Summer 2009

Alternativeness in art education: case studies of art instruction in three non-traditional schools

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ALTERNATIVENESS IN ART EDUCATION: CASE STUDIES OF ART INSTRUCTION IN THREE NON-TRADITIONAL SCHOOLS

by

Karin Lee Tollefson-Hall

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of
Philosophy degree in Teaching and Learning
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2009

Thesis Supervisors: Professor Steve McGuire
Associate Professor Rachel Williams

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I owe much gratitude to the administrators who allowed me access to these three unique schools. And to the art teachers who opened their rooms to me and spent many hours each week sharing their teaching with me and accepting my presence with open arms. I enjoyed my time at all of the schools getting acquainted with the students and learning the unique story of each school. I could not have completed this project without their cooperation. Thank you to my academic advisors and mentors, whose guidance and advice was invaluable. I also have to acknowledge my husband who made it possible for me to spend extra hours researching and writing. The love and support of my family has made this journey to completion of my degree a reality.

ABSTRACT

In this study I present case studies of the art classes at three private schools in the Midwest. The schools include a Catholic school, a Mennonite school and a Transcendental Meditation school. In the study I spent time observing art classes at each school for eighteen weeks totaling an average of thirty hours in each school. At the schools I observed the art classes and interviewed the art teachers, administrators and students in order to be able to describe the history and philosophy of each school as well as the art teaching and learning that occur in the art classes. The purpose of the study is not to determine which school is best or if they are better than public schools, but to present descriptions of art classes in nontraditional settings. Accomplishing this inquiry presented the possibility of drawing out unique or innovative teaching practices that could be implemented in any art classroom to improve the quality of education.

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PREFACE

While teaching in a large high school in East Moline, Illinois, a colleague made a comment to me which I have found myself returning to again and again throughout the last five years of my life. Her statement was, “I went into teaching assuming that I would be teaching students like the one I was.” In the time since I heard this statement I resigned from teaching public school and enrolled in graduate school full time. As a part of my graduate student experience I had the privilege of being a student teaching supervisor in art. The five semesters that I spent observing and assisting pre-service teachers in their final experiences before beginning their first teaching jobs lead me to reflect on my past teaching in several different secondary education settings and to question my ideas and presumptions of what “good teaching” is or should be. How did I generate my beliefs of what a teacher should and should not do in the classroom? What models, concepts, and people influenced my model of good teaching? How did I create my teacher identity?

From these questions my research interest has risen. As I began to question my beliefs about education I also had a friend who asked me to be her evaluator as she started homeschooling her daughter. I was delighted to perform the task and mystified when she told me she was using a Waldorf curriculum. Waldorf education would become my first research topic and has led me in my interest to discover and document as many nontraditional pedagogies and school settings as I can find. Put simply, I have become interested in learning about all the different ways there are to teach. As an educator of future art teachers, I am building resources of knowledge on teaching practices so that I can offer as many examples of methods of teaching and pedagogies as possible from which my students can select in creating their own teacher identities.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> The best inservice I ever had was almost ten years ago, when I visited another art teacher. That year the staff development money from the state was designated for allowing teachers to spend time at another school. I had a paid substitute for my classes and spent half a day observing another art teacher in the area. I learned more from that experience than any meeting or conference I have ever attended.

This passage was paraphrased from a conversation I had on my first visit to the art room of one of the teachers with whom I would spend time every week for one semester. I remember the staff development program that the teacher was talking about. In 1998 I had just begun my first teaching job at a rural junior and senior high school in southwestern Iowa. During that school year we were asked by the superintendent to contact a teacher in one of the surrounding districts and make arrangements to visit his or her classroom. I chose to go to Dennison, Iowa. I had been introduced to the art teacher in Dennison at the state art educators conference by my undergraduate university professor on several occasions. He was well respected and active in the organization. Being relatively close to his school, I took advantage of an opportunity to observe this veteran art instructor. The visit was a little awkward for me; having been a student teacher just months before, I felt more like I was still student teaching than that I was a colleague of this man. But that is not to say that I did not acquire a lot of new ideas about teaching art just by spending a few hours talking with and observing how someone else teaches.

Contrary to lesson plans labeled “best practices” in teaching that appear in education literature, or teaching guides that present lessons as “teacher proof,” I believe that teaching is contextual. Every teacher and every classroom is unique. Even if identical lesson plans were given to five teachers in one school district, or even one school building, the experience of the lesson for the teachers and students would be different in each class. The student population of each class determines the type of management strategies and ability level to which a teacher modifies his or her teaching practice. The

personal beliefs about the nature of the learner, the purpose of teaching, and the personal preferences of the teacher will all affect how the teacher delivers the lesson plan to the class. As teachers, we all have strengths and weaknesses in our teaching practice and we learn to utilize them as we teach our students.

As the teacher in the opening quote reminded me, there is great value for teachers in learning from each other. This is one reason why I chose to spend time observing three different art teachers in three distinct private schools. I plan to document the teaching practices that are occurring in art classrooms all around us and share those stories of art learning with all teachers. In *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, Elliot Eisner describes his recommended topics for research in art education. Besides recording the history of the field and performing demographic research of art education, Eisner calls for more research describing what teachers are doing in classrooms (Eisner, 2002, p. 215-216).

Why private schools?

While there are many exceptional teachers in public schools implementing innovative curriculums and teaching styles, I am interested in visiting private schools. Because these schools are not public institutions, they have the potential to employ not only curriculae and teaching styles that are qualitatively different from traditional school models, but the mission and administration of the school may also be significantly different.

By “traditional school model” I am referring to the typical public high school in the United States. A traditional model school is a high school which is governed by a school board, superintendent and principal. Students attend between four and eight classes each day in separate subjects taught by separate teachers. Letter grades and numerical grade point averages are used to rank students by achievement. Learning is generally passive in classrooms with desks facing the teacher. District approved texts and teaching materials are used for academic subjects with more flexibility for elective area

courses. Students may be grouped by ability in classes designed to prepare them for either the world of work or higher education upon graduation.

In her book *Schools for Growth: radical alternatives to current educational models,* Lois Holzman points out that rather than magnet or charter schools "it is the independent school that is more likely to attempt to create and implement a qualitatively different methodology from traditional models" (1997, p. 81). In using the term "alternative school" I am not referring to what is commonly called an alternative school, which tends to be a public school that serves at-risk students. Instead what I mean by "alternative school" is a privately funded and governed school that functions independently from the school district in which it resides. Holzman reports (as cited in Mintz, 1995, p. 10) that, since the early 1980's, there has been an increase in alternative schools of more than 60% with estimates of more than 6000 alternative schools existing in the United States. Most alternative schools are religious by nature, with Catholic schools being the most common, although the number of secular alternative schools has increased in recent years.

> Although there are varied and complex political, cultural, and religious motivations for alternative schooling, the desire for a greater level of autonomy and participation in creating more educational choices seems clear. For this reason alone, the structure, organization, and philosophy of alternatives seems worthy of serious examination by educators, educational researchers, and policymakers. (Holzman, 1997, p. 81)

The inquiry

My search for alternative schools with a high school program in the Midwest produced several options. After contacting principals and art teachers, I was granted permission to spend time in the art room every week during the fall semester of the 2008-2009 school year at three schools. The resulting schools were a Catholic high school (Alternative Site 1), a Mennonite school (Alternative Site 2) and a Transcendental

Meditation school (Alternative Site 3). All school names and names of participants in the inquiry have been changed for the purposes of the inquiry.

It was only a coincidence that all three art teachers observed for this inquiry happened to be male and between the ages of 45 and 60. In all three schools I would begin as an observer in the classroom and gradually involve myself more in the classroom as an assistant to the art teacher in order to allow everyone to become comfortable with my presence in the room. I tried to limit the amount of time that I was seen as a person in the corner with a computer, and instead I helped the teachers with materials and answered students' questions about their artwork giving suggestions for technique or composition. At both the Catholic school and the Transcendental Meditation school, there happened to be a day that I came to observe and the teacher was required to fulfill duties outside of the classroom. I spoke with the substitute teachers in both schools and offered myself as the art teacher for the day, as neither had art training. This proved to be a beneficial experience as it gave me a chance to prove myself as a knowledgeable art teacher and gain the trust of the students who were normally very loyal to their teacher.

In the moments before and after classes, these three teachers graciously gave up their coveted work time, once each week to talk with me about the school and what was happening in the classes I was watching. At times some of the teachers asked for advice about lessons or student work that was occurring, using me as a resource for ideas, conversing with me as a colleague would in trying to solve classroom quandaries. At other times most of the conversations with teachers were on an instructional level, as I was the student there to learn about their teaching. Besides the teachers, I spoke with an administrator at each school to gather background statistics and information about the school buildings and school community.

Providing a "portrait" of a day in a school is valuable but becomes especially significant when paired with the voices of students describing the aspects of the

classroom or school that make them feel successful or provide a positive learning experience. Teachers are constantly making decisions about how and what they teach to meet the needs of the students before them on any given day. But teachers rarely stop and ask their students if what and how they are teaching is helping them to be better learners. For this reason, my intention was not only to describe the art classes at three private schools; I also wanted to ask students what they like about their school and art class, and which aspects of the school and art class make them feel successful. I found that I had mixed success at this goal, as some students had very articulate and thoughtful responses about their school while other responses were shallow and on a few occasions students found excuses to avoid answering the question.

The three schools chosen are private institutions due to their religious affiliations. While I document the underlying philosophy of each school, religion is not the focus of my inquiry. Each day I spent observing and interacting with the art students and teachers at each school, I took note of several aspects of the schools and art classes in order to describe what art learning looks like in these particular schools. In order to guide my observations and emerging understanding of these schools the following research questions were used:

1. How does the mission and philosophy, or purposes, of the school influence the practices and experiences in the art classroom?
2. What are the practices for the art classroom at each school?
    a. What is the physical environment of the art classroom?
    b. What is the art curriculum?
    c. How does the art teacher teach?
    d. What is the art teacher's philosophy of art education?
    e. What is the art budget or what resources are available to the teacher?

3. In what ways are the purposes and practices of the school and art classroom qualitatively different from a public school?

Methodology

For this inquiry I conducted case study research. In the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln state, "as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used" (2000, p. 435). A case can be very small, such as one child, or as large as one classroom or even one school. The factor in defining something as a 'case' is that it is a bounded system. In this research I used a type of case study that Denzin and Lincoln call "intrinsic case study" (2000, p. 437). An intrinsic case study

> is undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants better understanding of this particular case. Here, it is not undertaken primarily because it represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity *and* ordinariness, this case itself is of interest. (2000, p. 437)

As with many forms of qualitative research, generalization is not my main concern in presenting these particular cases. As Denzin and Lincoln point out,

> generalization can be an unconscious process for both researcher and reader…case study researchers, like others, pass along to readers some of their personal meanings of events and relationships- and fail to pass along others. They know that the reader, too, will add and subtract, invent and shape- reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful. (2000, p. 442-443)

My intention is not to present these schools as something that can be reproduced with identical results. Studying classrooms and teaching styles includes many uncontrollable variables and therefore it could be argued that they are not genuinely generalizable. Publications within the field of art education value the use of narrative and anecdote in writing and research that is produced for practicing teachers as well as theorists. Elliot Eisner describes the changing practices of educational research and the shift away from quantifiable data to qualitative measures in *The Arts and the Creation of*

Mind (2002). He believes that “much of what needs to be understood and conveyed needs a narrative more than it needs a number…Narratives, films, video, theater, even poems and collages can be used to deepen one’s understanding of aspects of educational practice and its consequences (p. 210). Having been presented a detailed description of teaching and learning in a specific setting, the reader can select the aspects of the teaching described that he or she feels would be applicable to his or her own classroom. In conclusion, I will point out some of the aspects of the school or art classroom that I believe have a positive impact on students’ educational experiences and recommend those practices that could be adapted for use in other schools.

Presented here are three case studies, one of a Catholic school (AS1), one of a Mennonite school (AS2) and one of a Transcendental Meditation school (AS3) set side by side with my own anecdotal narratives of experiences I have had as a public school teacher in various school settings. I conducted the research at each school in the same manner. I received IRB approval and a letter of acceptance to participate in the inquiry by the principal and art teacher of each school. For this inquiry, all names of the schools and participants have been changed. I began my research at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year and attended each school for at least two hours every week during the Fall semester. The majority of my time was spent in the art classroom during an art period observing the teacher and students and recording fieldnotes of my observations. I began as an observer in the classroom and, as the teacher and students became more comfortable with my presence in the class, I began a participant role as an assistant to the teacher.

Throughout the course of the semester I conducted several informal interviews with the teachers during prep hours. The interviews were focused on the teacher’s beliefs of the nature of the students, their expectations of the students in class, their curriculum and classroom procedures and their interpretations of their school. Once the students were comfortable with me and were willing to talk to me about their experiences in

school, I conducted brief informal interviews with the students. On the first day that I visited each school, I presented an assent information letter explaining my research to the students in the art class I would be observing. The students were able to verbally assent to be in the inquiry at any time. I only interviewed students who told me they assented to be in the inquiry and the interview focused on what they liked about the school, and what aspects of the school they felt helped them be better learners.

I found that I was able to locate a large amount of information on the mission and purposes of the schools on their respective websites. However, during the weeks that I attended each school, I took time to interview the principal or an administrative representative of each school. The focus of the interviews was on the historical background of the school, the demographics of the student population and the general policies or governance of the school. The interviews were completed with varying degrees of success. One principal was willing to be interviewed for almost thirty minutes. At the other two schools I made appointments for interviews and instead found that administrative staff members referred me to student handbooks and other published materials containing the information about school policies and demographics. All of the teacher interviews and single principal interview were audio taped and transcribed. All participants were presented with an assent or consent information letter before being interviewed and were informed that they could end participation in the interview at any time without any consequences.

Outside of the school settings, I reviewed documents from all schools that are preserved in state libraries or at the schools themselves. Because qualitative research data is emergent, as I transcribed the interviews and my fieldnotes each week, I continually performed data analysis, letting themes emerge from my observations that were then used to form refined subquestions to guide my further observations and interviews. For example, as one teacher commented that he would be spending time after school working on his own personal artwork, I became curious about the importance of being a

productive artist and teacher. I asked all teachers specifically if they continue to produce or exhibit works of art and if their students ever see them making artwork. By the end of the semester I had spent an average of thirty hours in each school.

In the subsequent chapters I have presented examples of schools which employ methods of schooling which are unique, and different from the common school experience encountered in public schools in the United States. All three of the case studies are presented similarly. The description of each school begins with an explanation of the historical and philosophical contexts in which it exists, followed by a description and analysis of the specific art classes and art teachers I observed. To conclude the inquiry, I have defined aspects of each school and art class that I believe are significant in the learning of the art students and recommended teaching practices which could be implemented in other schools.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Broadly based, general accounts of alternative schools really do not exist. There are studies or descriptions of specific schools that have been deemed successful in some way or that have gained some level of interest or recognition for their distinctive methods of schooling such as Summerhill (Neill, 1992) and Sudbury Valley School (Holzman, 1997). With this inquiry I hope to add to the limited body of documentation of alternative schools by presenting case studies of a Catholic school, a Mennonite school and a Transcendental Meditation school. In visiting these schools and observing the teachers and students I will not be assessing if the school is "successful." I am not interested in test scores, or how these schools perform on standardized tests in relation to public schools in the state or district. I do not want to asses the quality of the educational experience beyond what the students tell me they like about their school. Instead I will attempt to describe the organization of the school and instructional style of the art teacher. My goal is not to say that these schools are better or worse than any other type of school, but to point out what characteristics of these schools make them unique. To do this, I will focus my attention on several aspects of the school and the instruction that I have seen as a researcher in alternative settings, or have experienced as a teacher in several public schools, to have an effect on student learning and educational experiences. The factors that I believe influence student learning are: the physical environment of the school and the art room; the mission and organization of the school (school mission statement, rules and policies or general governance); the school schedule, the curriculum, the teaching style of the art teacher; the teacher's personality and beliefs or expectations of the students; and the students themselves.

Physical environment

In my past research (Tollefson-Hall, 2005) I visited two different types of schools in which the physical environment was believed to play an important role in the educational experience of children. Prairieflower, a Waldorf preschool in Iowa, and the Rudolph Steiner School, a Waldorf grade school in Michigan, both designed their school spaces to be more like a home than an institutional setting. Similarly, Truman Elementary School, a public school in Davenport, Iowa was implementing a system called Integrated Thematic Instruction (ITI) that promotes that the creation of a warm, non-threatening, organized classroom with visual harmony in colors, patterns and textures around the room. This is thought to affect student's brains and to reduce distractions from learning (Kovalik, 2002). I believe that one key to the home-like atmosphere of all three of these schools, which have lamps instead of fluorescent lights, curtains, rugs, plants and natural objects around the room, is that the feeling of a home instead of a sterile institutional room helps students feel as comfortable and safe in the classroom as they would in a home. This also helps the students and teachers in the class create a community in the classroom and relate to each other more closely and humanely, as children may act if living as an extended family. John Dewey also had distinct ideas about desks and the classroom environment that he explained in his book *The School and Society*. Dewey believed that desks and classrooms of public schools are designed for listening, not for working or moving, and are designed to accommodate the largest groups possible (1902, p. 32).

Mission and organization of the school

The objective or mission of a school will influence many aspects of the school, such as how the administration and teachers view the nature of the learner and the community in which the school resides. The mission statement of the school expresses the focus of the work of the school, or its reason for being. When I was a teacher in a

secondary school in rural Iowa, the task of an entire school year of inservice meetings was to rewrite the schools' mission statement. The process began by listing what the teachers felt were the most important functions of the school, such as college preparation, work and life skills, learning how to learn, etc. The list was then consolidated and voted on until two main ideas were left. While there were a few students in each graduating class who did go on to college, it was widely expected that more than half of all graduates would finish high school and remain in the community with their extended family ties. Because of this, the two things that were deemed most important by the teachers in this school district were life-long learning and community or citizenship. The mission of this school became to teach students how to be life-long learners since they would most likely not continue their education after high school, and would likely be involved citizens in their community.

It is common practice for public and private schools to have a mission statement. Hlebowitsh believes that school mission statements often are written using language that has a greater promotional quality than the expression of a mission (Hlebowitsh, 2005, p.88). Schools choose to become private institutions because they desire to be unique in educational purpose and/or method of instruction. The unique qualities of the school often are demonstrated in the mission statement. Mission statements for public schools run into trouble when they become to generic to express an actual mission or idea grounding the educational experience of the school.

> The first thing we should look for in a mission statement is some exposition that helps unify the structure of the entire school experience (Krug, 1950). What is it that all teachers, irrespective of grade level or subject area, are committed to accomplishing in the school? And what is it about the school that makes it unique and especially critical in the education of youth? The statement should be formed at a level of high generality, but phrased in a way that allows lay people and educators alike to understand what the school truly values in the education of its children. (Hlebowitsh, 2005, p. 89)

In alternative schools, the organization of the school can be radically different from the traditional school setting. “Free” schools such as Summerhill offer instruction, but the students are free to choose each day to attend classes or not (Neill, 1992). Summerhill and Sudbury Valley School use a town meeting system of governance for the schools, where teachers and administrators do not impose rules for the school. Instead, the students suggest and vote on the rules and consequences that govern the school (Neill, 1992 and Holzman, 1997).

The mission or beliefs grounding an alternative school can affect how the school is organized at basic levels. For example the Golden Key project, which was begun in Russia in 1989, and which now includes at least 30 child centers, is based on the philosophy of Lev Vygotsky, and seeks to creat zones of proximal development (Holzman, 1997, p. 86). The goal of Golden Key, according to Lois Holzman, is “to create an environment where children’s learning is not separate from their emotional growth nor from their creating happy, joyful lives” (1997, p. 85). This goal, and the focus on zones of proximal development, influence how the school is organized. Holzman lists four characteristics of the Golden Key child centers. First, the role of the teacher is not as an educator of children but as someone who is “*sharing life with children*” (italics in original) (1997, p. 87). Second, the school does not wish to separate the school life from the family, instead, the school life should complete the relationships in the family. For this reason the “school is opened to the parents” (1997, p. 87). Third, the children are placed in multiage groups, that are more like the relationships they experience in a home or community. And fourth, it is believed that learning “is subordinate to the values of happy life and maximum positive development, and occurs in the context of the overall life activities of the children and adults” (1997, p. 87).

School schedule

School schedule could refer to the school calendar, or in other words, to how many days the students attend school each year and how the vacations are divided out in the year. While I have not found an example of an alternative school with a calendar that is different from traditional schools, there is controversy among public schools as to whether it is best to have a long summer break, as schools have traditionally had, or to spread out the school days more evenly throughout the year in what is often referred to as a 'balanced calendar' approach. It appears that students who attend schools that meet for more days of the year would be at an advantage over students who are in school fewer days.

What I am more interested in with the schools' schedule is how the school divides the school day. Traditionally schools tend to have short periods, or long blocks, for each class or subject throughout the day, with little if any continuity between the classes and teachers. The door opened for innovative approaches to school scheduling with the availability of computer technology in the 1960's (Traverso, 2000, p. 332). Since that time schedules have evolved from the typical 45-55 minute period, to long blocks up to 120 minutes, and any combination of long and short classes within a school week imaginable.

Instead of these types of schedules, some alternative schools seek to achieve more unity in the instruction. In Waldorf schools and in the ITI model at Truman Elementary, broad common topics or themes are used to unify the curriculum so that all subjects are taught in a manner that is linked to the theme (Tollefson-Hall, 2005). Waldorf schools do not divide the school day into sections governed by strict adherence to time schedules or a bell to signal class changes. Instead, the length of lessons is left up to the teacher's discretion, so that a subject or lesson can be carried through to a natural break or change in the activity of the children (Steiner, 1995, p. 71). A few years ago I spent one day attending Willowwind, a local alternative school for students up to age

fourteen. All of the students in the school ate lunch and went out to play at the same time, but other than that each of the three multiage classrooms operated by its own schedule and the teachers followed the interests of the students in deciding when to change subjects. If the class spent an entire morning researching a foreign country or after thirty minutes of reading poetry was ready for a change, that was fine. Reggio Emilia preschools in Italy also do not adhere to time schedules, but let children work at an activity for as long as they desire (Tarr, 2003).

Curriculum

The choice of the curriculum for the school year will directly affect what the students have the opportunity to learn. Many public school teachers do not have the luxury of choosing their curriculum, as the school district may have chosen a pre-made curriculum that meets the districts' standards and mandate that teachers use it, or refuse to purchase materials for a different curriculum. As an art teacher there tends to be more flexibility for the teacher to choose his or her own curriculum. Most school districts only require that art teachers meet the district or state standards, but art teachers are free to do that in any way they wish.

Alternative schools are free to adopt or create any curriculum they choose, and this can be a major factor in defining these schools as unique. The vast majority of alternative schools are religious schools, which have chosen to be independent from the local school district so that religion can be incorporated into the curriculum. One of the basic principles of Waldorf schools is that they follow the curriculum laid out by Rudolf Steiner, the creator of the school. The Waldorf curriculum does not outline specific lessons to be taught, but Steiner did give a topic around which to focus each year of schooling through eighth grade. Each topic is one that Steiner believed to be best suited to meeting the developmental level of the child at that age. For example, the theme for first grade is fairy tales, for second grade it is myths and legends from around the world,

and third grade is the stories of the Old Testament. The year-long topics for the rest of the grades up to high school are: Norse mythology in fourth grade; Ancient mythology and Greek history in fifth grade; Roman history, Medieval society, and the lives of Christ and Mohammed in sixth grade; the Renaissance and the Reformation in seventh grade; and the French and American revolutions, and Shakespeare, in eighth grade (Tollefson-Hall, 2005).

Other alternative schools, such as the Barbara Taylor School in New York City, have no curriculum. Lois Holzman, collaborator in the creation and director of the Barbara Taylor School, describes the school as "*improvisational, activity-centered, and radically democratic.*" (italics in original) (Holzman, 1997, p. 114). She continues,

> Being a student or a staff member is both liberating and demanding, for there is no curriculum to follow, no set schedule, no fixed divisions of students…Each day the students and adults decide, together, what they will do. The task of the learning directors (they are called that and not teachers because they function much like theater directors) is to lead the students and each other in the creative, relational activity of creating a developmental learning environment-performing the school anew each day. (Holzman, 1997, p. 114)

Teaching style and teacher beliefs/expectations of students

No two teachers are the same, and even if given identical instructional materials, each teacher teaches in a manner that reflects his or her personality, strengths, and interests. This is why educational research becomes difficult. The teacher and students are uncontrolled variables. The way a teacher teaches directly affects the educational experience of the students. Eisner points out that even what is *not* taught, or the null curriculum, teaches the students about values in the classroom and society (Eisner, 2002). If a teacher is kind instead of authoritarian the students will respond differently to the teacher and what he or she is trying to teach. Eisner (2002) describes several characteristics that he believes contribute to teacher quality. Teachers cannot fill students

with knowledge; learning is cooperation between teachers and students. To teach, Eisner believes that,

> …teachers need to behave like an environmental designer, creating situations that will, in turn, create an appetite to learn. These situations will contain tasks and materials that will engage students in meaningful learning, learning that they can apply and that connects with other aspects of the world…When "manner" in teaching is brought under intelligent control and when it is sensitive and appropriate fro the individual student or class, it is artistic in character. The tone of the teacher's language, the way in which the pace of class is modulated, and, most important, the ability to improvise in the face of uncertainty, are critical. (Eisner, 2002, p. 47-8)

Suspected correlations between teacher quality and student achievement have been widely studied in the field of education research (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Harris, Sass, 2008; Rice, 2003; Rockoff, 2004). The focus of research on teacher quality is policy issues related to teacher training programs and licensure. In this inquiry I observed three experienced teachers and documented their current teaching practice. All three teachers are licensed and therefore, have completed a teacher training program. I did not question them about their teach training or licensure requirements, as these are just a small part of what has brought them to become the teachers they are today. Policy issues of teacher training program and licensure requirements as a result, are not part of my interest in this study.

