locale or group” (Russel, 2004, 22). Postmodern public art is considered place-specific and often utilizes a collaborative approach with members of the community.

An example of a successful postmodern artwork is, Community Bridge, a traffic bridge in Frederick, Maryland that was transformed by a realistic mural into a beautiful piece of public art by the artist William Cochran working with the community (Stephens, 2006). The community provided suggestions for symbols to incorporate into the mural design and communication about local issues and ideas developed. For public art to be effective for social change Krensky (2001) suggests that it must be about a social or political issue, it must be displayed in public and it must create an interaction with the viewer.

Student’s Perspectives on Community

“Participation in society has declined and young people, in particular, are not engaged in civic life” (Krensky, 2001, p. 428). Krensky (2001) goes farther to suggest that “personal alienation and political apathy, which block community and civic participation, are overcome when youth engage in real-life activities that address social issues” (p. 428). Community-based art education can be the catalyst that motivates students to become active in their communities.
Hoffman (2011) conducted research about student’s perceptions about community-service and found that students that participate in community service activities “report a greater sense of personal responsibility to community events as well as feeling more connected to their community” (p. 1). Webster and Worrell (2008) also conducted a study about the perceptions of community service from academically gifted students in middle school and high school. All of the students displayed a positive attitude towards the community-service program. “All young people have the potential to be positive forces for change in their own lives, in their communities, and a larger, global level” (Krensky, 2001, p. 442). The students just need an opportunity to study their community to find ways to contribute and gain the confidence to try.

**Drawbacks to Community-Based Art Education**

One major issue that is perceived with community-based art education is that the content may be “inappropriate or out of place within a school or art classroom” (Darts, 2011, p. 51). This stems from a concern with the teaching of social, and political issues. In conservative districts disciplinary actions has occurred to teachers that have included topics that the schoolboard or administrators have not sanctioned (Darts, 2011).

Time and money issues can make community-based art education difficult to execute in the classroom. Ulbricht (2005) suggested that teachers may find it “difficult to organize community-based ethnographic art studies during school hours” (p. 10). Another issue that may occur with community-based art education is the lack of funds to provide transportation to take the students into the community for field trips to use ethnography for a research method. Community-based art education also takes collaboration with different sections of the community. The teacher must find community resources and individuals that are interested in the
project. These drawbacks are slight compared to the effectiveness of community-based art education and can be handled by communicating with the administrators, schoolboard, and community about the intentions of the project.

**Conclusion**

**Tacit Understanding**

Observations of the lack of interest in the community by high school students at Collinsville, influenced my choice to include community-based art education into the curriculum. When students are informally asked about why they do not participate in community service actsives the responses typically stem from a lack of knowledge or a belief that they are not welcome. Community-based art education finds ways to bridge the school environment with the community to promote student interaction and empowerment in the local community. Providing an educational experience rooted in community issues may lead to students developing a greater interest and concern for their local environments.

**Theoretical Understanding**

The literature showed that community-based art education is an appropriate stategy to untilize to promote knowledge, skills, civic responsibility, pride, and empower students to voice concerns about local issues. Community-based art education has also been successful with all age groups in both urban and rural settings and public art is a critical compoent of community-based art education. Finally, students that engage in community service programs feel more connected to ther local communities and enjoy the expereince. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that will be used for the action research study.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The question that this action research project studied was: Will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions about their community? The classroom-based, case study took place in the sculpture class at Collinsville High School. Seventeen students are enrolled in the class, eleven females and six males. The class has two multi-racial students, three African American students, two Hispanic students and ten Caucasian students. Four of the students have Individualized Educational Plans and one student is an English Language Learner. None of the students are in Advanced Placement classes. The research was conducted during the unit entitled, *Fostering awareness of local community through art*. The unit focused on the local issue of the Superstore vs. Main Street. In the unit the students learned about their local community and the local issues by participating in class discussions, conducting visual ethnography on local businesses, developing a group sculpture proposal, creating the proposed sculpture, and reflecting on their experience.

Research Methods

The study collected data through the methods participant observation, structured interviewing, and surveys. Observations were documented in field notes by the researcher. Class discussions and interviews were videotaped to provide data that could be reevaluated. The videotaped interviews used open and closed structured questions to avoid researcher bias. The pre and post unit survey (see Appendix A-1 p.54) used open-ended questions, fixed alternative, and scale responses. Using the same survey before and after the unit provided information on any
possible changes in the student’s perspectives of their community. Other forms of observational data that was collected include: student narratives in the form of a group sculpture proposal with sketches of the proposed sculpture, written process and final critiques and an individual written reflection paper at the end of the unit. Visual ethnography that the groups conducted on local businesses and the finished sculptures were also utilized for data.

The data was collected through a qualitative, classroom-based, case study. Qualitative research collects descriptive data to gain an understanding of an area of interest. This form of research is ideal for a classroom-based study because it relies on observations and developing a trusting relationship with the participants. In a classroom study it is also important to note that the researcher is an active participant as the teacher. Case study research is “an investigation of a phenomenon that occurs within a specific context” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 426). This study focused on one group of student’s perceptions of their community before, during, and after a community-based art education unit. The phenomenon that was monitored during the research was the student’s attitudes and perceptions on their community.

The perspective of the qualitative study was constructivism. The focus of the study was on the student’s perceptions of their community and constructivism is about reporting the perceptions, beliefs, and worldviews of the participants. Constructivism is in two forms; cognitive that occurs individually and social that occurs in a group context (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The students were provided opportunities to individually and socially construct meanings about their community during the unit through the individual and group activities. Using a constructionist learning theory states that “ideas are constructed from experience to have a personal meaning for the student” and it is important for teachers, acting as facilitators, to communicate “concepts so that students can connect to them” (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 241).
Data Collection

The data for the study was collected during the daily sculpture class at Collinsville High School. Each class lasts fifty-five minutes and eighteen class periods will be analyzed for data. The students were aware that research was being conducted because of the use of the video camera, but they were unaware of the research question.

Before the unit began the students anonymously took surveys about Collinsville. The survey consisted of nine questions (see Appendix A-1 p.54). The first four questions were based on a scale rating with one being low and five being high. One question is a fixed alternative and four were open-ended. The students anonymously retook the survey again after the unit was finished. The questions asked the students about their knowledge about the local community, perceptions of the community and community involvement. The last question was an open invitation for the student to add any additional comments.

The unit, Fostering awareness of local community through art, consisted of four lessons. Lesson one and two each took one class, lesson three consumed fifteen classes and lesson four was one class on the final day of the unit. The practical goals of the unit were to have students learn about their community, empower the students to voice their concerns about local issues, and promote involvement in the community through the creation of public art.

