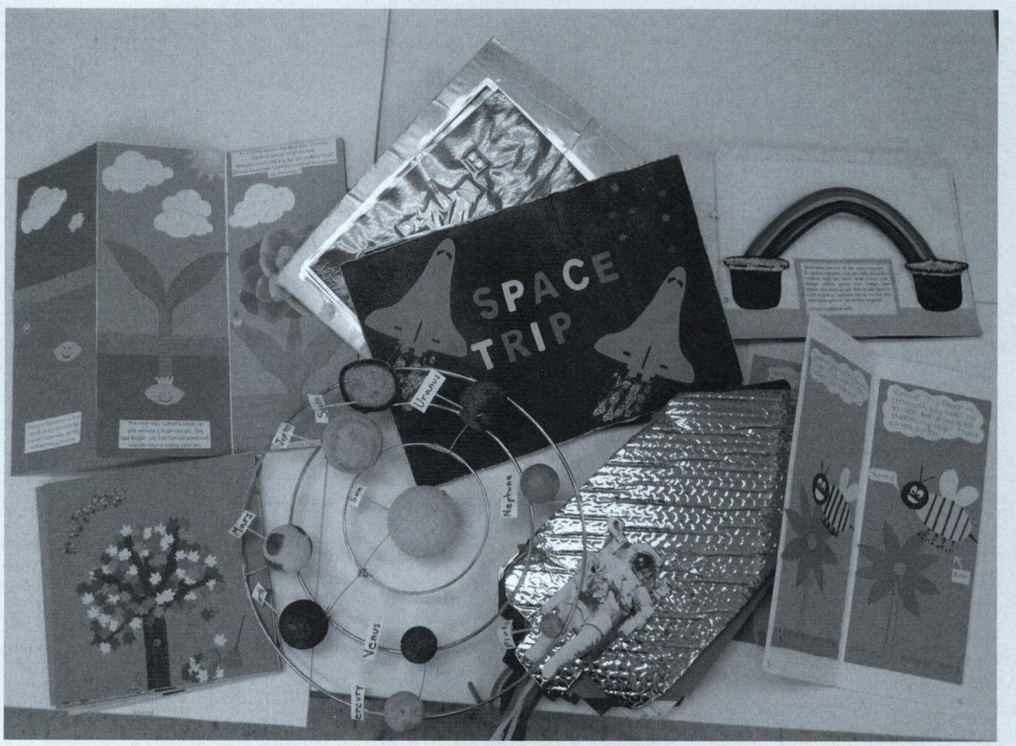


Figure 6. A science book project.

Three Approaches to Teaching Art Methods Courses: Child Art, Visual Culture, and Issues-Based Art Education

EUNJUNG CHANG, MARIA LIM, AND MINAM KIM

Within art education, many researchers are concerned with teacher preparation in order to understand current practices, to recognize what is working well, and to determine future directions for changes (Henry & Lazzari, 2007). One area of neglect is the course taught at most colleges and universities that offer art education—that is, the service course in art education for elementary education majors. Although scholars wrote in this area in the 1990s and early 2000s (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Grauer, 1998; Smith-Shank, 1993a, 1993b, 2001), little has been published on this topic since that time.

In this article, three art educators reflect on their ideas and experiences in developing and implementing innovative projects for their courses focusing on art for elementary education majors. At the 2009 NAEA National Convention in Minneapolis, we realized that we all taught this service course for our departments. We shared our expectations for the course, teaching strategies, and class activities. Our conversations developed into a cohesive presentation for the 2010 NAEA National Convention in Baltimore, and resulted in this paper. In this article, we explore three different approaches for an art methods course for elementary education majors. Each of the three authors will focus on one aspect of this course and we will conclude with a critique and recommendations.

The three areas that will be discussed in depth include: understanding child art, visual culture, and issues-based art education. Minam Kim uses her students' early artistic experiences and art products to (re)consider the artwork of other children. EunJung Chang focuses on visual culture from three different entry points including an interdisciplinary focus, as a contemporary phenomenon, and as a substantial field for inquiry. Lastly, Maria Lim shares the importance of an issues-based approach for teaching art and illustrates techniques for implementing this concept with elementary education majors.

Elementary education majors may not have the depth of experience in child art, visual culture, and contemporary cultural issues that we see in art education majors. It is often difficult for them to incorporate their art-related experiences, interests, and knowledge into their teaching because of their lack of artmaking techniques. We do, however, believe that through the use of any of the three curriculum techniques presented in this paper, elementary preservice teachers will gain confidence with art.

