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Navigating Curricular Change in the Visual Arts in Ontario

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Navigating Curricular Change in the Visual Arts in Ontario

By

Peter Jonathon Bates

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Navigating Curricular Change in the Visual Arts in Ontario

by

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ABSTRACT

Every 7 years or so, the Ontario Ministry of Education publishes revised curriculum documents for a number of grades and disciplines. The purpose of this study was to explore the process of implementing *The Ontario Curriculum, The Arts, Revised, 2010* in Ontario secondary schools. This work explored 20 teachers' perceptions and assessed the impact of a change in policy on their practice. Teacher agency provided the theoretical perspective that guided the construction, execution, and evaluation of the project. This study looked for a central phenomenon using grounded theory and involved 3 phases of data collection: survey, autoethnography, and interviews. Findings indicate that there are points of consensus between participants as well as points of departure. Differences between participants were largely along geographical lines, between those who work in the GTA and those who teach elsewhere. What emerged as the central phenomena from my findings is that study participants felt empowered to navigate curricular change as they saw fit, and that there was little consensus regarding appreciation of the 2010 curriculum revisions or how to integrate the latter into classroom practice. Four conclusions were drawn from this study. First, perceptions of curricular change and implementation efforts vary widely. Second, divisions appeared to exist between participants teaching art in the GTA and elsewhere in Ontario with respect to assessment and implementation of visual arts curriculum. Third, satisfaction with a revised curriculum could take a number of directions. Lastly, implementation of change fell across a spectrum from limited to considerable.

DEDICATION

To CJ O'Callaghan,

I wouldn't have done this without you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Education in Canada is regulated by each provincial government. The Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) determines the curriculum for each subject at every grade level. Curriculum documents are developed to define what is taught in publicly funded schools, and to what standards. In 2003, the OME established a schedule for ongoing curriculum review to ensure that subjects remain current, relevant, and age-appropriate (OME, 2011). Every 7 years or so, the Ministry publishes revised curriculum documents for a number of grades and subjects, reflecting changes in pedagogical theory, the field of knowledge, and current political ideology.

The development of these new documents at the Ministry level, and the implementation of the new curriculum at the school level, is typically the result of a lengthy process of consultation with multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to: faculties of education, employers, parents, students, other Ministries, and NGOs (Non-governmental organizations). Consultation is conducted for the purpose of comprehensive information gathering. This process involves: studying research in the subject area, comparisons with other jurisdictions, input from focus groups comprised of educators from all Ontario school boards, and technical content analysis conducted by subject experts (OME, 2011).

Once information has been gathered and processed, writing teams are assembled from school boards across the province. Their draft documents are shared with focus groups of educators prior to final revisions, approval, and publication. This process can

take 2 or more years before teachers receive new or revised documents. Once new curriculum outlining the knowledge and skills students are expected to develop in each grade and subject is issued, these policy documents constitute the curriculum that teachers are mandated to deliver in publicly funded classrooms to satisfy graduation requirements. Through the development and distribution of these policies, which outline the overall and specific expectations of courses, the OME sets provincial education standards.

The latest revised arts curriculum document details expectations for dance, drama, integrated arts, media arts, music, and visual arts. These documents were designed to align the delivery of curriculum from kindergarten through grade 12. They were distributed to Ontario classrooms in September of 2010 and made available on the Ministry's website. The curriculum documents are prefaced with front matter, a lengthy section designed to explain the importance of the arts, roles and responsibilities, the creative and critical analysis processes, considerations for assessment and evaluation, and program planning.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the study is to examine the process of implementation of new curriculum through the lens of teachers, using as a case study *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, The Arts, Revised, 2010*. My research will focus on secondary visual arts curriculum documents, grades 9 through 12.

Due to the publication of the documents in September of 2010, teachers had little time to plan the school year with the new documents, expected to be implemented that same month. As well, professional development opportunities to work with the new

curriculum prior to implementation were limited for most teachers, to 1 day of release time or less.

The study used three approaches to collect data on how teachers responded to the introduction of a revised arts curriculum, what actually changed in the classroom in terms of either course content or teaching practices, and what was offered in the way of support from leadership to help teachers adapt. Initially, I conducted a pilot study (Bates, 2012; see Appendix A) which surveyed teachers in one school board that suggested that there is resistance to, and dissatisfaction with, the new curriculum. Whether or not these findings would prove to be common among art educators across the province became a part of the research question. The remainder of the study worked with these early indicators and extended the study in both depth and breadth, through an autoethnographic study of the author's teaching practice and through interviews with a pool of teachers from a variety of teaching contexts in Ontario.

Research Questions

The work addresses three key questions.

1. What are the perspectives of visual art teachers regarding the effects of recent changes made to the curriculum?

2. To what extent does a change in curriculum policy translate into a change in teaching practice?

3. What role does school or school board culture play in these perceptions and pedagogical practices?

The first question was the focus of my pilot study, and the latter two questions arose from the pilot study and were addressed throughout the next two phases of this research.

Significance of the Study

At any given time, there are as many as 20 curriculum documents covering a range of disciplines or grade levels engaged in the curriculum review cycle in Ontario, at least five of which are slated for implementation in a particular year (OME, 2011). This study will contribute to an understanding of the issues around the development and implementation of curriculum changes in Ontario secondary schools. While focusing on the visual arts in this study, the findings and recommendations of this study will not be limited to visual arts curriculum implementation. They may point to broader implications for the development, implementation, and delivery of curricular change in other contexts, across disciplines and jurisdictions grappling with issues of effective change implementation.

Pilot Study and the Need for Further Research

I began teaching in 2002, shortly after the previous arts curriculum revisions in 2000. Therefore, when *The Ontario Arts Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, 2010 Revised* was introduced, it was the first time that I was mandated to adapt my teaching to a new curriculum. As I examined policy changes, I questioned the impact on my own pedagogy and what impact these changes may have on art education in Ontario.

With this in mind, I conducted a pilot study in the fall of 2010 to solicit reaction to the new Ontario visual arts curriculum. The central phenomenon that emerged from this pilot study was that teachers have significant concerns with the new curriculum documents. Participants feel that the revised curriculum reflects a lack of respect for the arts. A common concern that teachers expressed is that there is a "dumbing-down" of the visual arts curriculum, which would lead to lower standards and little consistency across

the province. Another theme that emerged from the pilot study was that policy implementation is as important as policy development; with a perceived top-down process, implementation may be characterized as inconsistent at best.

These issues warranted further investigation. For example, it was possible that some of these problems may be a matter of optics: was the development of the new document as top-down as it appears to be for many teachers? Would more professional development or resources mitigate resistance to change? A wider study may reveal whether or not the results of the pilot study were influenced by the culture or climate of one school board, or if the concerns raised are widespread across Ontario. Research on this topic may inform pedagogical choices and teaching practices in the arts. As well, the research may benefit policy makers and educators in other disciplines as they plan for and undergo changes to curriculum.

Curriculum Implementation Parameters

As my research looked at issues of implementation of new curriculum, it is important to understand which phases of implementation I intended to explore in the study. Implementation of curriculum encompasses a continuum of activity from the development of new curriculum through to delivery in the classroom and involves a range of stakeholders. This can be quite a lengthy and complex process. Earlier stages of implementation, such as curriculum development, are relevant to my research; however, discussion of them will be limited in the project as most participants could only speculate what these earlier phases of implementation might entail. While some teachers are involved in this process, most are not familiar with new curriculum until final drafts or finished documents are presented to them, either through professional development

sessions or via documents deposited into their mailboxes. For many, their first look at the changes to the curriculum occurred after its mandated implementation date of September 2010. Therefore, the primary focus of my research project was on the later stages of the implementation process which involved most classroom teachers: from professional development regarding curricular changes through to its impact in the classroom with respect to curriculum and pedagogy.

The Ontario Visual Arts Curriculum: Clarifying the Changes Under Consideration

It is important to highlight exactly what I and those involved in the pilot study perceived to be the major changes to the official arts curriculum documents. The focus of this comparison was based on two documents: *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10: The Arts, 1999*, and, *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10: The Arts Revised, 2010*. While there are many major and minor changes to the arts curriculum, key changes identified by pilot study participants are the focus of the following discussion as these were the changes significant to them and, therefore, most relevant to my research at the time. What follows is a brief indication of key similarities, and more importantly, some discussion of major differences between the latest two generations of visual arts curriculum for Ontario art students. For a more detailed comparison of the two documents, see Appendix B.

Art making as a focus of student learning continues to permeate the curriculum. The expectation remains that students will engage in the creative process for the production of two- and three-dimensional art in a variety of media. Skills are expected to grow and expand in terms of media and technique throughout the grades, as students'

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repertoire grows over time. Students will consider elements of art history or culture as it relates to the study of art and to their own personal lives.

In addition to the similarities noted above, there are a number of changes to the arts curriculum. The new documents contain a greatly expanded preface with the intent to communicate key information regarding the philosophical and pedagogical ground upon which the curriculum expectations have been developed. There are expanded and revised constructions of the critical analysis process for looking at art, as well as an expanded creative process for critically thinking about the creation of art. New to the front matter is a section which outlines the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in education including: students, parents, teachers, principals, and community partners.

While the creative process was implicit in the 1999 document, it was not explained in detail beyond a brief explanatory note in a glossary at the conclusion of the curriculum. Consideration of the creative process has grown in scope to comprise a flexible, cyclical process with eight stages instead of four. There is discussion regarding the importance of the creative process in innovation, critical thinking, and the assimilation of new thinking with existing knowledge. Much like the creative process, the critical analysis process has been upgraded from a brief endnote that lists five stages for evaluating artworks (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training [OMET], 1999), to several pages devoted to the steps for, and application of, the critical analysis process (OME, 2010b).

The 2010 curriculum places a greater emphasis on a thematic study of the history of art rather than a chronological approach. While art history continues to figure prominently in the curriculum, the term history has largely been replaced with the word

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culture. In this way, students and teachers are afforded more flexibility to work with themes and cultures from around the world to reflect the makeup of many of Ontario's classrooms today. There are no expectations in the documents to suggest that courses will cover all key periods of art history—Western or otherwise.

Another notable change in the document is a decrease in the number of expectations, each with more in-depth examples and new teacher prompts. The examples and teacher prompts are intended to clarify the expectations and provide a sense of how the expectation may be approached and achieved. As well, examples and prompts include a wider range of art making practices and are more current, accessible, and inclusive in terms of content and multiculturalism. Table 1 exemplifies the revised approach to curriculum expectations:

Table 1

Comparing Specific Curriculum Expectations

Visual Arts, Grade 9 AVI1O Open, 1999[a]	Visual Arts, Grade 9 AVI1O Open, 2010[b]
By the end of this course, students will: Produce artworks using traditional and new technologies (e.g., video, computer, scanner, photocopier, digital camera);	By the end of this course, students will: A3.1 explore and experiment with a variety of media/materials and traditional and/or emerging technologies, tools, and techniques, and apply them to produce art works (*e.g. experiment with contemporary art-making methods and materials; incorporate found objects, digital images, and mixed media into their art work; use alternative painting surfaces and implements*)
	Teacher prompts: "How could you use found materials to create an art work that shows your concern for the environment?" What are some ways in which you could create an image without using a pencil and paper?" "What are some techniques that you could use to create three dimensional works?"

[a] OMET, 1999, p. 50.
[b] OME, 2010b, p. 121.

Prerequisites have changed for the arts as well. In the previous curriculum, either a grade 9 or 10 credit was required if students wished to further their studies in the arts. This is no longer the case for all courses, as students may enroll in any Grade 11 Open level arts course without any prerequisites. The change greatly concerned pilot study participants, as it seems difficult to plan a curriculum that builds on previous knowledge and skills if a number of students in the course have little or no prior experience with art.

While there are many similarities between the two most recent iterations of the visual arts curriculum in terms of expectations, the changes outlined above may be seen as significant to educators who engage with the new document. Much research, consultation, and resources have gone into revisions to *The Ontario Arts Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, 2010 Revised.* How these changes are received and implemented by educators in the classroom comprise the bulk of my research question.

Personal Ground

I approach the research from a number of perspectives due to the variety of roles I currently balance in my career. Among my many personal and professional roles, I include artist, teacher, and researcher. I will briefly consider how each of these roles provides a different lens through which I engage in this work.

There are times when I identify as an artist, as I do manage to create a piece or two a year while working full-time and studying part-time. I paint and I work with ceramics, sometimes in conjunction with encaustic (painting with wax). In the past, I was quite prolific in my art making, particularly while undertaking both undergraduate and Master's degrees in visual arts. Currently, art making takes a back seat to teaching and research. Much of my art making now involves demonstrations of techniques and of the

creative process for my students: a limited number of these efforts complete the creative process and result in finished pieces. My experience as an artist shapes my thinking about art curriculum and what media I choose to explore in my courses.

My art practice helps me to see parallels between the creative process and qualitative research methods like grounded theory: both seek to explore a problem and hope to create something new through a cyclical process of experimentation, discovery, and knowledge creation. The greatest challenge for conducting a grounded theory study looking at art curriculum will be to manage bias or hypothesizing in the construction, analysis, and interpretation of data as I place great value on visual art and often advocate this value to others.

I identify as a teacher perhaps more than I do as an artist. Teaching is a second career for me after 7 years in business. While rewarding at times, business failed to provide any intrinsic rewards for me. It was my passion for the visual arts that guided my decision to pursue a teaching career in the arts rather than teaching business, having degrees and qualifications in both. I enrolled in visual arts soon after finishing my business degree at Western University, and I value the knowledge and skills that I gained from both disciplines. I consider myself a hybrid and I feel satisfaction when I read interviews and articles in the *Harvard Business Review* espousing the importance of creative thinkers for business. I also note that Daniel Pink (2006) calls an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) the new MBA (Master of Business Administration) for the 21st century as business and industry turn to empathetic, creative, meaning-makers in what Pink (2006) calls the conceptual age (p. 49).

Many of my friends were teachers while I was in business and some of these friends were heavily involved in teacher unions. I believe that this gave me an appreciation for, and better understanding of, the role of these organizations, and it had an impact on my sense of teacher agency early in my teaching career.

When I began teaching at a residential school in Northern Ontario, I was quite surprised by my level of autonomy. I was largely in control of how and what curriculum was delivered. I was my own art department in a school that shared a principal with another school 72 kilometers away. While there were visits to my classroom from a range of school and school board personnel, I was rarely questioned about my pedagogy or curriculum by any of these visitors. Nevertheless, as a novice teacher, I was eager to continue to learn and improve through professional development opportunities in my school boards and through the OME.

In 2013, labour strife between two of the largest teacher federations in Ontario and the Liberal government resulted in a period of teachers "working to rule." With the threat of increased strike action, I found my sense of agency greatly heightened. I resolved to teach the new, mandated art curriculum as I fully expected greater accountability and scrutiny should the current political climate or situation worsen. At the same time, I had withdrawn from any school, board, or Ministry activities that were not a part of the imposed contract. I found that my research had influenced my sense of agency as a teacher, in that I felt that I knew more about the curriculum and perhaps about pedagogy than most of my colleagues.

I began my teaching career in 2002 with a relatively new arts curriculum introduced by the OME in 1999 and 2000. The 2010 revisions to the Ontario Arts

curriculum were my first exposure to the processes involved from development to implementation of a revised curriculum document. I am actively involved in professional development, both as a participant and as part of a team that regularly plans and delivers workshops for other arts educators in my school board. Because of these professional activities, I was invited by the school board's arts learning coordinator to provide input into draft documents when the OME traveled around the province seeking input from teachers. The number of local participants was relatively small, as only two secondary art teachers were present: one to represent visual arts, and one to represent media arts. Most other art teachers were unaware that this consultative phase was even taking place. This may have had something to do with the selection process: I was selected by our learning coordinator for the arts to represent all media arts teachers. While I felt that my input was heard, I do not see any of my suggestions reflected in the new document.

Nevertheless, I welcomed the opportunity to work with a new visual arts curriculum. As I had been involved in the consultation process with the Ministry, I was asked to be a part of the team to introduce draft versions of the documents to colleagues during full 1-day professional development sessions. We were working with draft documents because the money allocated for professional development was to be spent before the end of the school year (June), while final documents would not be approved and printed until September. During these sessions, it became clear to me that there were those who had concerns with the direction of revisions, and that some had no intention of altering their teaching practices. They had little appreciation or knowledge of the lengthy process involved in the revisions to the curriculum, as they were not involved in the consultation process. Their objections may have only represented a small group of

educators in one school board, but it raised a question in my mind about the perceptions of a wider range of teachers regarding the new Ontario Arts curriculum. These experiences, as a teacher and presenter, brought me to this research as I worked with the revised curriculum.

Since beginning my Ph.D. journey, I have come to identify myself as a researcher. While Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that binaries are convenient for capturing points of commonality, they also note that over the past 70 years there has been interaction between traditions and that there are intermediate points of view. Burrell and Morgan (1979) conceptualize social science and theories of organizations in terms of "four sets of assumptions related to ontology, epistemology, human nature, and methodology" (p. 1). Rather than seeing these assumptions as polarized perspectives, they argue that the trend towards intermediate points of view has resulted in a spectrum of distinctive configurations of assumptions, leading to a growing range of theories, ideas, and approaches to social science research. Where do I situate myself and my work in their model, and what assumptions led me there? My position in Burrell and Morgan's matrix is not fixed. I believe that we live in societies of fluid, shifting language, meanings and positionalities and I am more inclined to move about, favouring the subjective side of the continuum (see Figure 1).

I believe that subjectivist and objectivist approaches are on a continuum rather than strict binaries, and I position myself closer to the subjective approach to social science. I consider reality as temporal, situational, and socially constructed: there is little room for what is "real" or "true" structure in my experience. I believe that while we are influenced by societal conditions, we are not completely determined by our

environments, as we each have some measure of free will or agency. We live in a world of ever changing social structures, however subtle, and these changes necessitate reconstruction of knowledge and beliefs over time.

Subjective approach		Objective Approach
	Self Portrait, Wood Cut Print, 2011	
Nominalism	------------------------Ontology--------------------------	Realism
Anti-Positivism	----------------------Epistemology----------------------	Positivism
Voluntarism	----------------------Human nature----------------------	Determinism
Ideographic	----------------------Methodology----------------------	Nomothetic
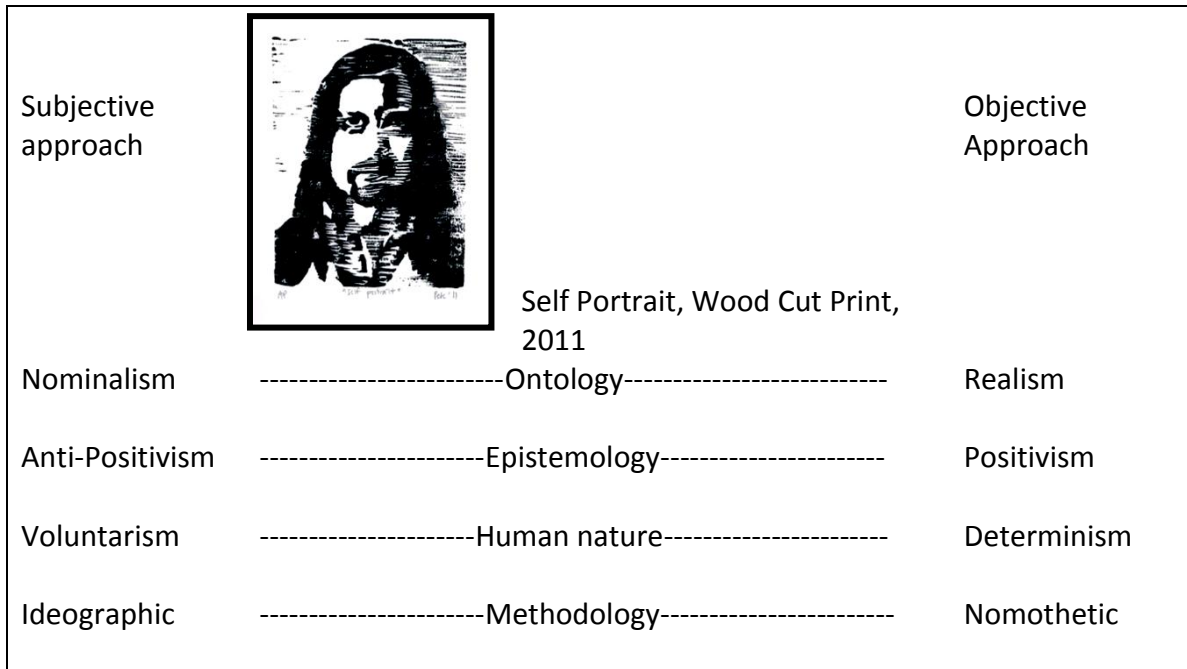
Figure 1. My place in Burrell and Morgan's subjective–objective dimension.

As an artist, I prefer to understand the world from the view of the individual, rather than seeking to explain and predict what happens by looking for laws, regularities, or causal relationships. As a researcher, I attempt to understand a relativistic world from the point of view of the participants: fellow educators. I am more inclined to take an ideographic approach, preferring to get inside situations to understand the social world through qualitative methodology, understanding the world through first-hand knowledge of situations, histories, stories, artifacts, biographies, narratives, or interviews. As I rarely approach my research questions with any sort of hypothesis, much of my work involves a grounded theory approach. Using grounded theory, I may utilize a variety of qualitative

methods including interviews, open-ended surveys, and autoethnography. The rich details and creative methods found in these methods are what make research interesting for me.

I am the sum of my past experiences, influenced by the time and geography in which I find myself today. My experiences have brought me to this research and provide me with multiple lenses reflective of my roles of artist, teacher, and researcher. As an artist, teacher, and researcher, I find that I have a growing appreciation for, and sense of, teacher agency.

Theoretical Perspective: Teacher Agency

Glaser and Strauss (1967) established that, within the framework of a grounded theory project, it is not the role of a researcher to begin with a hypothesis to be tested or theories to explain. However, I do begin with some assumptions as I seek to explore and describe the "what" and "why" or "why not" of changes to visual arts curriculum in light of a new policy document. Noting that a theoretical perspective is an important aspect of a dissertation proposal, Kilbourne (2006) acknowledges that "not all proposals have an explicit discussion of the theoretical perspective" (p. 545). Kilbourne does however stress the importance of a perspective, or point of view, particularly when selecting and interpreting qualitative data. As I embark on the study, my point of view has been informed by my experience as an educator and researcher.

I assume that teachers will not all act in the same way, or respond to the same extent, as others: teachers experience their own sense of agency depending upon their particular circumstances. Some researchers suggest that there has been erosion of teacher agency in today's education system in terms of curriculum development as it becomes more prescriptive in the drive for greater accountability in education (Priestley, Edwards,

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Priestley, & Miller, 2012; Schweisfurth, 2006). However, Priestley et al. (2012) note that education policy tends to mutate from school to school based on the variability of teacher agency, and that while curriculum may be seen as restrictive, there continues to be space for teacher agency through collaboration and delivery of curriculum.

To teach in an organization is to navigate through a complex network of factors, from the personal to the political. Educators handle change differently in different settings. It is therefore difficult to hypothesize or predict the responses of teachers to the implementation of new curriculum given that personal and political variability will affect each teacher and his or her sense of agency. It is with this complexity in mind that I approach my research with the fluid, cyclical methodological approach found in grounded theory.

Teacher agency. Priestley et al. (2012) caution us not to define agency too narrowly. For the purposes of my research, teacher agency will refer to the ways in which teachers respond to educational policy shaped by personal, material, and social conditions (Priestley et al., 2012, p. 194). The personal, political, and social impacts on a teacher's sense of agency will be explored in greater detail later in my literature review. It is important to note that agency is not a static phenomenon; rather, it is grounded in a context of time, place, and politics of each individual teacher (Priestley et al., 2012). Depending upon the data collected and findings of the study, teacher agency allows either a micro lens—for a close-up look at how individual teachers in a particular system react to curriculum change—or a macro lens to look at agency within institutional and social systems, or both. Priestley et al. (2012) note that, in much of the literature, "agency" considers either a micro view based on individual circumstances and autonomy, or a

macro view in which teacher agency is determined primarily by social and environmental factors beyond their control. They suggest that such views limit consideration of the influence of societal structures and human culture on teacher agency, which will vary from context to context. Sociologist Margaret Archer (1995, 2000) argues for a middle ground, noting that in complex organizations, like schools, it is difficult to determine accurately the level of effect social acts have on actions, and that socio-cultural interaction cannot be analyzed separately from cultural and structural systems.

This middle ground is where I situate myself. I believe that personal, cultural, and political factors affect the extent to which each teacher feels they have control over what curriculum to deliver, and how. This point of view guided the direction of my autoethnographic research and subsequent interviews with participants. It also influenced the content of interview questions, and subsequently the selection, coding, and analysis of data mined from reflections and interviews.

Outline of Chapters

The dissertation will follow a traditional five-chapter format. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature, including some discussion of the literature on the methodology and methods selected for the project. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the methodology and research design, including ethical considerations and timelines for the research. Chapter 4 includes description, analysis, and interpretation of the data; and Chapter 5 reviews and summarizes the research, its significance and implications, and considerations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction and Methodology

The review of literature will consider: the changing nature of curriculum, the role of the arts in the curriculum, change and social theory, the role of leadership in curricular change, and teacher agency. Literature review pertaining to methodological approaches will be presented in the methods section in Chapter 3.

As the latest edition of an Ontario arts curriculum is now in the implementation stage, it is important to consider the history of art education and the development of curriculum theory in order to chart how we got to where we are today. Change and social theories shed light on or explain practical differences and beliefs in terms of the acceptance of recent changes to arts curriculum, particularly those theories that examine resistance to change. The role of leadership can be a factor in the success or failure of change implementation. Teacher agency will be reflected in participant reactions and responses to the new curriculum. I begin my review with a brief overview of relevant literature on curriculum as a necessary precursor to considering curricular change.

An Evolving Curriculum

Any consideration of curriculum might well begin with looking to the very purpose of public education. Looking at how perspectives or philosophies regarding curriculum have evolved or been considered over the past century can help to demonstrate that curricular change and implementation has long been an ongoing issue for educators and educational research. The Ontario curriculum is undergoing such a

cycle of regular review with a number of disciplines scheduled to begin each year (OME, 2011).

As I consider the purpose of education, curriculum design, and the role of the arts in curriculum, I begin with a number of works by academics such as: Bobbitt (1911, 1918/2004), Dewey (1929/2004), Tyler (1949/2004), Kelly (2009), and McKernan (2008). What I take from these authors is a sense of the inevitable, continuous thread of curricular change over time, as each identifies a different approach to, or purpose for, curriculum. As an additional thread, I note too that many of these theorists make mention or use of the arts in their education arguments. As this is the case, the review sheds some light on the ongoing efforts to ensure that the arts remain a valued part of public education. This assists me in setting up the next section in my literature review where I look at the role of art in education.

A variety of factors influence the drive for curricular change and improvement, including but not limited to changes in: society, technology, politics, pedagogy, and discipline-specific knowledge. As one example, assessment and accountability may be playing an increasingly important role in curriculum as globalization and corporatization have an impact on the direction and focus of education today (Ball, 1998; Popkewitz, 2009). I will address later in my literature review how these and other factors have an impact on arts curriculum. What I find limited in this body of work on curriculum theory is consideration for how to implement suggested or recommended approaches or changes in curriculum. Rather, consideration of implementation is often left to research on change/social theory or leadership; so I will consider each of these topics in turn.

Dewey considered the role of education and what curriculum was necessary to induct youth into society. Dewey (1929/2004) believed that education is a part of participation of the individual in society and humanity, and that school is a concentration and simplification of social life. He believed that "education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform" (Dewey, 1929/2004, p. 40). He described the subject matter of education as the scaffolded inculcation into society through a curriculum that includes science, literature, art, culture, and communication through the continuous reconstruction of attitudes, interests, and experience. Proposing a seemingly early version of a child-developmental approach, Dewey encourages teachers to consider the child's own nature and stage of development as they develop and present curriculum. He directs educators to reconsider their pedagogical practices, but he does not instruct, or advise, how such changes ought to occur. For example, Dewey suggested the following:

> Much of the time and attention now given to the preparation and presentation of lessons might be more wisely and profitably expended in training the child's power of imagery and in seeing to it that he was continually forming definite, vivid and growing images of the various subject with which he comes in contact with his experiences. (1929/2004, p. 39)

Dewey is reflecting on and sharing his beliefs about curricular choices and delivery rather than instructing readers on how to implement changes to their pedagogy. In addition, Dewey proves to be an early arts advocate with his routine calls to unite science and art in education (p. 41).

There are other examples of Dewey's advocacy regarding the importance of the arts. Dewey addressed arts educators directly during a conference in 1906. Jackson

(2001) deconstructs one sentence from the conclusion of Dewey's address to a convention of art teachers; the sentence, given towards the end of his speech consisted of "To feel the meaning of what one is doing, and to rejoice in that meaning; to unite in one concurrent fact the unfolding of the inner life and the ordered development of material conditions—that is art" (p. 167). Jackson dissects the passage phrase by phrase, and suggests that Dewey is speaking of any art and not necessarily just the activities of those who identify as artists. Jackson interprets the first part of the sentence to mean the promise of art: to unify mind and body. He considers "material conditions" to mean supplies, and "ordered development" to reference the creative process: a back and forth cycle of reflection and action. Finally, he suggests that Dewey is speaking about becoming artfully engaged in what one is doing: to "feel as one with the object taking form under one's own agency" (Jackson, 2001, p. 174). Jackson argues that Dewey was not speaking of just art as a definition, but trying to appeal to his audience of visual and industrial arts teachers. According to Jackson, Dewey is demystifying and democratizing art, making the case that it is a central activity of humanity, worthy of appreciation and study in the education system.

Taking a different approach, Tyler (1949/2004) proposes a rationale for analyzing, interpreting, and building curriculum by identifying four fundamental concepts to consider in developing curriculum: the purpose of education, educational experiences, organization of these experiences, and assessing attainment of these purposes. In an argument that could still be made today, Tyler, like Dewey, recommends curricular change because life is complex and constantly changing. For example, he claims that it is very necessary to focus educational efforts upon the critical aspects of

this complex life and upon those aspects that are of importance today. He recommends that we do not waste the time of students in learning things that were important 50 years ago but no longer have significance at the same time that we are neglecting areas of life that are now important and for which the school provides no preparation (Tyler, 1949/2004, p. 72).

Noting the relativism of an educational setting or culture, Tyler does not provide specific answers to address these fundamental ideas, and like Dewey, he does not delve into how to implement such changes. When addressing the purpose of education in his work, Tyler chooses to use art as a key example of how a subject may serve five functions in the general education of a student:

1. Extending the range of perception of the student

2. Clarification of ideas and feelings through another medium for communication

3. Personal integration by relieving tensions through artistic expression

4. Development of interests and values

5. The development of technical competence or skill. (Tyler, 1949/2004, p. 76)

Tyler's work theorizes on curriculum, through questions about the purpose of education and how education ought to be organized, without answers or steps on how best to build a curriculum. Instead, we are presented with a "rationale by which to examine problems of curriculum and instruction" (p. 69). As well, I again note the ongoing references to the role and value of art in the history of curriculum theory.