The first lesson, Community: Familiar and Strange had the student’s start to analyze what they knew and want to know about their communities by making k-w-l charts in groups. Then a master chart was created from the group charts. This was used to inform students about Collinsville and see what interested them. In the process the students realized how much that they do not know about their community and were motivated to know more. The students also
began to see how important it is for artists to interact with their local environments. Villeneuve and Sheppard (2009) stated that “students realize that artists do not operate in a vacuum; rather, they are part of a social world in which art objects are created” (p. 6). The last section of the lesson involved a discussion and exemplars of traditional, modern and postmodern public art.

During the lesson the class discussions was videotaped. This provided the researcher an opportunity to revisit the discussion to categorize the perceptions of the students. Another piece of information that was collected is the group k-w-l charts (see Appendix A-2 p.55) and the class master chart. Villeneuve and Sheppard (2009) also used a k-w-l chart at the beginning of their community-based art education unit to assess the student’s base knowledge and perceptions. Field notes at the end of the lesson provided additional information and reflections from the researcher.

The second lesson, *Community: Issues and Awareness* had the students participate in a think-pair-share activity. First the students individually created a list of issues they believe existed in their community. Then they met in their groups to discuss their lists. Last the students discussed their ideas with the class and created a master list of issues. This activity provided the students an opportunity to voice concerns that they have about the community. Discussing their concerns validated their opinions and opened up lines of communication during the unit. The discussion transitioned into a discussion of social commentary artists.

Discussions during this lesson were also videotaped. The class created master list and field notes provided additional data and reflection. Krensky (2001) used field notes in her eight month case study of a community-based collaboration project between a local organization and
the local middle school. Field notes are essential for the researcher to capture descriptive narrative and visual data (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009).

The third lesson, Community: Main Street vs. Superstores began with a scholarly article about the Main Street vs. Superstore issue that the groups read and discussed as a class. Students created a sculpture proposal for the theme Main Street vs. Superstore after conducting their own research and visual ethnography. After their proposal was accepted they created a group sculpture that will be displayed in the Main Street area of the community. The group sculpture had to be at least eighteen inches tall, freestanding, viewed in the round, display good craftsmanship and construction, and based on the theme of Main Street vs. Superstores. Every member of the group was expected to contribute to the development and creation of the sculpture.

Community-based art education can “take the form of public art that addresses community development, education, intergenerational communications, the environment, politics, conflict resolution or other issues pertinent to the community” (Villeneuve & Sheppard, 2009, p. 7). Adolescent students are transitioning into adulthood, so they need to be aware of issues that exist in their community. Providing opportunities for the students to learn about their community will promote their participation in the community as they grown older.

The visual ethnography from the student research was copied for data. The visual ethnography consisted of the students conducting research at local businesses to gain a better understanding of the location and people associated with the business. The students could write memos, take pictures and/or draw images. Powell (2010) and Marche (1998) both advocated the usefulness of student ethnography during community units. The written group sculpture
proposals also served as data because the students discussed the concept of their sculpture in regards to the theme. Field notes were again taken during the lesson to note the student’s attitudes about the assignment as well as any comments about the community. Towards the middle of this lesson the groups were interviewed. The videotaped interviews used structured questions about their perceptions on the project and community. A written process critique was also conducted towards the middle of the lesson. This provided the groups an opportunity to give constructive criticism to other groups and suggestions that the groups could use to finish their sculptures. The written process critique was collected for data.

The last lesson, Community: Reflection and Change focused on the students need to take the time to reflect upon their experience in writing. For students to be able to construct meaning “substantial individual thought needs to be acquired in content or subject areas for students to actually understand the material instead of just being able to recite” (Powell & Kalina, 2009, 242). Providing the experiences during the first three lessons and concluding with reflection and a group critique of the sculptures allowed the students to create an understanding about their community though cognitive and social construction. During the lesson the groups filled in the L section from the k-w-l charts that they started during the first lesson. Then the students wrote reflection statements about their experiences during the unit. Last, the groups presented their sculptures and discussed the sculptures with the class using a written critique form.

During the final lesson the finished k-w-l charts, critique forms and the individual personal reflection papers provided insight to what the students learned and their perceptions of the unit. The reflection papers provided a personal narrative from each student and respondent validation to the researcher’s observations. The finished sculptures also provided data because
the student’s perceptions and attitudes about the theme will be evident in the finished product and accompanying discussion.

The researcher used individual and social constructivism as a guiding principle during the unit. This method focused on the students having experiences that utilize social interaction and personal critical thinking, so that they can construct meaning (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The teacher functioned as a facilitator and guided the learning. The amount of cooperative learning was higher in this unit then it has been in previous units for this subject. The students were also allowed more freedom in their choice of subject and materials for this unit. The formal assessment of the artwork was similar to previous projects and was based on a numeric rubric with specific criteria. Informal assessments occurred during the class discussions and individually during the project.

**Table 3.1 Data Collection Techniques**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Data</th>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Pre and Post Unit survey taken anonymously by the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Videotaped structured group interviews during lesson three.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotapes</td>
<td>Videotapes of class discussions during lessons one and two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>Daily written observations and reflections by the researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifacts</td>
<td>Student documents that were created during the unit. Artifacts will include the k-w-l charts,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
student conducted visual ethnography, class created lists, group sculpture proposals, critique forms and personal reflection statements.

Artwork

Finished group sculpture.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected it was reread and viewed to write field notes. From the memos the data was categorized using open coding. This means that the categories are determined after the data has been read (Maxwell, 2013). Since the researcher did not have predetermined themes that the student responses would fall into, the most appropriate procedure was to determine the categories after the data analysis began.

The data was collected before, during, and at the end of the unit. Each time frame provided a separate body of data that was compared with the other time frames for contiguity-based relations to determine the influence of the community-based art education unit on the student’s perceptions of their community. Contiguity-based relations “involves juxtaposition in time and space, the influence of one thing on another” and “identification involves seeing actual connections between things, rather than similarities and differences” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 106). This was critical to understand the effect the community-based art education unit had on the students at different times during the study.

The researcher also used analytic induction by comparing student attitudes and involvement during the research project with a previous group assignment on community. During the study the researcher also compared and contrasted previous knowledge of the
behaviors, quality of work, and attitudes of the class. Field notes focused on engagement, the artwork gauged the quality of the work, the interviews, surveys and videotapes provided data about the student’s perspectives and attitudes towards community. Lastly, the various artifacts encompassed the student’s perspectives, engagement, understanding and attitude.

The data collection was successfully coded into themes and compared by time frames during the study. The pre and post surveys bookended the study and provided data on the starting and ending points of the research. The data that was collected during the study provided an understanding of the evolution of the study and the experiences of the students through the process.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of the research study was to determine the effect that a community-based art education unit has on the students’ perceptions of the community. The research question asked; will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the students’ research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community. The study focused on the students’ perceptions and knowledge about the local community before, during, and after the unit. Seventeen students in the sculpture class at Collinsville High School participated in the study. The class is open to all grade levels, so freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors are all together. For the unit the students worked in six groups. Five of the groups had three students and one group only had two students. The study was conducted during eighteen, fifty-five minute class periods. The data was gathered by using surveys, interviews, class discussions, written reflections, and field notes. The results of the research study are discussed in the chapter.

