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Understanding How the Role of an Artist-Teacher May Impact Student Learning and Teaching Practice

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Boston University
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Nichole Gronvold Roller

CFAAR 890

Boston, University
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Abstract

The definition of an artist-teacher has been an ongoing debate amongst many within the fine arts and art education. The following research is the journey of a newly proclaimed artist-teacher as she finds meaning in her newfound declaration with the dual identities. The action based research documented the happenings and insights of an artist-teacher, along with nineteen high school art students in Central Illinois. The researcher sought to discover whether an artist-teacher may work alongside students in a studio setting, investigating and analyzing both the positive and negative results. The goal of the research was to understand how the role of an artist-teacher may impact student learning and teaching practice. As a result of a triangulation approach to data collection, the researcher uncovered that an artist-teacher working alongside learners in a studio setting promoted a comfortable working environment that increased student interactions and dialogue. Additionally, the importance of an artist-teacher being reflective of practice was revealed as the researcher found such reflections to be a resourceful tool in order to better balance the dual roles that at times may become overwhelming.

Keywords: artist-teacher, artist-teacher philosophy, artist-teacher and student collaboration, defining an artist-teacher, reflective practitioner.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The definition and controversy regarding the term artist-teacher within the context of art education has instigated varying viewpoints regarding the necessity for an additional term in describing for one whom teaches art. Daichendt (2010) investigates the historical development and practice of artist-teachers throughout the ages, from the classical period to contemporary times. Daichendt with consideration and reflections of various descriptions of an artist-teacher throughout history, stakes claim in his own definition asserting that an “artist-teacher, when used properly, is actually a philosophy of teaching. It does not presuppose an artistic lifestyle but uses the individual talents and learned skills or techniques of the artist and circumvents them into the teaching profession” (p. 61).

The journey of developing one’s teaching philosophy may shift and grow with experiences, as Simpson (1998) states that “the more we explore choices for teaching, the more we practice our skills, and the more we know about students, the more it becomes apparent that our philosophy evolves throughout the process of teaching” (p. 6). Feldman (1996) illustrates what an art education philosophy should consist of, affirming that:

First it would be a statement of the basic beliefs of art teachers as they practice their profession. Second, it would offer a critique of the means through which teachers implement those beliefs. Third, it would be a statement of the ideal goals toward which the best efforts of art educators ought to be directed. (p.2)
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The following qualitative research documented the journey of a high school art teacher, recently claimed artist-teacher, at the crossroads of acquiring a new art education philosophy. In response to the artist-teacher’s evolving art education philosophy, the classroom-based study attempted to answer the question of how might the role of an artist-teacher at Tremont High School, in Tremont Illinois, impact student learning and influence teaching practice?

The researcher inquired the processes that might be responsible for nurturing artistic discoveries for artist-teacher and students in a collaborative classroom studio setting. The action, classroom-based study assisted in providing answers and direction for shaping the newfound philosophy the artist-teacher was seeking. The methodology of the research study was a gathering of information from experts in the field of art education, literature reviews focusing on the concept of an artist-teacher, and personal insights from students and artist-teacher. The methods consisted of a collection of data, utilizing a mixed method – triangulation approach. All elements assisted in answering how could one implement a collaborative working environment consisting of both artist-teacher and students in a studio setting, and how might the role of an artist-teacher influence student learning and impact teaching practice (Maxwell, 2012).

Research Goals

In the quest to uncover how to best meet the intellectual and emotional needs for both art students and artist-teacher, the qualitative research approach strove to reveal the benefits and disadvantages of the dual identities of the artist-teacher working alongside students in a studio setting. The research goals in the case study were to improve current teaching practice (McNiff, 2009, p. 88), understand the influence dialogue has on learning for both students and artist-
understanding how the role of an artist-teacher may impact student learning and teaching practice

teacher, in addition to reveal how artistic collaboration affects the classroom environment and art understandings.

research questions

the study sought to find conclusions to the question: must an artist-teacher choose between being an artist or an art teacher, and might it be possible to merge both identities? hall (2010) discloses that embracing the artist-teacher role is not necessarily for all art educators as “…some artist teachers regard making and teaching art feeding off each other as essential and inevitable, even synonymous, others wish to keep some distinction between making and teaching” (p. 107). regardless if an art educator embraces the role as an artist-teacher or not, the research examined whether both identities could be merged if desired by the artist-teacher.

simpson (1998) affirms that “teacher as an artist is an appropriate metaphor. Each time we encounter a new class, we must approach it much the same as we would a blank canvas” (p. 337). in the action research, the artist-teacher supports simpson’s statement that both art making and teaching art is a harmonious creative process. additional sub-questions were formed in order to address the question: might learners and artist-teacher collaborate in art making in a similar studio setting? could a positive relationship between artist-teacher and students result if both parties shared a similar artistic journey? if an artist-teacher approached his or her pedagogy in a creative fashion that mirrors personal art making, might the classroom be as unique and individualized as student learning?

further influences lead to the questions surrounding the research that were structured upon the findings of daichendt (2010) in connection with the practice of the artist-teacher hans hofmann. daichendt discusses hoffman’s ability to “…bring the studio to the classroom…the
discoveries made in the studio were something to be shared” (p. 128). Taking on the role of an artist-teacher may have its disadvantages as it is known of Hoffman’s “frustrations of balancing both teaching and art making…” (p. 125). The research looked into how these challenges might affect teaching practice and philosophy; might there be ways of balancing both roles, and if so, how does it influence student learning?

**Conceptual Framework**

The methodology used by the researcher in the investigation was an action research, classroom-based study, where the researcher, also known as the artist-teacher, was an active participant. Observations, memos, questionnaires, interviews, photographs, and videos were some of the methods of data collecting. In seeking to better understand the information formed through data collection, a matrix that “…allows [the researcher] to develop, and show, the connections between specific parts of each component, such as how each research question is related to specific goals, theories, methods and validity issues” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 13), was implemented.

The research approach was reflective of the goals surrounding the conceptual framework, such as: building upon previous knowledge, inquiring new insights through research, means of data collection, and methods of improving practice (Maxwell, 2012). All elements within the conceptual framework are linked under the central question of how might the role of an artist-teacher at Tremont High School, in Tremont Illinois, impact student learning and influence teaching practice? The rationale of the conceptual framework was supported by Maxwell’s statement, confirming that “…the methods you use must enable you to answer your research
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questions” (p. 5). Furthermore, the structure exhibited what the researcher “want[ed] to study”, and “…what [was] going on with these things and why…” (p. 39).

Theoretical Framework

The researcher was influenced by the previous experience and exposure of being an artist-teacher working alongside students, uncovering such a practice yielding a unique learning atmosphere. Additionally, association between dialogue and the artist-teacher exhibiting relevant relationships in his or her own art work further encourages students to provided links with their unique experiences. The belief that students are more willing to engage in learning when they are able to make relevant connections with their own lives is supported by Simpson (1998) and Daggett (2013). Simpson (1998) states that:

If we can find the pathway into the learner’s mind, we can parade an unending cast of characters down that pathway and they will be well received. If, on the other hand, there seems no reason for any of the characters to even be on the path, the mind will remain closed to them. (p. 332)

Students naturally question why they should learn the required content provided by their teachers. Teachers who offer relevance and meaning behind the content, presenting associations for students through their own experiences and the knowledge of others, only enhances learning through attaining relevance.

Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships

The artist-teacher at Tremont High School is influenced by the school’s mission statement “to make school meaningful” (Tremont High School, 2013, para. 5), and as well
embraces the entire 702 School District’s philosophy of supporting Daggett’s (2013) educational framework of “Rigor, Relevance and Relationships” (para. 1). The artist-teacher maintains that building a curriculum that is student centered by emphasizing the learner’s experiences, encourages a positive rapport between artist-teacher and students. Furthermore, the artist-teacher attests that validating a student’s experiences exhibits an authentic interest in the student’s individualized learning. The researcher supports a curriculum that employs real world situations; sustaining the belief that students want to be challenged, and at the same time nurturing a comfortable learning environment where risk taking leading to creative/innovative exploration within a classroom is valued, thus learning may be impacted, and teaching practice influenced (Daggett, 2013).

Six Facets of Understanding

The researcher gauged how students might learn, and whether students have acquired new art understandings by referring to the writings of Wiggins & McTighe (2005). Wiggins & McTighe outline six facets of understanding: explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge in order to address that “… understandings are not facts, and that certain learning actions and performance assessments are required to bring about the needed meaning-making by the learner” (p. 103).

In agreement with Wiggins & McTighe (2005) and the complexities of evaluating students’ levels of understandings are “multidimensional and complicated. There are different types of understanding, different methods of understanding, and conceptual overlap with other intellectual targets” (p. 84). Students’ art understandings should not be defined solely by the end
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product, but consideration and recognition should be placed on the process and associations that learners are able to connect with themselves and the world in which they live in.

**Significance of the Study**

The importance of the study, to seek an understanding of the role of an artist teacher is evident in the writings of Daichendt (2011) as he discusses the history of the first acclaimed, influential artist-teacher, George Wallis. In order to better understand the dual roles of Wallis being an artist-teacher, Daichendt’s methodology of “separating the enterprises” through coding the main characteristics in order to “…better understand the connections between his art making and teaching” (pp.72-73). Daichendt’s interesting findings reveal the results of Wallis being first an artist before a teacher and his “…early success [as an artist] and experiences had a very strong influence on his growing role as an art teacher” (p. 75).

In analyzing the consequences of undergraduate art students leaving behind their artist identity and replacing with the role as an art teacher, Page (2012) uncovers the process and insight of how both professions; being an artist and art teacher, could be unified. Page (2012) investigates the merging role of art educators whom are new in their profession, as they struggle in separating themselves as an artist to take on a new identity as an art teacher. Page states in connection with the UK’s National Society for Education through Art and Design “the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) in 1999 promotes the idea that art and design practitioners should be supported in maintaining and further developing their creative practice once they become teachers” (p. 71).

The role of the artist-teacher and the power of dialogue between learner and practitioner during collaborative art making, is supported by Stanhope (2011). Stanhope’s (2011) study
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analyzes the strength of building relationships in dialogue between artist-teacher and learner concerning the sensitive issues of censorship within the art classroom. The case study involves the author’s findings of how students are influenced by the artist-teacher, as Stanhope testifies that “sharing my process as an artist has allowed students to access me as an adult rather than solely a teacher, and has aided the merging identities of teacher and student” (p. 390).

The research study provides additional options for teachers whom seek an innovative way of instruction. Regardless of the subject matter, or age level one is teaching; much is revealed and understood from the interactions and dialogue between students and teacher. A classroom environment that is both comfortable and engaging will prove to be conducive to learning. The choices teachers make within curriculum development, classroom management, and the personal investment of each individual learner, contributes to the ability for a student to meet their learning potential.

**Limitations of the Study**

The limitations to the study were time constraints, participant’s selection, and the current emotional state of the students and artist-teacher at Tremont High School.

**Time Constraints**

The study conducted concentrated on the influences of practice for an artist–teacher working alongside students in a collaborative working environment. In order to have a comprehensive view of how such behaviors may influence student learning and teaching practice, one might implement a research study for an entire school year, in order to
compare/contrast the results with a similar class that does not have an artist-teacher working alongside students in a study setting.