Prior to Tyler, the need for curricular reform in a changing world was identified by Bobbitt in 1918. He noted that the prevailing programs of public education were based on simpler times of the 19th century (Bobbitt, 1918/2004) and that the swiftly advancing

20th century required new tasks, methods, materials, and new vision. I would add that we could update this argument as it remains relevant today. Bobbitt advocated for a change from a focus on memorizing facts to a focus on finding facts. Typically, this has been promoted through a scientific method model: an approach of discovery beginning with the observation of student errors to determine what students needed to learn (Bobbitt, 1918/2004). Assessment for learning, inquiry based learning, and the creative process are all aspects of Bobbitt's 1918 theories that can be found in the current arts curriculum. Bobbitt manages to use some illustrations in his treatise to demonstrate how changes in pedagogy and curriculum may be accomplished; however, he does not recommend strategies to initiate or manage fundamental curricular change. Bobbitt does not discuss the arts directly in this work. However, he does discuss the importance of art in an address to art educators in 1911.

Bobbitt (1911) suggests that as more jobs in the 20th century become mechanized, many classes of society will enjoy a greater amount of leisure time. Given this change in employment patterns, Bobbitt makes the case that leisure time would benefit from education on how to best use this time for "healthy" and "appropriate" pursuits. In this address, he recommends greater focus and instruction in the arts: music and pictorial arts in particular. He suggests that schools could be used as community music centres, using the example of Richmond, Indiana, a small city "in possession of a number of public-spirited men and women of literary, musical, and artistic tastes and ability" (Bobbitt, 1911, p. 121). Bobbitt notes too that one secondary school is also a community hub for pictorial art with rooms set aside as a museum for the city of Richmond. He argues that this is the ideal place for a museum, as students will engage

with art regularly as a student rather than experiencing art as an infrequent, passive

activity in less accessible locations. Although he enters terrain I will not traverse in this

dissertation when he notes that the teaching of music ought to be done "with the spirit not

of the pedagogue but of the artist" (p. 124), I use this example to demonstrate that Bobbitt

considers the importance and value of the arts in education.

More recently, McKernan (2008) argues that curriculum, like teaching, can be

considered an art that incorporates intuition, creativity, situational understanding, and

practical and critical judgment. He believes that curriculum theory and development for

too long have been scientific- and objectives-based, and lacking imagination. Kelly

(2009) supports the idea that a shift to process-oriented inquiry is required in our system

in order to develop, implement, and evaluate curriculum effectively. Kelly suggests that

objectivist models like Tyler's are too simple, whereas more recent models begin with the

concept of education as a series of developmental processes and that curriculum ought to

be designed to encourage these processes.

There are recent arguments that neoconservatives have politicized curriculum to

be market-driven, based on outcomes, standards, and accountability (Popkewitz, 2009).

Popkewitz concludes that this direction in education policy has in effect taken the

curriculum out of the hands of teachers. In this politicized, globalized environment, Kelly

(2009) and McKernan (2008) argue that the standardization of curriculum has reduced

the role of the teacher, even though it is the teacher who is central to successful

curriculum implementation and change. For example, in the front matter, or preface, of

the revised Ontario arts curriculum, teachers are charged with delivery and assessment of

the curriculum with broad implications about life, learning and society:

Teachers develop instructional strategies to help students achieve the curriculum

expectations, as well as appropriate methods for assessing and evaluating student

learning. … The arts can play a key role in shaping students' views about life and

learning. Since the arts exist in a broader social and historical context, teachers

can show students that all of the arts are affected by the values and choices of

individuals, and in turn have a significant impact on society. (OME, 2010b, p. 6)

Advocating for more teacher involvement in curricular research, Kelly asserts that any

effort to teacher-proof curriculum will fail, because individuals adapt changes to suit their

own purposes. Quality of curriculum delivery depends on the teacher, and change must

recognize this or be doomed to failure (Kelly, 2009).

McKernan (2008) argues that teachers need the tools and power to engage in

ongoing professional development in order to manage change. McKernan suggests that

the aim of the curriculum is twofold: to enable students to think critically and

imaginatively; and to induct students into a culture/society. However, he sees inducting

students into a culture to be problematic considering the multicultural nature and

globalization of many societies. Common trends in education point towards the

marketization and globalization of education, with a focus on the creation of workers and

what McKernan describes as wealth driven, international education policy.

Internationally, policies continue to call for a greater emphasis on standardized testing

and accountability in industrialized nations, especially with regards to measurable

outcomes in terms of literacy and numeracy (Ball, 1998; McKernan, 2008).

The history of curriculum suggests continued change and development as

education adapts to new knowledge and changing political and economic situations.

There is much theorizing on what curriculum should be taught, and what pedagogical approaches ought to be taken to deliver curriculum. As these evolve over time, changes may be warranted. However, I see a disconnect; just as academia often separates curriculum and leadership into different streams of study, so too does much of the literature separate curriculum theory from theories on best practices for implementing change. Recommending curricular change is often separated from consideration of effective change implementation as these arguments are left to other arenas like change/social and leadership theories. It is my intention to consider both changes made to the arts curriculum and implementation issues in this research. As a part of this dual purpose, I will touch on how recent trends towards globalization, standardization, and the diminished role of the classroom teacher in curriculum development influence or impact art education in Ontario.

The History of Art Education in the Ontario Curriculum

Art has been a part of the Ontario curriculum in various capacities for more than a century. Appreciation of the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of an arts education has varied widely, and there have been advocates who argue for education *in* art, *through* art, or both. At this point in our history, there is a drive towards standardization and accountability in education, especially with regards to literacy and numeracy. Current drives for efficiency as a marker of quality education leave little room for the arts in schools if I accept Eisner's (2002) description of the arts as a discipline in which efficiency has little use (p. viii). Where does this situate the study of art in Ontario?

Clark (2010) charts the history of art education in Canada, identifying four eras in its ever-changing role or purpose in the lives of students. Clark notes that art as we know

it today evolved from 19th-century technical courses in drawing. According to Clark, there has been a non-linear shift from regarding art as a technical skill, to regarding art as an expressive act. He follows the evolution of the study of art as it moved from art as vocation, to art as design, to art as self-expression, and most recently, to art as a discipline.

A variety of factors, which I will discuss below, have led to these shifts in the purpose and function of art in our schools, including: wars, scientific discoveries, globalization, and high-stakes testing and evaluation of other skills such as literacy and numeracy. Some of the shifts in art education mark a return to earlier purposes of education as outlined by Clark. For example, in the 1990s, we experienced a shift back towards art as a vocational education in some cases. In Australia, for example, the arts were grouped together as one of eight key learning areas, stemming from the belief that skills developed through arts education were transferable to the world of work (Livermore & McPherson, 1998). While this trend has not permeated the art curriculum in Ontario, the visual arts documents contain expectations that students will research and consider career pathways related to visual arts. The document's front matter lists many skills developed in arts courses that are critical for the workplace, including problem-solving and adaptability (OME, 2010b). This may signal a return to some focus on art as vocation and design in the current era of tight budgets and accountability: if art can provide job related skills, it may stand a better chance of garnering the attention of students, parents, and policy makers.

According to Eisner (2003), the history of the importance of arts education has been quite cyclical and that what is wanted "especially in America today, [is] a tough

curriculum, something rigorous, a curriculum that challenges students to think and whose effects are visible in higher test scores. At best the arts are considered a minor part of this project" (p. xi). Walling (2001) attributes factors such as: standardized testing, wars, depression, and the Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 for the marginalization of the arts in the period following World War II as policy makers placed a greater emphasis on science and mathematics. Walling writes that this marginalization peaked in the 1970s as baby boomers left high school and declining enrollment in public schools lead to cutbacks. Walling (2001) asserts that the combination of declining enrollment and the post-World War II shift in priorities to math and science as the cold war raged on meant that art was in crisis (p. 626). Burton (1994) notes the crisis in which art found itself during the 1960s and 1970s when "art education was not alone in feeling the full wrath of public criticism for having failed the educative process by focusing unduly on the expression of feeling, experimentation, and personal interpretation" (p. 479). Reaction to such criticism lead to the rise of Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), taking some of the focus away from studio practice by adding a rigorous curriculum that included production, criticism, history, and aesthetics.

Since the 1980s, there has been some relief for arts education as postmodernism, constructivism, computer technology, the lobbying efforts of arts organizations, and DBAE have helped to keep the arts relevant in education (Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010; Walling, 2001). For example, technologies such as computers have made art more relevant and central in the curriculum today, reuniting art and science to an extent we have not seen since the days of Dewey (Walling, 2001).

As the importance of art in the curriculum fluctuates, integration of art with other disciplines permeates the discourse: either as a survival tactic for the arts, or as a teaching strategy to improve performance in other subject areas. Integration of the arts with other disciplines has its proponents and its detractors and I consider each of these positions in the literature below. Generally, this debate is about whether or not to teach *through* art: whether it is a tool or methodology for teaching other disciplines or a valued discipline in its own right.

A number of scholars argue for integrating the visual arts across the curriculum (Efland, 2002; Manzo, 2002; Uhrmacher, 2009). We see a similar philosophy of teaching *through* art rather than *about* art in an arts-infused model, although the concern is raised as to whether one subject becomes subservient to the other (Coutts, Soden, & Seagraves, 2009). There are numerous models or degrees of integration. Fogarty (1992) explains 10 such models, ranging from the traditional, discipline specific model he refers to as the fragmented model, to cross disciplinary, integrated models in which an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum is arranged around themes or topics. While integration can give the arts a central role in the curriculum, there are detractors who raise the concern that it can lead to the arts becoming a handmaiden to other disciplines (Coutts et al., 2009; Donmoyer, 1995).

Burton (1994) considers dichotomous views about the value of art in schools, arguing that while art is a central feature of contemporary life, it fails to be afforded a central role in the plans of educational policy and curriculum developers. She notes a trend towards art education either for employment or as an extra for the affluent. Her

work explores questions about why art is important to children and adolescents, and argues for its full integration in the curriculum.

High-stakes testing and accountability have gripped parts of the industrialized world in recent decades, leaving their mark on art education by calling into question its value or purpose in curriculum in countries such as the United States (U.S.). Studies in the U.S. conclude that initiatives like the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, with its focus on literacy and numeracy, have left the arts currently under threat in terms of funding, scheduling, and support (Beveridge, 2010; Heilig et al., 2010; Sabal, 2010). A similar situation took place in the United Kingdom (U.K.) where the introduction of National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have led to a decline in the amount of time and resources allocated to the arts (Herne, 2000). We can see a similar impact on the arts in Ontario since the advent of Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and related literacy and numeracy initiatives. In a report from People for Education, the number of elementary schools that have a specialized music teacher, for example, sat at 49% in 2012; a recent improvement, but "still far below 1998 levels" (People for Education, 2012, p. 20). This group recommends reinstatement of the recently cancelled Program Enhancement Grants, which was designed to "enhance new and existing programs in music and the arts" (People for Education, 2013, p. 3).

As schools are pressured to perform well in literacy and numeracy, time, support, and resources are stripped from many arts programs, resulting in funding cuts and a devaluation of the arts (Beveridge, 2010; Graham & Sims-Gunzenhauser, 2009; Heilig et al., 2010; Sabal, 2010). In some cases, this reduction in support results in the hiring of less expensive and less qualified "teaching artists" in the place of qualified teachers

(Beveridge, 2010). With these cuts to funding, scheduling, and support, some arts educators feel that the arts are not respected as disciplines. In some schools, the arts are marginalized in the curriculum, treated as fun time or peripheral to "core" or "academic" subjects, which perceivably undermines the professionalism of art and art teachers (Coutts et al., 2009; Herne, 2000; Manzo, 2002; Walling, 2001; Sefton & Bayley, 2010; Young & Adams, 1991).

Extrinsic benefits of an arts education. In addition to the intrinsic benefits of an arts education, a great deal of literature has been dedicated to examining arts education for its extrinsic benefits to students, society, and the workforce. The benefits of a strong arts education include the development of creative, higher-order thinking skills, sought after by 21st-century employers and academics alike (Eisner, 2002). "The Ontario Arts Council says full intellectual development requires more than traditional literacy and numeracy skills. … In countries like Finland and Singapore, the arts are viewed as one of the basics, along with math, reading and writing" (People for Education, 2013, p. 1).

In addition, some advocates (Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002) call for embedding the arts in curriculum through integration with other disciplines. Still others suggest ways to standardize or codify the arts in an attempt to sell them as more credible or "real" disciplines. To counter the notion that the arts are a frivolous or less rigorous discipline than others, they propose the use of portfolios as one possible source for standardized, credible arts assessment (Chauncey, 2006; Heilig et al., 2010). Such a mechanism already exists in the U.S. with the Advanced Placement in Studio Art Program, whereby student portfolios are judged annually in a national forum using detailed rubrics, while still

allowing flexibility for teachers to deliver art curriculum as they see fit (Graham & Sims-Gunzenhauser, 2009).

Art education can provide a variety of experiences and transferable skills in students (Donmoyer, 1995; Gude, 2009; Heilig et al., 2010; OME, 2010b). Uhrmacher (2009) explores how the arts may improve student engagement, memory retention, satisfaction, meaning making, creativity, and innovation. Through the arts, students can benefit from engaging in an aesthetic, sensory learning experience: making connections, risk taking, and using their imaginations. The creative exercise of art-making can also help students develop higher-order and integrative thinking skills and a tolerance for different ideas and opinions (Martin, 2007; Tharp, 2008; Young & Adams, 1991).

Related to these benefits to students' creative thinking skills, some literature (Efland, 2002; Eisner, 2002; Jansen, 2001) focuses on the notion that an arts education is important for brain development. As an intellectual pursuit, these researchers argue that artistic endeavours improve cognition and learning. Efland (2002) claims that art, as a cultural activity, can help developing minds to construct cultural meaning and has been found to be important for social development. Adding to this argument, Chauncey (2006) also suggests that critical thinking skills are developed through both the creative and critical analysis processes engaged in the art room.

Some research goes as far as suggesting that the arts enhance neurobiological systems and develop creative students who can imagine, explore new ideas, and consider opposing perspectives (Jansen, 2001; Uhrmacher, 2009). Efland (2002) also supports claims that the arts are important to cognitive development as they enhance neurobiological systems and creative skills to the benefit of students and society.

Work is a part of society, and Pink (2006) believes that creative-thinkers are in high demand in the 21st-century workplace. Art education can help to develop the intelligent, creative knowledge worker who can adapt to rapid change, explore new ideas, and consider multiple perspectives (Eisner, 2002; Heilig et al., 2010; Jansen, 2001; Livermore & McPherson, 1998). With a growing definition of art that includes technology, a reinvigorated art curriculum will produce workers adept at managing the new, technology-based economy (Hughes, 1998; Jansen, 2001; Walling, 2001). In my experience, the line between visual and media arts, steeped in computer skills, is becoming blurred at the secondary school level. This can be seen especially in photography as more schools lose their dark rooms and gain computer lab space for digital photography and animation.

In the early part of the 21st century, there have been, and continue to be, rapid technological changes taking place that have an impact on not only on the pedagogy of art instruction, but on art making as well. New, interactive media and technologies must become a part of the art education of the "digital native" generation if it is to remain relevant to their lives. Bennett, Maton, and Kervin (2008) define digital natives as those who were raised immersed in technology since childhood, as opposed to those of us who might be described as digital immigrants: those who have adapted to technology over time in our adulthood. Prensky (2001) provides a more detailed description of digital natives, defining them as the generation born between 1980 and 1994. These students are familiar with, and rely on, technology, as they are taught by digital immigrants (Prensky, 2001). Bennett et al. claim that digital natives may share sophisticated technical skills and have learning preferences unlike previous generations of learners. However, they argue

that the divide between student and teacher is not as large and insurmountable as earlier alarmists claimed. Instead, they recommend further research, suggesting that we need to have rigorous research before making assumptions about the need for sweeping changes to pedagogy.

Hughes (1998) argues that old media and skills are losing relevance for 21st-century youth, and art education must incorporate political, social, and psychological issues to remain relevant. He is not alone in his call for opening up the parameters of art education; Efland (2002) calls for a reconsideration of the purpose of art education and the need for changes in the way in which the arts are taught to keep art relevant. While not all researchers espouse the need for such drastic changes to art curriculum, the new curriculum makes attempts to keep up with changes in culture and technology in Ontario classrooms. The new document makes mention of "the fast-paced changes and the creative economy of the twenty-first century" (OME, 2010b, p. 4), and that "activities should give students opportunities to relate their knowledge of and skills in the arts to the social, environmental, and economic conditions and concerns of the world in which they live" (p. 6).

Change and Social Theory: Resistance to Change

There are numerous reasons why curriculum changes over time. For example, Ontario has guidelines in place that ensure regular review and revision of curriculum documents over time (OME, 2011). Historically, times of particular financial hardship have often led to cutbacks in programming and funding for education, particularly for those disciplines like art, considered fringe or marginal by the political right (Beveridge, 2010; Manzo, 2002). Such cutbacks and changes may be met with resistance from

educators who value their disciplines and curriculum. Change theories can offer possible explanations for the extent of change that takes place in schools faced with new polices or documents. The literature offers a variety of reasons and proposes a variety of solutions or theories to explain these variations: no single theory explains all of the factors, or provides a one-size-fits-all framework for understanding resistance to change. For example, O'Toole (1995) advises leaders on how to effect change in organizations, and examines a wide variety of reasons why workers in organizations may be resistant to change. His exhaustive list includes, but is not limited to: inertia, fear, self-interest, lack of knowledge, volume of change, and ego. His research indicates that change is and has been resisted by all human groups (p. 242).

Becher and Maclure (1978) have another explanation for the variability of response from educators when faced with change:

Many of those who first embrace a new idea are the lively, enthusiastic and imaginative teachers who are quick to see the possibilities it offers for improving their own teaching. … Many of those most resistant to change are the sincere and dedicated teachers who are rightly suspicious of gimmicks or cure-alls, and who are anxious to safeguard the long-term interest of their pupils. (p. 113)

Implementation of curricular change is not always easy, and there may be gaps between what is proposed by developers and what is delivered by teachers (Dyer, 1999; Priestley, 2011). Priestley et al. (2012) argue that change in education is continuous and has reached almost epidemic proportions. They note that educators continue to be faced with innovation and change regarding student learning, yet many schools move slowly or resist these changes.

Institutional culture and schools—an autobiographical example. Most

teachers are busy working alone in a classroom with students for the majority of the

school day (Wideman, Wilson, Murphy, Lipman, & Brathwaite, 2000). As I consider my

own teaching career, it became obvious that my experience with the new curriculum

could add insight into the case of the introduction of the 2010 revised art curriculum.

Therefore I chose autoethnography as one approach to my research problem, and this will

comprise the second phase of my study. Here, I will limit my experiences to one example

to illustrate how levels of isolation can have an impact on the adoption of changes in

policy.

I can go months without seeing administrators enter my classroom, and I often

wonder how versed they are in visual arts curriculum. While principals may identify

themselves as curriculum leaders, one study reported that "few principals feel that they

have sufficient background in the arts to offer guidance to their teachers" (Sefton &

Bayley, 2010, p. 19). While I feel supported in my efforts to work with the new

curriculum, I also feel that I have a great deal of autonomy to teach what I please as a

department head with much more familiarity of the arts than either administrator in my

school. Fortunately, I work in a department with three art teachers who interact regularly

both socially and professionally. As such, we have engaged in a number of professional

development opportunities, such as learning cycles, to adapt our current curriculum to

meet some of the changes found in the new documents.

Anderson and Wilson (1996) note that effective curricular change rarely occurs in

isolation and may be discouraged by others who feel that they too must initiate changes.

As an example, I may have more success in implementing changes when I teach different

courses than my colleagues and consensus is not an issue. There are studies that indicate

that without consideration of implementation of policy change from the onset, the

resultant change may be limited and disappointing (Dyer, 1999; Spohn, 2008). In my

case, I was fortunate to be one of those charged with developing the professional

development for art teachers in my school board. Implementation may not have been

forefront in the minds of those who developed the new curriculum, but I was privy to the

changes before most of my colleagues, and shared what I knew with colleagues.

　　Professional development as a catalyst for change. Consideration of how best

to introduce new curriculum through professional development occupies a growing body

of research. The idea of testing or addressing the ramifications of new policy prior to

implementation is believed to aid in more successful transitions for educators (Spohn,

2008). Unfortunately, Dyer (1999) posits that in developing countries, developing

curriculum at the government level is often considered to be more prestigious than the act

of implementing curriculum in the classroom (p. 47). In his study, implementation was an

afterthought, and proved to be ineffective, making the intended reforms pointless.

Developers, as well as other stakeholders, need to consider the mechanics of change and

which supports may be required by those expected to implement mandated curricular

revisions. Findings from my pilot study indicated that 1 day of professional development,

with draft documents and limited time spent on discipline-specific issues was considered

to be insufficient preparation by those in attendance.

　　Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, and Kwang (2002) examined policy

implementation strategies in 400 U.S. school districts. They found that teacher

involvement in planning was a key characteristic of quality professional development.

However, they note that in most cases professional development does not consist of activities leading to increased knowledge or a change in practice: in many cases, it is described as fragmented and ineffective. Involving teachers in the planning stages can help to identify teacher needs, strengths, weaknesses, and goals (Desimone et al., 2002, pp. 1272-1273). It also sets the stage for building a professional learning community with shared goals and a greater likelihood of success. In their list of best practices for quality professional development (PD), they include content (discipline) focus and active learning, using as an example the practice of reviewing student work during the session. This study found that larger districts with more staff, as well as higher poverty districts with access to more funding, were most likely to offer higher quality PD. They recommend combining smaller districts for the purposes of PD, in order to maximize funding, and involve more teachers in collaboration. These findings suggest to me that cultural differences can have an impact on PD concerning new curriculum, and it is for this reason that the third stage of my research looks to interview teachers in a range of varying school boards.

   School culture. A number of researchers have considered school culture and its complex relationship to change (Giroux, 1983; Huberman, 1989; Sarason, 1996). Resistance to change may not be simple to quantify: any oppositional behaviour must be considered in either the context or value systems of the individual, the socio-historical conditions in which the behaviour developed, or both. Each stage of the lifecycle of a teacher's career can present different opportunities for resistance dependent upon personal, social, and organizational factors (Huberman, 1993). An environment of greater communication, and collaboration among teachers in an organization, for example, can

foster a school culture in which the implementation of change is enhanced (Manzo, 2002). Social and structural conditions can have a greater impact on change than any policy imperatives or new ideas: professional communities with greater participation, trust, and autonomy foster greater engagement with real, externally initiated policy change (Priestley, 2011; Seashore, 2009). To foster change in schools, it is important to start with the teachers who work there (Kelly, 2009; Uhrmacher & Moroye, 2007).

Eisner (2002) cautions educators that routine can prove to be an impediment to artistry in teaching. There are times in a teaching career when a sense of burnout can take hold: this can happen at various stages of a teacher's professional life. By changing the teaching assignment considerably, the lifecycle of a teacher can in a sense experience a fresh start as the teacher returns to a new beginning in his or her career (Huberman, 1989). Boredom, routine, and burnout can all have an impact on a teacher's ability to engage in change. What enables a teacher to resist the effects of a "routinized" existence (Sarason, 1996)?

The provision of adequate supports and resources to facilitate proposed changes can mitigate potential resistance to change (Dyer, 1999; Kelly, 2009; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Spohn, 2008). During a panel discussion between representatives from the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and Faculties of Education, Bencze et al. (2000) agreed that time, resources, and support are vital components of successful curriculum implementation. Noting that teachers are tired and lacking support for implementation, they recommend that PD needs to be an ongoing process: 1-day workshops or sessions in isolation are not effective. Similarly, while debating roles and importance of the implementation of policy into practice at OISE,

Wideman et al. (2000) claim that necessary resources (time, money, materials) for implementation to take place are not provided in many cases.

As well, giving educators a sense that they have a voice in change implementation can be a powerful tool. Change communities that include teachers in decision-making are vital to educational reform (Priestly, 2011; Sarason, 1996). Wideman et al. (2000) recommend that implementation ought to be considered and incorporated into the planning and development of new or revised curriculum: what is needed is a system of planning, training, resources, funding, monitoring, and review of implementation. These researchers recognize the value of including teachers in decisions about the development and delivery of new or revised curricula. A top-down approach to change is no longer considered an appropriate strategy: solutions must start at the foundation with those who work there (Dyer, 1999; McKernan, 2008; Stewart, 2006). What is not considered in the literature is the extent to which an approach is actually bottom-up or top-down: these extremes may be two points on a continuum.

The process for consultation by the OME offers a case in point. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) believes that input into curriculum development in Ontario is "a case of too little, too late" (OSSTF, 2004, p. 5). The Ministry consults with a limited number of teachers and school board participants without the knowledge of the federations that represent the members who will be charged with delivering the curriculum. Furthermore, opportunity for input from a broader range of education workers occurs late in the process, and is limited to online surveys with little room for meaningful comments. Final meetings or consultation with all stakeholders, like OSSTF, takes place once draft documents are developed and significant changes are

discouraged and unlikely (OSSTF, 2004, p. 5). So, while there are teachers involved in the process, their numbers are limited as is their input.

The requisite number of teachers involved in the development of curriculum policy which would constitute a bottom-up approach is not often considered in the literature. Much of the literature on curricular change presumes bottom-up or top-down and not both: perhaps a combination of both approaches is required to effect change successfully. Leiberman and Miller (1984) share the view that there are problems with top-down and bottom-up approaches to school improvement, noting that the most effective change strategies consider the teachers, classrooms, and interactions within a school as starting points for school reform. They conclude that new expectations from leadership are best matched with planning and organizing at the local level. This moves the focus to the teachers, who in order to create and sustain changes, need time, resources, and continuous support.

Whether or not innovations are dictated from "above," or stem from grassroots initiatives may be a question of optics, as those who do participate in the development of curricula will feel a greater sense of ownership and engage in curricular reform. Those not involved in its development may perceive the introduction of the same curricula to be a directive from above, and lack appreciation for revisions or new policy.

Myers (2003) defines curriculum as the official policy guidelines of a government, noting the great deal of effort, time, input, and money that goes into the development of such documents. He suggests that curriculum is never perfect; rather, it is a compromise between people with different agendas or interests. Myers claims that without ongoing support, curriculum implementation has a history of failure. Questioning

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the reasons for failure, Myers relegates failed ideas into two categories: poor

implementation, as described earlier in this review, or "intellectual zombies": ideas that

ought not to have been resurrected, rather left in the ground. Writing about the last time

education in Ontario was "in a time of stress" (Myers, 2003, p. 1), Myers considers the

phenomenon of an implementation dip. When new ideas are implemented, a dip occurs as

things can worsen before improvement takes hold as teachers find it easier to return to

tried and true pedagogy if not given adequate support to facilitate change. Shortly after

the release of the 2010, revised art curriculum, we entered another era of political stress

in Ontario education (OSSTF, 2012). What impact this may have on the implementation

of the new document in the long term remains to be seen.

The Role of Leadership in Change Implementation

Leadership is one factor that can affect policy implementation, either increasing

or reducing the likelihood of resistance to change. Much has been written on leadership,

but there is little consensus regarding the concept of leadership or what constitutes

effective leadership. The six most dominant or prevalent categories of leadership include:

instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial, and contingent

(Leithwood & Duke, 1999). It is argued that among the most instrumental in initiating

change in an organization is the transactional leader who engages teachers in a shared

vision and shared leadership. These visionary leaders empower others, build shared

school goals, and model best practices (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Stewart, 2006) by

creating a culture of participation, professional trust, and autonomy (Priestley, 2011).

Teachers working in professional communities need the leadership of a principal in

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addition to networks of influence, stable relationships, collective responsibility, and support for real change (Seashore, 2009).

Institutional settings such as schools require effective leaders who possess the skills to manage change and lead such organizations. Erçetin (2002) describes the following set of skills as organizational intelligence: adaptability, propensity for rapid action, flexibility, comfort, sensitivity, open-mindedness, the ability to use imagination, and the ability to renew. He notes that schools need to improve in terms of organizational intelligence in the 21st century, and shed the hallmarks of :organizational stupidity," including waste, repetition, and underachievement (pp. 45 - 46).

As social and political circumstances change, the drive for innovation in education continues. These innovations are implemented to varying degrees. Looking at 23 years of public elementary school data regarding change implementation, Gold (1999) found that "innovations in schools frequently encounter problems after adoption and terminate a short time later—often within the first 2 years—without achieving full implementation" (p. 192). According to Gold, this problem is attributed to a variety of factors, including: assumptions made by policy makers regarding teachers and students, problems with both planning and implementation, school culture, ideological contradictions, as well as a host of social, financial, and political barriers (p. 192). Rather than seeing these events as failures, Gold argues that over time, there are actually short bursts of rapid change, followed by longer periods of slow change or stability; he terms this cycle "punctuated legitimacy" (p. 192). In the end, he concludes it appears that the legitimacy of the educational practices is more important to successful change than is the rationale for the reform, its implementation, or improvement to student outcomes. To

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achieve such legitimacy, policy makers must understand current legitimizations in schools in order to construct new justifications for change in order to avoid resistance (p. 216).

According to Fullan (2001), resistance can be expected as a part of any change, and he offers principals a number of assumptions that they should or should not make when faced with a change like curricular change. Fullan suggests that that there may be a number of reasons why changes are rejected. Three of these reasons include: inadequate resources, insufficient time to implement expected changes, and that those who are resisting change may have some valid arguments for doing so. For example, in the minds of participants in my pilot study, the majority indicated that they would not change their approach to art history. In their minds, there are valid reasons to study the history of art in chronological fashion, as movements are often informed by, or are reactions to, previous art periods. The preference to continue to teach art history from a chronological perspective does not reflect the new direction of the revised curriculum, but it does not preclude meeting the expectations found in the new documents either.

We can see examples to support Fullan's claims regarding the need for adequate resources in another Canadian study involving Ontario and Nova Scotia. Exploring the implementation of revised Physical Education curriculum in two different provinces, Beaudoin and Fraser (2002) conclude that there are a variety of obstacles to success, including but not limited to: funding limitations, large class sizes, a lack of resources, and as in many other studies, limited professional development. They note, however, that teachers are creative in their efforts to both learn more about the new curriculum and in their delivery of the curriculum despite reported challenges.

Fullan (2001) cautions that not all, or even most, of those expected to implement change will do so. He recommends celebrating what is being accomplished, even if marginally, from our efforts to initiate change. Finally, Fullan reminds us that implementing significant change can take at least 2 to 3 years, and this is where we were with the new arts curriculum as it was introduced 2.5 years before I began the second phase of my study.