Significance of the Study

The research solidly showed that students’ perceptions of the local community became slightly more positive after participating in a community-based art education unit. The evidence was triangulated between the pre and post-survey results, the group interviews, field notes, and the student’s reflection statements. A discrepancy exists between the student’s comments during the group interview and the post-survey results and the reflection statements. During the interviews the students did not believe that their perceptions had changed, but in the post survey and reflection papers, changes were noted. The change in the students’ perception of the community stemmed from the acquisition of knowledge during the unit. The students showed an
increase in knowledge and understanding of the local community by completing research and actively participating in class discussions. The increase in understanding was evident from the students’ survey results, reflection papers, class discussions, and k-w-l charts.

Community-based art education has been associated with an increase in community pride. Often community-based art education units work directly with community organizations. This has resulted in a great deal of success in changing students’ attitudes about their community. Working collaboratively with a community organization requires a great deal of effort from the teacher and a community organization. At a secondary education level it is very difficult to do during the school day. Therefore the research study used a community-based art education unit without working collaboratively with a community organization. The results of the study still showed a positive correlation between community-based art education and students’ perceptions of their community.

The study coincided with other claims of community-based art education such as communication, skill development, collaboration, and empowerment (Ulbricht, 2005). The students had an increase of knowledge about their local community and issues and it empowered students to voice their concerns. This was noted by the survey results and the class discussions. The students worked successfully together on the group projects and learned new skills by designing their own sculptures. The teacher acted as a mentor and the groups did much of the problem-solving and troubleshooting in their sculpture construction. The constructivist teaching style was consistent with other community-based art education units; it provided the students an opportunity to create their own understanding (Powell & Kalina, 2009). The phenomenon that has been witnessed by other art educators using community-based art education in their classroom was also observed by the researcher.
The findings are useful because they show that community-based art education has a positive impact on the students’ perceptions of their community. The change was not dramatic, but it is a start. If additional community-based art education units focused on different aspects of the local community over a period of time, a more significant change could be evident. This could result in an increase in community pride and civic responsibility.

**Bias and Validity**

The researcher believed that the study would create a positive change in the students’ perception of the community based on the literature. To keep the study as objective as possible the data was collected through various methods and reanalyzed to void subjectivity. The researcher’s enthusiasm for the unit may have caused some reactivity at the beginning of the research. The reactivity was lessened during the third lesson that took fifteen class periods, because the teaching shifted into a constructivist style. This style allowed the researcher to participate in the classroom as a mentor or coach to the groups. This allowed student groups to formulate their own ideas for the content and execution of the sculpture and to do much of their own problem solving.

The data was triangulated to reduce researcher bias and confirm validity. The surveys, group interviews, class discussions, and written reflections served as evidence in the shift of the students’ perceptions and their acquisition of knowledge during the process. The class discussions and group interviewers were videotaped to allow the researcher to reanalyze the encounters. All of the student written documentations in the unit were collected and photocopied to allow the researcher access to restudy the data. As a result the researcher believes that the findings accurately express the results of the research study.
Analysis of the Data

Pre-Unit Data Analysis

Prior to the beginning of the unit the students were given a survey about Collinsville to complete (Appendix A-1 p.54). The survey consisted of scale response questions, open response questions, and a fixed response question. The students completed the surveys anonymously and the survey results were analyzed. The scaled responses were ranked to determine the number of response for each option and the open responses were categorized into themes. The same survey was used after the unit to determine growth in the areas of student knowledge about the community, students’ perceptions of the community, and community involvement.

Lesson One Data Analysis

At the beginning of the first lesson, which lasted one class period, the students were anonymously placed in six groups. The groups began the unit by working on k-w-l charts (Appendix A-2 p.55). During the first lesson the groups filled out the k (know) and the w (want to know) on their charts. Then the groups discussed their ideas while the researcher made a class master chart of the k-w-l chart suggestions from the students. The k-w-l charts were collected at the end of the lesson, so that they could be completed during the final lesson. The know column provided information to the researcher about the preliminary knowledge of the students. The want to know column gave the researcher information about the interests and questions that the students had about the community. The class discussion was videotaped and later reanalyzed to evaluate the student’s attitudes about the community. Positive and negative comments about the community and the student’s involvement in the lesson were recorded in field notes.
Lesson Two Data Analysis

The second lesson took one class period and started by addressing the questions that were brought up in lesson one. Then the students participated in a think-pair-share activity about local issues. The students individually generated a list of issues that they believe are present in the community, and then the students shared their ideas with their group members. From the group list, a class master list of the community issues was created. Each idea that was added to the list was discussed. The master list of issues was recorded to keep the data and again the class discussion was videotaped to reevaluate student involvement and triangulate the data. The issues addressed by the students were categorized into environmental, beautification, economic, and social concerns. The predominate concern for the students was about the community creating awareness about local events, promoting local businesses, advocating the arts, and developing green spaces to create a sense of pride in the community and improve the economy through tourism. The lists provided information about the student’s perceptions and their prior knowledge about local community issues. The discussion engaged the entire class and made them excited about their role of creating a piece of art that would be displayed in the community library.

Lesson Three Data Analysis

Main Street vs. Superstore Article.

The third lesson lasted fifteen class periods and the students completed a series of tasks. This lesson began with an introduction to the topic that the students would focus on for their sculptures. The topic, Main Street vs. Superstores, was introduced by having the students read a scholarly article about the topic. Each group was assigned a part of the article to read. After they read their section they verbally discussed it with the class. This was an effective way for the
students to get all of the information and teach each other. The discussion was videotaped to provide data about the students’ understanding of the topic. After the article was discussed the groups decided what two stores in the community they would compare for their sculptures. They had to pick a small local business and compare it to a major chain business that is located in the community.

**Visual Ethnography.**

The students conducted visual ethnography on their stores over a weekend. Students were provided a list of guiding questions (Appendix A-3 p.56) that they attempted to answer when they explored their locations. The questions could be answered in written form, in sketches, or in photographs. All of the groups conducted visual ethnography on one of their locations and half of the groups went to both of their locations. The experience and research that the students conducted provided them with ideas about their concepts for their sculptures.

![Image 4.1: Example of Student Visual Ethnography](image)
Sculpture Proposals.

The groups used the starting point of the visual ethnography and continued doing research in the computer lab to create their sculpture proposals. The sculpture proposal was a real-world application for the students. The students had to discuss their concept, decide on their sculpture materials and stay within a $50 budget, state the skills that they would need to learn and difficulties that they may encounter, determine a general size of the finished piece within the established guidelines, and create a sketch of the proposed sculpture. Then each group typed a proposal and had it submitted and approved before they could begin construction. The proposal provided data about the students’ understanding of the topic and encouraged the groups to solve problem together. The proposals were copied, so that the researcher could revaluate their understanding.