Child Art Based Approach

"What do you expect to learn from this course?" Every semester, I start my first day of teaching with this question. Then, most of my elementary education majors give very similar answers: "I want to know many fun and creative art projects for enjoyment and therapeutic purposes in my future classroom," "I want to learn how to use art to teach other subjects more easily," or "I want to know how to incorporate art into my classroom" (classroom discussion, January 18, 2010). Many students add these words: "BUT, I'm not good at art…" or "I can't draw well." Although these preservice elementary teachers believe art is important, they are also afraid to teach art because they lack art skills, techniques, and confidence. Check (2002) found similar concerns from in-service elementary teachers he worked with: "They were afraid of art; afraid of their own art skills. They were afraid to do anything where they could not control the outcome" (p. 53). Many elementary preservice teachers expect their university instructor to help them develop art skills and others simply want to have fun, using easy art activities that do not require sophisticated techniques. This was the way I felt before.

I majored in elementary education in college. I questioned my artistic ability and had no confidence in my ability to teach art. My instructors seemed to be worried about me too, so they made sure I had a variety of art projects to practice studio techniques. I made one mug, one soup bowl, two oil paintings, one watercolor painting, a few small printmaking works, several pieces of calligraphy, two observation drawings, and so forth. The art teaching method course I took was like a studio program for beginners. Although I produced several artworks, I did not feel any more confident to teach art. As Boehler (2008) also noted, simple and fun art projects made me feel confident teaching young children how to do simple artmaking, but did not make me feel confident teaching art in depth.

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	**Introduction and Discuss Syllabus**	
2-5	**Interpreting and Understanding My Artistic Experience:** What is Art and What is Art Education FOR ME? • Discussion: What is art? • Image of art class • Life line of my art experiences • Two types of self-portrait • Identity Project Readings: Jeffers (1999) *What Happens When We Ask, "What Is Art?"* Check (2002). *In the Trenches*	(1) Reading Notes (2) Interview with 3 people (3) Artist Statement (4) Identity Project (5) Presentation/Exhibition
6-10	**Child Art:** • A Classical Perspective Historical Narrative of Individuals' Art • A Modernist Perspective • Quiz • Socio-Cultural Perspective/Postmodern Perspective • Gender Issues • Peer Influence • Image of Child & Visual Culture • School-type Drawing vs. Self-initiated Drawing • Drawing vs. Sculpture • Mid-term project Plan • Presentation Readings: Wilson (1977) *An Iconoclastic View of the Imagery Sources in the Drawings of Young People* Thompson (2002) *Drawing Together: Peer Influence in Preschool-kindergarten Art Classes* Tuman, D. M. (1999) *Gender style as form and content* Glomb (2002) *The Development of Sculpture*	(1) Collecting 3 drawings from children (2) Group Presentations about Lowenfield's theory of children's artistic development (3) Collecting drawings from boys and girls (4) Reading Notes (5) Mid-term project: Research on child art (6) PowerPoint presentation
11-13	**What to Teach?**: Art Integrated Lesson Readings: Lynch (2007) *Making meaning many ways: An exploratory look at integrating the arts with classroom curriculum* Sullivan (2002). *Ideas and teaching: Making meaning from contemporary art* Guay (2002) *The dynamic project, contemporary issues, and integrative learning*	Reading Notes
14-16	**How to Teach:** Lesson Planning (Issue-based Art Lesson) Simulation Teaching	(1) Lesson Plan (2) Visual Documentation

Figure 1. Summary of 2010 spring course syllabus at Emporia State University.