The need for effective leadership during institutional change was identified by Beckhard and Gaspard (1977). They examined organizational leadership issues involved in major curricular changes in their case study of two nursing programs. However, many of their conclusions and recommendations from 38 years ago are not applied today when curricular change is underway. Their study proposed educational interventions for leadership to effectively manage change in educational settings. They found that planning and managing implementation was often underdeveloped or understood, limiting chances of obtaining a critical mass of involvement and commitment to change from stakeholders. In their view, "Introducing curriculum change may be very upsetting to organizations. Resistances, fears, anxieties, competitiveness, and backbiting are all likely to surface, and unless they are effectively dealt with, a program may get hopelessly stalled or may even be abandoned" (Beckhard & Gaspard, 1977, p. 14). To ameliorate and facilitate the implementation of curricular change, Beckhard and Gaspard offer the following recommendations to change leaders:

1. Assessment of the organization's attitudes towards change and the capability to make it happen. This can be accomplished through: developing a real consensus

of the definition of the problem. What is to be changed? What will it look like when changed?

2. Assessing types of changes in attitudes, behaviour, policies, procedures that will be required for the change to occur.

3. Assessing the readiness (willingness) of key people in the system (organization) and its environment to do what is required to implement the change: Let it happen; Help it happen; Make it happen.

4. A careful assessment of their capability (resources—people/money) to make the change. (1977, pp. 60 - 61)

The school principal is a leader charged with the responsibility to manage change. The role of the principal in Ontario is defined in the front matter of new curriculum documents. While it is not the role of principals to be curriculum experts in all disciplines, they are tasked with the responsibility to ensure that "the Ontario curriculum is being properly implemented in all classrooms … and that appropriate resources are made available for teachers and students" (OME, 2010b, p. 7). I would argue that this mandate requires that as leaders, principals can best facilitate curricular change through observing some of the principles developed by Beckhard and Gaspard listed above.

> Vietgen (2010) reflects on the importance of a principal's support:
>
> Their support, or lack thereof, was critical to how I felt as a teacher in their school. Their varying levels of support, at different times of my teaching career, played a significant role in how I perceived a distinct level of appreciation of myself in my job as a visual arts teacher. (p. 96)

Later, the role of administration is revisited within a discussion of support for technology. Vietgen (2010) writes, "The importance of the role support from one's school administration plays is also key when it comes to the implementation of new teaching strategies" (p. 127). What is important to note here is the importance of the perceived value of a principal's support in the delivery of curriculum regardless of the discipline-based knowledge of the administrator. If curriculum change is left up to the individual teacher, with limited support from administration, change will be limited to the agency or capacity of each teacher.

Teacher Agency

When considering the role of the teacher in change implementation, it is important to consider teacher agency and the impact a teacher's sense of affect or efficacy might have on the desire or perceived ability to adopt curricular change in the classroom. According to Frost and Durrant (2002), teacher agency is a key to school improvement and teacher-led professional development is integral to this sense of agency. For the purposes of this study, teacher agency will be considered as the degree of action or power a teacher perceives s/he has in the classroom. Essentially, agency considers who is in control of what curriculum is covered, and why. Similar to the discussion of change theory above, the political, social, and personal can each play a role in a teacher's sense of agency with respect to curricular change. Each of these factors will be considered in turn.

Political influence on agency. The impact of politics on teacher agency varies over time and location as educators work under different power structures and political agendas. Moore (2006) interviewed teachers and principals experiencing rapid education

policy developments in the U.K. Looking at the balance between personal agency and social structure, Moore sought to understand why the implementation of mandated policies was widely different across locations and explored reasons why unpopular policies were not always widely resisted. There was a sense from teachers in this particular study that there was no point in arguing, as they were legally required to follow the mandated curriculum. In another study, Frost and Durrant (2002) conducted interviews with teachers in the U.K. and found that a decade of top-down reform led to increased workload, increased attrition, and a decreased sense of teacher agency. In these examples, it appears that teachers lose their sense of agency when policies come from above, particularly if such policies are legally mandated and there is little or no choice as to whether or not implementation is an option.

On the other hand, legal and ethical requirements to implement mandated changes in the classroom are not widely monitored. While there are professional development initiatives, teacher performance evaluations and classroom visits by administrators, how often and to what extent? In Ontario, teachers are to be evaluated once every 5 years by administration (OME, 2010a). The frequency and length of classroom visits in the interim can vary widely. In one study conducted in Saskatchewan by Sackney, Walker, and Hajnal (1998), 90% of respondents reported zero or one classroom visit from administration with respect to formal supervision during the previous year. Given these statistics, it appears that what happens in the classroom is largely up to the classroom teachers, their sense of personal agency, and the school culture or social environment in which they find themselves.

School or cultural influences on agency. A school or school board culture can have an influence on the sense of agency that teachers feel they have with respect to pedagogical choices. Learning communities that embrace teacher-led professional development can foster a sense of community, empowerment, and a commitment to both learning and change (Frost & Durrant, 2002). Frost and Durant (2002) conclude that, ideally, the actions of teacher-leaders will foster change in teacher practice, student learning, and school culture. Ross and Hanney (2001) identify attributes for change capacity that include honouring dissonance through collaborative professional development, forging new relationships, and staff involvement. While teachers spend much of their day in the classroom with students and not with peers, research suggests that both change and teacher agency are affected by the culture in a school at a particular time and place. Currently, professional learning communities are promoted widely in Ontario schools. For the purposes of this dissertation, professional learning communities refer to the collaborative efforts of teachers designed to reflect upon and improve pedagogy with a goal of improving student learning. These learning communities may be initiated by teachers, or be thrust upon them from administrators or school boards with varying degrees of resources and supports. The extent to which a particular teacher engages in professional learning communities can vary due to personal circumstances as well.

Personal factors influencing agency. Personal circumstances are also a significant factor in determining one's professional sense of agency as an educator. As the individual teacher negotiates working in a specific power structure, the nature of one's students, home, and family circumstances and one's social-economic position can each impact a sense of agency (Moore, 2006). Moore explores the notion that teachers re-

enact their own biographies, conflicts, and childhood memories of school, concluding that teachers are constantly repositioning themselves in both agency and structure, or stated another way, balancing their inner selves and the demands of their daily work environment.

Cognitive dissonance can disrupt one's sense of agency in the face of new information contradictory to previously held beliefs. Ross and Hanney (2001) deconstruct the concept of cognitive dissonance, which they claim develops when an individual is required to reconcile contradictory attitudes and behaviours. Cognitive dissonance can surface when individuals must question their own knowledge derived from their own experiences when such conflicts with proposed change. For example, the new visual arts curriculum does not focus on art history. Instead, it places an emphasis on culture, whereas most visual arts teachers were educated in a system that privileged a chronological, Western focus on art history. The possibility of dissonance is heightened when such mandated curriculum is in stark contrast to the knowledge and experiences of those required to implement such changes. Finally, while looking at school improvement initiatives, one study found that teachers with a strong sense of agency were those who participated collaboratively, worked towards common goals, and believed that they could make a difference. Under these conditions, implementation of initiatives was more likely to be met with success (Sackney et al., 1998).

In conclusion, teacher agency is affected by the personal, the social or school culture, and the political culture, and as such, is not static over time and location. Teachers with a strong sense of agency may not always be champions of change; rather, they are the educators more likely to make conscious choices as to whether or not to

implement change in the classroom. Change may occur or not, and a variety of factors can influence the degree to which any situation or organization experiences change. Even in the strongest organizational cultures, leadership, social culture, and personal factors can help or hinder its progress.

Locating This Dissertation in the Literature

The idea of change is a common element in curriculum studies, art education, and qualitative research methodology. There are many different theories and approaches to examine each, but the creative process as a knowledge and meaning-making endeavour unites art, education, and research. The gaps or disparities in implementation of revised curriculum policy may shed light on the pervasiveness of, and reasons for, any resistance to change. Identifying such gaps may assist in identifying factors that could facilitate implementation if educators imbued with a sense of agency and embrace what they deem to be beneficial change in arts education.

The curriculum released in 2010 reflects the rapidly changing landscape of art and technology, and also acknowledges the growing multicultural makeup in the Ontario classroom. Little is yet known about what impact this new document will have on teaching practices in the classroom, and this exploration will add to the literature on both the development and implementation of new curriculum—two important stages not often considered together in theory or in studies.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I researched literature on grounded theory, constructivist grounded theory, action research, autoethnography, and a/r/tography as I considered each methodology and its applicability for my research problem. I identified grounded theory as the best approach for the research project, and within this framework, I also employed autoethnographic methods in the second phase of data collection.

Grounded Theory

The three phases of this research project (survey, autoethnography, and interviews) provide three opportunities for coding data for themes, as well as providing for triangulation as I explore phenomena more comprehensively over time. The following section will demonstrate how I apply grounded theory to the research design as well as provide details regarding the methods incorporated into the three phases of the study.

Grounded theory is an evolving, shifting approach that can incorporate other quantitative or qualitative methodologies including survey or autoethnography in a cyclical, fluid investigation of a problem or process. In many respects, grounded theory mirrors the creative process familiar to me as an artist, a teacher, and a researcher. It also allows for my research question to evolve as new themes appear in the process of data collection. For example, my initial survey questions did not consider implementation as an issue with the new curriculum, but participants indicated that in their experience, implementation was something found to be top-down and woefully lacking the necessary time, resources, and support to effectively make use of new guidelines.

In grounded theory, researchers seek to discover explanations of processes through field data with participants rather than testing pre-determined theories or hypotheses (Creswell, 2008). Generating theory from the data rather than verifying theory began in sociology, but Glaser and Strauss (1967) noted its applicability to qualitative educational research. They admitted that their book was an initial venture or method for comparative analysis rather than a guide with clear steps and definitions. Perhaps, ironically, they viewed their work as a hypothesis to be tested. Originally they suggested that categories and themes naturally present themselves in the coding of data and that it would be impossible to predict how long a project would take. They suggested that data collection occur only until data saturation is reached and that anything more would be a waste of time.

Since that time, Glaser, Strauss, and others have made further advancements in grounded theory, both in terms of methods, approaches, and variations (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). There can be multiple interpretations from one set of data, thus Corbin and Strauss (2008) encourage researchers to use procedures in their own way, as long as there is clarity and purpose in those procedures. There is no unified framework for this type of research; it is shifting ground as a research design and for individuals as they too change (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Denzin, 2010).

These recent interpretations and advancements in grounded theory emphasize the role of the researcher in the research, and often, the teacher can act as the researcher in educational studies. One way the researcher's voice can become important in research is through memoing the researcher's inner dialogue with him or herself about the theory as it emerges (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2008; Ghezeljeh & Emami, 2009; Moore, 2010).

Charmaz (2006) argues for the use of memoing as part of the grounded theory process, a variation that is important to me as I intend to include my own voice in this research. Through ongoing reflection, the insertion of the researcher's voice becomes part of the coding and writing processes (Charmaz, 2006; Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006).

Recently, Charmaz (2006) called for scholars to passionately undertake a transformative journey into grounded theory, steeped in their own social, historical, local, and interactional contexts. This constructivist approach stemmed from earlier systemic or prescriptive procedures that limited consideration of the situational context of both participants and researcher in the process (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Ghezeljeh & Emami, 2009). Grounded theory allows for the co-construction of meaning particular to a context, which may or may not be transferable to another situation (Charmaz, 2006; Mills et al., 2006). Corbin and Strauss (2008) believe that the end goal of grounded theory research need not always attempt to build theory: description, bringing about change, and telling stories are in and of themselves valid reasons for doing research.

With a variety of purposes for conducting grounded theory, research becomes more creative, exciting, and invigorating methods of data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). They describe research methods that may lead to "happy accidents" while the researcher wanders through libraries or rifles through magazines. Literature review, often done in conjunction with, or post data collection, may be considered a data collection method itself.

Denzin (2010) calls for promotion and engagement with grounded theory via creative and critical responses. The personal is political and the political is pedagogical (Denzin, 2010, p. 476). The researcher's self is inscribed in the text, linking grounded

theory, action research, and (auto)ethnography as a possible, shifting research paradigm (Denzin, 2010). Such research designs benefit from consulting literature after data analysis for explanations of the findings as literature can test or refine emergent theories (Dick, 2010, p. 405).

Grounded theory is applicable to educational research, and in data analysis categories and themes will naturally present themselves (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Charmaz (2006), a constructivist grounded theorist, considers Glaser's argument that grounded theory ought to resolve a main concern and believes that main concerns are steeped in locally, socially, and historically constructed situations. I believe that this is precisely where I find myself and the current incarnation of the visual arts curriculum: grounded in a specific sociopolitical point in time that is changing.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) advise us that grounded theory need not always result in theory building; instead, research may add to a body of existing knowledge or simply describe a situation at a particular time. I did not know at the outset whether or not my research would generate theory or resolve an issue regarding curriculum change and implementation. A primary aim of this research is to explore the process of implementing new visual arts curriculum implementation in Ontario. This in turn will provide insight into factors that promote or hinder curriculum implementation in a wider context. Accepting that the personal is political, and with this in mind, I turn inward to autoethnographic research for the second phase of this project.

Autoethnography

If we are to look at the composition of this word, we see *auto* (self), *ethno* (culture), and *graphy* (research process) (Chang, 2008). As a research design, it is

intended to go beyond the notion of autobiography in that we can learn about society and culture through exploring the self, as oneself is to a degree socially constructed and irrevocably linked to culture. Chang's (2008) methods book *Autoethnography as Method* leads researchers through the history, steps for conducting and reporting, and benefits and challenges of autoethnography. Included are arguments to support the narrative, reflexive practice of self-research for its value in understanding cultures.

Where autoethnography differs from most other approaches is that the researcher is also the research participant. Additionally, like narrative designs, autoethnographers are encouraged to resist traditional reporting practices, allowing for more varied, creative expression (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2008; Mizzi, 2010). This is not the case for my dissertation as the autoethnographic study is sandwiched between two other, more traditional phases: a survey and semi-structured interviews.

Chang (2008) cautions us however that autoethnography has both its critics and its pitfalls. Some of these concerns centre around the notion that autoethnography is viewed by some to be self-indulgent and narcissistic. Others too note that writing about oneself is not without challenges (Ellis et al., 2006; Mizzi, 2008; Richardson, 2001). These challenges can include, but are not limited to: implicating friends, family, or colleagues in our stories; autobiographical focus on the self and not the culture; lack of triangulation of data; and ethical clearance. Ethical clearance is advised in cases when our stories include others as interviewees or the observed (Chang, 2008, p. 68). Nevertheless, there is a growing number of researchers promoting the inherent value of such research (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2006). As we examine ourselves and share our stories

(Richardson, 2001), we also examine processes like change in such a way that these stories can be reflexive and therapeutic for both author and audience (Chang, 2008).

By incorporating an autoethnographic component to this research project, I can add data through an examination of my varied roles in art education. As one who was consulted on the draft curriculum documents, one who delivered professional development to others in my school board, and as a classroom teacher adapting my pedagogy to reflect the revised curriculum, my perspectives will contribute to an understanding of the impact the new curriculum may have on classroom practice.

A piece of this autoethnographic exercise involves the writing of my own reflections regarding my experiences with the current and previous curricula as a classroom teacher. In, *Getting Personal: Writing Stories*, Richardson (2001) shares her advice on writing that is applicable to my research. She suggests that writing is done in, and subject to, a particular socio-historical, local context (pp. 35-36). I see connections here between writing and agency, as both are steeped in social-political and personal contexts. Richardson (2001) reminds us that, "what we know about the world and what we know about ourselves are always intertwined, partial, and historical" (p. 36). I draw two conclusions from this: our experiences change and are open to interpretation, and writing about ourselves can help connect us to others as meaning we derive from our reflexive practice incorporates collective experiences. Richardson is speaking to autobiographical writing in this paper, but I believe that her advice is applicable to autoethnographic writing as well. Writing does not occur in a vacuum: our stories and plots shift and evolve as our situations change.

My teaching experience is steeped in the culture of two particular school boards, and therefore cannot reflect curriculum change as it is experienced elsewhere in the province, or by other teachers with different training and education, different work experiences, or different teaching practices. What my experience can do is open doors, offer insights, and make connections for readers. For these reasons, there are three phases to this study. Pilot study surveys in one school board produced emergent themes that shaped the direction of the autoethnographic study. In turn, emergent themes from the autoethnographic study shaped the direction of the final phase of research, in-depth interviews with secondary visual arts teachers from various school boards in the province.

Methods for Phase One: The Pilot Study Survey

In the fall of 2010, I conducted a pilot study, which consisted of an open-ended survey of secondary art teachers in one school board. I received nine responses out of a potential pool of 72 teachers. All art teachers were invited to participate through email, and through a school board conference site. Perhaps it was the time of year (December), or the method of communication (not all teachers avail themselves of the school board conference site or frequent their board email accounts) that lead to lower participation than expected. The survey revealed some surprising results regarding the content and implementation of the new, secondary visual arts curriculum in Ontario.

The majority of respondents expressed concern with the new curriculum documents for a number of reasons. Primarily, they referred to a dumbing-down of the curriculum, and a lack of respect for the arts. There were concerns expressed regarding consistency across schools and across the province without a common focus or approach

to the history of art. Participants in this study believed that policy implementation was as important as policy development, and that without a local, bottom-up process to PD delivery, implementation will not be uniform or consistent. In some cases, change was reported as nonexistent. A key theme that emerged from the pilot was the concern expressed over poor implementation, and this was to become a focus in the next two phases of the research.

Methods for Phase Two: An Autoethnographic Journey

I had reasoned that my own experience with the new curriculum would either corroborate the findings from the pilot study, shed light on new, emergent themes to be considered, or both. Charmaz (2006) recommends tracking ongoing reflections and the insertion of the researcher's voice through the coding and writing phases of research. Reflecting on changes I am making to my pedagogical approach situates me in the data and determines what direction this research takes in its final stages: interviews with practicing, secondary visual arts teachers across Ontario.

Over the course of a school year, I kept a journal of my reflections on the impact the new curriculum has had in my own classroom. What impact had the revised document had on my pedagogy? Another important question considered what influence the pilot study had on my practice and reflections. I did not journal my reflections when the new curriculum was first introduced 2 years ago; however, I do have documents that can aid in my recall and reflections. In her text, *Autoethnography as Method*, Chang (2008) explains how to incorporate external data such as text into an autoethnographic study. Therefore, concurrently with journaling my reflections, I gathered, coded, and analyzed documents that provided historical insight and contextualized the changes made

to my curriculum. Documents that considered the time included: teacher logs (notes I take each day about which lessons are covered, and any issues that arose during the day), my lesson plans, student exemplars, notes from professional development sessions, copies of draft curriculum documents, and the teacher's resource book I co-authored, based on the new curriculum. Other documents were incorporated into my data analysis as they surfaced, and these are reported in Chapter 4.

This document analysis was used to corroborate my reflections and as a means of triangulation. As this document analysis led to a convergence of information from the pilot study and from my reflections, there is greater confidence in the trustworthiness of the findings (Bowen, 2009). However, I also found contradictions in the data, leading to new directions for my inquiry, and to a revised central phenomenon: while I shared many of the pilot study participants' concerns about the revisions to the curriculum, I also found what I deemed to be beneficial changes. As well, I looked for additional emergent themes that ultimately informed the direction and questions in the final phase of data collection: interviews with art teachers in different regions and school boards in Ontario.

Methods for Phase Three: Semi-Structured Interviews with Art Teachers

As my pilot study in a school board revealed that teachers largely disagreed with the direction of the new curriculum, it was prudent to study the perceptions of art educators in different boards to verify if earlier findings were representative or an anomaly based on one school board's culture. In part, this study looks at the symbiotic nature of school board culture and individual teachers. School board culture affects the individual practices of teachers and of schools, who in turn influence board culture, as

school boards are the sum of their employees and shared histories. Interview participants were recruited from across Ontario.

Themes emerged from the pilot study and autoethnographic study that were not anticipated. These themes provided direction in terms of modifications to interview questions, and for deductive coding of interview data. Initially proposed interview questions are available in Appendix C, but as the process was semi-structured, participants often deviated from the set list of questions. At times, questions were added or deleted based on the direction of the conversation.

Interview Participant/Site Selection

I used two avenues for selecting interview participants. Primarily, I solicited participants through the Ontario Art Education Association (OAEA). As well, I was part of another research project, an Ontario-wide online survey that in part asked secondary visual arts teachers to describe and evaluate implementation of the new arts curriculum in their schools. As a part of this survey, participants were invited to indicate whether or not they would be willing to be interviewed in relation to this project. A number of visual arts teachers indicated an interest and provided their contact information.

Through these venues I invited secondary visual arts educators from across Ontario to participate in semi-structured interviews to discuss their reaction and response to the new curriculum introduced in September 2010. There are 72 school boards in Ontario: 31 English Public, 29 English Catholic, four French Public, and eight French Catholic (OME, 2012). I set out to interview approximately 10 to 12 teachers from different English-speaking school boards in Ontario, hoping to capture a variety of rural, urban, suburban, and remote impressions of the new curriculum, from

teachers at a variety of stages in their career life cycles. I will leave research with French boards for another study, by researchers with a better command of the French language.

It was important to examine a variety of different school boards to factor in the impact that local social and school culture may have had on teacher agency and implementation: each board may have approached the introduction of the new curriculum in a different way with the money that was provided by the OME. In the end, in-depth interviews with 10 such participants yielded rich detail for the purposes of my study and covered a number of school boards and contexts in Ontario.

To be included in the study, participants had to have taught art long enough to be familiar with both the previous and current Ontario Visual Arts curriculum documents. Participants were informed of the parameters of the study, their role, their right to withdraw, and timelines for the study. I informed participants that I would record these interviews. Participants were asked demographic questions regarding age, gender, and length of time teaching. Open-ended questions and discussion ensued, regarding their familiarity with, introduction to, reaction to, and changes made to their pedagogy to reflect the new curriculum. Participants were invited to share documents such as lesson plans and exemplars that typify their curriculum delivery pre and post the 2010 revised curriculum: few did, as interview questions were not provided prior to the interviews, and we usually met in public locations like restaurants, or in their private homes. Often, they did not have documents with them as most kept such materials at school. However, in most cases they did verbally share examples of new or revised lessons and assessment strategies.

Data Analysis: Pilot Study

Using a constructivist grounded theory approach I continuously analyzed and coded data for categories and themes. Data were compared with other data, and categories were compared with each other. I also infused my perspective on the process through memoing, which included my reflections as an art teacher. Literature pertaining to emergent themes was reviewed and incorporated to support my findings. A summary of these findings had been shared with participants for their review, critique, and input. The study was presented at a Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference (Bates, 2012).

Nine teachers responded to my survey questionnaire and reported a range of teaching experience from 5 to 26 years. Using open coding as each set of data was received, new information was compared to existing themes, and new categories emerged. This constant comparative approach was employed until a measure of saturation of the data was reached in that no further themes were emerging from the data collected in this pilot study. Data were reanalyzed to determine a central phenomenon. Finally, selective coding allowed for the determination of a central phenomenon through interrelating categories.

Triangulation was managed through the format of my study: using different methods to gather data from three different sources. Findings were tested through comparing developing theory to the literature, comparing data and findings from each phase of the study, sharing findings with participants for member checking and review, as well as the incorporation of my reflections as a teacher and researcher.

The survey revealed some surprising results, largely negative in nature, regarding participants' perceptions of the content and implementation of the new, secondary visual arts curriculum in Ontario. The majority of respondents expressed concern with the new curriculum documents for a number of reasons. Primarily, they referred to a dumbing-down of the curriculum, and a lack of respect for the arts. There were concerns expressed regarding consistency across schools and across the province without a common focus or approach to the history of art. Participants in this study indicated that policy implementation is as important as policy development, and that without a local, bottom-up process to PD delivery, implementation will not be uniform or consistent. In some cases, change was reported as nonexistent. A key theme that emerged from the pilot was the concern expressed over poor implementation, and this was a focus in the next two phases of the research.

Data Analysis: Autoethnographic Journals and Related Documents

I approached the autoethnographic portion of my research based on the writings of Heewon Chang. In *Autoethnography as Method*, Chang (2008) outlines the history, pros and cons, and options for conducting autoethnography as method. Collecting personal memory and self-reflective data, and collecting external data are methods I employed. This involved chronicling the recent past with respect to my experience with the new curriculum and its impact on my practice, as well as collecting textual and visual artefacts that could provide rich data with which to work.

The collection and analysis of personal memory and self-reflective data began with a timeline of events, and continued with reflections and memos as data were mined for codes and then themes. I observed actual behaviours, thoughts, and emotions as they

occurred throughout this exercise, and as I examined my reaction to, and implementation of, the 2010 revised curriculum. In addition to collecting personal memories and reflections, I simultaneously conducted document analysis, based not only on the process of data management, collection, and analysis as explained by Chang, but on the work of Bowen (2009) and Rapley (2007). Rapley's text, *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis* provided me with a framework for analyzing the documents from this phase of research as well as an approach for coding and analyzing the interviews that followed in the final stages of my research.

I based my approach on Bowen's (2009) work, especially his guidance for conducting document analysis. For example, he lists journals, minutes of meetings, agendas, reports, and visual data like photographs as possible sources of data. While not gathered or developed for the purposes of research, many of these types of documents and artefacts are in my possession. These documents provided insightful data regarding my experiences with the 2000 and the 2010 revised curriculum. As well, Bowen's example uses a multi-method approach similar to my own that includes: a pilot study, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews, under the umbrella of grounded theory.

Bowen (2009) provides a systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge about a situation or culture, citing Corbin and Strauss (2008) as well as Rapley (2007). Bowen provides five purposes for analyzing documents:

1. Provide historical insight or context within which participants operate;
2. Point to, or suggest questions to ask in later phases of research (interviews);

3. Supplement research data that supports data from other sources (reflections and pilot study);

4. Track change and development, comparing drafts (of lessons and curriculum);

5. Verify findings or corroborate other sources. (2009, pp. 29 - 30)

This list reveals a variety of purposes that apply directly to not only the purpose of my research, but also to the ideal role of document analysis in the methodology I proposed for my research into curriculum implementation.

Document analysis involves skimming, reading, and interpreting data that were not intended for research purposes when crafted (Bowen, 2009). Not unlike the methods employed in the pilot study, an iterative process during which data were analyzed for content and for themes was used. Data were coded with reference to the pilot study to evaluate whether or not my own experience aligned with the findings from the pilot study. I began with a theoretical sampling as I looked for the themes that emerged in the pilot study. In a constant comparative method, I identified patterns through a back-and-forth interplay with the data, checking and rechecking codes and categories as more emerged. This analysis concluded when I exhausted all relevant, available documents. New themes were taken into account as I revised my semi-structured interview questions for the final phase of research. For example, I added a final question to ask participants if they had any advice for the Ministry for the next round of revisions, as I found that I had ideas as to how the implementation process might have been more effective.

Data Analysis: Semi-Structured Interviews

The constant-comparative approach applied in the first two phases of research was similarly employed in this phase as well. Interviews were transcribed and coded

individually and again as each additional interview was concluded. I coded data into four categories and then analyzed data looking for emergent themes and eventually for a central phenomenon. Categories were compared to each other, and specific codes were compared, such as rural versus urban, age, years of experience, and codes from the two school boards from which I had three participants each.

Codes were compared to those of the first two phases of the study: the pilot study survey codes, and my autoethnographic codes. First, I deductively looked for those themes found in previous stages of the research, and then I used a more inductive process as I looked for new, emergent themes. Participants were offered the opportunity to member check transcripts and were provided information as to where the dissertation and REB report will be housed. Half of the participants wished to see their transcripts, and only one asked for changes or deletions.

Ethical Considerations

All study participants are professional adults, capable of giving informed consent. However, there were social risks to consider. Participants who may not agree with recent changes to the curriculum, or who indicate that this new policy document has had little or no impact on their pedagogy could risk the reputations of themselves, their schools, and their school boards. Additionally, as some of the participants knew other participants, through the workplace or through professional associations, readers may have been able to identify participants by their comments or examples. With this concern in mind, I chose to report data without attribution rather than identify participants with pseudonyms, numbers, or labels. Finally, there were specific details shared by participants that were

excluded from the data, as they could potentially identify participants familiar with the history of one school board in particular.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

All data collected were treated as confidential. Participants for both the pilot study survey and the third-phase interviews were not anonymous, but identities were protected using pseudonyms in all stages of data collection, coding, and storage to ensure confidentiality. Schools and school boards were not identified either; each were given pseudonyms as necessary in the transcribing process, and are referred to only in descriptive terms such as urban/rural, large or small. No participants or other stakeholders, such as principals or students, are identified or referred to in the findings reported in Chapter 4.

Limitations of the Study

This study seeks to explore the responses of secondary school visual arts teachers in Ontario. The data obtained from different local settings will limit the generalizability of the findings due to the method of recruitment: either members of a particular organization, the OAEA, or respondents to a survey that was solicited through the OAEA and other arts associations. Not all visual art educators join professional associations like the OAEA, and membership in such organizations may indicate a particular mindset or affinity to engage in pedagogical discourse. As well, the data will come from a limited number of participants, and their sense of agency and/or school and board culture may influence their responses such that they do not reflect the majority.

As education is provincially mandated and regulations and practices may not be identical in other jurisdictions, there are limitations to the generalizability of the results.

As the Ministry provides different levels of funding and programs for some subject areas, there may be limitations to how transferable the findings are to other subject areas. As well, the changes made to curriculum in other subject areas may be more or less substantive than those made to the arts document, and this too could have an impact on teacher response and implementation in various disciplines.

Timelines

Phase one of this project, the pilot study, was conducted in the fall of 2010. Participants were provided with a summary of preliminary findings in January 2011.

Phase two comprised an autoethnographic look at my teaching practices during the 2012-2013 school year. During that time, I kept a journal of my impressions of the new curriculum, I tracked changes I had made to my pedagogy based on the new curriculum, and I gathered and analyzed documents that supported the changes I had made in my teaching.

Grounded in the results of phases one and two, phase three involved inviting participants from different parts of the province to take part in an approximately one hour, open-ended interview, which was audio taped and transcribed. This process began in July 2013, and concluded in February 2014. Coding, analysis, and interpretation of these data took place in the fall of 2013 and the winter of 2014. The first, complete draft of this dissertation was completed in April 2014.

Summary

Through this research project, I describe what is happening in 20 Ontario classrooms as I explore the impact of a revised arts curriculum on teacher practice. I also shed light on the impact of school or school board culture on teachers' perceptions and

pedagogical practices. Using a grounded theory methodology, three phases of data collection were employed to address the research question. To begin, I conducted a pilot study survey with nine participants recruited from one southwestern Ontario school board in the fall of 2010. The findings from the pilot survey informed the direction of my autoethnographic study in 2012 and 2013 as I both reflected on my experience as a classroom teacher working with the new curriculum and as I analyzed documents relevant to my teaching practice. This second phase of the study both confirmed some of the pilot study findings, and revealed new themes to pursue in the final phase of research: interviews with 10 visual arts teachers from five school boards and one independent school in 2013 and 2014. A constant-comparative approach to data analysis was employed throughout the study and findings were shared with participants. Risks to participants proved to be low, and only one participant requested any changes to transcripts. Data analysis concluded in April 2014, at which time I began to write and report findings.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Data collection for the final phase of this study concluded in February 2014. The pilot study informed my autoethnographic study, which in turn informed the direction of some of the open-ended questions in my semi-structured interviews. Through each phase, the focus shifted from an exploration of what visual arts teachers thought of the 2010, revised curriculum, to issues of implementation, resources, and seemingly regional pedagogical and curricular differences. Data collection and coding was a cyclical process in each of the three phases of my study. I remained open to the possibility of new, unanticipated data and findings. Analysis shifted from a deductive focus to a more inductive focus as I looked for corroboration of earlier findings as well as continuing to analyze for new themes. Data collection, coding, and analysis continued until new themes ceased to arise.