Sculpture Construction.

The construction phase of the lesson was exciting for the students; after all of the planning the students were ready to get working. The researcher worked one-on-one with the groups as a mentor. After the first few days the groups became more self-sufficient and were able to do more of their own problem solving. Collaboration was evident during this phase. Groups divided the tasks that they wanted to complete and only two students had to be reminded by the researcher to participate more in their group’s project. The groups helped other groups and they asked each other for advice and suggestions. Successes and failures were felt by the entire class. An example of this phenomenon occurred when one of groups made a mold of their hands and were able to pull a beautiful cast. The other groups were in awe of the piece. Two days later the piece became off-balanced and crashed to the floor. The casted hand and the sculpted hand were both seriously damaged. Their peers were devastated for the group. Luckily the sculpture
was salvageable and the group reconstructed the piece. The reconstructed sculpture is shown in image 4.2 and image 4.3. A written process critique allowed the groups to continue their collaboration and provide feedback and suggestions to each other. Field notes were written daily after the class to document the student’s progress, engagement, and major events in the class.

**Image 4.2: Finished Hand Sculpture**  
**Image 4.3: Hand Detail**

**Group Interviews.**

During the construction phase the researcher conducted videotaped group interviews. The structured interviews consisted of nine questions (Appendix A-4 p.56). Sixteen of the seventeen students in the study participated in the interviews, one student was absent. The questions asked about the student’s opinions on the theme, working in groups, displaying their work publically in the community, their perception of Collinsville, if they had learned anything new, and provided the students an opportunity to add additional comments. While reevaluating the videotape the researcher documented the answers to the questions and charted the responses into categories that the students liked, disliked, were neutral, or made no comment. Several of the students had a positive and negative comment about their thoughts about working in groups, so the data shows
three additional responses (Appendix B-2 p.63). Specific comments that the students stated were also documented when the video was reanalyzed (Appendix B-2 p.63).

**Lesson Four Data Analysis**

The final lesson consisted of one class period. During this lesson the students completed the I column in their k-w-l charts that they started at the beginning of the unit. Every group was able to list ideas that they learned during the unit. Some groups answered the questions from the want to know column of the chart, but most groups wrote about the importance of local business in the community and the impact of superstores. During this lesson the students also completed written group critiques that were discussed verbally in the class. This again provided a way for the students to express their ideas and accomplishments with each other.

The last task was for the students to write a reflection statement (Appendix A-5 p.57) about the project and their perceptions. Time constraints forced the task to become homework, so only ten of the seventeen students completed the reflection statement. Five of the students noted changes in their perceptions and five did not. Each statement was reread and sorted into students that changed their perceptions and students that did not. Important statements from the reflections were noted for each student.

**Post-Unit Data Analysis**

After the unit was over, the students were given the same survey that they had taken before the unit started. The results of the survey were categorized the same way as the pre-unit survey and compared. The analysis showed an increase in student knowledge about the local history, heritage and culture, and local issues. The students were able to provide more suggestions about improving Collinsville and were better aware of local issues. The student’s
perceptions also become more positive. The complete survey results are located in appendix B-1 p.60.

After the unit the researcher also graded the sculptures using a numerical rubric on the criteria of designing based on the theme, balance, construction and height requirements, craftsmanship, visual interest in the round, and complexity. Three of the groups received an A with a 90% or better and three of the groups received a B with an 80% -89%. The grades were consistent with the student’s other grades in the class. Images of the finished sculptures are located in Appendix B-3 p.64.

Results

The results for the research are broken into two sections. The significant findings will discuss the results that are directly related to the research questions. The two topics that were significant to the research questions were the student’s acquisition of knowledge about the community and the student’s perceptions of the community. The secondary findings relate to the researcher’s goals. Student collaboration, empowerment to voice concerns about local issues, and the student’s participation in community organizations are all addressed in the secondary findings.

Significant Findings

Over eighteen class periods data was collected to answer the research question: Will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the students’ research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community? To accurately answer the question the researcher analyzed the data to determine the knowledge and awareness that the students gained about their community during the unit and the result of the knowledge upon the students’ perception towards their community.
Community Knowledge and Awareness

The community-based art education unit entitled, *Fostering awareness of local community through art*, (Appendix A-6 p.58) did increase the students’ knowledge about their community and awareness of local issues. The acquisition of knowledge and awareness was determined by comparing the students’ base knowledge at the beginning of the unit to their thoughts at the end of the unit. The activities that were executed during the unit were presented in a constructivist style and served as building blocks for the students to create meaning.

Survey Results.

To judge the students’ base knowledge I used an anonymous pre-unit survey. The survey asked the students to rate their knowledge about Collinsville’s history, culture and heritage, and knowledge about local issues. The five point scale was developed that one was low and five was high. After the unit was complete the students anonymously took the survey again. The results showed that the students felt like they were more knowledge about all three areas, but some students still did not feel like they were very knowledgeable and very few students rated the categories with the top rating of five. The first chart shows the pre-unit survey results and the second chart is the findings from the post-survey.
Table 4.1: Pre-unit survey results

Table 4.2: Post-unit survey results
K-W-L Charts and Group Interviews.

In the first lesson the students, while in groups, filled in the k (know) and the w (want to know) on the k-w-l charts. Information that the student’s knew included basic information about local landmarks, events, businesses, history, and economy. The students wanted to know more about the origins of the community, population and size, economic diversity, businesses, the art scene, local organizations, leisure activities and local issues like the road construction delays. The suggestions from this lesson became the introduction into the second lesson and developed into a lesson about local issues.

During the unit the students read and discussed an article about the topic for the sculpture, Main Street vs. Superstores and conducted research on local businesses. From these activities ten students reported during their group interview that they learned new information about Collinsville, three did not believe that they learned anything new and three students did not comment. Students commented that they learned about the horseradish production of the region, information about the local landmarks, historical information on the community and about new stores that existed in the community. The learning was also evident in the last lesson when the students filled in the l (learn) column of their k-w-l charts. Since the unit was focused on local businesses many of the comments related to the need and appreciation for small businesses. Other comments related to questions that the students had wanted to know about such as the population and the art scene.

Student Perceptions about the Local Community

The main purpose of the study was to analyze the student’s perceptions of their community. To do this I used a pre and post-unit survey, group interviews, and written reflection
statements from the students. The results from the pre-unit to the post-unit survey showed that the community-based art education unit shifted the students’ perceptions about the community in a positive manner. The shift was not dramatic, but it was evident.

**Survey Results.**

One question in the survey asked the students to rate their perception of Collinsville. The ranking stated that one was that they disliked the community, two was considered that they slightly disliked the community, three was neutral, four was that they slightly liked the community and five was that they liked the community. Most of the students showed a shift from slightly disliking the community to being neutral or slightly liking the community. Only one student disliked the community after the unit.

