Making it “Click”:
Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Greta F. Hildebrand, B.A. with Honours

Department of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies in Education

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Faculty of Education, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

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Abstract

Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education examined the teaching practice of 6 art educators who conducted their work through the Niagara Falls Art Gallery’s (NFAG) in-schools and Children’s Museum programmes. These community resources service the elementary levels of participatory Public, Catholic and French schools in the Niagara Peninsula.

The goal of this research was to find ways in which these teachers could explore their creative potential as art educators. The “click,” a term introduced by participants indicating the coming together of all positive factors towards creativity, became the central theme behind this study. Research revealed that the effective creative process was not merely a singular phase, but rather a series of 4 processes: 1, gathering knowledge; 2, intuitive and experiential; 3, the informal presentation of information in which creativity as a process was explored; and 4, formal presentation that took the analysis of information to a deeper, holistic level.

To examine the ways in which experience and knowledge could be shared and brought together through a collaborative process, this study employed data collection that used literature research, interviews, focus group discussions, and personal journal entries. Follow-up discussions that assessed the effectiveness of action research, took place 3½ months after the initial meetings.

It is hoped that this study might assist in creative educational practices, for myself as a member of the NFAG teaching team, for colleagues in the art programmes, art educators, and other teachers in the broader disciplines of education.
Acknowledgements

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To the 6 dedicated art educators who gave of themselves that this research was possible. I will always remember you by your pseudonyms: Letendre, Rubens, Mona, Daumier, Picasso and Escher.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

This study involved a collaborative exploration of the perceptions of creative practice of 6 art educators from the Niagara Falls Art Gallery’s (NFAG) education programmes who teach within the Gallery setting and Public, Catholic, and French schools of the Niagara Region. In the study, participants were introduced to pedagogy in the field of creative teaching through the process of action research (Elliott, 1991) with the goal to expanding the imaginative component of curriculum-based art workshops. In keeping with “best practices” (Ecclestone, 2005, p. 1) pedagogy, a richer and more authentic picture of art education was constructed.

Although art educators within and outside the programmes had been critical of the minimal creativity of some workshops, the programmes were structurally sound, having been designed in alignment with curriculum guidelines, and in partnership with classroom teachers. Winner (2000) provided a rationale for this research in that creative children might be average students when they are young, but often go on to become “innovator[s] and revolutionizer[s] of a domain” (p. 166). It was my belief that these art educators had, in some way, evolved as creators from Winner’s inferred process of nurture; and, as a result of this experience they had the potential to transform the NFAG education programmes to ensure creativity and long-term sustainability.

Background of the Problem

Teachers who augment their classroom practices with the NFAG educational programmes select workshops from a catalogue of over 120 choices. As well, the Museum component offers a programme with an ancient civilizations and archeological content. A Web site provides teacher support and rubric follow-up (2005,
www.niagarafallsartgallery.ca). Teachers can be assured that the artwork of each workshop will be consistent, regardless of the instructor, and all children will have a comparable and assessable product. Moreover, their work will usually be above average in technical competency, compared to what it would be without instruction. This observation appears to align with Ecclestone’s (2005, pp. 1, 2) vision that “Standards of learning and achievement, better inspection grades and evidence of best practice become one and the same thing. . . . And when this increases the number of high inspection grades, Government can say that standards of teaching are rising.” From a business point of view, if the child, teacher, school, and parent are satisfied with these results they might continue to employ the expertise of the gallery “educators” as the Gallery prefers its teachers to be addressed, thus ensuring the financial sustainability of the NFAG programmes. However, the term “educator,” in itself, suggests a level of education beyond technical instruction, which leads me to question Government’s comparison of high inspection grades to raised teaching standards.

For the NFAG, teacher directed, transmission/formalist (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985) education aims to ensure that the majority of children are encouraged by a product, which brings admiration from peers, teachers, and family. But, there are some children who may fail to meet teacher, and parental expectations. (Observations show that some children do not appear to be as competent, or do not apply themselves as well as others.) As a qualified and experienced secondary school art teacher and practitioner in the curatorial field, I felt a transmission/formalist approach to teaching art was in conflict with my teacher training and experience in the broad field of visual arts. I wondered what would become of children’s motivation to continue in the
field of visual art, or how to challenge themselves creatively, if they did not have input in their artwork. Also, I wondered about the future of the educators in the programme. For the art educator with no previous experience in classroom education, transmission methodology may initially serve well as a means to formal instruction. However, I questioned his or her long-term potential as a creative educator. Discovery of self became a fundamental question in the interviews and group discussions of this study. Do successful short-term inspection grades necessarily provide for the long-term development of innovators and revolutionizers that Winner (2000) suggests are average students when they are young?

Towards these ends I saw a potential study group in the Niagara Falls Art Gallery teaching team of 7 full-time, and 2 part-time educators. All offered a background in visual arts, either through university, college or combined programmes, and other non-academic knowledge and experience.

**Statement of the Problem Situation**

The problem of this study focused on a perceived lack of creativity in some workshops delivered by the NFAG. These workshops tended to be transmissive/formalist (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), relying on prescribed, teacher-directed instruction that did not allow for educators' individuality or student input. Educators were trained to teach such workshops using a uniform process, which subsequently delivered a homogenous product geared towards high inspection grades and marketplace satisfaction. For example, the reproduction of a lion or tiger's head might address cognitive learning through formal instruction of line, shape, colour, value, texture, form, and space. Teachers and parents frequently relay their pleasure and
satisfaction with the results of these workshops. However, the workshops do not necessarily employ transformative/socio-ecological, commonly termed “issues-based” (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985) methodologies, which make affective and spiritual connections between self and world (Hutchinson & Bosacki, 2000). Consequently, I believed that neither the educator’s, nor the student’s creative potential was being fully challenged.

My working and social relationship with the Gallery’s educators had led me to believe that they were a group with diverse knowledge, experience, and interests that went beyond the field of visual art. Music, drama, and nature science were among these outside interests. I wondered if it would be possible for educators to draw upon their individuality to infuse such workshops as the “lion” and “tiger” with creativity, and still produce an end product consistent with the expectations of the curriculum-based, NFAG education programmes.

Statement of the Problem

Art workshops that rely on transmission/formalist methodology alone may overlook the creative potential of their educators and students. Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (1998) listed student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative tenets as comprising best practices philosophy towards successful teaching and learning. These ideals suggest that the pedagogy of art teaching must go beyond a prescribed, teacher-centred perspective towards transformative/issues-based (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985) education in order to meet the demands of teaching in the twenty-first century.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative action research study was to explore, collaboratively, 6 NFAG educators' perceptions of creative practice. As a seventh educator in the Gallery's education programmes, I considered this purpose to be beneficial to myself as well. By reflecting upon discussion material based on my literature research, and participants' individual practice, I hoped we would:

- Increase awareness of personal creative practice
- Start to construct a holistic vision of art education
- Explore ways in which we could instill creativity into our workshops
- Begin to improve the imaginative component of the NFAG programmes overall

To understand creative practice from various perspectives, the following general questions were addressed in a) interviews and b) focus groups discussions. These questions are related to the schematic of action research in figures 1 & 2. The actual questions of these 2 database components can be found in full, in Appendices F, G, and H.

Research Questions to be Addressed

- What is the effect of reflecting upon our creative practice as art educators?
- What is the effect of discovering new creative practices, on the ideas and practices of art educators?
- What is the effect of exploring the self within a social and ecological dynamic, and the way in which the process impacts art educators' workshops?
Action Research Model – for Myself as Researcher
(Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

Stage 1. Gathering Knowledge:
Towards Motivation
Stage 2. Intuitive Exploration:
Experiential and Process Learning
Stage 3. Informal Presentation:
The Process of Creativity Explored
Stage 4. Formal Presentation:
A holistic Exploration of Transformative Practices in Education

(1) Instrumental
Knowledge is potential → practice must follow

(2) Information Acceptance
Information acceptance → understanding

(3) Symbolic Use
Symbolism → making sense of the world through patterns and narratives

Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice Research
Achieved through:
- Literature research
- Interviews – discovering participants’ education/training, experiences
- Focus group discussions – introducing new concepts
- Research Journaling

Research Questions
What is the effect of reflecting upon our creative practice as art educators?
What is the effect of discovering new creative practices, on the ideas and practices of art educators?
What is the effect of exploring the self within a social and ecological dynamic, and the way in which the process impacts art educators’ workshops?

Findings
Stage 1. Gathering Knowledge:
How do I learn? – using multiple intelligences: spacial/visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional, nature
How do we learn? – using theories and practice in education/art education to process experience and knowledge: transmission/formalist, transaction/child-centred, transformation/issues based methodologies

Findings
Stage 2. Intuitive Exploration:
Learning through:
Play - fun, imagination, pretending, choice, ownership, role-playing
Flow/vibe – flow can be achieved; however time factors are deterrents
Risk Taking – diminishes educator anxiety, builds educator/student rapport, lessens educator/student tension

Findings
Stage 3. Informal Presentation:
Finding self through the process of poiesis or discovery through:
fun, learning, the unconscious, energy, excitement, creativity

Findings
Stage 4. Formal Presentation:
Teaching who we are through holistic avenues:
Cognitive, affective, spiritual, social, ecological, caring concepts, coming together as “the click.”
**Action Research Model – for Art Educators**
(Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

**Stage 1. Gathering Knowledge:**
Towards Motivation

**Stage 2. Intuitive Exploration:**
Experiential and Process Learning

**Stage 3. Informal Presentation:**
The Process of Creativity Explored

**Stage 4. Formal Presentation:**
A holistic Exploration of Transformative Practices in Education

**Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice Research Achieved through:**
- Interviews – disclosing education/training, experiences
- Focus group discussions – exposure to new concepts

**Research Questions**
What is the effect of reflecting upon our creative practice as art educators?
What is the effect of discovering new creative practices, on the ideas and practices of art educators?
What is the effect of exploring the self within a social and ecological dynamic, and the way in which the process impacts art educators’ workshops?