In a study of at-risk young women in public alternative schools, all of the girls interviewed felt that they had been 'othered' or ignored by their former teachers and school staff. In contrast, they reported feeling successful at the alternative school because each day the teachers looked them in the face and spoke directly to them about their lives and their schooling. They felt that they were important individuals to the teacher (Loutzenheiser, 2002). This not only has to do with the personality of the teachers in the alternative school, but also with the shared belief that the students are valuable individuals with something to offer to the community. These teachers have not given up

on the students who repeatedly failed in traditional public school settings, and instead have positive expectations of what they can achieve.

Similarly, Waldorf teachers believe in the creation of a close-knit family style community amongst the students in their class. Each day the teachers greet every student at the door and offer a handshake or hug, look the students in the eye and have a brief conversation with them. The ITI model also encouraged its teachers to have students give the teacher a handshake, high five or hug as they entered the room (Tollefson-Hall, 2005). Teaches who have high expectations for students and believe that they are capable of great things will teach students accordingly.

At the Barbara Taylor School the belief of the directors in the creation of a "radical democracy" guide the activities present in the school.

> To us, radical democracy refers to the collective activity of people *governing and transforming themselves*. The Barbara Taylor School is democratic to the extent that creating the school is inclusionary and voluntary, not to the extent that rules institutionalizing democratic process are followed...It is our belief that it is the *process* of creating an environment in which a 4-year-old can hold the floor and be heard and respected in a mixed-age and heterogeneous group that is most valuable. (italics in original) (Holzman, 1997, p. 116)

The students

The students are another uncontrolled variable in educational research. Any teacher knows that no two groups of children are the same; each second grade class can be radically different from the next. The personality of each individual child plays a role in the creation of the class community. Part of each student's personality comes from his or her race, social class and home experience. In *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau (2003) demonstrates that social class is actually more influential in a student's educational experience than race. Due to the nature of our school system and the lack of federal funding for private schools, the alternative independent schools I am interested in studying require parents to pay tuition. As a result, the students who attend these schools

are going to be from middle to upper class homes and will experience what Lareau (2003) calls “concerted cultivation.” Middle and upper class parents who take an active and deliberate role as advocates for their children in their education provide advantages that lower class children do not receive. The parents of alternative school students in this inquiry are not only financially able to send their children to these schools but are also educated enough to research the school and make the decision that this is the best educational option for their child.

Single-sex instruction

In the beginning of the twentieth century, single-sex educational settings were common, though mostly due to the fact that the majority of the students attending school were boys. Now most educators have only experienced co-educational classrooms unless they attended separate boys and girls preparatory or parochial schools. This is a result of the congressional act known as Title IX, passed in 1972, that mandated equal education for boys and girls. With the momentum of the civil rights and feminist movements it was not socially acceptable for educators and researchers to publicize beliefs of boys and girls benefiting from single sex educational settings (Meyer, 2008, p. 16). Believing that boys and girls may learn differently or benefit from different teaching styles, some researchers have investigated the questions. Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, studies have been completed on both sexes. NCLB opened a door for single-sex public classrooms by approving federal funds for innovative educational programs including same-gender schools and classrooms. While private and charter schools have always been allowed to divide classes in any way they deem appropriate, in 2004 the Office of Civil Rights changed its view of Title IX and “issued proposals that would permit public single-sex schools and classes with few limitations” (Salomone, 2006, p. 779).

> According to Leonard Sax, executive director of the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, in 1995 there were just 3 single-gender public schools in the United States; by 2007 there were 86, with an additional 277 public schools offering all-

> girls or all-boys education programs within their coeducational building. (Meyer, 2008, p.19)

I found almost equal numbers of studies reporting the benefits to girls feeling more empowered in the classroom (Crombie, Abarbanel, & Trinneer, 2002) and boys getting more dynamic teaching styles to meet levels of maturity (King, & Gurian.., 2006; Warrington & Younger, 2001; Marsh, 1989; Meyer 2008).

> The resurgence of single-sex schooling has also been the result of hard-fought battles to recapture the benefits of difference and take advantage of educational choice…Part of what single-sex schools do is redress historic and historical inequities, another part is minimizing the distractions that come from mixing the sexes; and a final ingredient is addressing gender differences in learning. (Meyer, 2008, p. 21)

What was more interesting to me than the individual studies of the academic achievements of boys and girls in single-sex classrooms was the fact that almost all of the studies were conducted in schools in countries outside of the United States. The most frequent sites for research studies on single-sex education were from England and Australia with locations in Africa, Belgium, and Pakistan also appearing in the search results. In the studies that were conducted in the United States, the most common topic of the research was studies to determine if single-sex classes improve academic achievement for low income or minority students (Hubbard & Datnow, 2005) suggesting that, at least for now, single-sex classes are reserved as a drastic reform for poor performing schools, rather than a positive educational program for all students.

Dress code

All schools have some form of dress code to delineate what is and is not school appropriate attire. I will not outline all of the possible nuances of rules of dress in schools within the range of schools still allowing for personal choice in clothing. What is more significant is the debate over school uniforms. Some of the reasons given for implementing school uniforms are: improved attendance, self-esteem and academic

performance; a reduction in school violence and social pressures; an improved school atmosphere; and, a reduction is clothing costs for families (Brunsma, 2006).

Current research on school uniforms is focused on refuting past studies which claimed to have found positive correlations between school uniforms and school improvement (Bodine, 2003; Brunsma, 2006; Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006;). The past studies have been discredited as anecdotal, containing too many uncontrollable variables to be reliable, and misinterpreting statistical data. For example Brunsma (2006) points out that "[t]he drive to uniform public schools students occurs mostly in disadvantaged, poor, and minority schools and school districts" (p. 50). Implementing a school uniform program is highly visible to the community and therefore occurs in schools looking to make quick radical improvements to the school climate and achievement levels. The correlations of improved academics or lower school violence can be confounded when schools implement several changes at the same time with uniforms only being one component. For example a school attempting to lower violence may institute a uniform policy and also increase the number of hall monitors. In this case it would be unclear if a reduction in school violence came from the uniforms or from the increased surveillance (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006). Konheim-Kalkstein states "[l]ike the research on a possible relationship between school uniforms and reduced violence, findings on uniforms and school climate have yielded no clear conclusions" (p. 27).

One of the cited positive effects of instituting a mandatory school uniform policy is a reduction of clothing costs. Although buying uniforms can result in an initial increase in clothing cost, at least theoretically, over time it should be more cost effective. Purchasing school uniforms does become burdensome for families of lower economic status. School uniforms have been used in the United States as an attempt to improve the school climate of schools in lower economic neighborhoods which tend to have more occurrences of violence than schools in wealthy neighborhoods. Unless schools subsidize uniforms, or have used uniforms that can be handed down or purchased second-hand,

requiring uniforms places stress on the families who can least afford them (Konheim-Kalkstein, 2006).

Annette Lareau (2003) reminds us, in *Unequal Childhoods*, that class is more important to school achievement than race. In her research Lareau also describes parent involvement in their children's education. From her descriptions it is clear that less affluent parents are more likely to defer to the educational authority of the school and therefore not question the use of uniforms. David Brunsma (2006) agrees with this conclusion and states "results for the demographic and socioeconomic factors associated with school uniform policies show that more affluent schools are less likely to have uniform policies, while disadvantaged schools are more likely to have them" (p. 51).

In the public school debate over school uniforms one frequent argument against mandatory dress is that it violates the First Amendment Right of free speech. "Critics of the uniform policies, including the American Civil Liberties Union, accuse schools of taking a simplistic approach to school violence. The largest opposition to school uniforms, however, is not cost or style, but constitutionality" (Mitchell and Knechtle, 2003, p. 488). Some of the reasons for rejecting school uniforms given by Mitchell and Knechtle include restricting student and family rights for freedom of expression through dress, uniforms restrict youth in the developmental task of creating identity with dress, and that uniform policies are an intrusion of government into the private lives of citizens (p. 488).

Despite the mixed review of the outcomes associated with school uniforms, private schools continue to require them. In the literature, a debate over the use of uniforms in private schools does not exist. Private schools are free to institute dress code policies as they choose. Academic achievement and school discipline are surely reasons for private schools to desire to have students wear uniforms. Another reason may be as a symbol of status or prestige of the school. Images in our culture, from movies, advertisements to music videos, connect uniforms to affluent private schools. Flashing an

image of an attractive young boy or girl in a white shirt and tie or plaid skirt instantly registers with a viewer as a privileged private school student. It would take quite a different image to get a viewer to make the association with at-risk, low economic status minority student as the person wearing the school uniform.

> Clothing is a very powerful way in which social regulation is enacted: it turns bodies into "readable" signs, making the observer recognize patterns of docility and transgression, and social positioning. Elizabeth Grosz remarks that clothes mark the subject's body as deeply as a surgical incision, binding individuals to systems of significance in which they become signs to be read, both by others and by themselves (Grosz 1995). (Dussel, 2001, p. 213)

Community service

The practice of engaging in community service activities is common in private schools, for fundraising and for character development. Because most private schools are religious, with the large majority being Catholic, Christian values of stewardship and charity are taught through involving students in community service. Among secular schools, the inclusion of community service or service learning in the curriculum is a current debate. Community service and service learning are two different practices. Community service is volunteer work done to provide a service to someone in the community. Service learning differs in that the type of service activity is integrally linked to the curriculum, the students may be involved in deciding on the service activity, and reflection on the service activity and its impact on student's experiences and learning is a focus of the curriculum and possibly the evaluation.

While few would deny that there are positive social and developmental effects to students who voluntarily perform community service, when schools require students to perform community service, the outcomes may be different. As a high school teacher, a common event in the school where I taught was an annual food drive asking students to donate non-perishable food items for charity. I frequently watched the teachers in the rooms around me collect large quantities of food while the box in my room sat mainly

empty. While I appreciated the results for the food pantry, I had an ethical problem with how the food was collected. The teachers around me gave students extra credit for bringing in food. I did not agree with students being bribed into being charitable and wanted kids to give for the sake of helping others, not for a personal reward. Secondly, this system of extra credit points also meant that the student whose parents could afford to buy the most food to donate, was able to buy a better grade.

> The practice of requiring service has been debated in state and local communities and among scholars. Some argue that requiring service is a contradiction in that it constitutes enforced servitude, and those students who are not motivated to volunteer on their own will not derive benefits (Raskoff and Sundeen 1999). Opponents of required service also argue that schools should primarily be concerned with fostering students' academic skills and achievement rather than channeling their valuable sources and time into requiring community service (Bandow 1995). Arguments in favor of required service, on the other hand, point to the need, indeed, the responsibility, of schools in a democratic society to instill knowledge of civic principles, habits of civic engagement, and dedication to the public interest in young people, stating that unless service is required by schools, this important opportunity will be lost to those most in need of learning civic responsibility (Barber 1992; Kenny and Gallagher 2003). (Schmidt, 2007, p. 129)

Research on community service through surveys have recorded that up to 50% of high school students reported performing voluntary community service, making the argument for the necessity of mandatory community service through the schools seem unnecessary. Although, while half of all high school students say they have participated in community service, the same students reported only participating once or twice a year (Schmidt, 2007, p. 128). Proponents of mandatory community service hope that having been required to spend large amounts of time working in service, students will come to view community service as a regular part of their lives and not as a once or twice a year event.

> A second reason to consider requiring service even when participation rates are high is that not all groups of adolescents participate in service with the same frequency. Specifically, African American and Latino/a adolescents, and students whose parents have little education are the least likely to participate in service in general, and they are particularly unlikely to participate

> in service voluntarily. Such individuals are likely to face social, economic, and educational disadvantages that might put them at risk for academic failure and other maladaptive behaviors. If participation in service activities does indeed have a positive impact on adolescent development as so many have argued, these benefits will be largely unavailable to these populations. Consistent with other studies (Barber 1992; Kenny and Gallagher 2003), our findings suggest that requiring students to do service might ensure that the benefits of service participation like academic success, positive behavior, and civic responsibility will not be lost to those most in need of them. (Schmidt, 2007, p. 136)

While it is sound reasoning to ask public school students to perform community service so that all students have the experience of working in service to the community, this does not apply to private schools. The students that are least likely to participate in voluntary community service due to social class and parent education levels, are not the students who will be attending a private school which requires the parents to pay tuition.

CHAPTER 3

ALTERNATIVE SITE 1: A CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

I did not ask Jim Davis, the art teacher at the Catholic school, specifically about his inclusion of religion into the curriculum, but I have witnessed a few connections in my time in the classroom. Naturally there is the presence of artworks made by students that include crosses and AS1 crowns in the school, and Jim does not discourage making religious objects in any way. In the beginning of the class he was talking with one girl and as an aside told me that she is a janitor at one of the Catholic Churches in town. Then he posed a question to her about religion. He relayed a debate between a humanist and a Catholic that he had encountered in which the humanist made an ad asking why God is needed and the phrase, "Just be good for goodness sake." He posed the question to the student of why she believes we need God. I was surprised that she did not shy away but thought a moment and she and Mr. Davis reasoned aloud through their ensuing conversation about the necessity of God, with both candidly admitting that they believe in God even though they could not necessarily explain why God is "necessary."

Philosophy of Catholic education

In reading the literature on Catholic education, and more specifically that related to the philosophy of Catholic education, it quickly becomes obvious that among Catholic scholars there is much debate about the existence of a "Catholic philosophy of education." John Donohue, in *Catholicism and Education,* and Ellis Joseph, in *The Philosophy of Catholic Education*, both begin their writings with lengthy discussions of the definitions of philosophy and philosophies of education and the scholars who have promoted them. While following different paths, both authors reach the same conclusion that the denial of a "philosophy of Catholic education" stems from the conflicts between the definitions of philosophy and theology. The difference is that the truths of philosophy are revealed through reason and the truths of theology are revealed by God. "Philosophy

is a science which studies the highest principles and first causes of all things through the *natural* light of reason. The light in theology is supernatural" (italics in original, Joseph, 2001, p. 31). Therefore to combine philosophy and Catholicism creates a conflict at the very basis of both philosophy and theology.

After their lengthy denial of a true "philosophy of Catholic education" both authors in reality understand that most readers are really asking "what makes a Catholic school Catholic" and proceed to then provide their vision of a philosophy of Catholic education. Joseph states

> [w]hat makes Catholic schools Catholic are the theological truths which govern and give guidance to both philosophy and to persons of Catholic faith. These truths have made the Catholic Church a countercultural church. It is a church which stands in resistance to birth control, to violence and death, to premarital sex, to abortion and euthanasia, to divorce, and so on. The failure on the part of Catholic schools to understand that their guidance emanates from theology, and not solely from philosophy, may account for their problems with identity and distinctiveness. (2001, p. 32)

> The apparent confusion over what makes Catholic schools Catholic may indeed be due to the failure to realize there can only be a theology of Catholic education leading to the integration of the tenets of Catholic faith in the school's curriculum and academic life in general. There is little scholarly evidence this integration has been accomplished. When it is even partially accomplished, perhaps major spokesmen for the nature of Catholic education will no longer write: "I am in no sense an expositor of the Catholic viewpoint on education. For one thing, I am not sure that such a viewpoint, except in the vaguest and most general terms, exists" (Graham, 1961, p. 400). This expression of uncertainty appeared in the prestigious *Harvard Educational Review*, when a prominent Catholic clergyman and thinker was invited to contribute. (Joseph, 2001, p. 35)

Historically the philosophy of Catholic education adopted by the Church is Thomism, or scholastic philosophy, which is understood to mean the philosophical teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. The basic premises of Thomism are related in 24 theses adopted by the Sacred Congregation of Studies. The theses are broken into four categories, general metaphysics, cosmology, psychology and natural theology. One of the most well known writings on Catholic philosophy of education, by a scholar of Catholic

education, is *Education at the Crossroads*, written by Jacques Maritain in 1943. Maritain's philosophy was Thomist. But, as with any philosophy, camps of opposing viewpoints arise, the emergence of Neo-Thomism is just one example. No matter what viewpoint scholars acquire today, the presence of Thomism in the history of Catholic education cannot be denied (Joseph, 2001, p. 36-41).

From this point on my use of the phrase 'philosophy of Catholic education' will refer to how the tenets, values and beliefs of Catholicism are incorporated into the Catholic school. One such point is natural law. "Catholics believe the natural law is derived from God at creation, and it is present in human existence and is the source of discerning what is forbidden and not in conformity with rational and social nature" (Joseph, 2001, p. 43). Because natural laws are given by God they are eternal laws and are not subject to relativism of time or place. For example, natural laws are imposed in the Catholic school in the forbiddance of premarital sex. The Church and also the school ask that adolescents "exercise a kind of discipline and self-control foreign to many of their peers and indeed to the culture at large" (Joseph, 2001, p. 43).

One aspect of the philosophy of Catholic education that seems to have the greatest consensus among scholars is that the Catholic faith should permeate every facet of the school and that merely offering religion classes is not enough. This may stem from a statement about Catholic education made by Pope Pius XI in 1939.

> …it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus, and textbooks in every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit… so that religion may be in every truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary, but the intermediate and the higher institutions as well. (p. 60)

While permeation of the entire school with the Catholic faith is the goal there is little evidence that the goal is being achieved. Curiously enough, one factor impeding the progress of permeation are disputes among Catholic scholars, who feel that the integrity of each subject, including religion, should be viewed by its own merits with its own

academic criteria. Another challenge to the integration of Catholicism within other subjects is that Catholic schools can employ teachers with diverse religious backgrounds. Those trained in the Catholic religion, such as nuns, are well suited to interjecting religion into other areas of life and study.

> Rarely have teachers, as a part of their own preparation, been exposed to the different realms of meaning unified by religion. Teachers of subjects other than religion have had little exposure to the study of religion or how to teach it. (Joseph, 2001 p. 51 from Ryan, 1964)

"Texts of educational psychology currently used in Catholic colleges and universities preparing teachers are virtually indistinguishable from those used in secular institutions" (Joseph, 2001, p. 55).

Gleason points out that since the late 1950's there has been a shift of attention in Catholic schools away from integrating the curriculum to instead focusing on "the pursuit of excellence-- with excellence being understood as the way things were done at places like Harvard and Berkeley" (Gleason, 1994, p. 14). The pressures of accountability and student achievement that have increased since the early 1990's have contributed to the focus of schools on test scores. While taking pride in student achievements is commendable, "there is little evidence that the course of studies (the different subjects taught) has achieved integration" (Joseph, 2001, p. 51).

Catholic scholars and educators have studied *Thomistic Psychology* by Brennan (1941) as the psychology of learning on which to base Catholic education. *Thomistic Psychology* uses the psychology of Aristotle and Aquinas as its main sources, and therefore emphasizes the perfection of the will and the role of habit in human life as a necessary component of education.

> Molding habits has always been central to character education in Catholic schools…The notion of habit is regarded as that which inclines an individual to act with facility in a certain way. Aquinas (1953), in his *De Magistro* (*The Teacher*), sees a stage in which habits are not completely formed; they exist in the persons as natural inclinations. Afterwards, through much practice, they are

> actualized and formed. Thus, the role of the teacher is to make explicit what is implicit in the learner. (Joseph, 2001, p. 55)

In Thomistic philosophy the intellectual habits or virtues are broken into three groups, speculative, practical and moral. The speculative virtues are concerned with how things are in the world, with what is present and factual and that which is found by human beings, not what is made. The speculative virtues are science, wisdom, and understanding. "Science is a mental habitus oriented toward proximate causes. Wisdom is knowledge of things in their ultimate causes. Understanding is a knowledge of the first principles of humans and the universe" (Joseph, 2001, p. 55). The practical virtues are art and prudence. "Art involves the right way to make things. Prudence involves the right reasons about things to be done. While the speculative virtues are concerned with finding things in being, the practical virtues are concerned with making things from what is found" (Joseph, 2001, p. 56). Lastly, the moral virtues are prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance. Prudence is the only virtue that appears in more than one category.

According to Joseph there is little evidence of a "systematic and comprehensive philosophy of teaching" (p. 57) in Catholic schools. The two most historically, highly regarded texts on the subject are *De Magistro* by Aquinas and *De Magistro* by Augustine. "Aquinas (1953) contends that knowledge pre-exists in the learner potentially, and, therefore, reason by itself may reach knowledge of unknown things, and this is called *discovery*; when someone else assists the learner, this is called *learning by instruction*" (Joseph, 2001, p. 57).

Aquinas expects that teachers have become competent in the virtues presented above as well as know the psychology of the learner at all ages and have a "genuine love of youth. The teacher's calling is regarded as second only to that of the priest…" (Joseph, 2001, p. 56). The distinction between a school where religion is an academic subject and a school which is permeated with the "Christian spirit," according to the Sacred Congregation, is that the former is a school is which the Christian message is transmitted

by word as well as by every gesture of the teacher's behavior. Joseph gives a very detailed list of the expectations of the teacher in a Christian school.

> Teachers involved in transmitting the Christian spirit and in teaching subjects in the curriculum are encouraged to keep abreast of recent methods, teaching aids, and questioning skills which lead to searching inquiries (Abbott, 1966). They are directed to develop listening skills, to not look upon achievement of pupils with condescension, and to not issue orders, rules, and restrictions without giving reasons. They are reminded that the dignity of the student demands respect for free choice and the responsibility associated with it, for authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within the human person. All of these pedagogical inclinations should be manifested with the realization that students operate in a culture with is described as new and different from the old (Barta, 1967). Christian teachers are cautioned to avoid a narrow, detailed system of surveillance, "a mechanical restriction of the pupil's freedom which threatens to destroy the very foundation of a strong and virile piety" (De Hovre, 1930, p. 418-419). The passive quality of plasticity is encouraged. This quality involves the capacity to make modifications to one's existing modes of activity "and to establish entirely new modes of activity to meet new and changed conditions" (Shields, 1917, p. 17)…In modern education terminology, plasticity involves one's ability to change oneself and the surrounding environment. (2001, p. 56)

Three Popes, John XXIII, Pius XII and Leo XIII, have each called for education to encourage students to become inclined towards social reform and social justice.

Enrollment in Catholic schools

In 1788 John Carroll opened the first Catholic school in the United States, Georgetown Academy. Catholic schools began as a reaction to the sectarian schools created in disproportionate location and quality. The desire for a more equal system of schools available to all students regardless of location, class or religion drove social reformers to advocate widespread schooling. Of these factors, religion became the most important defining influence.

> [T]he new nation was dominated by Protestants who were deeply committed to the belief that everyone should be able to read the Bible. In addition, education was seen as a means of promoting morality, which most Americans-then as now-associated with religious teachings. As a result, relatively few people of that period favored entirely secular schooling; to most educators, the question

> was not *whether* to promote religion but *whose* religion to promote. (Delfattore, 2004, p. 13-14)

Because Protestants were in the majority, they felt it only right to promote Protestant values as well as practices such as reading from the King James Version of the Bible in the schools. These practices were against Catholic beliefs and led to enough tension that Catholics found it necessary to take on the responsibility to educate their children in schools that taught Catholic values.

> It was only with the waves of European immigration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that enrollment began to increase in Catholic schools. The generational effect was felt until the mid-1960's, when nearly 5.6 million children were enrolled in Catholic schools…After 1965, a period of decline began with a total of 4,367,000 students enrolled in Catholic school in 1970, 3,319,000 in 1980, and 2,589,00 in 1990. (Greene and O'Keefe, 2001, p. 162)

Enrollment rose by a little over 50,000 students in the 1999-2000 school year. The steady decline of Catholic school enrollment was noted not only in raw numbers but also in what researchers call "market share," or the percentage of students who are Catholic. It has been estimated "that in 1962 approximately 52% of Catholic children were in Catholic schools. That percentage decreased to 27% in 1987" (Greene and O'Keefe, 2001, p. 162).

Because of the Catholic church's history of bringing together immigrants from various European countries whose only commonality may have been religion, the first Catholic schools can be viewed as better serving the multicultural needs of the communities in the United States than their secular counterparts.

> It can be argued that in the history of educational institutions in the United States, for example, Catholic schools have provided the most widespread and sustained example of bilingualism and biculturalism. Because they enrolled children form cultures other than that of the mainstream, they shaped their curriculum, instruction, ethos, and community relations to meet the needs of minorities. (Greene and O'Keefe, 2001, p. 163)

In the 1999-2000 school year, 76.6% of Catholic students were Caucasian, with black and Hispanic students comprising 8.1% and 10.6% respectively. A common

criticism of private schools is, as the art teacher pointed out the first day I came to his class, "the one thing you'll notice is a lack of diversity." Historically if a Catholic school was examined visually they may always have appeared to "lack racial diversity." This characteristic seems pronounced now, as in the last 150 years the ethnic and cultural differences of white Europeans have all but disappeared to be replaced with the "white American."