**Participant Selection**

Maxwell (2012) states “…in qualitative research, the typical way of selecting settings and individuals is neither probability sampling nor convenience sampling” (p. 97). The prospect of selecting a group that consisted of individuals whom are the same age and experience level, was not feasible in the classroom dynamic the researcher studied. The various classrooms taken into consideration for the research consisted of only mixed classes that contain one main course, such as drawing III/ painting III students, advanced studio students, and an art intern. Students did not all share a common age, or experience level in the classroom-based study.

**Current Emotional State of Students and Artist-teacher**

The small community in Tremont, Illinois, recently experienced another tragedy within the community of only 2,241 residents, as it is mourning for a student who tragically died in a motor vehicle accident in February of 2013. The 2012-2013 school year at Tremont has been emotionally impacted by three deaths in separate situations; a high school teacher, a custodian, and a student. The staff at Tremont High School and all 320 students have been influenced by the numerous losses within the past few years within the community. The recent losses have affected the high school, as it has opened old and new emotional wounds, recalling three students whom passed away in 2011. The current learning state of Tremont High School is not reflective of its typical environment; therefore, the results of the study may have emotional limitations and influences.
Conclusion

In conclusion of chapter one, a framework has been provided in order to specify the main objectives for the conducted research: existing knowledge, rationale for study, goals, and questions. In order to build upon current research findings in connection with the pedagogy of an artist-teacher, the study asked how might the role of an artist-teacher impact student learning and influence teaching practice. The chosen method of the study was reflective of the researcher taking an active role as a participant in the action research. The logic of data collection through a triangulation approach was supported by Maxwell (2012) “…as a check on one another” (p. 102). Collecting data from numerous areas: questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentation provided “…far more credibility than if limited to one source or method” (p. 102). In addition, the researcher was aware that using various methods “…does not guarantee validity, they are nonetheless essential to the process of ruling out validity threats…” (p. 125).

Chapter two focuses on the literature reviews in support of analyzing the findings within the data collection of the qualitative research. The literature reviews build upon the researchers existing knowledge, encouraging varying viewpoints of the role of an artist-teacher.

Definition of Terms

Action Research: the use of techniques of social and psychological research to identify social problems in a group or community coupled with active participation of the investigators in group efforts to solve these problems.

Case study: an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment.
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**Methodology:** a body of methods, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline: a particular procedure or set of procedures.

**Pedagogy:** the art, science, or profession of teaching.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

An artist-teacher who embraces the philosophy that teaching is a creative process and analogous with art making, may encourage an imaginative, positive learning environment for both students and practitioner. All artists have a unique method of solving an artistic problem; some may start by assembling ideas through sketches, others may seek for a collection of references, many may refer to other artists as a point of inspiration during his or her artistic journey. A possible theme or set of goals might be the course of action for the artist; regardless, in the end the process and the final piece of art work are all part of the creative journey, unique and as individual as the artist whom is inventing.

In art education, an artist-teacher may have numerous choices in building a curriculum that is distinctive to the needs of the students within the classroom (Simpson, 1998). A choice an artist-teacher may consider is applying their own artistic discoveries as a point of inspiration for planning units of study. In turn, students whom often have a fresh perspective of contemporary issues may contribute to inspiring the artist-teacher in the art making and practice. Simpson validates this concept stating that “…the teaching process is continuous-we grow as we encounter a new problem. We learn with and from our students” (p.333).

The rationale of this review of literature was to analyze the various perspectives relating to the role of an artist-teacher, grounding the conceptual framework (McNiff, 2010, p. 123). The range of theories concerning the pedagogy of an artist- teacher better informed the researcher, also known as the active participant in the study by answering the question, how might the role of the artist-teacher influence student learning and teaching practice? Additionally, the
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researcher found some of the advantages and disadvantages in merging both identities as an artist and teacher through reviews written by experts in the field of art education.

**Background**

The artist-teacher, whom is the subject of the research, recalls the initial interest in the concept of an artist-teacher, when she realized the unique learning environment for both students and practitioner when the artist-teacher took an active role working alongside students in a studio setting. These insights did not form at the beginning of her teaching career, but rather was a slow progression of events during the artist-teacher’s fourteen years of practice. The artist-teacher remembers the start of the teaching career being dedicated to professional growth devoted to curriculum development, classroom management, and creating demonstration pieces for exemplar purposes.

As the years progressed, and the artist-teacher became more comfortable and prepared in practice, she found herself having additional time for art making within the context of the classroom. The artist-teacher’s classroom demonstration exemplars evolved into completed pieces of artwork that were shared with learners in a classroom setting. Whether the researcher was working on art for an upcoming show or fulfilling the need to be creative, art making during studio production time became a natural, daily occurrence in her upper level art courses. As a result of having the opportunity of teaching under a block schedule; four - ninety minute sessions, with alternating classes every other day, it allowed ample studio production time for both learners and artist-teacher at Tremont High School.

The artist-teacher’s goal of professional growth and evolving philosophy, led to the researcher’s objective of analyzing how the current pedagogy of working alongside students and
sharing artwork influences student learning and teaching practice. The researcher investigated the benefits and the disadvantages of the artist-teacher modeling dual roles in a classroom studio setting. The conceptual framework provided a preliminary source of how the researcher aimed to pull all aspects of the information together, concluding with how the artist-teacher proposed to utilize the new information.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework (see figure 2.1) was the logic for the action research study, as a means to uncover the role of an artist-teacher and the influences on student learning and teaching practice. In agreement with Daichendt (2010), testifying that “there is not a mysterious line one crosses to rightfully claim the title artist-teacher…it just matters that you make it, experience it, and engage it” (pp. 64-65). Throughout the research of “[bringing] the studio to the classroom” (p. 125), Daichendt’s definition has been applied within the action research and is at the core of prior knowledge and philosophy of the researcher/artist-teacher, that lead to the topic of research.

The conceptual framework outlined how the pedagogy of the artist-teacher working alongside students in a studio setting affected learning. Furthermore, the framework made connections by promoting further insights surrounding the power of dialogue, while linking these interactions between students and artist-teacher to nurturing a comfortable learning environment. The framework provided how the researcher planned to use the information collected in the study, to better inform her practice and be shared with others. The research study is not without its limitations and obstacles: therefore, constraints were offered in order to provide an objective perspective to the classroom study.
The following diagram shows the conceptual framework that represented the structure and plan of action for the research, in order to exhibit “...what [was] going on with these things and why...” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 39).

**Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework**
In questioning the role of artist-teacher, and uncovering the function of teachers in general, the researcher of the action, classroom-based study challenged the view of the ideology of the teacher. Does a teacher have to be the keeper of all knowledge? Might it be possible to encourage lifelong learning for students if the artist-teacher or practitioners in general exhibits a continual curiosity in learning? Stanhope (2011) composes the statement that “I aspire for students to guide their projects and the educator to support the process of investigation, rather than the educator lead the project, which the students follow and investigate within the parameters set by the teacher” (p. 391).

The following literature review first breaks down the discrepancies of the term artist-teacher; subsequently forming a new contemporary philosophy of an artist-teacher; next applies the various approaches in balancing the dual roles of the artist-teacher, then concludes with the effects of a collaborative learning environment, and the power of dialogue between learners and artist-teacher.

Discrepancies with the Term Artist-teacher

The expression of an artist-teacher unconventionally places the word artist before teacher; therefore, understandably causes debate amongst many inside the field of the fine arts and art education. Daichendt (2009) brings attention to the varying viewpoints of term artist-teacher, and those in opposition may believe the term to “…imply that art teachers cannot do what they teach…the term may be considered elitist” or that the artist-teacher may favor making art over teaching as “…they disregard[s] the importance of the educational field” (p. 33).
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Hall (2010) speaks of the challenges of acquiring the title of an artist-teacher through “…negotiating a new identity that integrates the teacher self or persona with artist self is not a straightforward or always comfortable process” (p. 107). Those that welcome the title of an artist-teacher are not without obstacles amongst other professionals, as affirmed by Hall “…indeed artist teachers can meet oppositional forces; for example, some artists’ resistance to the terms ‘education’ or ‘teaching’ and the distancing of some HE fine art departments that identify ‘education’ with what happens in schools” (p. 107), may hinder the acceptance of the dual roles.

The naysayers that are critical of the concept artist-teacher may be persuaded once realizing the why, when, and how the expression first originated. Daichendt (2009) redefines the concept of an artist-teacher “…to a 21st-century audience of art educators unfamiliar with its rich history” (p. 33), and equally provides a wealth of evidence for anyone - artist, art educators, artist-teacher, or any person desiring to learn more behind the rationale of the phrase.

**Artist-teacher as a concept rather than a term.** Daichendt (2009) emphasizes the flexibility of the concept of artist-teacher being an individualized commitment or “notion” about “…bringing together studio practices, problems, and world discussions to improve learning” (p. 37). Additionally, Daichendt states that “the variety of methods practiced by artist-teachers in the classroom reflects the range of artistic approaches artists utilize” (p. 37). The idea of an artist-teacher is a belief system, a philosophy, and a commitment of the dual roles, not the worth or status of being an artist or teacher, but rather an ontology, a conviction of seeing both identities as being instrumental to the wellbeing of the individual as a whole.
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Thornton (2011) claims an artist-teacher is a selective, personal affirmation, and regardless for the rationale behind why one may assign themselves the title of being an artist-teacher the research affirms that “…there is no type, quantity or quality of work which legitimizes us as artist-teachers other than our personal judgment about ourselves and our practice” (p.35). The personal benefit for the individual whom decides to embrace the concept artist-teacher, may encounter “the artistic, creative, educational freedom desired by many art teachers needs to be echoed in the way they teach and strive to create learning environments for students as well as themselves that embrace these values” (p. 34).

Thornton (2005) offers “characteristics, notions, practices, beliefs, observations and interpretations of who and what it means to be an artist-teacher in England” (p. 167). The following are select sections of the characteristic of an artist-teacher outlined by Thornton:

Have a deep identification with art and teaching that could be indicative of a function of identity….have motivations and convictions based upon their art practice and exposure to culture of art…reflect an interdependence of art and education…see their practice as a ‘way of life’ as well as a practice…(pp.168-169)

Placing a Value System on the Professions of being an Artist, Art teacher, or Artist-teacher

Parker’s (2009) effort to improve his teaching practice led him to enroll in a MA program in England under the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) that is “a national program of continued professional development …that combines practice and theory, aiming to reconnect the practitioner to their practice” (p.281). The rationale for Parker selecting this course of study was
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“…to explore and possibly reconcile the pedagogic issues related to the area of critical and contextual studies that had arisen with [the researchers] own practice” (p. 279).

Parker (2009) reports struggling with the “…demand to ‘revisit practice’ [and] the presentation of this first exhibition in the public scrutiny of my fellow students was quite a challenge” (p. 281). Parker reaches a conclusion that the dual roles of being an artist-teacher was not for him as he proclaims “…I had not entered the teaching profession so as to continue my own practice, but rather to work children and art in the classroom” (p. 281).