**Findings**
**Stage 1. Gathering Knowledge:**
How do I learn? – using multiple intelligences: spacial/visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, emotional, nature
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**Stage 4. Formal Presentation:**
Teaching who we are through holistic avenues:
Cognitive, affective, spiritual, social, ecological, caring concepts, coming together as “the click.”
Rationale of the Study

This study into perceptions of creative practice was the result of several factors. The Art Gallery’s expectation that its educators adhere to a prescribed, transmission/formalist (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), methodology when teaching curriculum-based programmes contradicted the transformative/issues-based (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), pedagogy that I believed was so important. As well, the Art Gallery’s Director had discussed the need to transform the programmes’ creativity content, especially at the senior, Grade 7 and 8 levels. Creativity was already an encouraged component in the after-school programmes at the Gallery. Rumours had it that some in-school teachers and officials were not satisfied with the level of creativity of the programmes and teachers were being encouraged to look elsewhere for art programming.

I discovered the question of methodology and its link to creativity during my Master of Education coursework. I was asked to reflect on my own experiences in art and other areas of teaching, and the ways in which I had learned as a child and adult. I realized that I was creative as a result of my individual experiences and exposure to different pedagogical philosophies. I believed in transformative/issues-based (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), teaching and learning methods that engage teacher and student in partnership roles towards greater awareness of social and ecological issues. Consequently, I was skeptical of transmissive/formalist (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), teacher-centred instruction. However, I questioned whether there was a place for transmission methodology, when used for children between the ages of 7 and adolescence (a large percentage of children in the Gallery programmes).
who are exploring a world beyond the self. Kegan, (1994, p. 20) explained this cognitive change in the way children “organize their thinking, their feeling, and their social relating.” He contended that “they begin to construct a concrete world that conforms for the first time to the laws of nature, and they are interested in the limits and possibilities within that world.” Towards resolving what appeared to be a conflict between concrete development and transmissive/formalist methodology, I turned to alternative methods.

In between transformative and transmissive paradigms lay transactive/child-centred learning (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985), which was the basis of my own art education during the 1960s and early 1970s. The following reflections from my pre-thesis, meta-reflective research entry are included here to provide a perspective through which the aforementioned pedagogical theories are discussed.

I recall my Grade 5 teacher, who had a profound interest and creative talent in drama and art education. He had us create spontaneous plays out of given situations. I loved that. One day he paid attention to a drawing that I did in class. I remember it was of a Chinese festival dragon. If that wasn’t enough to make me feel special, I was invited to join his art class, which was held on Saturday mornings. I made a large abstract painting with lots of reds and yellows in it. But I have often wished that I had learned more about drawing in these classes. In many ways this memory relates to my 3 years at Art School during the early 1970s. Students were rebellious against institutional learning at that time. After the first year, which was fairly structured, we were allowed to practically do as we pleased. If students didn’t want Art History classes they relayed that wish to their professors and classes were cancelled. I remember only
a handful of Art films being shown and no Art History from textbooks (I still have my Gombrich text and have used it more in recent years than I ever did at University). I remember attending a life drawing class only once – I told myself I wasn’t interested, partly because this type of “discipline” was not in vogue at this time and place. If I’m honest with myself, I more likely wasn’t good and used disinterest as an excuse. Although I enjoyed the creative energy of my 3 years at Art School and produced some interesting work, I also have some regrets. I learned much about me, but I don’t believe I learned as much about the world. This may have been my motivation to become an adult student and to continue on my educative journey. I have, as well, enjoyed life-drawing classes as an adult in recent years (Research Journal, 2002).

As an advocate of “teaching who you are” (Drake, 1997), I believed authenticity was fundamental to effective teaching. From my own experience as an educator, being oneself in the classroom is rewarded with the feeling of accomplishment. My research journal entry from March 17, 2003 read:

The subject today was “Dragons.” I veered away from the normal today and allowed the children to be more creative [allowing freedom to explore body shapes and backgrounds]. However, at the same time I taught everything I was supposed to. The teachers... expressed their satisfaction with the workshops, but more importantly, the children were very happy with their work.

The best practice checklist provided by Zemelman, et al. (1998, p. 1), as well, professed to authenticity. These researchers added that “lessons should not be oversimplified” and “students have the ability to learn on deep levels.” Student-centred
interests, the experiential factor, holistic or thematic units that relate to one another, allowing children to express their thoughts and ideas, reflection, and collaboration at all grade levels are all factors that one would expect to be conducive to successful teaching and learning. Kegan's (1994) insight into concrete thought had been distilled from Piaget's (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) investigations into concrete operations. Piaget discovered that children need to work cooperatively with common intellectual values and without egocentrism. This insight pointed towards educational methodologies more inline with either transactive/child-centred or transformative/issues-based philosophies (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002; Miller & Seller, 1985).

**Importance of the Study**

The validity of art education has undergone scrutiny in the report by Upitis and Smithrim (1999-2002), *Learning Through the Arts*. The baseline results of their Canadian study determined that teachers believed the arts were fundamental to learning, and students could express their knowledge and skills through various art forms. Math, science, and language arts could be taught through the arts. Upitis and Smithrim listed enjoyment of school, emotional expression, cognitive benefits, and growth of self-esteem as benefits of arts programmes for children. However, only one in five teachers had specialized training in arts education. The interdisciplinary structure of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery's workshops provide for holistic learning in this sense, through educators qualified and experienced in visual arts with transmission style training for the Gallery's arts education programmes. However, Zemelman, et al,'s (2003, p. 1) best practices study listed holistic learning as "Thematic units of study [that] build greater overall understanding and appreciation."
I felt it important that art educators deliver art programmes that meld with Ontario’s school curriculum towards the well-being of the child, and the community at large. I believed that a child who is taught to develop art and other skills not only builds confidence in him or herself, but, as well, has the potential to give back to society. Some, perhaps only a handful, may have the potential to become professional, creative artists. Winner (2000) supported creativity as a means by which children become innovators and revolutionizers in specific domains as they mature into adults. I wondered to what extent the participant art educators had been influenced by creative art programming as children and youth. By believing that they were a part of an evolving, creative spiral (Young, 2002), I wondered if participants could similarly draw in the children under their care? I was guided by Kholodnaya’s (Dorfman, 2000) findings of giftedness in people over the age of 40 and wondered if this phenomenon resulted from early and continued development of combined cognitive, metacognitive, and intentional experience.

In agreement with Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000), I believed that the cognitive, affective and spiritual needs of arts educators and students were an integral part of teaching and learning. I also believed that the programming could win the confidence of more educational professionals in the region, thus leading to economic sustainability.

**Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The research was limited to the creative potential of 6 art educators working for the NFAG; and did not engage in management, which may well have a direct correlation to educator motivation. The latter area leaves itself open to separate research. These educators consented to participate in the initial study that occurred over a 5-week period. A follow-up session took place 3 months later. Information shared with me and other
participants of the focus group was entirely voluntary and limited by each participant’s veracity of self-report. Exposing vulnerability, such as in the discussion area of “risk taking” (see Data Analysis, Intuitive Presentation, chapter 4) allowed me insight into perceptions of teaching practice beyond regular, day-to-day conversations, which had preceded the study. The understanding that honesty and openness would conceivably benefit the education programme, appeared to act as positive motivation to participate in the study.

As discussion leader and researcher, I was aware of my personal agenda as outlines were drawn up for each focus group session. I reflected on this conflict situation using my research journal after conducting discussions and interviews. For example, discussion in chapter 4 relating to Aboriginal issues and the concept of poiesis, demonstrated participants’ reluctance to engage in conversation. Conversely, although I encouraged discussions to remain within the boundaries of prescribed outlines; participants sometimes wandered beyond these parameters, adding rich dialogue to my thesis. Transcriptions in chapter 4, relating to gender, provide an example.

Addressing the conceptual limitations of the research: The use of Heidegger in an academic secondary source was necessary due to language barriers. However, translated works were, as well, consulted. Vygotsky’s theories were referenced through translated sources and secondary, academic sources.

Outline of the Document

Chapter 1 has presented an argument for creativity in curriculum-based art education workshops delivered by the Niagara Falls Art Gallery. The singular use of
transmissive/formalist or transactive/child-centred methodologies are questioned against the combined practice of transformative/discipline based towards socio-ecological (issues-based) pedagogy as a tool for cognitive, affective, and spiritual (Hutchinson & Bosacki, 2000) teaching and learning.

Chapter 2 is introduced through three grounding theories, which underlie this research: action research, collaboration, and creativity. Dorfman (2000) provided an outline for creativity research, interpreted under the following headings: Gathering Knowledge, Intuitive Exploration, Informal Presentation, and Formal Presentation.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology and procedure of this research, divided into areas of research methodology, research design, selection of participants, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis, and summary. A glossary of terms can be found in Appendix A.

Chapter 4 introduces the findings of the study. An overview and introduction leads into profiles of the NFAG educators. Data analysis from interviews and focus group discussion is concluded with a follow-up discussion and summary.

Chapter 5 presents a conclusion and implications. An overview and introduction leads into a summary of comparative data analysis, follow-up discussion, implications for practice and research, recommendations, and references.

Lastly, the thesis provides Appendices A through H: creativity cycle, letter of approval, information letter to participants, consent form, letter requesting to conduct the study with approval, interview questions, preliminary focus group discussion topics and questions, and focus group discussion topics and questions.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter 2 provides a literature base to the study. The first section presents the conceptual areas of action research, collaboration, and creativity as a tri-focal lens through which the succeeding outline of creativity in art education ensues. The second section illuminates the creative process in more depth. Dorfman’s (2000) research allowed a means to organize my research and better understand the ways in which creativity functions in four identified phases: gathering knowledge, intuitive exploration, informal presentation, and formal presentation. Table 1 outlines the above concepts of this chapter.

In best practices, Zemelman et al. (2003) listed student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative as effective means to teaching and learning. Towards exploring these concepts, Sawyer (2003, p. 13) explored Piaget’s theory of intellectual development to find “new schemas are constructed by the child and that these schemas are not simply continuous accumulations of new knowledge, but represent complete reorganizations of thought.” Vygotsky (1988, p. 152) revealed that for the adolescent there can be a zero point of imagination “where he is unable to abstract himself from a concrete situation, unable to change it creatively, to regroup signs to free one’s self from under its influence.” Winner’s (2000, p. 166) thesis, that creative children might go on to become “innovator[s] and revolutionizer[s] of a domain” indicated a gap in research, which needed to be explored. She asserted that creative children often present themselves as average students when they are young; however, there can be a decline in school progress and weakening of established habits, particularly of a creative nature, during adolescence. Creativity appeared from this observation as
Table 1

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<th>Grounding Theories</th>
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<th>Best Practice</th>
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<td>Gathering Knowledge:</td>
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something vulnerable and in need of nurture if it were to emerge in later years. This decline is of importance, insofar as creativity correlates to its effective role in society. Although the NFAG does not engage in adolescent art education at the secondary school level, it does see itself as a precursor to this developmental phase. The degree to which the workshops engage in elementary age, creative development would later emerge from the research findings.