Alternative Setting 1

> [Alternative Setting 1] in cooperation with parents and parishes strives to provide a value-centered Catholic education rich in both academic excellence and witness of the Gospel message. We seek to build a school community where learners grow in knowledge, self-esteem, spirituality, respect for others, and a sense of social responsibility. We believe that by integrating Catholic Doctrine, religious celebration, and Christian service into an academically excellent curriculum, the students will be prepared to relate Christian values to everyday life, serve the total human community, and meet the human needs of our time.
>
> The primary goals of the [school] are
>
> To build a Christian school community where students can develop both spiritually and academically.
>
> To evangelize and assist the students in accepting and living the tenets and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
>
> To provide a superior academic program that is concerned with all phases of growth of the individual students.
>
> To educate our students to an awareness of the global, social, and economic problems of our time.
>
> To educate our students to become Christian leaders who act in solving the problems of our community and world. (www.ic[AS1].com)

Established in 1959, AS1 is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As is clearly stated in the above philosophy and goals of the school from the school website, the purpose of education at AS1 is integration of the Catholic faith and the school subjects. I can not say if integration has been achieved in the school, because I did not observe every classroom in the school. But I can say that religion is not a topic of the curriculum in the

art classes, which would lead me to assume, based on the numerous difficulties in truly integrating all subjects with religion already discussed, that other teachers besides the art teacher do not directly teach religion in their curriculum. That is not to say that AS1 is far from its stated goals. The art teacher freely states that he is not Catholic. I do not believe that this is entirely the reasoning for his choice not to include religion in his lessons. He does not avoid religion, which is obvious by the mural images on the walls of the art room which include a crucifixion and the reaching hands of God and Jesus from the Sistine Chapel. If not encouraged, religious iconography is willingly accepted in student artwork.

> Prayer, worship and the religious life of our students is an integral part of our school experience. Every student takes religion classes. Each day begins with prayer. Monthly religious celebrations are part of our experience. Retreat and renewal experiences encourage our young people to make operative in their lives our religious instruction. Many opportunities are provided for service to the community.
>
> Students in [AS1] practice their faith through real acts of service to make their community a better place to live. Students participate in numerous service projects. Such projects include collecting food donations, raising money for Operation Smile, participating in charity walk-run programs, visiting nursing homes and collecting holiday gifts or gift baskets for families in-need who otherwise would go without. (www.ic[AS1].com)

Two other community service activities which occurred while I was visiting AS1 included a work day and a Thanksgiving meal for the elderly. On the work day students are excused from school to rake leaves or do various chores and yard work for elderly families in the community. When I heard the school was serving a Thanksgiving meal I made note of it and did not think much else. When the day arrived and I saw all that the students were doing, I was shocked. A group of senior boys valet parked cars, and students escorted the guests to the cafeteria where Bingo games were played before the meal. The students who volunteered to serve meals were dressed as waiters and waitresses in white shirts and black pants.

The senior students were especially busy when it came time to prepare the Christmas Baskets. At AS1 groups of students are paired with a needy family, for example this year with families that are flood victims, to arrange for a basket of items for the family at Christmas. The students go to the family's home and meet with the adults to make a list of things they need for the holiday. The art teacher didn't know exactly how the families are contacted or chosen, only that the campus minister is in charge of directing the program as community outreach. The items requested are donated or collected from families associated with the school and include all kinds of items from small gifts to furniture. The art teacher said that he was donating a coffee table that a student with a truck was going to pick up from his house. He has mixed feelings about the program as some families are seriously in need and ask for essential items for the home, while others this year asked for all electronic luxuries like a Nintendo game system and a laptop computer.

Religious services are common at AS1, which is one way the school accomplishes its goal of integration. I asked the art teacher how often there is Mass at the school. He stated that it is not very often, he guessed not more than once a month, because the Mass service is very formal and does not deviate from the traditional program. Instead the school has more frequent prayer services which include contemporary music and themes related to student interests. A few times a year, confession is performed at the school. The art teacher reported that there was one recently and the gym was arranged with several tables spread around the floor with a priest sitting at each one. The students were called to the gym by class to participate if they chose. I asked, and confession is not required for students. The art teacher said that he has asked the students about confession as he is not Catholic and has never experienced it. He reported that some students told him they just give a standard story of being mean to siblings or something rather innocuous, while others are very sincere and as he said "dig deep." The art teacher has three sons who all attend AS1 and are not Catholic. From the experience of his children he knows that non-

Catholic students are not allowed to take communion at Mass but can participate in confession if they choose. He said that one of his sons has participated in the past and that he liked the experience.

Besides the services offered within the school building, each grade of the junior and senior high school has a religious retreat. I arrived for one of my visits to find that the art teacher was absent that day because he was attending a class retreat. While he is not Catholic, the art teacher is Christian and is not afraid to talk to students about faith. For example while on the retreat he chose to participate in a faith sharing activity by telling the class a story about a moment in his life when faith was important.

Because ASI is a religious school it has more latitude in the students it chooses to admit then a public school does. Public schools have to take any students within their district and make the appropriate accommodations to meet their educational needs to the best of the school districts' ability. Private schools on the other hand can refuse to admit students who don't meet entrance requirements or for whom the school does not feel it has the means to make appropriate accommodations.

Before the students arrived one morning, Jim was picking up from a long table the self-portrait paintings that the freshmen were making. I helped to stack them and looked at the progress as I picked up each one. The students are painting themselves in the style of a famous artist, for example one boy is painting himself in Edward Hoppers Diner from "The Nighthawks." He pointed out one painting that was drawn at the level of an early elementary student and began to tell me about the student. He is a special needs student who is very low functioning. Jim expressed concern for the student and the lack of a quality education he is getting. He said "we don't have any resources for him. He is not getting much from school here." Jim also told me that the student has been at AS1 since he was in first grade and that the parents have been told many times that the school cannot offer the kind of educational programs and services that the student needs. The parents still choose to keep him at AS1 because they feel that he is "safe" there.

Apparently they feel that he would be picked on and physically injured by students if he attended the public schools. Jim obviously regrets that the student is not getting the best education possible but realizes that there is nothing the school can do if the parents choose to keep sending him.

Jim commented that he has noticed among the students that have gone to AS1 all of their lives that there is an attitude and belief that "this is the castle and that is the jungle." Students think that life in the public high schools is too rough and that they are being sheltered in a private school.

Enrollment and tuition

When I inquired about interviewing a school administrator to find out the demographics of the school I was referred to one of the school counselors. She was not interested in being interviewed and instead supplied me with a copy of the student handbook and published school statistics from 2007 to answer my questions. According to the information I received there were 276 students in grades 9-12 in 2007, giving the school a student to faculty ratio of 12:1. I was not able to acquire statistical information related to the ethnic diversity of the school population. The school uses a weighted grading system with the highest GPA being a 4.33 and a separate AP grading scale with a maximum GPA of 4.50.

At my first meeting with the art teacher I learned that AS1 is an accredited Catholic school, which means that it is reviewed by the state at set intervals, they are required to hire licensed teachers, to comply with NCLB and to meet state testing requirements. He described the school as lacking diversity but acknowledged a recent influx of Korean students. The art teacher also commented that they have been getting students from Chicago and special needs students who are not performing well in public school whose parents ask the school to "save their kids." And added that sometimes they take the students, but they can refuse.

The tuition at AS1 for the 2008-2009 school year had three levels. The cost of attendance for students who are from outside of the parish is $8,095. For students in the parish the tuition is $5895 for “non-stewardship” students and $4095 for students who qualify for “stewardship with parish approval.” Students may work for the school or church in some capacity to help reduce tuition charges. Beyond the tuition, AS1 has several registration, sports, clubs and lab fees that students may also be required to pay. For example in the art program students who take the Photoshop class, which earns credit at the local community college, are charged $100 to enroll in the course.

Dress code and discipline

The explanation of the dress code printed in the handbook is extensive, and this is unavoidable when trying to set requirements. Once the administration draws a line they have to do the best they can to clearly define all aspects and nuances of dress that may come up so as to avoid conflicts with students trying to test the rulings. The specific details of the dress code are not necessary here so I will present a condensed version. Modesty in necklines, shoulder coverings and hem lengths for girls is required. No denim is allowed for any students, except on “jeans days” when students can pay one dollar to wear jeans with the money being used for fund raising efforts. Shirts must be worn tucked in and only AS1 logos and slogans are allowed on shirts and sweatshirts. Head wear of any kind, body piercing beyond the ears or visible tattoos are not permitted in the school.

The main forms of discipline in the school are detentions assigned by teachers when deemed appropriate or demerits assigned by the administration for infractions of dress code or inappropriate school conduct. If a student receives six demerits in one quarter of the school year they are required to attend one Saturday school.

The art teacher

Jim Davis has three children, all boys, who attend Alternative Setting 1. A sign painter for ten years before getting a degree in art education, this is his ninth year teaching at AS1. I first met Jim when I supervised student teachers in his classroom. In the past nine years Jim has had seventeen student teachers. He enjoys having student teachers and acknowledges that he learns a lot from them, adding that he would like to write about his various experiences with student teachers when he has time. Jim is energetic, humorous and a fast talker. He is knowledgeable about the administration of AS1 and willing to share what he knows with me. This aspect was helpful to this inquiry as I found the principal and other administrators to be less interested in talking with me about the school.

When I last saw Jim, he was teaching grades 7-12 in order to be a full time teacher. In his time at AS1 he has built up student involvement in the art program and expanded it. Now they have added some art classes to the courses offered at AS1 and Jim even elects to teach an extra section, leaving him only one prep hour each day. The elementary art teacher teaches k-8 and Jim teaches only high school art full time. One of the classes he added is on Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator, through which the students are able to earn credit at the local community college. Jim has roughly 140 students in art each day. He said that the photography class had three students signed up when he came his first year.

In the past Jim has been offered jobs at the other local public high schools and he turned them down even after seeing the pay scale. As a policy AS1 pays 85% of the local school district pay scale, in an effort to retain teachers. Jim says that even so turn over is high, a lot of teachers use the school as a stepping stone. He says he stays because he likes it. He described the students as some “heavy hitters” and he related the experience of asking a seventh grade class who had heard of the Louvre, and half the class had been there.

One morning I noticed a student asking Jim for a letter of recommendation for a college art program. We talked about some of his students who are putting together art portfolios for college applications and I asked him if he has students' work reviewed by the Art Institute of Chicago. He replied "yes" and the discussion shifted to the advantages that these students have, compared to what Jim had growing up in an industrial town in the Midwest. He related that when he was in school it was seen as good if a student graduated high school and got a job at Quaker Oats or General Mills. He reminisced about friends who had done just that and we talked about different people we knew who worked in factories. "Then you have these kids," Jim says and gestures around the room, noting the backgrounds and potential futures of his students.

Jim has had a very different life experience than his students and I haven't heard him talk about it with the class. But despite that, he is able to relate to his students. They love his classes and as a result the school art program has grown. Even though he has not had the same experiences as his students he can be empathetic to their lives. It seems that often he is in awe of the world experiences that his students get before they even graduate from high school, as a result of coming from privileged homes.

Jim is constantly telling stories about his past life experiences and former students. He isn't just telling me stories because he knows me, art teaching, and the local community; but he also tells stories to the class whenever they are sparked by something happening around him. This makes him a likeable and interesting person to be around and helps build a relationship with his students. Today in the middle of class a student says "this is the only class that's worthwhile." When a student was talking with Jim at the beginning of class and said he was "pissed off," Jim corrected him and said, "it Picasso'ed you off." He uses humor in the class not only as a way to get students attention but also as a way to remind them of the expected behavior in school.

As a former graphic and commercial artist, Jim is a defender of visual culture and commercial imagery as art. When a Midwestern city made a public sculpture series

asking local artist and art groups to decorate a form, like the cows in New York City and the Snoopy's in Minneapolis, a resident wrote a scathing criticism of the objects as non-art in the local newspaper. Jim told me that the only time he has ever written an editorial for the newspaper was out of his rage against the article. Commercial imagery is a strength of Jim as a teacher and an artist. The students in his classes frequently draw on visual culture as they create logos and silkscreen prints, create giant products, and paint ceiling tiles with images from popular consumer products and television shows. Jim still works as a commercial artist, drawing caricatures at prom parties and corporate events.

> While some K-12 art educators still engage their students in exercises based on creative self-expression ideologies, many others attempt to help students gain critical acumen to themselves and their world through the study of artworks exclusively from the museum realm. Although this practice is admirable, it nonetheless ignores the way that children and youth frequently construct their ever-changing identities through popular culture (Tavin, 2001). Television programs, music videos, movies, CDs, and fashion merchandise, for example, contribute language, codes, and values that become the material milieu of everyday discursive formations (Grossberg, 1992), These formations help shape and regulate students' understanding of themselves and the world- their social relatedness. While art educators place art from the museum realm at the center of their curriculum, their students are piecing together their expectations and dreams in and through popular culture. By focusing upon certain "art" objects and authorizing what counts as legitimate culture, art educators help subjugate students' experiences with everyday life. This form of pedagogy "supports the familiar concept of culture as a hierarchy, with the upper strata as the best and most correct. The art preferences and interpretations of privileged groups reside at the top, and those of students [popular culture] at the bottom" (Cary, 1998, p. 55). (Tavin, 2003, p. 197)

In the art classes at AS1 Jim spends far more time on allowing students to create imagery based on popular visual culture than on studying works of art from museums. In the 3D forms class that I visited, I did not see him present any examples of historical or contemporary works of art. He did talk about the art appreciation course for freshmen, which he described as half studio and half art history, and I saw examples from a painting class where the students were painting themselves into a famous painting. The encouragement to produce images from popular culture instead of studying museum

artworks I believe is one important reason why the students like taking his classes. When talking about the ceiling tiles that students paint and leave in the school Jim said “I want it to be a pop culture thing.”

Figure 1. Four ceiling tiles in the art room.

Curriculum

When I asked Mr. Davis what his curriculum was, his first response was “there isn’t one.” Then he added that the diocese had written curriculums for every subject in the school except art and music. Noting that there was no “official” curriculum, I asked Mr. Davis how he arrived at the classes and lessons he now teaches. Like many beginning teachers or experienced teachers who move to a new school, the first year at AS1 he followed the previous teacher’s curriculum. Since then he has made changes to improve the continuity of the skills or lessons taught between the classes. As I have noted already, he has drawn many students into the art program and therefore has added new art classes such as a computer course in which students can also earn credit for the local community college.

I asked Jim what his goal as an art teacher is. He told me that he tries to give the students the opportunity to get their hands on as many materials as possible so they can find something they like and pursue it further in future classes. This statement put the art classes at AS1 into perspective for me. I had noticed that the classes seemed to work in such a wide variety of media within a course that students did not develop great skill in any one area. For example in the 3-D forms class I have been visiting, the students will have worked in clay, wax and plaster casting, candle making, mixed media sculpture and caste jewelry before the semester ends. In that sense I would say that Jim definitely meets his goal of presenting as many media as he can physically and budgetarily manage. At the same time, I have witnessed students being allowed to develop greater skill in areas of interest. For example, in the 3-D forms class I have watched one girl work on stippling and scratchboard when she has finished her 3-dimensional assignments. While I was talking with Mr. Davis, a few girls were talking about which art classes they were registering for in the second semester. Two girls talked about retaking Art 2. I was curious why they would do that, so I asked Jim. He said that seniors often retook previous art classes for no credit, if they had taken all of the other classes or wanted to be able to work more in depth with a certain media. In this case Art 2 is drawing with colored pencil and pastel, watercolor and acrylic painting and stained glass. For these students Jim allows them to use the materials that the class is using but alters the subject matter to meet their desires, as they have already completed his lessons the first time they took the class.

Budget

After the class left we talked a little about budgets. Jim says that he gets $3000 from the school and another $1000 from PISA (parents in support of the arts). Having 140 students in art each semester, he seems to be able to make the budget stretch to get what he needs. He did admit to the class that he was willing to “dumpster dive” for any

materials the class wanted for their giant products, as these generally require some unusual or large materials such as Plexiglas, tubing or large cardboard boxes. In my teacher training courses one of the professors frequently reminded us how to acquire art supplies for free from the community, as budgets never seem to fully match the needs of the art program.

Teaching philosophy

I asked Mr. Davis what his philosophy of education was. He gave me a look of despair, so I quickly rephrased the question to sound less intimidating and asked him what he felt his purpose as an art teacher was. He related a brief story to me. The art education professor he had when he went back to school to earn his teaching license told him that the most common answer you will give people about your teaching is "it depends." Then he gave me an example. "Some students are here to work on college entrance portfolios, and others are here because they have four AP classes and they want a break. If I have sixteen students, I have sixteen different curriculums." In other words, Jim tries to be the teacher that each individual student needs. He helps students refine artistic skills and create works of art of a quality that will allow them to continue to study art after graduation, or he provides a space where students can take pleasure in being creative purely for the joy of making art. For Jim, the art teacher has to be flexible and empathetic to each student's needs and desires as an artist. His role and identity are more fluid than other teachers, who might have more rigid ideas of what students need from art education.

Philosophers such as John Dewey (1902), Michel Foucault (1977) and Paolo Freire (1970) are just a few of the educational scholars who have described how students learn how to "perform" school and the power structures that exist in the institution of school. In contrast to the "academic" subjects, scholars such as Maxine Greene see the arts as providing a gap in the structure of school allowing students to find space and

freedom for personal expression and pleasure. Greene cites the critic Denis Donoghue and then explains

> Donoghue concludes that the arts are on the margins of most people's lives; the "margin" being "the place for those feelings and intuitions which daily life doesn't have a place for and mostly seems to suppress." Yet those who choose to live "within the arts…can make space for themselves and fill it with intimations of freedom and presence" (p. 129). The idea of making spaces for ourselves, experiencing ourselves in our connectedness and taking initiatives to move through those spaces, seems to me to be of the first importance. (1995, p. 134)

The foundation of the art education theory of visual culture is the acceptance of visual imagery from popular culture in the art classroom (Tavin, 2003; Wilson, 2003, 2004; Freedman and Stuhr, 2004). Art educators have noticed the presence of popular culture in students artwork made by their own initiative for decades. Brent Wilson (2005) recorded the comic book images of a junior high school student in the 1970's and Marilyn Zurmuehlen recounted a narrative about a series of twenty-two books a nine year old girl drew about Mr. Peanut in 1990, to name a few examples. While, traditionally, popular culture images were seen by art educators as lower class art not to be placed in the school where students were learning to make fine art, the movement of visual culture has demonstrated the importance to students of accepting the images from popular culture that they produce. As I have already outlined Jim does not teach visual culture studies, in that the class is not deconstructing the images they use in their artwork. But by allowing students to use popular culture frequently in the classroom he is opening a gap in the school for students to express what they appreciate in their culture as well as have a time in the school day to produce art for pleasure.

The classroom and the art class

As the 3-D Forms class comes into the room, a girl asks if her clay pot has been fired. Jim uses his typical humor and says, "gotta wait for a full load. You wouldn't wash a load of laundry with just one sock."

Figure 2. The art room (AS1).

Today the students are making wax castes of their hands to be filled with plaster. As he shows them how to alternate between dipping their hands in the melted wax and a bucket of cold water, he talks to the class about some of the sculptures students have made in the past. The students can choose to make just one hand or multiple hands that will then be mounted together. The presentation is informal and unrehearsed, the students joke and talk with Jim as he shows them what to do. A few examples of plaster hands are laid out on one table for the students to look at. Jim goes into the back room to get a bag of wax beads to refill the pot. As he returns he tells me that they will make candles later in the semester and that in a previous semester this class was full of football players. “It was the man art class, but they loved candlemaking. It was great.”

The next class I visited, Jim showed the students two candles that freshmen had made in art club the night before. He talked with them about some of the things students have put inside their candles in the past, such as candy, colored glass, shells and a dried corsage. The students were excited about candles and talked about the types they might make. Jim said that they have made sand and ice candles before also.

Jim commented on more than one occasion “I don’t know why we make candles.” He has stated before he doesn’t recall why he started making them and jokes about all of the knowledge he has accumulated about different materials and techniques for candlemaking. He jokingly asks me “can you define art and craft?” We briefly talked about how with the emergence of postmodernism the line between art and craft has been blurred. I can see that he includes this project because the students like it, but at the same time he struggles to justify to himself why he teaches it in an art class.

In teacher training, teachers are taught to be reflective about the value of every lesson they teach. I believe that Jim struggles with himself on this issue with candles. The students love making them, but he feels at some level the dilemma between teaching art and craft. Candlemaking doesn’t fit with high art and in making only two or three candles the goal is enjoyment, not the learning of the refined skill of a craft. Jim could feel reassured about the presence of this project if he considered the value of the pleasure students find in the material and if he approached candles as teaching material culture. Before class started, when the students were no longer allowed to make candles, I overheard one girl say to a classmate, “I am so pissed off we are done with candles.”

“Material culture is a term that is broad-based in its meaning and application, and describes all human-made and modified forms, objects, and expressions manifested in the past and in out contemporary world” (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p. 249). I refer to the practice of making candles as material culture but not as material culture studies, because in the class Jim is not leading students in discussions on the social significance of candles or in any way studying or deconstructing their relation to society.

This room is much larger than Jim’s old art room, making it less crowded, but it is no less messy then his previous space. The tables are dirty and some students show concern about not messing up their work as they sit down and try to clean their area. One student had a difficult time finding a paint brush that was the right size and clean enough for her tastes as she finished up a silhouette of Bob Dylan on a yellow background with

red splatters. She complained to Jim the entire time she is searching, until he finally runs out to his van to get the supply of new brushes he just purchased.

Figure 3. Plaster hands and candles on display.

In my experience I have seen that often students who work in a messy area do not have much incentive to clean up or take care of their materials. At the end of the class Jim tells students when time is getting near so that they can get the wax off of their hands, but gives no instructions for clean up. If students had gotten out materials that weren't related to the wax they put them away before leaving, but no other clean up is performed.

Jim has been at AS1 long enough to have come up with some interesting projects that the students see and hear about from their predecessors and look forward to making themselves, such as the giant products. Another popular project is the painted ceiling tiles. One of the first things you notice as you walk into the art room is the colorful ceiling. Jim said the project began one day when he didn't know what to do with the kids so he took down some tiles and they started painting them. "I didn't have permission or anything, we just did it." And since then, students look forward to making their own and being able to leave a mark on the school. When I was teaching in southwest Iowa I had a

large room with a lot of wall space. One of the teachers in the past had begun mural paintings with the students and I continued the practice. The students liked the fact that they were making something permanent in the school that would be seen by other students after they left. The old and new art rooms at AS1 have limited wall space, so the ceiling tiles make a perfect alternative option. The new art room has one wall of windows which are lined with stained glass projects and other various artworks. The few wall spaces available between the cabinets have already been painted and the cabinet doors have been screen printed by Jim and other students.

Figure 4. Ceiling tiles of movie imagery.

Besides painting ceiling tiles, students look forward to making a giant product. This is a project that has been occurring for several years and students have watched the products of previous years in anticipation of making their own. The idea is to recreate a commercial item on a gigantic scale using whatever materials are best suited to product. In the 3-D forms class I visited the products under construction included a Pixy Stick, a flip-flop, a perfume bottle, a cup of Starbucks coffee, a pair of scissors, a camera, and a

box of macaroni and cheese. Jim offers to collect materials or the students can bring in boxes and tubes themselves. For example to make the perfume bottle a water bottle from a stand water cooler was cut in half and colored cellophane used to wrap the bottle. Jim has a commercial sign letter cutter from when he was a sign painter that he has in his classroom, and he lets the students use it when they need stick-on letters like on the perfume bottle. Several of the students never finished their product before the semester was over.

The giant product project is one very visible example of the presence of popular culture in the art room at AS1.

> Of course, students deal with complex issues and problems when negotiating their identities within the terrain of popular culture. Therefore, telling students what to think about popular culture is inadequate and irresponsible. It plays into the logic of traditional teacher authority where educators speak uncontested truths that erase the complicated relationship students have to popular culture. (Tavin, 2003, p. 201)

As Tavin recommends, Jim does not tell students what to think about the product that they have chosen. As with the candles, there is no discussion in the class about popular culture or the significance of the items they are reproducing. Instead the students make the products with the pleasure of being able to use popular imagery in their artwork.

As the class came to varying degrees of completion with the giant products, three students who were finished worked on altered books after seeing the student teacher making some for her personal artwork during an earlier class. The students were able to get books from the school library that were going to be discarded. I talked with them about what books they were using and found that they had not considered the text when they chose the books and merely found a book that was available. I also asked if they were considering the use of the text in relation to the pages they were altering and again the book was simply the structure to paint and collage on. Here the students got the experience of using a new art media to produce an altered book. Because they only had

this one experience and no discussion of the significance of altered books, they merely copied the technique they saw the student teacher using. It is great that students get a chance to try so many different materials in their classes. After I talked with the students about the texts they were using hopefully if they make another altered book in the future they will begin to think about some of the deeper meanings their work can have, rather than just collaging in a used book.

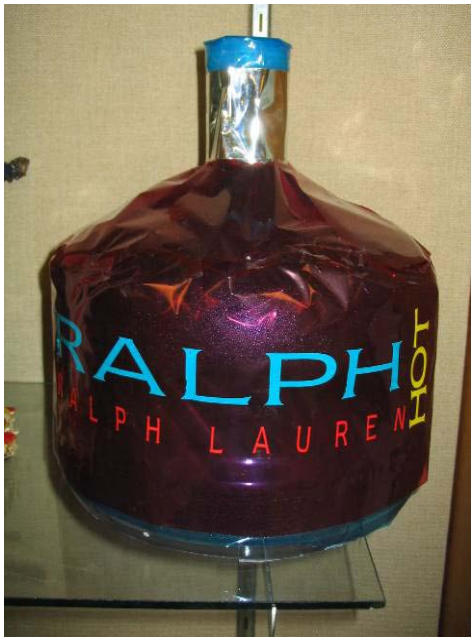

Figure 5. Giant product sculpture of a perfume bottle.

