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## Elements of Concern in Pre-Service Art Teaching

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*This case study identifies key elements of concern in pre-service art teaching by exploring the experiences of pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers engaged in an 18-week pre-service art teaching experience. Three pre-service art teachers and six cooperating art teachers participated in the study. Data collection included interviews with pre-service art teachers and their cooperating teachers, class observations, lesson plans, teaching resources, videos, and the weekly journals of pre-service art teachers. The content analysis of the data reveals key elements of concern in pre-service art teaching: classroom management, balancing and integrating art curriculum content areas, and transfer of art content into pre-service art teaching. The findings have implications for the enhancement of art education programs and pre-service art teaching experiences.*

Pre-service art teaching experiences are crucial because they give students who are seeking art education certification onsite professional practice in actual classrooms. These practical experiences will help students seeking art certification to better understand the art classrooms, pupils, and schools they are likely to encounter after graduation (Bain, Newton, Kuster, & Milbrandt, 2010). Such experiences enable future art teachers to transfer and apply their knowledge of art content, theories, and pedagogy to real art classrooms (Zimmerman, 1994). Most importantly, such experiences allow pre-service art teachers to envision their life as teachers and build successful teaching habits (Milbrandt, 2006).

Researchers have described student art teaching experiences (Galbraith, 1995; Kowalchuk, 1999; Short, 1995; Unrath & Kerridge, 2009). My study adds

to this literature. The primary aim of this study was to examine pre-service art teaching experiences to identify aspects that are crucial for success in teaching. Results of this study provide teacher educators, pre-service art teachers, and their cooperating teachers with constructive guidelines for maximizing the value of the pre-service art teaching experience. The research question guiding the study was: *What are the key elements of concern in pre-service art teaching experiences?* In order to investigate this question, I interviewed three pre-service art teachers and six cooperating teachers, conducted classroom observations of the teaching of pre-service art teachers, and analyzed pre-service art teachers' teaching, their lesson plans, teaching resources, and weekly journals.

### Understanding Art Instructional Decisions of the Pre-Service Art Teacher

Milbrandt (2006) observes that many art teachers are isolated from colleagues in their own schools. There are just not many opportunities to communicate with other art teachers about new teaching ideas and methods to use in revising or updating curricula. Milbrandt also finds that novice art teachers and pre-service art teachers struggle with classroom management and with understanding their pupils' needs and interests. Hanes and Schiller (1994) describe how the physical isolation of art teachers makes it difficult for them to accept new ideas from others teaching art in the public school system. Hanes and Schiller attribute this resistance to long-established art curriculum content and curricular decisions by cooperating teachers. Bain et al. (2010) similarly find that the art lesson content decisions of pre-service art teachers and novice art teachers are heavily influenced by their cooperating teachers and school culture. In addition, pre-service art teachers often immediately recognize gaps between their college coursework and the actual work of art classes in their schools. Kowalchuk (1999) observes that in many cases, the pre-service art teachers who try to use contemporary theory and instructional strategies from their college coursework discover that they do not smoothly assimilate into actual art classrooms. Thus, as many pre-service art teachers proceed into their student teaching, they pragmatically adopt teaching methods from their cooperating teachers for survival's sake. Because these pre-service art teachers feel pressured by criticism from cooperating teachers and college supervisors, their art curricular choices are relatively simple and overly simplified, and they avoid risk-taking. Accordingly, their art lessons do not prompt pupils to engage in higher-order thinking but instead require only low-level cognition (Short, 1995). In fact, they generally are more concerned with controlling their pupils' behavior than facilitating their pupils' best learning.

## Learning Classroom Management Skills

The overriding concern amongst pre-service and novice teachers for controlling student behavior is not warranted in the literature on best practices in classroom management. One useful paradigm for conceptualizing art classroom management and the role of the teacher vis-à-vis students centers on control versus flexibility. A more controlled style means that the teacher takes the role of director or manager, and views the class as a “closed system,” meaning that teachers control students’ learning and predict learning outcomes (Prawat, 1992, p. 384). A flexible classroom management style, on the other hand, is found in the art lessons of expert teachers (Berliner, 2004). The expert art teacher views the class as an “open system” in which the teacher encourages students to construct their own knowledge through collaboration and interactive discussions (Prawat, 1992, p. 385). In this case, the art teachers’ main role is that of a facilitator or guide who knows when to challenge and when to support students (Kowalchuk, 1993). Expert art teachers do not overlook or ignore students’ insightful responses or thoughtful questions. Rather, they use them as triggers for activating students’ prior knowledge of art and artistic and cultural experience, and as a motivation and bridge for introducing new art projects or contemporary artists and artist groups. Thus, effective art teachers capitalize on the comments and questions that their students raise (Efland, 1993). There is no separation of teaching, art content, and art classroom management because these three domains are integrated into the art lesson (Kagan, 1992). These are things that the pre-service art teacher who focused on control, and who was fearful of losing control of the classroom, has yet to understand.