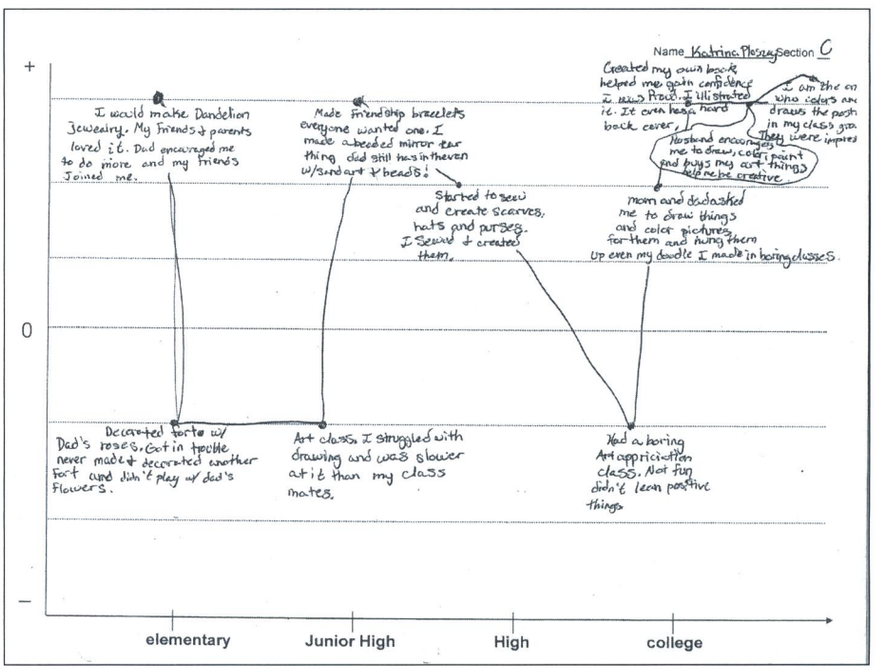


Figure 2. Students made their own Art Lifelines.

Upon becoming an elementary teacher in Korea, I encountered several confusing situations relating to art, but I did not know how to deal with them. For example, what feedback could be more educational than "Good job!" or "Beautiful!"? Were there art projects that could be more useful and helpful to the children than the ones I was using? What difficulties could children experience in the process of making art? Like Check (2002), I started thinking, "My university art education really didn't prepare me to teach art well" (p. 52). When I started studying child art theories in my graduate program in the United States, I found the answers to at least some of my questions. I had the opportunity to reflect upon and learn to interpret the meanings of my childhood artistic experiences. In other words, the child art theories helped me understand children's artmaking and how to teach them in a new way.

My experiences both as an elementary teacher and now as an art education professional lead me to believe that an elementary art methods course should focus on understanding child art through the reflection of the preservice art teacher's early artistic experience and by studying various theories of child artistic development and related case studies. For this purpose, I developed a course consisting of four main themes: (1) interpreting and understanding the students' artistic experience; (2) child art development; (3) what content to teach; and (4) how to teach (see Figure 1). When college students who are learning to be elementary teachers understand their own art experiences and think of themselves as in-service teachers with real students, they can more meaningfully prepare good art lessons.

There are several required art projects in this course. For example, the first lesson was to draw a mental image of an art class in the past: who made the art, what art projects they had, and what the art teacher did. I was surprised to find that they all drew similar images. Most activities were drawings or paintings, and many students had distant relationships with their teacher. Why did most of them draw similar images of the art class? When Jeffers (1999) asked students, *"What Happens When We Ask, 'What Is Art?'"* she found that students understood art as "learned expectations about art" (p. 44), not as their own definitions of art. They designated art as a few specific forms of art, such as drawing and painting, because they had done these art projects more frequently than others, such as new media projects. During this discussion, my students understood why they were seriously concerned about their art skills in drawing and painting, and they began to consider "their roles in the socialization process" (Jeffers, 1999, p. 44). How could they help their future students change and broaden such learned expectations of art? Making a map of their own art lives also helped the student teachers visualize their previous negative and positive artistic experiences, how each experience affected their current understanding of art, and what artistic experiences they wanted to help their students have (see Figure 2). Through these projects, my students examine: their understanding of art; their attitudes (positive or negative) toward artmaking; how they can use their knowledge of child art in both professional and personal life situations, which may include interpreting a collection of children's drawings; images of children's art in popular media (see Figure 3); why children make art as they do; and the influences on children's artistic development, among others. This child art based approach helps students realize the importance of understanding both their own and children's artistic experiences.

Visual Culture Based Approach

My art methods course for elementary education majors consists of two sections—art and music methods. Students spend half a semester studying art methods with me and the other half studying music methods with a music instructor. I have only 8 weeks to teach art methods! How much art education content and strategies can I cover in 8 weeks? How can I encourage students to become involved? How can I make this course meaningful and effective? I am still engaging these questions, but feel that I am moving in the right direction. I chose to develop my art methods course (see Figure 4) focused on visual culture because: (1) visual culture is interdisciplinary; (2) visual culture is a substantial field for inquiry; and (3) visual culture reflects and represents our own everyday lives. In other words, the term *visual culture* is defined in three ways: as interdisciplinary, substantial, and phenomenological (Tavin, 2003).

