A/r/tography as a Guide for Curriculum Design

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A/R/TOGRAPHY AS A GUIDE FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN

by

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A THESIS

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A/R/TOGRAPHY AS A GUIDE FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN

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A/r/tography is not a method for curriculum development. Rather curriculum designers who see themselves as artist, researcher, and teacher best serve their students by creating lessons and units that encourage the learners to discover the a/r/tographer in themselves. Students who research themes presented in the visual arts classroom, create images that build on their personal experiences and communicate their individual perspective, and then teach others about their process are more likely to have relevant visual arts experiences. This paper explains the idea of a/r/tography and shows how a/r/tography as an overarching guide can inform curriculum whereby student artists construct meaningful experiences in a visual arts educational setting.
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My Beginnings

My teaching career began at a small urban school that was known for very little, save some of the lowest reading and math scores in the district. The school I taught at was in a neighborhood where once grand homes were divided and then subdivided into lesser dwellings. The school had a transient population of approximately 42%, which may have been due in part to the high number of homeless students who were bused in daily from the City Mission. More than 92% of students received free or reduced priced lunches, and it was not uncommon for Child Protective Services officers to be at the school. The principal who hired me was replaced midway through the third quarter of the year. And even with all of this, I could not have been more enthusiastic about the opportunity that lay before me on the day I was hired.

I knew that I would provide my students with an opportunity to engage in art in ways that would help them make meaning both in their artwork and also in their lives; my lessons were linked in some manner to aspects of their identities, their interests, their family…their experiences. On my first day, I introduced a lesson crafted around the concept of place. I wanted students to go out onto the school grounds with new sketchbooks and sharpened pencils in hand, and sketch their environment—both the school and surrounding homes. This was to be a precursor to a grander unit about how our identities are shaped by where we live and, of course, our own impact on the community. Seventeen 3rd graders followed me outside; they listened as I briefly described the intent of our sketches, found seats in the grass, and commenced drawing in their new sketchbooks. No more than a few minutes after settling into our drawings, one boy stood up, shouted that I was a “fool,” and ran off down the street. I, with no walkie-talkie or
cell phone at my disposal, cannot express the feeling of panic and shock that struck me. The remaining third graders jumped to their feet and cheered him on. In hindsight I know that he couldn’t have been all that fast, but as time has clouded my memory I see an 8-year-old version of Usain Bolt striding away from me growing smaller with each step he took, and so began my teaching career.

The lessons I learned from that experience are many and most likely obvious to anyone who has taught for even a short period of time. What may not have been obvious is how the impact of this incident overshadowed my pedagogy of teaching. Theories of education took a back seat to more pressing issues related to my survival. As the year unfolded, I focused less on how to create aesthetic experiences for my students, as Dewey (1934) advocated, and instead attended to the scaffolding needed to ensure that the class was able to simply function.

Over the course of the last decade I have taught as an itinerant art teacher at two elementary schools and as a full time visual arts educator in high school. The latter is my current station. The socioeconomics of this school mirror many of the dynamics of the primary school I described previously. Today, my energies are not spent on management of students in my room, but instead are attentive to my original goal of creating opportunities for students to engage with art in ways that help them make meaning both in their artwork and also in their lives. But even after years of developing strategies for organizing students and attaining an understanding of school protocol and politics, pursuing my goal of constructing curriculum that has the potential to be meaningful to my students is still quite challenging.
Providing the scaffolding for students to have an aesthetic experience is no easy task. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) writes that such experiences “require continuity, cumulation, conservation, tension and anticipation” (p. 143); all of those pieces come together naturally, creating the whole, the experience. I know what Dewey is advocating, I have felt that when creating my own art, but when developing curriculum, it’s not nearly as organic. I attribute the lack of fluidity when designing curriculum to two sources. First, I have no frame of reference from own educational experiences. Eisner (2002, p. 49) referred to this a secondary ignorance. It is the impediment to designing curriculum that comes from not knowing what you don’t know. My elementary and high school art education did not provide an opportunity to witness the type of lesson design I hope to achieve in my own classroom. I cannot recollect one personal work of art that truly had meaning in my life. What I was asked to render was not open to interpretation, there were no overarching ideas or themes presented, and not once did I assess my creative intentions. My art did not build on personal understandings, it predominantly centered on successful manipulation of materials. I remember drawing a few self-portraits-those at least marked a time in my life and served as a record of physical change. I drew a lot of still-life composed of objects found in the art room; once I drew my shoes-that was a slightly more intimate still life, lots of animals and plants, but nothing more cherished than that, [Figure 1]. For a student, like myself, who innately appreciates art, this satisfied me because I found ways to make my projects interesting and worthwhile. I was the student able to articulate whatever was being asked of me visually. I presented as the learner who “got it” because my visual representations conveyed my teacher’s intent, but I wonder if the same could be said for my peers who
may not have been as interested in art or as artistically inclined. What about the less-experienced artists? the able, but unmotivated? the less abled? those with varied interests and styles? (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005). How did those students engage with art?

![Shoe, Michelle Hrbek, 24”x18”, 1986 [oil pastel]. This shoe drawing was completed during my high school freshman drawing course.](image)

*Figure 1.* This is a typical example of high school artwork. *Shoe*, Michelle Hrbek, 24”x18”, 1986 [oil pastel]. This shoe drawing was completed during my high school freshman drawing course.

Secondly, creating meaningful thematic-based curriculum is difficult (Hurwitz & Day, 2001a). It requires time, attention and reflection, all of which can easily be derailed by the daily realities faced within the classroom (Lortie, 1975). As a pre-service educator
the idea of theme-based curriculum espoused through methods courses and publications like *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), require far more time than I felt I could spare in developing my own curriculum. This lack of time, standard for all educators, commencing their career or even those tenured, is compounded by pressure from district and building administrators who ask visual arts instructors to dedicate time to support the “core” classes such as reading, writing, math and science within the art classroom (Sabol, 2010). At the school where I am currently employed it has not been uncommon for me to be asked to allot time for writing assignments unrelated to the visual arts. I once participated in a building wide “contest” spurred on by administrators, with the intent of rewarding my art students if they were able to use such words as “infer” and “trace” successfully in a sentence simply because these terms were oftentimes found and used in standardized tests. This not only took time away from my subject area, but it also reinforced notions that art is not valuable on its own (Eisner, 1998; Hurwitz & Day, 2001b). Frequently these mandated school-wide writing assignments were disjointed from the instruction at hand and ultimately just another distraction from creating the programming that I desired to develop.