## Transfer Strategies

Transfer is a type of teaching strategy in which students apply prior knowledge, skills, and concepts learned from school to new situations in which they may be relevant (Perkins & Salomon, 1988). Two styles of transfer have been identified: low-road and high-road transfer (Perkins & Salomon, 1988). Low-road transfer is a simple application wherein student teachers retrieve art history knowledge and studio skills for developing their art lessons. In contrast, high-road transfer is more complicated and profound than low-road transfer; it cannot take place automatically but requires effort and thought (Fogarty, Perkins, & Barell, 1992). High-road transfer demands more active abstraction and exploration of possible connections than low-road transfer does (Perkins & Salomon, 1988). Two dimensions of transfer are particularly relevant for pre-service art teachers, and require their reflection. One facet involves the transfer by pre-service teachers of theories and pedagogical

knowledge learned in university preparatory coursework to their student teaching. The other facet focuses on their pupils' learning outcomes and transfer of knowledge. In order to promote low- and high-road transfer for their pupils, pre-service art teachers need to consider a variety of instructional strategies such as modeling, matching, simulating, generalizing concepts, and using analogies (see Fogarty et al., 1992). Transfer, classroom management, and instructional decisions are key elements considered in this study.

## Methodology

My research method is a multiple instrumental case study, also known as a collective case study in which several cases that provide insight into an issue or theme are examined (Stake, 1995). Data collected for this case study were derived from my observational notes, pre-service art teaching documents (lesson plans, teaching resources, and weekly journals), their teaching videos, and interviews (and interview transcriptions). I studied three pre-service teachers and talked to six cooperating teachers, observed two art lessons per each pre-service art teacher placement, and interviewed each student art teacher and her cooperating teacher after the completion of each placement. I also collected two pre-service art teachers' lesson plans and teaching resources such as PowerPoint files, worksheets, and handouts. I examined these pre-service art teacher's reflective weekly journals along with their teaching videos.

I employed two data analysis techniques: a layering data analysis in which I represented the data using interconnected levels of themes (Creswell, 1998, 2005), and a cross-case analysis, in which I found meaning in each case that could be generalized to the other cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used NVivo 10, a qualitative data analysis software program, to analyze data collected (interviews, pre-service teachers' instructional materials, pre-service teachers' journals and videos, and my own observational notes). NVivo 10 effectively creates classifications, attributes, and values of data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). First, I read through all the data from each participant to develop an overall understanding and put data into NVivo 10 (layer 1), and then I described each case in detail, including its unique educational, cultural, social, political, economic, and personal contexts, as relevant (layer 2). From these descriptions, I developed themes or issues that emerged from each case/participant (layer 3) and these were unified into several overarching logical structures linked by the relationships between them (layer 4) (adapted from Creswell, 1998, 2005). I compared within and across cases using comparative analysis with the grouping and conceptualizing that NVivo 10 offers (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Themes emerged from data, and each theme consisted of subthemes (see Appendix A. Themes, Descriptions, and Sub-themes). Through this process of analyzing my collected data, I was able to construct a comprehen-

sive portrait of the experiences, work, and reflections of pre-service art teachers, as well as the perceptions of their cooperating teachers concerning elements in pre-service art teaching.

## Themes/Findings

### *Classroom Management*

My observation data as well as the pre-service art teachers' weekly journals indicated that pre-service art teachers used both controlling and flexible art classroom management styles. Control-based art classroom management was reflected in a rule-based art teaching style that tended toward rigidity. In this case, pre-service art teachers followed art lesson plans that they had written previously, and rushed to complete what needed to be done for each step of their lesson plans. When these pre-service art teachers found it difficult to handle students' unexpected or inappropriate behaviors, attitudes, and questions, they eventually ignored or overlooked these issues. For example, one fourth grader looked at van Gogh's *Starry Night* and stated: "It is very expressive and emotional." However, the pre-service art teacher failed to capitalize on these insightful comments and make meaningful connections between her pupil's statement and the studio activity that her pupils were asked to make—an expressive painting using various brush strokes and contrasting colors. The pre-service art teacher seemed to think that she should present what she had prepared for the lesson. Although she followed her prepared lesson and completed her presentation, this kind of one-way, highly controlled class management did not allow her pupils to make meaningful connections with the lesson and their learning.