Student comments

The students were talking amongst themselves about classes and math classes specifically. A girl, who was going to be featured as the "A" student of the week in the local paper, told Jim that she would list 3-D forms (this class) as her favorite class. To which, another boy added "the only class I look forward to is art." These types of

comments I heard frequently in Jim's room. Without prompt the students would praise the classes as their favorites or the classes they found most valuable.

I tried asking a few girls what they liked about art at the AS1 and they misinterpreted my question. They answered;

"Art II was my favorite. I like drawing and painting. I didn't like digital drawing. I don't like computer stuff."

I approached one boy who was painting a ceiling tile towards the end of my time at AS1 and asked what he liked about art classes. He just looked nervously around the room, didn't answer and eventually found a distraction as an excuse. Lastly, I asked two students, whom I have frequently seen working on individual projects, what they liked about the art classes. Their responses were:

"It's laid back. You can kind of do whatever you want, but he still has things for you to do."

Academic stress is high at AS1. There isn't open campus or free periods allowing students' leisure time like some public high schools have. Students can take a study hall, but are encouraged to fill their schedules. When it came time to register for the following semesters courses, students were frequently stopping into the art room between classes to ask if they could retake art classes they had already completed or to take classes out of sequence to fill their schedules. Besides being a class that "you don't have to study for," students enjoy Jim's art classes because of the relaxed atmosphere, the time to try many different media, the ability to freely use images from popular culture, and because of the art teacher's personality as a humorous entertaining teacher.

Conclusions

In relation to art education the art classes at AS1 follow well documented and predictable practices. Giving students experiences with a wide variety of materials and including popular culture in the curriculum are common practices in art. The positive

impact he is having in relation to art education is producing a large number of students who appreciate art for the pleasure of creating as well as learning a variety of new skills. Obviously the arts are valued by the school community as indicated by the extra funding Jim receives each year for supplies from a parent organization in support of the arts. In relation to AS1 being a Catholic school Jim is accepting of religious iconography in the classroom and supportive of the students' choices. For example, when a beginning art class made craft stick sculptures, a group of students worked together to create a five foot cross. Jim found a bucket of sand to use as a base and put the giant cross on display in the lobby of the school.

What is more important in this setting is how Jim Davis helps to "build a Christian school community" and "assist the students in accepting and living the tenets and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church," two of the main goals of the school. Like many teachers in Catholic schools, Jim is not Catholic, but this does not hold him back from working towards the goal of producing Catholic citizens. He freely states that he is Christian and is a religious person. Jim is interested in the student's religious experiences within the school where he teaches. He voluntarily participates in faith activities and retreats such as the experience of faith sharing he described to me. He models the expectations of the school to his students by participating in service activities such as donating items to the Christmas basket program.

I have learned from my experiences as a teacher, especially in working with student teachers, that having to explain my beliefs and understandings to another person makes me think critically about what I believe and why. Another example is, by giving debates in English classes I have found that when I had to debate a point of view that was opposite of my beliefs I felt that I actually learned more about what I was debating then when I merely argued what I already believed. Jim helps students to think critically about their faith by questioning their beliefs. He is not judgmental, and often seems mostly to be curious about the practices of the Catholic religion and so asks his students about

confession and mass and even about their belief in God as demonstrated in the conversation with the student about why she felt she needed God in her life.

CHAPTER 4

ALTERNATIVE SITE 2: A MENNONITE HIGH SCHOOL

History of the school

Sitting in the art class at Alternative Site 2 (AS2), an observer would not know that they are in a school that is different than any other rural Midwestern high school. The students wear jeans and t-shirts and talk with each other as they wait for the bell to begin class. The teacher gets the students' attention, reads the lunch menu and takes a count so that he is ready when the secretary calls over the intercom five minutes later. Yet when I tell people that I am visiting a Mennonite school for my research, the assumption is made that I am visiting a small schoolhouse filled with students in black bonnets and dark dresses or overalls. A brief history of the community and the creation of the school are necessary to depict how AS2 has evolved to become the school it is today. Fortunately for me, a member of the local Mennonite community and alumni of AS2, who also happens to be a historian, wrote a history of the school titled *Opening a Window to the World* in honor of the 50th anniversary of the school in 1994.

> To some degree, everyone who has ever supported [AS2] favors a certain level of isolation and protection. If this were not so, no reason would justify the school's existence. People who support any private school do so because they seek a separation from other parts of society. Military schools offer discipline within a regimented environment, elite prep schools stress academic excellence, and church based schools provide a setting where religious beliefs can be freely taught. For any of these schools to function, they need to be separated from people who do not share their ideas, values, or philosophies.
>
> At [AS2], not all people saw the school's role in the same way. Some wanted [AS2] to function as a haven to isolate young people from the influences they found wrong. They saw little value in mixing with non-Christians or Christians with whom they disagreed. They worried about associations and sought to limit access to experiences they felt might harm students. Others feared outside influences less and encouraged the school to expose students to different ideas, values, and cultures. They argued that the environment offered by a Christian school was the ideal setting in which to explore the world students would inevitably encounter. In their minds, [AS2] was a place where students should learn to

> consider a variety of options before coming to a decision. (Yoder, 1994, p. xv)

In 1846 Amish pioneers chose to settle along Deer Creek. While the fertile Midwest landscape of rich soil and abundant hard wood trees along its waterways were influential in attracting the Amish, as a people they had become an agrarian culture long before coming to the United States. As a religious group the Amish are associated with a radical wing of the Protestant Reformation from the sixteenth century.

> Rejecting infant baptism and the use of violence while advocating strong community bonds and a believers' church, the early European Anabaptists found themselves at odds with both the Roman Catholic Church and most newly formed Protestant groups. Fleeing the cities' persecution to the safer countryside, they learned how to farm. By the time the first Amish and Mennonite immigrants came to North America and settled in Pennsylvania, farming had become their way of life.
>
> Not only did farms provide safety, but Anabaptists soon discovered other advantages that accompanied the isolated agrarian life. Strong communities could be more easily maintained away from the cities, the corruption often associated with politics and business seemed less poisonous, and the close connection with God's nature harmonized well with their emphasis on simple living and an uncomplicated religion, Farming, church, and the countryside were so intertwined that early towns and cities in North American attracted very few Mennonites and Amish. (Yoder, 1994, p. 23)

The original settlers along Deer Creek were all Amish when they arrived in 1846, but within the course of the next 75 years they would split into Conservative Mennonite, Mennonite and Amish congregations. "After the initial split in the 1880's, the Amish seemed to swing toward even more conservatism, while the new Mennonite and the later Conservative Mennonite congregations moved onto the slippery slope of change" (Yoder, 1994, p. 27).

> For both Mennonites and Conservative Mennonites, each new idea or innovation became a potential crisis as church leaders struggled to hold back the sweeping tide of social and technological change. Automobiles, radios, telephones, electricity, and myriad other innovations each posed unique challenges. Women bore the brunt of much of this burden as jewelry, hair styles, skirt length, clothing, and personal adornment details kept the church leaders busy as they tried to restrain members bent on adopting newer, more modern ways. (Yoder, 1994, p. 29)

> In retrospect, efforts to hold back the waves of change seem to have been unrealistic and in vain. The change in dress, lifestyle, and worship practices appear necessary and natural. From a contemporary perspective the concern over dress and behavior seems overblown and restrictive, but these changes posed a serious threat to a faith and way of life. Many Mennonite church leaders after 1900 feared what lay ahead as the church moved through uncharted waters. Concerned about the corrosive influence of new ideas, behaviors, and technologies, some Mennonite leaders and lay persons reacted by resisting anything that suggested modernity, materialism, and accommodation. For years, Amish, and then Mennonite identity had been so wrapped up in appearance, tradition, and lifestyle that outward changes were at least as threatening, if not more so, than new doctrines such as fundamentalism, liberalism, and the holiness movements. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Amish church experienced frequent splits over questions of change and accommodation. In the twentieth century, these problems continued to trouble the newly organized Mennonite congregations which had hoped to leave them in their Amish past. (Yoder, 1994, p. 31)

During the 1930's and 1940's an increasing number of Mennonite youth entered the local public high school. Also during this time the United States participated in two World Wars and Mennonites attracted attention due to their pacifism. Harassment and vandalism against Mennonites occurred in the Midwest. Tensions between Mennonites and other community members rose as the wars brought the differences between the groups into a brighter light. These issues, along with the increased attention on competitive sports in the public high school, which are contrary to Mennonite values of humility, cooperation and caring, lead Mennonite ministers and members to propose building their own school. In 1944 a committee was created of representatives from several of the Mennonite congregations in the area to assess the state of the public schools. The report found that, in the local public high school, 20 percent of the student population was Mennonite. While the findings are reported as being exaggerated by some community members and high school teachers from the Mennonite churches, the committee sighted activities such as boys using tobacco and alcohol, going to movies, and being involved in school organized war drives. For the girls, it was reported that most were seen on the streets of town with skirts above the knee and shirt sleeves above the elbow as well as wearing lipstick and jewelry. All students were reported to be slipping in

their church and Sunday school attendance and that they were participating in an unhealthy sports craze. It is understandable that a committee with a desire to create a parochial school would try to display the facts in a manner that would lead congregation members to agree that a Mennonite school was necessary.

Once passed, the committee hoped to have a school open in the fall of 1944. Because of the war, building materials were scarce and the committee sought other alternatives for the school. One option was a recently closed rural high school six miles away. After several months of negotiations the committee was unable to purchase or lease the building from the local school district. Instead a family offered to sell the committee a house that could be moved, for $400. With a building secured, a second family gave two and a half acres of land directly south of the Lower Deer Creek Mennonite Church for the purpose of a school. Three faculty would be hired along with a principal to teach the entire course load when the school opened. On September 17, 1945 Alternative Site 2 opened with 29 freshman and 8 sophomores. Because the principal held only an elementary teaching license, the school opened unaccredited and due to the limited space, began by teaching only two grades with the hope of adding a junior and senior class the following two years.

Figure 6. The first school building (AS2).

Before opening it was apparent that a bigger structure would be needed and construction plans as well as fundraising began almost immediately. Over the course of the schools' existence, the building would change frequently with the addition of more buildings including the administration building, classrooms and gymnasium space, a chapel, and the most recent expansion of an auditorium and arts wing. With the high level of community involvement in the school all construction was possible through monetary donations and thousands of hours of volunteer labor.

Figure 7. First school constructed (right) and arts addition (left).

Teachers and administrators were always in short supply at AS2 due to the rural location, low pay and strict adherence to dress codes. Male teachers were required to wear the plain coat associated with a minister and were criticized for wearing ties. Women were to wear long sleeved dressed that fell below the knees. Women also were still prohibited from cutting their hair and were to wear it in braids covered with a prayer covering. Jewelry was not allowed in the school. It was not uncommon for applicants to decline to teach at AS2 due to the dress code. Prospective teachers were examined carefully for their religious and moral characteristics, as teachers were to hold a status

comparable to ministers in the community. Not only teachers but also students were required to follow strict dress codes in the early years at AS2. Boys were allowed to wear jeans, but t-shirts had to be covered by another shirt. Girls wore long sleeved dresses with hems below the knees, uncut hair and prayer coverings like the teachers. Arguments over dress code could become intense and the school board was not in an easy position when conflicts of ideologies arose on any issue. Because AS2 students came from both the Conservative Mennonite and Mennonite churches, the school board was constantly trying to make compromises that would allow freedoms for Mennonites but not offend Conservative Mennonites. As with any institution, rules change with time and as the years passed AS2 would slowly loosen the dress code to the point of virtually no longer having one.

> By 1990 distinctive styles of dress and appearance mattered little to most Mennonites. Few would have argued that a particular cut of dress, a prayer veiling, or a plain coat had religious or spiritual importance. Conservative Mennonites maintained more of the connections between lifestyle, appearance, and personal convictions, but they too had changed. Televisions, smaller coverings with no strings, and more fashionable dress were examples of once frowned upon or forbidden practices the Conservative Mennonite Church now permitted. (Yoder, 1994, p. 209)

With the limited number of students and teachers in the school the first school building often functioned more like a one room schoolhouse than like a high school. Courses were offered based on the experiences of the teachers, most of whom found themselves teaching subjects well beyond their areas of training. Teachers and students had to be creative to come up with materials to teach all the subjects the students requested.

> What instructors and students lacked in terms of training and facilities, they occasionally gained back in the freedom to pursue individual interests. Free from state regulations, instructors spent time on projects difficult to develop in larger schools. Motivated and talented students sometimes worked in unconventional ways. (Yoder, 1994, p. 65)

In its fourth year of existence, Alternative Site 2 earned state accreditation. With growing enrollment and facilities came a growing demand for sports. Sports in school would be a contentious point for school administrators for nearly thirty years. While requests for Friday night basketball games, leading to intramural sports, was given into rather easily, the decision to add interscholastic sports to the school would be a heated battle that was not resolved until the acceptance of interscholastic boys' basketball in 1972. Declining enrollments and school spirit, as well as the noticeable loss of "good" athletes to public schools, finally won over the administration.

The purpose of creating a parochial school, and especially a Mennonite school which is wary of modernization, was to protect and even isolate students from the broader community. In reading about the history of AS2 I was surprised at how often the text described teachers of bible classes asking students to question the text, and classes going outside of the state and addressing diverse populations in the country. It appeared that the focus, whether everyone liked it or not, became more about showing students the world and teaching them to think critically about life in the "safe" environment of the school.

> Interscholastic sports punched a hole in the wall insulating [AS2] from the world, but at the same time, other programs with an intentional focus on values, exposure to the world, and diversity also emerged. During the same year that the [AS2] boys' varsity basketball team stepped onto the court for their first interscholastic competition, students stepped out into the world as part of a new interterm program. In the fall of 1972, Levi Miller laid plans for a 10 day period during which students could experience everything from the inner city to life in a German village. Modeled after several college programs, [AS2] offered a wide variety of mini courses on and off campus. (Yoder, 1994, p. 162)

Traditionally an all white school AS2 has also admitted students from diverse backgrounds. "High Aim" was a program developed by a faculty member at Goshen College, a Mennonite college in Indiana in 1970. High Aim gave minorities, often from urban areas, an opportunity to attend Mennonite schools and board with families in the

local community. “Throughout the 1970s between 6 and 12 High Aim students came to [AS2] each year” (Yoder, 1994, p. 167).

> A glance through the yearbooks in the 1970s and 1980s revealed growing numbers of African-American and Hispanic students. At times, minority students, mostly from Chicago, St. Louis, and Omaha, made up over 10 percent of the student body. They nearly all came to [AS2] through the High Aim program.
>
> In addition to visible racial and cultural differences, students also reflected a growing denominational diversity. For example, in 1980 [AS2] students attended Mennonite, Church of the Brethren Nazarene, and Roman Catholic churches. In 1988, nine different faiths were represented in the student population, with 22 students attending non-Mennonite congregations. (Yoder, 1994, p. 189)

Almost sixty-five years of slow but steady changes have produced a school that is drastically different from the one opened in 1945.

> Unlike the campus in 1945 that included White Gables and 2 ½ acres, the physical plant at [AS2] had grown. A large building complex, the athletic fields, and parking lots spread over 10 acres of the former Clarence and Edna Swartzendruber farm. Hillcrest Union, the Administration building, the chapel, and the foyer dwarfed the first school building that now served as an apartment for several faculty members.
>
> In spite of these visible changes, some things at [AS2] changed very little since 1945. Each day chapels still provided students with an opportunity to hear and discuss issues of faith. During a school year, each student attended nearly 180 chapel sessions. Daily, they spent at least 20 minutes hearing local ministers, guests from outside of the community, faculty members, fellow students, singing groups, and others present a picture of the Christian life. (Yoder, 1994, p. 248)

Philosophy of the school

Like any parochial school, Mennonite educational philosophy is grounded in promoting the religion which supports it. This is present in the daily chapel session that all students are required to attend. Ironically, AS2 was created to separate students from the mainstream culture but faculty members would push the limits of the curriculum, for example, with bible teachers who asked students to question their religious beliefs, until

the school became a safe place for students to explore the events and ideologies of cultures from all around the globe.

> [AS2] is also a history of ideas and educational philosophy. People have always asked the question: what kind of school should [AS2] be? The motto- "Holding Forth the Word"- tells the world that [AS2] is a school centered around Christian values. The name of the school, … makes it clear that these values will have a distinctive thrust grounded in an Anabaptist tradition and in the unique history of Mennonites in [the Midwest]; it is different from other parochial schools and from Mennonite high schools in states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Oregon.
>
> As the years passed, [AS2] became many things its founders did not want it to be. It was founded as an institution to shelter and protect Mennonite young people. Ironically, the school became a vehicle of change, opening a window to the very world that many of the founders of [AS2] feared. Faculty challenged students to think critically about their faith, the community, and the world beyond. (Yoder, 1994, p. 247)

During the course of my visits to AS2 I had the privilege of interviewing a former principal and teacher. Mr. White began as a teacher at AS2 in the 1970's and retired as principal in 2007. In my conversation with him, Mr. White he also brought up the unexpected contradiction of a parochial school opening students to critically examine the world in which they live. My interview was centered on the question of how AS2 had continued to evolve from 1994 (the publication date of *Opening a Window to the World*) to 2007 when he retired. One of his responses was;

> I think another change was related to Frank's book, "Opening a Window to the World." The idea of isolation, because the school began as a shelter for parents who wanted their kids protected. And he (Frank Yoder) implied that we were already moving out I think it was an apt title. I think that in recent years the community has begun to understand more that this is not just a Mennonite school. It's a private school, a Mennonite school by theology and practice but for a long time persons from the outside knew little about what was going on here, and weren't even sure that they would be welcome here. It has a reputation for good athletics and good academics, just a quality place. But that doesn't mean that people are going to send their kids here, especially with the extra cost. (transcribed interview, 2008)

Mr. White also pointed out that one of his personal goals while he was principal of AS2 was to strengthen the sense of community within the school and to work on the overall harmony of student life.

> I think that one of the important things in the period of 1994-2007 is that our faculty has become quite stable. There was a period of time when turnover was a real problem. It was hard to keep teachers because of salary, but we were very pleased that faculty did stick around quite a bit. Partly because they were dedicated to the mission here and partly because they felt that this was a good place to be and a good place to work. I think we have benefited over those years from the sense of community among faculty and students. I worked hard at relational kinds of issues and felt blessed by the kinds of students that we had. For the most part they are very cooperative. I had gone to school here and I knew the history and there were years when it wasn't so, when there was more negative stuff going on. Because of that we had a number of students who did well, who were emotionally, picked on who suffered in other schools and there were students here, because our students are pretty accepting, they were able to make it here. They were not as uptight and tense and actually enjoyed coming to school. (transcribed interview, 2008)

From my visits at AS2 I had noticed that the students address the teachers by their first names. When I was introduced to the current principal he was presented to me by his first name as well. I asked Mr. White about the use of first names and its influence on the connections between teachers and students.

> I think students will say that it makes them feel more capable of going to the teachers and talking on a person to person basis. Some teachers are a little surprised when they first hear about it. I thought it demonstrated that respect is earned and not dictated, whether by name or otherwise. So it was a good thing. It was changing when I came in 1973, we were on a first name basis but there were still a few teachers who used titles. I think it has been helpful. There are times when students want to abuse it and use nicknames. Normally what we have done is to say, that's going too far. (transcribed interview, 2008)

I have not attended a Mennonite church and the focus of my time in the art classes at AS2 was not on religion except as it affected the students making art. I will not discuss how specific religious beliefs are present in the school philosophy other than pacifism. As noted in the history of the school, the Mennonite community has been a target of harassment during times of war as a result of their pacifism. In my interview with Mr.

White one of the first anecdotes about the school he related was about the treatment of the school by the wider community after the attack on September 11, 2001.

> …one of the things that occupied me in the end was when 9-11 occurred. We are a school that doesn't display a flag. At basketball games we don't play the national anthem. The idea is that we are a part of God's creation that includes not just the United States but a global community. Too often the flag, particularly at the time of 9-11, is used to generate hate and war rather than to build unity. And so we didn't do that (hang flags) and in the community that was viewed negatively. For example in our athletic league.
>
> (Karin) Obviously your league hadn't changed so this was with people that knew you and that your school doesn't have flags or the anthem.
>
> (Mr. White) Sure, but when they came, being a pacifist community is not very acceptable, even though we have students that aren't pacifists. There were some tensions during that time. One of the schools brought flags with them and waved them and attached them to the bleachers as a symbol of their disapproval. Related to that also was a conservative element among the religious community including persons here and even included one of the faculty members and they took a very antagonistic view towards Muslims. A big issue with some people was Allah and they wanted me to say that Allah is evil. My view is that Allah is another name for God. The Muslim view of God might be different than ours but we're all descendants of Abraham. That led to several families pulling their kids from school. And it led to the faculty member taking out a one page ad in the newspaper that was very negative toward the school. We pretty much ignored it in terms of not replying or rebutting and the community was accepting of that. (transcribed interview, 2008)

Tuition

Alternative Site 2 is located in the rural Midwestern countryside and is supported by local congregations comprised of families from an agrarian tradition. Unlike a private college preparatory school in an affluent suburb or prestigious location, there is a necessity to keep the cost of tuition as low as possible. Like other parochial schools, the families of students who do not belong to one of the supporting congregations are responsible for paying the entire tuition bill. For Mennonite students, assistance with tuition comes from the churches. Even so, more than once in my conversations with the

art teacher he pointed out that it is not uncommon for parents and students to work as janitors and cafeteria staff to help offset the cost of attendance.

> We happen to still get students who are struggling in another school and are looking for an alternative. We still are mostly a Mennonite population but we are starting to pick up a few more other students. But the real challenge for the future will be drawing more, and that's hard to do in rough economic times. When you can send your kids at no cost, why would you send them here? (Transcribed interview, 2008)

The system has changed over the years from congregations paying a percentage of the tuition for those children attending AS2 to a system where the church pays for all children eligible to attend the school. Frank Yoder summed up the history of the schools finances in *Opening a Window to the World*.

> [AS2] always raised funds in a variety of ways- student tuition and fees, church offerings, and special fund raisers. The school had no endowment or reserves, and the community felt the effect of budget shortfalls. Over the years a system of informal quotas evolved in which congregations assumed part of the educational costs for each [AS2] student from that congregation.
>
> As more students chose to attend public schools, the quota system no longer provided [AS2] with a secure financial base. As tuition costs rose, families found it increasingly difficult to send their children to [AS2]…
>
> A change needed to be made. In 1972, Tom Stuckey, business manager at [AS2], presented the Brotherhood Education Concept (BEC) to the Operating Board. The plan proposed that congregations pick up a greater portion of the educational costs, decreasing the load on parents. Instead of paying tuition, students paid a nominal entrance fee, lab, and rental costs, and their home congregation paid the remaining costs. As before, parents were asked to voluntarily contribute through their church offerings.
>
> Unlike the quota system that looked at the number of students attending [AS2], the BEC based congregational assessments on the number of students eligible to attend [AS2]. Since the church paid tuition for all high school age persons, any family could now send their child to [AS2] without feeling they were a drain on the church's finances. (Yoder, 1994, p. 139-140)

The cost of tuition at AS2 for the 2008-2009 school year was $6400 for non-Mennonite students and $3200 for Mennonite students with supporting church contributions. There were approximately 138 students at AS2 in the 2008-2009 school

year. It is roughly estimated that one quarter of the students are non-Mennonite. The art teacher described the non-Mennonite students as hard working. They do not have a church backing their tuition, so the parents of non-Mennonite students are paying the entire tuition leading the family to be more serious about their child's success in school.

Every fall, for two days school is cancelled and the students have "work days," a fund raiser for the school which has been occurring as long as the school existed. The students spend two days working for businesses or members of the community and then turn over their paychecks to the school. The students work for their school, which can be seen as a form of service learning. I wondered if this came out of Mennonite values of hard work or service to the community, in this case the school. When I asked the art teacher about the origin of work days the only response was that they had always had them.

> There are many definitions of service-learning. Kraft (1996) described service-learning as including the following components: it connects to the curriculum, meets a need, has a theoretical base, involves students in planning, and allows for reflection. Jeffers (2005) mentioned that service-learning is a form of "experiential learning" (p. 8). Though there are similarities between service learning and community service, the overt connection to the curriculum and the emphasis on reflection in service-learning are important differences (Taylor, 2002b). (Buffington, 2007, p. 41)

According to Buffington the lack of connections to the school curriculum and reflection on the service act would make work days a form of community service rather than service-learning. At least in relation to the art class I would agree with this in that when I mentioned the connection between work days and service-learning Donald Young, the art teacher, had never heard of service-learning. I would also argue that while the students are clearly performing community service work for the benefit of their school, a connection to an overall purpose of schooling in the United States of creating good citizens could be made. On a second level, for a Christian school, working for the betterment or preservation of one's community, in this case the school and congregations from which it draws, would be connected to a Christian ethic of care or stewardship.

While this is not directly reflected upon in the art class, it is possible that it is reviewed during chapel. Speakers for the chapel services are not only lay people within the churches but members of the Mennonite community who perform acts of service around the world. For example, on the day which I attended chapel, the speaker was an elderly gentleman whose career had been in drilling. As a result of his expertise, he began traveling to Africa as a young man and drilling wells for poor communities, a practice which has continued for over thirty years.

The physical environment and school schedule

The arts wing of Alternative Site 2 is the newest addition to the building, finished in 2007, it houses a large atrium, the auditorium, music rooms, the art room and a gallery. The building was always clean and the art room impeccably organized each time I visited the school. While walking through other areas of the school I do not remember seeing any vending machines, nor did I see students coming to class with snacks and soda or coffee. This was a stark contrast to the large high school in Illinois where I spent my last two years of teaching watching the janitors sweep the hallways three times each day to keep up with the wrappers and cans thoughtlessly dropped by students.