**A/r/tography**

I was introduced to the idea of a/r/tography as an undergraduate. The acronym of a/r/t can best be understood through the following ideas of Irwin and de Cosson:

**Art** is the visual reorganization of experience that renders complex the apparently simple or simplifies the apparently complex. **Research** is the enhancement of meaning revealed through ongoing interpretations of complex relationships that are continually created, recreated and transformed. **Teaching** is performative knowing in meaningful relationships with learners. (2004, p. 31)
In other words, it is a theory that integrates knowing, doing, and making, not unlike Aristotle’s three concepts of knowledge: theoria, praxis, poesis (p. 27). A/r/tography allows for the merging of artistic understanding, the on-going process of being a life-long learner/researcher, and teaching, with each informing and enhancing the other. For those unfamiliar with this methodology, it can be considered somewhat intangible in nature. Springgay, Irwin, and Kind suggest this themselves by writing that a/r/tography is not a “formulaic-based methodology, rather it is a fluid orientation creating its rigor through continuous reflexivity and analysis” (as cited in Lea, Belliveau, Wager, & Beck, 2011, p. 3). It is difficult to grasp because it is vague, abstract, and in many ways uncomfortable. As a practice-based/research-based methodology, it does not seek to answer questions or provide procedural instructions that result in universally precise outcomes—it is a practice of living inquiry, that resides in the tension between spaces, pursuing and acknowledging discomfort as a place of learning.

If, then, questions are not answered and procedural instructions do not result from this method, why argue that it should be used as a lens through which to view visual arts curriculum development? After all, isn’t curriculum itself fairly prescribed? Don’t standards and objectives dictate what educators must teach? Yes, visual arts curriculum is and can be prescribed and standards and objectives do unify what is being taught. But do strict formulaic procedures imposed by an external source serve as the most effective manner for teaching the arts? (Eisner, 2002) Do we want common outcomes when it comes to a student’s drawings, paintings, and sculptures? No. If, as Dewey (1934) argued, experience is essential to growth and experience is the medium of education, in order for students to grow through their education we have to take into account the
differences in experiences for each student. Using a canned lesson doesn’t take into account the individual. It harkens back to my own art education where generic instruction did not provide opportunities for invention (from either the teacher or student), nor do these types of lessons motivate students to find their own voice (Greene, 1995). I argue that an a/r/tographic perspective is worthwhile as guidance for curriculum design. I’m not suggesting that a/r/tography is a method for curriculum design, but that curriculum design is a goal of teaching and teaching is a component of a/r/tography. When designing curriculum, I think about how to translate the recursive flow of artist, researcher, and teacher to my students, as I want each one of them to experience a/r/tography in their own lives. I believe that curriculum designed by an a/r/tographer, when enacted, offers student-artists the potential to complete art problems that meet overarching standards and create deeper meaning in their lives as they too move between artist, researcher, and teacher.

As an a/r/tographer, I understand the challenge of creating educational experiences for growth. When designing curriculum, I experience the ebb and flow that leads me to a deeper understanding of how best to develop my lessons so that instruction builds on the students’ own experiences. Discovering how best to reach my intended outcomes mimics the process my own students undergo when solving an art problem. If I am asking my students to deal with personal divergence in finding a purpose related to their artwork, shouldn’t I have to navigate the same waters in rising to the challenge of crafting our lessons? A/r/tography encourages discomfort, it has the potential to make visual arts curriculum stronger. Dewey (1934) advocated something similar to this when he wrote:
Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living. Under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that conscious intent emerges… we have an experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. Then and then only is it integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experiences from other experiences. (p. 35-36)

A/r/tography as a guide for developing curriculum runs parallel to Dewey’s idea of having an experience. It encourages the designer to provide room for resolution to evolve, leads to a more significant understanding of how best to teach the theme being presented, and it encourages genuine growth for art students; it has the potential to have no end beyond itself (Dewey, 1916). During and even after the lesson, I will consider, reconsider, and reflect on what transpired during the unit. Taking heed of what I learned from my students when the class was occurring, I modify forthcoming lessons in ways that I believe will further enable future art students’ growth. The fact that a/r/tography as a methodology does not supply answers, result in procedural instruction, nor provide a prescription is exactly what visual arts educators should strive for if we truly desire meaningful discoveries when teaching our students.

It is the goal of creating experiences for my students that has led me to the creation of my current curriculum and further created the fodder for this thesis. In this paper I will examine the function of artist, researcher, teacher, discuss how my role as each has helped define my educational practice, and further indicate how my life as an a/r/tographer helps guide me when creating relevant visual arts experiences for my students. A narrative of my personal experiences coupled with artwork, both my own and my students’ will provide evidence supporting my claim.
**Artist**

I see art in everything. I am aware of the design patterns I create in my yard when mowing the lawn, I notice the way light slices through the blinds and settles on the interior of my home as the sun rises in the east, I pay attention to reflections on still water and racing rain drops down windows. Very little happens visually that I don’t consider or record, [*Figure 2*].

Daily, I take time and make mental notes of things I see or think, I record my visions, thoughts, memories, and even collect physical images that visually stimulate my thinking, oftentimes I document or place them in a sketchbook, [*Figure 3*]. When I take time to create art, I reflect back on these records and attempt to make sense of the images, considering what I can use from each. In some instances the images may lead to other ideas, sometimes they function as a record of light or texture or some other physical detail. I will sift through my thoughts and decide how to take this collection of material and turn them into works of art.
I reflect on what my message might be and let my own interests and experiences shape the work I am about to create. Dewey (1934) suggests that an artist “observes the scene with meanings and values brought to his perception by prior experiences” (p. 89). These sketchbook pages are records of those prior experiences, how I put them together, and the decisions I make demand that I participate in the creative process. This is not something that happens quickly. I do not rush the development of an artwork; there is no deadline.