Another pre-service art teacher took a more flexible approach. I observed as she modified and adapted her art lesson plan and teaching strategies during her teaching after finding that some students already knew the art skills and vocabulary she had planned to teach. The pre-service teacher mentioned: "I knew when to bend the rule and to keep the rule." Her response reminded me of "flexible purposing" (Eisner, 2002, p. 77). Flexible purposing requires that art teachers be sensitive to each individual student's skills and level of understanding. They must be keenly aware of their pupils' responses to the art lessons so that the teaching and learning activities can be more unpredictable, exciting, and innovative for both art teachers and their pupils. Pre-service art teachers may need to learn whether a more controlled or flexible style is more effective for them, as well as how both styles can be applied on a case-by-case basis.

### *Balancing and Integrating Art Curriculum Content Areas*

Making artwork and studio art lessons were the dominant focus of the pre-service art teachers' lessons. Pre-service art teachers and their cooperating teachers were

fairly satisfied with the art content areas they chose to teach. Further, pre-service art teachers strongly believed they knew about art content areas. One of the pre-service teachers reflected upon her lessons:

Art history—I used with all the lessons I taught. I went through the history of van Gogh, batik, Post-Impressionism still life, pen and ink. I did a little bit of art history with everything.

My observations suggested something different, however. I found that the art history content of all the pre-service art teachers' lessons often was disconnected from their studio projects. Sometimes art history information was not presented correctly, and contextual knowledge about artists and artworks was oversimplified. For example, one pre-service art teacher explained van Gogh's *Starry Night* for her fifth graders and introduced him as Impressionist. Van Gogh is not Impressionist, but rather Post-Impressionist. Post-Impressionists developed many different representational styles and actually were against Impressionism. The pre-service art teacher only mentioned visual qualities of art works, such as the uses of colors, swirling brushstrokes, rugged forms, jagged shapes, and so on, neglecting to discuss the symbolic meaning of the cypress trees and a church in the *Starry Night* painting. Further, the three pre-service art teachers and their pupils engaged in no deeper conversations about the art works and artists; nor did they present contextual information that would have broadened the scope of the lesson.

Also missing was any discussion of art value systems, past or present, on the part of pre-service art teachers. Though exposed to contemporary theories of critical pedagogy and social constructivist perspectives in their university art education methods and education courses, and encouraged to use such perspectives in their actual teaching, these pre-service art teachers found it difficult to incorporate themes of social justice, issue-based artworks, multiculturalism, and popular and visual culture in their curriculum. The main cause of this problem of omission may be that pre-service art teachers (and possibly their art students) favored talking about art value systems instead of focusing on studio art-making techniques. Either these pre-service teachers did not learn effective and engaging ways to include discussion of aesthetic theories (past or present) in their art lessons, or they believed that such discussions are not necessary or relevant in their schools. Consideration of underlying systems of beliefs about art is a way of thinking that encourages students to consider their own and others' definitions of art, beauty, and the roles and value of art and artists within our society. Pre-service art teachers may need guidance in approaching how engagements with theory can provide a space for them to bring these philosophical and fundamental questions into their classrooms, and in ways that are interesting and relevant to their students.

### *The Transfer of Art Methods Course Content to the Actual Art Classroom*

While observing the pre-service art teachers, I wanted to see how they applied the art content, pedagogy, and teaching strategies learned in college to their student teaching experience. My observations revealed that both low-road and high-road transfer styles were used differentially by the pre-service teachers. Low-road transfer is a simple application wherein student teachers retrieve art history knowledge and studio skills in developing their art lessons. For example, one pre-service art teacher used a low-road transfer style in presenting information on Paul Cezanne and his paintings for her still life lessons. Her presentation was based on the knowledge she had gained about Cezanne, his artistic styles, and French Post-Impressionism in her art history and studio classes. Ideally, her high school pupils would transfer the knowledge they learned from this unit into their own artistic growth and incorporate what they learned from the Cezanne lesson into future art projects.

In contrast, an example of high-road transfer was demonstrated by another pre-service art teacher in the study. She taught a group of at-risk high school students and piqued their interest by introducing logo designs for skateboards. She arranged a space for a special exhibition downtown and invited the pupils, their family members, artists, art teachers, and local citizens to attend. Although she is a pre-service teacher, she synthesized and orchestrated contemporary theories, pedagogy, and art lesson ideas that she had learned from her college art teacher education program and experiences.