The debate amongst artists and art teachers disputing whom is superior of the two professions, has been an ongoing personal experience for the artist-teacher of this qualitative research study. The artist-teacher of this study recalls the decision to specialize her undergraduate degree from a Bachelor of Fine Arts to a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education at Minnesota State University, in Moorhead, Minnesota. The artist-teacher was first an artist and then after volunteering at a juvenile detention center teaching art, was inspired by the students to build upon her degree and add education to the artist’s title. The change of major was not openly accepted amongst the researcher’s colleagues whom were art students, but rather they disapproved, believing that art educators were not talented enough to be artists; therefore, chose to be teachers. Thornton (2005) concludes that “…teaching can undermine the artist teaching identity. For instance, there is a common perception that teaching is no more than a safety net for those who cannot find employment in other fields or professions” (p. 168).

In contrast, Parker (2009) recalls his early experience as an art educator tied with guilt “…of not maintaining my art practice, almost as if I had been masquerading under false pretenses as an art educator” (p. 281). Parker discusses that all art educators will come to a point
within their career and “question where they stand in relation to these two roles” (p. 282). Parker concludes that for him personally, he embraced “…the teacher end of the continuum” (p.282). Ironically, within the written dialogue of Parker’s research, beautiful illustrations, showing his artistic role is inserted throughout his findings. Regrettably, Parker may not be familiar with the possibility of not having to choose between one profession over the other, but rather considering to move beyond the definable term – artist-teacher; instead, adopting the idea as a philosophy, or concept that may be as individualized as one’s creative process.

**Challenges of Balancing the Dual Roles of an Artist-teacher**

The idea of balancing dual identities is not a new concept for the artist-teacher, also known as the researcher of this qualitative research. As a wife, mother of three young children, and a full time artist-teacher, the researcher of the study has added an additional dimension to an expanding complex identity taking on the title of a student, as she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Art Education at Boston University. The personality of one who is willing to take on various responsibilities at once might not be conducive to those whom seek total control of all situations, as in certain circumstances, some items/tasks may be left undone; perfectionism may not be an option.

Daichendt (2010) states in connection with Hoffman’s struggles of the dual identities within the artist-teacher framework:

…the frustration of balancing both teaching and art making is a contemporary issue that plagued Hoffman as well…although teaching was a vital outlet it also hampered his production at times. Hoffman brought the studio into his classroom, but it appears the classroom sometimes took precedence over teaching, a
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dangerous balance that can darken and cause the spirit of the artist-teacher to drain. (p.125)

The researcher of this study acknowledges those who might struggle with choosing between being solely an artist or an art educator, in addition to those that decide to integrate both roles as an artist-teacher. If one elects to undertake the dual identity, there are valuable resources in assisting a comfortable balance of these roles.

Finding ways to balance the dual identity through reflections. Thornton (2005) states that “quite clearly, the difficulties of practicing as both an artist and teacher are real” (p. 171). What must an artist-teacher do in order to alleviate some of pressures associated with the dual roles? Thornton provides options, such as being a reflective practitioner and affirms that:

Reflective practice can enable us to accept the complexity and even understand it as a necessary condition of the world and help us to approach each problem as a unique experience to be framed and engaged in such. This approach could also help artist teachers to gain perspective upon their dual practice and possibly see the continuous search for appropriate strategies…. (p. 173)

Daichendt (2009) uncovers the benefits of the artist-teacher Wallis using such a reflective approach that nurtured both his practice as an artist and teacher asserting that:

Teachers that embrace their own artistic aptitudes and value connections between studio and classroom can create a classroom experience that utilizes individual art making interests. In fact, Wallis’ reflections on his own artistic triumphs and failures as a working designer allowed him to design curriculum that met the
needs of the 19th – century student…The concept of artist-teacher can be encompassing of the qualities of an art teacher and also of the unique aspects of being a reflective artist. (p. 37)

Daichendt (2010) in response to Hans Hoffman’s dual identity of using the classroom as a place of exploration for both the artist-teacher and student, found within those experiences the ability to balance in course of “working through ideas with students and encouraging them to find their voice, Hoffman further developed his own art as well” (p. 129).

The Artist-teacher and the Collaborative Classroom

The dynamics of a classroom environment that challenges the traditional hierarchy role of the teacher being all knowing, and dictating student’s understandings, may result in interesting outcomes when both students and artist-teacher explore innovative options in acquiring knowledge within a collaborative setting. Graham (2009) states that recently many teachers are challenging the current traditions in education, specifically in the case when “the teacher who is also an artist” (p. 86). Modeling a classroom where active learning is present for both teacher and learners can result in “their classrooms [are] characterized by hospitality toward students, spontaneity, playfulness, and a spirit of inquiry” (p. 86).

Graham (2009) captures the energy of a collaborative setting as the author steps into the classroom of Keith Williams that is covered with artwork created by students and the artist-teacher; both in progress, and completed art work. Graham explains why the artist teacher feels compelled to work alongside students, citing Keith Williams “‘it is important the students see me
work, to see me also have as intimate, amicable, and struggles to get things right, to work out problems.’ The energy and excitement in the room is inescapable” (p. 87).

**Dialogue between learning and artist-teacher.** Thornton (2011) reveals the importance of the artist-teacher instigating a positive, thought provoking dialogue between practitioner and students, stating that:

The notion of entering into dialogue with students and understanding them as co-learners and teachers reflect a central conceptualization of dialogue as intimate, amicable conversation between the two interlocutors striving for trust and mutual respect and an exchange of knowledge and understanding of benefit to both. (p. 33)

In addition to building a positive relationship by the artist-teacher being open to the opinion of his or her students, dialogue plays an equally important role for the practitioner. An artist-teacher who discusses his or her processes openly with high school art students must be able to articulate, support the reasoning behind current and/or past art investigations, as learners are often curious individuals and are not easy to persuade. Daichendt (2010) cites Anderson & Wark in stating that “teaching refines ideas and the teacher is the one who benefits the most from this practice” (p. 126). The dialogue between student and artist teacher encourages the practitioner to both visually and verbally articulate their art making process and reasoning.

**Unique learning experience through dialogue.** A classroom atmosphere built upon the respect between students and artist-teacher may be found within a collaborative setting. Varying viewpoints are encouraged, not always agreed upon, but never the less heard, and pondered; therefore, validating, nurturing a safe haven for creative expression and exploration. Olson
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(1998) states that “the arts provide a unique opportunity for teachers to relate with students on a personal level, to learn their interests, their concerns, their worries, and their lives” (p.182). It is of great importance for teachers to not only provide information, but also exhibit an authentic interest of the opinions of his or her students. Through the interaction of a safe dialogue between all within the classroom, much can be learned.

Stanhope (2011) found that working in a collaborative setting alongside students states that “shifting how I operate as a teacher…was not approached purely as a form of self-expression but as a form of communication, saw an increase in students using their own lives as inspiration, which in turn meant an increase in socially varied subjects” (p.392). An artist-teacher, whom is willing to share their story through art, may encourage others within the art classroom to individualize their art through their life experiences. Stanhope (2011) continues to support this concept testifying that “the sharing of ideas and practice of a group helps increase students’ confidence in the communication of their ideas” (p. 393).

Conclusion

Within the literature review, the findings concluded that there is a continual need in researching the role of the artist-teacher. The recent research shows a necessity for artist-teachers to make a connection with both identities, and the researcher has sought out resources intellectually, emotionally, and financially. Thornton (2005) maintains that:

Many art teachers seek opportunities to develop their work and will often finance opportunities in learning in their own time. This might indicate that the making of art is a necessary manifestation of their creativity that may provide meaning and purpose for them. (p. 173)
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The motivation of the artist-teacher, taking control of current situations and working environments, does not mean support is not needed, or should not be requested. The artist-teacher who delivers accountability and provides leadership by sharing evidence and research findings with others will improve communication and the support desired.

Chapter three delivers a methodology of how the role of the artist-teacher influences student learning and impacts teaching practice. Through the collection of data, the action research revealed why the role of the artist-teacher is an important practice that deserves the recognition and support of others within the field of art, education, and art education.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The design of the study applied a combined data assembly approach to better fit the structure of the research in answering how might the role of the artist-teacher impact student learning and teaching practice, and for the “… purpose of strengthening the study and validating it” (Simpson, 2013b, p. 1). The classroom-based study used multiple perspectives: autoethnography, hermeneutics, and narratology. All elements were representative of encompassing the main questions of the action research that focused upon dual issues: student learning, and the practice of an artist-teacher.

Autoethnography

The autoethnography perspective was implemented in order to examine how the role of the artist-teacher working alongside students affects the practitioner’s experiences. Through the methods of journaling, memos, documentation of art processes, analyzing previous art works; the artist-teacher made personal connections with her dual roles as artist and teacher, and how this “way of life” results in either positive or negative experiences (Simpson, 2013b, p.2).

Hermeneutics

The hermeneutics perspective was applied in order to interpret the behaviors; written, verbal, and non-verbal responses provided by students, so the researcher may better grasp how learning has been impacted by an artist-teacher working alongside students in addition to sharing artistic discoveries. In response to the importance of observation in data collection, Maxwell (2012) affirms that “you are the research instrument in a qualitative study, and your eyes and
ears are the tools you use to gather the information and to make sense of what is going on” (p. 88). The researcher used “…hanging out, casual conversations, and incidental observations” in order to better evaluate how the classroom environment was influenced with all parties being active in studio production within a collaborative setting (p. 88). An inquiry of whether students were able to make connections with their own learning when an artist-teacher shares how she uses personal experiences within art work was addressed. Hermeneutics method noted the behaviors of how students responded in their own art making, and whether there was an increase or decrease level of comfort in leaners engaging in innovative art discoveries when an artist-teacher models similar inquires.

**Narratology**

The narratology perspective was used in building upon an existing art curriculum for both students and artist-teacher. The student unit plan, Self- Identity Installation, emphasized the experiences and perception of self in attempt to answer the central question and the “big idea” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) uncovering what “…the narrative or story [may] reveal about the person and the world from which they came” (Simpson, 2013, p. 2). In connection with the student’s unit plan, the artist-teacher investigated real and inventive spaces, while incorporating symbolism suggested by learners in order to encourage a collaborative learning environment.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Block system: students meet every other day for 1 ½ hrs.</td>
<td>Painting III and Advanced Studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist-teacher in the making.</td>
<td>Past artwork completed in a classroom setting or used as exemplars</td>
<td>2003-2013</td>
<td>Personal studio Bartonville and Tremont, Illinois.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Grades 9-12 art classrooms Tremont, Illinois.</td>
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<td>Painting III and Advanced Studio</td>
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*Figure 3.1. Methods Time Frame*
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Research Methods

The rationale of selecting multiple methods in data collection for the qualitative research was applied to see “…if methods with different strengths and limitations all support a single conclusion” (Maxwell, 2010, p. 102). The researcher chose a triangulation approach that emphasized an assortment of methods in order “to gain information about different aspects of the phenomenon…” (p. 102). An inductive method of combining both flexible and structured methods provided adaptable options for the researcher in uncovering multiple facets of the study.

Questionnaires

The formal approaches to the triangulation of data collecting were applied, such as questionnaires that anonymously asked students how they felt about an artist-teacher working alongside them in a studio setting, and whether it is important that their teacher is a practicing artist. The method of using multiple, short questionnaires encouraged convenience for students, and provided flexibility in the qualitative research, as the approach built upon how students responded to the initial questions; examples provided in figure 3.3.