*Figure 2. Personal Reference material. Examples of photographic source material taken for future thematic inspiration or technical reference.*
for the outcome; I take time to appreciate and enjoy the aesthetics of the moment, I linger (Eisner, 1991).

Figure 3. Examples of sketchbook pages. 2014, 2009 (respectively), [marker, graphite].

As an artist I spend a great deal of time working on creating imagery that is important to me. I believe, as do others, (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2004; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002) that art acts as a form of communication between human beings about what matters in life. Of course, what matters in life varies from one individual to the next, but ultimately artists create art about what they believe is important. Pablo Picasso created *Guernica* as a reaction to the violence and suffering inflicted on the victims of war; Kara Walker uses silhouettes to create narratives pertaining to race, gender, and sexuality; Vic Muniz, through photography, recast the workers of Jardim Gramacho, the world’s largest dump,
not as trash pickers, but as important and influential figures in art-examining poverty in the process; and Judy Chicago creates images and installations from a feminist perspective. My art is continually evolving; I create images that attend to relationships within my family and the small moments of everyday. Drawings capture images of my children frozen in time; I create records of their expressions and attitudes, [Figures 4.1 and 4.2]. In other pieces, I document the taken-for-granted and often overlooked aspects of any given day, just as some individuals keep a written journal, I keep a visual diary of small, but memorable event, [Figure 5.1 & 5.2]. The formats and intent of each are relatively similar; my art is about documenting life, not the grand moments, but the subtle observations I make, the flash of an event, turned into a sketch that preserves a memory. I can look at any one drawing from my diary and be transported to that time, place and feeling. I give attention to the moments that go unnoticed.

This creative process does not work in isolation. Not only am I recording the images of my day, but I’m also searching for new ways of seeing and creating. I seek out artists, media, and techniques. This search takes place in museums, galleries, books, on-line, my classroom, and the world around me. As an artist, most everything I encounter is source material for future works of art.
Figure 4.1. Cooper’s Expressions, Age 7, 2013, 48”x60”, [Colored Pencil].

Figure 4.2. Close up image of Cooper’s Expressions, Age 7.
Figure 5.1 - Journal Entries, December 2012, 48”x60”, [Graphite].

Figure 5.2 - Close up of Journal Entries, December 2012.
Researcher

If research is the careful study that is done to find and report new knowledge about something (Mirriam-Webster, 2014) and artists and teachers are constantly investigating and studying new ways of making art and enhancing their teaching, then it can be concluded that the simple act of being an artist and teacher makes one a researcher.

The component of researcher in a/r/tography is the most challenging to convey because it is not an autonomous entity, but more of a transitional module between the artist and the teacher; both creating a work of art and teaching requires a fair amount of investigation and study (Pearse, 2004). It has already been established that, as an artist, the process of living, collecting images, ideas, and searching for new ways of seeing occurs daily. As a classroom teacher, I seek out new theories and practices related to education and curriculum design all the while reviewing how and what I teach in order to improve instruction and student outcomes.

Teacher

In the last two years, the pursuit of my Master’s degree has encouraged the study of works written by Barone, Dewey, Eisner, Greene, Irwin, Noddings and dozens of other educational thinkers. With each article or book, I reflect on what they are theorizing. I contemplate their theories and consider whether what they champion supports or conflicts with my current beliefs. I will use insight from these thinkers to inform my teaching, support my curricular decisions, and to reinforce my belief that students can and should have deep connections to the art they create and the meaning they make.
For example, prior to working on my degree, I had little exposure to the thoughts and writing of Noddings. Her pedagogy of care works seamlessly with what I’m trying to accomplish with my curriculum design. She proposes that the responsibility of schools is to create an educational scheme that “speaks to the existential heart of life—one that draws attention to our passions, attitudes, connections, concerns and experienced responsibilities” (Noddings, 2005 p.47), and further indicates that in order to do so, educators must “listen attentively and to respond as positively as possible” to their students (pg. xiv). This, she argues, is our educational obligation. In designing lessons for my students I must be willing to listen, encourage, and validate their thinking and doing.

Other writers caused me to rethink long held beliefs. Eisner has always been an advocate for Discipline-Based Art Education (Brandt, 1987; Eisner, 2002) and since I have read and subscribed to much of his philosophy, I had to really consider some faults with DBAE as a version of art education. In being exposed to Cahan and Kocur’s book *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education*, I was introduced to the belief that this educational model embraces a Eurocentric and patriarchal perspective (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2004; Cahan & Kocur, 1996), an idea that I had not previously contemplated. Upon reading Nieto and Bode’s *Affirming Diversity, The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*, I can better see how that may be the case. Arriving at that destination, I now do a more thorough job of scrutinizing image selections and artists studied so that I don’t inadvertently perpetuate social constructs that may already exist and undermine the idea of an egalitarian society. While these examples are few, they provide some indication of the continuous consideration and reflection that are necessary
to make curriculum more supportive of my students’ backgrounds, experiences, and needs.

**Artist/researcher/teacher Unite**

It is important to note that while artist, researcher, and teacher were separated and compartmentalized in order to explain my personal connection with each component of a/r/t, as a practice-based/research-based method, a/r/tography is interdisciplinary (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind, 2005). In order for me to create curriculum design that I believe best serves my students, I must call upon the influences of artist, researcher, and teacher collectively. The development of the lesson happens when all three collide, each informing the other.