Towards these ends, collaborative action research offered itself as a means to understanding the creative process. Both theoretical concepts were, therefore, established as a basis to the actual study. The creative process was researched as the final section of this chapter and is summarized in the preceding chart under Creativity Cycle.

Conceptual Areas: Grounding Theories

Theory of Action Research

Lewin (Elliott, 1991, p. 70), the social psychologist who first coined the term “action research,” drew up a model that depicted a “spiral of cycles.” For Lewin, ideas led to reconnaissance fact finding, to plans, then implementation of those plans. He advised that upon completion, plans should be evaluated, amended, re-implemented and re-evaluated. Elliott (1991, p. 69) explained action research as “the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it.” Rossman and Rallis (2003) elaborated, that, in conducting this method of qualitative research, practitioners may reflect upon their own practice with the aim to improving it. Groups involve themselves in a particular project with the goal to better understanding and improving their environment. In the case of this study, it was the Art Education programmes of the NFAG and the classrooms or Gallery settings in which they conduct their workshops.
Collaboration between consenting participants and myself, aimed to bring fruitful discussion to focus group meetings. The purpose of sharing ideas was to bring about social change through the transformation of participants' own ideas and those of the institution of which they are a part.

Heidegger (Heidegger & Nietzsche, 1979, p. 81) introduced the term "techne," meaning the bringing forth of knowledge through guidance. van Manen (1990, pp. 100, 101) offered practical advice concerning the actual group discussion. Through questioning and laying open the subject matter of conversation, the group should aim to gather knowledge. He likened the process to a dialogic relation that Socrates described as "talking together like friends." In this situation people do not compete with one another, but rather, aim to strengthen the knowledge that is being shared. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) listed long-term engagement, voluntary connection, trust, negotiation and jointly chosen projects as means by which collaboration might creatively transform individual ideas. I, as researcher, tried to recognize this dynamic and aimed to allow each person equal opportunity to reveal thoughts, and to develop them creatively through group interaction.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) researched deeper into the social aspects of qualitative research and the ways in which it might be applied, not necessarily by the researcher, but by whoever might make use of the study. Rossman and Rallis presented four consecutive phases that I used as a conceptual basis for this section: the instrumental, the enlightenment, the symbolic, and the emancipatory.

**Instrumental use.** This concept views knowledge as being applied to specific problems. As such, knowledge provides solutions or recommendations. The concept is
theoretical until the user makes his or her own sense of it. In the case of this study, there was a perceived need to increase the creativity of the NFAG education programmes. Through collaboration, and using focus group discussions, this knowledge was shared among the 6 participants of this study. Rossman and Rallis (2003) professed that knowledge is only potential at this early stage of action research, and good only in-so-far as it is put into practice.

_Enlightenment use_. Rossman and Rallis (2003) first envisioned the sharing of information as contributing to a pool of general knowledge. However, this knowledge must be transformed into the utilization domain. For each problem there may be several possible solutions. The user must choose the one that aligns with his or her educational philosophy. Participants in the study were asked to read, then discuss in the first focus group meeting, a short background on art education theory by Gaudelius & Speirs (2002), that outlined formalist, child-centred and discipline-based towards socio-ecological (issues-based) methodologies. Miller and Seller’s (1985) three principle theories of Western education, transmission, transaction, and transformation, were aligned with the aforementioned art-specific terms.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) explained that general knowledge eventually becomes accepted as truth and enhances one’s understanding of the educational process. In turn, specific knowledge offers heuristic insight. I envisioned that participant educators might accept knowledge that is meaningful to them and begin to experiment with it in their art workshops.

_Symbolic use_. Rossman and Rallis (2003) suggested that symbolism allows humans to make sense of their world. That which is familiar is seen in a new light.
Symbolism provides new ways of expressing phenomena that we encounter and crystallizes our beliefs or values in this respect. An example of an Emily Carr painting that I have introduced into the NFAG workshops, provides an example of symbolism. Carr’s “Big Raven,” 1931 (see figure 3), stands as a reference to West Coast Haida culture through its symbolic guardianship of the ancestors. Although the workshop is taught using transmission methods, this powerful symbol and its surrounding landscape has the ability to take the workshop into a social and even ecological dimension. Rossman and Rallis understood that humans look for patterns in their lives and out of these they form narratives. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 66) identified mediation between tools that effect change in external objects and signs that cause changes in mental processes. The external helps to regulate behaviour that is eventually surpassed by “internal, symbolic, psychological functions.” In turn, our own reconceptualizations become public perceptions as we practice what Drake (1997, p. 39) professed to as transformational practice by “teach [ing] who we are.” Thus, authenticity and truth become key understandings toward this end.

*Emancipatory use.* Rossman and Rallis (2003) concluded that through inquiry, action, and reflection upon the knowledge that is generated by action research, the individual and society has the potential to be transformed. As individuals we become empowered by this process and as a consequence, oppressive social relations may be positively affected. Collaboration can generate the knowledge that leads to improvements in personal lives and in the workplace. Vygotsky (1971, p. 249) stated in his dissertation of 1925: “Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual.” His socialist
ideologies juxtaposed the internal and emotional subjectivity of the individual with the external objectivity of society, thus bringing "the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life" (p. 249). Vygotsky's premise, thus sets the vision of this thesis.

Theory of Collaboration

Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) advocated collaboration as a tenet of best practices in that "cooperative social relationship can be a powerful aid to learning." Brooks (2000, pp. 144, 145) looked to the Group for Collaborative Inquiry to identify "boundary permeability (flexibility in concepts and thinking), holistic learning (including cognitive, affective, and embodied knowing), interconnectedness (among people and among ideas), and mutability (capacity for change)" as central to transformative learning in women. She identified narrative as having an important role in linking the individual to social transformation. Rossman and Rallis (2003) confirmed that collaboration, and the knowledge accumulated by a collaborative process, can lead to emancipation of the individual and, in turn, the workplace itself. Focus group discussions of this study allowed the participants to author their own narratives. At times discussion went off topic; however, these discussions were valuable and, therefore, incorporated into the findings.

In this respect, it is important to take into consideration the way in which the experiences of each educator affects his or her teaching practice. Secondly, Western education in the twenty-first century has become increasingly globalized to meet the demands of a democratic ideal, especially so with the enactment of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982. Tucker (1986, p. 53) observed group dynamics set in a
postmodern framework: “Collaboration by its very nature bypasses formalist doctrine entirely. It emphasizes flexibility, spontaneity, and responsiveness rather than control, autonomy, and isolation.” Educators of the NFAG in-school programme often travel together to conduct their workshops in the Niagara Region’s schools. These opportunities frequently lend themselves to sharing of ideas and problem-solving resolutions.

Fennell (1997) allowed opportunity to view the dynamics of leadership at work through three women principals. Intuition and empirical knowledge combined to build schools in which listening, caring, collaboration, understanding, and “servanthood” became the foundations of democratic learning environments. Such truths may lie within the histories of these leaders having walked their paths as wives and mothers, as it has similarly for myself, and, perhaps, for many of the women in the NFAG team.

Noddings’s (1992, 1995, 2003) work intertwined with Goldstein’s (1999) notion of dual, transformational care, entering into what Vygotsky (1978, p. 85) defined as the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky’s theory identified this “zone” as the difference between the child’s “actual development level,” and his or her potential development as determined by someone more capable in that field. In essence, the gap between the experiential and the innate. Noddings (2003, p. 33) discussed the notion of “place” as central to the happiness of individuals and their creative work. Classrooms must be places of comfort and familiarity, conducive to learning in which children find companionship and purpose. Within these places, the extension of care that incurs modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 1992) became a further factor towards effective teaching and learning. In this respect, her concept of caring
relationships transcended empathy (the notion of feeling concern for another’s plight) into an egalitarian relationship that fosters confidence within the student, opening the way to reception of information. The relationship then becomes transformative, in that it allows both student and educator to share in the dissemination and receiving of experience. In turn, I as researcher became engaged in this dual process in the way Flannery (2000) saw the growth of identity and self-esteem within the female researcher as an important component of the learning process.

**Theory of Creativity**

Zemelman et al. (2003, p.1) listed expressiveness as a tenet of best practices that allows opportunities “for students to express their thoughts and ideas.” Research into creativity emerged out of the early studies of Wallas (1926, cited in Sawyer, 2003), which had drawn on earlier studies by Helmholtz and Poincaré. Wallas identified “preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification” (p. 23) as the four stages of creativity. Gardner (1973) similarly broke the creative process into four phases: (1) disconnected and disorganized acts, which are frequently interrupted; (2) behaviour is poorly articulated, but carried out in a single, pauseless action; (3) the behavioural sequence becomes an integrated unit yet is dependent upon motivation; and (4) the sequence is differentiated into parts and yet integrated as a whole, the actions are flexible, involving less demand on attention. Van Tassel-Baska, J. (2003) listed six goals towards the promotion of creativity: risk taking, convergent and divergent skills, deep knowledge in particular domains, strong communications skills in written and oral contexts, motivation and passion, and creative habits. Many of these aspects were identified and covered in the course of this research.
Dewey (1934) linked creative thinking to the activities of the everyday. In this way “art” is reassessed as a process and a means by which the human creates the self through an expressive form. Both Piaget and Vygotsky (Sawyer, 2003) maintained that children are creators of their own knowledge. Towards the child’s participation in his or her own creation of knowledge, Vygotsky (1978, p. 65) said:

The search for method becomes one of the most important problems of the entire enterprise of understanding the uniquely human forms of psychological activity. In this case, the method is simultaneously prerequisite and product, the tool and the result of the study.