Visual culture is inherently interdisciplinary. It focuses on crossing and challenging the borders of traditional methodologies and academic disciplines such as anthropology, archeology, art history, cultural studies, feminism, linguistics, media studies, psychology, philosophy, political economy, and sociology (Tavin, 2003; Walker & Chaplin, 1997). Visual culture refuses to be restricted or confined as a discipline for inquiry. It encourages the challenging of artificial boundaries of arts disciplines and integrates the arts across multiple disciplines. My students participate in five arts integration lessons including math, science, social studies, language art, and performing arts through individual and/or group hands-on activities and discussions. In particular, they enjoy creating a puppet show (see Figure 5) and a science book (see Figure 6, p. 17) with their own-authored stories in groups. A preservice elementary teacher noted, "Art… is that no matter what the subject is, it is art… it teaches science, social studies, language art, history, culture, tradition…" (class journal, April, 28, 2010).

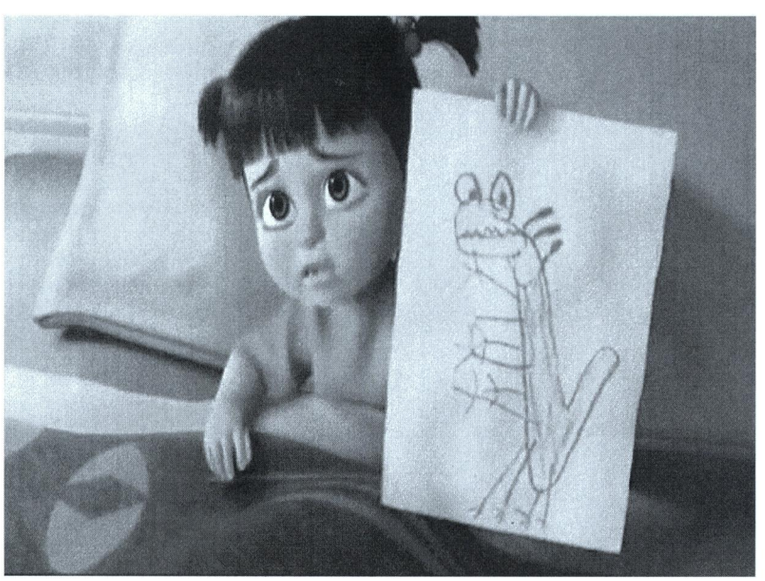


Figure 3. Interpreting children's artistic experience using images of child art from popular media, *Monsters, Inc.* (2001) by Pixar Animation Studios.

Week	Topics	Learning Activities
1	**Introduction to Course** - syllabus overview	Nametag Design Introduction discussion 1. What are your expectations from this course? 2. Why do you want to be a teacher? 3. What can you do for your students, school, and community? ***Activity***: Mind Mapping: What is Art?
	Introduction of Art Education -- The role of art in the school and society	***Group Activity***: Discussion and Poster Presentation 1. Why should children study art? 2. How does art contribute to education at all levels? 3. What does art education do for the individual and for society? Activity - Making a group poster (poster paper and marker) Reading: Eisner, E (2002). *The Arts and the Creation of Mind, What the Arts Teach and How it Shows (Ch.4) & What Education Can Learn from the Art (Ch.8)*
2	**History of Art Education**	Activity: Inspired by Vincent Van Gogh (DBAE – Teaching in Four Disciplines) Summary Handouts *- Art Education – A Historical Continuum by Zimmerman, E* *- Examining DBAE as a Curriculum Construct by Clark, G* *- Contemporary Issues in Art Education by Zhang, E*
3	**Visual Culture Art Education**	Activity: Me, Myself, and I (Photo Magazine Collage) Reading: Duncum, P. (2002). *Visual Culture Art Education: Why, What, and How.* Eisner, E. (2001). *Should We Create New Aims for Art Education?* Assignment: Metaphor Paper (An image or object representing you and your life)
4	**Visual Literacy (Interpreting fine arts and popular culture)** - Elements/ Principles - The Generic Game by Project Muse - MOMA Visual Thinking - Seven Principles for VC	Activity: Image Quiz - Identify masterpieces from popular culture ***Group Activity:*** One Principle for Visual Culture (see Duncum, P. 2010) Reading: Barrett, T (2003). *Interpreting Visual Culture* Duncum, P. (2010). *Seven Principles for Visual Culture Education* Assignment: Fine Arts Gallery Paper
5 - 7	**Art Integrated Lesson** - Math - Science - Language Art	***Group Project:*** Science Book Making (Illustrating and Writing – 8 pages) Reading - Lynch, P. (2007). *Making Meaning Many Ways: An Exploratory Look at Integrating the Arts with Classroom Curriculum* - Duncum, P. (2005). *Popular Visual Culture and Ten Kinds of Integration* - Lackey, L. (2005). *Elementary Classroom Teachers, Arts Integration, and Socially Progressive Curriculum* Assignment: Symmetrical Project – 3 found images from everyday life
	- Social Studies - Performing Art	Social Studies: Unique World Culture – Image collage for a short presentation **Group Project**: Directing a Puppet Show* (A detail instruction will be provided)
7 - 8	**Creating A Curriculum** - Lesson Plan Workshop	Reading - Day, M., & Hurwitz, A (2006). *Children and Their Art: Methods for the Elementary Art. Children's Artistic Development (Ch.3)* Handout: - *Lesson Plan Format by Zimmerman, E* - *Writing Lesson Objectives and Evaluations by Zhang, E* Activity: Assessment (Rubric)