Since embarking on my degree, I have redeveloped my curriculum to create a full semester of study that builds on the students’ personal experiences while also asking them to consider their role in society. In originating and creating this curriculum I looked to the writing and research of Anderson, Cahan, Kocur, Nieto, Noddings, Milbrant and other who write extensively about the responsibility of educators in promoting a sense of societal accountability and care amongst their students. Because units of study last approximately 3 to 4 week, it is only possible to develop 5 units within the semester. In addition, I took into account that students may not have the skill level to carry out their visual intentions; therefore an introductory unit that teaches various components of drawing commences the term. Barring the *Drawing Skills Unit*, because it relates more to the teaching of drawing technique and less to a theme of personal responsibility and compassion, a brief summation of each unit follows. All curriculums, assessments, and
instruction developed within the course were crafted using Wiggins and McTighe’s *Understanding by Design* (2005). Coursework for beginning drawing students includes:

- Drawing Skills Unit
- Identity and perception of self
- Empathy
- Race, stereotypes, and moving towards a more accepting society
- Family dynamics, relations within the family, and popular culture

**Identity and Perception of Self**

For this art problem, students create a graphic novel showcasing an important aspect of their identity or a moment that they believe is/was paramount in the development of their own character. The graphic novel must include written documentation, either in the form of dialog within the novel or as a separate essay to be submitted with the project. [Figure 6]. The technical skills include working with foregrounds, middle grounds, backgrounds, understanding perspective, the visual elements of sequencing and narrative, and the creation of value with ink. I chose identity because we are always working towards becoming. “Identity is an achievement, gained and modified through the process of moving upon and experiencing a world in which others are simultaneously achieving their own identities” (Barone, 2001, p. 124). All of us have unique experiences that shape who we are. This project aims to pull those experiences out of my learners and give them a physical representation of the occasion that they believe shaped them (in some respect) into the individual they are today. Student projects have covered the gamut of experiences. They have acknowledged their favorite activities, relationships,
rites of passage such as acquiring their driver’s licenses, coming to terms with depression, and one project even explained how a student disclosed an unplanned pregnancy to her parents. In each case, the artist was in control of the story they were telling and each outcome was unique and personal to the storyteller.

*Figure 6.* This is the student work of Rebecca Schiltz. Schiltz depicted a series of scenes showing a turning point in her life when she felt isolated from her peers. She sought solace in her music in order to get through this challenging time.

**Empathy**

Understanding empathy leads to prosocial behaviors (actions that benefit others: individuals, groups, or society as a whole) (Klass, 2012). As an artist, I know all too well how vulnerable one can feel in revealing themselves through their artwork. The intended outcome of developing a curriculum around the concept of empathy is to encourage students to become more compassionate towards their peers when sharing and expressing their artistic intentions. Additionally, empathy is a skill needed in life. Inspired by artist Frank Warren’s (2005) PostSecret community art project, students are asked to anonymously contribute a never-been-shared, truthful secret to a “secret box” located outside of the art room. These secrets are then chosen by other students in the drawing
class as the source for their artwork, [Figure 7]. In addition to the concept of empathy, this lesson introduces students to an array of materials and encourages experimentation. The PostSecret project also allows for discourse on dealing with depression, suicidal thoughts, and addiction.

Figure 7. Briana Montez illustrates an anonymous secret submitted by a fellow student. Secrets range from hopes and dreams to substance abuse and even thoughts of suicide.

Race, Stereotypes, and Moving Towards a More Accepting Society

“There is really only one race-the human race. Historically, the concept of race has been used to oppress entire groups of people for their supposed difference” (Nieto, 2012 p. 47). Because I teach a diverse population and because current events have brought issues of race to the forefront of U.S. media coverage with the deaths of Treyvon Martin and
Michael Brown, I believe the topic of race is worthy of consideration as a theme in art. For this project, students work on the skills of portraiture with the intent of debunking a stereotype that might exist about their race. Class begins with a group activity, students work to share stereotypes. After stereotypes are shared, they then collaborate in small groups to debunk the stereotype. We also spend time talking about the potential harm of stereotypes and what those stereotypes mean for society. Students then compose a self-portrait with oil pastels, incising into the medium with words that they believe describe who they are and how they want to be perceived, all the while pushing aside a generally accepted untruth related to their race, [Figure 8].
Figure 8. Nick Keating debunks stereotypes that might exist about his race in this artwork by using a sgraffito method.

Family Dynamics, Relationships within the Family and Society

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2012 that married couple households with children under the age of 18 halved from 40 percent to 20 percent, nationally (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013). The study further reported that more students are living in homes with single parents, grandparents, and same-sex parents. In crafting the lessons within this unit, I considered the work of Kocur (1996). I asked students to consider their own family dynamic, look more closely at family representations in culture through popular media, and examine who defines the concept of a “normal” family structure (p.255). For the visual outcome, students were to craft an artwork where each member of their family was to be represented by a symbol of his or her choosing, [Figure 9]. Skills and technical expectations from the previous lesson were reinforced, but students were also introduced to various components of composition. A more detailed account of this lesson follows below, with the curriculum included in Appendix A.
Figure 9. McKensi Webel drew this image of her family. Each image represents someone she cares about; some individuals represented are biologically related others are not.

**A/r/tographical Influences: The Family Dynamics Unit Explained**

The idea for creating a lesson around the theme of family came directly from my own artistic investigations. I am constantly using my children as a source of inspiration, [Figure 10.1 and 10.2]. My daughter and sons model for me-sometimes by choice and other times begrudgingly, provide ideas for works of art, encourage me, and in general function as the muses for much of what I create. In addition, my students come from, live with, and/or will someday choose to have a family. It is a theme that offers great amount of source material and is highly relatable.
Figure 10.1. A portrait of my son. *Benjamin Swimming*, 2004, 36”x24”. [Acrylic Paint].

Figure 10.2. A portrait of my daughter. *Untitled*, 2012, 60”x48”. [Mixed Media].
I believe many art educators would have, at this point, taken the theme and simply asked students to draw their family. To accompany their plan, they could pull images of artworks depicting families; this would be relatively easy. There is nothing wrong with that scheme, however from years of teaching experience I am aware of a few caveats in this plan:

• In high school, students want to render drawings with precision, striving for a sort of hyperrealism (Edwards, 1990). Any observant secondary art teacher knows this. If students cannot render the face or figure at a level they deem superior, they become disheartened. This impediment further causes them to abandon effort; they oftentimes seek to just complete the project with whatever effort it will take to secure a passing grade.