Sawyer’s (2003) research saw the creative process as a parallel to constructivism, the maturation of the developmental process. In constructivism the creative process essentially emerges through time and is not an entirely new substance, but rather a combination of elements; thus is borne the emergence theory. In education, Bruner’s (Wood, 1989, p. 60) concept of “scaffolding functions” became means to cognitive development whereby “one more knowledgeable than the learner may help to bridge such gaps... activating problem solving in the child... instruction enables novices to reach higher levels of competence than they can achieve alone.” Closely linked to this concept was Vygotsky’s (1978) theory “zone of proximal development.” Here internal experience and external knowledge had the potential to become the basis for motivation and learning. Driving this learning potential was the child’s interaction with the external world. The zone was the point at which the knowledge and experience of child and adult met.
Piaget (Gardner, 1982, p. 8; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) had, as early as 1945, recognized that children explore “concrete operational thought” from age 7 to 12. He believed children are able to see things from another person’s point of view and can proceed back and forth between 2 perspectives on the same scene using the central operation of reversibility. Kegan, (1994, p. 24) discussed the order of mind, which he termed “durable categories.” Children from the ages of 7 or 8 move from the egocentric world into a more “concrete world that conforms for the first time to the laws of nature, and they are interested in the limits and possibilities within that world. . . . and come to recognize that people have separate minds, separate intentions, and separate vantage points” (p. 20). Gardner (1999, p. 36) argued, “middle childhood represents the skill building years when, following the psychological principle of literalism, children seek to do adult-like things in adult-like ways.” Bruner (1997, p. 65) reflected on Piaget’s objective perspective of the “fundamental role of logic-like operations in human mental activity.” Bruner, however, took a more subjective view when he said “that individual human intellectual power depended upon our capacity to appropriate human culture and history as tools of mind” (p. 65). At the root of these language-based rationales for understanding and explaining the world, which lead to our actions in it, is the drive for human survival.

Simonton (2000, p. 152) discovered that creativity does not mature until children reach puberty when “new ideas must arise from a large set of well-developed skills and a rich body of domain-relevant knowledge.” Winner (2000, p. 166) saw that creative children are often average students when they are young and not classified as “gifted” at all. However, creative children often go on to become “innovator[s] and revolutionizer[s]
of a domain.” Nurturing the love to discover the wonders of art, in its broadest sense, would therefore appear as a priori if creativity is to emerge out of these formative years.

Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art

Education is a research study organized into 4 discussions under the headings: (1) Gathering Knowledge: Towards Motivation; (2) Intuitive Exploration: Experiential and Process Learning; (3) Informal Presentation: The Process of Creativity Explored; and (4) Formal Presentation: A Holistic Exploration of Transformative Practices in Education. Headings were derived from the four identified phases of creativity discovered in my initial literature research of Ponomarev (1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10). I felt that, for continuity, the entire study, including interviews and focus group discussions, should follow this pattern.

Delors’s (1996, p. 86), research complemented this research framework with the four pillars of knowledge: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. He emphasized that “A broad, encompassing view of learning should aim to enable each individual to discover, unearth and enrich his or her creative potential, to reveal the treasure within each of us,” and allows a more complete picture of the creative process.

Four Phases of Creativity

Gathering Knowledge: Towards Motivation

Ponomarev (1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10) identified the first phase of creative processing as “logical analysis in which actual knowledge is used to solve a task. The person solving the problem is aware of both the processing and the results and both are under logical control.” Heidegger (Heidegger & Nietzsche, 1979, p. 81) termed
knowledge technē and said that it "supports and conducts every human irruption into the midst of beings. . . . produces utensils and works of art." In best practices Zemelman et al. (2003) advocated student-centred, experiential holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative tenets towards successful teaching and learning. Thus, multiple intelligence research (Gardner, 1973, 1999, 2004) and methodologies in teaching (Miller and Seller, 1985; Gaudelius and Speirs, 2002) became areas of research towards gathering knowledge with respect to my own insight, and participants' perspectives of creative practice.

Multiple intelligences. Neisser (1979, cited in Averill, 2000, p. 277) saw, within language, a multiplicity of abilities that included, "verbal fluency, logical ability, and wide general knowledge. . . . common sense, wit, creativity, lack of bias, sensitivity to one's own limitations, intellectual independence, openness to experience. . . ." Neisser's findings indicate that intelligence comprises both empirical and tacit sources. Within this field of intelligence research, Gardner (1973, 1999, 2004) continues to develop his Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory. From this body, the NFAG programming recognizes and puts into practice musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, and logical-mathematical intelligences. This thesis research has further explored the merits of Gardner's interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence domains and Gardner's (2004) and Averill's (2000) research into emotional intelligences. Gardner's (1973, 1999) methodology and areas of intelligence were the main topics of discussion in Roper and Davis (2002) research. Here, implications for applying Gardner's MI theory looked towards enriched learning environments that were motivational and creative.
Kinzeloe, Steinberg, and Tippins (1999), in researching the truth behind the philosophy of Einstein, came to recognize the spirit within each child as the “genius.” Einstein’s observation begs the questions: is “genius” something innate in all children? Do we find genius in just one discipline, or, as Gardner (1973, 1999, 2004) would argue, do we find it dispersed among a diversity of intelligences? In a single elementary class, the odds of finding all students innately talented in spacial/visual intelligence (that synonymous with visual art) would therefore be unlikely. The NFAG workshops go beyond a single discipline to integrate the entire curriculum from science, math, history, social studies, to drama, music, literature, and more. But, is the Art Gallery programme (or any art programme) designed to discover this genius or to nurture creativity? The second stage of the creative process, in which intuition takes reign over knowledge, addresses this question.

There is, as well, the question of whether the NFAG programmes serve a therapeutic role. Williams and Wood (1975, p. vii) defined art as a “motivating, gratifying activity for nearly every child.” Further, they saw therapy as a “healing experience. It mends where developmental processes have broken down. It is an opportunity for new learning where a gap has existed. It is a means for venturing into the next, new steps among the challenges of childhood” (p. vii). By combining Piaget’s (Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) concrete developmental stage with Gardner’s (1973, 1999, 2004) multiple intelligences, it is plausible that the NFAG school programmes could be therapeutic.

Educational assistants (EAs) are encountered regularly in both Public and Catholic schools of the Niagara Region. These teacher aids communicate the art
educators' instructions to the children in their care, normally on a one-to-one ratio. Autistic conditions (high functioning Asperger and low-functioning Kanner-type) Tourette's and Down Syndrome are among several disabilities that EAs work with. In addition, the art programme might serve other children in a therapeutic manner. Lowenfeld, (1982, as cited in Rubin, 1984, p. 220) was an advocate for "art education therapy," but advised art teachers that, "We must not engage in any diagnosis of children's drawings, which is drawn from inferences." Lowenfeld believed that the process of creativity moved us from chaos to "a better organization in our thinking, feeling and perceiving" and toward becoming "a better organized individual." Rubin (p. 221) further discussed the therapeutic function of art providing the child with a climate conducive to change and growth towards building self-confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-growth.

Despite the therapeutic potential of the NFAG programmes, it is not the goal of the Gallery workshops, or of its instructors, to serve as therapists. Instructors do not have the required background or training to engage in this psychological area. Rather, the purpose of the programmes is to fill diverse curriculum requirements, and to these ends its educators have received training. However, my study looks beyond transmission based education as it relates to the participant educators.

The words of Spock (Barr Goral & Chlebo, 2000, p. 51) have become a personal guide as I have taken on the challenge of elementary art education over the past year:

Not only must the teacher love and reverence his pupils; he must make himself worthy of being reverenced and loved by them. It is not what he knows, but what he is that affects the child most deeply, for children instinctively seek in their teacher a model for their own development.
Towards these ends Drake (1997, p. 39) professed to the authenticity of the teacher in “teach [ing] who we are.” For her, “perseverance, caring, concern for others, flexibility, and social responsibility” are the fundamental principles of teaching. The diverse environment, from kindergarten to Grade 8, in which the NFAG educators teach, requires this holistic response. Children of varied learning abilities (and disabilities) and interests, as well as social backgrounds, and their teachers and school environments must be taken into account. Towards programmes that are tailor-made to fit both educator and student, and the environments in which they are educated, the following methodologies in teaching have been considered.

**Methodologies in Teaching**

Hutchison (1998, pp. 28-31), from the groundwork of Miller and Seller (1985), outlined three basic paradigms found in today’s North American schools: transmission, transaction, and transformation. This study questioned the pedagogical effectiveness of each philosophy in relation to their equivalents in art education. Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) outlined the three methodologies as formalist, child-centred, and discipline-based with a twenty-first century, issues-based focus.

**Transmission and Formalism Compared**

**Transmission.** Hutchison (1998) interpreted from Miller and Seller, (1985) transmission-based education as a technocratic, “Back to Basics” methodology, which was, in essence, a positivist, logico-scientific method that dated to the mid-eighteenth century. John Locke (Miller & Seller, 1985) perceived the mind as a tabula rasa (blank slate) that receives ideas that result in actions. Actions, in turn, lead to habits. In the transmission model, product is the end result of a teacher-centred philosophy. The foremost aim is to help students develop knowledge, skills, and values that will assist in
securing productive jobs in a competitive marketplace. In terms of society, successful individuals hold the power to effect change for the economic well-being of the human species. Such leaders drive technological development.

In education, cognitive dimensions are foremost. Learning proceeds from teacher to student, and involves memorization of empirical information. Curricula are subject based and allow for little cross-disciplinary integration. There is little or no socio-ecological, values education. Standardization, quantitative assessment, and product are the signposts of transmission-based education.

Formalism. When translated into the pedagogy of art education, transmission becomes a formalist paradigm. Gaudelius and Speirs (2002, p. 6) explained formalism as originating from the aesthetic theory of Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth century. In essence, Kant based his aesthetic judgment on “how people respond to works of art, how they interpret art, and how they judge it based on nothing but the work itself.” In 1899, Dow, (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002) introduced the elements and principles of design that included line, colour, shape/form, texture space, value, and the way in which they are organized (composed) through balance, emphasis, proportion, movement, rhythm, repetition, pattern, contrast, variety, and unity. The elements and principles of design are still the essence of the visual language of art. The teacher is primarily in control of the learning environment. Much of the NFAG workshops include formalism as a primary methodology of teaching, where educators model the formal aspects of visual art and children follow in turn.
Transaction and Child-Centred Approach Compared

Transaction. Hutchison (1998) from Miller and Seller, (1985) viewed transaction philosophy as progressive and “child-centred.” Transaction aims to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to shape citizens who will participate effectively in a democratic society. Transactive education first arose in the early twentieth century in reaction to Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy of education. It became popular again in the early 1970s with the rise of humanistic psychology and against the backdrop of Western social revolution. In viewing the natural world, humans are viewed as stewards and are seen as a means to solving ecological problems. The earliest stages of holistic learning could be seen in the whole-language practices of transaction’s methodologies.