Several areas of the building are utilized to display artwork, which is often rotated to showcase what the art students have recently completed. Besides wall space in the atrium and next to the office, AS2 has the advantage of having a gallery adjacent to the art room. The gallery is a square room with carpeting, white walls and track lighting. It is not an enormous space, but large enough to hold a small gathering for a class or show event. The only requirement for displaying artwork in the gallery is that the artist be connected to the school in some way such as a student, alumni or community member. The art teacher is responsible for locating or selecting artists to display work and to help with hanging the shows.

AS2 has used the modified block schedule for almost ten years now. Three days of the week students attend all of their classes for roughly forty-five minutes each and on the remaining two days they have each class one time for ninety minutes. Mr. White brought in the idea when it was in fashion to have block schedules. The art teacher remembered spending what seemed like countless inservice meetings talking about block schedule but appreciated that in the end when Mr. White presented the idea of having one block period for each class, each week that the staff felt as if they owned the idea and not that it was being dictated to them.

Figure 8. The art room (AS2).

The art teacher

I walked into the art room five minutes before the first class began and was greeted by a broad smiling face and vigorous introduction to the man I had only connected with through email prior to that day. After brief introductions, Donald Young turned his attention to the freshman entering the room. Attendance taken and lunch choices recorded, Donald jumped right into the art history lecture the class was

continuing from the previous day. Two aspects of the ensuing lecture instantly caught my attention, the energy of the teacher and the level of participation by the students. In some respects I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was 8:15 in the morning and a class full of fourteen-year-olds was looking at slides of gothic and medieval art in a darkened room and they were talking about the images. Donald's presentation of information and leading questions about the slides were so enthusiastic that the students were in no way bored by the presentation. Because they were studying gothic and medieval art the subjects of the artwork were from Christianity. As a teacher I never tried to avoid showing religious images in my classroom, but I was cautious about how they were discussed and presented in a public school. On this day I heard students commenting on aspects of bible stories being depicted that I am unfamiliar with. The students were looking and thinking about the images presented. They could talk about the subject matter of the artwork and Donald, as I would see him do with all styles of art presented in the classroom, demonstrated and led them to use the clues provided in an image to make their own interpretation of the significance and meaning of what they saw. In the fifteen weeks that I visited Donald's class, I never saw his energy or enthusiasm in the classroom wane. I was pleasantly surprised to find that on many occasions Donald had as many questions for me as I had for him. He is a thoughtful and inquisitive person who recognizes the potential to learn from those around him, no matter their age or experience with art.

Donald is an alumnus of AS2 who began his post secondary education at Hesston, Mennonite community college in Kansas and after two years moved eight miles down the road to Bethel College to finish a BA. During the Vietnam War Donald completed his alternative service by teaching in Laos alongside his fiancé. In Laos he taught both English and art without a teaching license. In 1970, Donald returned home to attend the University of Iowa and obtain his MAT. His first art teaching job in the United States was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After two years Donald was fired due to administrative changes and what he reported to be the school systems policy of saving money by

releasing teachers with master's degrees in order to hire cheaper teachers with lower degrees. By this time he had a family and decided against continuing to find teaching jobs for short amounts of time only to be released and have to move his family. Donald and his wife decided to return to the AS2 area and farm. He had become comfortable farming and had resigned himself to the fact that art teaching was in his past when AS2 came to him and asked him to teach. He was reluctant at first but looking back is glad that he took the job. "Thirty years later I am still here."

Donald remembered that I had previously asked him about his personal artwork, and showed me a ceramic sculpture he is completing. It is a large round structure about two feet high and nearly two feet in diameter which is hollow in the middle like a tube. The structure is very organic resembling twisting roots or vines intertwined. At the top edge there are seven holes in the clay body that allow a marble to be dropped in which will then travel in and out along the channels in the clay until it ends in the center of the ring at the bottom. The piece was drying when I saw it and Donald told me his plans to build a wood base and top with a clear center plate to allow the viewer to watch the path of the marbles. He has many aspects of the art work to consider yet, but said that he envisions the final work functioning as a piece of furniture, like a coffee table. Donald also told me that he had artwork on display in the permanent collection of a local hospital. There are three artworks that are in the general pediatrics and neo-natal units of the hospital. Because the works are in children's spaces they are kinetic and able to be manipulated by the viewer. I asked Donald if all of his work was playful and he said that these were made with children in mind so it was fitting for that particular work.

Curriculum

I asked Donald to describe his curriculum. In 1963 and 1964, when he was a student at AS2 he was in one of the first art classes offered at the school. Art was only offered sporadically in the school based on the availability of qualified teachers and

student interest. When Donald came to teach at AS2, he made the curriculum. He had three classes, drawing and painting, printmaking, and ceramics, which he taught every semester. At the time he was in a very small room in the school and with a move to a larger space he added photography, computer art, and an introduction to art, which would become a required freshman course. Now Donald teaches different classes each semester of the year. This semester he has taught introduction to art, painting, and drawing and printmaking. Next semester he will teach computer art, photography and sculpture. To teach both, sculpture and ceramics, these three dimensional courses are offered on a rotating basis.

Knowing that the purpose of a parochial school is to incorporate religion into the curriculum, I asked Donald if he intentionally includes Mennonite beliefs into his lessons or if he lets connection occur naturally. I gave the examples I had observed in the classes such as using Biblical references when talking about art work, and explained that, from my experience as a teacher in a public school, when shown historical artworks with religious subject matter most students were unable or unwilling to identify the significance of the image. In the intro to art class on the first day I visited, I was amazed at how much biblical knowledge the students interjected into the discussion of medieval art. Donald commented that he notices that his students today have less biblical knowledge than students of the past and notes that he is unsure if that is a failing of the church or the home. He added that he does not aim at a specific religious curriculum because he feels that when he does the students fall into stereotypical representations of religious beliefs and events. He gave an example of what he feels was a successful inclusion of religion in an art lesson due to its subtlety. In a past drawing class he set up a still life using a chair, towel and basin in reference to the practice of foot washing. He was pleased with the drawings the students made by using these objects for a drawing exercise without including a discussion of their symbolic meaning. Even though Donald does not intentionally try to present religion in his lessons I would not say that religion is

absent from his classes, as he does not avoid religious images or discussions if they fit within the natural context of the class.

Teaching philosophy

> I teach art students to see. I teach problem solving, only the problems are visual. Part of my purpose is literacy (of artworks and artists). Most of my students will not be artists, so I try to acquaint them with what's out there. Even when they seem unaware, there is stuff going on in there. There is self awareness being developed. I want the students to get beyond the obvious, to learn to think. I'm wary of easy. If it comes too easily, they aren't learning. I have a reputation; students know I will make them work. And at some level they are ok with that. I hope art is work. I want it to be an intellectual challenge. All student work comes from direct observation at some point in the process. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

These are the statements Donald used to describe his teaching philosophy when I asked him to explain his purpose as an art teacher. As he generated the list I could instantly think of examples of each item in the classes I had been watching. The broadest example is the Introduction to Art class. The freshman class was created by Donald who also saw that it became a required course for graduation. I will describe the course in greater detail in the next section, but the objective of the course is to present students with a brief overview of Western art from ancient to contemporary styles while also requiring students to complete a few studio art works. As I have already stated this is in no way a silent lecture in the dark; but students are encouraged and required to talk about the images they are viewing. I am certain that the students would agree that the intro class is not easy, in that they are tested on the slides. The inclusion of this course in the graduation standards demonstrates Donald's commitment to teaching students art literacy.

Besides the intro to art class, I also spent time observing the drawing and printmaking class. The drawing studies for the course all came from direct observation of still lives or models, which even included Donald bringing live chickens into the classroom. The subject matter for the printmaking section of the course came from the

previously made drawings and self-portraits with the aid of mirrors. The students felt the pressure of hard work in the printmaking class. When they were almost finished with their intaglio prints Donald commended them on having pushed the prints closer to perfection than any other class he has had. They were getting tired of working on the imagery, working and reworking the plates, but the image quality was worth the effort.

Figure 9. Block print of a chicken from a drawing made observing live chickens.

Budget

The budget for art classes comes from a lab fee charged to every student enrolled in art and therefore varies with the number of students each year. Several years ago the school received a gift from an estate of $5000 for the art program. Donald has used the money to purchase a small printing press, easels, and display boxes for the gallery.

I have noticed that Donald does not waste materials and shows students exactly how he wants them to clean up and gives specific directions for saving unused inks and

washing out screens to use next year. I can only assume that in part this is related to Mennonite culture. While art budgets are limited and most art teachers are careful with materials and supplies, this trait is carried even farther in Donald's art room. It would seem logical that a community originating as Amish, which values limiting material possessions would also then take great care to maintain the possessions it has. When I think of Amish, or Mennonite cultures which value hard work I also think of thrift as being a respected quality and I assume that the practice is carried on in different ways in homes and classrooms today even with the presence of technology and modern styles of clothing.

Introduction to art

The introduction to art class is required for all freshman students at AS2. The class is always divided in half and sometimes it has been done randomly, but usually it is divided by the music teacher. For the music and band classes it is more effective for the practices if the students are divided by music ability, into a high and low group. When Donald first told me that the class was split into high and low music groups flashing lights went off in my mind related to tracking and what I learned about tracking from reading *Keeping Track* by Jeannie Oakes. The largest concern about tracking I took from her text is that students in lowered tracked classes receive lower quality teaching. Donald explained that he was sympathetic to the system as there can be a great disparity in the experiences that students have had with music before coming to high school. But for him he is indifferent as the student's previous experiences in art are very similar. He says "there isn't a difference, but there is." He acknowledges that there shouldn't be any difference in the students in his classes and he treats them as equals, but in reality what he does see are things like better study habits and class participation from the high music group. Students with higher performance in the arts tend to be better academic students as

well. In summary the music teacher decides how to split the class and Donald just happily takes what he gets.

Donald is teaching the students how to be observant and decode works of art. He is teaching them how to look and evaluate artworks and to pay attention to the details. Art history is obviously an important part of his curriculum and the idea that an introductory art class should focus on laying a ground work of what art is and what it means at different times and places. Learning about past art precedes making art in his curriculum. Donald said he has been teaching this course for twenty-five years. When asked about the content of the course he described it as “three quarters art history and one quarter art production.”

During the slide lectures I noticed that Donald focused not just on the artists and styles but he encouraged the students to comment on the work. He pointed out aspects of the image or style that made it different from other styles and representative of its category. He tried to give connections that would help students to remember the work or the style and he especially practiced talking about what the images say to a viewer. He asked the students to describe what they saw in the images and what they thought was happening or why the artist made what they did. Donald was never condescending to a student’s narrative of an image and encouraged them to not only use the factual cues present in the artworks but to also create their own interpretations. I never heard him declaratively state to students the meaning of an artwork or ask them to accept only his interpretation. In these examples he is attempting to not simply teach a rote skill of slide memorization but to teach students how to begin to respond to new images they encounter in their lives.

There are three tests given during the course, over the slides presented in class. All of the tests follow the same format. For example the final test consisted of twenty-nine slide identification items and two comparison essays. For the slide identification the students were asked to identify the artist and style for every slide and the nationality of

the artist on select slides. The test covered a range of styles within modern art. Of the four slides shown for the two essay questions, the students had only seen one image in class, a Duane Hanson sculpture. Donald does not choose new slides to trick the students, as they are not asked to identify the artist or style. Instead he picks two images that he thinks are easily related in some way and therefore lend themselves to comparison or contrast. The image sets for this test were a Kathe Kollwitz print and a Keith Herring painting; and the second pair was a Matisse reclining female and the Hanson sculpture of a woman shopping. In these questions Donald wants the students to tell him something about the image in terms of what they think each means.

Figure 10. Illuminated page design.

Before each test, several class periods are used to review the slides and the students are called on to give information about the images using their notes. On one such review session I observed that Donald went through five or six slides and suddenly stopped and asked the class “is this going to help? Is this working?” The class answered ‘yes’ and he continued. This was significant because it is an example of a teacher asking students for their response to his teaching method. During the discussion of the essay

slides Donald put out his interpretation of one image and invited the class to argue with him. He is not trying to impose his interpretation of the artworks on the students, and asks students to present their judgments and thoughts and to support them with evidence in the images and reasoning.

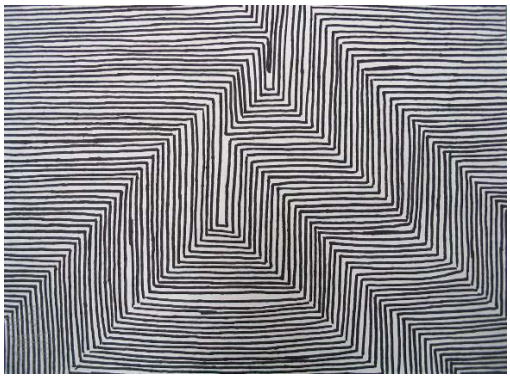

Figure 11. Optical design.

The Introduction to Art class completes four or five studio assignments as time permits throughout the course. The first is a medieval style illuminated page design. Donald has taught this lesson for many years and has the requirements down to a science. He is able to give good advice and recommendations about what will look best and how to work most efficiently as a result of his experience with the lesson. For example, completing and drawing freehand because the inclusion of a few “perfect” lines from a compass will look odd in the drawing. Or, leaving enough border space and drawing detailed patterns only in a small area and then tracing it repeatedly on the final paper. The requirements for the medieval design are to include: a fantastic animal or person, a letter, border segments, floral or plant ideas, and weavings. The final will be no larger than 8 ½” x 11” with a ¾” border of white. Donald likes to use this assignment at the beginning of the year because he feels that it is successful due to the non-threatening nature of the

topic. Soon the students will move to drawing portraits, but again have a choice between drawing a hand or a face so that it is less intimidating for beginning art students who often lack confidence in their art.

Figure 12. Two examples of paintings from the fruit bowl still life.

Besides an optical art design and a cubist collage, the Intro to Art class completed one other studio assignment. The assignment was to create a tempera painting from a still life with an impressionist theme. While the class did not go outside to paint, they replicated impressionist techniques by painting quickly, and using a large brush to limit the amount of details possible. I was impressed by the variety of results from the assignment. Even though the students all worked from the same still life of fruit in bowls the products were neither identical nor predictable. One student made a very abstract image of shapes using only red, black and grey. Another was focused more on attempting to demonstrate the shading on one orange and bowl, using an enlarged viewpoint, than on showing an entire bowl of fruit as most students did. As we briefly talked about the

images Donald and I agreed that the class was more successful than expected on the painting assignment, in contrast to the optical art designs in which few students followed the procedures closely enough to create a design that truly fooled the eye.

Drawing and printmaking

Half way through my time at AS2 I switched to visiting the drawing and printmaking class as the Introduction to Art is only a quarter long and therefore it has finished. I chose the drawing and printmaking class because it is larger, with 9 students enrolled. (The painting class only has three students and therefore is very unstructured and self directed, so there is not a lot of "teaching" for me to observe.) This class spends the first quarter on drawing in various media and styles and the second quarter on printmaking. I observed the class regularly during the printmaking portion of the semester. The students completed a block print, an intaglio and a colored intaglio all from one drawing of their choice which had been completed earlier in the semester before concluding the course by creating a silk screen self portrait.

Figure 13. Block print (left) and intaglio print (right) by same student.

The class is much quieter then the Introduction to Art class and I took time to try and talk with all the students about their prints, even if it was only a question or praise of their work, to slowly build up their comfort level with me in the class. On several occasions the class began by viewing images for inspiration. For example, Donald presented images by Alex Katz and Robert Longo to give them ideas about composition and the use of black and white in their print images. Donald's collection of images in the classroom is impressive. He has file boxes of traditional slides as well as file cabinets full of hard copy images and information about artists. He is currently in the process of converting the collection to digital files saved as slide shows to pull up whenever he needs to show examples. I am impressed at his inclusion of contemporary artists and have recently noticed that he subscribes to *Art in America*, which he obviously spends much time going through each issue and selecting artwork to use in his classes.

Some art educators would disagree with the manner in which Donald uses contemporary art in his classes. At the present time it is popular in art education to use contemporary artworks as motivation for the students to begin making conceptual art. (Marshall, 2008; Black and Smith, 2008; McKay, 2008) I did not witness Donald teaching conceptual art in his classes, rather, the focus of lessons was more on developing skills in drawing and printmaking using subject matter available in the classroom such as still lives, mirrors for self portraits, models and live animals. Most often the images presented to the drawing and printmaking students were used as examples of composition, media and technique. In their article *What About the Other Face of Contemporary Art?* Kamhi and Torres (2008) argue for inclusion of contemporary artworks made in classical realist styles in the curriculum along with a return to focusing on teaching art skills.

> In presenting such work [contemporary realist art forms], the focus should be first on eliciting students' personal responses to the work, and then on helping them to identify the often subtle features of form, gesture, expression, and atmosphere that convey the spirit and meaning to which they have responded. After those key

> elements have been discussed, the lesson should be enriched with historical and biographical information. Finally, contrary to the recommendations of some art educators (Tavin, Kushins, & Elniski, 2007), there should be a renewed emphasis in the studio on the traditional skills of drawing, painting, and sculpture to hone students' powers of both observation and of two- and three-dimensional representation, which are the essential foundation of all artmaking. (Kamhi and Torres, 2008, p. 56)

After one of the classes Donald told me that he feels insecure teaching two-dimensional media. He considers himself a sculptor and ceramicist and has less confidence in his ability to comment on student's two-dimensional work. In this class I watched Donald talk with students about what he observed in their designs and show students examples of woodcuts from other artists on the computer as examples of line and texture to help them improve their images. I was surprised when Donald told me of his insecurity. Donald acknowledged that it is impossible to know everything. I responded to him by reminding him that how you teach depends on what kind of teacher you want to be. Does he want to be able to tell students exactly what to do, or show them examples and give them ideas to think about so that they can make their own informed judgments about their work? Donald commented that "I break down and admit to them that this is my area of weakness." By the way Donald teaches it is obvious that it is important to him to show students examples of how other artists have solved compositional problems and talk with them about the elements and meanings of their work. Even though he knows he can't "know everything" he still feels fallible by not being the "all knowing teacher." As young children we begin to be instilled with the notion that the teacher is always right and knows all the answers.

The last assignment for the drawing and printmaking class was to run a series of five silk screen prints. The students were painting directly on the silk with drawing fluid and then blocking out the screen before washing away the drawing fluid to leave the stencil. The subject for the print was a self portrait and the students were looking in mirrors set up on one counter while they painted the screen. As with all of the printing techniques the students have done, Donald has stations set up for each step of the process

and students know where supplies are located and where to go to prepare a screen or to pull prints and then where to put them to dry.

The students do have the option to print their silk screen portraits on a t-shirt and this semester Donald has brought in stamps of letters of the alphabet for students to use to add words to accompany their images. This idea seems to have been inspired by a painting made by a student a few weeks ago. During the process of making intaglio prints the students were becoming frustrated with the tedious work of perfecting their plates. When it came time to add watercolor to a few of their prints one boy altered his image with the color. His image was a self-portrait on which he painted green hair and a red smile to resemble the Joker, from the Batman movie, and painted the phrase “why so serious?” Donald was so taken with the whimsical response to the tension being created in the quest to perfect the intaglio prints that he hung the painting on the whiteboard for two weeks. I believe this image was what inspired Donald to suggest the students add their own text to the self-portrait t-shirts.

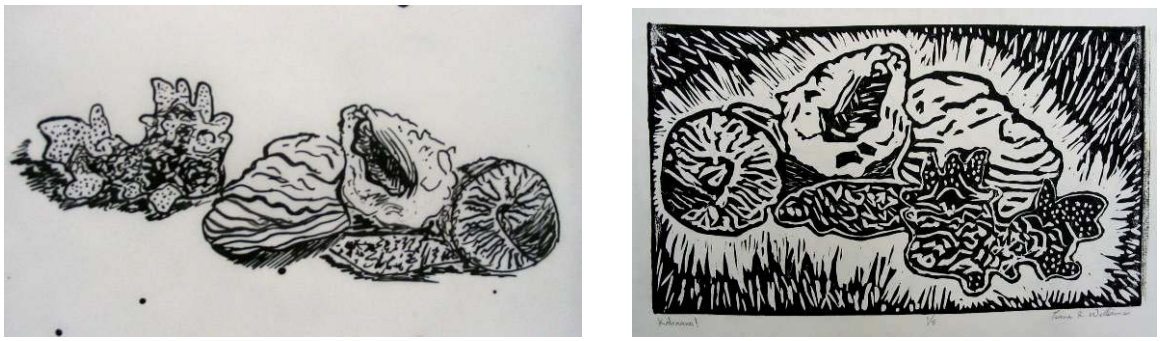

Figure 14. Pen and ink shell drawing (left) shell block print (right).

Student comments

The introduction to art class at AS2 is only a nine week course required of all freshman students. Because this is the first experience these students have with Donald

and it is not a typical studio course, I did not ask the students for comments about the class and school, and instead I chose to speak with students in the drawing and printmaking class. The drawing and printmaking students, with the exception of one foreign exchange students, have all had Donald as a teacher for at least one other class.

I overheard a small group of students talking about their upcoming final exams and that they were glad not to have a final in art. I took advantage of the conversation to ask them about the class.

> Karin: What do you like about your art class other than it doesn't have a final?
>
> Student 1: I like that, for me it is a break, from like looking at a screen. I don't want to say that it isn't work, but it's fun. It's a different kind of work.
>
> Student 2: It's more relaxing and there isn't homework.

On a separate occasion I asked two students who were working together what they liked about their school and art class, this was their response:

> Student 3: There is a lot of freedom in what you study or in following your interests.
>
> Karin: In art, or in all subjects?
>
> Student 3:In all subjects.
>
> Student 4: There is more interaction between students and teachers outside of school and in class. Sometimes I come to art during my studyhall to work or just to talk to Donald. There is a closer relationship between students and teachers.

The close relationship between faculty and students, especially with Donald was also noted by Frank Yoder in *Opening a Window to the World*.

> One student, whom faculty members felt should have been expelled from [AS2], looked back on his relationship with art instructor [Donald Young] as a stabilizing influence during a turbulent time in his life.
>
> "I basically lived my life at [AS2] in the art room. That's one place where I felt real and I felt very secure that what I cared to express and what I cared to display was accepted. My art was not so much judged as right or wrong, but it was accepted and I was accepted for who I was."

> [Young's] openness and willingness to listen made a difference. Year's later, the student remarked: "I'm grateful that he stuck in there with me as with many others. It's given me a lot to think about as I push out the frontiers of my vocation today."
>
> Although people sometimes viewed art classes as a depository for struggling students, others saw art as an integral part of any curriculum. [Donald Young] felt art matured students by helping them face themselves. When confronted with a project that required self-expression, students had to think critically about what they hoped to create. As they worked with a piece of clay or a bare canvas, they learned about images and form, but they also discovered much about their own emotions and thoughts.
>
> Even though a tradition of practical living pushed many visual and performance arts to the fringes of Mennonite expression, students found satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment in the arts. Many people believed the arts allowed student to develop and express God-given ability. Whether in music, painting, sculpting, or pottery making, the arts gave students an opportunity to work within a medium that had different expectations. (1994, p. 223)

Conclusions

Like the Catholic school art classes, the art classes at AS2 are not demonstrating any new art education theories. Donald teaches a good balance of materials and skill building to produce students with more than adequate artistic skill and an understanding of historical and contemporary art. What does he contribute to the school as a Mennonite school? When I talked with Donald about the presence of religion in the classroom he related that he does not overtly try to include religion in his curriculum. However, as a member of the Mennonite community Donald has a deep knowledge of the Bible through his faith, and therefore is able to elaborate in depth about the religious stories being depicted in historical art works. The first day I attended the Introduction to Art class I was amazed at the amount of knowledge the students had about the biblical stories they were seeing in slides of paintings.

Donald is an honest and direct person who tells the students his expectations for their work. He shared with me stories of his parents and grandparents who lived within the school community and some of his experiences as a student at AS2. Because the arts were not traditionally valued by Mennonites, Donald took advantage of the few art

classes available to him. He obviously found enough pleasure in art that he chose to pursue it in his life and career path. As noted in *Opening a Window to the World* Mennonites were supportive of artistic talent, viewing it as taking advantage of a God-given gift. As the art teacher at AS2 for thirty years, Donald still has small classes, but has gotten the school to require all students to take Introduction to Art, using the class to give students a general sense of art history and to have a few limited studio experiences in relation to what they are studying. A gallery was built in connection with the art room during the latest addition to the school, which Donald runs, including locating artists who have a connection to the school to present their work. In the orderliness of his classroom, the focus on hard work in his philosophy and the stress on economical use of materials I see Mennonite values of simplicity, frugalness, and work ethic, which are all elements of the experience Donald generates in the art classroom that a teacher who was not Mennonite might, or equally might not, bring. Lastly, as one art student pointed out she felt that she was always welcome to come to the art room and talk with Donald as well as make art. While any art teacher can build good rapport with students, especially over an extended period of time, I believe that the fact that Donald has been a life long member of the community makes the students and families more trusting of him as a teacher.