• Students need images to help them better negotiate their drawings. Most artists work with reference materials. It is likely that the students have or can take pictures of themselves, but acquiring imagery of each family member becomes tricky, thus increasing the degree of difficulty in this project.

• Students often find realistic portraits kind of boring. Painter Alice Neel, was quoted as once saying (in Allara, 1998 p. 16):

  “…actually portraits are where more crimes are committed than in any other form of art. I mean, witness college professors that hang on walls in petrified form. I think they are frightful…they are portraits of so-called distinguished people; but I break these rules.”

She was commenting on the fact that her portraits did not look “photographic.” Neel painted with an expressive quality; her images reflect the character of the
individual. In some respects, a student’s lack of technical refinement lends itself to a more expressive portrait, but trying to convey that to a teenager who is not willing to see imperfections as beautiful, is challenging.

- Another concern I have with the proposed art project is unrelated to the student’s involvement, but lies more with the teacher. I believe in all likelihood that most educators would pull references with strong Eurocentric and non-contemporary perspectives to depict the family (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This again would only reinforce social norms that oftentimes oppress people of color and diverse backgrounds.

As a researcher, I must acknowledge that, while I know and understand my own family, I am not completely aware of all the various family structures that exist. I must dedicate time to considering family diversity. I must consider how this art problem may play out with students who come from single parent homes, blended families, adopted or foster families, households managed by grandparents or same-sex parents, even students that are emancipated from their family. I turned to resources such as Teaching Tolerance (Southern Poverty Law Center) and GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network), among others and see what information may be out there to inform me about differences among my students’ families.

Running concurrent with my investigation into family diversity, I begin the process of researching as an artist by creating my own family portrait with the same parameter I provide for my students. My idea may have come from my personal artistic interests, but I will need to brainstorm concepts and symbolic representations of my family so that I too experience some of the same thought processes as my students, [Figure 11.1 & 11.2].
This practice of sketching, drawing, and reflecting weaves back and forth informing my curriculum development and art instruction. I use the same media that my students use so I have an understanding of how the materials will react and I attempt to determine what misunderstandings my students may encounter when embarking on or engaging with this art problem (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

*Figure 11.1.* Family sketches done for the Family Dynamics Unit. I demonstrate and model the artistic process for each of the units completed during the semester, working alongside of student artists. 2013, 8.5”x11”, [Graphite].
As I continue to work on my drawing for this project, I think about how this lesson will play out in class, with my students. As I brainstorm a multitude of ideas for my own artwork, I know that each student’s outcome will be vastly different than my own and that no two projects could possibly resemble each other, as no two families are alike. I have an idea of how students may develop a plan to solve this art problem, but of course there will be surprises in the teaching process, ideas and conversations I have not prepared for. Dewey (1938) suggests that quality teaching opens the door for students to contribute to the lesson:

The plan is a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation. The teacher’s suggestion is not a mold for a cast-iron result but is a starting point to be developed into a plan through contributions from the experience of all engaged in the learning process. (p. 72)
Grumet (1993) echoes this sentiment by arguing that truly artful schooling “invites teachers to have children participate in the construction of their identities in classrooms” (p.206). It is, therefore, my responsibility to not only expect surprise, but also welcome it. In heeding that belief, I must be open to unexpected contributions from my students.

Eisner (1992) writes:

The arts teach that goals need to be flexible and that surprise counts; that chance, as Aristotle wisely remarked, is something that art loves; that being open to the unanticipated opportunities that inevitably emerge in the context of action increases insight; and that purposeful flexibility rather than rigid adherence to prior plans is more likely to yield something of value. (p. 594)

I am, consequently, not overwhelmed by surprises that arise in introducing this unit. I look forward to the unforeseen. Students will ask if they have to include family members that they do not like, perhaps a father who has not been present in their life or whether or not a deceased member of their family can be included. To all of this I respond, “You are the artist, that’s a decision for you to make…not me.” If anything, I am most amazed by just how startled students are when granted the opportunity to control their work. I will circle back asking them what conclusions they’ve reached related to their piece and listen intently to their answers. I sense that they are the ones surprised. Surprised that they control the outcome, that their drawings do not require a certain number of objects or that the arrangement of all items is their decision. I believe it is an indication of what educational theorists are concerned about, that American schooling, with standards and fixed objectives, don’t always encourage diverse answers (Barone, 2001; Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 1992).

At the onset of the lesson and throughout, we will discuss as a class the families we see on television and represented in popular culture. Essential questions like, “Is there such a
thing as a ‘normal’ family in the United States?’ and “What does it mean if we don’t see
our family unit represented in popular culture?” are discussed and circled back upon.
This leads to conversations about family diversity and what role we play in acceptance or
refusal of acceptance of the various forms families take. Students recognize that the days
of married heterosexual parents raising biological children are changing and that families
present in a variety of forms.
Students rise to the occasion and develop thoughtful and well-rendered drawings that
show this diversity. Students like McKensi Webel, presents her blended family by
incorporating her biological parents and sister, a step-parent and step-sister, grandparents,
and a close family friend when defining her family, [Figure 9]. McKensi wanted all of
the subjects within the frame of the paper to interact with each other, just as her own
family does. She represents herself with an image of an eye because every object chosen
for this artwork comes through her perspective; she also chose a pencil to symbolize her
love of drawing. The artist represents her mother with the flower, her father with the
coffee cup—which happens to be balanced on the running shoe (her step-mother), her
sister is symbolized through both the Starbucks logo and the musical notes, her step-sister
is the ballet shoe, her grandparents are the cityscape and country scape (within her eye),
and the radiating flower behind the logo is a close family friend fondly referred to as
“Mama Shine.” McKensi became an a/r/tographer herself in the process of creating this
work of art. She researched her family giving consideration to her symbol selections,
used that information to inform and create her art, and then taught me through her
assessment about what each symbol meant.
The same can be said for all the students who create projects for this art problem.

Rebecca Schiltz taught me about her large family. She is one of 7 children. For her, the family portrait she developed involved many artistic compositional choices [Figure 12]. She wanted very much to incorporate every member of her family including extended family members. When all was said and done, she placed more than 15 objects within her composition with each symbol representing the people she felt most compelled to call family.