Figure 4. Syllabus of Fall 2010 at Francis Marion University.

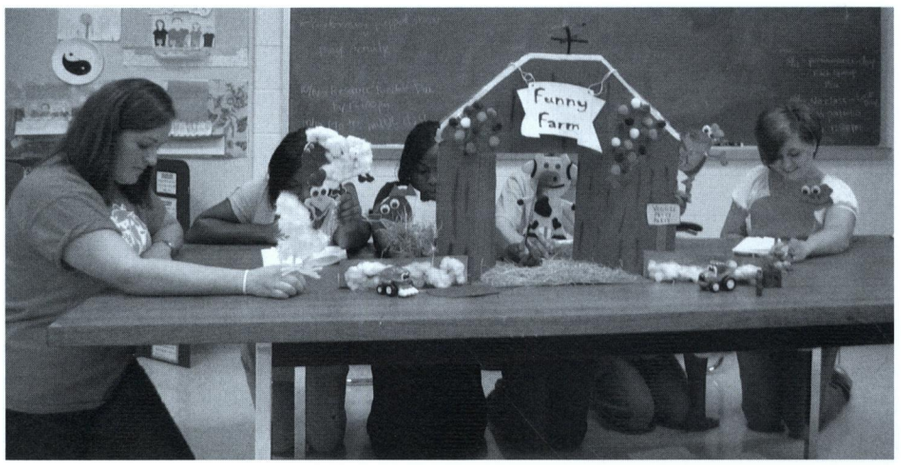
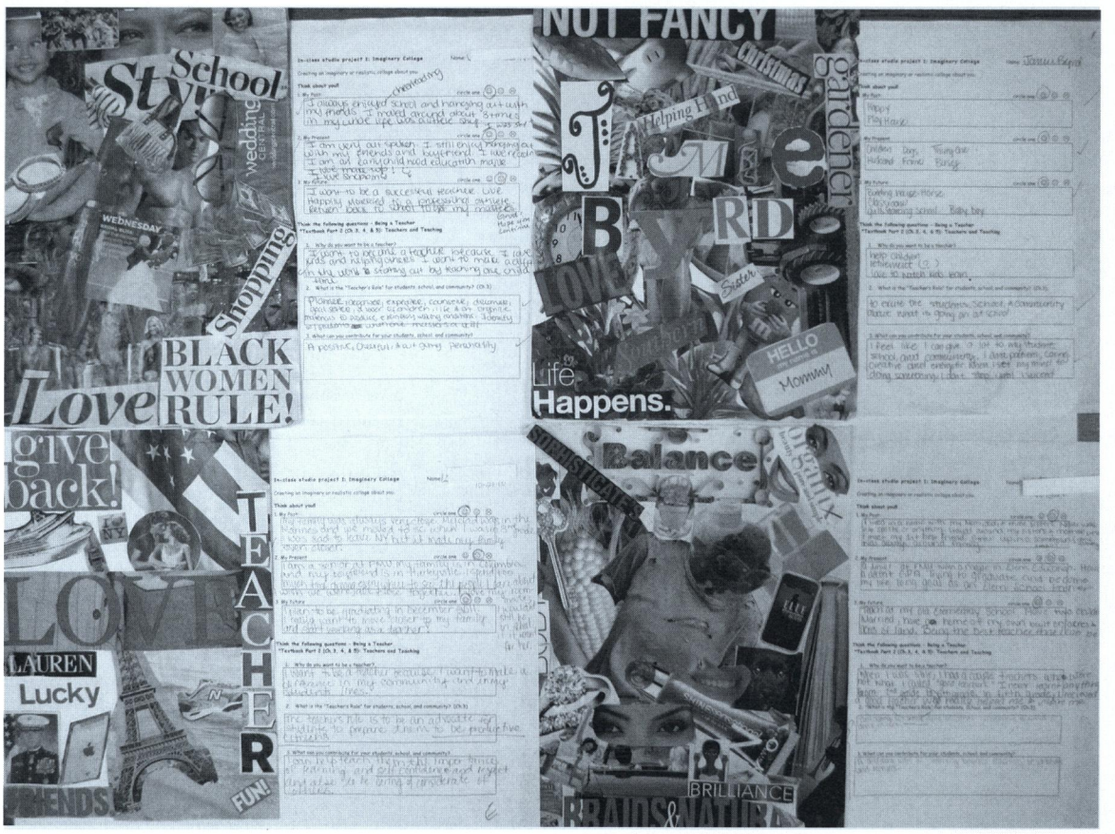