Participation Observations

The researcher was an active participant in the conducted qualitative research study whom recorded observations, reflections, and personal insights through daily journaling. Sporadic video tapping was used exclusively for journaling purposes, enabling the researcher to obtain a better view of the Painting III classroom setting, in addition to observing behaviors and interactions of individuals within the selected environment. In respect of students who did not want their image shared with others, the researcher used the tapings as reflections only.
Photography was instrumental in capturing the setting; furthermore, it was beneficial in documenting student and artist-teacher work in progress and completed art pieces.

**Identifying Patterns Through Memos**

Memos were used in order to organize information to find links and instigate the examination of the information. In addition to memos, the researcher took the approach of “developing coding categories and applying these to data, analyzing narrative structure and contextual relationships, and creating matrices…” to form a better concept of what was going on with the research project, and attaining the main goals outlined in the conceptual framework (Maxwell, 2012, p.105).

**Data Collection**

The collection of data derived from a purposeful selection of “…times, settings, and individuals…” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 97), as the researcher gave much consideration of these situations prior to conducting the research. The selected case study, Painting III course provided the best option for the researcher in uncovering conclusions for the fundamental questions of the classroom-based study.

Students in the Painting III course have experience with art techniques and classroom procedures, lending to extra studio production time for both artist-teacher and learners. Many of the Painting III students have an option to enroll in one more year of art in high school; therefore, the findings will be beneficial for those individuals during the 2013/2014 school year.

The purposeful selection was additionally based on the diversity of motivation levels of the Painting III students. The classroom dynamics consist of a diverse group of learners who
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vary from individuals who are enthusiastic and involved in school happenings, in contrast with those who exhibit a disinterest in high school. These behaviors are equally reflective within the undercurrents of the Painting III course. Students range from being clearly enthusiastic about all aspects of art, differing from those that require extra motivation and prompting.

The following information describes the various approaches of data collection that were utilized in the qualitative research: formal and informal dialogue; photographic documentation, observations, and journaling.

Figure 3.2. Data Collection
Formal Dialogue Through Questionnaires

The method of collecting information from students gauging how their learning is impacted with an artist-teacher modeling both artistic and teaching behaviors in a studio setting was a building process of inquiry. The first group of questions informed the researcher for the second group of questions, followed by the investigator evaluating whether further questions were needed. In support of Maxwell’s (2012) statement that one must “…remember that what is a ‘researcher project’ for you is always in some degree, an intrusion of the lives of the participants in your study” the researcher was conscientious in respecting student’s studio production time (p.92). Therefore, the artist-teacher did not ask numerous questions in one setting, but rather broke the inquiries into chunks of information that spanned throughout two weeks.

Students’ anonymity was encouraged to provide a safe ground for students to offer honest answers, and minimize insecurities that the information given would not hinder current student and artist-teacher relationship. Prior to administrating the questions, the researcher of the study openly discussed the rationale behind why the artist-teacher sought student feedback, such as to improve current practice and the validation of the student’s opinions.
Pseudonym: ________________________________________________

Please select a name to keep your anonymity, and remember your pseudonym for future questions.

Please provide honest answers. As your artist-teacher, I hope to improve my practice in the efforts to meet the needs of my students 😊 I appreciate the time you take to fully answer my questions. Thanks!

1. I am curious if my students recall any of my personal artwork completed either in class or outside of the classroom setting. Do you remember any of my artwork? If so, what piece(s) do you recall? Obviously, I don’t expect that you would know the title, but you may describe the piece.

2. If you recall more than one piece of art I have completed, select one example that influenced you in some way (could be positive or negative). Why do you remember this particular piece of art; what stands out in your mind?

3. In connection with question #2, did I work on this piece of artwork in class, or was it an example used in a presentation; such as a PowerPoint, and/or a demonstration piece?

4. Have I ever brought into class an example of my art, or worked on art in the classroom that helped you with your own artwork? If yes, could you explain?

*Figure 3.3. Student Questionnaires Number One*
Pseudonym: _____________________________________________________

Please rate the following questions according to the level of importance.

1 = Unimportant
2 = Slightly important
3 = Important
4 = Very important
5 = Critical

1. Do you think an art teacher should have a diverse understanding of art, such as know a variety of art disciplines: ceramics, painting, drawing, mixed media, photography etc.?

2. Do you think it is important that an art teacher brings in his or her personal art work for lesson examples and/or art instruction?

3. Do you think it is important that an art teacher shows enthusiasm about creating art work inside and outside of the classroom?

4. Do you think it is important that an art teacher is a good artist?

5. Do you think it is important that your art teacher models artistic behaviors inside the art classroom by working alongside students in a collaborative setting?

Figure: 3.4. Student Questionnaires Number Two
**Figure: 3.5. Student Questionnaires Number 3**
Informal Dialogue

The recordings and documentation through journaling and memos was instigated in order to provide links showing positive or negative results of artist-teacher working alongside students and/or referencing to previous artwork and artistic discoveries. The artist-teacher documented whether students were comfortable in approaching the artist-teacher while she was working alongside students. Did students ask artist-teacher questions about her art process? Did these questions led to conversations about student work? The process was informal as students were not required to approach the table where the artist-teacher is working, but rather students volunteered and instigated the initial dialogue between student and artist-teacher.

Photographic Documentation

Completed student work, classroom environment, and work in progress were documented through photography. Student and artist-teacher in progress art pieces and were documented throughout the study. Photography was also implemented as source of visually journaling events that took place during the qualitative research. Completed works were additionally documented and analyzed as a source of data collection.

Journaling

An informal approach of collecting data through journaling was used to provide flexibility within the research, as the researcher wrote freely the observations and insights before, during, and after an event took place within the art classroom setting at Tremont High School. Journaling began on the first day of the introduction to the research - January 7th, 2013. Journaling continued as the artist-teacher consolidated ideas during the proposal of the study,
continued throughout the process of the research implementation, and concluded with the completion and analysis of the study on April 7th, 2013.

Figure 3.6. Example of Artist-teacher’s Journal and Collection of Resources for Memos

Observations and Videotaping

In attempt to have a better understanding of the classroom environment and student behaviors/ reactions, the data collection method of observation was used to “… describe settings, behaviors, and events…” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 102) throughout the action based research. Videotaping was employed as a source of reflection for the researcher, also known as the artist-teacher. As a result of viewing the video documentation, the researcher was able to see other happenings throughout the classroom while working alongside students, in addition to how learners reacted as the artist-teacher demonstrated techniques and introduced art lessons. In respect of the two students who requested not to have their image shared with others, the videotaping was used for reflections in journals only.
Data Analysis

The collection of data was explored through the process of reviewing journals, photographs, videos; furthermore, the grouping and linking of the findings resulted from the actions of memos, and matrices. Additionally, a narrative analysis was applied through student and artist-teacher self-assessments, and curriculum development. The researcher of the study conducted an inductive method of analysis that used previous knowledge acquired prior to the study, later comparing and contrasting previous knowledge with the current findings developed during the research (Simpson, 2013a, p. 2). The method of creating memos was used for providing structure and these reflections. Matrices were applied to find relationships within the collection of data further informing the research study.

Organizing Journal and Memos

The researcher of the study reviewed all information within the journals and highlighted notes of interest. In means of creating a system of order, the artist-teacher color coordinated highlighted information into: yellow – interesting, surprising positive findings; pink – negative, frustrating findings. A matrix was implemented to have a better hypothesis of the different findings; memos were applied as a point of organized reflection.

Categorizing questionnaires with matrix. The coding of responses received from the Painting III students in answering the questionnaire’s, was grouped into theoretical categories or topics, so the researcher could “…place coded data into more general or abstract framework” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 108). A visual structure, a matrix was implemented as a means to organize the data collected and stay focused in answering the main questions of the research (Maxwell, 2012, p. 108).
Organizing of past artwork memos. The rationale of the researcher in creating memos that reflected upon past experiences of the duals identities, and the process of the evolving philosophy of the artist-teacher, was executed and emphasized as the new element of inquiry in the study. The artist-teacher has never formally reflected on her dual roles, nor has she analyzed how such practice might influence classroom environment and student learning.

Memos were used to see if there were any links in current practice that could better inform the existing research study. The artist-teacher viewed previous artwork created and/or shared within the art-classroom, analyzing past student exemplars to unearth any connections of style or thematic influences students may have experienced. In support of Maxwell’s (2012) statement concerning memos, the researcher sought such a method in order “…to engage in serious reflection, analysis, and self-critique, rather than just mechanically recording events and thoughts” (p. 20).

Student Curriculum Development

In connection with the research study, an open ended unit was implemented for Painting III learners to encourage symbolic imagery, collaboration with artist-teacher, and working with innovative techniques of assemblage and found objects. The unit of study focused on Wiggins & McTighe (2005) six facets of understanding to better gauge student learning, specially emphasizing, Facet 1: Explanation, Facet 2: Interpretation, and Facet 6: Self-Knowledge (pp. 82-104).

Self-identity installation. The unit Self- Identity Installation encouraged learners to use their own experiences and ideas about their definition of art, in addition to exploring new options in defining self through unconventional materials. In support of Kay (1998) the unit plan is “an
elegant problem [as it] provides an opportunity for many excellent responses or solutions from a variety of problem solvers” (p. 260). Students were introduced to the art form of installations in association with the artists Marcel Duchamp, Sandy Skoglund, Jason Rhoades, and Joseph Cornell. Students visually described their perception of self, in addition to being reflective of how they are perceived by others, within 3D format.

**Artist-Teacher Curriculum Development**

Currently, the artist-teacher is exploring the areas of integration of art and text, symbolism, innovative materials/techniques, and real and inventive spaces. The practitioner of the study often uses real life situations as a source of inspiration for her narrative art work, such as: literature, lyrical poetry, nature, and architecture are of recent inspiration. In relationship with exploring a new art education philosophy, the artist-teacher is deciphering how this new found “way of life” visually influences personal art work (Simpson, 2013b, p.2).

**Real and inventive spaces.** In questioning how an artist-teacher may work alongside students beyond creating demonstration pieces, the artist teacher has selected a theme that correlates, but does not replicate the same problem as the Painting III students were given during the research study. Connections of symbolism and the idea of space are addressed in the artist-teacher’s art discovery as a means to link with the Painting III student’s Self-Identity Installation. In contrast to the 3D format of the students unit, the artist-teacher will be working with 2D materials.

Emphasizing a collaborative studio setting, the artist-teacher encouraged students to participate with her art making by selecting a symbolic image that represents them, that would later be added to artist-teacher’s real and inventive spaces. The artist-teacher seeks to reinforce
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the idea of self for the learners by using symbolic imagery within context of the student’s artwork and also reflected in the practitioner’s art. Additionally, the researcher is testing whether an artist-teacher has to model exactly what students are working on within a studio setting, or could students become informed in their own art making within a similar thread of ideas?

Assessments

Assessment of student work.