Rationale for the Organization of Findings

In the spirit of constructivist grounded theory, I will present my findings one phase at a time. I believe that this will give readers insight into the shifting nature of my findings as categories evolved with each new phase of data collection, coding, and analysis. While the final two phases did overlap during the summer of 2013, this organization of the findings reflects a chronological ordering, and will help to demonstrate that as data collection methods shifted, some findings were corroborated, others proved divergent, and new and unanticipated themes emerged.

Coding and analysis took a decided turn in phase three as initial coding appeared too divergent for me to make sense of the data. Returning to the data from phases one and

two it became clear that my method of coding was narrow in scope, as it focused more on the first research question regarding teacher perceptions of the new curriculum, and less so on resultant changes in practice or on cultural differences between school boards.

I recoded my data from all three phases of research, beginning with the most recent and working backwards. This time, I coded data and sorted these codes into four categories: context, implementation, curriculum content, and teaching practice and application. Each of these categories was further divided into subcategories. For example, context was divided into personal, school, and sociopolitical contexts, while teaching practice and application was subdivided into teaching philosophy, teaching practice, change, and teacher agency/administrator oversight. In excess of 100 pages of data eventually yielded 30 pages of codes.

Codes were sorted and printed by category and by participant, or in the case of my autoethnography, by journal entry or document. The results of this sorting process were telling as two prominent features emerged from this process. First, some categories were much richer than others in terms of detail and volume of codes, and secondly, there was a division in some cases between the responses of interview participants from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the responses of other participants. The GTA is generally considered to include the city of Toronto and the surrounding regions of Durham, Peel, Halton, and York. Conveniently, there were five participants from school boards in the GTA, and five from other regions of southern Ontario in the final phase of data collection. Other comparisons were made at this stage of data analysis as I compared levels of participant education, age, and years of teaching experience, and the results from two school boards from each of which I had three participants.

This analysis process helped me to see a different picture, as some earlier findings were corroborated, some proved contrary, and others were altogether new. It was difficult for me to see connections between categories however, until I developed a colour-coded system whereby I created a large, visual chart of key findings sorted by category (see Figure 2). It was during this process that I began to see interrelated connections between categories, and new themes emerged.

Figure 2. Categorization of key findings process.

I describe this process in further detail because I want to make sense of the rationale for the organization of this chapter. Grounded theory is a creative process and the iterative, constant, comparative method of analysis not only added to or confirmed initial findings, but it took my research in new directions and into a larger context. Using three methods and sources of data collection allowed for triangulation of findings

(corroborating evidence), and increased the likelihood of validity (accuracy or credibility) of the study. I believe that it is helpful to see the transition in my analysis and findings over time and for this reason, Chapter 4 presents findings as they build, one phase at a time and you will note that the central phenomenon evolves throughout this process. Each section that follows begins with a description of the setting, followed by findings based on analysis of the data for themes/subthemes found in the study.

As noted in Chapter 3, data received from participants were continuously analyzed and coded for themes or categories using constructivist grounded theory. Themes emerging from phases two and three initiated a return to the data from previous phases as I reviewed data for corroborating or divergent data that may have seemed insignificant at the time. In the interest of clarity, participant response data included below is italicized, while document data is not, in an effort to distinguish between the two types of data. I begin with the findings from phase one, a pilot study conducted in the fall of 2010.

Phase One: Pilot Study Setting and Findings

The population in this pilot study includes approximately 70 secondary school visual arts teachers in one southwestern Ontario school board (the learning coordinator for the arts keeps an email list of visual art teachers in the school board and the total number varies slightly from year to year). These teachers vary demographically and experientially, representing a range of ages, years of experience, and type of contracts they have with their boards. These educators were invited to participate in a voluntary survey simultaneously disseminated via two methods: through email, and by way of a teacher conference webpage. The preexisting digital culture of communication

established in this community made email the preferred method of communication by the majority of participants. Seven participants emailed their responses while two hand-delivered written responses. Participants were provided with a letter of information for consent to participate in research. They were informed of their right to withdraw from the study; no one who began the study withdrew at any time.

Three participants had previously engaged in a discussion on a teacher conference website regarding my dissertation topic. While their ideas were the genesis of this research, none of their earlier comments were used in this report as they predated ethics approval and the development of the research question.

Responses were solicited to an open-ended survey consisting of five questions:

1. How long have you been teaching visual art at the secondary level;

2. How familiar are you with the new, revised, secondary art curriculum documents;

3. Describe what training you have had with the new curriculum;

4. Please share your thoughts on the revised art curriculum document;

5. Do you expect the new curriculum to result in changes to your teaching practice? If so, in what way?

The nine teachers who responded to my survey questionnaire represent a range of teaching experience from 5 to 26 years. Using open coding as each set of data was received, new information was compared to existing themes and new categories emerged. A constant comparative approach was employed until a measure of saturation of the data was reached in that no further themes were emerging, and data were no longer enriching existing themes. Data were reanalyzed by comparing categories and selective coding allowed for the development of a central phenomenon. A summary of findings was

provided to phase one participants for their review, critique, and input. No formal responses were received from these participants, although informal conversations with participants continue to this day when we meet at visual art and school board functions.

Pilot study central phenomenon. Themes quickly emerged as data collection began and a central phenomenon emerged suggesting that for the most part, participants are passionate about their discipline and concerned about the direction in which the new curriculum was heading. Subthemes related to this concern included: a sense that the curriculum had been "dumbed-down"; art history was being eliminated or replaced; important course prerequisites had disappeared; and the implementation of this new document was last-minute and woefully lacking in both structure and depth. A synopsis of each subtheme follows, highlighting participant responses and my reflections.

Dumbing-down the curriculum. The term "dumbed-down," used by one of my first participants—*Why was the curriculum DUMBED-DOWN?*—soon became a part of the vocabulary for my study, as it captured the sentiments of the majority of pilot study participants. One of the first responses received asked this question, elaborating to suggest that: *The document is garbage and should be revised immediately.* Another participant finds the curriculum expectations to be: *Too vague to be of much use.* Five participants also raise concerns about the lack of basic skills development over time:

- *I was a little disappointed that some of the basics were overlooked.*
- *I think that I will have difficulty getting through all the aspects of the new curriculum, when I need to spend so much time going over … the basics.*
- *The actual content of the document varies little from grade to grade.*
- *Useless specific expectations/ambiguous, not important. I think the ambiguity actually does a discredit to the arts by suggesting the courses are really not important enough to warrant exactness or consistency.*
- *Watered-down or removed art history: a real shame.*

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These concerns centre on the new format of the curriculum, which delineates curriculum expectations from examples. The examples serve only as suggestions, not requirements. In the new Grade 9 curriculum, for example, one expectation is that students will: "Interpret a variety of historical and/or contemporary art works (e.g., prehistoric cave paintings, Egyptian tomb paintings, Claes Oldenburg *Shoestring Potatoes Spilling from a Bag*) to identify their subject matter and purpose and the meanings they convey" (OME, 2010b, p. 122). Technically, a teacher can choose random art images to meet this curriculum expectation. Participants believe that this will leave students unable to make meaningful connections between works of art, and will eliminate any consistency between courses taught at different schools. In the words of one representative participant: *The new curriculum document does a HUGE disservice to all teachers and students.*

The elimination of art history. Much of the perceived dumbing-down of the revised curriculum, noted by participants, concerns changes to the suggested approach to art history. Regardless of the direction one pursues in the study of visual arts, there is usually a measure of both studio practice and art history intertwined in the program. As an art historian, it is difficult to apply a critical process to evaluate art without some knowledge of the context from which it came. Both the creative process and the critical analysis process are prominent features in the new curriculum while a chronological study of art history is not. Two-thirds of participants perceive this lack of structure or direction to be problematic, noting that:

- *The document … allows teachers to anecdotally discuss art history arbitrarily.*
- *Given that art history is not the easiest part of what an art teacher does it seems quite possible that many teachers will omit art history entirely from their teaching.*

- *When our future graduates enter college and/or university they will be at a disadvantage in comparison to out of province and out of country fellow students.*
- *There is now no continuity across the board (or Ontario). Some students will get minimal art history, while others will still get lots.*
- *I liked the idea that each and every student in the province was taught this important element of cultural capital. ... I think that is a real shame.*
- *It shows a lack of respect and understanding for our curriculum.*

This theme emerged early and grew in prominence as data analysis continued.

One participant describes this approach to art history as a: *Smorgasbord approach to art history at the discretion of the teacher.* While it is possible to study historical works thematically rather than chronologically, such an approach is deemed by participants to be more difficult for students in terms of making connections and organizing their understanding of art. One participant notes that: *There is no way the math curriculum would be treated this way or even the history curriculum (teach whatever you want in Grade 10... I think not!).* Participants perceive that there is limited understanding or respect for art as a discipline that would not be tolerated in other disciplines.

Lack of prerequisites. Another major theme that emerged related to the notion of a dumbed-down curriculum is concern about the elimination of any prerequisites for Grade 11 Open level arts courses. Six out of nine participants are alarmed or concerned about this change to the curriculum and what it means for visual arts education. While not initially a focus of my survey, most mentioned concerns related to this lack of a prerequisite:

- *Lack of prerequisites for Grade 11 Art.*
- *More students signing up without Grade 9 or 10 Art.*
- *Difficult to create a valuable, meaningful or challenging program.*
- *Disservice for those wanting to pursue a career in visual arts.*

One participant gives this issue much more consideration, reflecting on what the curriculum says about art and what it actually delivers. She notes a contradiction in the front matter of the new documents. Agreeing with the content of the expanded front matter, this participant sees a problem with the use of the word *all*: "In all arts subjects in Grades 11 and 12 emphasis is placed on acquiring more advanced skills and applying them in more complex ways" (OME, 2010c, p. 9). In response to this statement, the participant asserts that: *This of course is completely contradicted by the elimination of any sort of prerequisite for the Gr. 11 Open course.* She further explains that trying to address the various levels in a class, including students without prior experience, immediately lowers standards and she likens the situation to settling for the lowest common denominator. Considering this a significant blow to art education, she continues this argument by predicting a serious and negative impact on the future of art education as she questions how few of the lofty aims of the new curriculum will come to pass when students can pick up art as a discipline in Grades 9, 10, *or* 11:

> *I can't help feeling that this was one of those eleventh hour political compromises since it is in such direct contradiction to what the document states. It feeds into poor attitudes towards the arts and a lack of understanding of the arts. ... This move alone will gut art programs across the province.*

As a visual arts teacher, I have found it a challenge to offer a strong Grade 10 course when half of the students enroll without a Grade 9 Visual Arts credit. Students may have not been exposed to art since elementary school. Both students and teachers must *start over* in a sense, developing basic skills and vocabulary before proceeding with the curriculum. Students without prior art credits may now be enrolled in a Grade 11 course alongside students who have already studied visual arts for 2 years.

Status quo: To change or not to change. All of the respondents raise concerns

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regarding the seemingly haphazard approach to art history as found in the new document. Five out of the nine participants vow to deliver art history curriculum much as they have in the past, regardless of the new curriculum. When asked what impact the new document would have on their teaching practice, responses included:

- *As I enter my twilight years, I would say no change.*
- *I will continue to teach the same. I focus on skill-based development for art projects and then teach art history according to progression of time.*
- *I will continue teaching art history the way I have in the past, chronologically.*
- *If anything this document strengthens my resolve to make art history a meaningful part of the 1-4 years that students spend in my classroom.*

What does this mean for students? Teachers are professional, and will cover the new curriculum, but many participants feel that it is their duty to see that the best interests of students are met by covering art history much the same as they have in the past.

     Implementation process of the new curriculum. While the curriculum was developed with input from educators and other stakeholders from across the province (OMOE, 2010a), this is not evident to the majority of participants as they were not a part of the review process.

     Familiarity with the document. For most, their first look at the new documents was at a PD session in June, 2010. One survey question asked participants "How familiar are you with the new, revised, Secondary Art Curriculum documents?" This question elicited a range of responses:

- *Not sure, haven't had enough time with the document yet.*
- *Somewhat familiar* [four participants].
- *Read sections that pertained to secondary visual arts.*
- *I spent more time with the draft document, and have not had a huge amount of time to read the official document.*
- *Quite familiar, I have read the document several times.*

There were three additional teachers who approached me to inform me that they could not participate in my survey as they have yet to look at or familiarize themselves with the new curriculum. This survey was conducted after the new curriculum was already mandated to be in place in Ontario classrooms.

The PD session. Feedback on the training provided is, for the most part, unfavourable. One participant reports being unable to attend the session and the other eight participants emphasize that there was only one day of PD, which they describe as inadequate, limited, or disappointing. One participant characterizes the day as short and general, and another describes the training as: *One session to discuss draft documents without going in depth and studying at least one grade level as a group [of visual arts teachers].*

Another participant questions the financial expense and value of the PD day, considering it to be a waste of time and resources. Explaining further, the same participant calculates the cost for releasing 150 teachers from their classrooms for a day to be more than the annual salary of a teacher. Each teacher in attendance was replaced with a supply teacher, each at a cost of approximately $220. Participants explain some of their dissatisfaction with the day in more detail, noting that: *The breakout sessions were useless; the document was not available, and [we were] told to read it on line.*

Few who attended the PD session make mention of how they spent the morning: looking at the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders and reviewing changes to assessment and evaluation. Whether or not this reflects the content of my questionnaire or the value participants placed on these activities when they were chiefly concerned with

the visual arts curriculum is unknown. This question would feature in future reflections during the autoethnographic phase of my study.

Teacher initiated professional initiatives. Not all responses regarding PD were unfavourable and teachers had obviously given thoughtful considerations to reflecting on their own training with the document and its implementation:

- *Through talking with my colleagues – I have a better understanding.*
- *I believe it is my responsibility as a teacher to ensure that my classroom teaching reflects the expectations mandated by the government. As a result I have tried to ensure that my lessons and assignments are aligned with the curriculum.*
- *In the multicultural classroom teachers needed more guidance on how to shift the teaching of art history from a European-centred perspective to include multicultural issues.*

These participants indicate that they collaborate with colleagues and recognize the need to meet government mandated curriculum expectations. The ideas regarding multicultural classrooms highlight a shift in the makeup of our schools in terms of students and curriculum: something I will consider further in phase three of my research where I discuss interview findings from participants from multicultural, urban centres.

Summary of pilot study findings. As I coded data and found recurrent misgivings about the implementation of the new document, I reflected on my own role in its introduction as I was one of the PD organizers and presenters. Did I think the training was ideal or appropriate? Was I offended by participants' criticisms? I recalled the frustration during the planning stages, as PD funding was available for a limited time only, and the documents were not yet available. As a number of the arts were represented at the PD session (including music, dance, and drama), there was limited time to devote to visual arts curriculum specifically. The PD session in June 2010, with draft documents, did not reach or prepare all art teachers to work with the new curriculum. The official

documents were not delivered to schools until September, after the term had already begun and the new curriculum was to be in place.

This pilot study addressed my initial research question about teacher perceptions of the new curriculum, and their assessment of its contents. A chief concern of most participants surrounds the notion of limited respect for the arts in education. What emerged as a central phenomenon is an unhappiness with the new arts curriculum documents for what they lack. Participants who spoke of the dumbing-down of the curriculum believe that it shortchanges students and does not recognize the value of art in education. This unhappiness encompasses a range of feelings from mixed-emotions, to disappointment, to outrage. This theme derived from a number of subthemes including: the haphazard implementation of the new policy document, the perceived dumbing-down of the new curriculum, the elimination of art history, and the loss of important prerequisites for Grade 11 Open level Arts courses. These categories illuminate the sense of a lack of respect or understanding for art in the Ontario curriculum on the part of policy makers.

Participants appear undaunted however as they remain committed to teaching a rigorous curriculum: there may be little change in classroom practice for some. Visual arts educators in this study feel that they know best what students need to learn and that they have the power to engage students with a rigorous curriculum that incorporates a chronological approach to art history in order to better understand and create art, and to better prepare them for postsecondary studies.

Many respondents feel that the introduction of the revised curriculum was inadequate at best, while others feel that the PD provided was a complete waste of time

and resources. A characterization of *useful* PD was not asked for in the survey, as this was an unanticipated theme. I expanded my exploration to consider issues of PD and implementation in the next phases of my study based on these results. The next phase of the research, the autoethnographic study of journal reflections and relevant documents took place between September 2012 and August 2013.

Phase Two: Autoethnographic Settings and Findings

Personal journal entries were kept throughout the 2012-2013 school year as I reflected on my teaching practice, the 2010 curriculum, and my research question. During the same period, documents were collected, coded, and analyzed for data relevant to my study. A wide range of documents were considered for analysis, and 17 were ultimately selected for the rich data they could yield: lesson plans, handouts, art work, student exemplars, field trip forms, Ministry curriculum and supporting documents, draft curriculum documents, professional development session documents, and daily teacher logs. These selected documents spanned the length of my teaching career, from the 1999 Ontario curriculum documents, to student exemplars from the 2012-2013 school year.

I followed the systematic procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge about a situation or culture (Bowen 2009). In doing so, I looked at documents for the historical insight or context they might add to my data; I noted possible questions to consider in analysis and in the final phase of my study; I looked for data that would corroborate or conflict with previously collected data; and I tracked changes to curriculum and compared drafts with finalized documents. Through this phase of data analysis, my findings added to those of

the pilot study in two ways: some of my earlier findings were confirmed, and altogether new themes arose.

Autoethnographic findings: A shifting central phenomenon. As I analyzed autoethnographic data, a different picture began to emerge and the central phenomenon became more complex. The central phenomenon that emerged suggests that while I too am unhappy with some aspects of the new curriculum and its implementation, I also find satisfaction with the situation through a variety of means: I both reflect on what I deem to be beneficial changes to the curriculum and find creative solutions to address the limited PD and resources provided at the outset. I find much clarity and flexibility in the revised curriculum, as well as ongoing opportunities for additional PD relevant to the curriculum. Visual arts teachers may take some satisfaction in knowing that, while professionally responsible for delivering a government mandated curriculum, they maintain a measure of agency or control over what takes place in the classroom.

A number of the findings from the pilot study were corroborated in this phase of my study. I too feel that there was a sense that the curriculum had been dumbed-down, that there is an inherent lack of respect for the arts in some of the changes, and that implementation support, while not an issue for me, is lacking for many others. Each of these themes will be discussed in turn before I move on to consider new, emergent themes that required revisiting the pilot study data.

New issues of concern for me that evolved as themes from that analysis of my reflections and document analysis were twofold: time spent delivering art curriculum is being eroded, and teacher input into curricular change is very limited. First, I find that standardized testing, such as the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), has a

negative impact on the delivery of art curriculum as educators are pressured to spend time delivering literacy test skills at the expense of art curriculum. Additionally, there has been a decline in the number of art classes offered in some schools.

Another theme developed regarding the process of curricular revision. The so-called information gathering and consultation process utilized by the OME in the revision of arts curricula was, in my view, disingenuous. There were few, minimal changes made to the curriculum based on the input of secondary school teachers around the province.

Themes that suggest that I found some of the changes in the new curriculum to be beneficial emerged from the data. My reflections and documents analysis suggest that one could have the perspective that there is much more freedom or flexibility for educators to deliver a wider range of art history curriculum. Teachers are free to tailor their approaches to history, culture, and media to match their interests and needs of their students. I find that there is increased clarity between the overall and specific expectations in the new curriculum, and a greater emphasis on both the creative and critical analysis processes. Also, those who feel that the curriculum has been watered down in some respects may take comfort in knowing that they may not need to make changes to their pedagogy or curriculum in order to meet the expectations found in the new documents. Finally, to address the lack of PD and resources provided when the 2010 documents were introduced, educators can now find a number of creative ways to engage in discipline-specific PD, with time and resources available from different Ministry initiatives. Those who avail themselves of these opportunities may be better prepared and more accepting of the revised curriculum.

***A dumbed-down curriculum and a lack of respect for art as a discipline*.** My

documents and reflections reveal a sense that the curriculum is not as rigorous as was the

previous edition, or as rigorous as it is in other disciplines. This echoes the opinions of

participants in the pilot study as I too note that there are no prerequisites for any Grade

11, Open level Arts courses.

Lack of prerequisites. As one participant noted: *This flies in the face of the front*

matter of the 11–12 curriculum document, [which] suggests senior courses build on the

knowledge and skills of junior courses. The front matter of the 2010 curriculum

emphasizes that Grade 9 and 10 Arts courses should "provide a basis for more intensive

and specialized study … [and that] in all arts subjects in Grades 11 and 12 emphasis is

placed on acquiring more advanced skills and applying them in more complex ways"

(OME, 2010c, p. 9). *More advanced* and *more complex* imply prior instruction and

knowledge—unlikely for students enrolling in a Grade 11 course without previous

secondary school art instruction.

I considered the changes made regarding history and culture and how they could

contribute to the loss of art history in some cases. I cannot envision how I would teach

Grade 11 Art without a chronological focus:

> *I sure teach a rigorous, chronological art history program: it would be difficult to imagine how to cover the Northern, Early and High Renaissance as well as Mannerism, Baroque, Neo Classical and Romanticism without the chronological and historical context.*

My reflections suggest that I will continue status quo in terms of my approach to

art history for the time being. Studio and history projects are often combined in my

courses. For example, in Grade 11, we examine watercolours by Durer prior to exploring

the medium, integrating studio practice with history. The lessons contained in that unit

however, are usually divided into technique or content/theme. Initially, watercolour exercises allow for the exploration of new techniques and styles. We then revisit historical examples of watercolour art, discussing the composition and techniques used by other artists as we consider the historical context around their work. In this way, a unit can cover several of the limited number of mandated visual arts curriculum expectations.

Fewer expectations than other disciplines. It appears to me that English has a more rigorous, prescriptive curriculum than do the visual arts in current curriculum documents. Comparing the most recent versions of Grade 9 Open Visual Art (OME, 2010b) with Grade 9 Applied English (OME, 2007), there is quite a discrepancy in terms of volume of expectations to cover in each single-credit course. There are 26 specific expectations in the Grade 9 Visual Arts course spanning eight pages, while the English curriculum contains 70 specific expectations over 15 pages. There are more strands (categories of related expectations) and more overall expectations for each English course, giving the appearance that English requires a more rigorous and exacting curriculum than art. In one journal entry, I question whether or not I would prefer a more stringent or exacting set of curriculum expectations:

> *The curriculum is weak. I could cover the expectations in a month. Would I prefer something more detailed or prescriptive? Not sure. On one hand, it gives me much freedom to teach what I feel is important or relevant in any particular situation or year. On the other, what kind of education are we giving students around the province? I suspect very different art curriculum is being taught in different places. Some great, some weak. There are also very different programs out there. Some schools teach music, art, and drama to Grade 9 students on a rotation of about 6 weeks each. Students would then have a better sense of which of the arts they might wish to pursue. They also don't get very far in any of the arts in such a short span of time.*

This passage raises another issue regarding consistency across the province: not all schools offer full Grade 9 Arts courses. Instead, they provide rotational survey courses

of a number of the arts. One participant in the third phase of this study describes such a school. These schools cannot offer the same curriculum as others; therefore issues of consistency will continue to exist regardless of the wording of curriculum expectations.

Whether or not arts educators would prefer a more prescriptive set of expectations, like those found in the English curriculum, was not a focus of this research. To participants, however, this discrepancy creates the appearance of marginalization of the visual arts as English education appears to be considered more valuable and important than visual arts education.

Support for implementation of new curriculum. Limited support for the new curriculum is another theme consistent with that of the pilot study. My reflections indicate that there were insufficient supports or resources to effectively implement changes based on the 2010 Curriculum. Consistent with findings in my literature review, I found that professional development is less likely to be effective if delivered as a one-time event:

- *I think that the professional development followed exactly what the literature says will not succeed: one day, no follow up, no resources to implement changes.*
- *PD needs to be on-going, not a one shot cure. We essentially had half a day as the morning focused on the front matter, giving us less than two hours together as art teachers to discuss the new documents.*

These journal entries are based on reflections and documents associated with the professional development workshop I played a part in delivering. On more than one occasion I noted that there was no additional funding or resources to facilitate changes to the curriculum:

- *Time, money, collaboration, understanding: we were given zero resources to make changes, although separate funding envelopes could be accessed by creative teachers, such as learning cycles.*

- *Plan implementation from the outset, not an afterthought: what was the plan? Cash thrown at boards to deliver a one-shot day, releasing teachers and spending half of the day on assessment and evaluation, leaving half a day to digest the new, draft document.*

In addition to this lack of resources, I note that the official curriculum was not ready for September 2010, when we were expected to implement changes:

- *There was no additional funding to facilitate changes to curriculum, and the documents arrived late, after the school year began.*
- *We did not even have the official document before September when it was to be implemented.*

This caused concern not only for me, but for other art teachers who work in my school board. Anecdotally, many of these educators indicated their decision to ignore the new document for the time being; they intended to consider changes only after finding time to critically examine the official curriculum. This delay in releasing the new curriculum, with few resources to initiate changes, limited the possibility of wide-spread adoption of changes in a timely manner. Some would consider changes for the following year, while others would make no changes whatsoever. This discrepancy will be examined later when I discuss the findings from my interviews with teachers around the province.

The familiar themes found above were not the only themes to emerge from my autoethnographic data analysis. I also uncovered new themes. I found that the new curriculum brought with it new clarity on a number of fronts. As well, it allows for some flexibility and freedom in terms of pedagogy and curriculum content. These themes may be viewed as contradictory to earlier themes in one sense, but in another, they may point to the difference more thorough PD and greater exposure to the curriculum documents may have on teachers.

There are a number of related themes regarding changes made in the classroom and whether or not change is even necessary. Change is a far more likely course of action for those well trained in the revised document, and PD opportunities do exist for the creative teacher. However, there are other themes that highlight the mistrust of some educators regarding the revised curriculum: there is a lack of leadership and oversight regarding the visual arts curriculum from administration, and the consultation process with the Ministry of Education was a sham.

Standardized testing in Ontario affects the arts. In Ontario, it is difficult to gauge the impact of standardized testing on the arts in isolation, as there were a number of changes taking place in terms of the economy, politics, and education policy simultaneously. For example, the elimination of Grade 13, or OAC courses (the first 4-year cohort began Grade 9 in 1997) took place during the same era as the introduction of the OSSLT and its increased focus on literacy in Ontario education (Anderson & Ben Jaafar, 2003, pp. 15, 24). The EQAO was established in 1996 (EQAO, 2012, p. 10). Both of these shifts in education policy affected curriculum delivery, and in some cases, the number of arts courses offered in schools as students had fewer options under a 4-year plan of study. In my reflections, I note that: *The impact of the OSSLT was minimal, but real. More senior art educators noted that some schools have fewer lines of art than in the past.*

When students attended secondary school for 5 years, there were more opportunities to enroll in optional arts courses. In addition to the drop in the number of arts courses offered, there are now directives from administration to embed literacy test training into all disciplines. In my experience, there is an expectation: *That I would*

ensure that I was spending time teaching to the literacy test in my curriculum through

activities designed around the format of the OSSLT.

In my role as a department head, I was asked to provide administration with a sample of art lesson activities reflective of the types of questions found on the Grade 10 literacy test. Examples that our department has created for Grade 9 Art students include:

1. Short answer and multiple choice questions based on the Group of Seven

2. A news report about the fall of Rome

3. A summary of an article about the Colosseum

While these lesson examples still fall within the realm of art curriculum, teaching to the test in terms of how to answer OSSLT-type questions takes time away from other visual arts content. Teaching reading and writing skills rather than art processes or techniques shortens time frames for other lessons or art making.

The Ministry of Education consultation process. Perhaps the most significant finding from my document analysis involves the consultation process outlined on the OME website where it describes the process for curriculum review. There, it is noted that comprehensive information gathering comes from a range of sources, including focus groups of educators from every school board in Ontario (OME, 2013). There is also "Feedback consultation on the draft curriculum from educators and stakeholders" (OME, 2013, para. 5). I was involved in this stage of the process as the media arts representative from my school board. According to my reflections, it appears that the Ministry does not always live up to its claims regarding the consultation process. Reflecting on the difference between draft documents and the versions released as official curriculum in 2010, I deduced that there are few, if any, changes based on input from teachers:

I was a part of the consultation process in 2009, when five local arts teachers (one for each of the arts) were invited to review and consult with the Ministry in 2009. The consultation process was a sham! I had reported earlier in my proposal that I was a part of the consultation process, and that I did not see any of my suggestions reflected in the final document. I did not, however, assume that there was no effort made to incorporate anybody's suggestions or input from the consultative process. Were they just looking for typos and an editor? Clearly we were not truly a part of the development of the curriculum. This exercise has seriously shaken my beliefs about the consultation process espoused by the Ministry of Education in these documents. I will move forward with a shifted lens from now on. What a waste of time. I feel lied to about the consultation process.

Document analysis of some of the draft and final versions of the curriculum reveal that changes were not made as a result of consultations. Comparing the Grade 11 Open Visual Arts course draft document from 2009 to the official, published document from 2010, I find only three minor changes, which are shown in Table 2:

Table 2

Revisions Between Draft and Published Versions of Curriculum

Official curriculum expectation	Change from earlier drafts shared at the consultation sessions
A1.2	A grammar correction
B2.1	Removed graffiti from the list of examples
B2.3	Pluralized the word *society*

There were no substantive changes to this course, and no changes made whatsoever to the Grade 10 Media Arts course, ASM2O, between the draft shared with participants on the PD day and the official document released late in September. As I conducted my document analysis, I recorded my reflections and impressions of the experience. On three separate occasions I consider the consultation process to be disingenuous:

- *Grade 11 Open course: I've never taught this course, so I have not looked at the expectations or compared them before now. The consultation process was a sham! Clearly we were not truly a part of the development of the curriculum. The removal of graffiti as an example seems conservative and not reflective of the reality of art and students today.*
- *Draft course document, Grade 10 Media Arts, ASM2O, Curriculum expectations in draft form shared with participants… compared with finalized document released in September: I see no changes at all.*
- *I remember asking them to switch the example of photocopier art to scanner, to bring the curriculum into the 21st century: of course they did not.*

Not one word changed between the Media Arts draft document that was presented at the

PD session in June and the final document published in September.