Figure 5. A group puppet show with their own puppets and story.

Visual culture is a substantial field for inquiry. It includes both traditional fine arts and popular visual culture. It consists of images and objects from daily lives that are found on television, advertisements, videos, magazines, books, performance arts, shopping malls, festivals, theme parks, fast-food restaurants, and other forms of visual representations (Duncum, 2001, 2002). Freedman and Wood (1999) suggest "all human-made or arranged artifacts or environments that have visual characteristics" (p. 130) are visual culture. Barnard (2001) also asserts "all forms of art and design as well as personal and body-related visual phenomena such as facial expressions, fashion and tattooing" (p. 2) are visual culture. Morris (2002) defines visual culture as "the totality of humanly designed artifacts that represent us" (p. 103) including heritage, history, tradition, culture, and politics. Thus, visual culture based art education includes "all forms of visual communication" (Eisner, 2001, p. 7). For visual literacy lessons, I use various images, especially many from the United Color of Benetton's campaign posters, commercial advertisements, and newspaper cartoons. The images are "chosen, not for their inherent aesthetic value, but for their power" dealing with contemporary issues (Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy, & Knight, 2003, p. 46). I also use image groups that teach traditional fine arts along with a range of associated popular visual images. This often helps students to understand and remember traditional fine arts better through popular visual culture. One student commented, "To me art was something beautiful… some types or forms of skillful craftsmanship… Now, art to me is to have a deeper meaning other than aesthetic satisfaction but also intellectual stimulation… it makes me think and wonder around me…" (class discussion, April, 26, 2010).

Visual culture is a contemporary era phenomenon. It "reflects and contributes to the construction of knowledge, identity, beliefs, imaginations, sense of time and place, feeling of agency, and the quality of life at all ages" (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2003, p. 46). Our present-day life is intensively mediated through visual imagery in reality and cyberspace. Today, visual culture is not just part of everyday life, but it **is** everyday life (Mirzoeff, 1999). Thus, the study of visual culture enhances a variety of real life issues regarding social, political, economic, and psychological realities in an art methods course. It allows students to understand the contexts surrounding their communities, their societies, and themselves. Visual culture is "not something special but something



"To me art was something beautiful… some types or forms of skillful craftsmanship… Now, art to me is to have a deeper meaning other than aesthetic satisfaction but also intellectual stimulation… it makes me think and wonder around me…"

top
Figure 7. Life collage.

bottom
Figure 8. Identity quilts inspired by Faith Ringgold's story quilt.

we all possess and practice all the time" (Duncum, 2001, p. 103). My students create two identity projects—a magazine collage representing their past, present, and future (see Figure 7) and a photo self-portrait describing their good and bad characteristics. How much do students know about themselves? Most students are just interested in becoming teachers, but they often do not consider why they want to become teachers, what they can offer their future students, what weaknesses/strengths they have, and what changes are needed to become good teachers. These projects bring these issues into the educational conversation. I believe the foundation of good teaching is self-experience and self-knowledge. How do we begin to understand "the other" if we do not understand ourselves? (Keifer-Boyd, et al., 2003). These identity projects often bring out their life stories, current concerns, and future events to the class and offer chances to rethink their values, beliefs, dreams, and plans. A student noted, "Art is an expression. It helps me describe who I am. It can invoke emotions inside me and now I express myself" (class journal, April 28, 2010).