*Formative*. A narrative assessment was evaluated as the students and artist-teacher had one on one discussions concerning ideas about the Self-Identity Installation project. A minimum of three sketches was required prior to beginning the final project for the unit. Learners brought in a container and found objects, and were provided daily points for remembering to supply their items of personal significance. Observation assessments consisted of students receiving 0-10 points every class period depending on how diligently they work on their art, in addition to coming to class prepared. A written self-evaluation was completed at the end of the unit, so the artist-teacher had an additional point of reference in understanding the student’s intention for the Self-Identity Installation.

*Summative*. The artist-teacher made comments and provided a grade of 0-100 points for the final project on the student’s self-assessment. The artist-teacher offered the summative assessment at the beginning of the unit of study, so the learners had a guide for the goals of the assignment. Students were graded on composition, originality, technique, craftsmanship, and complexity.
Assessment of artist-teacher’s work.

**Formative.** A narrative assessment was applied as the artist-teacher used an informal dialogue with students concerning artwork. The artist-teacher prompted students with inquires as she became stumped in areas of composition, such as color selection and placement of objects. Additionally, the artist-teacher evaluated her role as the teacher, gauging whether students understood proper art terminology, and demonstrated understandings of the elements and principles of design.

**Summative.** The artist-teacher completed a self-assessment in a similar format as the student’s Self-Identity Installation. As part of the artistic process for the artist-teacher, an artist statement was completed concerning the artwork accomplished in the classroom setting.

**Conclusion**

The complexity of the research study seeking to uncover two branches of information that stems from the influences of an artist-teacher; student learning, and teaching practice, was instrumental in the logic behind the methodology of data collection and analysis. Organization of the diverse groupings of data depended heavily upon a matrix system, in addition to highly reflective memos. As an active participant in the action research, the artist-teacher implemented journaling as it provided a means for the researcher to freely record observations, piggyback ideas in memo writing, and was able to review areas that stood out as a significant function to the study. In addition to rationale for the data collection, the goals of the research influenced how the analysis design resulted in the findings that will be further discussed in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Background of the Results

The classroom based study consisted of a diverse triangulation approach of data collection from students and artist-teacher through journaling, photography, observations, questionnaires, memos, and matrices. The researcher found common themes and connections of the findings that solidified the understanding of how the role of an artist-teacher may impact student learning and teaching practice. The rationale of analyzing the collected data into separate groups of information: student responses, classroom environment, artist-teacher’s artist steps, and reflections of the artist-teacher, was aligned with Maxwell’s (2012) account that “…in qualitative data analysis, similarities and differences are generally used to define categories and to group and compare data by category” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 106). The data was collected by the researcher, who took on the viewpoint of an emic, as she was an active participant in the action research (Simpson, 2013c, p. 3).

The classroom based study was a long term action research, initially beginning January 17th 2013 as the researcher began collecting information leading to the research proposal. The implementation of the research study of the artist-teacher consistently working alongside students for a minimum of twenty minutes began on February 22nd, 2013 until March 21st, 2013. During this time period, the researcher’s goals were to collect and analyze artist-teacher reflections, observations, in addition to obtaining formal and informal feedback from students. The structure and goals of the data collection were the new elements of information in this research study.
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

The classroom based study focused on one class, Painting III that consisted of nineteen students, an occasional field experience student teacher, and the artist-teacher. The “purposeful selected” class for the qualitative research was the first class of the day for both students and artist-teacher, and met every other day for one hour and twenty five minutes (Maxwell, 2012, p. 97). Class met a total of nine days during the data collection that consisted of: student questionnaires; a consistent collaborative working environment; artist-teacher reflections, journaling; photography of classroom environment, artist-teacher steps of real and inventive spaces, and student progress of self-identity installation.

Significance of the Study

Solid Evidence through Triangulation

The classroom based study’s purpose was to uncover the dual roles of an artist teacher and the impact on student learning and teaching practice. In order to better understand the two roles, the researcher grouped and separated findings into matrices of categories that consisted of: student feedback and observations, artist-teacher reflections, and documentation of artistic processes for both learners and artist-teacher. The justification of the selected triangulation approach was to strengthen the results, as the methodology provided many opportunities of comparisons and connections through themes leading to the solid findings. The evidence collected throughout the research brought an awareness of numerous options and levels of implementation of an artist-teacher; in addition to the positive impact such practice may have on upper level art students.
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Findings resulted in an Increased Understanding of Being an Artist-teacher

The researcher discovered how being an artist-teacher impacted learning through an increased dialogue with learners; impromptu, and informative demonstrations; enhanced rapport with students; all components resulting in a positive learning environment. McNiff & Whitehead (2009) affirm that:

…in the case of enquiring into how you are improving your practice, especially in relationship to how you are exercising your educational influence in your own and other people’s thinking, you need to monitor your own changing thinking, and how it is informing your changing practice. (p.93)

The researcher discovered that acquiring the dual identities is not without the struggles of balancing the personal and professional life of an artist-teacher. A constant balance check through reflections are required in order to have a better grasp and understanding of being efficient while maintaining an equilibrium in one’s life.

Supportive Literature and Connections made Through Research Findings

Simpson (1998) instigates the mindset harmony of artist and an art teacher as she affirms that “just as artists leave their mark on society, teachers make theirs with their students. Both artists and teachers make deliberate choices to become makers of meaning” (p. 337). The researcher of the study established that the creative methods of teaching and art making are closely linked in a similar configuration of meaning making, and inventive problem solving. Both roles consist of innovative thought processes and procedures, to the point one might blur
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

the two identities of when one is either an artist or an art teacher. If one takes on the philosophy of an artist-teacher, these dual roles can become equally united.

Simpson (1998) emphasizes that “things you discover about yourself can inform your future work in the classroom and help you make meaningful choices about what and how to teach” (p. 19). The artist-teacher of the research study inquired how might her desire to work as both an artist and an art teacher influence student learning and teaching practice? Similar to Kay’s (1998) concept of forming an elegant problem that “provides an opportunity for many excellent responses or solutions form a variety of problem solvers” an analogy may be applied to the possibilities of molding and shaping the philosophy of being an artist-teacher, depending on the individual needs of the learners and the artist-teacher (p. 260). As part of the research findings, the researcher concluded that one of the attracting features of acknowledging and adopting the role of an artist-teacher is there is not an exclusive formula that needs to be followed; the flexibility of the possibilities is endless.

Although the flexibility of employing the idea of an artist-teacher both in thought process and practice may be enticing, the commitment of this philosophy is not without its challenges. Defining the term artist-teacher or “redefining” has historically encountered controversy from those within the art education and studio arts profession (Daichendt, 2009, p. 33). In contrast with the negative connotations, the researcher of the study embraced the philosophy of an artist-teacher who takes on the “…approach to art education that celebrates artistic practices and artistic ways of thinking into the classroom” (p. 33). Additionally, the artist-teacher of the research found similar frustrations indicated by Daichendt (2010) in connection with Hans Hoffman and William Dyce of trying to balance the dual roles (p. 81, p. 125).
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT
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The researcher was influenced by Thornton’s (2005) readings that reiterated that being a reflective practitioner could “…help artist teachers to gain perspective upon their dual practice and possibly see the continuous search for appropriate strategies in diverse context as a creative task that can develop confidence” (p. 173). Reflections through journaling informed the artist-teacher in seeking better classroom managements strategies that minimized frustrations found in working in a collaborative setting with students. In addition, the artist-teacher’s reflections throughout the research established that the two roles informed each other; such concept is supported by Daichendt (2010) in reference to the practice of the artist-teacher Hoffman, that “nothing refines ideas and thoughts better than teaching and explaining them to others” ( p.129). Furthermore, through the practice of reflection, the artist-teacher was able to better understand how her philosophical ideals fit within the studio arts and art education realm.

Projected Intentions for Research Findings

The artist-teacher of the research will continue to use the findings from the study to further investigate the dual roles of being both an artist and a teacher. Future aspirations of continuing to build upon a professional art portfolio in order to seek entrance to exhibitions will be part of the artist-teachers daily activities that will naturally feed into the classroom. The artist-teacher will persist in finding ways of employing the different levels of the artist-teacher practice inside the classroom, depending on the needs of the students. Additionally embracing the philosophy of being an artist-teacher as a “way of life”, the practitioner will share enthusiasm with learners the art happenings within the community, encouraging field trips to local museums, galleries, and university visits (Simpson, 2013b, p.2).
Bias and Validity

Bias

As an active participant in the study, the researcher had much invested in the results of the investigation. The personal investment of wanting the results to prove beneficial for both artist-teacher and learners was an important factor of bias that the researcher was aware of prior to setting up the structure of the study. The artist-teacher realized this bias prior and during the research; therefore, often spoke with her students about the proposed research. The researcher was conscientious of her student’s privacy and not wanting to jeopardize a positive student and artist-teacher relationship; hence, always provided an option for students not to participate in the study during the different levels of data collection; questionnaires, photography and video photography.

Validity

The artist-teacher encouraged students to use a pseudonym in order to provide anonymity during questionnaires, so they would not be persuaded in pleasing their teacher by answering how they felt she would want them to respond. In response and support of Maxwell (2010) that “…what is important is to understand how you are influencing what the informant says, and how this effects the validity of inferences…” (p. 125). The researcher methodology was based on covering many different components and viewpoints during the qualitative research, in order to elevate and minimize any bias preconceived theories prior, during, and after the data was collected. While the researcher promoted anonymity for students so they may candid, and freely answer the artist-teacher questions, many selected their own names, and/or provided pseudonyms that were so closely related to their personalities, that the artist-teacher made obvious student
connections to the selected anonymous name. Students openly discussed with the researcher that they felt comfortable sharing their opinions with the artist-teacher, resulting in a change in the intended methodology.

Analysis of the Data

Artist-teacher Impact of Student Learning

As the result of the research findings, specifically through student questionnaires, the researcher discovered teachable moments connected with being an artist-teacher that she was unaware of in past teaching experiences. Other unique findings led to an additional conclusion that an artist-teacher may not have to work in a collaborative environment with students to impact learning, but there are numerous options of exhibiting artistic behaviors resulting in students acquiring an equally rich learning experience. This particular finding is important to note, as not all classroom environments are conducive to a student and artist-teacher collaborative studio setting, as classroom management issues may be of a concern.

While the findings proved that students were positively influenced by an artist-teacher working in a collaborative setting, there was artist-teacher reflective evidence that highlighted the difference between the students who displayed an interest in art, versus the learner who seemed more indifferent to the visual arts. Students who were more dedicated to their own art making, seemed to benefit and be more interested in the artist-teacher working in a collaborative setting, versus the students who consistently exhibited low motivation levels in their art making.

Artist-teacher influence of practice. The reflections of the artist-teacher were beneficial in uncovering the demands of setting a minimum goal of twenty minutes one should
work in a collaborative setting with learners. The more definitive structure of such practice limited the artist-teacher in the flexibility of the dual practice. The researcher noted that the artist-teacher did not desire such structure, but rather enjoyed working on art when she felt comfortable all aspects of the classroom were taken care of, resulting in a more relaxing working environment. Furthermore, as the outcome of journal reflections, the artist-teacher found that a first hour class was not a prime time to accomplish a substantial amount of studio work. Often, first hour contained many interruptions commonly found at the beginning of the school day; late students; student personal issues from the previous evening who wanted to consult with artist-teacher; prepping of classes for the day by artist-teacher; pledge; attendance; emails, and often calls from the office. Many housekeeping items took up a large portion of the artist-teachers time in addition to the typical student activities of teaching.