![Chart showing pre-unit and post-unit responses]

**Table 4.3:** Student perspective of the Community

**Discussions.**

During the first lesson the researcher asked the class why they think individuals do not take an interest in the community. Several of the students made comments that support ideas
from research in this field. Bob made a statement that he moves every few years, so he found that it was useless to take an interest in the community. Gradle (2007) noted that same idea, “the lack of a sense of place, of belonging or attachment, is often a serious by-product of transitional migration, of increased economic and social mobility” (p. 392). In regards to the question Ariel, commented that the community members don’t know enough to appreciate the town and Anastasia added to the comment saying that it is under appreciated because it is familiar. To challenge the students to reassess their local community, the groups were asked to conduct visual ethnographical research on two businesses. Over a weekend the group members needed to go to the two stores that they were focusing on for their sculpture and write notes, draw sketches, or take pictures. Every group conducted research, three groups went to both stores and the other three groups only went to one store. Powell (2010) suggested the use of visual ethnography to strengthen “the relationships among self, community, and the natural or built environment” (p. 44).

**Group Interviews.**

During the middle of the unit the researcher conducted videotaped group interviews. Several questions in the interview were about the students’ perception of Collinsville. Three students made positive comments, three students made negative comments and nine comments were considered neutral. Neutral comments included responses such as, it is okay, ordinary, and fine. When asked if the students felt that their perception changed every student answered that they felt that it did not. The researcher felt that the responses were influenced by the presence of the other group members. In most cases one group member would quickly that they perceived no change and the others would agree. George stated that nothing could change his perception and Pete said that it did not change his perception, but now he thinks about the area more. This is
inconsistent with the survey results at the end of the unit. The time between the interview and the post-unit survey was five days. During that time the students finished their sculptures, completed the k-w-l charts, wrote reflection statements and participated in critiques. Either the shift if the students’ perceptions were very slight or their perceptions shifted during the last week of the unit.

**Reflection Statements.**

The task that could have caused the shift in perspective was the reflection statement. The project was assigned over a weekend to complete, unfortunately only ten of the seventeen students completed the assignment. The assignment asked the students to reflect on the project, discussions, and article. Five of the students indicated a positive change in their attitude towards the community and five stated that they had no change. The students that indicated a positive change stated it was a result of the project, and the class discussions. Indy stated that the unit “brought me closer to my community, making me consider things I most likely never had before.” Pete said that “Going home, thinking about this project, I go into thought and look out the window and I take a closer look at my community.” George wrote that no matter how much the researcher would do it would not change his perception and Ayanna said that “she was not from Collinsville, so she did not care about it”.

**Significant Findings Conclusion**

In conclusion, the group interview and the post-survey results do not match, but the changes in the students’ perceptions could have occurred during the final week when they were given a chance to reevaluate their ideas. The interviews were also conducted in groups, so the students may have answered similarly because of group solidarity or pressure. The researcher
believes that the knowledge and experiences that the students gained during the community-based art education unit did slightly change many of the students’ perceptions to be more positive towards the community. The shift was slight and more incorporation of community-based art education units or a direct experience with the community such as a large public mural or sculpture would be needed to create a more dramatic shift in the students’ attitudes.

**Secondary Findings**

Secondary goals for the research were to provide the students an opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns, promote collaboration, and evaluate civic involvement. During the unit students had many opportunities to discuss the community and local issues. The students also worked in groups during the unit in a constructivist manner to create understanding. Lastly, the students listed civic organizations that they were involved in.

**Empowerment to Voice Concern**

It is important to provide the students an opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas. During the unit the students took advantage of the discussions to voice their ideas. When the researcher asked the students how to make the community more appealing, great ideas were generated. The students discussed the need for better community promotion and advertising to inform the local citizens of events and resources. Drawing more business back to the Main Street area to keep crime down and designing more events and festivals to have people go back to the historic districts were also suggested. A large portion of the discussion centered on a local landmark that is not promoted or presented very well. The students decided that the area around the landmark should be turned into a green space and they even wanted to write the mayor and send designs.
When the class discussed issues the students focused on community beautification, public art and teenage issues such as pregnancy, drinking and drug use. During all of the discussions the students were actively engaged by listening, making eye contact and adding ideas. The impact of the discussions was evident in the results of the pre-unit and post-unit surveys. When the students listed ideas about issues that existed in Collinsville and ideas to improve Collinsville, the post-unit surveys had more ideas and suggestions than the pre-unit surveys.

Collaboration

During the unit the students worked in small groups of two or three students. This method was chosen because of the difficulty of the assignment and the freedom that the students could have in their choice of materials. Since many of the groups decided to work with new sculpting materials for the project, the group provided a support system to troubleshoot problems. Powell and Kalina (2009) stated that “Students have a lot to offer one another. When students master completion of projects or activities in a group, the internalization of knowledge occurs for each individual at a different rate according to their own experience” (p. 244). When the students were asked if they liked working in groups during the interviews, eleven stated that they liked it, seven disliked it and one was neutral. Several of the students noted that they both liked and disliked it for different reasons. Reasons that students liked the groups included that they could work faster, more elaborately and larger, they also had people to help them and others to bounce ideas off of. Reasons against the group work included that they prefer to work alone, the members had different ideas for the sculpture and it is slower. During the production phase of the unit almost all of the students were actively working each day. Only two students needed to be prompted to help their groups more.
Community Involvement

The pre-unit and post-unit survey asked the students if they were involved in any community organizations. Only two students were involved before and after the unit in a community organization. Even though one of the discussions talked about local community service activities and organizations none of the students joined any. The reasons that the students stated that they were not involved in community organizations were often that they did not have time, none of the organizations seemed interesting to them and that they did not want to join anything. The lack of change in the student’s attitude towards community involvement could result from the focus of the unit not being on that aspect and that the unit did not have any direct community involvement with any organizations. The research was also only conducted over a three and a half week time frame, so it did not give the students much time to join any organizations.

Secondary Findings Conclusion

The community-based art education unit did empower students to voice their ideas and concerns about the community. The students were excited and actively engaged during discussions. The engagement in the discussions led to excitement in the collaborative learning groups during the unit. The students worked daily on their sculptures and were excited about sharing their ideas with each other. In general, the groups worked harmoniously together and were proud of their completed sculptures. Unfortunately the excitement about the projects and discussions in the classroom did not encourage students to join any local organizations.
Conclusion

In conclusion, the research question; will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the students’ research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community, was answered. Community-based art education does have a positive effect on student perceptions of their community. This was accomplished by the students learning about the community and finding a way to make their voice heard through the creation of a sculpture and class discussions. The students were excited and motivated during the study. They collaborated and created their own understanding with the constructivist teaching style that was utilized. Data was collected before, during and after the unit to understand and evaluate how the students created meaning about the local community and the effect that the additional knowledge had on their perceptions.