Figure 12. Rebecca Schiltz layers objects, one on top of another, to represent her large family.
Briana Montez chose to display her family with a balanced composition that included herself, a sister, and her mother [Figure 14]. She placed each symbol in balance with one another because the three members of her family rely equally on each other. Briana also went back and forth on whether or not to include another sister who was part of the family, but not necessarily emotionally close to her. In the end she did not include that sibling because she didn’t feel as though she knew her as well now as she had in her childhood.

Figure 13. Briana Montez chose keys to a piano to represent her passion for the instrument, books because her mother is a voracious reader, and a tree to represent her sister’s love of nature.
Hannah Judkins situation was different from many of the students in class, in that she was dealing with the loss of a parent, her mother. Hannah decided that her mother’s gravestone best represents her physical presence now [Figure 15]. During the course of this project I learned a great deal about her relationship with her dad, they had grown closer since the passing of her mother although they had always been close. She shared stories of her dad’s love for heavy metal, a passion he passed on to Hannah. She also reflected on how she and her father were moving on, he now dating someone and she considering the possibility of a stepmother.

These are but a few of many examples of students presenting works of art with personal meaning. These examples pull from individual experiences, communicate what matters to the artist, and serve not as an ending to an art problem related to the theme of family, but rather a record of how they perceive the concept of family currently. As time passes, they will re-examine the theme. Inevitably their lives will change. They most likely will grow independent of their current family, possibly start their own families, and come to terms with the loss of guardians and other loved ones as they pass on. Students may not be asked to create additional works of art related to their family, but very possibly this art problem begins a sort of internal dialog whereby students will consider and reconsider their role and the roles of others related to their definition of family.
Figure 14. Hannah Judkins chooses to show a gravestone as a symbol of her mother.

The stone is a big part of her composition, which she indicated represented how important her mother was in her life.

Conclusion

Meaningful curriculum design is challenging for many art educators who strive to create relevant visual arts programming. Art educators must seek out methods for creating such curriculum and while a/r/tography is not a formula for such development, those who live as a/r/tographers are more likely to create educational experiences that encourage students to move into the realm of artist, researcher, and teacher themselves. Art works created in the course of the back, forth, and merging nature of the three elements of this methodology evolve to create unique, individual, and meaningful outcomes. Because
a/r/tography does not seek resolution, but instead encourages a living-inquiry, students are poised to take the understandings initiated in the art classroom and continue their quest to make meaning in their lives. Dewey (1916) says that development that leads to growth occurs through a cumulative movement of action toward a later result. I can’t guarantee that all of my students undergo significant change in moving towards a greater understanding because true learning experiences may not be entirely measurable within the finite time spent in the art classroom. This is not to say such growth is immeasurable, but in the limited time we spend together as art educator and students, I must rely on the cues provided by each artist, a handful of whom are exemplified in the preceding pages. Those indications include meaningful outcomes revealed through what students are able to say about their work and the visual representations they create. These items are my evidence (Eisner, 2002). In the theme-based units of study created for my beginning drawing classes, my own experiences as artist, researcher and teacher encouraged curriculum development that allowed students to be able to share and create works of art that communicate and aesthetically reveal personal meaning, which is or should be the ultimate goal of art education.
References


APPENDIX A

Family Dynamics, Relationships within the Family and Society Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Title:</th>
<th>Family Dynamics, Relationships within the Family &amp; Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade Levels:</td>
<td>9-12</td>
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Subject/Topic Areas: Visual Arts-Drawing

Key Words:

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<tr>
<th>Theme:</th>
<th>Technical:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>Negative Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Culture</td>
<td>Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Portrait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Designed by: Michelle Hrbek  
Time Frame: 10 days

School District:  
School: High School

Brief Summary of Unit (including curricular content and unit goals):

Students are to consider their own family dynamic, look more closely at family representations in culture through popular media, and examine who defines the concept of a “normal” family structure. For the visual outcome, students will craft an artwork where each member of their family is to be represented by a symbol of his or her choosing. Skills and technical expectation from the previous lesson will be reinforced, and students will also be introduced to various components of composition building.
Unit Design Status

Completed templates pages:

- ✓ Stage 1, 2, 3
- ✓ Completed blueprint for each performance task
- ✓ Completed rubrics
- ✓ Directions to students and teachers
- ✓ Materials and resources listed
- ✓ Suggested accommodations
- ✓ Suggested extensions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Draft Date:</th>
<th>Revised Draft Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 20, 2013</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by:

- ✓ Peer
- ✓ Content
- ✓ Field Tested
- ✓ Validated
- ✓ Anchored

Stage 1-Desired Results

Established Goals (Formal long term goals, such as State and District)

- What relevant goals (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this design address?

CA1-Exploring and developing the creative process through artistic expression

- Competency 1.1: Experiment with ideas, materials, structures and process
- Competency 1.2: Set their own goals and design problems.

CA2-Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures (NS4)

- Competency 2.2: Discover how history, culture, and visual arts can influence each other in making and studying works of art.

CA3-Communicating by using a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas (NS3)
• Competency 3.2: Select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

CA5-Understanding and applying process, media (art materials), and techniques (NS1)

• Competency 5.1-Apply processes, media, and techniques with skill, confidence, and sensitivity.
• Competency 5.2-Conceive and create works of visual art which relate their ideas to the processes, media, and techniques they use.

Theme of Social Justice, specifically (Family) Diversity-Family is the most basic element of self-identification for students; it shapes and informs their sense of self and who they are in the world. It is important for students to see their families reflected in the world around them, while at the same time seeing the diversity of families that also exists in our communities.

• Students and teachers will analyze their own and societal beliefs and opinions about family.
• Students will critically examine representations of families, including their own families.
• Students will examine diverse attitudes toward marriage, children, and family size.
• Students will analyze representations of families in the mass media and create alternative representations that reflect their own experiences.

### Understandings:
Students will understand that…
- What are the big ideas?
- What specific understandings about them are desired?
- What misunderstandings are predictable?