**Results**

The following information are examples of the data collected throughout the research study. The first groupings of questions were geared towards the Painting III students initiated by the researcher in order to uncover whether students were aware of the artist-teachers interest in the fine arts. Additionally, the researcher wanted to inquire if students’ learning was impacted by their artist-teacher either working in a collaborative setting, or introducing completed works of art as exemplars. A total of three groupings of questions took place over the nine class sessions during the research. The first set of questions was structured to encourage students beyond yes and no questions. The second and third group of questions were structured upon the initial findings from the first set inquires, applying a rating system from either a strong or negative perception.
### Section from Questionnaire One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Question 2 (first portion)</th>
<th>Question 2 (second portion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you recall more than one piece of art I have completed, select one example that influenced you in some way (positive or negative).</td>
<td>Why do you remember this particular piece of art; what stands out in your mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>Gronvold Roller, <em>Sweat Pea</em>, 28” x 32”, 2011.</td>
<td>No comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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</table>

**Student 2**

My favorite piece would be the painting that has the owl sitting on a pillow with sheep jumping over. I loved the detail that he had with the color selection and different texture styles you chose. The piece was very calm and gave me a homey feeling.

**Student 3**

The contrasting colors jumped out at me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 4</th>
<th>One of my favorite pieces is the dress hanging from the tree. It influenced to like art more because it’s one of the best earliest pieces I’ve seen. It made me pay attention to detail and want to do good artwork.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gronvold Roller, Not Enough, 28” x 32”, 2011.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 5</th>
<th>Nothing really influenced me at all positively or negatively.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gronvold Roller, Temptations, 38” x 42”, 2010.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>The flower and snake artwork you did inspired me to do my illusions project last year and to add color and whimsical flowers in my artwork. I remember this piece of artwork because it was Beautiful and unique.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>The painting of the boats influenced me to try new things. I remember it well because of all the layers of tape used to make the shading and lines perfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>Gronvold Roller, <em>I Wish I Had a Paddle</em>, 48” x 36”, 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 9</td>
<td>Gronvold Roller, <em>Tropical Bags</em>, Approximately 40” x 32”, 2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 10</td>
<td>Student did not select an art piece.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student 11


The one with you in the boat during the storm. I remember it bc it made sense. Everything is crazy. And it was cool to put it that way.

Student 12


One of my favorite pieces of your artwork was the painting with the birds and your first house. I love the different textures you use in all of your art. When I first started painting it’s was horrid, but I developed a lot of skills by mainly observing your art work and you working on your art. I’ve always thought of art as an escape from life, because the time spent creating, your mind is completely occupied,
**Student 13**


but all of your feelings are expressed through this one piece of art. You have inspired me to show more expression through my art work, because I love looking at your art and to understand a fraction of your feelings. Art is just a beautiful thing and just like good musicians gives me the chills, so does your art.

The one with the jungle animals. You did it so fast and it still turned out great.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think that the rainforest pieces (including many animals) sort of just showed me the possibilities of art. Anytime I see a really well-done piece of Art it always inspires me to do better or think more creatively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The boat piece. It was well put together and cool looking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 16</td>
<td>Gronvold Roller, <em>In class demonstrations</em>, 9” x 12”, 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>It was cool to see how you drew the body parts, because we could see first-hand what you did so we had a better idea when we tried.</em></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The one with the boats influenced me in color scheme and mood. The element that really stood out to me in that piece was the texture.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 18</th>
<th>Little people because she is putting each of her students in your artwork.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 19</td>
<td>Student was absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 19</td>
<td>Student was absent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.1.**

**Noteworthy findings of questionnaire one.** A total of eighteen students out of nineteen students answered questionnaire one. One student was absent during the data collection.

**A collaborative studio setting.** As a result of the first group of questions issued to the Painting III students, the researcher uncovered that an artist-teacher does not have to model artistic behaviors exclusively through working alongside students in a collaborative studio setting in order to impact student learning. An artist-teacher may bring in completed works of art and have an equally valuable influence on student learning. Interestingly, six out of the eighteen students whom answered the first questionnaire, commonly selected a piece of art; *I wish I had a Paddle* that influenced their learning. This particular piece was not completed by the artist-teacher during studio class time, but rather was placed in the classroom as an exemplar for another class. The artist-teacher never formally used this painting as an exemplar for the
Painting III class, although having the art work set within the classroom setting, impacted student learning.

**Past teachable moments revealed.** The researcher found it fascinating that three out of the eighteen students who responded to the first survey made a connection with a piece a functional art; a tropical bag set, that was completed by the artist-teacher numerous years ago in 2010. The artist-teacher found the set so insignificant that she had a challenge finding an image of the art the students described. The artist-teacher volunteered to paint the bag set for a community fund raiser, and because of time constraints, out of necessity, brought the project to the classroom in order to complete in the required two days. The researcher was surprised that students recalled this particular piece that she long ago forgotten. Even though the art piece was insignificant to the artist-teacher, three students found substance in the practitioner working alongside students in a studio setting.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

**Figure 4.2.** Questionnaire Two; Results of Student Expectations of Artist-teacher
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

The following questions were inquired in order to uncover student’s expectations of an art teacher. Students rated the level of importance from 1 being unimportant, up to 5 being critical.

1. Do you think an art teacher should have a diverse understanding of art, such as know a variety of art disciplines: ceramics, painting, drawing, mixed media, photography etc.?
2. Do you think it is important that an art teacher brings in his or her personal art work for lesson examples and/or art instruction?
3. Do you think it is important that an art teacher shows enthusiasm about creating art work inside and outside of the classroom?
4. Do you think it is important that an art teacher is a good artist?
5. Do you think it is important that your art teacher models artistic behaviors inside the art classroom by working alongside students in a collaborative setting?

Noteworthy findings of questionnaire two. A total of nineteen out of nineteen students answered the second questionnaire. All students present during data collection.

Students expectations of an artist-teacher. The researcher of the study was intrigued by the student responses concerning the level of importance placed on an art teacher’s diversity of art understandings in comparison to an art teacher who was considered a good artist. Students seemed to be more concerned that an art teacher possesses knowledge in all concentrations of art, rather than exhibiting mastery in the field of art. Equally important to note, one student felt it was only slightly important that that an art teacher bring in his or her personal art work for lesson examples and/or art instruction. Overall, the research findings conclude that the majority of students do feel an art teacher should have a strong artistic application and knowledge of art.
The following questions were inquired in order to uncover student’s perception of the classroom environment. Students rated the level of comfort from 1 strongly disagree up to 5 being strongly agree.

1. Do you think the art room is a comfortable, safe learning environment?

2. Do you feel at ease (comfortable) asking Mrs. Roller a question about your artwork?

3. Do you feel comfortable asking Mrs. Roller a question while she is working on her artwork in the classroom?

4. Do you believe the decisions you make concerning your art work are valued, and supported by Mrs. Roller?

Figure 4.3. Questionnaire Three; Results of Student Perception of Classroom Environment
5. Do you feel comfortable disagreeing with Mrs. Roller concerning your artwork? Such as, if Mrs. Roller gives you an opinion (positive or negative) about your art, and you disagree, would you feel comfortable telling her your viewpoint?

**Noteworthy findings of questionnaire three.** A total of fifteen students out of nineteen students were able to answer questionnaire three. Numerous students were absent on the day of the questionnaire.

**Positive findings of classroom environment.** The artist-teacher of the research was pleased to find that students felt comfortable approaching her while working on art work during studio production time. Prior to the research, the artist teacher was a concerned that students may less likely approach her while working on art. The study concluded and reassured the practitioner that working in collaboration with students was an appropriate classroom practice. The artist-teacher was equally pleased that students felt the art room is a comfortable, safe learning environment.

**Areas of improvement for classroom environment.** As an outcome of the student perception of classroom environment, an area of improvement the artist-teacher should consider, would be working with students in building confidence in supporting their artwork. The artist-teacher would like to improve students’ comfort level in defending their opinion concerning their art; specifically, in the event when the student disagrees with a critique provided by their artist-teacher.
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

The following data collection captures within chronological order the happenings of students producing their self-identity installation. Additionally, the data depicts the collaborative setting of students and artist-teacher working on their art work in a shared classroom environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation of Collaborative Classroom Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Painting III" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting III is the first class of the day on an A day; block system. Artist-teacher sets up her art station prior to the start of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Student" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student working on self-identity installation. Note window progression in the background.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Student’s select interesting containers; an antique drawer from grandparents’ house and a display case.

Artist-teacher moves art station to the middle of the classroom after observing students less likely to approach the practitioner when stationed in the corner of the room. Once artist-teacher moved to a more central area, a more collaborative environment resulted.

Artist-teacher working on art work during Painting III studio production time.

Student work in progress
Student working on self-identity installation. Student made a replica of the spacers for pole vaulting; attaching various competition numbers, notes, etc.

Student selected antique frames.

Student is writing phrases on paper to add as extensions for her installation project.

Sculpture of Peace Tea with blocked out opaque sections of colors in order include pop culture images painted by artist.
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT
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Students working on sketched items to include in installation.

Student work in progress.

Field experience student teacher journaling observations during Painting III class.

Student work in progress.
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

Student uses drawer as a shadow box, and paints a scenic background, then hangs an antique frame, while creating origami birds that hangs from drawer.

Last day of data collecting. Students need an additional week prior to completing art work for their self-identity installation. Three students have completed their art work, others need additional time for completion.

Completed self-identity installation.

Numerous students absent the last day of data collecting due to the week before spring break.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student work in progress.</td>
<td>Work in progress. Student has completed exterior and now carefully crafting interior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.4.*
Artist-teacher worked on real and inventive spaces during the Painting III class in a collaborative setting. The rationale of artist-teacher selecting a similar theme, but not exactly the same art problem as the students in Painting III was to promote a sharing of ideas during art making. The artist-teacher further encouraged a cooperative environment with students as she had students select a symbolic image that represented themselves for the practitioner’s real and inventive space. The artist-teacher worked on this mixed media piece inside and outside of this class, but was unable to complete during data collection. The artist-teacher completed work as a future art exemplar for the unit study of self-identity installation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation of Artist-teacher’s Step by Step Procedure of Real and Inventive Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sketch for real and inventive space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping out underlying structure and vanishing points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphite on mat board 32” x 40”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detail of blocking in color with watercolor.</th>
<th>Incorporation of watercolors.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used classroom environment as a point of inspiration for real and inventive spaces.</td>
<td>Used a student’s shirt pattern in Painting III for real and inventive spaces.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE**

| Used a similar pattern found on glaze cabinet found in the classroom for art work. | Detail of pattern inclusion in addition to the introduction to the acrylic medium for the mixed media piece. |
| Note extension technique of using yarn for plotting vanishing points | Added in details of flooring on second level and working on table. Incorporated acrylic, watercolor, and color pencil. |
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><img src="image1.png" alt="Artwork with symbolic images" /></th>
<th><img src="image2.png" alt="Artwork with symbolic images" /></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning to add symbolic images selected by students to represent themselves in the artist-teacher real and inventive spaces art work. Note elephant, tree, and table setting.</td>
<td>Included bunny sitting on chair, birds, eor hiding behind couch, and seal for additional student symbolic imagery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Bunny attempt" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Bunny attempt" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunny was attempted twice after student was not happy how she was represented. Artist-teacher went off a memory of a bunny; being more familiar with dogs, was confused with the sitting position of this particular animal.</td>
<td>After finding a reference of a bunny, the artist-teacher and student were happier with the second bunny. Student felt comfortable critiquing artist-teachers art work, and artist-teacher appreciated the honest feedback from the learner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clean up for artist-teacher can be bothersome. Artist-teacher feels frustrated having to start and stop art production. Much energy goes into taking out materials and putting away just in order to complete 20 minutes of studio time.