The study enabled the research to see the positive effects of studying the local community in an art classroom. The study will result in more community-based art education classes being developed for the other art studio classes at the high school. The rationale for adding additional community-based art education units it that it will encourage more students to explore their local communities and students that are in multiple classes during their high school experience will have the opportunity to learn about their community from different perspectives. The optimal result would be an even more positive perception of the local community and an increase in community pride and responsibility. Chapter five will continue to discuss the impact of the study, the choices that were made, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Using community-based art education in the classroom was a new experience that provided the students an opportunity to investigate their community and make a statement through their finished sculptures. The researcher also gained a valuable experience with community-based art education and constructivist methodology. This chapter will discuss the impact that the research study has made on the researcher’s teaching, why the unit focused on the social issue of Main Street vs. Superstores and recommendations for future study.

Discussion

Personal Impact of the Study

The study has impacted the researcher’s teaching methodology and the incorporation of community-based art education into the classroom. Using a constructivist style that utilized the teacher as a mentor or coach, allowed the students more freedom to solve their own problems and create their own meaning. Having more choices of materials and subjects that the students were able to work with and less specific procedures for the project, produced a greater variety of solutions to the visual problem. The first several class periods were demanding on the researcher because each group needed different supplies and advice about their projects. Once the groups were comfortable with their supplies the researcher did not have to provide as much guidance. It was exciting for both the researcher and the students because of the sense of discovery that occurred when the students worked out issues and developed new skills with the materials. The classroom began to feel more like a college art studio class instead of a high school classroom.

This was the first time that community-based art education has been incorporated into the researcher’s classroom. The results from the study showed positive changes in the student’s
perceptions of their community, increased collaboration between students, opportunities for students to voice concerns, and an increase in the student’s knowledge about local community issues. Ulbricht (2005) suggested that using community-based art education would “enhance skill development, collaboration, communication, and empowerment” (p. 11). Since the results of the study were positive, the researcher plans to incorporate community-based art education units into the drawing and painting classes. The repeated opportunities for the students to learn about their community should create a larger positive impact on the student’s attitudes about the local community.

Returning to the research question, will learning about a local social issue and creating artwork based on the research influence the students in my sculpture class to change their perceptions on their community, the findings from the study showed that the student’s perceptions of the community were more positive after the unit. This was consistent with the researcher’s prior thoughts. The acquisition of knowledge about the community contributed to the student’s shift in attitude. During the unit the students learned about the local history, local issues, and local businesses. Having the students reevaluate their community turned something familiar, their community, into something new. Therefore the students gained awareness. Indy, a student, wrote in his reflection paper that, “The theme brought you closer to your community; making you consider things you most likely never had before.”

Additional goals for the unit were to provide an opportunity for the students to voice their concerns about local issues and promote involvement in the community by creating public art. The students were given the chance to discuss local issues in the second and third lessons. The class discussions were actively participated in by a majority of the students. Many of the students that often stayed quiet spoke up with their opinions and ideas. This was especially true for
Ayanna, who was a quiet student that usually did not participate in class discussions, but actively participated in all of the class discussions during this unit and became the leader in her group. Upon meeting her mother during parent teacher conferences Ayanna and she both expressed excitement over the sculpture and the mother was incredibly proud of her daughter for developing her leadership abilities. During the class discussions the students were eager to share their ideas and even proposed sending letters to the mayor about local projects that could improve the community.

One area of the research that was not effective was encouraging students to become more active in their communities by joining organizations or volunteering. I believe that the students were not motivated to join local organizations because the unit did not work directly with the community. The students conducted their own research and created art for a location instead of creating art with a community group for a particular cause. Russell (2004) calls postmodern public art that works with the community a “collaborate-and-create orientation” that utilizes dialogue between the artists and the community members to create an artwork that is a combination of both group’s vision (p. 23). Having more direct contact with the community would probably have encouraged the students to take more of an interest in local community organizations. This raised the question, would the student’s perception of their community been more positive if the students had an opportunity to work directly with members of the community in a group art project? Krensky (2001), Lawton (2010), and Stephens (2006) all found positive correlations with student’s experiences when they worked with community groups on art projects.
Impact on Practice

Community-based art education was the central theory used for the unit. This was chosen because the content of the unit needed to focus on the history, culture and issues of the local community. The theme Main Street vs. Superstores was chosen for several reasons. One reason was that the content would be familiar for the students. The content was familiar because the students have experience with the businesses and the businesses provided locations that the students could go to conduct visual ethnological research. Another reason was that the finished sculptures were going to be displayed in the public library on Main Street, so the content was relevant to the location. The last reason was that the researcher did not want to pick a controversial issue as a theme. The researcher wanted the students to focus on positive aspects of the community and explore the possibilities of local businesses instead of focusing on a negative problem.

The teaching methodology that was used was constructivism because community-based art education relies on collaboration and collaboration is important in social constructivism. Social constructivism “is based on the social interactions a student in the classroom along with a personal critical thinking process” (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 243). The unit was designed around the students developing understanding through class discussions and working cooperatively in groups on the artwork. Community-based art education also encourages the teacher to act as a mentor instead of continuously leading, so constructivism was the best choice to accomplish that goal. This provided the students a chance to lead and develop their own understanding of the content.
Recommendations

Implications for Further Research

If the researcher were to replicate the study, several changes would be made. One change would be to schedule a field trip to the Main Street area, the historical museum, and several superstores. That way all of students could experience the locations together. Having a field trip would also provide data about the student’s reactions to the locations and give the researcher a chance to ask questions and guide the students in their visual ethnography. Another change would be to conduct the interviews one on one instead of in groups. The students seemed to all answer the questions similarly when they were in groups, so personal interviews would provide the students an opportunity to be completely honest about their thoughts and ideas. The last change would be to have the reflection statement as an in-class project. Time constraints for the research changed it into a homework assignment, so not all of the students completed it. The reflection statements that were submitted provided participant validation to the field notes and were crucial to the final analysis of the results.

One major question that could be addressed is, if students have more opportunities to study their local community through several art units, will their perceptions continue to become more positive? The researcher believes that it would and plans to incorporate community-based art education units into other art studio classes. Therefore, students that take several studio classes could have multiple opportunities to study about different aspects of the community. Another question that surfaced was; would a larger community service art project that worked with a community organization encourage the students to become more actively involved in the community? Possibly creating a piece of public art, such as a mural, green space, or permanent
sculpture, with members of the community could motivate students to take an active role in their community. This is another aspect that the researcher would like to study. Large scale projects could become an interdisciplinary project that incorporated English classes, business classes, and the area vocational center. Krensky (2001) documented a middle school that was able to work collaboratively to design and create a space entitled Peace Park that united a community. This format could be adapted to other large scale projects.