Most families (approximately 95%) do not fit the dominant societal image of the “normal” family, which constitutes one working father, a mother who stays home

### Essential Questions:

- What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding and transfer of learning?
  - What is a family?
  - Who defines family norms, and how?
  - What is the impact of not living in a “normal” family structure?
  - How does family diversity relate to art and our lives?
  - How does art about the family reflect, as well as shape, culture?
caring for the family and two children.

Mass media (culture) representations of family rarely represent the true family situation encountered by students (CA2).

Family diversity can be a source of inspiration for works of art whereby students can communicate using a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas (CA3).

Creating artwork around the concept of family requires an understanding and application of processes, media (art materials) and techniques (CA5).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will know…</th>
<th>Students will be able to…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?</td>
<td>What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skill?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key vocabulary including:</td>
<td>Discuss the concept of family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Evaluate possibilities and select solutions to art problems related to their family (CA1.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass Media</td>
<td>Apply knowledge of visual concepts, subject matter, symbols, themes, and ideas are used in his/her and others works of art (CA3.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular Culture</td>
<td>Reflect on their own comprehension what makes a family (CA2.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait</td>
<td>Express ideas of family with a variety of processes, media, and techniques to create individual artworks (CA5.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Interpret artworks created by classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Portrait</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Artistic expression is influenced by time, place, and culture. Our concepts of family or art inspired by the family are directly related to when, where, and the cultural aspects of when we exist.

Various types of family structures

Techniques used with graphite drawings including:

- Perspective
- Value
- Space
Various artworks and artists who work with the concept of family.

Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:
- *Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understanding?*
- *By what criteria will performances of understanding be judged?*

As part of an art display viewed by the entire student body and staff, you will need to create a symbolic family portrait where everyone in your family is represented in a way that you feel best reflects an aspect of their physical appearance or character, yourself included. For assessment purposes your work will be judged on how the images fit together and/or are arranged in creating your portrait. You will need to generate, what you believe is, the best solution to this problem (CA1), a written explanation of symbols chosen (CA3) and carefully use materials and techniques (CA5) in creating your work of art.

Other Evidence:
- *Through what other evidence (e.g. quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?*
- *How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?*
- Prepare a graphic organizer of your family. Explain the distinguishing visual characteristics or symbolic interests of each individual in your family.
- Informal observations of students using different processes, materials, and techniques create various effects.
- Think, Share, Pair work related to perceptions of family. (Collaboration)
- Drawing exercises that indicate student understands perspective and value:
  - Various sites: Door, Hallway, Desk
  - Scales and application
- Classroom as “Family” portrait Practice (Collaborative)

Stage 3-Learning Plan
To what extent is the learning plan effective and engaging? Consider:

Will the students...

- **W**-know where they’re going (learning goals, **why** (reason for learning the content), and **what** is required of them (unit goal, performance requirements, and evaluative criteria.
- **H**-be hooked-engaged in digging the Big Ideas (e.g., through inquiry, research, problem-solving, experimentation).
- **E**-Have adequate opportunities to **explore** and **experience** Big Ideas and receive instruction to equip them for the required performances?
- **R**-Have sufficient opportunities to **rethink**, **rehearse**, **revise** and **refine** their work based upon timely feedback?
- **E**-Have an opportunity to **evaluate** their work and set future goals?

Consider the extent to which the learning plan is...

- **T**-Tailored and flexible to address the interests and learning styles of all students.
- **O**-Organized and sequenced to maximize engagement and effectiveness.

1. Begin with Think, Pair, Share exercise about families in the media (TV) (H).
2. Present PowerPoint Presentation on Families (W & H)
3. Discuss how we define family and determine if there is a “norm” (R). (Consider not just TV, but other sources, advertisements, government?)
4. Begin discussing family diversity-present essential questions (W)
5. Have students provide questions they want to ask about theme or lesson (E2)
6. Show PowerPoint of artwork inspired that shows families. (W)
7. Present Performance Task on Symbolic Family Portraits and present Creative Process (W & E1)
8. Present Assessment (W)
9. Begin discussion about symbolism (E1)
10. Work on Graphic Organizer/Mind Map of student’s family (O)
11. Mini-Lesson on how to draw (E1):
    a. Review Line & Negative Space
    b. Sighting Door
    c. Sighting Angles
    d. Foreshortening
    e. Value Study
    f. White on White
12. Re-introduce Symbolic Family Portrait (W)
13. Create small groups that compose a classroom symbolic portrait. (R)
14. Discuss how to arrange portraits/compositions. (E1)
15. What do I really know family, my own and others (R & E2)
16. Have students develop their sketches for Portraits (Review Creative Process) (T)
17. Designate time for a peer critique (R)
18. Review students’ questions to make sure they are answered and complete a one-
minute essay reflecting on the idea of what makes a family.

19. Performance Task Assessment (E2)

**Resources:**

PowerPoint Presentation

- Artist who have drawn/painted family portraits
- Families we see in the media
- Symbolism in Life and Art
- Composition in Art

**Materials:**

Graphite Pencils

Drawing Paper Specifically cut to the students’ specifications.

**Accommodations**

Students with special needs may choose any object they like to represent their family, but the degree of difficulty in rendering the image may need to be modified or scaffolding, such as use of viewfinders, gridding, or even tracing (using the light) table may need to occur.

**Extensions**

For students with advanced skills, they should consider how all objects relate to one another. What link can be devised to show either a composition intertwined in some cohesive manner or an overall theme (for example, one student drew everyone in his family as birds in a tree. Each family member possessed some characteristic of the bird, his mother was an owl (wise), father was a songbird (loved to sing), and he was a hawk (because he considered himself powerful).