The OME's concept of consultation is different than mine. Granted, the Ministry

claims that:

Reviews are conducted with great care. Comprehensive information-gathering

includes: Studying research in the subject area; Comparison with other

jurisdictions; Focus groups comprised of educators from all Ontario school

boards; Technical content analysis conducted by subject experts; Consultations

with stakeholders including… Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education;

Faculties of Education; Employers; Parents; Students; Universities, colleges;

Other branches of the Ministry of Education; Other ministries; NGOs (Non-

Governmental Organizations). These sources of information form the basis of

recommended revisions to the curriculum. Writing teams drawn from school

boards across the province then develop revised English and French documents

based on research and consultation. Further stages of review to finalize the

curriculum include: Feedback consultation on the draft curriculum from educators

and stakeholders; Overall fact-check for accuracy and subject integrity; Expert

checks to ensure alignment with government policies and frameworks such as

environmental education, First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework and

equity and inclusive education strategy; Publishing processes including editing;

Approvals processes. (OME, 2013, para. 4)

There are three instances when classroom teachers are involved in the process of revising

curriculum. First, educators are included in focus groups during the information-

gathering process prior to writing. Later, curriculum-writing teams include secondary

school educators, and finally, additional teachers are invited for consultation and to

provide feedback on draft documents. I was involved in this final stage of consultation

and it seems that the focus at this point was on fact checking and accuracy: the time for

input was past. A very small percentage of teachers were involved in the consultation

process.

Greater flexibility in terms of media, history, and culture. While participants

in the pilot study criticized the new document for its lack of a coherent, chronological

direction regarding art history, I find that this change allows for greater flexibility for

students and for teachers to focus on their interests, strengths, and knowledge base. This

revelation led me back to data from the pilot study, and indeed, one participant out of

nine appreciates the flexibility found in the 2010 documents:

> *However, I think they are trying to provide broad enough parameters for teachers*
> *to bring their own skill sets to the teaching of the curriculum. There don't appear*
> *to be the same kind of dictates that there were with the old curriculum.*

As I examined my old lesson plans and teacher's logs, I found that I tend to focus entirely

on Western art history, although in recent years I have changed my thinking:

  – *I would mix things up today a little, perhaps Islamic, Japanese, or Chinese art*
    history: something to go with the printmaking or sculpture unit. It has been some
    years since I taught grade 11: I usually do [Grades] 9 and 12.

- *I do see students take an interest in non-western art, as they incorporate themes or motifs from other cultures. There are more students sharing aspects of their family cultures and backgrounds through their art.*

This change in focus from history to culture allows for a wide range of themes or directions to take with any particular course.

There are more examples and new prompts designed to assist educators in thinking about alternatives for art history. This new approach can better reflect the changing landscape and makeup of Ontarians: as immigration patterns evolve, so too will students and teachers be changing. As demographics shift in a particular school board or community, these changes will not be consistent across the province and the new curriculum allows for different themes or foci to reflect local trends. For example, we have recently incorporated Islamic art into our Grade 10 curriculum to reflect a growing Muslim population in our school. With a substantive Korean population in our school, it is our intent to incorporate more eastern art in the curriculum in coming years.

Teacher agency: Greater freedom and limited oversight from *above*. Just as the curriculum allows for a great deal of flexibility in what art and art history are covered in a course, there is much flexibility in the classroom for teachers in terms of pedagogy and what direction they take with the curriculum. As I examined my teaching career through reflections and document analysis, I noted a growing sense of agency. This increased sense of agency is based on a number of factors.

There is some measure of teacher life cycle or experience at play in that I am more familiar and confident in the classroom regarding curriculum, classroom management, and assessment. Different phases of a teacher's career can pose opportunities for resistance based on personal, organizational, and social factors

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(Huberman, 1989). I identify myself as a mid-career teacher working in a stable, supportive school environment. There is a heightened sense of authority as teachers reach a point of tenure, or full-time, permanent employment. As well, the level of administrative oversight can contribute to a sense of agency for teachers. Agency, however, does not grow exponentially, nor does it become static. Each of these factors works to foster a sense of agency that is destined to shift over time as experience, administration, and politics change.

      Experience and tenure with limited administrative oversight. Once teachers reach tenure status, or full-time, permanent work, there is a heightened sense of security and agency compared to the new breed of part-time teachers desperate for full time work. Part-time or temporary status limited my sense of agency based on the perceived need to outperform to secure full-time, permanent work. I have 12 years in this profession now, and I serve as a department head, a PD trainer, an associate teacher, and as an OAEA representative. Since 2011, I have also worked in a school with a supportive administration. This can be seen in my journal reflections:

- *I believe that I now have complete control over what art curricula is covered in my classroom: this was not the case in my previous school where I was not the department head, and I had an administrator who liked to micromanage. I am now the department head in a school with an administration that appears to trust me to know what is needed in the art program.*

- *I feel a great sense of agency, as I feel that I know more about the new curriculum than anyone in my work setting, and I see little interference or even interest in what exactly I do day to day. The administration in my school trusts me to know what is best regarding curriculum, as is evidenced by my recent requests for equipment purchases: a Smartboard, an expensive digital camera and two pottery wheels. To date, the response has been, "if you need it for your program, we will find a way to make it happen."*

While this is the case for me at this point in time it is not always the case for me or for other visual arts educators. While they may not have supportive administration at all

times, they do have some measure of autonomy in their day to day working conditions.

As well, administration is temporary in most schools compared to the teaching staff.

Indeed, the level of support can and will change over time when there is a shift in

administration or when a teacher switches schools. There were numerous examples from

my reflections that suggest art teachers often have great autonomy because administrators

are very busy, and few I have encountered are well versed in the visual arts:

- *Busy administrators do not have the time for proper, timely performance appraisals, and 'look for's' may not be tied to discipline specifics.*
- *There is a great deal of autonomy in the average art room, where teachers can adapt the curriculum as they see fit, or they can ignore revised policy documents all together.*
- *It is hard to care what the curriculum says some days: no one ever checks.*

Presenting these data is not intended to suggest that administrators are unaware of new

curriculum issues. Often they too are directed to include school based PD on a variety of

topics, usually those found in the front matter of newer curriculum documents:

assessment and evaluation practices, differentiation, and assorted literacies. I note that

principals are aware of curriculum change; however, they rely on department heads as

curriculum leaders to monitor such changes rather than micromanage each department:

- *I believe that my administrators are aware that there is a new curriculum, but that their knowledge of changes is based on the front matter, in terms of differentiation and assessment as of and for learning. They are not art educators.*
- *There has been no oversight as to whether or not my teaching reflects the new curriculum. I keep expecting it to come up in a Teacher Performance Appraisal, but I have not had one in 7 years, despite the fact that they are to be done every 5 years.*

It is worth noting that in smaller schools, there may only be one visual art teacher, who

may or may not be the head of their own department. In these cases, an art teacher may

be the only one in the building with arts education or experience. Teacher performance

appraisals are required every 5 years, but in reality, administration does not often last 5 years in a particular school and teachers are routinely missed in this cycle. I know educators who have not been evaluated since the 1990s, and they do not anticipate an evaluation in the coming years. I note in my reflection journal that: *Today, new teachers are evaluated twice, then every 5 years. Even that does not happen, as I am now in year 11 and have not been evaluated for 7 years.* These evaluations are the only regulated, formal assessment of a teacher in the classroom, and years can go by without an evaluation.

There are informal methods of monitoring a teacher's classroom activity and administrators will be aware of: what work students are producing, pass rates and class averages coming from a particular class or department, and what student or parent commentary is coming to the attention of department heads and principals. These performance measures are for another dissertation: I raise them here only to acknowledge that school leaders, from department heads to administration do have some knowledge of a classroom teacher's activities through informal measures.

Clarity: Alignment between grades and clearer links between expectations. As I compared the curriculum documents from 1999 and 2010, as well as my lesson plans from the years 2003-2013, it became apparent that the 2010 documents provide a measure of clarity for me that I found lacking in previous versions. There has been an attempt to align the expectations across the grades from Kindergarten to grade 12 in that overall expectations do not change from year to year in the revised curriculum documents. For example, there are three consistent strands for each of the arts in the curriculum for the primary grades: Creating and Presenting; Reflecting, Responding, and

Analyzing; and Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts (OME, 2009). These consistent

strands, through Grades 1 to 8, mirror the slightly different strands found in the secondary

documents: Creating and Presenting; Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing; and

Foundations (OME, 2010b).

This alignment of strands and related expectations should provide some measure

of consistency across grades and across the province, regardless of the direction taken by

particular teachers in different contexts. Additionally, the specific expectations are now

more clearly linked to the overall expectations with a new labelling system: With three

overall expectations numbered for each strand labelled A, B, and C, the corresponding

specific expectations now share these letters, linking which specific expectations are

meant to lead to an understanding of which overall expectation as the following example

from the Grade 9 Open Visual Arts curriculum is intended to demonstrate:

> Overall Expectation C1. Terminology: demonstrate an understanding of, and use
>
> correct terminology when referring to, elements, principles, and other components
>
> related to visual arts;
>
> Specific Expectation C1.2 use appropriate vocabulary to describe techniques,
>
> materials, and tools when creating and presenting visual art works (e.g., brayers,
>
> conté, frottage, markers, painting techniques, pencil techniques, relief, stencil).
>
> (OME, 2010a, p. 124)

In addition to the new, aligned strand names, there are more examples and new

prompts for educators looking for ideas as to how best to meet a particular expectation in

their setting. On one occasion in my journal reflections, I remark the following: *There are*

now fewer, more descriptive expectations: the examples and prompts help to clarify how

expectations might be approached or achieved. I also note an appreciation for the direct

links between the overall and specific expectations as I: *Found it difficult in the past to*

accurately record which ones I was covering in a lesson; sometimes I felt like I was

making connections up just to fill out a lesson plan.

Greater emphasis on the creative and critical analysis processes. In addition to

greater clarity, there is a renewed emphasis on both the creative and critical analysis

processes. The following reflections from an examination of the 2010 curriculum

documents highlight what I see to be a significant improvement to the curriculum:

- *I see great things in the creative process and range of possibilities for art history.*
- *I see a greater emphasis on the creative process instead of the final product.*
- *I see added steps for more attention to the creative process through rough work in sketchbooks.*

This shift in focus from product to process resulted in pedagogical changes to my

approach to visual arts education, evident in my document analysis and reflections

of recent lesson plans and exemplars. I now incorporate more instruction on, and

discussion of, the creative and critical analysis processes noting:

- *How has my pedagogy changed? More focus on students demonstrating their learning through the creative process, critiques, and student presentations.*
- *I have begun to explicitly teach and assess the critical analysis and creative processes. .... Students are assessed more on process and less on product, including rough work, experimentation and interim critiques.*
- *I do now explicitly teach students about the stages of the creative process and assign marks to more stages to get students to complete work. It is helping, and students are appreciating the process more, especially critiques prior to the completion of work.*
- *Students are paying more attention to the creative process, and their projects are benefiting from more interaction with peers throughout the creative process.*

I returned to this theme repeatedly in my reflections of the new curriculum and during

document analysis. Earlier in this dissertation, I compared the two most recent curriculum

documents (Appendix B) and noted that the critical and creative processes had grown from short definitions in a glossary to the focus of several pages of the front matter. As I analyzed my autoethnographic data and found new themes, I returned to my pilot study data, and found supporting evidence suggesting that others were impressed with the greatly expanded front matter. One participant comments:

> *In particular, I think the [front matter] is much more comprehensive and fleshed-out than the old document. The brevity of the previous document made the arts seem as though they were an afterthought with some rather strange and rigid requirements thrown in.*

As students learn to appreciate the value of the various stages of the more fully developed creative and critical analysis processes, I find that they are more articulate and more successful in terms of communicating their thoughts and intentions behind works of art. With more focus on process work and critique, and less on the final product, more students are finding success in my classes: the 2012-2013 school year was the first year in which all of my students attained their art credit, and eight graduates were leaving to attend well-known postsecondary art programs.

Finding creative opportunities for self-directed PD. A theme that emerged during my journal reflections and document analysis involved access to professional development (PD). While there were complaints from participants in the pilot study regarding the lack of PD, support, or resources to implement changes in their pedagogy, there was subsequently a shift in government funding for new initiatives which made possible more personalized, self-directed PD. With such opportunities we could spend time exploring the curriculum in order to develop new lessons and resources. In my analysis of lesson plans, forms, and journal reflections, I witnessed a trend towards more independent PD opportunities for individual teachers as well as collaborative efforts for

visual arts teachers across schools in my school board. Examples include learning cycles, which provide release time for teachers to work together on self-identified projects and PD, and the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) that matches mentors and mentees. I, and others, have found opportunities to work on curriculum:

- *I have completed three learning cycles based on the new curriculum, with teachers from three different schools. I have completed two learning forwards with teachers in my own department, same idea, but more autonomy.*
- *The biggest barrier to change is definitely time. There isn't enough time to design and implement all of the changes I would like to make. The recent 'learning forward' initiative is the best I have seen. You propose a PD activity, and submit it for supply coverage. Few questions asked, and a real sense of professional trust.*

In each of these examples, I mention two PD initiatives: *learning cycles* and *learning forwards*. Learning cycles involved: training at the school board level with other visual arts teachers on what was expected in terms of self-directed PD, what forms would be completed, and what reporting would look like at the conclusion of the learning cycle. Such cycles could be cross-disciplinary, cross-panel, cross-school, or they could be completed as a department. Two full school days were allotted to those who registered to complete such a learning cycle.

Over time, teachers found the process repetitive and restrictive in terms of paper work, and many teachers soon lost interest in learning cycles. School boards were given new money for teachers to participate in an altered version of the learning cycle, called learning forward. This plan was similar in that teachers would describe what they intended to do in terms of PD release time either individually or as a collaborative project. This new initiative is intended to be more self-directed, with limited oversight and greater autonomy for teachers. As a department, we used these initiatives to develop

visual arts lessons and supporting materials reflective of the new curriculum and of the cultural diversity of our student population.

These new learning opportunities for teachers address some of the earlier concerns of pilot study participants. While there was only 1 day of PD to introduce art educators to the new curriculum in 2010, the following 3 years came with a variety of ways to access time and money for curriculum development for those who choose to take advantage of such opportunities.

Summary of autoethnographic findings. Findings from this second phase of data collection and analysis both support some of the earlier findings from the pilot study, and expand to include new themes. Similar to the findings of the pilot study, the curriculum appears to me to be less rigorous, or thorough, than is the case in other disciplines. As well, I too report that there are limited supports available during the introduction of the new curriculum in 2010.

Themes that emerged from my autoethnographic study indicate that I have questions about the process of implementation, and I do see value in some of the curricular changes made in 2010. I had more experience with the Ministry's consultation process than did my earlier participants; I found that the consultation process was inauthentic in that it did not incorporate feedback from the visual arts teachers involved. Who exactly was involved in the consultative process will return as an issue in the final phase of this research.

I found that the new curriculum provides some freedom and clarity for me to interpret and deliver curriculum as I feel it best meets the needs of my students. Also, with limited oversight from administration, I have a stronger sense of agency to make

decisions based on my professional judgment and experience. Finally, as the curriculum is now in its third year, there are, and have been, multiple opportunities for additional PD available to me to seek ongoing learning.

While my perceptions of the new curriculum are varied, I am satisfied that I can work with the new document. Satisfaction with the curriculum was something neither reported nor considered by pilot study participants in their responses.

Through this phase of analysis, I expanded on my findings that addressed my first two research questions regarding teacher perceptions, and whether or not curricular change results in changes in practice. What was still missing was the factor of school board culture, as I worked in the same school board as my pilot study participants. Only through interviews with participants from a range of school boards could I look more closely at what role board culture might play in the perceptions and practices of visual arts teachers.

Phase Three: Interview Setting and Findings

Ten participants were interviewed from a range of geographical regions of Southern Ontario. There were no volunteers from northern Ontario. As recruitment was primarily through the OAEA and a majority of active OAEA members reside or work in the GTA, this may have been a factor in the makeup of the pool of participants.

The interviews provided substantive data from a range of different school boards, giving a glimpse into possible regional and cultural differences that come into play during curriculum implementation. The number of interviews and the limited number of school boards does not allow for generalizations about visual arts curriculum implementation in Ontario. However, it is possible to analyze the implications of the

implementation and adoption of a revised curriculum from a specific time and context, with implications and conclusions that may prove relevant to other disciplines and to future editions of the Ontario Arts Curriculum.

Nine participants work in five different school boards, while one works for the Canadian Association of Independent Schools. There were three participants from each of two school boards: one in the GTA, and the other in southwestern Ontario. Eight participants identified their schools as urban, while the other two described their schools as a mix of urban and rural. Participants ranged in age from 30 to 58, and they reported a range of teaching experience from 7 to 29 years. All interview participants identified as female. The majority of interviews ranged in length between 25 and 45 minutes.

The interviews were conducted over a period of 6 months from July 2013 until the beginning of February 2014. Nine of the interviews were conducted in person, and one was conducted by telephone. Since an open-ended survey was the instrument of data collection, there were times when a question was omitted or added based on prior responses. Some answers often anticipated the next question and questions were sometimes added for clarification or to expand on a response. There were no male participants interviewed; however, there were male participants in the pilot study and I identify as male and am represented in the autoethnographic phase of the study.

Participants were provided with a copy of the Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in Research. No one withdrew. Transcripts were offered to participants for member checking. Five declined the invitation and only one of the remaining participants submitted any changes. Requested changes involved the removal of repetitive text and

information that may have made it obvious to some readers to determine her identification if the data in question were used.

Review of the data coding/analysis processes. Following the constant comparative method used in the earlier phases of data analysis, I returned to previous interviews to look for themes that had emerged in subsequent interviews. The process was both deductive and inductive at this point as I looked for data that both supported existing themes and for patterns in the data that could suggest new themes. I coded my data beginning with the most recent interviews, focusing on significant data: data that corroborated earlier findings; data contrary to earlier findings; recurring or repetitive data; data I had not personally experienced or considered; strong, passionate, or emotional responses; and anomalies or outliers.

I compared codes from my first round of coding with the second, looking for similarities and differences. I compared categories in terms of levels of participant education, age, and years of teaching experience, and public versus private school teacher responses. I developed the colour-coded chart, in order to compare categories with categories. With this visual format in front of me, new themes emerged and again the central phenomenon shifted.

Central phenomenon. The central phenomenon that finally emerged from this study is that there appears to be little consensus or consistency among participants, and this is not new or due to a change in curriculum. Among interview participants, there is a divide between teachers from the GTA and those from outside the GTA, both in terms of accessing local community art resources and in terms of perception of the new curriculum. Many participants found fault with some aspects of the content, development,

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implementation, or resources available to support a revised curriculum. However, all participants state that they will meet, or in many cases exceed, the mandated expectations as they each find their own path navigating change. Teachers in this study believe that a more transparent process is necessary, involving a wider range of educators, when considering revisions to curriculum documents. Participants believe that administrators, while knowledgeable about issues of pedagogy and assessment, are generally not familiar with visual arts curriculum. This belief contributes to a heightened sense of agency in that participants feel free to determine which pedagogical approach is taken and what curriculum is delivered in their classrooms.

The findings are subdivided into three major themes: issues of implementation; teacher assessment of curriculum revisions; and the professional practice of teachers as agents of change. Each of these themes encompasses a number of sub-themes, and will be discussed in turn.

Implementation issues: Skepticism in the process. A theme of skepticism or mistrust about the process of new curriculum development and implementation permeated all three phases of my research. Survey participants in phase one stated that professional development during the introduction of the new curriculum was limited, and generally considered it to be a waste of time as insufficient time was devoted to examining the visual arts portion of the documents. These earlier participants were not asked about the development or implementation of the revised curriculum, but their responses encouraged me to consider these issues in the next phases of my research.

Analysis of autoethnographic data suggested that while PD was limited, there were opportunities for creative, self-directed learning to further work with the new

curriculum. Document analysis suggested that the Ministry consultation process was not consultative; rather, it was an opportunity to share the new curriculum and solicit reaction, and perhaps a chance for a last-minute edit prior to publication. At best, the consultation process appeared to be miss-named; at worst, a misrepresentation in order to provide the appearance of consultation with educators as promised by the Ministry on its website (OME, 2013 FAQ section 5).

After the final phase of data collection and coding, a larger picture began to emerge. Firstly, there is a culture of skepticism among participants regarding who is called to develop and implement curricular change. There is a sense that a wider, more transparent call must go out when the time comes to revise curriculum and that more arts educators desire the ability to provide what they deem to be authentic input into the future of visual arts education in Ontario. Many participants believe that input sought by the Ministry was largely ignored and that the consultation process was disingenuous. Regardless of the perceived problems with the process, teachers report that they are aware that they must follow the Ontario curriculum which is mandated and regulated under government policy. In my study, participant responses indicate that the availability and use of PD covers a wide spectrum. There are those who feel that they have limited access to PD and others who access an abundance of PD through a variety of different venues as they engage with the new curriculum and reflect on pedagogy.

Most participants identify issues with the development and implementation of the 2010 curriculum. There are three subcategories relevant to this theme: (a) the selection approach to leadership and involvement in curricular change, (b) the consultation process with the Ministry of Education, and (c) the spectrum of PD available.

The selection approach to leadership and involvement in curricular change. What some participants describe as a "tap on the shoulder" approach to recruiting curriculum leaders and curriculum writers contributes to a sense of mistrust in the system. Two interview questions in particular elicited comments regarding the selection process: (a) "Did you have input in the development of the new curriculum?" and (b) "Describe what professional development or training you have had with the new arts curriculum." Five participants refer to the lack of transparency regarding who is selected for a number of roles in the education system, relating to the development and implementation of curriculum. Questions are raised not only about who is chosen to write curriculum, but about who is selected to engage in consultations with the Ministry, as well as about who is elevated to positions of leadership in the arts at the system or board level. Seven out of 10 interview participants indicate that they had little or no input into the development of the revised documents. None of my pilot study participants were involved in the consultation process. Together, these scenarios create a sense among the majority of participants that a few hand-chosen people were involved in developing the new curriculum. This sense of not having been consulted predisposes teachers to view the revised curriculum in a negative light.

Perhaps the simple question "Did you have input into the development of the new arts curriculum?" early in the interview set the tone for answers that followed. Three of 10 interviewees indicate some involvement in the writing or consultation process, and others indicate that they were not involved at all. Responses ranged from *definitely not*, to *no, but I wish I did*, indicating that more educators would appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the writing and consultation processes. When asked to "Describe what

professional development or training you have had with the new arts curriculum," concerns are expressed about who exactly is chosen to fill leadership roles in arts education, from school board consultants, to those who write curriculum for the Ministry.

One participant feels that there is rarely an opportunity to apply for positions of added responsibility regarding who delivers PD. She describes the selection process in her school board as a tap on the shoulder:

> *Demonstration days ... because there's limited amount of supply teacher days available, they [being the arts curriculum leaders, or subject leaders at the board] usually go and tap on teachers' shoulders to run demonstration teacher days and then different people, different educators from the board and teachers can sign up to attend a demonstration teacher day.*

This confirms my experience: I was chosen to represent media arts teachers in my board during the consultation process as there was no application process. I was chosen by a school board learning coordinator with whom I had a previous working relationship. In many school boards there are discipline-specific learning coordinators or consultants who oversee discipline specific issues, government initiatives, and professional development.

Three participants express concerns about the selection of these coordinators and consultants. For example, when asked about available PD, one participant expresses doubts about who is selected as board consultants:

> *No, it really depended on my own initiative, and that is not unique to me, that's everybody. There was no time set out by the board, [board masked], in spite of [name masked] who was our consultant, to advocate for it. She is not particularly aggressive when it comes to that sort of thing. ... She has a background in Visual Arts, but you know, there are people who find their way to the board who will, I can only put it in terms of animal behaviour, they are the ones who will lay over and show their necks, and those are the ones who get the jobs.*

There are others who express similar concerns regarding who is selected to write curriculum for the Ministry:

I know they have tried to involve teachers, but don't just involve, take a survey of teachers out there because often when the request goes through boards, specific teachers are selected and it's often for political reasons. It is not the teachers who are on the ground teaching the curriculum, it is specific teachers in privileged positions who are writing that curriculum. For example, from our board, I know a gentleman, who teaches to the top quartile of the class photography, not visual art, was involved in writing the curriculum.

This response indicates that this participant feels that the process for selecting curriculum writers is flawed. It also provides an example of how the selection of a curriculum writer created the perception that the candidate was inappropriate, as he lacked the knowledge or experience participants would expect of one writing a visual arts curriculum document.

When asked what advice they would offer the Ministry for the next round of revisions, four participants provide the following responses:

- *Get down to the grassroots. Talk to some of the local heroes, the people who have been in the trenches.*
- *I would like the curriculum to be umm, revisited by some experienced teachers …*
- *I think they need to involve more people than just higher-ups … they need more input from educators.*
- *More democratic. An all-call to anyone willing to spend the time and has the experience to write to come to the table.*

These responses describe a system of favouritism in which teachers who may or may not be suitable are hand-selected to revise curriculum. Most of the participants stated that they would prefer a system where more teachers are given the opportunity to write curriculum for the Ministry. They perceive that most teachers do not have the opportunity to contribute to the process, and that any input or consultation fails to have an impact on the final product.

One participant, however, has a different view of the consultation process:

On a personal level, I really enjoyed the early, 'let you in on what we are doing' workshops, that were offered to educators, particularly in the Arts. I really I think it was [Name withheld], I really, really appreciated knowing that that

terminology that was coming down the pipe . . . was already out there, and it was being presented through different means, but you know, workshops, conferences and opportunities through individual arts centres and organizations.

This participant was the only one involved in the curriculum writing process. The one most familiar with the process is the one participant who does not find fault with it. In the next section of findings, I will discuss how the consultation process suffers from a similar negative image as the selection processes.

The consultation process with the Ministry of Education. During my autoethnographic analysis, I became aware that the consultation process was misnamed at best and at worst a sham. In the final phase of my project, interview participants also question the consultation process and its purpose or effectiveness. These concerns came mainly from participants who report playing a role in the consultation process, although one participant expresses her doubts based on anecdotal evidence from peers who were involved: *I know people, who know people ... I think there was lip service? payment? done to the new curriculum like "comment on what has been written" but not input per se.* While she was not invited to consult, her use of the words "lip service" suggests that she believed that little was accomplished during the consultation phase of implementation.

Three additional participants address the issue of consultation with teachers on the final curriculum document:

- *I was sort of part of the road show that they [the Ministry] took… when they had it in draft form with lots of little holes in it. They brought it to [board withheld] but there were three or four boards involved in it. I don't know how other many areas they actually took it to. Probably [name of two school boards withheld]. We sat down with the document and started to fill in areas … it was painstaking, it was more informative than anything else. I don't know how much direct impact we had on the document but we could see that it was being formed.*

– *I did get an opportunity to read the draft yeah. [follow up question: did you notice any changes between the draft and the final document?] Not much … from the draft to the final product.*

– *When the draft came out I was very critical of it and to be honest I don't know that anybody ever read it [her criticisms] and if they did, we know what their response was because nothing changed from what I could see between the draft and the final document.*

According to these participants, those who were involved in the process doubt their input held much weight, and believe little came of their suggestions. This finding mirrors those from my autoethnographic document study discussed earlier, in which I noted very few changes between draft and final documents.

The OME and classroom teachers have two different concepts of curriculum review process. On the OME website, the review process speaks of comprehensive information gathering. It does not actually state that *teachers* will be consulted, only that information will be gathered from "focus groups comprised of educators from all Ontario School Boards" OME, 2013, para. 4). The website lists consultation partners as: "Minister's Advisory Council on Special Education; Faculties of Education; parents; students; universities, colleges; other ministries" (OME, 2013, para. X). The website goes further to state that writing teams will come from school boards from across the province, without mentioning teachers specifically.

Professional development. During pilot study data collection, respondents raised concerns about the limited amount of PD and resources available during the introduction of the revised curriculum. In the subsequent phase of the research however, it became apparent that there are a variety of professional development opportunities available to educators who take it upon themselves to seek out professional learning initiatives over the next few years. Some of the findings corroborate concerns raised in the pilot study,

but the majority of respondents identify a range of personal growth opportunities geared towards teaching practice, both through school board and Ministry initiatives, and through professional organizations like the OAEA.

Two interview participants echo the responses of those in my pilot study, providing brief descriptions of the limited PD geared towards the revisions to the curriculum in 2010. They recount details of a single day of PD for all arts educators at a central location:

– *One day to go, one PD session, probably half a day to go over it at the board.*
– *We had a workshop … a full-day workshop on one of our PD days too where they went through and you know, this is the old, this is the new.*

These responses, relatively neutral and brief, come from participants in two different school boards. They are similar in content to the majority of respondents in the pilot study, though responses in the pilot study go into greater depth about how limited or disappointing the sessions were for teachers.

Two other interviewees are unsure if there was any PD specific to the new curriculum. It is unknown whether these responses are due to the 3 years that had elapsed since the introduction of the 2010 curriculum and fading memory, or if there was truly no targeted PD:

– *Yeah, didn't we have something? I'm sure we had something with our subject council. It was like 3 years ago, I don't know.*
– *Umm, because of the new curriculum? Not really: we used to have PD days where we would get together with the other arts teachers and share what we do, we haven't done that for a lot of years because right now all our PD seems to be like school-based, principal-led.*

Whether or not these two participants experienced PD when the curriculum was introduced, their responses indicate that any such PD is not sustained or ongoing, and that any impact on their pedagogy is limited.

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The majority of interviewees however, report repeated PD opportunities over the past three years, both in and out of the school system. Much of this PD is described as optional or voluntary in nature, as these teachers look for opportunities to reflect on their pedagogy:

- *Formally with the school board we had some in service training ... I think it was at the Art Gallery of Ontario [for] department heads from the board and there were a couple of supply teacher days given/day day and a half.*

- *They'd have ... PD days for the arts teachers. They'd show us the draft, and how it would apply, and play around, discuss stuff with it. ... We had some exemplars we could look at through the Ontario Society of Educators through Art. I think they have rewritten their name [now known as the OAEA]*

These examples demonstrate that there are opportunities available to educators who wished to work collaboratively with the new curriculum.

There are others who report similar opportunities, but their examples point to a few problems encountered with the PD provided:

- *Actually, the board was pretty good about it really ... I probably went to five workshops. I don't know how much I learned from the workshops but the board tried to embrace us, usually they wound up being upset fighting matches because people were so disappointed with the curriculum.*

- *In the board there were a number of professional development workshops. ... The board did all of the arts: they brought us in all together. They also did more training for department heads. ... There was an attempt, but at the board office [sessions] there were more questions than answers and in the government's wisdom, they lumped all of the arts together. ... The teachers present made it as good as it was as they talked together, given that it really is three different curriculums, teachers made it work. The board provided the time to do that, but not adequate time. More time would be advantageous, especially now that we have had time to work with it.*

These educators appreciate the effort to bring together art teachers for workshops, but take issue with some aspects of the PD. In one case, the teacher notes that there was such disappointment with the new curriculum that fighting ensued at the workshops. In the second case, we see the complaint that there was not enough time allotted to work with

discipline specific content as all of the arts were brought together in one day. I report

similar concerns in my autoethnographic study. These issues figure prominently in my

pilot study findings, where participants describe the initial PD session as limited, too

short, and a waste of time.