Other teachers could utilize several different components of the research in their classroom. Finding an issue that is pertinent to the community and the students is a great place to being developing a community-based art education unit. An issue that the students have some familiarity with, but could be studied in more depth is key. The final sculptures from the research study were displayed in the community library. Having a public art display away from the school motivated the students to work diligently in class and was exciting for the students. Using constructivism instead of a traditional teacher-centered style provided the students more freedom in their choices and required higher level thinking skills. The constructivist style also shifted the dynamic of the classroom into a journey of exploration for the groups. The researcher recommends that if the teacher wants to know the effect of community-based art education on the students to use some type of survey or student written statements before and after the unit. The study showed a positive effect on student’s perceptions about the local community and the reason for that change was that students learned about their community and were able to discuss their ideas.
Conclusion to the Research

Advice to the Field of Art Education

Using community-based art education in the classroom has been a wondrous journey for the students and the researcher. Learning about a local issue provided the students an opportunity to look upon their community with new eyes. This fresh look at the community coupled with ways that the students can participate in the local community may provide the needed motivation for students to become actively involved in their communities again. During this hectic age where everyone wants to be anonymous and stand on the sidelines in their community, community-based art education may be a way to get the students to reinvest in their community. Students become participants in their community instead of passive observers.

Advice to Art Teachers

Community-based art education is worth trying out in your own classroom. Every community has a story to tell, history to share, or an issue to face. From small rural communities to urban centers, community-based art education has been an effective way to reacquaint students with their environments. Community-based art education can focus on traditional skills, community issues, community service, community history or culture. Decide what will benefit your students and community, and then plan a unit that unifies your intentions and implement it. Inspiration for your students may be just outside the classroom window, you just have to open the window and let it in.
References


APPENDIX A

Document 1: Pre and Post Unit Survey

**Collinsville Survey**

One the following scales- 1 is low and 5 is high.

1. Rank how much you know about Collinsville’s history.

   1  2  3  4  5

2. Rank how much you know about the culture and heritage of Collinsville.

   1  2  3  4  5

3. How much do you know about local issues?

   1  2  3  4  5

4. Rank your perception of Collinsville (1-dislike, 3-neutral, 5-like)

   1  2  3  4  5

5. Do you belong to any community organizations? Yes or NO

   If yes, what are they_____________________________________________________

   If no, why not________________________________________________________

6. What issues do you believe that Collinsville has? _________________________

7. What could be done to improve Collinsville? _____________________________

   ____________________________________________________________________
8. How do you feel as an adolescent growing up in this area? _____________________

9. Feel free to add any other comments________________________________________

**Document 2: K-W-L Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>K</strong></th>
<th><strong>W</strong></th>
<th><strong>L</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you know about Collinsville?</td>
<td>What do you want to know about Collinsville?</td>
<td>What did you learn about Collinsville?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Document 3: Visual Ethnography Guiding Questions

Visual Ethnography

Visual micro-ethnographic research is the description and interpretation of a location and/or issue for a short amount of time. Visual practice of ethnography involves observing a location and creating sketches, taking notes and/or pictures. For this assignment members of your group should conduct visual ethnography on a local superstore and main street business. Pick two businesses that sell similar products (Examples could be pharmacies, grocery stores, florists, restaurants, retail stores).

Try to answer these questions using visual ethnography when you are there…

1. What does it look like? (outside, inside, layout)
2. How does it make you feel? (comfortable, uncomfortable...)
3. How to you move around the space? (do you wonder around or is the movement directed explain)
4. Do you interact with anyone? If so what are they like? (what is their connection to the store)
5. What are the other people like at the location? (friendly, unfriendly…)
6. Does anything stand out that could be used for metaphor, symbolism, irony or humor?

Document 4: Structured Interview Questions

Structured Interview Questions

1. What do you like or dislike about the theme for this project? Why?
2. Do you like or dislike working in a group for this project? Why?
3. What do you think about having your work displayed in the Collinsville library?
4. What is your perception about Collinsville?
5. Is your perception the same or different from when we started the project?
6. If it is different, what changed? Why do you think it changed?

7. Have you learned anything new about Collinsville during this unit?

8. If so, what?

9. Do you have anything else that you want to say about Collinsville, the theme or the project?

Document 5: Reflection Statement Assignment

Reflection Statement

Name__________________________

For this paper I want you to address…

(Intro, 3 body paragraphs and conclusion paragraph)

Intro-The theme, Main Street vs. Superstore, and examine how the project, readings, discussions with your teacher and peers, affected your perspective of Collinsville.

Body-Divide your reflection into sub areas (project, article/readings, group discussions/lectures) and comment upon those areas in more details. Explain if any of the aspects did or didn’t change your perspective on the community.

Conclusion-Finally, give an overall assessment of what you liked about the project and suggestions on how to improve it in the future. So indicate themes, speakers, field trips or any other areas you think would be helpful.
# Boston University Unit Plan (Art Education Department)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Rosemary Dodson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Title:</td>
<td>Fostering awareness of local community through art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals:</td>
<td>Students will…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze and evaluate student and professional works for how aesthetic qualities are used to convey intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning (IL 25.A.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze and evaluate how the choice of media, tools and technologies and processes support and influence the communication of ideas (IL 26.A.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate knowledge and skills that communicate clear and focused ideas based on planning, research and problem solving (IL 26.B.4d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze how the arts are used to inform and persuade through traditional and contemporary art forms (IL 27.A.4b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze how the arts shape and reflect ideas, issues or themes in a particular culture (IL 27.B.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work cooperatively with others to plan, implement, and evaluate a project that addresses an identified need in the broader community (IL 3C.5b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Concepts:</td>
<td>The students will look at a variety of sculptures to analyze their meaning, material choice and execution. The array of artwork should open up the students mind to the various ways they can execute their own group projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will learn how to work together in groups to create a sculpture for public display. The theme for the unit is community issues, specifically looking at the “Main Street” area in the debate over superstores vs main street. Stewart (2011), pointed out that “most communities have a ‘Main Street’, a place around which a town or city evolved and grew. The way a place looks and feels can affect the way we encounter, experience, and understand it. (p. 27).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Lessons:            | **Lesson 1**: Students will create k-w-l charts in groups about Collinsville. Discuss the lists as a class. Bridge into what artists do to raise awareness about local community issues and the role of public art.  
                     | **Lesson 2**: Students will make a list of issues that they perceive in the community. Discuss their perceptions and decide what the biggest issues according to them are. Show and discuss social commentary sculptors.  
                     | **Lesson 3**: Have students in their groups research the issue and |
develop a sculpture proposal. After the proposal is approved they will build the sculptures in groups. 