In my analysis of documents and interviews with all pre-service art and cooperating teachers, it was noted that all pre-service art teachers are assessed by what and how they teach and not by their pupils' knowledge and skills. Teaching for transfer may encourage pre-service art teachers to focus more on what their pupils are learning and how they as art teachers can transfer art content into different disciplinary domains.

### Insights and Recommendations

My study revealed key elements of concern in pre-service art teaching experiences. These elements can serve as useful guidelines for pre-service art teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors when they consider how to improve upon and update their teaching and learning in regard to pre-service art teaching. The key elements are *classroom management*, *balancing and integrating art curriculum content areas*, and *transfer of art content into pre-service art teaching*. Each of these elements is explained below.

First, pre-service art teachers and cooperating teachers seem excessively concerned about classroom management, controlling the class, and pupils' behavior and



attitudes toward learning. Yet, art classroom management cannot be achieved or mastered in such a short and probationary period, but must be integrated into the individual art teacher's personality, pedagogy, and curriculum (Kagan, 1992). Second, pre-service art teachers need to build new ways of teaching art using art history, contemporary art and artists, and art theory/value systems, including incorporating popular and visual culture and multicultural and social justice themes into their lessons. Such approaches and topics are highly versatile and can be transferred within content, across academic disciplines, and into various life-contexts pupils may encounter. Finally, transfer mechanisms (Salomon & Perkins, 1989) can be used when pre-service art teachers develop their teaching strategies and evaluate their teaching and their pupils' learning outcomes. Perkins and Salomon (1988) introduced two mediation strategies for transfer: hugging and bridging. Hugging refers to reflexive and automatic transfer, that is, making the learning experience like the situation one wants to transfer. In contrast, bridging is reflective transfer, or helping students to create generations, regulate their cognition, and be thoughtful in other ways that aid connection of their learning. These mechanisms enable pre-service art teachers to identify something they want to transfer, think about where it transfers, and decide how they can teach for transfer (Fogarty et al., 1992).

Art education methods courses play essential roles for pre-service art teachers because they allow them to make connections between the art content they know and how art content can be taught (Carroll, 2011). Two decades ago, Arthur Efland (1993) found that methods courses are often taught without adequate reference to art content itself, and that content is taught without adequate reference to teaching methods. From my own study, it is not clear that significant progress has been made in this regard. Art educators who teach college art methods courses to future art teachers should design specific learning activities that lead pre-service art teachers to develop approaches to art lesson planning that specify important ideas about art that they want to teach, how to effectively teach in ways that are engaging to contemporary students, and how to transfer what is learned in methods courses to actual classrooms (Fogarty et al., 1992). Through more self-aware experiences with the aspects of teaching identified in this study, pre-service art teachers may hone both their knowledge about art and their teaching strategies. Importantly, pre-service art teachers would benefit from methods courses that promote greater awareness of and strategies for incorporating art history, art value systems, and contemporary issues relevant to the visual arts. Incorporating such considerations into pre-service instruction, instead of focusing so predominantly on studio skills and classroom control, would provide opportunities for these future teachers to more effectively engage contemporary theories and practices in art education. For this to happen, cooperating teachers need to support and encourage pre-service art teachers' innovative, contemporary, and comprehensive approaches to art teaching, as these future art teachers take their rightful place in the profession

and shape the learning of 21st-century students. In this regard, art teacher educators, that is, those who teach future art teachers, need to understand and engage cooperating teachers in more robust ways.

#### APPENDIX A. THEMES, DESCRIPTIONS, AND SUB-THEMES

Theme	Sub-Themes	Description of Theme
Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control-based</li> <li>• Extrinsic</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Intrinsic</li> </ul>	The strategy for interacting with students to facilitate the best learning
Balancing and Integrating Art Curriculum Content Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disconnection between making art and art history/aesthetics/art criticism</li> <li>• Mispresented knowledge</li> <li>• Oversimplifying the understanding of art</li> <li>• Rushing classroom discussion and aesthetic practice with visual images and artworks</li> <li>• Too much focus on making art</li> </ul>	How pre-service art teachers create lesson plans, develop learning activities, and execute lessons that consist of art making, art history, aesthetics, popular culture, art criticism, and other related areas in a balanced way
The Transfer of Art Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-road transfer</li> <li>• Low-road transfer</li> <li>• No transfer</li> </ul>	How pre-service art teachers apply and implement what they learn about art content and pedagogy in methods courses to their lessons in actual classrooms

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