Added student selected symbolic image of an electric guitar hidden within structure. One student selected a bat for their symbolic image, so artist-teacher created a floor pattern consisting of bat tessellations. In addition, artist-teacher adds natural elements, such as the potted plants.
Real and inventive space is not completed at this stage of the data collection. Note completed piece within the curriculum development as the artist-teacher exemplar. Symbolic imageries needed for the inclusion of the real and inventive space; humming bird, smiley face, pig, bear paw print, coffee, and pink camphloge. Additionally artist-teacher worked on finishing areas of the structure of the inventive building.

*Figure 4.5*
The following information was selected from the journaling and reflections of the artist-teacher during the data collection of the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Entries of Artist-Teaching Reflecting on Collaborative Practice</th>
<th>Positive Findings</th>
<th>Negative Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 22, 2013 Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>Moved work station to the back center of the room to be more involved in a collaborative working environment. Table was open. Asked students to select symbolic image for real and inventive space; nine students eagerly provided symbolic symbol and put much thought into the decision. Field experience student teacher brought in personal art work in progress to share with students; great dialogue between students and field experience teacher. Students started working more once I pulled out my art and started working.</td>
<td>Bad personal day, but made myself work on art. Sad day in the community with another loss and I don’t feel like working on my art or being at school today. I know I need to set the tone for a productive working environment, but just don’t feel like it today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 26th, 2013 Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>Students had lots of questions about my art work. Started to work on art around 8:42.</td>
<td>Slow start, slow set up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5th, 2013 Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>8:22, set up fast today. Pledge, attendance, and made sure all students are ready to go. Asked students what their plans were for their installation…students are to no longer be working on their principles of design painting. All students are</td>
<td>Monday’s are always a challenge to get students motivated, especially first block. Students are late, or don’t show up until next class period. Frustrating. Student issues; derailed working on art, 8:45 – second attempt to work on art in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 6th, 2013</td>
<td>Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>went to be working on installation. Throughout class time students talked about how the chosen subjects for installation represented them…good student dialogue. Worked maybe 20 minutes. Lots of distractions today. Field experience student had numerous questions today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11, 2013</td>
<td>Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>…was totally engrossed in my art. Could have been a snow day – students are mad. Forgot to pay attention to time today as I was working on my art, student had to remind me that it was time to clean – up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13, 2013</td>
<td>Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>Started working on art around 8:30. Three students sat around my work area and were able to point out other student’s symbolic imagery; bat, and bunny. One student asked about my method of perspective. Good student dialogue. Worked for 30 minutes. Shared current events of a local artist who passed away. Students remembered his art work at a local restaurant where a group of us went during an art field trip earlier this school year. Everyone is moody as it is the first day back to school on daylights savings time…why do they do this? Asked some more students to give their symbolic image and one student responded… “what if I don’t want to give you a symbol…” I responded that it is a choice, for fun, not required. Student responded back “fine, I am not going to give you my symbol”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 13, 2013</td>
<td>Painting III; 8:00-9:25</td>
<td>Two students approached desk to see the elephant in my painting. One of the students who selected an elephant for her symbol in my art is also using an elephant in her installation. Student, who did not want to give me her symbolic image at the beginning of the unit to be included in my artwork, walked by my work station and told me her symbol – a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Starting to work on personal artwork not until 9:00. I am starting to feel really disorganized; my classroom is a mess, I am behind in lessons, need to grade. I am working more during second block than in my selected class for my study. I don’t have a lot of free time…breaking up my creative flow. I am not making great progress and probably won’t complete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hummingbird. Good progress with student as she is often oppositional. End of the hour a group of five students sat around my desk and watched me work and provided feedback/critiqued demonstrating correct art terminology. Additionally, students had fun guessing other students symbols. We made a collective piece of art by the time of data collecting.

March 15th, 2013
Painting III; 8:00-9:25
Students are really talkative, high energy level. I should be trying to get some art accomplished this morning, but today I am more interested in having fun with my student’s creations. They are really fun today, good spirits and willing to talk. Need to use this opportunity to work with students more; today I want to just interact with students…I think this ok. Student does not want to work on installation; she wants to work on other work. I have been setting up work to paint during first block, but I am working more during second block – frustrating. Very crazy Friday.

March 19th, 2013
Painting III; 8:00-9:25
Two students watch me paint and ask questions about process for 20 minutes. Seems like the students who show a great interest in their art equally show an interest in what I am doing. Those students that have low motivation level in their art do not seem very interested in what I am doing. Interesting. So many students absent due to spring break next week. Low level of energy. Students have elected not to turn on the classroom music today; very strange. Have a lock down drill that takes up 30 minutes of class time.

March 21st, 2013
Painting III; 8:00-9:25
Student helped select his symbolic image; I asked if he could help find a good spot for the seal and prompted his critique of the animal. The entire class had a good laugh with the student’s selection as it sounds similar to his last name. Good working day for Last day to collect data; I don’t feel I have enough, or maybe too much? Before spring break, more students absent. Unable to have all students fill out last questionnaire. Wish we were all further in our projects. Not a good month for a research
Conclusion

In deciding whether the role of an artist-teacher may impact student learning and influence teaching practice, one may first determine how they perceive the concept of an artist-teacher. The researcher of the study found a connection with the philosophy of an artist-teacher as being one whom embraces “an approach to art education that celebrates artistic practices and artist ways of thinking into the classroom” (Daichendt, 2009, p. 33). In contrast to viewing the concept of an artist-teacher being as a means of artistic success, the researcher found the practice more as a philosophy; a way of life, as supported by Thornton that “…there is no type quantity or quality of work which legitimizes us as artist teachers…” (2011, p. 35).

Daichendt (2009) affirms that “as the artist-teacher is positioned between two fields, the genius of this concept is the middle ground where traditional understandings of education and art making fuse” (p. 37). The artist-teacher investigated the “middle ground” where her dual roles as an artist and a teacher merged within the classroom setting (p.37). In questioning if it is feasible to model artistic behaviors inside and outside of the classroom, the artist-teacher
concluded; yes, it is possible. The researcher additionally concluded that an artist-teacher does impact student learning with positive results, although teaching practice may result in both positive and negative influences. The artist-teacher understands these limitations and through continual reflections and practice, will seek to further improve balancing the dual roles. In the final chapter, the researcher will apply meaning to the findings by describing how she plans to use the new information as an artist-teacher, in addition to informing others within the field of the visual arts and art education.
Personal Impact of the Study

The impact of the study that investigated the role of an artist-teacher, uncovered that there continues to be an ongoing discussion surrounding the characteristics of an artist-teacher in contemporary times. Daichendt (2010) expands on this issue as he affirms that “reflecting on the term ‘artist-teacher’ is troubling…the field of education continues to grow and bridges this divide when preparing art teachers for grade schools and high schools across the country” (p. 144).

In order to better understand the concept of an artist-teacher, the researcher initially took an approach of examining the dual identities into separate units. First by sorting out the two roles to find commonalities, then investigated how combining the roles may be challenging, but plausible, resulting in a very satisfying experience. Students do thrive in an environment where their artist-teacher is passionate about their profession, as often he or she sets a tone that nurtures a creative, comfortable working atmosphere. An artist-teacher, who exhibits artistic behaviors within the classroom by producing art in collaborative studio setting with learners, may positively influence students in contributing and sharing their personal artistic discoveries.

Dialogue. The increased dialogue between artist-teacher and students was evident throughout the study. In support of the findings of Stanhope (2011) who states that “sharing my process as an artist has allowed students to access me as an adult rather than solely a teacher, and has aided the merging identities of teacher and student” (p. 390). The most rewarding aspect for the artist-teacher during the action based research was the informal dialogue that developed with students as they inquired about the work and art process of the practitioner. The artist-teacher
found an ease of conversation with learners as she was able to share both successes and
disappointments of being an artist. Prior to the implementation of the research, the Painting III
students were unaware that the artist-teacher shared a commonality of insecurities about her art
being critiqued and judged by others. The artist-teacher was able to use this opportunity to
inform students that art making was a part of her well-being, regardless of the level of success
and acceptance within the art world. Students were also able to make connections with their own
art making in correlation with the artist-teacher’s work, and often shared their story that may
have been left untold if not been provided a comfortable, collaborative working environment.

**Finding balance.** The researcher uncovered the importance of being a reflective
practitioner in order to have a better gauge of what works and/or needs improvement when
working as an artist-teacher. Finding balance is key in order to minimize frustrations of
managing the dual roles, as affirmed by Thornton (2005) that “quite clearly, the difficulties of
practicing as both an artist and teacher are real” (p. 171). The artist-teacher initially began
working alongside students in a studio setting out of time necessity, gradually blending the dual
roles with little knowledge of the rich history of artist-teachers throughout time. As a result of
the methodology of data collection, the artist-teacher found the importance of journaling events,
and creating memos in order to better understand the advantages and disadvantages of bringing
her studio to the classroom. More importantly to note, in validating the significance of being
introspective of one’s practice, Thornton suggests that:

…perhaps reflective practice can enable us to accept the complexity and even
understand it as a necessary condition of the world and help us to approach each
problem as a unique experience framed and engaged with such. (p.173)
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The artist-teacher discovered that the frustrations of the dual identities were well worth the extra effort and challenges of striving for a balance in both personal and professional life. Through continual reflections, the practitioner continued to seek strategies that worked best for both students and artist-teacher, so she may continue to pursue the merging roles of being an artist and a teacher.

Impact on Practice

The researcher found a similar thought process in creative problem solving of an artist and an art teacher that further solidified the natural transition of merging of the two identities. The flexibility of the various levels of implementation of such a philosophy may be customized to the uniqueness of an artist-teacher, and abstractly may be considered a mirrored approach of a practitioner whom believes in providing open ended lessons that celebrates each student as an individual.

The unit of study in connection with the research focused on the unique experiences of the students in the Painting III class. An elegant problem was evident in the Self-Identity Installation unit, as learners used their personal experiences as a means to describe themselves. In addition, the unit stressed the use of innovative materials and symbolic imagery, emphasizing a perception of self and reflection of how they are perceived by others in world in which they live, as visually captured in appendix B2. In support of Kay (1998) the unit is an elegant problem as it provides “… an opportunity for many excellent responses or solutions from a variety of problem solvers” (p. 260).