**Lesson 4:** Students will write a reflection statement about the unit. The students will also participate in a written and verbal critique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources and Materials:</th>
<th>Resources:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Reproductions of artwork by:</td>
<td>- Mark Dion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- George Segal</td>
<td>- Judy Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Red Grooms</td>
<td>- Edward Kienholz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Harry McDaniel</td>
<td>- David Zvanut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Power Point of Images and Questions</td>
<td>- Critique Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Handouts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Large Paper</td>
<td>- Markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Computer/Internet</td>
<td>- Printer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Drawing Materials</td>
<td>- Newsprint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Various Sculpture Materials</td>
<td>- Paints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessments:** The students will have formal assessments based on a rubric for their sculptures, written reflections, written critiques and sculpture proposal. Informal assessments will be the group discussions, process critique and individual troubleshooting.

APPENDIX B

Figure 1: Results from the pre and post unit survey

Collinsville Survey Results

Pre-Unit Survey Results

Questions 1-4 (Scale Questions 1-low, 3-neutral, 5-high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collinsville History</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Heritage of</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collinsville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Local</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collinsville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-dislike to 5-like</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5- Do you belong to any community organizations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not gotten into them</td>
<td>Knights of Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never know where they are</td>
<td>Girl Scouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t know we had any</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know about anything</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t find any that interest me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know any</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work and have a lot going on at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know any organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opportunity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m new</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven’t had a chance to do anything</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t join anything</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Really aren’t any</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 6- What issues do you believe Collinsville has?


Not Sure of the problems-4, No Problems-1

Question 7-what could be done to improve Collinsville?
Clean up trash-5, Develop places for kids to hang out-2, Construction projects-3,
Strengthen community pride-2, Less bars-1, Not sure-3, Nothing-3

Question 8- Feel as an adolescent growing up here?
Positive Responses-6
Negative Responses-4
Neutral-2
Not Sure-5

Question 9-Feel free to add any other comments. (responses)
*I have lived here all of my life (15 years) and I have felt unsafe for the past 3-4 years.
* We need a Popeye’s
* Just moved here
* I moved here in 2007 and still don’t really know much about the town.
* I’ve been living here since I was 11 and coming from St. Louis, Collinsville feels like a safe haven for me.
* Make it better for everybody to live in.
* I live in Caseyville

**Post-Unit Survey Results**

Questions 1-4 (Scale Questions 1-low, 3-neutral, 5-high)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collinsville History</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture &amp; Heritage of Collinsville</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Local Issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of Collinsville 1-dislike to 5-like</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 5- Do you belong to any community organizations?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No 14</th>
<th>Yes 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why not?</td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside person</td>
<td>Knights of Columbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy/No time (3)</td>
<td>Girl Scouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know any (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know of any that would interest me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not done any in the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 6- What issues to you believe Collinsville has?


Uninformed public-3, Teen pregnancy-1, Construction-3, Crime-1, No Art-1, Drinking-1

Not Sure of the problems-1, No Problems-3

Question 7-what could be done to improve Collinsville?

Clean up trash-1, Develop places for kids to hang out-2- Construction projects-1,

Strengthen community pride-3, More activities-3, More information about local events-2, More public art-4, More friendly-1, Provide I-Pads for students-1, Not sure-0 Nothing-0

Question 8- Feel as an adolescent growing up here?

Positive Responses-7

Negative Responses-3

Neutral-5

Not Sure-2

Question 9-Feel free to add any other comments. (responses)

*Coming here is the best thing that has happened to me, education wise. I came from St. Louis.*
Figure 2: Group Interview Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Like or dislike the theme.</th>
<th>Like-8</th>
<th>Dislike-5</th>
<th>Neutral-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Like or dislike working in groups.</td>
<td>Like-11</td>
<td>Dislike-7</td>
<td>Neutral-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Like or dislike having your work displayed in the public library.</td>
<td>Like-16</td>
<td>Dislike-0</td>
<td>Neutral-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Perception of Collinsville</td>
<td>Positive-3</td>
<td>Negative-3</td>
<td>Neutral-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Perception of Collinsville the same or different from the beginning of the unit.</td>
<td>Same-16</td>
<td>Different-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Learn anything new about Collinsville</td>
<td>Something new-10</td>
<td>Nothing new-3</td>
<td>No comment-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions and Specific Comments

1. What do you like or dislike about the theme for this project? Why?
   Positive responses: able to have a say in the issue, creative way to handle the idea, able to say something about and for the community, it hits home, you have to look around and think about it, it is something new to think about, interesting, we learned about Collinsville through the research.
   Negative responses: hard to get the idea across to the viewer, hard topic to relate to, hard to figure out an idea.
   Neutral responses: challenging, and it was hard work.

2. Do you like or dislike working in a group for this project? Why?
   Positive responses: have people to help you, bounce ideas off people, can work longer and more elaborately, get more done.
   Negative responses: you can’t take all of the credit, slower, if something goes wrong it involves another person, can’t do your own ideas, hard to get your point across to the group members, differing views, personal preference to work alone.
   Neutral comments: as long as it gets done, I don’t care either way.

3. What do you think about having our work displayed at the Collinsville Public Library?
   Positive responses: excited, awesome, recognition of our work, the community will see that we care, a new experience, gets our work out there, makes our work seem more official, cool, now others can see that we have talent.

4. What is your perception of Collinsville?
   Positive responses: quaint and quiet, home, friendly people.
Negative responses—boring, nothing for teens to do, nothing really here, judgmental people, the community does not want to hold onto its small town charm.
Neutral responses—small town, ordinary, okay, not sure.
5. Is your perception the same or different from when we started the project?
   All of the students said that their perceptions were the same. Additional comments were that now they think about the area more and that nothing could change my perception.
6. If it is different, what changed? Why do you think it changed?
   This question was not answered since none of the students indicated a change in perception.
7. Have you learned anything new about Collinsville during the unit? Results are above.
8. If so, what?
   Comments included the horseradish production, catsup bottle water tower landmark, the dog park, that the town was previously named Unionville, new stores in the community.
9. Additional comments that students shared when given the option were…
   Let us pick our own theme next time. It was an interesting theme that was something different to think about.

Figure 3: Images of completed group sculptures and concepts based on the group’s sculpture proposal.

Group 1: The main idea of the work is to show how Wal-Mart, Target, and other large stores are overshadowing the mom and pop stores.
Group 2: The sculpture has a man crouching, covering his head and he represents the main street store. Above his products from the superstore are being dumped on top of him.

Group 3: The ballet dancer balances the two stores, weighing out the merchandise, customers and prices.
Group 4: The sculpture shows a person lying over her run-down store that is closed. The person is in despair and the coming soon sign portrays the crushing weight of the superstore that drove her out of business.

Group 5: The sculpture is about the caring of fruit. Superstores use pesticides and have been frozen and the local farmer’s market uses fresh locally grown fruit that is pesticide free.
Group 6: The hands represent different florists. The large hand is the superstore florist that is greedy and the small hands are the local florist shop. The small hands hold the flowers because they care deeply about their products.