In addition to initial PD workshops available through school boards, a number of

participants, all in the GTA, report additional training opportunities available to those

who take the initiative to seek them out. One participant notes:

> *The AQs [Additional Qualification Courses] I was taking at the time … and it would also be my involvement at the school level with AER [Assessment Evaluation and Reporting Committee]. … Not all of them were things that I paid for, but things that I was engaged in. … I had it voluntarily, 100% because this is not something that was handed down, this was all my initiative, every bit of it.*

Voluntary PD is discussed by three out of five of the GTA participants. The other two

note multiple opportunities for PD over the past 3 years:

- *Under the leadership of [name and board withheld], who is our instructional leader for the arts, she had … put some really good PD together where we got to talk about, not just the document, but assessment strategies, also looking at … culturally responsive teaching as well as differentiated instruction: not a lot of hands-on help, it was for the entire board's visual art teachers. … We got to be put into these focus groups where we worked through workshop formats. … The art department for [the board] has developed a number of things to address the new curriculum. Of course the discipline based organization … the OAEA they have done a slew of course based unit plans or course plans.*

- *Professional development is something that I have taken a lot of pride in and I've really focused on that in my career … anything that could improve on my teaching practice and my understanding of theory, the theory of education, I pretty much involved myself in, so, to answer your question … the professional development that I received at those kinds of workshops and conferences were … informative because I could immediately take that information and put it into practice in the classroom. … At the time the school that I was involved with, and I was there for, uh, 7 years … they were developing a think tank and so they were very interested in sending faculty to workshops and conferences and professional development opportunities and then they began to host them themselves … the support that we received was, was also through the kinds of associations I had made with the Ontario, with OAEA, Art Educators' Association that support is extrinsic, it came from outside of my school. It came from, you know, being*

associated with a like-minded group of educators in the arts who said we [have got to] make sure that this is launched well, and so any offerings that they presented, I took advantage of.

Each of the examples above indicates a commitment to ongoing professional development. These educators not only attend PD workshops provided by their school boards but also seek additional PD through associations like the OAEA.

It is important to remember that the OAEA was my primary source for interview participants, thus most participants are familiar with the resources available through the OAEA website, and at least one participant, other than me, was involved in creating resources sponsored by the OME specific to the 2010 curriculum. It is notable that the majority of members and activities of the OAEA are in the GTA area: this allows for easier access to these resources and collaborative opportunities for those who live and work within commuting distance of Toronto.

I benefited from PD offered by the OAEA when I applied to be a course profile writer in 2009. My inspiration to join the OAEA was what I perceived to be a lack of opportunities in my own geographical area. I needed to connect with more art educators. My timing was fortuitous. I joined the OAEA just months before a call for course profile writers went out to the membership and I started my doctoral studies the following year, the same year that the new curriculum was introduced. The OAEA was but one of several opportunities I had to work with the revised curriculum, prior to, and after, its release. Overall, participants who wish to engage in additional PD are able to do so if they seek opportunities in addition to school board initiatives.

Skepticism and mistrust characterize the reaction from a majority of participants regarding various stages of the process from curriculum development through to implementation. Targeted PD was limited in most cases, yet those who were creative

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about accessing additional PD from a variety of sources were able to do so. Regardless of the variety of PD available to participants, most report that they are familiar with the revised curriculum, and all have strong opinions regarding the content and direction of the 2010 revised documents. Their assessment of the revised 2010 Curriculum follows.

Curriculum change report card: A diverse assessment. When asked to describe their familiarity with the new curriculum, all interview participants expressed familiarity with the new document. Responses ranged from "50/50" and "pretty familiar," to "intimately familiar" and "extremely familiar." One participant noted that she had looked at it again knowing that I was coming to do an interview. Most interviewees attribute their familiarity with the curriculum to their participation in PD workshops designed to introduce the new document to teachers. These results are consistent with the responses from pilot study participants.

As interview participants address changes to the curriculum in their responses, most revisit some of the themes found during the first two phases of the research: the appearance of a dumbed-down curriculum; a significant shift in the way art history is taught and resultant inconsistencies; the lack of prerequisites for Grade 11 Open level Arts courses; newfound freedom and flexibility for educators; and a greater sense of clarity on a number of fronts, from the creative process to assessment and evaluation.

Responses vary across jurisdictions. For the most part, the data suggests a division between the GTA and the rest of Ontario (represented in my study). My pilot study was conducted in one Ontario school board located outside of the GTA, and the findings from that study reflect the division reported after analyzing phase three data. I will examine each of the subthemes, presenting data from two different perspectives.

Dumbed-down with lower standards? Confirming the findings from the first two phases of the research, some participants feel that the curriculum has been dumbed-down, or is less rigorous than before. This sense of a weaker or less-demanding revised curriculum arose due to a slightly different list of issues including: fewer, more generic expectations; a loss of art curriculum specialists at the elementary level; a loss of art history; and a lack of prerequisites for Grade 11 Open level courses. I will deal with the first two issues and how they relate to the revised curriculum here, and the latter two will be examined as sub-themes in subsequent sections.

In an attempt to provide a sense of consistency and growth in skill development from grade to grade, policy makers and curriculum writers have revised the arts curriculum such that the overall expectations remain relatively the same for each grade from Grades 1 through 12, with minor changes between Grades 8 and 9. For example, a similar elementary school visual arts expectation can be found for both Grade 2 and Grade 8, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3

Comparison of Expectations Between Grade Levels[a]

Grade 8 expectation	Grade 2 expectation
D1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process to produce art works in a variety of traditional two- and three-dimensional forms, as well as multimedia art works, that communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts as well as current media technologies;	D1. Creating and Presenting: apply the creative process (see pages 19–22) to produce a variety of two- and three-dimensional art works, using elements, principles, and techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings, ideas, and understandings;

[a] OME, 2009, p. 154.

While similar, the Grade 8 example includes an additional passage dealing with multimedia art works or current media technologies.

In the Grades 9-12 curriculum documents, *Creating and Presenting* is no longer one expectation; rather, it is expanded to become a strand containing three overall expectations. This expanded expectation looks at three specific expectations regarding: the creative process, the elements and principles of design, and the production and presenting of art works. The overall expectations are identical from Grade 9 Open level Arts courses through Grade 12 University/College level Visual Arts courses. The specific expectations in each strand, however, are more varied and more elaborate with each passing grade level. While this consistency in overall expectations is designed to allow for continuity and scaffolded growth from year to year, there are those who see the impact of this revision to be one of oversimplification and demeaning to the visual arts. One participant notes:

> *I think that it's more simplified. I think its basic and I think that they've made every grade level the same which seems silly to me, the same in terms of achievement level, what they want, creating and presenting all the standards between each level are the same.*

Another expresses concern about new or less-ambitious educators in the system:

> *If I was a brand new teacher and I was reading that curriculum or I was really lazy, you could get away with doing practically nothing and cover the expectations, so that's really disappointing. ... I just think that the new curriculum is weak, thin, transparent. ... There is no sense of drive for the students and I think it demeans art because of that. It made it look like our subject area is not worth the effort to put in and that the expectations are not needed, it's non-essential, that's what it feels like.*

Another issue raised relates to the perception that the 2010 document are somehow *less* than previous editions. This issue is exacerbated by concerns about who delivers arts curriculum today, particularly at the elementary school level. Two participants go into

some detail, noting a lack of specialist teachers in the elementary panel and the impact

this has on the delivery of secondary arts curriculum later:

- *At the elementary level, the problem is, you don't have people who are specialists, or if they are, they are usually considered the … prep teacher right? I have a friend, she is a music teacher in an elementary school, it's the same thing, she is the prep teacher, she is treated like shit, and yet, all we need really is drama, drama and dance, we need music, we need visual arts and along with it media: we could teach everything within the elementary curriculum if people had much more strong knowledge base in these areas.*

- *I mean it all stems from the elementary level: that the amount of time and resources that have been invested in trying to teach to the test has impacted any subject that is not core so all the arts have been affected because they are not considered by a lot of people to be valuable. … I mean if you invest time in one thing it has to be cut from something else, so it's always cut from the arts. It just cascades up the line right? So the fact that the kids don't get adequate art training, whether it's art or drama or music or whatever, the fact that they don't get that adequately at elementary school means that when they get to Grade 9 Visual Arts they don't know the basics and we have to spend time on the basics and not move on to more complicated stuff so everybody suffers. That and of course elementary schools, nothing against the elementary teachers, because I started as that, they are generalists, I mean when they took away the Grade 7 and 8 rotation it took away the ability for somebody who knows what they are doing in a particular subject, to teach their subject. They took away the art teachers, they took away the music teachers, they took away the math specialist so now you have people who are unfamiliar with or not comfortable with, teaching those subjects.*

These two examples refer to changes in policy that have had a negative impact on the

delivery of elementary, and therefore, secondary curriculum. Both participants note their

concern about the lack of arts specialists at the elementary level and the long term impact

this has on curriculum delivery at the secondary level. A third participant alludes to this

lack of specialists at the elementary level and the impact felt by students and teachers

when they enter Grade 9 Art:

> *How do you teach Grade 9s who have little or no appreciation for art, some don't even have any basis for art knowledge based on their elementary curriculum because the elementary teachers who many of the students have/had in their elementary career do not have any art history knowledge. Coming into grade 9 they get shocked and amazed by the amount of work done in the art historical knowledge that they are required to know.*

It is worth noting that the majority (three out of four) of the responses reported in this section, which speak unfavourably of the revised curriculum, come from non-GTA educators. This is a trend that will continue through the remainder of this section of findings.

Changes to art history: Is consistency important? The word history has largely been replaced by the word culture in the revised curriculum and the examples provided in the 2010 documents suggest a less-linear, more-thematic approach to incorporating art history into the art curriculum. This revision appeals to some participants and upsets other participants.

Seven out of nine survey participants in the pilot study indicate that they are unhappy with the changes to art history, and most of those teachers indicate that they would continue to deliver a rigorous, sequential history of art. A number of phase three interviewees, all of whom work outside of the GTA, express the same concern. Each of these teachers believe that the changes to the visual arts curriculum mean that we no longer have to teach art history in a chronological fashion, and this makes little sense in their minds:

- *If anything they should have spent some time looking at the different grade levels and different art history and different media that they want to focus on at the different grade levels to make somebody that comes out of high school ... well versed, but instead it's just essentially do whatever you want and if you want to teach art history tie it into an assignment. That's how I read it.*

- *I find the new curriculum less linear and I don't like that. I still think that you have a hard time thinking about one time period if you haven't covered the time periods before it. All art is a reaction to what comes before it, and if you don't know what comes before it, how do you react to it? So jumping around seems to be popular in the new curriculum and I don't think the old curriculum was much like that.*

- *I think we could get away with not doing almost any art history which I think is really sad because I think that art history is really important for the students, to*

have perspective of where they come from, especially if they are going to be in the arts.

These contrast with data from interviews with educators in a number of school boards in the GTA who prefer a thematic approach. GTA teachers do acknowledge the value of a chronological focus on art history and some are exploring ways to make that work with their thematic approach going forward.

Participants from the GTA believe that the new curriculum allows them the freedom to work thematically, incorporating art history that is relevant to their students and relevant to what is currently happening in the local and international art scene:

– *What else is different? Oh yes, the sequential art history, which it doesn't say you can't do it here, it doesn't say that. It just says that you do what works; you do what fits because it's conceptual teaching because it's thematic. You do not shy away from Kara Walker [contemporary American artist] and because "that's for Grade 12s." No seriously, if what she does politically, even if it is stylistically, if it fits with your Grade 10 unit then you bring Kara Walker in, or Andy Warhol, or whoever it happens to be. It doesn't have to be sequential. Although this is where I as an educator, this is me, I am so random, I actually do need, that is one of my next steps to make students aware that there is this sequential thing because all art has a historical and cultural context which is lovely, which is what is in here.*

– *It doesn't say you can't do it [sequential art history]; it's just that you don't have to spend six weeks on it, and it's not a separate unit ... even if I devote one or two periods to it I need to do it, and that's all it takes really. They need something like a timeline. ... I mean, you lay out the time line and you say here take some pictures and let's see what this really looks like and then have a discussion about it. Just to be able to see, and then they will recognize certain ones, and some are very famous and some it could be that they just came up and it has to do also with what is available. ... So if Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera are at the AGO and we are going to go see that show, well then we are going to bring that into the classroom with us, right? They may not be in the next semester, same course, they may not be there.*

Both of these respondents note that the new curriculum does not preclude a chronological approach to art history. Two other participants explain how they noticed, and welcomed, a shift from a chronological study of Western art, to a thematic focus, with the freedom to respond to students or the contemporary art scene:

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- *The way I was taught on the old curriculum was prehistory for Grade 9 to Greek and Roman right? Although not everyone followed that, not everyone followed art history, some just did studio-based ... this is more open ended. ... There is, again, indicators of art history and examples. The Grade 9 does, I think, say about Picasso and Impressionism, etc., but there is more room for what applies to what the students are studying and art and meaning making and taking what the students are making and applying art history to what they are making. ... It is not as regimented, I still bring in art history because I think it is really important for kids to know where art comes from, that there is a basis for classical art for why we think in the Western world, why we make the decisions we do. ... I think I've gone more thematic in my approach. With the new curriculum it's more theme based. ... Just the whole reframing of art history: not art history in a chronological way, the old timeline art history.*

- *I guess I really first noticed that there was a widening of the lens around art history to art histories plural, right? So, the old curriculum did touch upon non-Western but not as much as it does now. [the old curriculum] was kind of like: ok, there you go, we're safe, you know, it's [non-Western art] there but it's [up] to who's delivering that, I don't know how many people were actually actively doing it as much as what I can now see in the document. ... Oh yes, I think also coming from working in the contemporary art field in Toronto, for me I live and breathe contemporary art so it was not a hard transition at all and then this document comes along and I'm like, oh, finally, they are catching up to the art world. That's how I felt. I felt it was mirroring the reality of the art world a little bit more.*

In addition to explaining how they embrace the shift in direction for art history, the previous two responses question whether or not all educators were following the previous curriculum to the letter. This raises two issues: a question about consistency across schools in the province and the issue of teacher agency when there is limited oversight of curriculum delivery in the classroom. Both of these issues will be addressed later.

This theme may highlight the greatest contrast or division between two sets of data. Participants from outside of the GTA prefer a chronological approach to the study of art history and report that they would retain it as part of their pedagogical approach. Meanwhile, GTA participants embrace the shift to a more thematic approach: some were already teaching art history this way and believe that the new curriculum gives them license to incorporate whatever art historical examples fit with their students, and with

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what is happening in the Toronto art scene. A response from one Toronto area participant sums up this discussion: *I'm an art history major, yeah, but art history doesn't look like that [chronological, western] ... in Toronto it doesn't speak to a large majority of the population here. You know, so what speaks to them? We have to serve them.*

Lack of prerequisites: No longer an issue. The lack of prerequisites is quite an issue for survey participants, as half of participants wrote lengthy responses regarding the folly of offering a Grade 11 course without prerequisites. However, this issue does not figure prominently with interviewees, as only one in ten raises the issue, the one participant who was involved in both the writing of, and introduction of, the revised documents in 2009 and 2010:

> *Also there are some other things which people I know ... when we sat down with the script before it was in this form and people were freaking out because AVI3O for example was sitting on its own right? And they are going crazy ... but it did not work before. Anybody that took AVI3O [in the previous curriculum] couldn't even begin to contemplate going on to 4M. ... You couldn't even reasonably think about that as a prerequisite to 4M, right? So that's another difference that ... I totally agree with although people are still mildly freaking out about it.*

As the only participant involved in revising the arts curriculum, this GTA participant holds a different point of view on this issue: it makes sense to her that there is no prerequisite for the Grade 11 Open course as it does not lead to a Grade 12 University/College prep level course anyway.

Those who disagree with the lack of a prerequisite report concerns about being able to offer a quality Grade 11 Open course with many students with no prerequisites, and two survey participants had opted to not offer a Grade 11 Open Visual Arts course in their schools: one of them would offer Grade 11 Open level Crafts course instead. This decision points to the ability teachers have to control which courses are offered in their

programs, as well as one possible solution for those who disagree with a Ministry policy: avoidance. In summary, the issue of offering a Grade 11 course with no prerequisites was important to half of the survey respondents in 2010, but was raised as an issue by only one of the interviewees almost three years later. Either this was a concern in one school board, or the issue had resolved itself over the following 2 school years as teachers found ways to navigate this change in policy.

Freedom/flexibility in the classroom. The issue of freedom or flexibility to teach what works in a particular context was touched upon earlier in the examples and findings around the divide between those who teach art history chronologically versus those who prefer a thematic approach. Regardless of pedagogical approach or philosophy on this issue, the revised curriculum allows participants the freedom to make these choices. Freedom and flexibility in terms of content and pedagogical approach are also appreciated primarily by one set of interview participants: those in the GTA.

> *You know, maybe it's just my bias but as I told you earlier, this is the way I've always taught. I don't see things in isolation, I see things in context and this is all about context . . . people get upset because things aren't worded strongly enough you know? They want it black and white … directive … this is what they want. … Anyhow, I love the document, have you got that yet? And I think it allows for so much diversity in approach. Any time I have had a student teacher or sometimes somebody coming into the department … you have got to teach to your strengths, you know? You've got to teach what you know; you can't teach what I know you have got to teach what you know so you bring that … as long as you are following along with the curriculum.*

Another interviewee comments on the flexibility of the curriculum for teachers to work with their strengths, acknowledging that not all educators felt the same way:

> *I liked that about both of them [the previous and current documents], the flexibility to use our strengths. … I think there was a lot of trepidation, unsureness as there was some vagueness, and I applaud that for the flexibility. The way it's presented, it's an option really. There is more of an emphasis on the elements and principles of design, providing for a commonness wherever they [students] go. It*

is good, without saying "you must do." They avoided that, I have seen the Math curriculum, it is much more prescriptive.

A third participant translates the flexibility she sees in the document to mean that the curriculum is more open and inclusive of different learners:

What works for me is that it's open, it's inclusive, there's room to fall and stumble, there's room to really build up some good work, there's room for all levels. What I mean by that is the amateur, someone who is not necessarily going into the path of art but might just need to learn visual communicate, so the way I look at is … it helps me translate "ok guys, I'm not here to make, you know, to force you into art school or we are building a portfolio or whatever you come to do, but we are actually going to communicate ideas and this is how we are going to do it."

Together, these examples paint a different picture than the one that emerged in my pilot study. These participants, all from the GTA, do not see a less-prescriptive curriculum as watered-down or somehow less than previous editions. Rather, they valued the freedom to work with the interests and strengths of the teacher and student in any particular time and place. They did not mention any concerns about a lack of consistency or an inability to prepare students for postsecondary education.

There is one survey participant who, although critical of the revised curriculum, concedes that:

However, I think they are trying to provide broad enough parameters for teachers to bring their own skill sets to the teaching of the curriculum. There don't appear to be the same kind of dictates that there were with the old curriculum. For example they required students to produce watercolours in Grade 11, which wasn't all bad but does not necessarily respond to an individual teacher's strengths. I do think there could be more specifics in the new curriculum though.

An expanded front matter in the curriculum. Another subtheme considers whether or not the revised curriculum provides greater clarity for visual arts educators. This theme does not arise as an issue for pilot study participants, but does figure more prominently in the data from phases two and three. Two features of the revised document

in particular, the lengthy front matter of the document and the new teacher prompts, are

met with differing reviews.

The front matter was greatly expanded since the previous Ontario Curriculum,

and participants express different impressions of the value of this section. One interview

participant describes some of the features of the front matter that she finds quite valuable:

> *The front matter. ... That was so different from the previous document: it was almost half the thickness of the document itself. ... It was much more easily laid out with the creative process and critical analysis process and also talking about what our roles were, including principals, teachers and parents ... and that hadn't happened before. ... Because of the new curriculum ... development of rubrics, the development of learning goals, that in itself ... it was always top down whereas now the students are telling me. I would say that is the biggest thing about the new curriculum but again it's Growing Success, it's not an isolated thing ... what's the nature of peer and descriptive feedback? Peer and self, right? Or teacher feedback.*

This assessment of the value of the front matter is not shared by another interviewee who

may find the front matter more useful if it was not too lengthy to bother reading:

> *Any advice for the next round of revisions ... don't get caught up in the gobbly gook. ... It's like this is too long, I'm not going to read it. [The front matter] is 50 pages. ... Now it does have some stuff ... it did have some suggestions, oh maybe it was at the beginning ... where it talked about art and had some suggestions, considerations for cultural content. There seemed to be some things in here where they wanted people to become cultural advocates, not cultural advocates but like advocates for equality ... like they wanted to politicize the students?*

One survey participant also addresses the front matter in length in her survey

response. She had spent a good deal of time reading and analyzing the front matter and

includes specific examples from sections of the document that she finds important and

valuable:

> *In particular, I think the frontispiece is much more comprehensive and fleshed-out than the old document. The brevity of the previous document made the arts seem as though they were an afterthought with some rather strange and rigid requirements thrown in. Some of the things I particularly like in the new document is the emphasis on art as both enjoyable and fulfilling but also an intellectually rigorous discipline. It also discusses the importance of arts*

education as a necessity in preparing students for the fast-paced changes and the creative economy of the twenty-first century. ... I think a really important shift in the new curriculum in general is the acknowledgment that students must take responsibility for their own learning and development. ... Nicely put in the new document, students in arts courses need to realize that honing their craft is important and that real engagement with the arts requires hard work and continual self-assessment. In addition, the section on attitudes in the arts is also an important section emphasizing that the attitudes of everyone involved with students have a significant effect on how students approach the arts and that it is important to help students understand that even the most accomplished artists continue to put a great deal of time and effort into their work. I realize that attitudes towards the arts among guidance counsellors and administrators vary from school to school but I have felt that it has been an ongoing battle.

This example highlights the breadth of considerations for programming an arts curriculum as detailed in the front matter of each of the new arts curriculum documents.

Teacher prompts. When teachers turn to course-specific expectations in the curriculum documents, they find a new feature called "teacher prompts." These are examples for teachers of how they might introduce or approach an expectation with students. Like the front matter, these teacher prompts are met with contrasting opinions from participants. As my study involved only educators who had taught visual arts for five or more years, all of the participants are experienced teachers. One interviewee speculates that the teacher prompts would be helpful for teachers new to teaching art:

I think the teacher prompts are a big thing ... to give those teachers who were unfamiliar with the old curriculum and who are unfamiliar with the new curriculum suggestions as to what they can do so people aren't left in the lurch: "what do I do?" ... This is more open ended, even in the teacher prompts.

Another, quite experienced participant has no use for them:

I find the teacher prompts weird: like they don't make sense to me. Did you design them? The teacher prompts they just seem ... "How does your portfolio provide evidence of the informed development of original ideas?" I would never ask a kid that, they would look at me and go, "what are you talking about? We need to go to guidance and we need to drop this course." [Laughter] You know what I mean, they are just weird.

Pilot study data includes one participant who comments: *There are some interesting parts in the new document. I like the teacher prompts.*

To summarize, it is helpful to return to the three research questions set out in Chapter 1: What are the perspectives of visual art teachers regarding the effects of recent changes made to the curriculum? To what extent does a change in curriculum policy translate into a change in teaching practice? What role does school- or school board-culture play in these perceptions and pedagogical practices? These findings address each of these questions to some extent. In the case of teachers' perceptions of the revised curriculum, there is no consensus. There are teachers who applaud the new curriculum for its clarity on a number of features, and for catching up to a world of diverse 21st-century learners. There are others, however, who believe that the current addition of art curriculum short-changes students as it lacks direction or consistency.

Much of the data incorporated into this section addresses the third question about culture, as participants' responses fall largely along geographical lines: for the most part, teachers in the GTA reported that they value the changes to the Ontario Arts Curriculum, whereas participants from outside of the GTA do not as much. What this research did not consider, however, is what factors contribute to this division, or whether this division is consistent across the target population.

Teachers feel that they have the ability to decide what curriculum they will teach and how. There are contextual considerations, as many teachers in this study spoke of adapting curriculum to the strengths and needs of the teacher and students. Each of these factors has implications in terms of consistency across schools and across the province, raising the question whether consistency is desirable or even necessary. I will now turn

my attention to the final theme derived from my research analysis: teachers as agents of change.

Professional practice: Teachers as agents of change. Thus far, the findings have focused on two issues; teachers' perceptions of changes to the curriculum, and issues regarding the developing and implementing of these changes. I will now examine factors that contribute to whether or not teachers change with the curriculum and why. Findings are categorized under five related subthemes. First, I will consider how participants feel about the nature of art and its value for education, culture, society, and the individual. This is one of the few areas in my data where there is consensus. Secondly, I will explore participant responses regarding change: it seems that all participants routinely make changes to their practice, but not all changes reported are necessarily due to a change in curriculum. Next, I will explore various reasons why some teachers do not change their practice due to a change in curriculum policy. Many participants indicated some changes or desire to make changes. They also discuss barriers to change and these barriers constitute the fourth subtheme regarding change to professional practice. Finally, I examine two related issues: limited oversight of visual arts curriculum delivery by administration; and teachers' sense of agency in the classroom with respect to what curriculum is covered, and how.

Art is vital to education and society. One of the few topics agreed upon by all interview participants is their strong sense of arts advocacy. Each participant emphasizes the importance of the arts not only for education and learning, but for culture, society, and for self-development and self-fulfillment. One interview question asked whether or not more than one arts credit should be mandatory for graduation in Ontario. The

responses about the desirable number of required arts credits are varied, but the

importance each places on the value of the visual arts in the curriculum is not:

- *I think it should be changed because it's been proven over and over again that the arts expand the mind and that kids who can do creative problem solving in/within art assignments end up thinking more broadly in other classes and creative problem solve there.*

- *But, we all know they [the arts] are incredibly valuable, the top of Bloom's Taxonomy, and now the American schools are all trying to get the arts back in, and it's a big deal.*

Other participants are more elaborate in their description of art education and the

lasting benefits to students as they continue to postsecondary education:

- *Art makes you smarter, art makes you more aware, art makes you think critically, art makes you more analytical, you know, some of the, some universities would rather take arts students in than … a math student for engineering because they know they can teach the student math but they can't teach the critical thinking and the depth of perspective and there's all, there's just a thousand things. … There is so much statistical research about how great arts are.*

- *On a professional level, I believe the arts have a very important component of expression and … 21st-century educators are having to adopt new ways of both delivering and understanding and exchanging information with their students. … When you think about global understanding, when you think about the kinds of graduates we will be turning out, there need to be new ways, approaches, new resilience, new ways of interacting, that go beyond language. … The world is now no longer bound by physical, geographical location and our students need to know how to embrace other cultures. They need to know how to absorb ambivalence, they need to understand open-endedness, take greater risks, accept failure as a stimulus to make change, not as something that stymies their momentum you know, their progress. So, teaching different experience, often occurs quite naturally in the studio. … The beauty of the international baccalaureate is that it creates, if you will, think of disciplines as spokes, that the nucleus, the centre of that wheel is the arts. So, it is a lens through which … one appreciates history, or ah, mathematics, or the application of language, you know? The arts become that central … lens through which learning is found.*

There are few comments about the content of any particular art course of study; rather,

participants are adamant that it is important that students not only learn about art, but

through art, as a vehicle for learning and can be thought of as a pedagogical tool as much

as is a discipline.

Other responses indicate that participants feel that art is vital to the 21st-century

learner and economy:

– *I think the position of arts, and as we look at multi-literacies and multi-modalities and the change in 21st-century learning and thinking and how kids who are extremely engaged with their phones and the technological world, we are getting them to read images constantly, and text constantly, and yet we don't teach very much about reading those images. So I think it would be better, obviously, if we had more art courses as required.*

– *When I was in high school, the ninth largest industry in Canada was the arts you know? I think it really has to come from the core of, embedded into like a federal mandate, a provincial mandate, a local mandate where art is part of your community, you know, it's a living, breathing culture and not to discredit that.*

The teachers who participated in my study are all passionate in their descriptions of the

role art can play in a student's education and subsequent career as they contribute to

society. For example:

Visual arts is an integrated type of language, it's not using just one part of the brain, it's using the whole brain, and using the heart, and tactile, and kinaesthetic so it's not just linear, it's a pulsating, living subject matter. … Art: it kept me in school, art saved my life, um, I know for a fact that it saves many of my students' lives. Some of them are brilliant in the sciences, but they come to my art classes where they have a place that they can be, and they can chill, and they can still learn, and achieve success. So it's not just one part of the brain it's an integrated brain: left-brain, right-brain. That's the kind of magic art can do, that's another word, magic, it transcends necessarily, holding it, weighing it, entering it into a computer. This transforms the quality of someone's life. … It's also about quality of life, being able to appreciate beauty around them and, and not just think about it but touch it, experience it, share it, show it, live it.

This passage struck me as I first heard it in the interview. It captures what many art

educators, including myself, believe about art: that it transcends the category of a

discipline to be taught and learned as it also transforms and enriches lives.

Teachers making changes: Responding to student needs. Appreciation for the

value of art and visual arts education permeates not only the content of participant

interviews and the data from previous phases of this study, but it is a factor in decisions

teachers make about the revised curriculum in terms of content and pedagogy. Those who change and those who do not change do so in what they believe to be the best interest of their students and their discipline (Becher & Maclure, 1978). I noticed that a number of teachers discuss changes to their curriculum regardless of the revised document. When discussing a number of topics (e.g., assessment, differentiation, and technology), teachers comment on the need for constant change to respond to their current students.

One interviewee explains her constant process of revision as due to the fact that educators constantly change themselves. Her conversation then turns to the reactive nature of teaching: responding to student needs. She notes that even two sections of one course may be taught differently based on the makeup of the class:

> *And that's the thing too, as educators and it's not just visual arts, it has to be constantly changing because you are changing. … And you can't even plan to a certain extent because students will come in front of you and it's like, ok, this is going to work with … even last semester, two Grade 9s, two separate lessons, it's that adaptability and that is inside this [curriculum]. You have to change it according to who is in front of you. If you are not, you might as well just throw everything out, differentiated instruction, learning for all, throw it all out, because the moment you are deciding to do something in advance and then you're stuck in it, that's it.*

Other participants describe changes made to their curriculum over time, based on both the needs and strengths of the students before them:

> – *And so, I think, to some extent, I try more … to have studio based assignments connected to art history, the Grade 12s, it wouldn't work with this year's group because they are weak … instead of an essay I would have them do like a brochure, like you are, you know, here's your art gallery, name your art gallery, and you have to profile this artist in your gallery, so here's the brochure that goes to your person, patron, whoever shows up at your gallery.*

> – *I was rewriting curriculum everywhere I went so no matter which school I was at, I was always charged with the responsibility of rewriting … for the program, which I did. … The online students, and the students who were reliant on new technologies, um, were driving how courses could be delivered.*

In both of these examples, teachers explain how they adapt their program to meet the needs of students. The majority of participants describe changes they routinely make to their curriculum or pedagogy, based on the needs and interests of current students, an approach commonly described as student-centred or differentiation.

Why teachers may not change with the curriculum. Satisfaction with the new curriculum and its implementation can take shape in a number of ways: teachers can reject the revised document and continue status quo; they can embrace the changes in the curriculum; or they can seek creative venues for professional development and resources to better align their pedagogy with the direction of the 2010 Visual Arts Curriculum over time. While a number of interview participants indicate that they change their practice to meet the needs of students, there were those who see no need to alter their curriculum based on the 2010 revisions. These participants offer different rationales for their decision not to change.