In this paradigm, education became a 2-way interaction between student and the curriculum, teacher, and peer group. Problem-solving skills, learning strategies, cooperative learning, and social skills act toward building self-esteem. Although the curriculum is subject based, it allows for interdisciplinary and theme-based subject integration, especially at the elementary level. Children are assessed using anecdotal qualitative observations, and combined individual and group evaluations. Process is stressed above product.

Child-centred approach: Lowenfeld’s (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002) research is synonymous with the child-centred approach in art teaching that aligns philosophically with transaction’s methodology. The child and his or her interest, abilities, and expressive needs are central. These needs change as the child grows. The child is seen as an individual whose expression reflects his or her development and the environment in which he or she lives. The child controls and manipulates the art materials as an
expression of self. This approach is grounded in developmental psychology, which acts as the basis for curriculum development.

Transformation and Discipline-Based into Issues-Based Compared

Transformation. Hutchison (1998) from Miller and Seller (1985) saw the goal of transformative philosophy as one that viewed the world from a holistic perspective in developing knowledge, skills, and values, needed to further personal growth in a world beyond formal schooling. Transformation also prepares the child to be effective in an increasingly globalized world. Historical roots reach into the nineteenth century to Froebel and from there to Montessori and Steiner. Aboriginal philosophy is, as well, integral and predates European history. Transformative philosophy is organic and views the universe as interconnected parts and systems. In relation to the natural world, humans are one of many parts. Social change must be enacted to improve functioning of the whole system.

In education, transformation aims to balance the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions and interconnect the whole. There is an emphasis on the spiritual development of the child. The natural world is deemed most important and influential. The curriculum is structured such that learning occurs through a combined process of personal and social development. Critical thinking skills lead to social and attitudinal changes. The curriculum is theme based and interdisciplinary. Values look to an ethic of caring that extends beyond the classroom to the community and world as a whole. The natural world becomes a part of this environment. Evaluation is less formal but still focuses on anecdotal qualitative observations in the younger grades. Self and group evaluations are used.
Discipline-based into issues-based: Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) discussed the transformative process. DBAE emerged out of a shift in educational theory and practice during the mid-1980s. Aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production became the means to developing critical-thinking skills and inquiry processes. DBAE aimed to do more than just produce art; it set out to connect other subjects in the school curriculum. According to Wilson (cited in Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 10), DBAE should “transform the way students create and understand art.” Further, towards the end of the twentieth century, DBAE began to look outward beyond the school environment to include socio-ecological concerns as part of the transformational process. In this new paradigm, issues-based art education became the vehicle towards enabling a holistic and empathetic perspective of the world within and beyond the classroom. All people and all things became part of this encompassing circle of education. In this respect, transformational practices and discipline-based into issues-based art education, align in philosophical outlook.

Intuitive Exploration: Experiential and Process Learning

In best practices Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) included student-centred teaching where “students’ interests and concerns are taken into account when planning lessons.” Zemelman et al. included experiential learning “by doing” (p. 1) as a further tenet towards intuitive exploration. Ponomarev (1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10) found “intuitive problem-solving, is similar to the first [phase of creativity], except that one is not aware of the ways by means of which the problem is solved. It is possible to solve the problem only if the person’s unconscious experience contains a key to it. Gardner (1973, p. 60) described the second phase of creativity thus: “the behavior remains poorly
articulated and integrated but is often carried off as a single, pauseless action.” This second phase of creativity explored the experience of creative practice, and the process of learning through play, flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) and risk-taking.

Foremost in this research is the work of Dewey (1934). His understanding of experiential art as a lived experience gave rise to the notion of the product of art being one in the same as the process itself. He wrote:

When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that render almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals. . . . This task [of the philosopher] is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. (p. 3)


Dorfman (2000) combined research by Russian and Western psychologists to discover creativity as one of the manifestations of giftedness. Especially interesting in its connection to a holistic perspective is Dorfman’s research into giftedness of the elderly.

Giftedness in people 40 years and older was explored by Kholodnaya (Dorfman, 2000). She discovered three layers of individual mental experience: cognitive, metacognitive, and intentional, manifested by the way in which a person perceives, understands, and interprets the internal and external events of experience. In his study of intelligence,
emotion and creativity, Averill (2000) noted that creativity among elderly people opened the way to emotional vibrancy and physical health when compared to less creative peers. Although this area of research is a field unto itself, understanding its basis might relate to lifetime creativity. In this respect, the result of experiences afforded the child is both important and relevant to the study. The question that arises is, how might visual art be taught, effectively.

Insight into child-centred, transactive ideology is provided through the viewpoint of Morman Unsworth (2001). She wrote:

Art is not a product arrived at through following directions, copying, or conforming to a given model. Art is not just skill. It is the process of thinking, imagining, risking, seeing connections, inventing, expressing in unique visual form . . . . But by age 8 or 9, many look critically at their drawing and decide it is not up to their achievement level in other subjects, or up to the adult criteria imposed on them, and they stop.” (p. 10)

Morman Unsworth suggested drawing from life and from all perspectives as a resolution to this dilemma. But, can an adult’s drawing serve as a model for teaching formal principles such as perspective or composition, or to transport a child back in time to antiquity? Such is often the case when teaching to the curriculum of Niagara’s school boards.

Duncum (1999) provided the dialectic voice of a more traditional, transmissive method of imparting information. He suggested that this formalist approach is plausible, based on rationales presented by Gombrich and Wilson and Wilson. Children can learn to,
...make pictures from studying other pictures, not from life. . . . the emphasis here is on adapting graphic equivalents. . . . since knowledge is discipline specific, mastery of adult images can only be gained by examining the conventions of adult imagery. It is desirable, then, to introduce children to the illusionistic and compositional 'tricks of the trade' that have been employed by professional artists for centuries. (pp. 35, 36)

This dialectic between Unsworth's transactive, child-centred view and Duncum's transmissive, formalist perspective begs several questions. Does offering formal knowledge and technique lead to a child's confidence and hence productivity? Or does it undermine his or her self-assuredness and the possible creative results thereof? Heidegger (Heidegger & Nietzsche, 1979, pp. 81, 82) offered an answer in "technē." Here the concept might outwardly imply the technique of art and craft. However, the meaning is "knowledge, the disclosing of beings as such, in the manner of a knowing guidance of bringing-forth." Towards such ends, can transactive and transmissive methods be combined into transformative methods by working with the child until he or she is confident to proceed independently, in the way that Bruner (Wood, 1989) described as scaffolding? Further, are there other motivational tools that educators might employ towards effective and creative learning? The following three concepts of play, flow, and risk taking are explored to these ends.

**Play.** Carpenter (2001, p. 168) decreed the importance of play as "the soul of the nation and Canada's continued well-being." She described the "spiritual dimension" of play and "the individual who sees himself consistently is one who is at play in the world is expressing his state of inner harmony. . . . play is our dreams in action." As such, play
is an integral part of learning in childhood, and, perhaps, in adulthood as well. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) saw play as an essential element toward creating socially functioning individuals. Without imagination, Vygotsky believed people were unable to remove themselves from the immediate stimuli of the environment. He saw this process as being essential towards the internalization of signs that take on symbolic meaning for the individual. Heidegger (1977, pp. 167-187; Young, 2002) extended this notion into the narrative of self through the process of “bringing forth” that resulted in poiesis or self-realization (discussed in following section, Informal Presentation).

Göncü et al. (1999) looked at role-play as a form of play. Göncü believed, “Imaginative play is a leading activity because it allows children to appropriate from a given imagined situation in question as well as enabling children to rehearse adult roles in which they must engage in the future” (p. 155). Göncü et al. (p. 154) discussed play as having three levels of consciousness. At first “activity and its motive exist at the most global level. . . . second level involving actions and goals. . . . The third level is parallel to goals and actions. This level involves conditions and operations. . . . automated actions that no longer require conscious attention.” This latter concept leads into Csikszentmihalyi’s (1993) notion of flow, in the following discussion. Noddings (2003, p. 243) said of play: “Play can contribute directly to learning, especially for elementary school children, and all teachers should be aware of the power of play in learning.”

Flow. The theory of flow involves the most advanced and engaged stage of play, which Csikszentmihalyi (1993, p. 176) identified as an effective means toward learning. The processes of creativity and flow often go hand in hand. “Concentration, absorption, deep involvement” and “joy, a sense of accomplishment – are what people describe as the
best moments in their lives... provided one is using psychic energy in harmonious pattern.” This energy “stretches our skills in new directions, when we recognize and master new challenges” (p. 175). However, “When one is immersed in flow, interruptions are very frustrating because they break the spell and force us to return to the everyday state of consciousness” (p. 183). This aspect of the NFAG programme is sometimes difficult in that flow might be broken at a critical point because of time factors. Despite such problems, Csikszentmihalyi’s (1993) research indicated that flow enables the individual to find self-directed ways to cope with the stress that comes with day-to-day life. Further, Goleman, Kaufman, and Ray (1992) found that neurological studies indicated the brain uses less energy while in the state of flow. This is especially relevant when educators must engage in a complicated or enduring process, which often is the case with many of the NFAG educational workshops. Taking the creative experience to this level is the ultimate goal, seldom achieved in the short 90-minute workshops that the Gallery educators have with their students.

Risk Taking. Morman Unsworth (2001, p. 6) wrote of child-centred art education: “Art is not just skill. It is the process of thinking, imagining, risking, seeing connections, inventing, expressing in unique visual form.” Further, “creativity is centered in divergent thinking, the openness to the new. It establishes a climate for risk and readiness to learn from failure instead of seeing it as a defeat” (p. 9). In the process of developing intellectual growth, Sergiovanni (1994, p. 41) reminded us that we must seek “the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to approach problems in an open and systematic manner.” Postman (1995) guided teachers and students through this difficult task by allowing them to examine beliefs of
themselves and of their authorities. Error is part of learning and risk taking is tantamount to creativity. Drake (1997, p. 42) added, “perseverance, caring, concern for others, flexibility, and social responsibility” are the fundamental goals of teaching.

Strict transmission methods of teaching do not allow for risk taking; rather, this methodology aims to restrict children from exploring beyond set parameters. By contrast, transformative methods, which incorporate playfulness, allow for risks and the acceptance of errors that may result. Averill (2000) outlined three criteria for intelligent creators: novelty, effectiveness, and authenticity. Novelty includes the characteristics of unconventionality or even anticonventionality. Effectiveness involves potential benefit, to the individual or the group. Authenticity means originality. It is interesting to note that Averill viewed creativity in a dual individual and social context. In all aspects of these creative criteria, however, is the underlying premise that risk taking is an essential behavioural factor that is part of the experience and process involved in intuitive exploration.