The Self-Identity Installation unit was personalized, as all learners provided an outcome that differed from their peers within the Painting III class. The installation format provided
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

learners an option to explore a sense of place that may be viewed as an actual space, but was not limited to a specific location, as defined by Simpson (2012), a place is “…more than a physical setting, however. It can also be a state of mind –situation in which we find ourselves” (para. 3). In connection with the concept of space, the artist-teacher shared a similar artistic path as she explored what real and inventive space meant to her by emphasizing the classroom environment, student experiences and chosen symbolic imagery, literature influences, and current investigations of the integration of art and text.

Recommendations

Implications for Further Research

As the result of revealing the commonalities during the classroom-based study, the researcher concluded that a more comprehensive investigation of comparing and contrasting the role of an artist-teacher within a long term study format would have been beneficial. A research that analyzed two separate classes of a similar level and environment; one classroom with, and the other without an artist-teacher working in a collaborative studio setting, could provide ample and interesting findings. The researcher would further question in more detail, how might the role of an artist-teacher impact student learning and teaching practice. Additionally, the researcher would like to find a better system of encouraging confidentiality of students completing questionnaires. Combining two classrooms within a study would also be beneficial as the artist-teacher may have had a more difficult time deciphering the owner of the research answers to the questioned inquired.
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Further Investigations and Responsibilities of an Artist-teacher

While the researcher of the study concluded that taking on the role of an artist-teacher is a “way of life”; a philosophy, it does not come without responsibilities of furthering ones art understandings (Simpson, 2013b, p.2). Daichendt (2010) brings attention to the concerns that “…today’s art education programs hinder more than enhance the quality learning and teaching in the classroom as the artist has been removed from many of the programs in universities and colleges” (p. 149).

In agreement with Daichendt (2010), the researcher has found too much emphasis is placed on broad concepts of teaching, while little is stressed of acquiring mastery of the subject one is teaching. Often it is up to the practitioner to seek outside sources beyond required courses and professional development. In relationship with this concept, Thornton (2005) states that, “…many art teachers seek opportunities to develop their art work and often finance opportunities for learning on their own time. This might indicate that making art is necessary” (p. 173). The researcher of the study is optimistic that within the visual arts and art educational framework, there will be continual research and findings that will be supportive in providing more opportunities for artist-teachers in expanding both their teaching and artistic skills.

Bringing the Artistic Self to the Classroom

One of the exciting findings of the research was discovering that there are many levels of implementation of “…bringing art-making and artistic experience directly into the classroom” (Daichendt, 2010, p. 119). Not all art classrooms are conducive for an artist-teacher to work on art alongside students, as discovered by the research. The artist-teacher did find that bringing in personal artwork, and by setting it within the context of the classroom; students inquired the
practitioner about her process and meaning of art. The value of impromptu demonstrations is also an important and easy tool one may incorporate artistic practice during class instruction. An artist-teacher may also share art happenings within the community, post such information throughout the classroom, and on bulletin boards throughout the school.

**Conclusion to the Research**

**Advice to the Field of Art Education and Art Educators**

Exhibiting artistic behaviors with students should go beyond having acquired a degree in art education, rather it should be a continual passion and desire for all such professionals to learn with students. Whether you consider yourself an art teacher or an artist-teacher, neither defined professions should stay stagnant in their art understandings, instead all should seek opportunities of artistic growth through the options of personal art discoveries, workshops, art shows, and/or continual studio classes. Art education programs should reevaluate their current curriculum and inquire whether their institution presently provides the appropriate level of options for their learners who want to seek a stronger studio practice. In addition, fine art programs that offer degrees in studio arts, specifically MFA programs that often supply future art instructors, should equally have understandings in the art of teaching, as Daichendt (2010) adamantly brings attention to this need in the statement that “education is an important discipline yet students who study visual art at the highest level [MFA students] receive no training or education in teaching” (p. 149).
Personal Note from the Researcher

Recently the artist-teacher of the research found a mutual understanding with her three year old daughter and her need to explore with art materials. After putting off the demands of her daughter’s requests to paint for a few days, the researcher made excuses of general adult responsibilities, promising her daughter that maybe tomorrow would be a better day to paint. After a few days of delays, the artist-teacher’s daughter woke up early from an afternoon nap and admittedly proclaimed in a defeated voice that she just had to paint. The researcher heard the despair and the authentic need of her daughter yearning to paint, and completely understood her frustrations. The laundry, bills, and the artist-teacher’s research was set aside as she watched in admiration her daughter paint. After the painting session ended, the three year old little girl skipped away, displaying an emotion of fulfillment as she continued on with her day.

The artist-teacher was first an artist, and her roots are deeply interwoven with the necessity and desire to be a creative individual. Similar to the findings of Daichendt (2011) in connection with George Wallis stating that the artist-teacher’s “…identity as an artist developed much earlier and was supported many years before he pursued teaching…a healthy confidence as an artist significantly impacted his identity and allowed him to act confidently” (p. 75). The researcher whom became an artist first, is also aware and thankful for the fortunate turn of events that led her to an equally fulfilling role as an artist-teacher. Simpson (1998) states:

Career choices are based on a very complex mix of values, beliefs, and attitudes, and seldom does any one factor get examined in depth. Choices may be deliberate or spontaneous. They may be informed, institutive, or guided by
others. Informed career choices are made through the deliberate study of a profession. Sometimes, other people help us to make choices; parents, guidance counselors, and art teachers may comment that teaching is a great career for the visually talented…In any event, career choices and teaching choices are governed by a set of circumstances, peculiar to and different for each individual. (p. 4)

In this research study, the journey of the artist-teacher, who sought to find her position of where she stood amongst artists and art teachers, has been led down another path. In questioning the practitioner of the research how she currently identifies herself, as being either an artist or an art teacher; in closing, her choice is to be an artist-teacher.
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### Appendix A: Unit of Study and Forms

#### A1: Self-Identity Unit Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Nichole Gronvold Roller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description title for the unit:</td>
<td>Self-Identity Installation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals:</td>
<td>Students should…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understand:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ in what way the choice of media, tools, technologies and processes support and influence the communication of ideas. State goal: 26.A.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>know:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ how to analyze and evaluate student and profession works for how aesthetic qualities are used to convey intent, expressive ideas and/or meaning. State goal: 25.A.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ how to create…a complex work of art using a variety of techniques, technologies and resources and independent decision making. State Goal: 26.B.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ produce an installation using an inventive space that represents self through the selection of symbolic imagery. State goal: 26.B.4d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ purposely select materials/media in order to convey a particular meaning and emotion. State goal: 26.A.4e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ analyze art work through comparing and contrasting the principles and elements of art in a self-assessment. State goal: 25.A.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Illinois learning standards, 2013)

Instructional concepts: “An elegant problem provides an opportunity for many excellent responses or solutions from a variety of problem solvers…for a problem to be considered...”
elegant, it must also be worth solving” (Kay, 1998, pp. 260-283).

“Deep understanding is ultimately related to what we mean by wisdom. To understand the world we must first understand ourselves. Through self-knowledge we also understand what we do not understand” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 101)

“Understanding is multidimensional and complicated. There are different types of understanding, different methods of understanding, and conceptual overlap with other intellectual targets” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 84)

**Lessons:**

- **Lesson one:** learners are introduced to a variety of artists who utilize an unique perception of space. The following artists will be discussed: Richard Serra, Sandy Skoglund, Joseph Cornell, and Jason Rhoades. Artist-teacher and student exemplars also part of presentation.
- **Lesson two:** students work in sketch book and list adjectives that describe self in addition to how they believe others perceive them whether it is in line with their self-identity or not. Students begin to replace the written adjective and use a symbolic image as a visual representation. A minimum of five adjectives per perception: self and other.
- **Lesson three:** students bring in a container to use for the self-identity installation. Students will receive ten points for remembering to bring in their own material. Students may also bring in found objects that they find connection with for their self-identity.
- **Lesson four:** artist-teacher asks students to provide a symbolic image for her real and inventive space art work. Encouraging a collaborative working environment in addition to having students make connections with their art and perception of self in addition to artist-teachers work is the rationale of lesson four.
- **Lesson five:** students are to begin mapping
out ideas for their self-identity installation. Artist-teacher uses the sketches as a form of narrative dialogue with students in addition to helping students find the appropriate materials/medium for their final art work.

- Lesson six: students begin to construct, and build upon their self-identity installation project. All students work is individualized; therefore, artist-teacher breaks up the class time with a roundabout walk through so everyone may view each other’s art progress.
- Lesson seven: students help artist-teacher with displaying artwork. Learners create their own label that goes along with their self-identity installation.
- Lesson eight: student self-evaluation
- Lesson nine: artist teacher student assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources and materials:</th>
<th>o Materials:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Acrylic paint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gesso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fabric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Paint markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Watercolors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Sharpies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Found objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Variety of papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Container (student selects a container and brings to class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Masking tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gloss varnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Beads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Thread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Needles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>o Exemplars:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Tijuana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Three astronomical globes at the Vancouver Art Gallery</em>, British Columbia in 2003, Russell Crotty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>The Green House</em>, 1990, Sandy Skoglund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Untitled (Cockatoo and Corks)</em>, 1948, Joseph Cornell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                          | o Teacher and student exemplars |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments;</th>
<th>Formative Assessments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Step by step procedures by artist-teacher, connecting through theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Past student self-identity installation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Narrative-creative flow chart; student and artist-teacher discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Authentic- check lists, self-assessments, and peer review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Observations – daily points (0-10 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative Assessments:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Teacher assessment using a similar format as the self-assessment and peer review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:


A2: Student Self-Assessment; Artist-teacher Assessment

Note: artist-teacher provides feedback on student self-assessment

| Name of Artist: | ___________________________ |
| Title of Work: | ____________________________ |
| Media: | __________________________________ |

**Describe:** Record the facts only: size, media used, and placement of shapes and/or objects.
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

**Analyze:** Analyze your facts by looking for relationships between the elements and principles of design. Example: how did you use the elements of art to convey a particular mood or emotion in your art? Were you successful in organizing your composition through the principles of design? If you used three dimensional objects, are all sides of your form interesting?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

**Interpret:** Ask yourself; what is the single large idea or concept that sums up the theme of your self-identity art work? What do you think your work says to others? How did the found objects communicate with others your personality? Did you select an inside vs. outside metaphor to describe how you see yourself verses how the world perceives you?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

**Judge:** What part of your artwork do you feel is the most successful? Is there anything you would like to improve on in self-identity artwork? What was the most challenging aspect of the lesson?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Please rate the following components in your self-identity installation artwork:

**Composition:** (principles of design and elements of art): 1-20 points___________

**Craftsmanship:** (understanding of the chosen media and presentation): 1-20 points___________

**Complexity:** (how well did you challenge yourself?): 1-20 points___________

**Originality:** (does your art look different than others within the art class? How is your artwork unique?): 1-20 points___________

**Technique:** (how well were you able to describe your self-identity installation in a visual format?):
1-20___________

**Additional comments:**
Appendix B

B1: Artist-teacher Exemplar for Real and Inventive Spaces

B2: Details of Artist-teacher’s Art Found within Figure 4.1

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE


UNDERSTANDING HOW THE ROLE OF AN ARTIST-TEACHER MAY IMPACT STUDENT LEARNING AND TEACHING PRACTICE

B3: Student Exemplars for Self-Identity Installation

Student exemplar, mixed media, 2013.

Student exemplars, mixed media, 2013.