I asked interviewees about what change the new curriculum has had on their teaching practice and whether they had any advice for the Ministry. One interviewee focuses her discussion on assessment and evaluation. Having taught for a number of years, she considers the constant changes in terminology and weightings to be of little value:

> *For me, what bothers me … is the word communication. It's all communication in art. I guess it was 15 years ago they had communication as 5% for the board, the former [name withheld] board, … it was, the written word was the spoken word, 5%, ok, now then we are going to make it 10% this year; um ok, communication is no longer the written, the spoken word, it's the final product, did it communicate the intention. So they keep reinventing the meaning of these achievement charts, so you get to a point when you think it's [explicative mouthed, not spoken] ok? So, but I do it, I mean I intellectually see where they are coming from and I understand why it's being done, and … because I am who I am, and I've been around the block a few times and I come from a family of educators, I see, I see*

right through it. And, I think a lot of it is not practical, not really relevant to the person in front of me in that class.

In choosing not to keep pace with what she perceives to be constant shifts in assessment language, this participant has in mind what she believes to be the best for students when making her decisions.

With this finding in mind, I returned to my pilot study data. Survey results indicate that there are several participants who indicate that they will make little or no change to their curriculum: some of these fall into the next category under consideration, but one is adamant that no changes will be made due to a disagreement with the direction and content of the 2010 documents:

> *I'm smarter than the people who authored the document (I really am!) I know better than they do exactly what should happen in my classroom to prepare my students for the both enjoyment of art and/or postsecondary education in the visual arts.*

This response typifies the sense of teacher agency felt by study participants who believe that they have the freedom to ignore curricular changes if the revisions are not deemed to be in the best interest of students. Others with a similar sense of agency offer a different rationale for making no change to their curriculum or pedagogy.

A few participants note that they would not make changes based on new Ministry mandated guidelines as they disagreed with the changes. Several others report feeling that the new curriculum is inferior to the previous edition. They believe that their current practice exceeds the new expectations, and therefore there is no need to adjust their pedagogy or curriculum:

– *The new curriculum, because it seems almost dumbed-down to me, it has had no change on my teaching practice whatsoever, in fact, because it's been dumbed-down I am now way overachieving the standards in my classroom.*
– *I would say no [changes], not because of the curriculum. ... I mean we changed*

assignments and we adjusted things and matched it: we worked through our
expectations but I would say no. I would say my standards are still the same. I just
think that the new curriculum is weak, thin, transparent. ... There is no sense of
drive for the students and I think it demeans art because of that. It made it look
like our subject area is not worth the effort to put in and that the expectations are
not needed, it's non-essential, that's what it feels like. ... Again, that depends on
the teacher because a lot of teachers like myself, you know we bump way up [the
expectations], we bump it way up.

One participant indicates that she would not make changes to her curriculum, but that she

would adjust her practice to align what she already does with the new documents:

No I just made my approach work in the new curriculum. It doesn't preclude me,
and I still, I do jump around in some things in isolated units, but I'm still linear:
Egypt in Grade 9 and work your way up to Modern in Grade 12. ... No, just
maybe what is put in what grade but now you just make it fit. ... I don't think it
was as big a change as it meant to be.

The previous examples come from teachers who work outside of the GTA. I returned to

the results of my pilot study, and noted that two out of the nine participants indicate that

they would not change their practice; rather, they would make it *fit* the new curriculum.

An interview participant from the GTA indicates that she intended to exceed the

expectations of current Ministry curriculum guidelines:

It is more a question of, guidelines are guidelines and as long as you are writing
curricula that meets those needs, the mandate is, and it is never a direct mandate,
it is inherent in the nature of the school's strategy or mission might be, in my case
it was, we want to enrich them, so you will take them beyond those Ministry
guidelines every chance you get, and you will use best practice methodologies to
do it whether that is in assessment or whether that's in ... some other component
of the ... teaching model.

This response uses a term I had not seen in other interviews: guidelines. The argument

that the curriculum is a guideline rather than a mandate was not considered in my

research question. Do teachers see the curriculum expectations as a directive, or more of

a suggestion? This question could have bearing on the research around teacher agency as

well as policy implementation. There is one more subtheme regarding educators who felt

no need to revise their practice based on revisions to the visual arts curriculum: those who believe the curriculum is finally catching up to where they are in their pedagogy.

Whereas the previous participants perceived the curriculum to be weaker, or thinner, than the previous edition, the next two participants believe that the new document is much improved. According to their responses, the revised curriculum has finally come up to the pedagogical and curricular standards already in place in their schools:

– *It's what I've always done so in terms of changes I can go at it more robustly, I think because I've got words for it. ... I don't have to go through every word, we do not have to go through every one of these steps right? You might skip something, you might jump all over the place with it.*

– *My response is always going to be tempered by the fact that we were already doing it. When, by the time the Ministry guidelines were in place, we had been long since implementing, just maybe not using the wording, but we'd been implementing that you know, that approach to instruction to arts education, it was a foregone conclusion to us. ... I was already bringing all that into the program, and so, for me, it wasn't such a big transition, but I knew that for other colleagues who hadn't already got there, ... it was a difference, and there is nothing like a teacher who has been in the field for a long time and introducing them to new Ministry guidelines is a big yawn: they don't like it, it's more paper work, everything has got to be rewritten with the right/correct terminology, scope and sequence have got to be changed. I didn't see it as, particularly brain straining or stressful, we were already using that curriculum and converting all of our, syllabi to that formatting. ... For me, there were no changes in that I was already looking at the creative planning process, the responsive analysis component of arts education and the foundations program.*

The second response speculates that teachers who have taught for a number of years may have more difficulty adapting to new curriculum. This is not something that I found in my data, and the previous example comes from a teacher with more than 20 years in the classroom. As was the case in my pilot study, there is no apparent connection from the analysis of interview data between age or years teaching and willingness to change. There

are other factors that are often cited as barriers to change, and I turn my attention to those factors now.

   Resource barriers to change: Time, training, money. As noted earlier, there is a good deal of skepticism and mistrust regarding the development and implementation of the 2010 curriculum revisions. Several participants identify the format and scope of limited PD as part of the problem. Under *Curriculum Change Report Card*, I discussed a number of areas of the curriculum that are not well received by all participants. Interview participants were asked to describe what supports were available to implement change, and participants often asked for clarification. The question was left somewhat broad or, as it turned out, vague so as not to point responses in a particular direction. What emerged during data analysis was the near consensus that there were not, and rarely are, enough resources available for the visual arts, regardless of curricular change. Seven out of 10 interviewees report limited time and PD and a lack of funding as two issues that pose barriers to change. I will examine each of these and then follow with a discussion of one significant exception found in the data: the response from a participant who works in a private school.

   Two respondents indicate that there are few resources available, or that if there are any, they are not aware of them:

- *I still think there [are] never enough resources. There are certain components there that I don't think . . . that it even exists. Some of the criteria: I don' think there are enough resources for people who are special needs*
- *What kind of support? Maybe they [supports] were available but I certainly wasn't aware of them so I'm guessing no.*

Four interviewees use the question about support as an opportunity to describe some of the PD available, not only when the curriculum was introduced, but in the 3 years since

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that time:

- *No. No, it really depended on my own initiative, and that is not unique to me, that's everybody. There was no time set out by the board, [board masked], in spite of [name masked] who was our consultant, to advocate for it. She is not particularly aggressive when it comes to that sort of thing.*

- *[Describing recent, principal-led, school-wide PD] Professional development related to the 4 C's and the P: communication, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving. It was interesting when we did the whole PD thing and like how you would foster creativity in your classroom.*

- *Support, generally at our board we don't get extensive support. I think the thinking out there is that most people in department head positions have [their] specialist and can read through and can look at the curriculum or whatever is presented and make their own judgements so there wasn't really a lot of 'support' after that day/day and a half. And by the way, that [day and a half] was optional. People had to apply to go to it: it wasn't mandatory.*

- *I think I had some support. On a scale of 1 to 10: a 6 and 1/2. There was an attempt, but at the board office [sessions] there were more questions than answers and in the government's wisdom, they lumped all of the Arts together. It was hard to, a challenge to do. The teachers present made it as good as it was as they talked together, given that it really is three different curriculums, teachers made it work. The board provided the time to do that, but not adequate time. More time would be advantageous, especially now that we have had time to work with it. ... I don't know, everyone is trying to do the best they can with dwindling resources over time.*

Another respondent believes that budget cuts are cyclical and unfortunately, we are currently at the wrong stage of this cycle: *I think it's just a cycle but I think we always have to argue, but right now it's a big fight because you know, the governments are, you know, budget cuts, budget cuts.* These cuts to funding pose a barrier to implementing change, and there are three participants who address funding issues specifically in their response to the question about support. For example:

> *Funding, it changes, we are now four percent behind yet again in our funding because our board had to cut back again and it seems that the courses like ours which are dependent. ... Our funds are based on usable items, so paper, glue, ink, etc. It seems that art departments, they are always cutting those funds but they don't cut from history which requires the same amount of textbooks, overheads, etc. per year, and their funding remains kind of stagnant but the funds necessary*

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for consumables, those costs go up year after year. So it's rather frustrating because we also require a lot of donations to even run our program.

Here we see evidence of an ongoing problem: the majority of art budgets go to supplies that must be replenished each term. This leaves little room for art departments to consider other resources, such as books, equipment, or digital resources.

Another interviewee notes fundraising for needed equipment, but that too poses challenges:

Fundraising: we have tried but it's very difficult. We fundraised for a printing press, which we got creating tee shirts, but it's the old adage, when you are in a school which is highly academic art is seen at the bottom of the pile [in the] hierarchy of math, science, language, you know, art is way down there. We are a composite school so basically we have ... kids with means, parents that are the high economic scale and we have kids that come to school with nothing to eat and are from metro housing, community housing. So it's a real range of students. So that's why it's important for the teacher to work the child youth worker, or the special education department to identify kids to support them based on their needs.

Fundraising and access to discretionary spending raise issues of equity and access: there are numerous places in the curriculum where 21st-century technologies are mentioned, both in the front matter and in course expectations. A school without a state-of-the-art computer lab or other digital equipment may not be able to incorporate such technologies. This issue creates a two-tier system in which some schools will be better equipped to implement change than others.

There is one significant exception who does not share the concerns about support and resources above; the teacher who works in the independent school system. She describes the wealth of opportunities available to her, and a rationale for such abundant support in the following response:

Well, the benefit of being a member of faculty at the independent institutions is that there is generally, ... if the school, in my experience, is committed to that kind of professional development for their faculty ... because ... their faculty is a

competitive advantage … they will find the funds to do that if you are able to express and justify your rationale for it. So, wanting to be, um, one of the leading institutes in terms of, the application of current brain theory, … up to date, up to the minute pedagogy, those are some of the you know, some of the reasons people send their children to the independent institutions, for that level of … learning, opportunity. … And not just the support that comes from being part of a school which … focuses a lot of its … attention at [the] faculty development level and at the strategic planning level and at the board level on ensuring that best practice be up to the minute … knowledge and awareness of new ways of thinking and new ways of delivering program. … We were blessed because we were an independent [private] school and we could find the funding for these extras: that kind of enrichment opportunity does not exist in the public system, now there are, that doesn't hold back some educators from making wonderful connections within this urban environment with professionals. It shouldn't be … prohibitive, it's just that in our field, the arts are often so little recognized, so under represented financially that you can't very well ask a professional to visit your studio or have your students visit their studio or museum or gallery without expecting something in the way of compensation, needing to be paid, to be received … and so money is still going to be attached.

Support in terms of resources and PD is not an issue for this participant. For her, there are ample opportunities available for professional development to support changes in pedagogy and curriculum. However she too notes that the visual arts are often underfunded and that funding is an issue for those in the public school system.

When resources to support change are lacking, not all teachers embrace change. What happens when teachers do not change? Are they monitored? Are there consequences? How much agency do teachers have to deliver curriculum in the classroom?

Administrative oversight and teacher agency: Two sides of the same coin. I asked participants questions about how much control teachers felt they had over what happens in their classrooms. I also asked them to consider how much knowledge and oversight administration had in terms of the revisions to the art curriculum in 2010. Teacher agency and administrator oversight are two related subthemes that emerged from the data. The same teachers who report having a great deal of, or complete, control in

their classrooms also report that their administration has limited knowledge of visual arts curriculum; therefore there is little monitoring of curriculum delivery in the classroom. I will look at the themes of teacher agency and administrative oversight separately, but consider them to be interrelated.

Teacher agency: Who is in charge of the classroom? Asking teachers about the degree of control they feel they have over curriculum implementation was not considered in my pilot study. This theme arose based on the strong responses from pilot study participants regarding whether or not they agree with the revised curriculum, and the indication from several that they would not change their teaching practice in light of the new document. Ministry curriculum documents comprise mandated expectations that teachers must cover in any particular course and grade level. How is it teachers believe that they have choice?

In my autoethnographic journaling, I report feeling as though I have a great deal of control over what is taught in my classroom, primarily because I am the department head, and that there are infrequent visits and minimal oversight from administration. This prompted me to ask interviewees three related questions: what degree of control did they feel they had over what is taught in their classrooms, whether or not administration was aware that there was a new arts curriculum, and whether or not there had been any administrative oversight on whether or not the new curriculum was being implemented.

Regarding the first question—"What degree of control do you have over what art curricula is covered in your classroom, and if others have a say, who?"—there is limited variability in response across the 10 interviews. Six out of 10 interviewees claim that they have either absolute control, or 100% control. Two others indicate that they have "a fair

bit" of control, or "a lot" of control. A ninth response suggests that the department head is

in control; this respondent is the department head in her school. Finally, the 10th response

is more descriptive, stating that:

> *In the private system, the independent school system, one could take a lot of leeway with the Ministry program, as long as you meet the Ministry requirements, as long as you can point to it in your documentation, as long as your assessment practices address the guidelines, as long as you use the same assessment practices.*

In addition to espousing a great deal of control, participants often qualify their answers:

– *I don't think anybody in particular has a say except in a department you work together so you try to cover the same sort of information so it is unequal between all Grade 9 classes etc.*

– *There's not too many who have a say.*

– *I have, as long as I am following the curriculum.*

– *No one has a clue in this building what I do and what I don't do, which is good, but kind of sad because there [are] brilliant things that go on in that room that people just aren't aware of, like I'm the only art teacher.*

– *As far as checking in, nobody really checks in other than performance appraisals.*

These educators feel quite autonomous in the classroom, and believed that as long as they

are covering the curriculum in some manner, they will not be subject to scrutiny or

evaluation by others, except in the case of teacher performance appraisals. No one

mentioned the Ministry of Education in any of their responses to the question above.

Regarding the interview question about administrative oversight, eight out of 10

participants report that they believe that there is minimal knowledge or oversight from

administration regarding visual arts curriculum. These perceptions are formed on the

basis of infrequent classroom visits; a sense that few know what happens in the art room;

and that if administration know anything, it is about pedagogy and assessment. The two

remaining participants believe that administration is keenly aware of what goes on in the

art classroom: one due to the multiple, stringent inspections of private schools, and the

other due to advocacy to keep the art department in the mind of a principal who controls the budget.

Three participants report limited administrative awareness or intervention with respect to the delivery of visual arts curriculum:

- *They are aware [of a revised curriculum] because they were aware that teachers were going out for training on the new curriculum. But are they interested/aware of the details? Maybe at the moment, but they don't retain it much.*

- *No, not in my case because … I have a centrally assigned admin. They are not there every day, they visit maybe once every ten days. Yeah, and there is a curriculum leader who is like an acting principal and really, yes, he appreciates art, but as long as you haven't lost a kid and they've gotten hit by a bus when they should be in art class, no one bothers me.*

- *She [new principal] seems to be knowledgeable but … and so far she's made, I think, a positive impression but as far as curriculum requirements, for visual arts specifically, she doesn't. … Not that I can tell, ever.*

In each of these three cases, participants do not believe that their administrators are familiar with the specifics of the visual arts curriculum expectations.

Interview participants report few encounters with administrators with an arts background or with knowledge of arts curriculum:

- *Ah, I'm sure they are aware, I don't think they know the specifics. The administration are not visual arts in any fashion, I think they would be more familiar with their own subject. I don't think they would/if I was to quote part of the curriculum they would nod knowingly but I think that's all fake. They have no idea. … No [re: any oversight].*

- *I would feel that they would probably look at them before they get a … where they watch me teach, but I don't think that they know like it's impossible for them to be really familiar with all the curriculum for all the subjects. … Nobody has approached me about the new curriculum at an administrative level and besides, the one day at the board nobody at the board seems to care either.*

- *I think that administration is never aware of what goes on in arts classrooms unless they had some arts background they just let us do our thing uninterrupted, that's been my experience. … That's kind of an interesting question, I am not sure I would use the word oversight. I know when I get evaluated it's never the subject area that gets questioned, it's always like picky little things … because they don't seem to understand the subject area so they are always in awe of what I am doing*

so then they pick at little things like my hand out isn't quite as professional as they'd like or you know, my assessment could be more, they just seem to try to find things wrong because the subject matter is so foreign to them, they can't seem to figure that out so they just talk about stuff that's to do with general teaching, that's my experience as well. I get general comments about how to teach I never get specific teaching comments on how to teach my area.

This last example begins with speculation that administrators would likely be familiar with the discipline they had previously taught, not usually art. This participant then considers the question about oversight, and reframes the question in terms of what administrators could assess or evaluate: general pedagogy and assessment rather than art expectations. Two more participants turn to assessment and evaluation as they formulate their responses regarding administrative oversight:

- *Very much, very, very much. They pulled us all over, and made sure we were all following the same template [speaking to assessment], they were very insistent on that so we had to get rid of CUTA [Communication, Understanding, Thinking, Application] where we had it all integrated and instead had us break it down as you saw in the rubric I showed you. … We have three vice-principals and one principal because we have about, just under 2,000 students so it's a big school and one [new] person came and … they started doing a lot of micromanaging. So, we have to go over this, and go ok, that's going to be communication and that's going to be application, that'll be thinking and now alright, it's balanced, check. Well, they can look at your mark book yeah, so you have got to do it.*

- *It really is up to the principal to ask for certain things. … Like in the school I am in now, they ask for every culminating task. They want the whole culminating task. And then of course you have a principal who is coming in to do a TPA for you [every 5 years, at the most] at some point, and they don't have any background but they do know about … delivering curriculum.*

These examples, in which administrators have asked for specific assessment and evaluation instruments, are the first two reported cases of administration overseeing any aspect of participants' teaching practice.

Finally, there are two participants who believe their administrators are aware of their pedagogical practices and curriculum delivery, but for two quite different reasons. In one case, there are strict, specific inspections from a number of governing bodies over

the operation of private schools. In the second case, administration is routinely kept

aware of one department's activities due to the department's self-promotion/advocacy.

In the independent school example, there is quite a description of the various

inspections undertaken not only by the OME, but by the conference of independent

schools. She begins by disclosing that departments have some leeway to run their

programs as they choose, aware that there will be visits and inspections every few years:

> *I think that they have let each department, self-guide, I mean we obviously have, every few years we have, you undertake a Ministry visit, it becomes a really significant part of your preparation and ability to say, we not only meet Ministry guidelines but we exceed them because you use it as a benchmark you know? You will have the inspections, the inspectors will come in and take apart every aspect of your program, and it could be that they um, self-select what departments they are going to be looking at, what disciplines, or they may say we just want a broad stoke, you know, they may say they are coming in to look at your arts program, or taking a look at your school ... and so every few years, every independent school goes through this massive, very transparent, but very complex and intensive, inspection. ... So that's that, but we also have another layer, not just the Ministry, but also the conference of independent schools has its own, performative review as well, in terms of agreeing on, as a consultative basis, that they will keep an eye on each other's programs and on the efficacy of the programs and on calibre of instruction and so they form their own kind of group of people.*

Private schools must go through rigorous inspections, both to remain accredited to offer

Ontario Secondary School Diploma course credits, but to ensure quality and a

competitive advantage. One public school teacher ensures that her administration is

aware of what happens in her visual art program:

> *Who else knows? People know what I am teaching by the displays, the art work, what my students put out there in the art world. Through community events ... through formal kinds of school art shows, through what is in the cabinets, through integration with events in the community. Do they [administrators] know what is going on? Absolutely. Sometimes they show up, sometimes I just let them know because it's a good thing to do so, and sometimes our funding depends upon it.*

For the most part, teachers in this study do not believe that administrators were aware of

the specifics of visual arts curricula. Most report that administrators are aware that there

were revisions to the arts curriculum, but that visits and oversight are infrequent and typically focus on more generic pedagogical and assessment practices common across disciplines.

There are additional examples in the interview data suggesting that a strong measure of teacher agency, and hence variability across classrooms, is not new. Two stories shared by participants describe the variability already present in Ontario classrooms, both in terms of pedagogy and curriculum:

– *He's a man who is teaching by rote, he gets up there and lectures, he doesn't show any images. He doesn't know how to use the technology and doesn't bother, and the kids take notes because he says it is just like university.*

– *There [are] three public high schools in [name of city withheld], I'm not talking about the Catholic one, that would mean four … and we all do different stuff. We all do different stuff in different grades and yet we are on the same curriculum. … Maybe in other courses it's more similar, but in art it can be whatever it wants to be, it's whatever the teacher wants it to be. If they are studio based it's studio based, if they are art history based, they are more art history oriented.*

Consistency remains low as agency continues to be high in Ontario schools.

There is one interviewee who speculates that this lack of oversight and potentially freedom in terms of curriculum delivery may change. She uses the education system in England as an example:

> *We are not at the state that England is at, where we have curriculum police, where they are coming to check … it is getting quite frustrating for teachers in England, but we are not at that point yet. Who knows, we may get to that point.*

Summary of Findings

Of the emergent themes, there are four for which I found similar findings across the various participants. Firstly, each and every participant believes that the study of visual arts is important to students, education, and society. There is a high level of consensus that most administrators are not familiar with visual arts curriculum other than

front matter topics such as assessment and evaluation and current pedagogical strategies generic to all disciplines. As a result, most visual art teachers exercise a strong sense of teacher agency to deliver the curriculum as they deem appropriate in their particular circumstance. Finally, the majority of participants report skepticism or mistrust in the process: from curriculum development through to implementation. Participants express the desire for a more transparent, inclusive process of revision and implementation of art curriculum in Ontario.

There are also points of departure between various participants, often along geographical lines; however the reasons for this apparent divide are not apparent in this study. For example, a number of participants complain that PD devised to introduce educators to the revised curriculum documents is insufficient or a waste of time. However, others indicate that there is a wealth of PD opportunities for those who pursue ongoing professional development from a variety of sources. There are varying responses regarding the content of the new curriculum, particularly in terms of what art history to teach, and how. Participants hold opposing views about whether the flexibility afforded through broader expectations is instructive for making pedagogical choices that reflect the makeup of a particular classroom or if it is a detriment to any consistency in art education across the province. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the significance of these findings, related implications, and suggest aspects for further study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study represents the experiences of 20 visual arts educators from various regions of southern Ontario. While I cannot generalize about the state of visual arts across all of Ontario, the lived experiences of 20 educators provides a strong sample of teachers' perspectives in a given context. A number of the conclusions reached below may be indicative of wider trends, but further study with a larger sample set would be required to determine whether these findings are representative of the target population. The significance and implications that I draw from these findings reflect a particular context at a particular time in Ontario art education.

The purpose of my study was to examine the process of implementation of new curriculum through the lens of teachers working with *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, The Arts, Revised*, *2010*. The three questions used to guide this investigation were as follows:

1. What are the perspectives of visual art teachers regarding the effects of recent changes made to the curriculum?

2. To what extent does a change in curriculum policy translate into a change in teaching practice?

3. What role does school or school board culture play in these perceptions and pedagogical practices?

To answer these three questions, I took a three-pronged approach to data collection: a pilot survey with nine participants in one school board, an autoethnographic look at my teaching practice, and open-ended interviews with 10 secondary visual arts educators

from five school boards and one private school. What emerged as the central phenomena from my findings is that the 20 visual arts teachers who participated in this study felt entitled to navigate curricular change as they saw fit. As well, there was little consensus among participants regarding the appreciation of the 2010 curriculum revisions and how to integrate them into classroom practice. There was a division between GTA participants and participants from other regions of Ontario when it comes to assessment and implementation of the 2010 visual arts curriculum.

Primary Significance

The sample of participants in this study, from a number and variety of different school boards, allowed for rich data collection from which themes reached a level of saturation prior to final interviews even taking place. By saturation, I refer to Creswell's (2008) definition: "saturation is the point where you have identified the major themes and no new information can add to your list of themes or to the detail for existing themes" (p. 257). While the results discussed here are not generalizable to all instances of curriculum revision, they do describe a situation in a particular context, and findings may be extrapolated and prove relevant in other situations.

It was a challenge to determine which findings were significant at this particular time and in this particular context. Not only would a different researcher possibly come to different conclusions from the data I gathered in this study, but I too may have come to different conclusions were I at a different stage in my teaching career, or had I garnered a different sample set of participants with a different data set. In her seminal work on constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz (2006) advises that:

We cannot replicate the experiences of our research participants. … [constructivist grounded theory] not only theorizes the interpretive work that research participants do, but also acknowledges that the resulting theory is an interpretation. The theory depends on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it. Granted, different researchers may come up with similar ideas, although how they render them theoretically may differ. (p. 130)

In the end, I divided points of significance into two categories: primary and ancillary. Of primary significance are those issues and themes that add new information to, or that address gaps in, the literature. Four topics were selected for discussion:

1. Perceptions of curricular change and implementation efforts vary widely based on a variety of factors including personal, cultural, and contextual;

2. Divisions exist between participants teaching art in the GTA and elsewhere in Ontario;

3. Adoption of a revised curriculum can take a number of routes, and related to this,

4. Implementation of change falls across a spectrum from limited to considerable.

Variability of perceptions of curricular change and implementation efforts.

Literature often considers change as an either/or situation, either driven from the top-down or from the bottom-up (Dyer, 1999; McKernan, 2008); I found that this may not always be the case. Optics play a role in the perceptions of some educators when faced with curricular change; what appears to be a Ministry-developed and mandated policy to some participants is viewed as a collaboratively developed policy document to those participants who were invited to be involved in its creation.

This difference in perception presents a twofold problem. Primarily, when curriculum is revised, teachers in this study reported that they are not consulted to the extent that they believe they should be. Secondly, when participants are invited to view draft documents, they are under the impression that this invitation provides an opportunity for feedback and consultation; this was not the case. The distinctions are subtle: gathering information from a focus group and discussing draft documents constitutes consultation by definition, but there is no guarantee or promise that input from teachers will translate into action or curricular change.

Policy makers include no discussion of follow-through or of professional development (PD) for those educators charged with delivering revised curriculum documents under the frequently asked questions about curriculum development on the Ministry's website. PD was an important concern raised by participants in all three phases of this study. Some participants felt that there were limited PD opportunities or resources available to implement change, while others found ample opportunities for self-directed and collaborative PD and resource sharing. Bencze et al. (2000) and Myers (2003) noted the need for ongoing time, resources, and support for successful curriculum implication. Such support through PD was inconsistent according to participants in most cases. I found that there was little consensus between my study participants regarding the development and implementation of, and support, for the 2010 revised arts curriculum.

Participants reported that leadership was largely absent when it came to oversight of arts curriculum. This absentee leader, or perhaps the managerial leader as described by Leithwood and Duke (1999), one who focuses on managing and mediating more holistic concerns of a school community, best fits the one most often described by my study

participants. Additionally, PD and resources relegated to curriculum revision varied

significantly from the perspectives of both survey and interview participants. For those

whose experiences involved limited opportunities for PD, the literature would suggest that

the uptake or response to new policy would be limited (Beaudoin & Fraser, 2002; Gold,

1999). However, this was not the case for all participants: two out of nine survey

participants and half of those interviewed were more than willing to revise their pedagogy

and curriculum to reflect revised curriculum expectations regardless of what PD was

offered. Many of these same educators described multiple, meaningful opportunities for

professional growth and development in addition to any PD specific to the introduction of

revised curriculum documents. Ministry transparency and teacher perception may be larger

factors in determining the acceptance rate of a new policy or initiative than the

implementation process, who is involved, or what resources are available.

>**An apparent GTA divide: Differing approaches to curriculum and pedagogy.**

The division between those participants more accepting of the new curriculum and those

who indicated that they were less likely to make changes due to a revised document,

which they did not agree with, fell largely along geographical lines in this study. For the

most part, participants in the GTA were pleased with the direction of the new curriculum,

while those outside of the GTA felt that the revisions weakened the visual and do a

disservice to both students and to our discipline. I will consider the implications of this

finding later in this chapter, with reference to the role of the OAEA in curriculum

development, and in the recruitment of participants. There is evidence in the literature

that PD offered by larger school districts is often of higher quality due to greater access to

specialists, funding, and collaboration (Desimone et al., 2002), offering one possible explanation for the divisions reported by participants.

Response to curricular change can take a number of routes. Adoption of the new curriculum and its implementation can take shape in a number of ways: teachers can simply reject the revised document and continue status quo, they can embrace the changes in the curriculum, or they can seek creative venues for professional development and resources in order to better align their pedagogy with the direction of the 2010 visual arts curriculum over time. As noted earlier, even those participants who disagreed with the recent revisions to the curriculum found some way to reconcile their differences and meet the requirements of revised Ministry documents. For some, change was unnecessary as these teachers felt that their curriculum already exceeded the new mandates, while others made changes to their pedagogy and curriculum to reflect current theory and practice. These different responses to curriculum change tell us that teacher agency plays a significant role in the decisions of participants as they feel that they have the freedom to accept or reject curriculum changes mandated by the Ministry.

A spectrum of curricular change. Initially, it was difficult for me to find commonalities across the data provided by participants. What first looked like disparate responses regarding changes to curriculum based on a new document eventually took shape: curriculum change can best be described as a spectrum of change across participants. Based on their perceptions of the document and on their own sense of agency in their particular situation, the extent of change varied significantly. This is consistent with literature that looks at the adoption of education policy. Priestley et al. (2012) noted that education policy tends to mutate from school to school based on the

variability of teacher agency, and while curriculum may be seen as restrictive, there continues to be space for teacher agency through collaboration and delivery of curriculum. Responses in my study ranged from those reporting that they had made significant changes to their pedagogy and assessment practices to those who adamantly refused to revise their pedagogy or their curriculum as they disagreed with the direction of the revisions. Eisenbach (2012) describes three types of respondents to shifting curriculum mandates. There are those who accommodate, those who negotiate, and those who rebel or reject changes, based on whether or not ideologies matched the assumptions behind the mandates. Each of these three types of respondents was represented in my sample set. Fullan (2001) cautions that not all, or even most, of those expected to implement change in education will do so. He recommends celebrating what is being accomplished, even if the results of our efforts to initiate change are minimal.

Ancillary Significance

There were additional findings that I deemed to be significant; however, I am including them as ancillary findings as they do not address gaps in the literature or present new models or theories for consideration. Rather, they add a contemporary, Ontario example to existing literature. There were three such outcomes from my data analysis:

1. Participants believe that the arts are both vital to education and society and they are currently undervalued by the same society;

2. Participants found change implementation to be problematic when support for change is limited; and

3. In the experience of most participants, there is limited understanding or oversight of the arts from administration, due to their lack of familiarity with the discipline.