Informal Presentation: The Process of Creativity Explored

Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) said of authenticity in teaching and learning, “Lessons should not be oversimplified. Students have the ability to learn on deep levels.” Ponomarev (1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10) explained the third phase of creativity as when the “intuitive problem-solving process begins to be defined and verbalized.” Bogoyavleneskaya (1995b, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 12), explored into the mind, beyond the surface layer into what she termed a deeper source layer:

An internal cognitive process, of which the person is not consciously aware and during which people move beyond simple stimulus-bound perception of tasks in
seeking solutions. This kind of thinking is productive and spontaneous cognitive creativity that integrates cognition and affect. It is not stimulated by the outside situation but is affected by personality. Only the source layer represents creative thinking. (p. 12)

Towards my understanding of Bogoyavlenskaya’s (Dorfman, 2000) findings, I discovered Heidegger’s (1977; Young, 2002) notion of poiesis. I subsequently used the poetic term as a metaphor for the process of creative practice, and an avenue towards its exploration.

**Poiesis.** Young (2002) explained the interplay of processes and concepts as being rooted in the notion of physis in the natural world. In Heidegger’s (1977, p. 169) translated text, physis is what the Greeks called “emerging and rising in itself and in all things.” He gave the light of the day, the breadth of the sky and darkness of the night as examples. Young’s, (2002, p. 1) analysis of Heidegger saw physis as “movement, change, transformation, and ‘peaceful islands’ of stability.” The bringing forth of this “Being,” through “doing” resulted in poiesis. Symbolically, Heidegger (Young, 2002, p. 2) saw this “bringing forth” process as the unfolding spiral of creative development. Heidegger (1977, p. 183) said, “Art then is the becoming and happening of truth.” Through discovery, the awe and wonder of the everyday lies in wait. Moreover, through creative expression, not only of the individual, but of the group itself, educators and their students might explore ways to live in a world of commodity and technology.

From a transformational perspective, can the art educator become a vehicle which leads the human heart, mind, and hand to the discovery of self? Might the process of poiesis provide a means to story the individual and community, and ultimately, humanity
as a whole? It is a transformative process through which Fleener (1997) saw the ability to discover oneself within the community and hence, a self-directed “truth.” Maturana and Varela (Fleener, p. 7) stated “all autopoietic systems are living systems.” Luhmann (Fleener, p. 9) discovered that through communication of individuals, social organizations are autopoietic as well. In the multicultural environment of the Niagara Region, the notion of society’s inclusiveness or holism (see section, Formal Presentation) becomes integral.

Schools in Niagara, as well as many children who take Saturday classes and school holiday programmes at the Gallery, share this multicultural factor. Many children are, indeed, recent first generation immigrants, some in the process of learning the English language. Carr (1997, p. 2) argued the process of systemic change, which allows for connectedness between educational systems and communities, and the inclusion of marginal voices, and therefore multiple truths. These relationships seek understanding and mutual respect between schools and the community of which they are a part. As educators, do we have a responsibility to see that links are made in a respectful and ethical manner? If so, is there potential for ourselves, as educators, and the children whom we teach, to be thus empowered? Consequently, are self-narrated journeys enabled through creative art programming, a potential means to this end?

However, Marx (1977, cited in Young, 2002, p. 6) offered an alternative perspective that addressed the economic perspective of the NFAG programmes:

In capitalism, the product of \textit{physis} is abstracted from its original earth and World and becomes a commodity. . . a curious mix of use-value and exchange-value, “magically” calculated, reified, and accepted into the realm of Being. \textit{Physis} and
the *poiesis* of the worker thus become subject to a kind of fallacy of misplaced concreteness. The “thing” *qua* commodity conceals the various interrelated processes of human and non-human creativity. These “things” then begin to order the processes of life. It is for this reason that workers can be alienated. As individuals, they come to see their own personal creativity as belonging to the capitalist who buys their labour. This, then, makes workers unable to see the creativity inherent in other workers.

Marx (Young, 2002, p. 6) believed that commodification “estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and spiritual essence, his human being.” By contrast to the notion of worker alienation, O’Sullivan (1999, p. 3) professed that an *ecozoic* vision (transformative perspective in education that connects us to a total ecosystem) opens us to a full planetary consciousness, “that energizes our imagination well beyond a marketplace vision.” Although this area opens itself to further research, its relevance to this study might suggest a dialectic between the momentary “product,” as often directed by parents and fundraising committees who pay for the NFAG programmes and others (including classroom teachers and art educators) who might ideally wish to have creativity become an integral part of a child’s life.

*Formal Presentation: A Holistic Exploration of Transformative Practices in Education*

In best practices, Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) listed holistic education as “Thematic units of study [which] build greater overall understanding and appreciation.” Collaboration becomes a “powerful aid to learning” (p. 1) in this regard. Further, reflective practice allows students to “consider what they have learned, how they learned,
and how it applies to what they already know” (p. 1). Ponomarev (1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10) described the fourth phase of creativity as commencing when the “process and/or the product of problem-solving can be described formally and verbally.” Vygotsky (1997, pp. 208, 209) looked at the contemporary environment as a “chaotic system of influences... the environment of capitalist society, creates a radical contradiction between the child’s early experience and its subsequent forms of adaptation.” In essence, the child, and furthermore the adult, has a vast potential of energy waiting to be liberated and assumed in a state of reality that is socially useful and creative. Through a holistic lens, this fourth stage of creativity looks at transformative practices in education that encompass: ecological and social conscience, caring relationships, and the mind, soul, heart and spirit as the impetus of creativity.

Hutchison (1998) described a worldview seen through a social, ecological lens. Connecting with the environment allows the child and educator to share histories that help sustain communities. Relationships between young and old may be built in this way. Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000) looked at education holistically as a transformational process. For them, holism incorporated cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions as a means toward connecting self and world. Hutchison (1998), drawing on Miller and Seller (1985), outlined the principles of holistic philosophy, which emphasized the child’s search for meaningfulness and purpose in the physical and cultural world. This purpose extends beyond the school itself and responds to dramatic global change.

Holism’s philosophy sees the universe as composed of interconnected parts and systems. The human is an implicit part of the natural world, inescapably connected to the
way in which it works, functions and is destined to be. Visual art education, in this paradigm, has transformed from a discipline-based ideology into one that is ecological and socially conscious, or what is also termed "issues based" (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). Holism seeks cognitive, affective, and spiritual balance. This process of transformation focuses on personal growth, learning styles, and critical thinking. The whole places an emphasis on the ethic of caring beyond the self.

Looking at the NFAG programmes through an ethno-cultural lens is also important. For children of Aboriginal cultures, many of whom receive schooling in the Niagara Region, a holistic view of education that includes traditional ideologies might be viewed in a positive light. Bosacki (1995, p. 20) discussed the need for Aboriginal students to know their traditional heritage towards building "positive self-concept."

Child-centred strategies that employ culturally accurate and sensitive curriculum not only promote self-esteem for Aboriginal students, but foster positive attitudes from non-Aboriginal cultures. Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996, p. 30) spoke about the traditional beliefs of the Cree (closely related to the Ojibway/Anishnabe who are more prevalent in Niagara, together with the Mohawk and other Iroquois nations): "We are helped to understand self through our relationships with family, extended family, friends, and community. . . . We learn and understand self by interacting with peers, and values are transmitted through our parents and institutions like school and church" (p. 30). In many ways these traditional aboriginal values align with those of Noddings' (1992) theory of care and happiness in education (2003) that include familiarity of place and companionship (2003), discussed shortly under the heading of "caring relationships."
The principles of the traditional Medicine Wheel gave light to multidimensional understandings through the coming together of the four quadrants: the physical, spiritual, emotional and mental elements. Kulchyski, McCaskill, and Newhouse (1999, p. xx) discussed the power of the world working in circles as a symbol of completeness and perfection. Balance between each of these aspects of the four quadrants enables *Bimaadiziwin*, or "living in a good way in life." The NFAG in-school programme includes not only Aboriginal workshops, but other units pertaining to cultures within the multicultural diaspora of the Niagara Region. All cultural workshops are taught in conjunction with the curriculum. In designing a Bachelor of Education in Aboriginal Adult Education degree at Brock University, Kompf and Hodson (2002) sought advice from an Elder in relation to the Medicine Wheel teachings. His advice was to seek vision, relationship building, knowledge and finally action as a means to a successful programme. Recommendations given by the Protection Clan (set up specifically for this project) were that the curriculum had to be written and delivered by Native people, and Native students' voices had to be listened to and heard.

Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 10) provided the following ethical questions for researchers (some of whom transfer their experiential knowledge into education) who work cross-culturally: "Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? . . . Can they actually do anything?" Tuhiwai Smith suggested that skill, maturity, experience, and knowledge must all play a critical role towards honest and sensitive research.
Ecological and social conscience. Hutchison (1998) viewed holism from an ecological perspective as he situated the student within the earth and nature itself. In his work, Growing up Green, Hutchison stated:

To know one’s place is to have an intimate knowledge of the local environment (both natural and built) . . . shared histories and interdependent relationships that sustain the community over the long term . . . . their participation in community projects that help to nurture culturally significant relationships between young and old can be fostered. (p. 129)

Gablik (1991) placed art within this ecological framework and within a social sphere, at the same time looking at creativity in postmodern art processes. She argued profoundly against the solitary isolation of Cartesian and Kantian traditions (transmission/formalist) in favour of artwork being produced to fulfill socio-ecological purposes. Gablik emphasized this social paradigm as it has shifted from modernism to postmodernism over the past 3 decades:

The philosophies of the Cartesian era carried us away from a sense of wholeness by focusing only on individual experience. Ultimately this individualistic focus narrowed our aesthetic perspectives as well, due to its noninteractive, nonrelational and nonparticipatory orientation . . . . Under modernism this often meant freedom from community, freedom from obligation to the world and freedom from relatedness. The emerging new paradigm reflects a will to participate socially: a central aspect of new paradigm thinking involves a significant shift from objects to relationships. It is what the philosopher David
Michael Levin describes as “The rooting of vision in the ground of our needs; the need for openness, the need for contact, the need for wholeness.” (p. 7)

Gablik (1991, p. 114) discussed Levin’s deconstruction of the narcissistic self in which the reciprocities of a social world and moral community might take precedence.