---

Family Dynamics Summative Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-2</th>
<th>3-4</th>
<th>5-6</th>
<th>7-8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Process - Planning</td>
<td>Student has thought very little about the project.</td>
<td>Student can describe how s/he envisions the final product, but finds it difficult to</td>
<td>Student can somewhat describe how s/he envisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of Symbols*</td>
<td>Is present, but not invested in the product.</td>
<td>describe how s/he will reach that goal. Has set a goal, but lets things evolve in a somewhat random manner.</td>
<td>the final product and can describe some of the steps s/he will use to reach the goal. Focused with some planning.</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is unable to explain what symbol choices represent.</td>
<td>Student is able to explain some of their symbol choices, but not all.</td>
<td>Student is able to explain all of their symbol choices.</td>
<td>Student can not only explain all of their symbol choices, but also considered how they might relate to each other or were portrayed in the artwork (purposeful arrangement of objects).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing lacks almost all detail OR it is unclear what the drawing is intended to be. Student needs to work on control.</td>
<td>Drawing has few details. It is primarily representationall with very little use of perspective shading or texture. Student needs to improve control.</td>
<td>Drawing is expressive and somewhat detailed. Little use has been made of perspective, shading, or texture. Student has basics, but has not “branched” out.</td>
<td>Drawing is expressive and detailed. Perspective, shading and/or texture is used to add interest to the painting. Student has great control and is able to experiment a little.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please list the members of your family, the symbol chosen to represent that individual, and the reason you chose that symbol (this is part of Choice of Symbols, from above).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Member</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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</table>
1-Between 1800-1900 the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that the average American family had 7 children and two married parents (one male and one female). Explain how culture has changed in relationship to the families of today, many of which we’ve discussed in class. (4pts.)

2-Compare and contrast your family and a family of your choosing represented in the mass media. Please list the TV family you are choosing for this question. (6 pts.)

3-What do you think defines a “normal” family? (4 pts.)

4-How might the experiences within your family affect your art? (4 pts.)

5-Is there anything about this art problem that you still don’t understand? Or possibly something you would like to share about this project that I don’t know, but may help me understand your thinking?
APPENDIX B

IRB Youth Assent Letter

Youth Assent Form
IRB # 13757

ART EDUCATOR AS A/R/TOGRAPHER: STUDENT VISUAL ARTS OUTCOMES

I am inviting you to participate in this research because you are currently or formerly a student enrolled in Beginning Drawing class.

The research being conducted will require NO additional time for you. All that I am asking is that the work that you would normal complete for this course be allowed to be published in my Master's thesis. My thesis is about my personal growth and curriculum development as an art educator over the past 10 years. Over the course of the last year, I have developed curriculum that showcases my evolution as an artist, researcher, and teacher (A/R/Tographer). This evolution has informed my instruction, creating what I believe is rich and meaningful curriculum. The use of your work in my thesis would be used to support my claim.

Being included in this study will not have direct benefits to you, but it may help inform curriculum design and instruction for future teaching. In addition, not participating in this study will not affect our relationship or your grade. I will not be made aware of your participation until after the semester has ended and grades have been submitted.

The publishing of your work will be confidential unless you prefer to be identified with your work.

I will also ask your parents/guardian for permission for you to participate in this study. Please talk this over with them before deciding whether or not to participate.

If you have any questions at any time, please feel free to talk to me about your concerns.

________________________________________  _________________________
Signature of Student                                   Date

________________________________________  _________________________
Signature of Investigator                             Date

Investigator
Michelle Hrbek                                      Office: 402-436-1303

118 Henzlik Hall / P.O. Box 860355 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0355 / (402) 472-2231 / FAX (402) 472-2837
APPENDIX C

IRB Parent/Guardian Assent

Dear Parents and Guardians of [Student's Name],

I am asking for your child/legal ward to participate in research that I am conducting for my Master’s thesis. The research relates to my personal evolution as an artist, researcher, and teacher over the last 10 years. Over the last year, I have worked to create curriculum that is rich and meaningful for students and meets all the requirements of [School’s Visual Arts Core Abilities]. Your student has been chosen to participate because he/she is currently or formerly enrolled in my Beginning Drawing Class. The use of your student’s work would be used to support my curriculum development.

For this research, student’s work would be documented during the fourth quarter of the spring semester only. Students would not be asked to do anything in addition to the regular coursework assigned for this course. There are no direct benefits to students as research participants, nor are there known risks or discomforts associated with participation, and no compensation or extra-credit will be given. All artwork and written documentation would be conducted regardless of my research, this letter is just asking for permissions to include your student’s art and written work in the study.

Any information obtained during the study would be kept anonymous and documented in a pass-protected computer used for [School’s name]. If students would prefer to be identified with their artwork and writing, they may certainly do so.

If your child/legal ward chooses not to participate it will not harm their relationship with me. In addition, I will not be informed of who is participating until after grades for the semester have been submitted as an added protection for your student.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to allow your student to participate. Your student will also agree to be included by providing assent. Your signature certifies that you have decided to allow them to participate having read and understood the information presented. Feel free to contact me with additional questions. Sometimes participants have questions or concerns about their rights. In this case, please contact the UNL Research Compliance Services Office at 402-472-6965. In addition, participation is voluntary. Your decision will not affect your relationship with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the [School’s name] or me.

If participating, please have your student return this document to the main office of [School’s name] with the attached envelope. Thank you for your consideration.

Name of Student to be Included:

[Signature]

[Name & Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian]

Michelle Hrbek
Art Educator
402-436-1303

Dr. Susan Wunder
TLTE Interim Chairperson
402-472-3346

118 Herzl Hall / P.O. Box 880355 / Lincoln, NE 68588-0355 / (402) 472-2231 / FAX (402) 472-2837
APPENDIX D

Statement of IRB Permission

May 23, 2014

Michelle Hrbek
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
4930 South 75th Street Lincoln, NE 68516

Susan Wunder
Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education
216A HENZ, UNL, 68588-0355

IRB Number: 20140513757 EX
Project ID: 13757
Project Title: Art Educator as Artist/Researcher/Teacher (A/R/Tographer)

Dear Michelle:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board’s opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution’s Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 1.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Exemption Determination: 05/23/2014.

1. The stamped and approved informed consent documents have been uploaded to NUgrant (files with Approved.pdf in the file name). Please distribute these documents to participants. If you need to make changes to the documents, please submit the revised documents to the IRB for review and approval prior to using them.

We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:
* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side
effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Becky R. Freeman, CIP
for the IRB