CHAPTER 5

ALTERNATIVE SITE 3: A TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION SCHOOL

At the end of the eighth grade girls' photography class, Mr. Thompson asked if I wanted to sit with the girls for a short meditation, so I pulled up a chair at the back of the group. The first activity was to count your pulse. All the girls and the teacher put one hand around the opposite wrist and took their pulse for about a minute. Next Mr. Thompson asked the class to sit up straight and close their eyes for meditation. I closed my eyes and then opened them again to see how many students were meditating. As I turned my head I met the gaze of another girl who was studying me and we both smiled. I continually opened my eyes every few minutes to see what the girls were doing. One student had her eyes open most of the time. There was quite a bit of moving and rustling around. One student came in from a drink and there were snickers as another came in from the bathroom and let the door close too loudly. The whole time Mr. Thompson never opened his eyes or moved from his own meditation acting as a role model for the students. After five minutes or so Mr. Thompson whispered something I did not recognize and the girls stirred so I opened my eyes to see that they were all moving to rest their heads on the table. They continued resting with fewer distractions for a few minutes more and then the teacher signaled that it was time to take the pulse again and meditation was over.

Mr. Thompson told me that the general philosophy of the school is to give the kids a whole understanding.

> Even when you get a PhD you are left wondering what it all means. We try to show the kids how it is all connected, there are basic principles that are guides and we show them how these appear in art and math, and all the subjects. So that they can begin with the whole and then work down to the parts. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

Transcendental Meditation and the Science of Creative Intelligence

The underlying philosophy of Alternative Site 3 (AS3,) developed by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, is the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) and the practical application of SCI is the practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM).

> The theoretical framework of SCI is derived from a combination of Western scientific methods of objective investigation and the ancient wisdom of subjective development proclaimed in the Vedas. It draws together knowledge of the nature, origin, development, range and application of creative intelligence in individual life and throughout creation, from the structure of the atoms to the motion of the stars. The practical aspect of the science of creative intelligence, transcendental meditation, enables the student to experience directly the source of creative intelligence within himself, and apply it to all aspects of his life. (Forem, 1973, p. 6)

SCI is said to be a combination of Western scientific method and ancient wisdom. The influence of Western scientific method is evident in the claim that the universe is ordered and organized by universal laws and that the goal of the universe is evolution. Ancient wisdom is present in SCI by the focus on mystical concepts such as Being, Karma and transcendental consciousness. The goal of the practice of transcendental meditation is to reach the state of transcendental consciousness also referred to as, the "state of Being," "pure bliss" or "God consciousness."

The underlying premise of SCI is that

> there exists a source of creative intelligence which can be contacted by any individual, through the technique of transcendental meditation, and applied to all fields of life. Creative intelligence is defined by the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as "the impelling life force which manifests itself in the evolutionary process through creation of new forms and new relationships in the universe." (Forem, 1973, p. 99)

The Maharishi's belief in the presence of a universal force led him to name the study of such a force the science of creative intelligence. The reasoning behind the name has been defined.

> A *science*…is taken to be a systematic investigation, by means of repeatable experiment, to gain useful and verifiable knowledge. *Creativity* is the cause of change and is present everywhere, at all times. *Intelligence* is a basic quality of existence exemplified in the purpose and order of change. *Creative Intelligence,* then, is the single and branching flow of energy (creativity) and directedness (intelligence) observable in all phenomena, and the *Science of Creative Intelligence* is the study of the nature, origin, range, growth and application of creative intelligence. (Forem, 1973, p. 99)

The purpose of SCI is to unfold the creative intelligence within humans. The Maharishi explains, knowledge "is the product of the union of the knower and the known. The process of knowing connects the knower and the object of knowing" (Forem, 1973, p. 100-101). In SCI the universe is composed of opposites that exist in harmony. There is an objective and a subjective aspect to life, knowledge and experience. Without an object of experience and a subject, the experiencer, or an object of knowledge and a subjective knower, the knowledge or experience is found to be baseless. In other words, it is key to SCI that the practitioner to be able to connect with the self. Knowing about the self, what one likes or dislikes, is different than experiencing self-consciousness.

> The science of creative intelligence intellectually locates the "I," the self, and defines it as a field of pure consciousness, a field of energy and creative intelligence, the source of all thought. On the practical side, through the process of transcendental meditation, the individual learns to reduce an object of knowledge systematically until the subject, the experiencer (the pure consciousness of Being) comes to full awareness. This strengthens the subjective phase of life, opening the awareness to a broader range of comprehension and providing a basis of true self-knowledge for all thought and action. (Forem, 1973, p. 101-102)

In the curriculum of AS3, the focus on knowing oneself is described as "self-referral" which I will discuss in more detail later in the chapter. In 1970 Dr. Robert Keith Wallace published research in the journal *Science*, reporting evidence of a fourth major state of consciousness, transcendental consciousness. The previously known three states were, waking, sleeping and dreaming. Dr. Wallace conducted his research while at Harvard University and described the state of transcendental consciousness as "restful alertness".

> Dr. Wallace was the first to show that this fourth state of consciousness is characterized by an increase in medium-frequency alpha brain-wave activity and by a more coherent, holistic style of brain functioning. At the same time, the physiology experiences a deep state of rest. (Deans, 2005, p. 34)

Since 1970 more than 600 scientific research studies on transcendental meditation have been performed at over 200 universities and research institutions in more than 30 countries (Deans, 2005, p. 38). The practice of transcendental meditation is physically how a student of SCI gets in touch with the self and connects with the self-conscious. This practice has shown to have a wide impact on the practitioner. Some of the scientifically reported benefits of TM can be grouped into three categories: development of full mental potential; improved physical health; and improved social behavior. The benefits of TM related to the development of full mental potential include: increased creativity, intelligence, and learning ability; higher levels of brain functioning; improvements in academics and school behavior and benefits for special and remedial education. In the category of improved physical and mental health, TM has shown to reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors, decrease medical care and hospitalization rates, decrease anxiety and speed up recovery from stress and increase longevity. Lastly, TM reportedly provides benefits to social behavior including, increased efficiency, improved integration of personality, reduced substance abuse, effective rehabilitation of criminals, reduced crime and conflict and improved economic and social trends (Deans, 2005, p. 38).

The Maharishi's overall goal is to end all suffering in the world and increase happiness in mankind. Transcendental meditation was what he considered as the means to achieve this goal. To meet this objective the Maharishi created, and in 1972 began implementing, the "world plan" and provided the following agenda.

> We do not go by what the world has been. We go by what he world should be. We are planning today for the happiness of every man on earth. We want to outdate the old expression, 'Life is a struggle.' We want to replace it with, 'Life is bliss,' to educate every man everywhere in the full value of life. (Forem, 1973, p. 10)

The Maharishi enumerated seven goals of the world plan.

1. To develop the full potential of the individual.
2. To enhance governmental achievements.
3. To realize the highest ideal of education.
4. To solve the problems of crime, drug abuse and all behavior that brings unhappiness to the family of man.
5. To maximize the intelligent use of the environment.
6. To bring fulfillment to the economic aspirations of individuals and society.
7. To achieve the spiritual goals of mankind in this generation. (Forem, 1973, p. 10)

Obviously this is an enormous task covering all aspects of life in society. In the *Science of Being and Art of Living*, Maharishi explains how transcendental meditation is linked to all aspects of life and presents the ideal world as one where every human practices TM, therefore making the world free of all suffering. The ideas are stretched beyond government, the environment and education to include discussions of correct foods, architecture, speech and actions. In general, coming in touch with consciousness through the practice of TM is thought to bring the individual more in tune with their inner thoughts and intuition. Through the belief in karma, from his religious and cultural background in India, Maharishi believes that the goal of mankind is right and good action. If humans are always performing "good" actions, they are following karma and producing happiness in the world instead of suffering. Maharishi feels that TM can be practiced by anyone, of any religion and have the same effects. He states that right or good action is different for everyone, as right and good actions are determined by the laws of one's community and/or the laws of one's religion (Maharishi, 1963, p. 220).

The Maharishi also had a vision for education culminating in the creation of schools. He states

> The purpose of education is to culture the mind of a man so that he can accomplish all his aims in life. Education, to justify itself,

> should enable a man to use the full potential of his body, mind and spirit. It should also develop in him the ability to make the best use of his personality, surroundings, and circumstances so that he may accomplish the maximum in life for himself and for others. (Forem, 1973, p. 93)

Because a democracy is composed of individuals the betterment of the democratic society requires the development of each individual. The purpose of education then has two purposes, the cultivation of the individual and the improvement of society. The Maharishi argues that education has failed in these respects because it is simply continuing a cycle of existence rather than improving the human existence by teaching students to live to their full potential.

> The dream of individual fulfillment and social harmony through education has failed because, although every person in our country goes through approximately 12 years of schooling, he is not given *education*- he does not come into full, useful and harmonious life. In a sense, then, we could say that *education has been missing from our society*. What we have called education has been incomplete and baseless. It has not provided an individual with a foundation for successfully living in the world. (Forem, 1973, p. 96)

The Maharishi believes that this dilemma is only compounded in higher education. As knowledge in any academic area becomes more and more specialized and individuals become more highly trained on narrower fields of study they proportionately become less educated in broader areas of life and knowledge.

> A man may be a great scientist, make important discoveries and advance science, yet when he comes home from the laboratory he may not be able to deal with his family in a competent and loving manner. Individual development has largely been out of balance, incomplete. The pace and style of living today *necessitate* specialization: no one can learn everything and be an expert in all fields of knowledge. But this specialization should not be at the expense of a harmonious development of the personality.
>
> What is missing from education, then, is an effective system or technique to improve our capacity for creative, intelligent action. We have known no successful process to expand the ability of the heart for love and human kindness, no way to help an individual attain full use of his potential for dealing effectively with all situations of life. (Forem, 1973, p. 96-97)

The answer to the missing link of education, according to the Maharishi, is the practice of Transcendental Meditation and the science of creative intelligence.

> Any discussion of the science of creative intelligence should not obscure the fact that its results- expansion of the mind, deep physical rest with the attendant release of stress, and changed behavioral patterns toward a more harmonious and loving response to life- are due to the practice of transcendental meditation; they are *not* the product of the intellectual analysis which constitutes the theoretical phase of SCI. In itself, the technique of TM has nothing whatsoever to do with analysis or rational thought. It is purely a process of direct perception at subtler or earlier stages of the thought process, until the source of thought, the field of Being or pure creative intelligence, is brought within the range of conscious experience. (Forem, 1973, p. 111)

Figure 15. The Transcendental Meditation School.

The Transcendental Meditation School (AS3)

> The main thing is that Maharishi was always trying to tie it back to them, because that is the thing that is missing in our society and the madness to try and get wealthy. There is no concept of who we are. And they think that it's out there, well, it's not out there it's on the inside. So that's the gist of meditation. It gives you the technique and the school gives you the procedures and the philosophy is that the different kinds of things during the day that are there to always put it back on you. The thing that is the most basic is our creativity, and the self. He calls it the Science of Creative Intelligence. That's

> how intelligence takes on the role to become intelligent, because in the field of transcendence it is just intelligence. It's on its own. But when you step out of that is where this intelligence becomes aware of itself. In becoming aware of itself it takes on the role of becoming creative. So that creative thing is very important because that is what nourishes us. Being able to create something gives us the nourishment. If we always provide a link to that to the kids then we have got it no matter what, you will always have kids coming back to self-referral. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

To fulfill his vision of education Maharishi had a goal of opening TM schools around the world. A few schools began in California in the early 1970's, according to the art teacher, who learned about TM while living in Nevada in 1973. When I asked how a TM school would end up in the middle of the Midwestern countryside, the answer was the availability of cheap land. In an effort towards expansion, a large amount of land was purchased in the Midwest, for a more reasonable price than that of land in California, and the Maharishi opened a university. The art teacher frequently mentioned the continued goal of spreading schools across the country noting his belief that with the current changes in the political landscape of the United States, the time is upon us when the nation will become awakened to the benefits of TM.

AS3 began in 1974 as an elementary school of 12 students to educate the children of the faculty at the Maharishi's University. Enrollment was opened to children from the local community, and as a result of increased enrollment the school moved to its current building on campus. In 1981 the Upper School was formed. From 1986-1987 the school became accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States and the state Department of Education. All students are required to wear uniforms. I asked the art teacher why the school chose to require uniforms and if it was related to behavior or academic achievement, he stated that it is required because it is simply more practical. In 1989 the school began to offer single-gender classes whenever class sizes allowed and in 2003 the school split into three divisions; the Boys, Middle and Upper School; the Girls, Middle and Upper School; and the Lower School for grades K-6. I visited the office to ask about enrollment numbers for the 2008-2009 school year and the response that I got

was that there are 200 students in the school K-12. I asked if they could give me a break down of the number in the boys and girls' upper schools and the only answer I received was, "not without going to some work." I spent time with the boys senior class, which had 11 students. The upper school girls class I visited was not exclusively seniors so I can not guess at the number of senior girls. But if there are 200 students in K-12, it could be estimated that there are 15 students per class. The lower school still is only separated by sex for parts of the day or when class sizes permit. One of the most interesting things I observed at AS3 was the single sex classes which I will describe in greater detail in the discussion of the art classes.

The Maharishi's plans extend to all areas of life including diet and overall healthy lifestyles. To promote this the university operates an organic farm outside of town with large green houses that use rainwater collection systems, and well as solar and wind generated power. All of the produce used at the university and school comes from their farm. A small greenhouse is located outside the school building along with edible landscaping which allow students to learn about organic agriculture throughout the school year. In 2004 AS3 was awarded the Organic Silver Award from the Rodale Institute for the permaculture gardens in the greenhouse. Environmental sustainability is a theme of the school and the university employs green building practices with all of its architecture. The art teacher frequently commented to students about healthy living practices. As the teacher was walking around the classroom one afternoon he noticed a student had a metal water thermos and picked it up to look at it. The student said that she thought it was made of aluminum which prompted the teacher to spend several minutes recommending to students never to cook in aluminum pans or with foil due to the connections made by some scientists between aluminum and Alzheimer's disease.

The upper school art classes are held in two rooms in the same hallway as the darkroom. A separate teacher teaches the upper school photography classes which use the darkroom. One of Mr. Thompson's art rooms is used primarily for ceramics and sculpture

and the other was used for painting and drawing, although these are not hard and fast rules, as I saw some cross over of materials in the rooms. The each room has three or four long rectangular folding tables with folding chairs that are used predominately for artwork, a desk for Mr. Thompson and other assorted tables and shelves for supplies and previously completed assignments. On the walls are posters explaining the objectives of the main lessons, the principles of SCI and other graphic media about the Maharishi, the unified field and the plan for total world peace.

Figure 16. One of the art rooms at the Meditation school.

Meditation, SCI and Sanskrit

Besides the traditional academic subjects and electives in the arts, all students practice transcendental meditation twice daily as well as attend a class on the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI) and Sanskrit. I was able to observe the senior boys SCI class which is the first class each day following the morning meditation. The boys were alert and talkative about the weekend and sports competitions after school. No one was laying down, complaining of being tired or yawning, not even one student who said that he was

sick but wouldn't go home because he had a game. The class chatted while Mr. Thompson took attendance and then were quieted down as they took their pulse. Small paperback handbooks of the Vedas, with covers tattered from use, were passed out and the class discussed which page the verse was on. Once the page was decided the class began a recitation of a verse in Sanskrit. I could see the pages, the writing was only in Sanskrit, and the boys had no trouble reading and reciting the passage. The boys spoke together for at least five minutes, at times breaking apart with some students dropping out and at times all together loud and strong sounding like chanting.

The class had been watching a video series of interviews between celebrities and the Maharishi led by Merv Griffin on The Merv Griffin Show, from the mid 1970's. As the students waited for the video room in the library to cue the film for the channel in the school, they reviewed what they watched in the last class when Mary Tyler Moore and Clint Eastwood spoke about meditating on the first portion of the film and one student expressed that he appreciated watching and hearing the contrasts between celebrities consumerists ideals and the Maharishi and his denouncement of earthly objects. The program brought on famous people to talk about their experiences of meditating and how meditation had changed their life, as a promotional quality of the program of TM. Congressman Richard Nolan from Minnesota began the video that I saw and encouraged other politicians and government officials to meditate in order to make more enlightened policies and use their time and energy more efficiently. After the SCI class I had a chance to interview the teacher. He explained to me the reason for teaching Sanskrit.

> Basically the reason that we study Sanskrit is that Maharishi says it is the language of nature. So these are the sounds, the fundamental sounds, at the basis of the transcendent. They come up, actually all sounds originate in these sounds. To read those sounds is really good for your brain. And they've done some research where they go to people and hook them up to an EEG while they're doing it and their brain becomes more orderly. So basically we don't teach Spanish or French or anything. We teach them Sanskrit and they learn the grammar. They don't know what it means necessarily, some of them figure out what it means, but

> the reason is that it is like a mantra in a sense. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

Figure 17. Meditation dome.

Before the SCI classes and at the end of each school day all students in the school, no matter their age, practice transcendental meditation. The teachers take turns leading the program and all faculty who are not leading the student meditations meet at the gold domes on the Maharishi University of Management campus for meditation. There are separate domes for men and women of the university and community to use at any time for meditation. Upper grade students are also allowed to meditate in the domes if they choose. I was able to observe a meditation program led by the art teacher. The programs are held in the Hall of Bliss on the top floor of the building. It is a large room that is divided by a partial wall. I assume the wall is for the girls to be on one side and the boys the other, although no girls were present for meditation on this day. There are no shoes or bags allowed in the room and a small coat room is outside the door to store the student's personal items. I put my things away and followed Mr. Thompson into the room. He pulled a chair over by his at the front of the room and asked me to sit. Noticing my hesitation he added that I could move it somewhere else if I didn't want to sit at the head

of the class. I left it there and sat down. The boys hurried in and attendance was taken as a bell signaled it was time to begin. During the first half of the program there was a steady stream of boys coming up to use the bathroom. Each was reminded to do that before they come and asked if they could wait, but Mr. Thompson was met with complaints of not wanting to be tardy.

A soft bong, almost like the strum of a single note on an acoustic guitar signaled the changes in events during the meditation. I sat in the chair and followed along with Mr. Thompson trying not to seem like I was staring at any one student. The first step was to take our pulse for thirty seconds. At the signal the students began a series of yoga asanas or poses. There were many poses, Mr. Thompson read the names from a list and each was held for about five seconds. In total the students spend less than ten minutes on the poses. The next bong sounded and the students all laid down on the floor to rest. Rest was followed by a breathing exercise. The students sat up again and plugged one nostril, alternating nostrils with each breath. This is done not to focus on breathing, as the Maharishi did not believe that was necessary, but to help slow down the body and reduce stress. Next the students closed their eyes and began meditating sitting up. At this point Mr. Thompson also closed his eyes and meditated so I did the same. I tried to keep my eyes shut most of the time, only opening them a few times to see what students were doing. Most of them were sitting still with their eyes closed but a few looked around the room. I could tell by the drooped heads that several had fallen asleep. The only time I noticed Mr. Thompson open his eyes was when a boy came up to get a bathroom pass. As I was sitting I tried to focus on my breathing and body as I have done in yoga classes before. There was a constant stirring of boys moving around on the floor but Mr. Thompson was so still I didn't feel like I should move. After a while my back and rear end were getting sore from the chair and I couldn't decide if I should move or not. Luckily about that time and bong sounded again and all the boys shifted to lying down, so I used the opportunity to shift in my seat. The last portion of meditation was resting

lying down. When the final signal came most boys took their pulse again and when released got up and hurried on to sports practices but a few lingered asleep on the floor. Meditators report a sense of "restful alertness" after meditation rather than the sleepiness you might feel after taking a nap. *A Record of Excellence* is an account of the benefits of consciousness based education and the successes of AS3. In the text frequent quotes from students demonstrate the impact of meditation on the student's lives and education. For example a quote from a former valedictorian states, "[i]t's great to be able to practice Transcendental Meditation at the beginning of the day to get you ready for the rest of the day. When I'm more alert, and have less stress, my classes are a lot easier" (Deans, 2005, p. 45).

The art teacher

> I started going to school in Reno, Nevada and I met a guy who had been meditating. He was a sculptor and he did this unbelievable, incredibly detailed work. And I said "how did you do that?" And he said he couldn't do that if it wasn't for meditation. I asked, "Do you think it would help me?" He said "Oh yeah." So that was it and I continued to meditate. That was 1971. In 1973 when I finished my bachelors degree I went to teacher training in Switzerland. Then I came back and I taught for a year and then went to graduate school. When I was in teacher training some people had started a university in California and they were just starting up here and I said "is there a university anywhere?" They said "yes" and I said "well, do they have an art department?" I came and met the guy who was in charge of it (AS3) in 1978 and I came and I have been here ever since. I taught at the university for ten years and then I taught part time for a few years and I ran an art organization in town with a gallery and 20,000 square feet of studios, the whole nine yards. And then there was a need for starting the school so I moved over here. I just came here for the timing. I figured if I was going to be spending my time in meditation and having a good experience, and if they have a school where I could put the two things together that would be perfect. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

This is George Thompson's description of his introduction to meditation and how he became the art teacher at AS3. Because AS3 is a small school averaging 200 students in pre-k through twelfth grade, the school bears some resemblances to the rural public school that I taught in for three years. The biggest resemblance is that the teachers share

responsibilities in order to keep the school running. Teachers take turns leading meditation and teaching the SCI courses, Mr. Thompson is the only person at the school certified to drive a school bus with airbrakes so he has to drive students to field trips and sporting events, and some teachers teach multiple subject areas.

Mr. Thompson had a retrospective show of his work last year. He spoke about the importance of his artwork to his identity as a teacher and artist.

> We started going to England in 1991 and we have gone thirteen times or something like that. There is a series of trees I have been doing. I sit and draw and my wife brings the boys and they travel around. We'd take three little boys and go to England. It's because I had to. For me teaching is not enough and being a studio artist is not enough, I have to do both. For me there is a huge drive to always be working. I don't feel like I can be a good art teacher unless I have that. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

One unique characteristic of AS3 is that the faculty of the school and university are provided housing and a stipend for living expenses as their compensation for teaching. George described the housing situation to me.

> We get housing, the kids get to go to the school and university for almost nothing, so I can provide for them like my dad did for me. And we get a stipend, but everything else is pretty much taken care of. It's right here on campus; we live right across from the ladies dome in the frat buildings. We have a three-bedroom apartment in there. We've got everything we need. I have a big studio downstairs with windows going along the south. I had to make it but, that's ok.
>
> What is it that drives your life? When you take away all of the stuff, what is it that nourishes you, that gets you excited and makes you want to get up each day? If you can figure out that than it becomes a lot simpler. The same thing drives all people, but the difference is that some people get off on the wrong track and the problem is education. They think that all this stuff out here in the world is real, and on some level it is real. But it isn't going to make you happy. You don't need a lot to be happy. Look at Maharishi, he is in total bliss and he has nothing. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

George's strong belief in the benefits of meditation and the philosophy of the Maharishi has allowed him to be perfectly happy in his life at the school. Knowing that the school was founded by the Maharishi I asked George if he had ever met him.

> I have a really good relationship with him. I met him at my teacher training three or four times. I met him during advanced courses and then he came here. I saw him ten or fifteen times. I feel really blessed because I had a really close relationship with him and he is my guru, my teacher. There is absolutely no question. I have never had any interest in anybody else. Once I started TM there was no question, I am going to do it for the rest of my life. But it's still nice to meet people who have been on the path for a long time, because they just are not like normal human beings. He's enlightened and there is just a feeling that you get around him that is unbelievable. He is very powerful. He has all of that, because he is using his full potential. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

Teaching philosophy

George's teaching philosophy is to blend his artistic knowledge with the principles of SCI and TM to achieve the Maharishi's goal for education to make the practice of TM a part of daily life opening students up to use the full potential of not only their intelligence but of their personality and surroundings. George spoke at length about his philosophy of education and the explanation is best related through his own words.

> The main thing is that Maharishi was always trying to tie it back to them, because that is the thing that is missing in our society with the madness to try and get wealthy. There is no concept of who we are. And they think that it's out there, well, it's not out there, it's on the inside. So that's the gist of meditation. It gives you the technique and the school gives you the procedures and the philosophy is that there are different kinds of things during the day that are there to always put it back on you. The thing that is the most basic is our creativity, and the self. He calls it the Science of Creative Intelligence. That's how intelligence takes on the role to become intelligent, because in the field of transcendence it is just intelligence. It's on its own. But when you step out of that is where this intelligence becomes aware of itself. In becoming aware of itself it takes on the role of becoming creative. So that creative thing is very important because that is what nourishes us. Being able to create something gives us the nourishment. If we always provide a link to that to the kids then we have got it no matter what, you will always have kids coming back to self-referral. I challenge these kids a lot. But I love them and try to give them as much as I can and they just want to do the best that they can. It's not for me, they want it because they are having fun in art. They are having fun being creative seeing what they're made of and challenging themselves more and more. The nature of life is to grow. The nature of that growth is fulfilling. There is a thing about action, achievement, fulfillment. You take on an action and have an achievement which leads to fulfillment which makes you want to do it again. It's simple. The whole thing about all of this stuff is dead simple. It's all about happiness. Creating a situation in which

> a student is fulfilled, they have the knowledge of themselves and they can do what they want to be happy. It is a fuel to be able to do, create and manifest- what a gift that is.
>
> Another thing about our school is that you have to have very specific requirements. If you have very strong requirements they will achieve them. If you are a good teacher you are going to require a lot from your kids. You have to tell them what you want. You have to be intelligent enough to figure out what it is you want, because they don't know. You're not a good teacher if you don't tell them and then you work with them to help them to get there. I am constantly requiring more of them. I'll have a kid who will work on a drawing for five months. "Am I done yet?" Well, I don't know. What do you think that you can do? Where do you want to go? What is it that you want? What are you trying to tell us? I ask questions like that and it gives them a gauge that tells them where they are and it also provides nourishment for them. Sustaining focus for a kid who is sixteen years old, for four months is difficult. But when they do they come up with work that is phenomenal. And you can do it, you just have to nourish the kid and have a goal for them and let them have a goal that they want and then lead them step by step.
>
> So you have your art training, the stuff from Maharishi, the principles, and you put all those things together and then you can come up with a program. As long as they trust you then you can take them from point A to point B. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

Curriculum and budget

The basis of the curriculum for all the grades in art is learning self-referral. Self-referral is learning to trust the intuition or sense of deep feelings that we have within ourselves. In the end the only thing students are left with are themselves and their feelings and thoughts, so the goal is to train them to trust their intuition and selves in the choices that they make. It is believed that intuition is good and leads to right action and when students follow it they are acting on their conscious and are closer to pure consciousness. Meditation is a tool in learning self- referral but the act of following your inner feelings throughout the day is the goal.