O’Sullivan (1999) went beyond the notion of holism in his vision for education for the twenty-first century. From his perspective, education exists within a “dynamic evolving tension of elements held together in a dialectical movement of both harmony and disharmony . . . offering an understanding of evolutionary processes that includes a critical role for stress in the transformation of evolving systems.” This concept that allows for “stress,” enables us to see beyond holism’s emphasis on “harmony and integration” (p. 208). Working from Prigogine and Stengers’s (O’Sullivan, 1999) theory of “dissipative structures,” O’Sullivan saw a fluctuation of positive and negative energy, which might become an integral system of “flowing wholeness” (p. 209). If art educators in the NFAG programmes choose to situate themselves within this cosmic vision, acknowledging truths from all perspectives, they must also be ethically and morally sensitive to the young minds that are within their influence and care.

**Caring Relationships.** Caring relationships begin to develop in the NFAG programmes as educators return to the same schools and classrooms throughout the year, and into subsequent years as the students mature. Many of these children come to the Gallery for holiday camps and Saturday classes. Goldstein (1999) brought together an understanding for caring relationships through the work of Vygotsky (1978) and Noddings (1992, 1995, 2003). Noddings (1992, p. 23) researched caring relationships between educators and students. She spoke of four components: “modeling, dialogue,
practice and confirmation.” Modeling is the “showing” rather than the “telling.” Dialogue is open-ended in that neither party knows what the outcome will be. Dialogue can be “playful or serious, logical or imaginative, goal or process oriented” (p. 23). Practice is the “experience” (p. 23), which we are all able to bring to the discussion. Confirmation is the act of “affirming and encouraging the best in others” (p. 25). These precepts were discussed in Noddings’s (2003) book, Happiness in Education. She spoke about celebrating the concrete (p. 11) in life towards affording students everyday experiences such as watching a sunrise or sunset. These she called these experiences “ecstasies.” Further, Noddings (2003) spoke of place as a means of building familiarity and security. Companionship within this environment added to the child’s happiness and ability to learn. Through these avenues both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills can be nurtured. Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) spoke about such experiences as the bringing forth of life’s poetry, that which he termed poiesis.

During the 1980s, Gablik (1991, p. 123) viewed an emerging “myth of empathy – the capacity to see what another is feeling, to lie in the consciousness of our interconnectedness.” Toward the application of empathy, Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) observed the relative zone of proximal development: “It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers.” Drawing from Noddings’s (1992) ethic of care, Goldstein (1999) argued that “the interpersonal character of the zone of proximal development closely resembles a caring encounter. In merging caring and the notion of the co-construction of knowledge” (p. 648), Goldstein broadened the teaching-learning
process to further understand the roles played by affect, volition, and relationship in cognitive development. Barr Goral and Chlebo (2000) discussed the philosophy of the Waldorf schools and caring relationships between educators and students that foster healthy and productive learning environments.

Linked to caring relationships is the field of emotional intelligence. Averill (2000, p. 283) identified emotional syndromes that concerned a) existential beliefs and b) social rules. He said, “existential beliefs concern what is, what exists.” Some are true but others may be mythical. “Social rules prescribe what should be. . . . social rules help regulate the display of emotion such as laughing at a funeral.” Through emotional awareness, innate or learned, it is conceivable that individuals might communicate concern, care, and empathy between one another, and beyond to a global level. As well, they are capable of understanding their own emotional state and reaction to the outside world. Simultaneously enriching and complicating this process is the underlying social-constructionist view of emotion. Averill (2000, p. 291) pointed out that, “large differences exist across cultures in the way emotions are experienced and expressed. Thus, the question is not whether such variations exist, but what they mean.” The culturally diverse classrooms of the Niagara Region allow for exploration of these emotional and moral spheres.

*Mind, soul, heart and spirit: Impetus of creativity.* Bosacki (2001) described how teachers can help to provide insight into the mind and soul of learners through spiritual education. She explained spirituality as standing “for our lifelong search for meaningfulness and purpose in the world . . . . how we make sense of our selves and the universe. Thus, spirituality and stories about our self are one and the same” (pp. 157,
in the way that Heidegger (1977, p. 168) asked, “Where does a work belong? The work belongs, as work, uniquely within the realm that is opened up by itself. . . . We said that in the work there was a happening of truth at work.” This sense of “connectedness” with our world and with our self is part of a whole, “a dialectic between teachers and learners within a caring community” (p. 163). O’Sullivan (1999, p. 259) similarly viewed spirituality as “the deeper resources of the human spirit and involves the non-physical, immaterial dimension of our being.” As educators we have the opportunity to introduce children to the earth’s matrix. O’Sullivan (p. 262) continued: “It is a matrix that exhibits incredible variety and enormous grandeur. The earth’s landscape is rich nourishment for the human spirit.” Noddings (2003) discussed the awareness of spirituality through the everyday experiences of natural phenomena. These encounters, she believes, are the type that can be discussed in schools without violating religious or ethical rules.

Consistent with Postman (1999), many Public schools in which I have been, emphasize spirituality through studies of humanity and nature. He understood painting, music, architecture, literature, and science to be intertwined with religion. Postman, (1984, cited in Hutchison, 1998, p. 27) proposed a strong emphasis on classical forms of artistic expression, together with philosophy, science, history, language, and religion. The Ancient Civilization workshop series offered by the NFAG allow these avenues to be openly explored. Although admitting the conservative nature of such a curriculum, Postman believed it was justified because “we are surrounded by a culture that is volatile, experimental, and very nearly monolithic in its technological biases.” In this respect, Heidegger’s (Young, 2002) anti-capitalist viewpoint is supported through a strong
A humanities programme that includes artistic expression. I have also observed in Catholic schools a spiritual component, in the religious sense. For example, morning prayers are recited not only to ground children in their faith, but to guide them in their ethical choices during the day. Kindness, consideration, and care, and an applied work ethic, are messages I have frequently heard.

Nielsen (2001) looked holistically at the heart and mind of the learner as he built on the concept of head, hands and heart developed through Steiner’s “imaginative teaching” (p. 6) theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Waldorf schools consequently evolved out of his research. Steiner's thesis, based on the concept of spiritual science or Anthroposophy, embraced head, hands, and heart in a holistic concept of education. As such, the intellectual or quantitative teaching method must be in balance with the experiential or qualitative means of learning. Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) believed that practicing any art form could be an act of poiesis, and that through its hermeneutic (reflective) process the individual would be enabled a means into the existential realm of self-narration and truth. In this way, developing creativity within the NFAG programmes might allow children to explore their place both in the classroom community and in society itself. The spiraling movement of external discovery could, in turn, lead toward an understanding of the self.

Summary of Literature and Present Study

The preceding literature review aimed to provide a holistic picture of creativity from a transformational perspective in keeping with best practices (Zemelman et al., 2003), with the goal to increasing creativity in the NFAG programmes. In this way, the information allowed a backdrop to experiential data collected from participants, to be
discussed in chapter 4. Chapter 2 opened with three introductory dialogues on action research, collaborative process, and creativity.

Chapter 2 introduced Winner’s (2000) thesis whereby creative children become innovators and revolutionizers in particular domains. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) presented an obstacle to this notion as he observed a decline in creativity as children enter adolescence. The question of how art educators might keep this creativity active during the primary grades, especially after age 7, is fundamental to this research. The best practice checklist (Zemelman et al., 2003) provided student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative as concepts to begin with. The theories behind action research, collaboration, and creativity lead the way to exploring creative practice in art education.

Elliott’s (1991) action research theories grounded the study in their view to improving the quality of action within the NFAG programmes. van Manen (1990) and Vygotsky (1978) offered ways towards effective action research from openness and trust, to long-term engagement. Rossman and Rallis (2003) presented a breakdown of the action research process as instrumental, enlightenment, symbolic and emancipatory phases.

Brooks’s (2000) discussed collaboration as an experience that sought boundary permeability, holistic learning, interconnectedness, and mutability. Furthermore, narrative leads to social transformation. Tucker (1986) saw collaboration in a postmodern framework that bypasses formalist doctrine, one that emphasizes flexibility, spontaneity and responsiveness. Noddings (1992, 1995, 2003) brought caring relationships and happiness in education to this area of research.
Creativity theories began with Dewey’s (1934) notion of art as a process through which the human creates the self. As a process, Bruner’s (Wood, 1989) theory of scaffolding, Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development, and Piaget’s (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) concrete operational thought added insight into the creative process as a collaborative process. Together, they led to Winner’s (2000) observation that creative children can become innovators and revolutionizers, given nurture and opportunities to explore.

Four specific areas of creativity were investigated using Ponamarev’s (Dorfman, 2000) research: logical analysis, intuitive problem-solving, defining and verbalization, and formal and verbal description. The first area titled Gathering knowledge, towards motivation, looked at Gardner’s (1973, 1999, 2004) multiple intelligence theory as a means to gathering a wide spectrum of knowledge from individuals of specific talent. Drake (1997) affirmed my belief in teacher authenticity towards a caring learning environment. The principle methodologies of teaching were covered in this section as outlined by Hutchison (1998), and Gaudelius and Speirs (2002).

The second phase of creativity, titled Intuitive exploration, experiential and process learning, looked to Dewey (1934) to learn that art is a lived experience in which product and process are one and the same. Mormon Unsworth (2001) and Duncum (1999) introduced a dialectic between a child-centred and formalist approach to art education. This study looked at: the motivational factors of play (Carpenter, 2001); Csikszentmihalyi’s (1993) research into concentrated levels of play, which he termed “flow”; and risk taking, what Postman (1995) saw as tantamount to creativity.
The third phase of creativity titled *Informal presentation: The process of creativity explored*, looked into the process of *poiesis*. Heidegger’s (1977; Young, 2002) notion of the bringing forth of the being through doing essentially involved the process of self-discovery. Narrative was seen as an important means to this end. Further, Luhmann (Fleener, 1997) presented the idea that social organizations can be autopoietic through each individual. The question of estrangement from the self was raised by Young (2002). A world of commodity was seen as the root cause; however, O’Sullivan (1999) argued that a transformative perspective in education might energize our imagination beyond the marketplace vision.