Issues-Based Approach

I emphasize social and cultural issues in contemporary arts and visual representations as a foundation for an art methods course for elementary education majors. I understand an issue as "an idea about which at least two distinct points of view can be held and articulated" (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 1). As Jeffers (2002) asserts, "preservice teachers living in contemporary society are confronted by a host of social issues on a daily basis" (p. 161). Yokley (2002) emphasizes that it is especially important for elementary preservice teachers to discuss questions about how to respond to sensitive issues such as school violence and child abuse, stereotype and prejudice, gender and sexuality, or race and racism as they learn how to integrate art with their elementary classroom. A methods class that explores, discusses, and responds to socially and culturally relevant issues emphasizes the fact that "the classroom is not an isolated site, but is part of a local and global community" (Wyrick, 2002, p. 212).

I have two primary goals for my art methods course for elementary education majors: (1) helping my students become critical visual consumers by integrating social and cultural issues with their art learning processes, and (2) helping them integrate contemporary arts and issues into their elementary classroom teaching. The course embraces four components: (1) examining issue-based artmaking activities, (2) exploring contemporary arts and artists, (3) understanding contemporary social/cultural issues, and (4) developing contemporary art-integrated lesson plans. These themes are often interconnected and intermingled.

Artists' DVDs and educational documentary films are used to initiate my students' critical responses. Faith Ringgold's *The Last Story Quilt* (DVD) inspires my students to investigate their own identities and individualities while they are creating their own identity quilts (see Figure 8). Keith Haring's *Drawing the Line* (DVD) and Maya Lin's story, *A Strong Clear Vision* (DVD), encourage my students to discuss and to debate their perceptions relevant to the issues the artists have suggested through their artworks. Students also create paper collages addressing their sensitivities and insights relevant to the issues (see Figure 9). Class discussions after viewing the educational DVDs *Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance* and *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in Schools* help my students understand that sometimes controversial issues develop about diversity and tolerance; ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, class, stereotype, and prejudice; environment; and relationships within particular contexts—political, social, economic, biological, philosophical, and aesthetic (Jeffers, 2002) and that these issues can be discussed in elementary schools.

I also conduct two different local art museum visits for my students to view contemporary artwork and ask them to write guided reflection papers about the relationships between their aesthetic experiences and their real lives, as well as their pedagogical views for K-5 applications. As Yokley (2002) argues, "contemporary works of art speak in ways that address questions and issues of concern in today's society" (p. 202). During our museum visits, my students have the opportunity to wander, wonder, and explore contemporary issues and concepts conveyed in the artworks that "open a matter to discussion, controversy, debate, or dispute" (Yokley, 2002, p. 202).

According to Gaudelius and Speirs (2002), "art in the context of social issues offers teachers flexibility, a broad range of subject matter and potential choices, and a wide range of possibilities upon which to build curricula" (p. 5). Echoing this perception, I developed a visual teaching resource research project—a group project exploring social and cultural issues in contemporary arts and visual cultures. The project serves as a tool to facilitate my students' visual learning processes and critical thinking skills as they discover and examine current issues in contemporary visual representations. Students select current social and/or cultural issues that concern them most. At the beginning of research, my students participate a brainstorming session with questions: Why is the issue important? Why is the issue controversial? How is the issue relevant to education? In what way can the issue be explored thoroughly? After the discussion, students initiate the research process using picture books, movies and films, television shows, websites, video games, toys, magazines, billboards, and contemporary artworks.

After several weeks of exploring their topics, students share informative visual resources with their peers as midterm presentations (see Figure 10). The subjects frequently investigated by students include ecology and environment, school violence and bullying, sexual orientation, racism, sexism, feminism, self-image, capitalism, immigration and refugees, war, censorship, and LGBT issues. One student noted, "I feel confident in my abilities to bring contemporary issues into my classroom in the future" (personal communication, May 7, 2009). Implementing an issues-based approach through various class projects offers my students the opportunity to develop confidence in dealing with contemporary issues that are often ignored because they are thought too controversial for elementary education.

The students experienced wonder, excitement, and inspiration as they became more comfortable with understanding the complexities of child art and the issues depicted through art and visual culture.