> The curriculum is all from me. But the school has certain things that they want us to try to include. Maharishi has a certain way of approaching things, the 16 principles of SCI and stuff. So you want to try to tie in those principles, but it's easy because these are actually principles of nature. It might sound sort of simple but it's true. If you look at meditation there are a lot of things you can see that these principles are a part of. The kids learn these from an

> early age and if you can refer to them and show them where it is, use the charts and such, you can refer back to transcending, so that they are constantly seeing how it relates to them and also what the bigger picture is.
>
> The other thing that Maharishi says is that in art training he wanted the children to work from nature. Observation is very important, second best would be a photograph, third would be a sketch and fourth best would be if they just worked out of their head. Now that's completely backward from normal art training. And the reason that he wanted them to work that way would be to have something there that you see, and then you know where you are, where you are going and what the goal is. So at the end of the day you don't have to feel stressed about where you are in the process. Actually it is all process; it doesn't have anything to do with the end result. All art, all life is about process- completely. So you could take all of the beautiful things that we have created and put them in a pile and burn them and we still could gain because we had participated in the process.
>
> Basically the curriculum comes out of me and thinking about it and relating it to other people and trying different things. They are checked. I check them with any other art faculty at the university. My background is in printmaking so I thought the only way I could teach photography, the only way I could justify it, was for me to teach it with the language of art. For me, and also for the university (MUM) that is what we teach. So they learn the language of art and then they can start doing their photography. So it always comes back to that language, and having all that information prepares them to speak. The only way I could teach photography was to teach in the same way I would teach drawing. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

George mentioned how he teaches photography to the middle school students using the language of art instead of teaching them darkroom techniques. The classes bring in their own cameras which are digital, or if a student doesn't have a digital camera George loans them a point and shoot film camera from the school. The photography curriculum focuses his teaching on the design principles and then connects them to Maharishi by pointing out that they are opposites. The assignments for the class are presented as looking for opposite qualities to form the composition, such as light and shadow, organic and geometric, or rough and smooth.

The art history class for the senior boys is half art history and half copying of master works. For all of his classes there are handwritten posters on the wall listing the

objectives or purposes of working with the media and which SCI principal it is connected with. For example the poster for the Master Copies assignment stated:

> ART= master copying has been basis of artistic training for at least 500 years. This procedure familiarizes the student with how great art is built up- step by step. Copying master works allows the student to begin to comprehend the many levels that make an art work, this allows them to become a better artist.
>
> SCI= The way we understand how the artist thinks is by seeing and experiencing the choices they made while creating the art work. This is a visual example of the artists self referral creative process. (Copied from teacher-made poster in classroom)

The sixteen principles of the Science of Creative Intelligence are the theme of instruction throughout the school. On the first day I visited AS3 George noticed that I was copying his photography assignment poster and hesitated for a moment. He decided that it was fine that I was copying it word for word because he had made it, but expressed concern over me copying the printed posters on SCI in the school. In the interviews he referred to the SCI principles and that they are easy to connect to all lessons because they are basically natural laws, however I am not able to list them as I have respected the schools desire to keep that information private and I did not copy them during my visits. I have spent a considerable amount of time searching the information on the internet about Maharishi and AS3, but was unable to find any of the SCI principles reproduced on the web. In my previous research I studied Waldorf education and the themes that Rudolf Steiner designated as the topic of each year of instruction (Tollefson-Hall, 2005; Simmons, 2004) and the Integrated Thematic Instruction program which also is built around yearly themes in education (Kovalik, 2002). In the field of art education the use of "Big Ideas" in the curriculum and in artmaking is a contemporary practice (Walker, 2001). The practice, as promoted by Sydney Walker, involves guiding students to recognize the "big ideas" or themes professional artists use in their artmaking with the goal that students will begin to form a body of work around a big idea or theme that is important to them.

Mr. Thompson reminds students that "Art is made of relationships; just as everything in the world is made up of relationships." He talks about the magic of art being the fact that a visual image can create intense emotion in the viewer. He reminds students that learning the relationships in the work of art is learning how art communicates. "All art is communication." While his technique of teaching master copies may be very traditional, his discussion of art as communication is postmodern.

When I asked Mr. Thompson about the budget for the art department he never gave a number. Instead he talked about a program that the school used to be involved with where they paid a flat fee to a company for supplies.

> George: We are a non-profit school. We used to belong to NAEIR. It cost $1200 or so and that included travel, to go to Galesburg, Illinois and get supplies from their warehouse. And there were companies that donated things. I am still using paints and some things from them.
>
> Karin: Do you charge a lab fee or anything?
>
> George: No. they are already paying to be here. We don't want to gouge them. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

The tuition for the upper school in the 2008-2009 school year was $13,900. I assume that his budget is limited. When the upper school boys were working with clay I saw several boxes of clay and a very well stocked glaze cabinet. I also saw George give some of the girls tracing paper and illustration board, so I know that these materials had to have been ordered for the year. But I also watched most of the girls who were painting and drawing bring to class their own paints, pens, and pencil sets. In the middle school photography classes the students brought their own digital cameras and were required to have their pictures printed at a local store outside of the school day.

The art classes

In contrast to the other two schools, I was driving a significant distance to reach AS3 and therefore stayed at the school for more than one class each time that I visited. There were several complications with the schedule changing at the end of the quarter

and field trips so I was not able to find one class that I could consistently observe over the entire course of the semester. In the end I observed five different classes at the meditation school, the middle school girls' photography class, the middle school boys' photography class, the senior boys' art class, the high school girls' studio and the high school boys' studio.

Eighth grade girls' photography class

As the girls came in they were noisy and all ten girls gathered around one table. Mr. Thompson rang a bell and when the students kept talking he reminded them of what the bell signifies and they were quiet for class to begin. Mr. Thompson pointed to the charts of compositional elements and objectives for photography as he explained the photography assignment of the day which was geometric and organic forms. The students gave examples of geometric and organic shapes and forms and Mr. Thompson reminded them that they want to look for obvious contrasts so that the photographs will be more dynamic. He gave them tips like using various points of view and taking many photographs during the class. Only one girl that I noticed was using a film camera and shot two rolls of film during the class, the rest brought digital cameras from home.

I spoke with George about digital versus film cameras and he appreciates the affordances of each medium but likes the instantaneity of the results of digital with the younger students. In tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade the students learn darkroom techniques with a different teacher. Now he uses photography to teach compositional skills and techniques, like point of view.

The class decided together where to go to take pictures and ended up in the gardens and greenhouse area for the rest of the class. The girls wear a uniform of a white blouse and khaki skirt. It seems that jewelry and socks or shoes are a way of expressing individuality amongst girls. The variety of necklaces and earrings are apparent as well as the plaid shoes. An elementary class walked through the garden while we were outside.

The younger girls wore plaid jumpers over white blouses but what caught my attention as they filed past were the mismatched patterned socks and purple striped tights.

The girls moved around freely and took many photos such as plants and feet on brick walls. One girl got under the grate of the storm drain and peered out, apparently this was a popular picture location also used by the boy's class recently. One girl brought wigs and masks as props to be used by the class for the photographs. At the end of the class the girls returned to the classroom for the short meditation I already described. After the meditation Mr. Thompson asked the class what is the most important component of the photograph? A student answered, "me, the photographer." Mr. Thompson reiterates that the artist is the only one with the idea and the artist is the greatest resource to themselves. They have to rely on themselves and their own ideas and nurture them and take advantage of it. Each individual sees the world differently and that is important.

Middle school boys' class

The second class was the seventh and eighth grade boys. Usually these classes are separate and the seventh graders would be working on ceramics. This year the school is experimenting with combining the grades and since the eighth graders already had ceramics Mr. Thompson decided to go ahead with teaching photography to both grades.

After calling roll Mr. Thompson called for the students to hand in their homework, a drawing of the spoon they will carve. He then proceeded to hold up each drawing and state if it was a good or bad design and why it was likely to fail. He was rather harsh in his descriptions joking about some of the drawings asking if they had drawn a mirror or a bubble wand instead of a spoon. When one student was snickering about the drawings Mr. Thompson made sure to point out that he shouldn't comment since he hadn't even done the assignment. As Mr. Thompson told me later he has had a difficult time with homework and that he sent out progress reports to over half the class for losing points due to missing or late work.

He has struggled with teaching photography to this class. It is a large class, of 17 boys and he feels that they are too young and irresponsible to have the freedom to walk around and take pictures. On one day that I observed them, of the seventeen boys, four did not have cameras with them and during the twenty minutes we were outside at the playground for a free day of photography only one boy really focused on taking images. Three or four more took a few photos and the rest of the class just climbed on the playground equipment.

On another visit it was especially interesting to be in this class because the boys were doing the same critique process that I observed with the junior high girls the previous week. In the girls class each student presented a poster of her best photographs from the course and the students gave comments about which images were compositionally strongest and why. They gave suggestions for improvements to the images along with Mr. Thompson as the class selected which images each girls would submit to a photography contest. The girls were in their seats, quiet, focused, all looking at the photographs, and giving detailed comments.

The boys were a completely different setting then the girls, as George tried to have them present their photographs like I had seen the girls do previously. The girls were anxious to get their photographs out and talk about them. They gave serious and thoughtful comments about the work and were enthusiastic about the quality of their work. The boys were very different in behavior and interest, although the quality of the photographs was as good as the girls. The teacher attempted to have the boys gather around him on the floor and on chairs to look at one student's photo album. The constant noise and movement in the group was inescapable. Mr. Thompson had to ask students to rejoin the group as some sat far away demonstrating their disinterest. The boys did not give many comments beyond "I like that one" or "that is interesting." They lacked the specificity of what made the photographs good that the girls had in their discussion. Only

a few boys gave comments and most just sat as still as they could manage to keep their active bodies.

After the class Mr. Thompson and I talked about the stark contrast between the boys and girls classes in the junior high. Mr. Thompson commented that they are better separated and I said, "you like them better when the classes are separate?" And he responded, "No, it just *is better.*" He believes that boys and girls should be taught separately for as long as possible. He sees the students as too distracted when they are together, "getting their hearts hurt" and generally dealing with situations they don't need to be in until they are older. Mr. Thompson believes that having boys and girls together in classes gets in the way of learning.

The inclusion of single-sex classes in the school can be read in several ways. It was interesting to see the dramatic difference between the behavior and attitudes of the boys and girls classes. But I also have to acknowledge that the teacher teaches the boys and girls differently. He views the girls as more mature, focused and responsible enough to be taught in an independent studio style of instruction, while the boys are seen as too active and immature to handle that kind of freedom and, with a few exceptions, are taught specific lessons as a class. While I was observing the classes I had to keep reminding myself that part of what I was seeing in the behavior differences was constructed by the teacher and his beliefs in what boys and girls are capable of. Judith Butler (1999) and Paula McMurray (1998), begs the question that gender at all ages, is socially constructed. Instead of pointing out all of the ways that this teacher is reinforcing masculinity or femininity in his teaching, what is more valuable here is to take note that there is potential for improving teaching when teachers adjust their teaching style to meet the differences in learning styles and behaviors of boys and girls.

This younger boys' class is especially difficult. Mr. Thompson says they have been a challenge all the way through and that all the teachers are having a difficult time controlling them, as they are energetic and it is difficult to get them to focus. The school

is considering hiring more teachers so that the group can be split into two classes to help alleviate some of the problems. Mr. Thompson also believes that they troubles with these boys are not the schools fault but a result of a variety of parental actions.

Senior boys' class

There are eleven boys in the senior art class. Mr. Thompson explained that the first half of the quarter was a survey of art history and that in the second half of the quarter the students select one art work from a book or the internet and produce a master copy. They finish the course by giving a ten minute formal presentation of the artist chosen for the master copy.

The senior boys were beginning the master copies when I began coming to their class. The students talked as they worked, like any class does. They were perfectionists as they tried to find and mix colors to match their reproductions. George encouraged them to have fun but be serious about their work. Students chose the artwork they copied, and there were artists ranging from Warhol to Lichtenstein to Botero to Rousseau. Some chose works related to their heritage. I commented to one student that he was making a Botero, and he told me he was part Columbian. I also noticed that the Asian student was the only students making an Asian ink painting.

Figure 18. Examples of boys' master copies.

As the boys enter the room for each class they are assessed by the teacher for their dress, which includes having their top buttons buttoned, ties tight, shirt tucked, wearing a belt and dress shoes. The boys in the school wear a white shirt, khaki pants and yellow school colored tie. It was interesting to attend the class and a little unfortunate that I did not get a chance to be present more than three times, due to schedule conflicts. The boys and I were never mutually comfortable with my presence in the class to really allow me a chance to talk with them or feel like part of the class. I know that the boys have female teachers in the school, but my presence as a female in the art class created a noticeable tension. The boys seemed giggly and nervous when they would wait in the hallway before class with me present. They were hesitant to address me in the classroom. The one time I felt this break down a little was when I went to the computer lab with them and talked with a few individuals about their research topics. The only difficulty then was my lack of knowledge of the expectations for the assignment and their lack of trust in my abilities and knowledge as an artist. My presence was reiterated at times when the teacher reminded students to be respectful of their speech and action as they were “in the presence of a lady.”

On the last day that I visited this class, I had a chance to observe a few of the presentations. I was amazed by the high quality presentations and analysis of images for a first experience giving this kind of presentation. The students gave each other excellent feed back, with specific comments about what was said and shown in the presentation. No one gave a comment like “it was good.” Every person who spoke offered detailed remarks. They obviously have had experience critiquing artwork. I was impressed with the quality of the presentations and talked with Mr. Thompson briefly about them. I commented on the level of analysis of the images the boys presented, and questioned how much was what they had read, and how much was from their own thoughts. Mr. Thompson said that he helped them with the analyses, and commented that it didn’t

matter to him how much was their own thoughts and how much was repeated from texts, because either way they are internalizing the information.

Figure 19. Examples of boys' master copies.

High school boys' class

The second upper school boys' class I observed was a mix of ages. There were ten boys in the class. One was carving a wooden spoon, one was working on a collage and the rest of the class was working on specific ceramics assignments. Three of the boys in the ceramics class had been in the master copy class last quarter and recognized me, but the other seven boys had not seen me before. One day that I was in this class, Mr. Thompson had to leave the room to meet with parents. He offered that I could sit in on the meetings or stay in the class. I chose to stay with the class and offered myself as the artist in the classroom, as the teacher sent to be in charge was a science teacher. This was

a good experience, as it gave me a chance to talk with the boys, demonstrate that I was a qualified artist and teacher, and to prove myself to them in general. After this class I did not feel uncomfortable in the class with them again, and they would ask me questions about their artwork when Mr. Thompson was busy. It was especially pleased when I entered the class one day and a boy in the ceramics group excitedly called me over to show me the box he had made and how proud he was of his craftsmanship.

I frequently observed George practicing his philosophy of self referral. For example, a student announced that he made a mistake on his box and Mr. Thompson responded, “some philosophers believe that there are no mistakes. You have to use creativity to solve what comes about.” Another boy asked Mr. Thompson about his cylinder box. From across the room George asked the student what he thought about the lid. The student responded that it was thick and George added, “yes.” It’s a balance thing. There is something inside you that lets you know when things are right. The more you use it the better you see it.”

The students working in ceramics have made pinch, coil and slab structures with specific size requirements. The objective of the vessels has been the same each time, to create the most perfectly crafted object in the assigned technique. The last assignment for the class had more freedom. Mr. Thompson spent several classes making a caste of each students face with plaster gauze to form a mold. The class would then press clay into the mold and make a mask of their face. Half of the face was left unaltered and the other half was sculpted into whatever the students chose. This is the only assignment in the ceramics class, that I have seen, which allows for free expression and interpretation by the students. I have noticed examples of masks made in previous classes in the classroom. The boys were excited about the plaster casting and I assume that this is a project they have seen other classes make and look forward to making themselves.

In this class I did not spend time with the student making a spoon as he was usually in separate work room by himself. I did talk with the student making a collage

several times. This student had taken art classes with George in previous quarters, and had a specific idea to use a collage to make a statement about body building. Over the course of the time I was in the class, I watched him alter and add objects to a central muscular male figure to which he had added multiple arms and legs. This student was allowed to work independently, like the girls' class, and some of his comments about art are included in the student comments which follow the class descriptions.

Figure 20. Boys' class, collage

High school girls' class

When the girls' class began Mr. Thompson gave a little motivational speech.

George: What is it in you that tells you when your artwork needs to change?

Students: your hand.

George: Connected to your hand?

Students: your brain.

> George: Connected to your brain?
> Students: our consciousness.
>
> George: Rely on your consciousness and self referral to tell you what you need to do on your artwork. Use it and know you are using it and your artwork will be better.

From the first day I observed the upper school girls' class I noticed a big change from the boys' class. The girls were comfortable with me in the room, several asked me who I was and talked to me about what art in a university is like, right when they came into the room. There was not the nervous tension that I felt with the boys who were reluctant to look at me or talk to me in the hallway before the class started. Mr. Thompson taught this class similar to a college course, in that the girls chose what they wanted to work on. Most of the girls have taken art with him before, he knows their areas of interest and skill, and works with them as individuals or small groups on independent projects. The first day I visited, three girls were beginning or continuing paintings, three were working on a variety of drawings, and a group of four girls worked together on pinch pots. It seems that the pinch pot group was made of students who requested to do ceramics and therefore were learning techniques as a group. When Mr. Thompson stepped out of the room one girl expressed disappointment in choosing ceramics because she thought it would be learning to use a wheel instead of hand building. I haven't seen any wheels in the school, but there are art spaces that I have not been in so it is possible that they have some. Mr. Thompson spent the classes talking to each student about their work and he sat with the clay group early in the class. The students turned in images of pottery they had found on the computer and explained what they liked about them. Then he talked about the pinch pots they were making and asked them to think about the principles of their pot. The three areas, foot, valley and lip, were all expected to be balanced in the design of the pot. In describing how to shape each of the three parts he asked the students to think about "what is your pot telling us?"

Figure 21. Girls' pinch pots.

Among the drawing students one girl was using pencil to copy a photocopy of a photograph and another was drawing from a small turquoise skull. Mr. Thompson challenged her to transfer the pencil skull drawing into a high contrast image by drawing over the pencil on tracing paper with a black pen. Over all, the students have a high degree of technical skill with various art media.

One girl, who talked with me for quite some time, after I said I was here from the University of Iowa, was working on a large painting of a bust of a reclining female. The girl wanted to go to the university for art and appears to have more than sufficient skill to be accepted. Mr. Thompson described her work to me in her presence. The painting was of Kate Moss, a fashion model. He coached her to say that in the image she looks lifeless, like "there is no light on in there," and how that is a comment about our cultures ideas of beauty. The student was agreeable and said "yeah" as he asked her about the meaning and explained that she is going to draw a skull over the face to strengthen the statement. He reminded her that it is her painting and she responded in a monotone voice "I'm excited about it." She has already painted the background and skin a green-gray color that seems almost morbid and eerie in appearance. As Mr. Thompson finished, another student jumped into the conversation and said "but Mary thinks she's beautiful. You can tell

because she just says-yeah, I guess- when you talk about it." Mr. Thompson, several times in the description, would revert back and say "but what is important is what Mary thinks." In this instance I was left wondering how much of the meaning was created by the student and how much was instructed by the teacher.

Figure 22. Girls' class painting, in progress.

Student comments

The high school girls' class was the class that seemed most comfortable with me, and therefore, was the first that I talked to about their art class and school. The first girl that I asked was timid and did not seem sure how to answer the question of what she liked about her art class or school. She answered, "I took photography last year and I am taking it again next quarter. This is the first time I have had drawing." A second student talked about what classes she was planning on taking next in art. When I asked what she liked about the art class. She responded, "I don't like using the computer. I think it is cheating. I like to do things by hand. I am thinking about desktop publishing because colleges like it, but I am not interested in it. I'd rather take art."

One girl was especially talkative with me on a regular basis in the class. She told me what she liked about the school and art classes.

> About school, I like the people, my friends. I art I like the freedom to work on what I like. I couldn't do it otherwise. My friend took art last year and had an idea to make a sculpture of a tree in a pod but she had never done anything like it before. No one thought she could do it. She had to build the tree out of wire and cover it with papier-mâché and build the pod and paint it all. And she did it and it was awesome. She could do it because he gave her the freedom to do it.

In the boys' class, one boy, who was also in the master copy class, called me over right when I came in the door to show me his slab box. It was exceptionally well done, with a looped handle on the lid that was perfectly crafted. I complimented his work and we chatted about his box. I asked him if he was taking art next quarter. He said he was going to take sculpture. I asked him what he liked about the art classes. He said "I like making things by hand. Learning about the history of art was good, but I like working with the materials better. I'm not good at drawing. I like three-dimensional work better."

I noticed that the boy who has been making the collage about bodybuilding wasn't working on it one day, so I asked him if he was finished and where he was going to go from there.

> I like the idea of using the same subject and making it in different media, but I don't know. I had art two quarters last year. In third quarter last year I spent the whole class on one small pencil drawing. I was trying this time to not get bogged down with one thing. This was supposed to be a one or two week project and here it is half way through the quarter.

Conclusions

I talked with Mr. Thompson about what types of community service the school is involved in. Green-fest was begun by Mr. Thompson as a fund raiser bicycle ride in honor of a teacher who was killed in an accident. The event raised money to purchase several trees which were planted on campus as a memorial. The bicycle ride was so successful that the school decided to adopt it as an annual fundraiser for the school. Mr.

Thompson felt that this has been a good program for the elementary students, but not as successful for the older students. Instead, the school is beginning to implement work days for the 7-12 grade students. Like at the Mennonite school, students will be hired out to families or businesses in the community as laborers for a day, with the money earned being given to the school. Mr. Thompson believes that

> it is healthy (for the students) to know 'it's my school and I'm working for it. If it helps the school and the community and is educational than it's great for everyone. They do things for the community and if it makes money for the school at the same time I don't have a problem with that. (Transcribed interview, 2008)

This past summer the boy scouts, which Mr. Thompson leads, were preparing for a camping trip on the Great Lakes when the reports of flooding were becoming imminent in the Midwest. Mr. Thompson realized that there are staff people from AS3 who would be affected by the flood waters and informed the boy scouts, who together decided they should cancel their trip to stay and fill sand bags. For several days Mr. Thompson drove bus loads of students from the school and university to sandbag, greatly reducing the resulting damage to one town. Besides giving students an opportunity to have a direct positive impact on their community, Mr. Thompson remembers the experience as valuable for both the students and community, in making the students visible to the community. He recognizes that when people hear that someone teaches or attends a Transcendental Meditation school they may think that the person is a little odd. Sandbagging made it possible for everyone involved to relate as people helping people.

I have noticed when Mr. Thompson makes announcements about boy scouting events to the boys' classes and that many students are involved. I asked him if this was due to the fact that he is the leader, and therfore many students choose to be involved. He agreed that may be a factor, but also noted that boy scouts has changed. Each summer the boy scouts take a high adventure trip making being a boy scout more exciting and acceptable to young adults than it was viewed in the recent past. Mr. Thompson mostly began leading boy scouts because his sons were involved and wanted to continue, but he

has appreciated the experience as many of the ideas of boy scouting are related to points of SCI. For the students this makes one more real world connection between ideas present in school also being visible in their broader life experience.

Inside the classroom, Mr. Thompson grabs hold of any possible opportunity to talk with students or give suggestions about healthy living. For example, in drawing the boys' attention to the poster on cigarettes he informed the class that tobacco contains 4000 chemicals, 27 of which are known carcinogens. In the girls' class he noticed a student had brought in a metal water bottle. He picked it up and asked her if she knew what it was made of. When she guessed aluminum he advised against getting rid of all aluminum cooking implements and not using aluminum foil on food, due to the link between aluminum and Alzheimer's disease. A student came in after class for information on making chai for the boys' school holiday party and Mr. Thompson made a point to tell him not to have Styrofoam cups because they are not environmentally friendly in any respect.

He also finds moments to reinforce values or practices that lead to being a "good" person. For example in the girls' class Mr. Thompson mentioned that his wife had made his sweater. When asked about his response to his wife for the gift he said "the highest compliment I can give is by continuing to wear it." After asking the student wanting to make chai not to buy Styrofoam cups, he made sure to tell the student to send a thank you letter to the grocery store owner. In the boys' master copy class, the students were talking about the significance of the color red related to love in a painting. This led to examples of Valentines Day during which Mr. Thompson reminded the boys that the personal, little things they do for someone throughout the year mean more than receiving roses on one day.