I will briefly discuss how each of these themes adds to existing literature.

Art is both valuable, and undervalued. The most common element between participants' responses in all three phases of my research was the value Ontario visual arts educators placed on their discipline. Each and every one of them espoused the important role the arts play in students' lives, education, and future as both 21st-century workers and as members of society. As well, many participants indicated that they felt that their discipline was undervalued or misunderstood, and that often they had to fight or advocate for the arts in the workplace. These are not new revelations, but they do add a contemporary, Ontario example to the extensive, existing literature on the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of arts education and arts advocacy (Eisner, 2002; Uhrmacher, 2009). These beliefs formed a lens through which participants interpret curriculum, which in turn influences how they conduct their classrooms, and the decisions they make regarding the adoption of new curriculum and pedagogy.

Change implementation will find limited success without ongoing supports.

A common thread across the three phases of data collected was the limited amount of PD reported by participants to support implementation of the revised, 2010 curriculum. However, those who sought additional PD of their own accord reported greater uptake of the new curriculum in their classrooms. Literature suggests that without adequate supports and professional development, successful change in education will be limited and/or inconsistent (Dyer, 1999; Kelly, 2009; Wideman et al., 2000). However, it is evident in my research that there were, and are, additional opportunities to seek

professional development, although most is not specific to visual arts curriculum. Rather, participants reported that PD was more generic in nature, often tied to various government initiatives such as assessment and evaluation, pedagogy, or health and safety training.

Many participants reported that there has been an overall decrease in discipline specific PD in school boards across Ontario in recent years, and that personal initiative was the main route to sourcing additional PD and resources to support implementation of the arts curriculum. As participants indicated, more time for PD would be advantageous after they were more acquainted with the revised curriculum: perhaps PD with a new document ought to be planned in increments over two to three years. There are temporal factors at work here: survey participants were working with a very new curriculum, introduced just months prior in 2010, while phase three interviews took place approximately 2 years later. It is possible that a number of the initial pilot study participants, like phase three interviewees, undertook additional, creative PD opportunities to address curriculum needs in the ensuing two years. A more longitudinal study could help to account for this difference in PD reported by the two different groups of participants. Desimone et al. (2002) concluded that features of effective PD include long duration and follow-up: two features that were not a part of the implementation process around the 2010 curriculum revisions. It would be of value for future studies to consider the variety of PD available to other disciplines or to different sizes of schools and school boards.

Do school administrators understand the arts? My experience over 12 years as a secondary school teacher would indicate that school administrators are usually less familiar with the arts than with some other disciplines. Participants in my study reported

a similar experience. One in particular questioned why any visual arts teacher would want to leave the classroom to pursue a career in administration, as we have *the best job in town*. While principals come from the ranks of teachers, participants in this study reported that administrators rarely include in their numbers those with an arts background. Participants reported limited oversight of their curriculum by administrators, other than during teacher performance appraisals (TPAs). During these TPAs, school administrators often focused their evaluations on aspects of curriculum that are less discipline specific, like current pedagogical models, assessment, and evaluation.

Finally, there were factors that proved insignificant in my data analysis and findings. I sought demographic information about participants, anticipating that age of a participant and/or years of experience in teaching might prove to be factors in what they thought of the new curriculum and what impact it might have on their adoption of changes; neither proved to be the case with this data set.

Limitations

There are factors that limit the scope and generalizability of the study. Some of these factors are due to the nature of conducting a qualitative study based on a limited number of participants, while others are due to the recruitment and makeup of participants. For example, the makeup of my phase three interview participants was limited in some respects. This does not invalidate or diminish my findings: rather, it determined the scope of my findings in this particular study.

Challenges for conducting the study were managing bias and hypothesizing in the construction, analysis, and interpretation of participant data as I too am a secondary arts educator. I place great value on the visual arts and often advocate this value to others. I

have attempted to minimize bias in the coding of data through using the constant

comparative method, theoretical sampling, and by comparing and interrelating categories

(Glaser, 1992). In the spirit of vigilant subjectivity, I consciously remained open to

finding codes based on emergent themes which I had neither encountered nor considered

in my experience as an educator. I do acknowledge that there is some bias inherent in the

design and interpretation of my study. Corbin and Strauss (2008) noted that there can be

multiple interpretations from the same set of data, and therefore they encouraged

researchers to use procedures in their own way, as long as they provide clarity and

purpose in those procedures. A different researcher would likely have come to different

findings from my phase one pilot study and phase three interview data, based on their

unique situation and experience. My bias was more prevalent in the data and findings

unique to phase two where I incorporated autoethnographic data into this study.

  A limited number of male participants volunteered to participate in the study. In

phase one of this research, there were two male participants and seven female

participants. In phase two, I was the sole male participant as this segment was an

autoethnographic study. Phase three interviews involved only participants who identify as

female. This limits the study in terms of what role gender may play in terms of perception

of, or response to, curricular change in the arts.

  Another limitation was my primary method of recruitment in the final phase of

my study. Most participants (7 out of 10) were recruited through direct communication

with the OAEA and its membership. This method of recruitment limited the pool of

participants to those visual arts educators who are members of their subject association:

many visual arts educators are not involved with the OAEA. Therefore, this pool of

participants, 572 registered members in September 2014, includes those who are particularly active and interested in visual arts education and advocacy in Ontario.

There was another factor limiting the scope of my findings based on my line of questioning in phase three. I did not ask participants about the size of their schools: I asked only if they were rural or urban. It is possible that these smaller schools deliver quite a different curriculum or experience for their students and therefore educators may report different experiences with, and perceptions of, the new curriculum.

Finally, I interviewed nine participants from five school boards, and one from the independent school system. There are 850 publicly funded secondary schools in Ontario, across 72 school boards (OME, 2014). There were some commonalities between participants. All were from southern Ontario school boards or schools. As well, there were no participants from separate (also known as Catholic) secondary schools. There was only one truly small, rural school represented in my study, and each of my phase three interview participants identified as female. The one independent school board participant and the one small, rural school participant brought unique perspectives to this study based on their lived experiences in unique contexts, which cannot speak for all schools in similar situations.

These limitations worked together to contextualize the findings and conclusions of this study. While this study examines the lived experiences of 20 participants, it can neither speak to other contexts such as Catholic or francophone schools, nor can it provide insight into how gender might affect response to curricular change. Those factors deemed significant in this study can add to the literature in one of two ways: they add another case study to the existing literature as explained above, or they add something

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new to the literature as significant findings that may be applicable in other contexts as other disciplines or jurisdictions embark on a similar process of curriculum development and implementation. As well, these limitations point to implications for future consideration and research. I will next consider implications of this study that I intend to pursue in the future, and which may prove relevant to a wider range of contexts and disciplines.

Implications for Further Study

This study identifies a number of implications that warrant further examination. Participants questioned the process of curriculum revision and hoped for greater transparency in the process; the specific measures the OME could take in the future in order to increase transparency or the perception of transparency is a matter that requires deeper investigation. As well, the specific factors which contributed to the great variety of actions and reactions of educators to curriculum changes were unclear in this study, and warrant a more detailed exploration. Finally, the degree to which educators value the expanded front matter found in Ontario curriculum documents and whether or not is it even considered a part of course curriculum are two questions worthy of pursuit.

Issues of implementation: Perception and transparency. Participants reported

that they were not confident in the process of curriculum revision, from development

through to professional development and resources. Participants not only felt that there

was a lack of transparency regarding the selection process for curriculum writers but also

perceived that the development of curriculum was a top-down process with limited input

from teachers "in the field." Recent literature suggests that a top-down process is no

longer an appropriate strategy and that in such cases change will be limited (Dyer, 1999;

McKernan, 2008).

It is possible that some of these problems may be more a matter of perception:

was the development of the new document as top-down as reported by a number of

teachers? Without transparency, adoption of change is limited as teachers view the

documents as something developed by bureaucrats with political agendas rather than a

collaborative process that involves teachers. While teachers were involved in revising the

arts curriculum, it is difficult for most participants to see. There is no indication on the

Ministry website as to how curriculum writers are recruited or selected, nor are

contributors listed in the official curriculum documents. I contacted the OME in March

2014 to inquire about the process and I did not receive a response. I then contacted

executive members with the OAEA and asked them if they were aware of the process.

One member indicated that the Ministry contacts subject associations to solicit

curriculum writers through these organizations. This makes sense in many regards;

subject associations consist of educators within specific disciplines who are engaged to

the extent that they join their provincial associations. But not all teachers belong to, or

have ready access to, these organizations; thus, many do not have an opportunity to

answer the call for writers. They would be unaware that this recruitment process even took place, thereby increasing the likelihood that educators perceive the document as a top-down Ministry directive rather than as a collaborative project that benefited from teacher input. Further research is needed to explore what recruitment process and what measures the OME could take to increase transparency in the process.

Participants cited concerns with the limited PD and resources available during the introduction of the revised arts curriculum. Often there is the cry for more PD, but how much more, and what should it look like? Research into what PD or resources would best mitigate these concerns could provide guidance regarding effective implementation of change, and would add to the literature that suggests that ongoing, sustained, discipline-specific PD is optimal for sustainable change (Bencze et al., 2000; Myers, 2003).

The GTA divide and the OAEA. Given the nature of my recruitment methods, and the responses of many participants, my findings often led me back to the OAEA, particularly in light of the finding that there appears to be a GTA divide in terms of assessment of, and delivery of, the revised visual arts curriculum in this study. The OAEA consists of 572 members around Ontario, but in my experience, most interactions and events are largely Toronto based. Also, 11 out of 12 board members reside or work in the GTA (OAEA, 2014). Meetings, social events, and conferences are difficult to organize in smaller centres outside of the GTA as membership in other areas is limited. However, my autoethnographic data suggested that my perceptions of the curriculum shared similarities to both GTA and non-GTA participants. This suggests that geography and school board culture are not the only factors in shaping one's perceptions of curriculum documents.

The OAEA plays a prominent role in Ontario visual arts curriculum development. As the subject association for the visual arts, the OAEA is a primary source for Ministry recruitment initiatives. Given that writers are recruited through the subject association, these teachers would have the greatest input into the content and direction of curriculum revisions. More research is needed to determine what factors contribute to this seemingly geographic division. I hypothesize that a combination of factors could contribute to reported differences between the perceptions and practices of GTA participants and others. Cultural differences in terms of immigration patterns, access to a wealth of contemporary arts exhibits and resources, active involvement in OAEA activities, and access to a wider range of professional development may each contribute to the different approach to pedagogy and curriculum content reported by GTA participants.

It is possible that the GTA divide in my findings reflects not only geographical and cultural factors attributed to this large, urban centre, but that the curriculum itself best reflects the demographics of the GTA. Differences in perception and practice may be a result not only of school board culture, but that school board culture is in part determined by the demographic makeup of different jurisdictions in Ontario. The revised curriculum may reflect the changing landscape and makeup of Ontarians: as immigration patterns evolve, so too will the cultural makeup of students and teachers be changing. As demographics shift in a particular school board or community, changes will be inconsistent across the province. The new curriculum allows for different themes or foci to reflect local trends. The relationship between demographic shifts and the adoption of arts curriculum revisions across jurisdictions is a research question worth exploring now that culture plays a more prominent role in the documents.

There may be other paths of investigation identified from these findings. The history of the OAEA is worth examining: the size, history, recruitment, and makeup of this organization could reveal clues as to the benefits and challenges facing such subject associations today. Many of the visual arts educators that I know who bemoan the state of the arts in policy and perception are not active members of their own subject association. I see potential for collaborative research here, with active members, and with arts educators yet to see the value of joining their professional organization. Action research would be one appropriate methodology for such a study.

A burgeoning front matter, ancillary to or separate from the curriculum? In my findings, there were a range of opinions regarding the greatly expanded front matter to Ontario curriculum documents. Some appreciated the expanded content, while others

believe that it has become unwieldy and separate from discipline specific curriculum. The participant who did not read the front matter, due to its length, pointed to another reality of teaching today: with heavy workloads, not all educators are going to take the time to read such material. As it is separated from the individual course descriptions and expectations and is generic for all of the arts, it can appear extraneous to the arts curriculum. Some participants reported that they simply turn to the section specific to their discipline and the curriculum expectations for the courses they are teaching at the time.

Not only do some participants claim to not read the front matter as they focus on the content of their particular courses in the document, but much of the content is generic across disciplines. The same content, like the roles of various stakeholders, and best assessment and evaluation practices can be found in every revised curriculum, with slight modifications to suit the discipline in question. It is worth further study to investigate the value educators place on this portion of the curriculum, and whether or not most teachers consider it to truly be a part of their discipline's curriculum at all. A close reading of the front matter, with analysis of pedagogical implications, could provide direction for such research.

Emergent Issues for Further Consideration

In addition to the research topics considered above, there were other issues that emerged from my findings and conclusions. For example, few participants had ever encountered secondary school administrators with an arts background. It is not clear from this study why that is the case, and whether or not this is the experience of a majority of educators. As well, two participants referred to the curriculum with different, specific terminology, and the question remains about teacher perceptions of what exactly a

curriculum mandate is and whether or not such mandates are merely guidelines or suggestions for teachers to support their curriculum.

Do the career paths of arts educators lead to administration? My research participants frequently noted that their administrators may be aware of a new arts curriculum to varying degrees, but few believed that their principals were familiar with the arts in general. A study of elementary school curriculum noted that "few principals feel that they have sufficient background in the arts to offer guidance to their teachers" (Sefton & Bayley, 2010, p. 19). No participant in any of the phases of this research mentioned encountering a secondary school administrator with an arts background. Comparing the factors that determine career paths, and why few arts educators seem to pursue a career in school administration is worth further study. This could begin with a study to determine administrators' familiarity with the arts across jurisdictions in Ontario based on their education. Selecting a number of school boards, one could survey their websites to establish a list of administrators' names. As public school administrators are members of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), these names can be searched through the OCT website: their teaching qualifications and education are a matter of public record. While not all educators have experience teaching in the disciplines for which they are qualified, a study of this nature would quickly quantify their familiarity with the arts for one factor: their education.

Perhaps such a research question could be investigated in conjunction with questions about gender as more secondary arts educators are, in my experience, female. I could not find current statistics to verify my experience. The OCT (2013) tracks historical data regarding the number of members certified to teach each discipline, but it does not

subdivide these statistics by gender. Whether more educators pursuing leadership opportunities are male or female today may be connected to the line in inquiry investigating why art teachers do not become secondary school administrators. I looked at statistics from the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) website during the summer of 2014 and found that the administrators' directory lists 19 male and 10 female principals. This contrasts with the makeup of senior administration, where the breakdown of directors and superintendents includes three males and 11 females (TVDSB, 2014). The OCT keeps statistics regarding the total number of members with principal qualifications delineated by gender, and in 2013 approximately 60% (or 9,427 out of 15,670) were female (OCT, 2013).

Participants discussed other leadership roles assumed by arts educators, such as those who become arts coordinators or facilitators consultants for their respective school boards. There was one participant who held principal qualifications but has yet to pursue an administrative track. Anecdotally, I am also aware of many arts educators who pursue leadership positions in teacher federations like OSSTF. That too may be a valuable topic for future research, and may tie back into the discourse on teacher agency.

Is government curriculum a mandate, guideline, or suggestion? Given the sense of control over what curriculum is taught as reported by most participants, it is fair to question what exactly government curriculum documents are meant to accomplish. In what they characterize as a politicized, globalized education environment, Kelly (2009) and McKernan (2008) argue that the standardization of curriculum reduces the role of the teacher, even though it is the teacher who is central to successful curriculum implementation and change. There were comments by two interview participants who

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questioned whether or not the official policy document was a mandate regarding what to teach, or a guideline or suggestion as to where to start when planning a curriculum. One participant recommended that I ask teachers about this, albeit in a different vein: she believed that I ought to be asking teachers about their interpretation of the curriculum and what they actually do with the documents in terms of expectations and examples. This would be a worthwhile avenue for further research as it may tie issues of policy with those of agency and identity.

Conclusion

I initially set out to gauge the reaction of secondary visual arts teachers to the *Ontario Arts Curriculum Grades 9 and 10, Revised, 2010*. Pilot study findings determined that survey participants in one Ontario school board were not happy with the revisions, and that implementation was as great an issue for educators as was the content of the curriculum documents. Subsequent phases of data collection—autoethnography and open-ended interviews with participants from a variety of Ontario school boards— intended to expand on the initial research question. This study ultimately investigated 20 visual arts educators' reaction to the 2010 curriculum, and examined to what extent a change in curriculum policy translated into a change in their teaching practice. I looked at the impact of school or school board culture on these perceptions and pedagogical practices. Teacher agency provided the theoretical perspective that guided the construction, execution and evaluation of this project in that not all teachers react or behave in the same way.

Findings from the study showed points of consensus between participants. Common was the belief that the visual arts are important to students, education, and

society. Participants believe that their administrators are generally unfamiliar with visual arts curriculum. As well, teachers in this study choose to deliver curriculum as they deem appropriate in their particular circumstance. Finally, most participants reported skepticism or mistrust in the curriculum development process.

Points of departure between participants were revealed to have occurred largely along geographical lines. There were differing opinions regarding the direction of the new curriculum, and about resources and professional development available to implement change. Some participants found that the flexibility afforded through broader curriculum expectations was instructive for making pedagogical choices, while others felt that this flexibility was a detriment to consistency in art education across the province.

What emerged as the central phenomena from my findings is that visual arts teachers in this study feel empowered to navigate curricular change as they see fit: there is little consensus or consistency across participants' visual arts classrooms. There is a division between the GTA participants and others when it comes to assessment of, and implementation of, curriculum.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, perceptions of curricular change and implementation efforts vary widely. Second, divisions exist between participants teaching art in the GTA and elsewhere in Ontario. Third, adoption of a revised curriculum can take a number of directions and subsequently, implementation of change falls across a spectrum from limited, to considerable.

Visual arts educators in the study do not share a common understanding of what they believe is important to teach students regarding visual art and the history of art. Where they converge in their thinking is the inherent value they see in the arts and what

the discipline offers students and society. They have the agency to do as they please in their classrooms as long as they satisfy the curriculum expectations mandated by the government. There are significant differences between the pedagogical approach and curriculum offered by participants in the greater Toronto area than in other parts of the province. What remains to discover, is whether or not this is a widespread phenomenon, or whether this is a significant issue for the arts, our students, or society.

The research will be of value to teachers, administrators, and policy developers involved in the revision and implementation of this and other curricula. Ideally, it may assist in addressing challenges to implementation in other disciplines and in other jurisdictions as they too go through the regular cycle of curriculum review. The study identified implications for further study, including issues around perception and transparency, factors that have led to the apparent GTA/Ontario divide, and the role of curricula front matter.

In terms of policy development and implementation, greater transparency would help to assuage the concerns of teachers who are skeptical of the process. The flexibility afforded in the 2010 visual arts curriculum may serve as a model curriculum for educators in other disciplines who truly wish to best serve their students by tailoring their pedagogy and course content to the strengths and needs of their students. If curriculum is rigid and inflexible, it cannot keep pace and adapt to change as necessary to meet the diverse needs of students today: the current version of arts curriculum in Ontario affords such flexibility. Whether or not a particular teacher agrees with the direction of the current curriculum, it will be covered in the majority of Ontario art rooms. As one participant noted, *art educators are creative thinkers who can find a way*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pilot Study Summary

Bates, P. (2012, May). *The new Ontario arts curriculum: Impact on teacher practice*. Paper presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON.

Pilot Study Abstract

Using grounded theory, reaction was solicited to the new Arts Curriculum in Ontario. The central phenomenon that emerged was that teachers have concerns with the new curriculum documents. Primarily, there is a sense of a dumbing-down of the curriculum, a lack respect for the arts, and lower standards and little consistency across the province. Also evident is that policy implementation is as important as policy development, and that without a local, bottom up process, implementation may be spotty at best. Art educators are passionate about their discipline and their students, and any deviations or additions to the new prescribed curriculum will be in the interests of student learning and positive student outcomes. In the 21st century, with its increased demand for creative thinkers in the global knowledge economy, teachers have the power to initiate changes in their classrooms, or not.

Pilot Study Survey Questions

Please find below five questions designed to develop a clearer picture of Thames Valley Secondary Art Educator's thoughts about the new Ontario Art Curriculum. It is intended to be an open-ended survey, and you may answer any or all of the questions in as much or as little detail as you like: there is no right or wrong way to complete this survey. Data collected will be collated and analyzed to identify and code emergent themes in your collective responses. Themes will be shared with participants and they will be invited to provide feedback via email or through postal mail.

1. How long have you been teaching Visual Art at the Secondary level?
2. How familiar are you with the new, revised, Secondary Art Curriculum documents?
3. Describe what training you have had with the new Curriculum.
4. Please share your thoughts on the Revised Art Curriculum document.
5. Tell us about any changes the new curriculum might have on your teaching practice.

Appendix B: Comparing the 2000 and 2010 Ontario Visual Arts Curriculum

The first few pages of the new documents look remarkably similar to those found in the previous edition. While subheadings have switched from *the place of the arts* in the curriculum to *the importance of the arts* in the curriculum, these introductory pages continue to serve as advocacy for the valuable role the arts can play in the education of all students (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, 3; The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, 3).

Similarities

Art making as a focus of student learning continues to permeate the curriculum. The expectation remains that students will engage the creative process for the production of two and three dimensional art in a variety of media. In the earlier document, one overall expectation is that students will, "use materials and processes to create art objects that express their intent," (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, 50), while in the revised curriculum, the same expectation of the creative process is worded slightly differently: "apply the creative process to create a variety of artworks, individually and/or collaboratively" (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, 120).

Skills are expected to grow and expand in terms of media and technique throughout the grades, as students' repertoire grows over time, culminating in a portfolio of work by the end of each grade. Students will also consider elements of art history as it relates to the study of art and to their own personal lives. As students consider both their own art making, and art historical examples of art, they continue to employ the critical analysis process to consider the creation, influences, intent and aesthetic judgment of works of art. While these elements remain, all of them have undergone some shift or change, to reflect growing diversity in terms of students, technology, and art making practices in the 21st century.

Differences: What's New?

Expanded front matter. The new documents contain a greatly expanded preface with the intent to communicate key information regarding the philosophical and pedagogical ground upon which the curriculum expectations have been developed. There are expanded and revised constructions of the critical analysis process for looking at art, as well as an expanded creative process for critically thinking about the creation of art. Where there were formerly two pages entitled, "Some Considerations for Program Planning in the Arts," (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999) there are now fifteen. Added to the original considerations are: instructional approaches, environmental education, equity and inclusive education, multiple literacies in the arts, inquiry and research skills, critical literacy, the role of the school library, ethics in the arts, and

expanded program pathways including high skills majors (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b). This is also a new section regarding the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the education of students. An educator who actually reads this front matter may be daunted how exactly to address this list of considerations in addition to curriculum expectations.

Roles and responsibilities. New to the front matter is a new section outlining the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in education. The list includes: students, parents, teachers, principals and community partners. While the responsibilities assigned each are somewhat generic to all disciplines, there are excerpts specific to the arts. For example, students are reminded that "honing their craft is important and that real engagement with the arts requires hard work and continual self-assessment" (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, 5). As well, parents are advised that family activities such as attendance at concerts, galleries, and other arts and cultural events will demonstrate their awareness and support for their child's artistic interests and education. Under the banner of community partnerships, the benefits of field trips and visiting artists, musicians, actors and dancers for integrating arts programming in their classrooms are noted. Perhaps the most salient point for me in this section of the new document is in reference to principals:

To support student learning, principals ensure that the Ontario curriculum is being properly implemented in all classrooms using a variety of instructional approaches. It is the role of the principal to ensure that appropriate resources are made available for teachers and students (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, 7).

Here we can see that principals are charged with the duty to ensure that teachers are supported in the implementation of curriculum. In the final phases of my research, this relationship may be explored further as it may be relevant to both teacher agency and to issues around implementation.

The creative process. While the creative process was implicit in the 1999 document, it was not explained in detail beyond a brief explanatory note at the conclusion of the curriculum. The creative process was described as a linear, four stage process moving towards the creation of artwork: exploration, experimentation, production and evaluation (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999). Consideration of the creative process has grown in scope to comprise a flexible, cyclical, eight stage process instead of four.

The creative process is no longer a footnote in the curriculum, rather, it plays a more featured role, as each of the eight stages of the creative process are described in detail, and teachers are provided with possible activities for students at each phase (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b). There is discussion regarding the importance of

the creative process in innovation, critical thinking, and the assimilation of new thinking with existing knowledge.

The critical analysis process. Much like the creative process, the critical analysis process has been upgraded from a brief endnote that lists five stages for evaluating artworks (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999), to several pages devoted to the critical analysis process (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b). Steps include: initial reaction, analysis and interpretation, consideration of cultural context, expression of aesthetic judgment and ongoing reflection. There is a user-friendly graphic for the visual learner, and a series of sample guiding questions to lead students through the critical analysis process.

Greater flexibility with respect to art history. The 2010 curriculum places a greater emphasis on a thematic study of the history of art rather than a chronological approach. While art history was not entirely prescriptive in the previous document, examples and suggestions largely focused on a chronological, Western art direction. For example, in the Grade 9 curriculum, students are expected to "demonstrate knowledge of a segment of the early art history timeline (e.g., prehistoric times, Egyptian, ancient civilizations)" (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999, 49). There is nothing here that requires a teacher to cover any particular segment of the Western art timeline, as the examples were not expectations. As one travels through the grades however, teachers are guided through a chronological series of examples by Grade 12.

The newer, revised document presents a different approach to art history. Grade 9 students are now expected to "interpret a variety of historical and/or contemporary art works (e.g., prehistoric cave paintings, Egyptian tomb paintings, Claes Oldenburg's Shoestring Potatoes Spilling from a Bag) to identify their subject matter and purpose and the meanings they convey." (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b, 122). While art history continues to figure prominently in the curriculum, the term history has largely been replaced with the word culture. As students consider art from the past and present in relation to their own experiences and art making, the word culture allows for a greater depth of study of the influences on art making, as well as diversity in terms of art styles and traditions, past and present.

Fewer specific expectations with increased support for teachers. Another notable change in the document is the decreased number of expectations, each with more in-depth examples and new teacher prompts. Grade 9 Art, for example, previously had twenty-eight specific expectations, spanning three pages (The Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1999), while the revised curriculum (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b) contains twenty-six specific expectations over six pages. These specific expectations are longer, and described in greater detail, complete with more examples and teacher prompts.

The examples and prompts are intended to clarify the expectations and provide a sense of how the expectation may be achieved. As well, examples and prompts are more current, accessible and inclusive in terms of content, multiculturalism, and a wider range of art making practices. For example, there are now teacher prompts designed to connect to the interests and experiences of teenagers: "When designing your comic book cover, how could you draw the reader's attention to the name of your hero or to some of your hero's powers or abilities?" (120), and "What types of cultural, social, or environmental events are held in your community? Could any of these provide opportunities for you to design promotional material, make costumes, design sets, or display your art works?" (123). These prompts allow teachers and students to engage with the curriculum on a personal level, regardless of community or location in Ontario.

These features are examples, not expectations, and teachers are free to use their professional judgment as to how they wish to approach the expectation to support student learning in individual classroom situations with different needs. Finding examples from the two documents for comparison is difficult, as the expectations have changed sufficiently that they do not align well on a one-to-one basis.

With fewer expectations, with richer description, examples and suggested prompts, it is not difficult to understand how the curriculum document has grown in length almost three-fold, from 66 to 155 pages in length. The curriculum appears greatly expanded both in terms of the front matter and in terms of detail regarding curriculum expectations. This provides teachers not only with much more detail, and with much more to read. These changes give the appearance of greater flexibility for the classroom teacher. Providing additional examples and prompts assists in creating a rich curriculum of interest to the students, relevant to differing social and cultural contexts and locations.

The difference between the two expectations above is the shift in emphasis from product to process. At first glance, it may seem that these two expectations are similar to one less familiar with the creative process. In my interpretation of not only these two expectations, but through examination of the curriculum document as a whole, this marks a significant shift from a focus on product to an emphasis on process. Students are still expected to produce a body of art work throughout any visual art course, however, there is a new appreciation for creativity and the creative process in terms of curriculum content, delivery and assessment.

Prerequisites for senior courses. In the previous curriculum, either a grade 9 or 10 credit was required if students wished to further their studies in the arts. This is no longer the case for all courses. In the revised curriculum, it is noted in the introductory pages that grade 11 and grade 12 arts courses are designed to build on the skills students have developed in previous grades. There is the suggestion that students in senior grades will acquire more advanced skills to apply in more complex ways (The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010b). Paired with this change is the loss of any prerequisite for any Grade

11 Open level arts course: this was not the case in the previous curriculum where at least one grade 9 or 10 course was required. These changes seem incongruous to me and to other art educators involved in my pilot study, as it seems difficult to build on skills that may not have been acquired if a student did not benefit from study in the arts during either grades 9 or 10.

Appendix C: Semi Structured Interview Questions

Research Questions

A number of research questions could be considered to address the research problem. This work will address three key questions. What are the perspectives of visual art teachers regarding the value of recent changes made to the curriculum? To what extent does a change in curriculum policy translate into a change in teaching practice? What role does culture play in these perceptions and pedagogical practices? These questions will be addressed throughout the three phases of this research.

Interview Questions

1. What school board do you presently teach in? Would you describe your school more as a rural or an urban school?

2. How many years have you been teaching Visual Art at the secondary level? (*Include the present year*)

3. Gender

4. Age

5. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

6. Any Additional Qualifications (e.g., AQ courses, diplomas, etc.).

7. How familiar are you with the new, revised, Secondary Art Curriculum documents?

8. Did you have input into the development of the new arts curriculum (focus groups, professional association feedback, etc.)

9. Describe what professional development or training you have had with the new arts curriculum.

10. Do you feel that you had adequate support before you began teaching the new curriculum?

11. Have you collaborated with fellow teachers on new curriculum initiatives (e.g., course development, teaching strategies, learning cycles, etc.)? If yes, describe in detail.

12. How would you describe the difference between the "old" and the "new" arts curriculum?

13. Tell us about any changes the new curriculum has had on your teaching practice.

14. Please share your thoughts on the Revised Art Curriculum document.

15. What degree of control do you have over what art curricula is covered in your art room, and if others have a say, who? (agency within institutional and social systems).

16. Do you feel that your administrators, (e.g., Principal/VP) are aware of the new curriculum requirements?

17. Has there been any administrative oversight on whether the new curriculum is being taught?
    Have you noticed any student response to changes you have made as a result of using the new curriculum (e.g., new courses/approaches/content, etc.)? Please describe.

18. Could you share any lessons or exemplars reflective of the new curriculum?

19. What has been the impact of standardised testing on the arts (EQAO/literacy tests)?

20. Secondary students in Ontario only need to take one arts credit to satisfy matriculation requirements. Should this be changed? Why or why not?

Thank you.

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