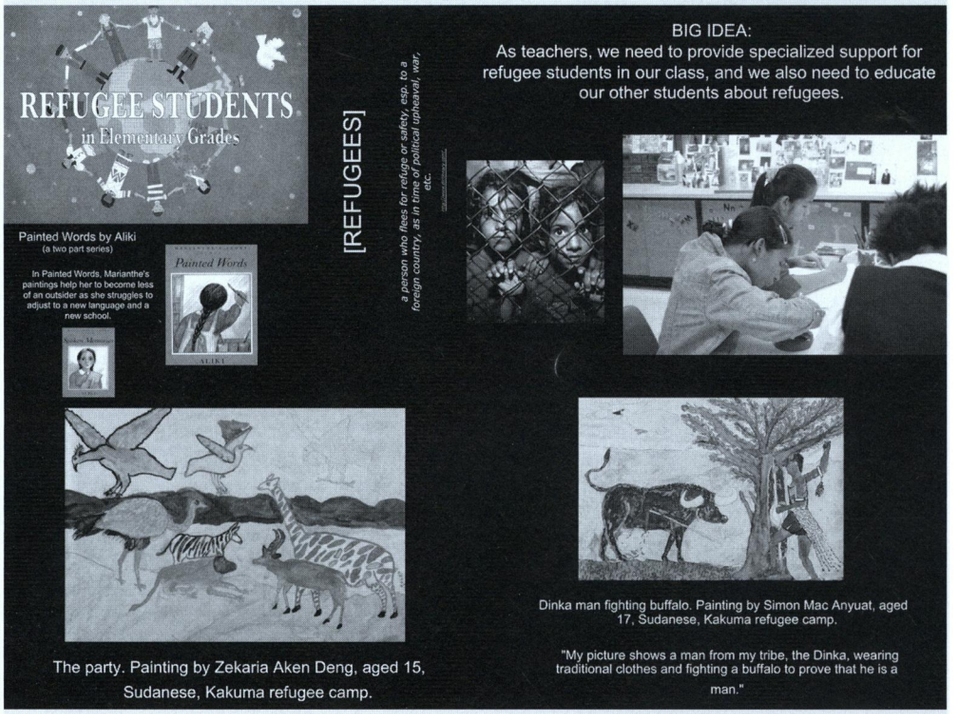


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Figure 9. Collages as visual response to the perceptions of prejudges and stereotypes.

bottom
Figure 10. Images from a visual research presentation about "Refugees."

Reflections

Dewey (1938) stated that curriculum should be developed through teachers' and students' collaborative process. While none of us had previously privileged the interactions we had with our students to develop these curricula over class projects and activities, in this article we share the belief that it is important and incorporate the collaborative process into our pedagogical curriculum development. When students and teachers share their experiences, interests, and knowledge, curriculum can be very powerful (Short, Schroeder, Laird, Kauffman, Ferguson, & Crawford, 1996).

The three approaches to art education for elementary education majors differ in their initial approach. While the strategies come from three viewpoints, they are all intended to make students comfortable with and enthusiastic about looking at, talking about, and making visual art. In each strategy, elementary education majors start with self-reflection and thoughtful analysis of their life histories, the art products they have made, and their cultures. Through these types of experiences, they can begin to empathize with their future students as they become able to look at the general elementary education curriculum and find the important place for art within it. This implies an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of art which we all feel is extremely important. These methods of instruction have enabled our students to overcome much of their reluctance to engage with art in understanding, creating, and teaching. Each of the three distinctive approaches has guided students to understand the importance of art in their lives and the larger culture. During our teaching and learning journeys, the students experienced wonder, excitement, and inspiration as they became more comfortable with understanding the complexities of child art and the issues depicted through art and visual culture. Our art methods courses offer elementary education majors an opportunity to understand art and visual culture as valuable tools they may use in multiple ways in their future classrooms as they develop their own creative paths to engage in art and education.

While the similar values of the three approaches have been discussed, each

approach brings distinct qualities to a discussion for the field of art education. The child art focused pedagogy offers students the chance to explore their own child art and the art of other children, and to understand various aspects of children's artistic development and their unique and creative experiences within and beyond the classroom. While these journeys are essential both in artistic and educational growth for future educators, pedagogy development anchored in understanding child art can be implemented to help them become competent teachers. On the other hand, the theoretical perspectives of visual cultures in art education provide students with opportunities to observe, question, and reflect upon concepts of the contemporary visual cultures in which they live. By doing that, students become aware of their own self-identities and their goals for teaching art as members of a family, a community, and a world. Through this practice, students will also gain reflective understanding of implications beyond the visual representations they see on a daily basis. Whereas the impression of child art and visual culture focused teaching approaches allow students to explore the significant relationships between their inner-selves and the world, the issues-based approach advocates students becoming empowered, expanding cultural and social awareness, and developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as citizens of the 21st century. The issues-based approach will offer students the opportunity to develop profound viewpoints regarding cultural, social, and/or political issues, and the ability to implement their knowledge in their future classrooms.

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AUTHORS' NOTE

We would like to thank Dr. Debbie Smith-Shank of Ohio State University for her thoughtful review of this manuscript.

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