While describing TM to me, Mr. Thompson explained that transcending is a natural occurrence in human existence. Athletes can transcend when they are at the height of their experience, for example, when people who run speak about feeling a runner's

high. People can transcend when they are reading or making art or playing music. When the person is so intently focused on what they are doing that they are unaware of anything else, they are fully in the moment, and experience transcendence. The only difference between this and transcendental meditation, is that with TM you can have the experience every day instead of by chance.

The Maharishi believed that anyone, regardless of religion, can practice TM. When I read *The Science of Being and Art of Living* and the lengthy descriptions of the karma and being, I questioned Maharishi's idea that TM did not affect religion. Because the premise of karma is reincarnation, I can think of several religious groups that would not practice anything related to karma. I asked Mr. Thompson how this is reconciled by the Maharishi. Basically he conceded that it cannot be. People who are religiously against the idea of karma would not accept TM. The fundamental difference between the Maharishi's view of life and many organized religions, is suffering. Inherent to Christian religions is the idea that life is suffering, and heaven is salvation from suffering. The Maharishi believes that there is no need for suffering in the world, and that instead, it is the birthright of humans to live in bliss. Through TM, the world can be free of suffering and all people can live in peace. Since some groups of people in the world would never choose to practice TM, due to conflicting belief systems, one would think that this means the world will continue in suffering. The key to unlocking the bind is that, according to the Maharishi, only one percent of the world's population needs to practice TM to be able to create peace in the world.

The teaching of SCI and karma to students helps to illustrate that what is real is the present moment. By focusing their attention on the present moment, students are reminded that they are where they are due to their past actions. And what they choose at any moment will affect their future, this is their karma. If we take out the terminology of karma, which makes listeners skeptical about the beliefs of the Maharishi, teachers can talk to students about the same issue. Instead of letting the students continue the

discourse of victimhood whenever life is not all that they hoped, students can be led to see how their own actions got them to where they are today and that the choices they make today will have positive or negative consequences in their future.

In relation to art education, Mr. Thompson uses mostly traditional theories of teaching such as, the master copies and other forms of skill training. While I was visiting the school I saw documentation of large numbers of students who won awards at photography competitions. One of the girls I talked with in the girls' upper school class was accepted to two art schools, including receiving a scholarship to the Art Institute of Chicago. While the teaching practice may be traditional at the meditation school, the result is that the teacher is producing highly skilled artists.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL ART CLASSES

One of the main aspects of this inquiry was not only to describe art learning in private school settings, but also to reflect on how the experience of being in an art class at a private school is qualitatively different from taking an art class in a public school. It is impossible to say which school is best or if they are better than public schools and that is not my intention. What I can do is describe the aspects of these schools that make them distinct from traditional school models, as I defined them in the introduction. There are specific aspects of each school which make them unique, such as the history of the Mennonite school or the meditation and single-sex classes at the Transcendental Meditation school. Instead of listing all of the qualities which separate these schools, and which are very visible in the descriptions of the classes, I will focus on themes that are present in all three schools. The broad topics I will describe include several aspects of the curriculum, the school community, student perceptions of the art program, and the art budget.

Art curriculum

One of the most obvious differences in private schools is the presence of religion, or the school's guiding philosophy, in the curriculum. Teachers are expected to include the school philosophy in their curriculum in some way. Typically this is the inclusion of religion, as the most common reason for opening a private school is to have the freedom to teach religion throughout the school. The Transcendental Meditation school claims that the program of TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence is not a religion. But it is the guiding philosophy of the school and is present in the curriculum in the same way a private religious school uses religion to guide the curriculum.

The presence of religion or philosophy is at times invisible and at other times overt depending on the lesson and the art teacher. When I asked Donald Young, the art

teacher at the Mennonite school if he intentionally includes religion in the curriculum he said that he has tried in the past, but was not happy with the resulting artwork. He has found that when students are given art assignments related to overtly religious topics they tend to fall back on stereotypical imagery. In the time I spent in Donald's classroom, the only time I heard a religious discussion was when the freshman class was looking at slides of medieval art, and Donald asked them to describe the Biblical stories being depicted. Even though Donald does not talk about the Mennonite religion in class or ask students to produce artwork with religious subject matter, that is not to say that religion is absent from his teaching. As a member of the Mennonite community the students see Donald in school and at church as a model of living a life in the Mennonite faith. I attended a chapel service at the school with Donald on one of my visits. He participated in all aspects of the service and each week when I arrived at the school I saw him coming out of the auditorium, demonstrating to me that he attends the services and models expected behaviors within the Mennonite community to the students of the school.

Jim Davis, the art teacher at the Catholic school, frequently reminded me that he was not Catholic and I never saw him teach an art lesson that required students to use Catholic imagery. Again this is not to say that Jim does not participate in the school philosophy of helping to teach students to lead a Catholic life. Like Donald, Jim teaches faith through example by participating in religious retreats and community service projects. He is accepting of all types of religious imagery that the students produce in his classes. And most importantly he engages students in conversations about Catholicism and faith. Jim asks the students questions about confession and other practices of the Catholic religion and how they feel about them. As I described in the chapter on Alternative Site 1, Jim tells students that he is Christian and believes in God and I witnessed his conversation with a student questioning her belief in the necessity of God and faith. As a teacher in a religious school Jim helps students to reflect on their beliefs and strengthen their convictions by engaging them in conversation.

George Thompson believes in the Maharishi's plan for world peace, is convinced that meditation has changed his life, and constantly talked to me about the power of the TM program to change the world and his trust in the Maharishi's claim that one day the world would be awakened and using their full human potential. He has trust in David Lynch and his efforts to raise money to spread TM to other existing schools in the United States. Every day that I sat in the classes at the meditation school I heard at least one reference to self-referral, living a healthy life style, or consciousness. George strongly believes and will explain repeatedly that "consciousness based education," wearing school uniforms, and teaching boys and girls separately are in his words "simply better" educational practices. He was the one teacher who overtly expressed the school philosophy to his students on a regular basis.

Freedom of the curriculum

The second aspect of the curriculae of these three art programs that is different from public schools is the freedom of choice that the teachers have. When I asked each teacher about a school curriculum, the first answer I got was "there isn't one." All three of these teachers had the freedom to generate the curriculum of the art program free of oversight from the administration. While art teachers may feel that they have more freedom in developing curriculums than teachers of textbook subjects have, public school districts all have some sort of standards for the art program that the teacher must meet within their curriculum. Iowa is the only state in the United States that does not have mandated standards of learning. That is not to say that schools in Iowa do not have standards. Every school district determines its own required standards and there are recommended state standards which can be adopted. All three of the private schools in this inquiry are accredited, which means they have to meet state testing standards and course offering requirements. But the guiding reason for a school to open as a private institution is to have greater freedom in the curriculum then is allowed in public schools.

For these art teachers that has meant complete freedom to create or use any art curriculum they desired. George Thompson commented on how easy it is for him to include the principles of SCI into his art lessons because they are general statements related to natural laws. Even when expected to teach religion or the school philosophy, art teachers find that it is not difficult to connect those with concepts of art.

Budget

In an art classroom the budget can have a large impact on the quality of the art experience students have. Obviously a school which can afford higher quality materials, a greater variety of materials, or simply a greater amount of materials to the students will have an advantage. For example, my husband is an art teacher who spent five years teaching in a Title I school with a budget of roughly one dollar per student for the entire school year. At the same time I was teaching junior and senior high school art classes in a rural school. I had an annual budget of $700, and an average of 40 students in art over the course of the school year. I experienced much greater freedom in the types of art activities that I could plan and provide for my students than my husband did. I recently interviewed a former student of mine at the University of Iowa who is a first year teacher about what she had learned from her experience teaching art lessons to children on Saturday mornings. In her response she referred to the freedom of having a large budget.

> "The Saturday morning Art Workshop gives you (the teacher and the children) plenty of room for experimentation that you don't necessarily get in a typical elementary art room setting with tight time and budget constraints. I learned about the joyful, spontaneous creativity children have the potential to demonstrate if given plenty of space (physical and creative), a chunk of unhurried time, and access to a multitude of interesting art materials."

In the three schools I studied, I did see a disparity in the budget. The only teacher who gave me a specific dollar amount for the art budget was Jim Davis, at the Catholic school. He receives $3000 dollars each year ($2000 from the school and $1000 from a parent organization) and teaches 140 students each day. The students are not closely

monitored in the use of materials in the classroom and Jim frequently has to buy extra supplies during the semester. For example, in the time I was there he bought extra white paint on three occasions.

At the Mennonite school the students were creating wonderful art work, but I could sense that there was tension about the use of materials and the budget. Donald did not give me a specific budget amount because the students who take an art class are charged a lab fee for materials, so the budget is contingent upon the number of student enrolled each year. Donald was fortunate enough to receive a gift of $5000 that was willed to the art department and that he has been spending for several years to buy large items for the classroom such as easels, a printing press and display cases for the gallery. These are items that he would be working without if it had not been for the donation. I witnessed Donald's very precise directions about putting back extra paint and inks as well as scrubbing out silk screens so that they could be reused as long as possible. When we talked about the tuition at the Mennonite school he was worried about the hardship it presents to some families and concerned about enrollment in a declining economy. He also added that it was common to see students or parents working in the cafeteria or as janitors to help reduce the cost of tuition.

Similarly George Thompson at the Transcendental Meditation school did not tell me a specific budget but talked about a consortium that the school used to buy into and that he was using up materials he received years earlier such as paints and glazes. In the photography class the students brought their own cameras and paid for their own picture printing. In the girls high school class most students brought their own pencils and paints to class. When I asked about a lab fee George said that the school did not charge extra fees since the cost of attendance is already very high.

School community

The community of the school has an impact on the art experiences that occur within the classroom. This is visible in that it is assumed by parents and other members of the school community that the values of the community will be reflected in the work of the students. This is most obvious in the use of religious iconography in the artwork of the students at the Catholic school. The teacher is not Catholic and does not directly teach religion in the art lessons, yet many students create crosses and Christ images in their artwork of their own initiative. The Christian value of service to the community is present in the art room of the Catholic school when the students use class time to work on school sponsored community service projects such as the Christmas baskets, Thanksgiving dinner, sculpting pumpkins for the elementary Halloween parade, and work days.

At the Mennonite school, art might seem to go against the ideals of simplicity in life and adornment. But the school has embraced the visual and performing arts recognizing the importance to students who are talented or interested in the arts. The school demonstrated this support through the creation of a gallery in the latest school addition. Donald, states in his teaching philosophy that art should be work and that he is skeptical of things that are easy. When I think of and see examples of traditional Amish life, the root of the Mennonite faith, I can see the connection to valuing hard work. When the Amish first separated themselves from the Baptists in Europe they learned the value of living in close proximity and in a close knit community as a means of avoiding persecution. At the Mennonite school today the students and teachers call each other by their first names as a means of building a closer relationship between teachers and students.

The administrators of the Transcendental Meditation school have a goal to spread their pedagogy to other schools across the country. As a result, the school has a vested interest in positive promotion of the successes of the school. On the school website there are links to research studies about Transcendental Meditation, single-sex classes, records

of academic achievements, a book published on the successes of the school in academics and sports and various forms of media coverage the school has received. To keep up with the academic awards and above average number of national merit scholars in the school the art students also win many awards in photography contests and seniors frequently are awarded scholarships to art schools. One senior girl in the art class I visited was awarded a scholarship to the Art Institute of Chicago. The teacher demands students achieve a high level of skill in art which is evident in his comments about getting high school students to spend four or five months on one art work and in the requirement to keep a log of time spent working on artwork outside of school for homework in art.

Another way that the school community impacts the experiences within the school is that attendance at the school confers identity, and places the students within a specific community. At the Catholic school there is a certain amount of status and privilege acquired by attending the school. Walking through the student parking lot or watching the type of cars that drop off students at the Catholic school each morning it is easy to get a sense of the economic status of most of the families who are a part of this Catholic school's community.

The students at the meditation school are received differently within the geographic area because of attendance at the school. It is easy to imagine how someone who has never had contact with the school would react when a student says that they attend a meditation school. The art teacher illustrated this point when he told me the story about the students filling sandbags for a nearby town and that it was a beneficial experience for the local community to see the students as not that different from the students at public high schools. When I attended the Science of Creative Intelligence class I found it interesting that there was a poster on the wall detailing how to talk to others about TM. Because the students are so frequently stereotyped or misperceived the school actually teaches them how to explain their practice to outsiders in a manner that presents it as less exotic.

Student perceptions of the art program

As a public high school teacher, the students in my classes were present for a number of reasons. Students took art because they were serious about going into an art profession, because they enjoyed art, and some were placed in art class by school administrators against their will because they were not passing their other subjects. All three of these situations may exist in the schools I have been observing. A theme that has emerged in this inquiry from my conversations with students that is related to the students enrollment in art are the students' perceptions of the place of art in the overall academics

At the Catholic school a handful of senior students worked independently with Jim to generate portfolios for entrance to art programs at the university level. But the majority of students seemed to take art as a break from academics in the school day. Jim is accepting of student work at all skill levels and is an enjoyable person in the classroom. The students commented on the relaxed atmosphere of classes as a break from the pressure of other academic subjects. In seeing the types of imagery the students at the Catholic school use in their artwork I believe that the willingness of Jim to allow and encourage inclusion of pop culture in the artwork increases student satisfaction with the class.

The students at the Transcendental Meditation school are known for their academic achievement on standardized tests and in math and science competitions. The atmosphere of the upper grades values excellence in some area of student life, such as sports, the arts, or specific academic subjects. In the girls' class the majority of the class was serious about their artwork. They worked on individual projects and, as George pointed out, he pushes students to work on an artwork for several months, which is much longer than the typical art lesson would be in a public high school. The small group of girls who worked together on clay were the only new students to art and therefore were given directed assignments focusing on perfection of skill in craftsmanship with clay. These girls were not as content in the class. I asked one girl if she was going to take art in

the next quarter and her answer was, “I don’t have the stamina for this.” She was frustrated with the push to perfection and degree of attention the art classes require. In contrast to the art classes at the Catholic school, these classes are intense. Art is seen as a skill to be perfected just as another student may have above average achievement in science or math.

Historically, in the Mennonite school, art classes were often few and far between, being taught based on the presence of a capable teacher rather than as an academic requirement. The importance of the art program to the school has increased since Donald has been the teacher. His art room has been moved to larger spaces two times with the last move being a well designed art room with a gallery. When he moved to the current room, the freshman art class became a graduation requirement for the school. Beyond the freshman class the other art classes remain relatively small, composed of students who have an interest in continuing art outside of school or enjoy artmaking. Donald realizes that the elective art classes only reach a limited population of the school and adjusts the required freshman class to meet the needs of a group of students from which few will continue in art. To do this he teaches basic art history, visual literacy and how to decode visual imagery. He teaches these skills so that students will have an entry point for addressing the visual images they encounter later in life.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

My intention at the beginning of this project was to find unique or innovative teaching practices within private school art classes that could be applied to any classroom to improve teaching and learning. After spending over thirty hours at each school I did not find any "new" practices in art education. Instead of finding innovative or unique teaching, I found these schools drew more on traditional theories of art education than contemporary theories. By inquiring into the history and philosophy of the overall school, I was planning to incorporate in the findings not only aspects of the art classes that apply to art education specifically, but to also look at the broader picture of the school and schooling in general. While I cannot make recommendation of practices of art education to implement in other art classes, I do believe that some aspects of these schools as a whole were significant to the improvement of education. None of these topics are new to educational research and instead could be used in support of studies on community service, the teacher as artist, the value of including popular culture in the curriculum, development of teaching philosophies and school philosophies.

Connecting the school and local community

> Service learning has recently received greater attention and has been explored as a form of experiential education based on ideological educational theories of both John Dewey and Paulo Freire (Deans, 1999). Dewey's (1938) concept of experiential learning emphasized real life experiences as necessary to providing meaningful education. Freire (1993) presented a critical pedagogy based on his work in Brazil training individuals to read and teach reading skills, thus empowering individuals to seek liberation and change through education. As such, service-learning as an experiential and critical educational approach is based on the notion of reciprocal learning, which benefits both those receiving and those providing the services. (Sigmon, 1979)
>
> As a reciprocal learning experience, it can be argued that service-learning is rooted in democratic education, which hooks (2003) described as learning that "is never confined solely to an institutionalized classroom" (p. 41). hooks described the

> democratic educator as a teacher who consistently connects learning to student's lives. (Hutzel, 2007, p. 34)

In the discussion of community service and service learning in the literature review and in the description of the community service projects at each school, I have already alluded to the fact that according to definitions of service learning from the literature, these schools are performing community service rather than service learning. Because the curriculae of the classes are not organized around the service project and reflection on the service work is not a classroom activity, the work days and charity programs that students participate in through these private schools would be defined as community service rather than service learning. I do not disagree with the definitions and distinctions between service learning and community service in the literature, as a line has to be drawn between these two activities. But the community service projects at private schools perform a function that they do not in a public school. To continue to exist, private schools rely on private funding from the community. Having students working on programs that are visible and beneficial to the community is one way of encouraging the community to support the school by donating funding beyond what is paid in tuition.

For teachers in private schools the expectation of service to the school is present in the community. Similar to my teaching experience in a rural school, all teachers have to work together and donate time to perform tasks outside of the school day to keep the school running and providing extra curricular activities. The art teacher is unique in that the community views him or her as an artist as well as a teacher and there is an added expectation that the art teacher will be able to perform various art related tasks for the school. For example, while I was visiting the Catholic school, Jim Davis, the former commercial artist, was busy designing the posters for the school musical and drawing caricatures for the dance team t-shirts. The teachers at these three schools are aware of themselves in service to the school community and each views himself as having a role in that community.

When I taught in a rural public school, the community was consciously aware of the possibility of the town losing its school due to lack of funding from low enrollment. The loss of the school was viewed as a death blow to the livelihood of the town. The community consistently voted to raise its local taxes to support the school. At both the Mennonite school and the Transcendental Meditation school, the art teachers expressed concern over the economic needs of the school and enrollment. It would be hard for me to believe that the tenuous nature of the school would not be known to the students as well. These students perform community service to raise funds for their school and have a vested interest in maintaining the school community. While this point may not be present in the classroom lectures each day, it is present in the minds of the school community who know that they all have to participate or the school will not exist. That sense of commitment to the school is different than reflecting on personal growth from a service learning project, or performing a one time community service activity because it is a graduation requirement. For this reason I believe that it is important that the students at these schools are performing community service projects; and further inquiry could be done on the specific projects and how students view the place of community service within their school and educational experience. Connections could possibly be made to studies on the positive educational outcomes from the inclusion of community service in the school curriculum.

Teacher identity and philosophy

> If we teachers are to develop a humane and liberating pedagogy, we must feel ourselves to be engaged in a dialectical relation. We are more likely to uncover or be able to interpret what we are experiencing if we can at times recapture some of our own lost spontaneity and some awareness of our own backgrounds, either through communication with children, psychotherapy, or engagement with works of art… (Greene, 1995, p. 52)

Art teachers are trained in two subject areas, as artists and as teachers. Seeing oneself as an artist and as a teacher is integral to the teacher identity of an art educator.

While at a college or university completing an art education program it is easy to feel like an artist while learning to be a teacher, as the university students are involved in studio courses, art shows, and art production in general. From my teaching experience and from talking to art teachers over the past ten years, the fact that it is difficult to find time to produce artwork while teaching is expressed frequently. Many colleges and art schools provide summer art camps for art teachers so that they can learn new studio techniques or just have a chance to feel like they are in a studio course again. All three of the teachers at the schools I observed are practicing artists as well as teachers. They have found ways to maintain their art practice along with the time requirements of teaching. Mr. Thompson commented in an interview that for him, teaching is not enough and producing artwork is not enough. To feel satisfied in life he has to both teach and make artwork. In a school community that is constantly engaged in recreating itself, it is critical to have teachers strongly identify with their role. There is a significant expectation to be both an artist and a teacher in the private school community. Art education programs encourage students to be both artists and teachers but it is not clear that public schools have the same expectations.

As I have spent seven semesters supervising student teachers I have not had a single conversation with mentor teachers or student teachers about their personal art practice. I feel that I failed to reiterate to new teachers the importance of maintaining their personal sense of being an artist as well as a teacher. In the future I will include in my curriculae the idea that art educators need to remain connected to their artmaking. I would extend this as a recommendation to educators of pre-service art teachers and mentors of new teachers to remind each other of the importance of being both a teacher and an artist.

A second commonality of these teachers was their strong sense of the purpose of their art program. Each teacher had a different purpose. For Mr. Davis the purpose was to provide experiences with as many different media as possible, for Mr. Young it was

visual literacy, and for Mr. Thompson it was being skilled in technique and composition. When I asked each teacher what he believed to be the purpose of art education, they all were able to answer quickly and I immediately was able to recall examples of their teaching that matched their stated beliefs. These are all established art teachers who have had time to determine their personal teaching philosophy and purpose of their program. It is also important to include the fact that in all three schools I visited, the art teacher was solely responsible for generating the curriculum, and none had chosen packaged curriculum. If a teacher is solely responsible for the generation of the art curriculum he or she will more wholly identify himself or herself with the curriculum, not unlike how an artist identifies themselves with their artwork. Because the teacher created the curriculum he or she has a stronger sense of purpose and the resulting curriculum stems from their teacher identity and teaching philosophy.

In the five years that I was teaching in public schools I do not feel like I developed a strong sense of purpose for my art programs. It was not until the end of my graduate studies that I have felt like I have a personal philosophy of art education. No matter what the philosophy is, an art program is going to be stronger when a teacher has a solid idea of the purpose of their program and teaches towards that purpose. As educators of pre-service teachers and mentors to new teachers, it would be beneficial to help guide new teachers in forming their purpose of art education and teaching toward that goal.

School philosophy

A common characteristic of all private schools is that they have an overall school philosophy that is known by all faculty and the school community and is present in the curriculum. Religion at the Catholic and Mennonite schools and the teachings of the Maharishi at the Transcendental Meditation school are the underlying philosophy of the schools and are expected to be integrated into all of the subject areas. Because everyone in the school community knows the philosophy and it is present across the curriculum the

school has, at some levels, a greater sense of consistency in education. While each teacher is teaching a different subject, they all are charged with demonstrating to the students how the philosophy is present in their subject.

There are programs for public schools such as Integrated Thematic Instruction which require schools to center the curriculum around broad themes creating a similar consistency in education. At the public elementary school in which my husband currently teaches the school has implemented a school wide discipline plan to encourage positive behaviors and offer consistency in expectations and behavior management across all classrooms. While a public school cannot adopt a religious philosophy to guide education, I believe that it could be beneficial for schools to determine a school or district philosophy that is then made known to the school community and taught in all classes. The school mission statement would be one example of a philosophy statement that could be adopted, publicized and taught by all teachers. Most schools have a mission statement or school goal, but what was missing in schools that I have taught in, is making the philosophy known to parents, students, and teachers and asking teachers to include the philosophy in their curriculum. For example, while teaching art and Spanish in a small district the school spent the majority of one school years inservice meetings on rewriting the school mission statement. We ultimately chose to focus the statement on life long learning and citizenship. The mission statement was printed on the letterhead and denim shirts for the faculty, and in the following two years that I was at the district it was never mentioned again. Schools can benefit from consistency in education across subject areas by having a broad statement or purpose of education which is publicized and the focus of education, similar to the way in which a private school centers education around its chosen philosophy.

Pop culture in the curriculum

After visiting the art programs at these three schools, I noticed that at the Mennonite school and the meditation school there was a greater focus on the refinement of artistic skill than at the Catholic school. The Catholic school art teacher wanted to present a lot of media so that students had a wide variety of experiences and the possibility of finding a material that they were interested in developing greater skill. His classes also were allowed to incorporate popular culture into their artwork frequently. The Catholic school was larger then the two other schools, but even if the art class enrollment numbers are figured proportionately, there are more students enrolled in art classes at the Catholic school than at the other schools. Out of 276 students in the high school grades 140 take art classes each day at the Catholic school. At the Mennonite there are 138 students and roughly 40 students who take art classes. Remembering that I was not able to get exact enrollment numbers for the high school grades at the meditation school, I estimated 15 students in each graduating class, making the high school enrollment about 60 students. In the boys' and girls' high school classes with Mr. Thompson there are on average 24 students enrolled in art classes. It is interesting to note that the art programs that focus on traditional methods and refined skill win awards but the program that freely incorporates pop and visual culture has had increased enrollment in art.

Even though I was not able to provide insight into new or innovative art teaching practices this research is still valuable. In general it adds to the field of art education descriptions of the school and teaching philosophy of the art teachers as well as documenting what happens in art classrooms at three private schools. It provides support for research studies on educational topics such as community service, school uniforms and single-sex classes. Many areas of these case studies could be expanded for future research. Further teacher interviews and study of the curriculum could be conducted towards research on art education theory and practice. Coming to three nontraditional

school settings I was expecting to find unique or nontraditional teaching practices, and was surprised to find very traditional teaching methods being employed at all three sites. A follow up study to discover why art teachers in nontraditional settings are not using contemporary theories of art education would be valuable. A study of the student's perceptions of the presence of the philosophy of the school and the inclusion of community service could illuminate the strengths or weaknesses of the methods of presenting the school philosophy to the students. Further studies could be conducted at the meditation school on the impact of single-sex classes and school uniforms on student's attitudes, behaviors and academics.

I plan to continue this line of research and seek out both private and public schools which are unique in character, instruction, or design and document the teaching and learning which occurs in specific school settings. This study has increased my curiosity about the disconnect between art education theory and teaching practice. I would like to continue to research why art teachers are not using current theories of art education and instead relying on traditional methodologies, or even regressing to traditional methods after completing a teacher education program which focuses on current theories of art education.

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