The fourth phase of creativity: *Formal presentation: A holistic exploration of transformative practices in education*, brought together concepts that looked beyond the surface of teaching into the heart and soul of each person involved. Hutchison (1998) brought to the research a socio-ecological lens. Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000) contributed research into education as a holistic, transformational process involving cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. Postman (1999) saw an intertwining of the arts with religion. A link was made to Aboriginal cultures. Bosacki (1995) identified a need for positive self-concept, and Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996) a need to know traditional beliefs. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) raised the issue of ethical research, and hence, ethical teaching. The holistic vision of art education was further completed with Hutchison’s (1998) vision of ecological conscience melded with that of Gablik (1991) in a social sphere. Noddings’s (1992, 2003) research into caring relationships and happiness in education linked to Steiner’s (Nielson, 2001) theories behind the Waldorf schools that developed a holistic approach to teaching through head, hands, and heart. In
this way, Heidegger’s (Young, 2002) spiral of discovery not only led outwards to the world beyond the classroom, but also inwards to discovery of self.

The above literature resources enabled me to look at art education through a multidimensional lens. The theories of action research, collaboration, and creativity allowed a pathway into the exploration of creativity itself. These literature concepts became the basis of interview and discussion questions for participants in the study of collaborative perceptions of creative practice in art education. The literature also provided me with insight into this holistic picture of art education as I recorded my day-to-day teaching experiences and perceptions of the data collection process with participatory educators of the NFAG. The findings of these four combined sources are explored in chapter 4, Findings.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

This was a collaborative action research study on perceptions of creative practice in art education. Thick data from 6 participant art educators was gathered through interviews and focus group discussions: an initial 4 group sessions with a follow-up assessment discussion. Elliott (1991) described action research as a qualitative methodology involving practice in a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within the given situation. Previous and ongoing literature research enabled me to compile the interview and discussion questions with knowledge in my field of inquiry, and to interpret the resulting data through research journal entries with insight. This methodology and procedural chapter is organized according to research methodology, research design, data collection, data processing and analysis, and summary.

The first component of the research methodology involved the synthesis of literature derived from Master of Education course content and assignment research, and additional literature researched for the thesis itself. These sources included published materials from books (some translations), journals and other articles, on line information for more current data, and a limited number of unpublished papers. van Manen (1990) viewed literature including biography, diaries and journals, as a “fountain of experiences” (p. 70) from which researchers might build practical insights. He believed that each researcher’s experiences differ from another’s; therefore, the pooling of this knowledge can only allow for a more holistic picture of any particular field of study. Reviewed literature provided an important data source that formed the basis of this study and was used to stimulate the action research process.
Elliott's (1991) view that practices in social situations can be improved through action research was the first reason for choosing this methodology for raw data collection towards exploring the perceptions of creativity in art education. Further, Elliott believed that through action research participants are helped to act more intelligently and skillfully in the work that they do. Zemelman et al. (2003) discussed best practices in teaching and learning. Effective education is student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative. Further, action research allowed for participant perspectives that encompassed experiences in the field of art education.

Lewin (Elliott, 1991, p. 70) described action research in terms of a "spiral of cycles" consisting of reconnaissance fact-finding, planning and then re-implementation and re-evaluation of plans. Rossman and Rallis (2003) interpreted action research in four stages: instrumental, information acceptance, symbolic use and emancipatory use. I felt this model related to my research (see Figures 1 & 2). Interviews and focus group discussions began the instrumental phase. Reflection took place during and between focus group discussions as participants considered new ideas generated by the literature I provided them with, and through discussion itself. Informal talks with participants indicated reflection was occurring. Over the period of research a spiraling action developed as all four creativity stages were covered. I began each session where the former had ended, asking participants for their reflections. As a group we mutually agreed that a follow-up discussion would be beneficial towards assessing the impact of action research. This session took place on March 25, 2004.

Rossman and Rallis (2003) viewed symbolism as a powerful tool towards this transformational learning process, enabling that which is familiar to be seen in a new light.
The educator becomes part of a risk taking process, a phenomenon discussed by Postman (1995) and Drake (1997). Art educators may fear this freedom because of potential failure, either of themselves or of their students. Focus group discussion and support enabled a means toward resolving such dilemmas for educators of the NFAG Art Education programmes.

From a personal perspective, written reflection through journaling became a means by which my own experiences in the classroom, and those that resulted through participant interviews and group discussions, were recorded. van Manen, (1990, p. 128) discussed this hermeneutic practice and the thoughtful action that results as “praxis.” He further stated that such writing “empowers us with embodied knowledge which now can be brought to play or realized into action in the performance of the drama of everyday life” (p. 130). Rossman and Rallis (2003) expanded on van Manen’s concept to one where finding symbolism results from discovering pattern and hence narrative. This process can occur through regular journaling; however, it may also take place in the classroom through one or a series of art workshops. In turn, students should be allowed to interpret these workshops in personally, meaningful ways that the process may become symbiotic. The action research process of inquiry, action, and reflection upon the shared knowledge, therefore, has the potential to empower both educator and student.

Towards understanding the process of motivation leading to empowerment, Weber (1968) used the term Verstehen to explain the notion of understanding resulting from either direct observation or explanatory understanding. From Weber’s perspective, observational understanding may be the result of the subjective act of verbal utterances, or might involve emotional understanding derived from body language displaying enjoyment, anger, or other
human emotions. Conversely, explanatory understanding is an objective or rational act of motivation. Weber believed the end result of motivation in a creative process might be improvement to personal lives and of the workplace, which includes the children in it. The following methodology, design, data collection, processing, and analysis provide a means to these ends.

**Research Methodology**

**Literature**

Literature was categorized in a filing system according to various headings in this study. Action research, collaboration, creativity, methodologies in teaching, multiple intelligences, play, risk taking, spirituality in teaching, and *poiesis* comprised some of the main headings. As well, my personal library consisted of education texts and other published material. Brock University and interlibrary loans were widely consulted. Professors were also an invaluable source of literature, especially for published and unpublished papers in specific areas of my research. Credible Internet Web sites, as well, provided up-to-date information. Photocopied material contained highlighted points with my own notations written into the columns. These annotations became a quick reference source used over and over again.

**Interviews**

Interview questions (see Appendix F) were based on the three main questions of inquiry in this study.

- What is the effect of reflecting upon our creative practice as art educators?
- What is the effect of discovering new creative practices, on the ideas and practices of art educators?
What is the effect of exploring the self within a social and ecological dynamic, and the way in which the process impacts art educators' workshops?

The interview questions were divided into a series of three categories that inquired into participants' background education and life experience; motivation and reasons for engaging in art education, and impact of pedagogical theory. Questions were designed to gain insight into participants' experiences and beliefs, and sought to understand whether these factors might impact teaching practice. Series 1 aimed to gather information regarding education and training, and life experiences. Series 2 explored the motivation of art educators to practice in the field of art education. Series 3 sought to understand participants' educational philosophy. Information was gathered by audiotape and transcribed by me in the week following each interview. Member checks were made to ensure accuracy of the transcriptions. This procedure is elaborated on in the following section: Data Collection.

(Series 1) Background education and life experience. Although I believed the field of art education within the classroom was important, I also felt other life experiences that contributed to the concept of holistic learning were essential as well. Participant art educators in the NFAG programmes had a diverse educational background that encompassed technical training and academic education in various fields beyond visual art. Each had his or her individual life experience and cultural background. Familial differences (marital status, children, extended families), age differences (ranging from mid-20s to early 40s), place of birth and childhood experience, and first language gave the study a variety of perspectives. Although 6 of the 7 educators were women (including myself),
both male and female points of view were of interest to me. Each of these dynamics had
the potential to bring creativity to the educational programmes.

The duration of participants' relationship with the NFAG programming was also of
interest. What gap was there between participants' ideologies of art education before
research commenced, during the research and after it was completed? Was transformation,
indeed, taking place?

(Series 2) Participants' motivation and reasons for engaging in art education. I
was interested to discover what motivated these art educators and why they had chosen to
practice in this field. At the same time, I wished to discover the link, if any, to their
practice as artists, a characteristic that each shared: Did art educators derive inspiration
from their own form of expression? And, was it used in the educational programmes? If
so, how? If not, why not? How did these educators motivate children, especially those
moving through the, often challenging, concrete phase of learning (Kegan, 1994)?

(Series 3) Pedagogical theory of art education during the twentieth century.
Gaudelius and Speirs, (2002, pp. 1-18) discussed three theories of art education applicable
to the day-to-day teaching practice of art educators with the NFAG. At the same time there
was an interesting link with the major educational theories of transmission, transaction, and
transformation practiced over the past century, researched by Miller and Seller (1985).
Formalism related to transmission-based concepts, child-centred art education to
transaction ideologies, and discipline-based art education, and its evolution into a
postmodernist issues-based realm with transformative visions.

I was interested in the way in which these theories had set or altered ideologies
within each participant. Informal discussions and staff meetings prior to this research,
revealed that transaction/formalist methods were an expected norm. However, in Saturday and school holiday programmes, educators perceived more freedom to exercise transaction/child-centred and transformative/discipline-based (into an issues-based realm) methods. Would the empowerment that resulted from collaboration of ideas help transform the NFAG environment, bringing more creativity to day-to-day school and museum programmes? In closing my interviews, I wished to know if participants viewed collaboration as a useful tool toward their creative growth as art educators in the NFAG Art Education programmes.

The themes from series 2 and 3 – motivation and pedagogical theory – aligned with those in focus group discussions so that participants would have more than one opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the themes. Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 19) said about action research: “[The] purpose is to promote social change by transforming structures through the influence of the information collected.”

**Focus Group Discussions**

Third, I chose to use focus group discussions over a period of 5 weeks to distill pedagogical ideas in a collaborative manner. The research group was asked to meet four times at the Art Gallery during the research period. A fifth discussion session was added for participants who were unable to attend the group meetings. Discussion sessions were audiotaped, transcribed by me, and returned as paper copy to participants for feedback within 7 days. Member checks were made as advised by participants. An edited version of all transcripts was given to each participant at the close of research. On occasion informal discussions took place as follow-up. These were initiated spontaneously and helped me better understand the perspective of participants, and helped participants understand some
of the more complex theories, such as *poiesis*. (see details of transcription procedure in Data Collection section).

The creative process outlined by Ponomarev (Dorfman, 2000) served as a framework that divided creativity into four stages: (1) logical analysis of knowledge, (2) intuitive problem-solving, (3) defining and verbalization, and (4) formal and verbal description. The following format indicates the titles I have derived from these four concepts.

**1. Gathering knowledge.** The first focus group discussion covered educational theories and multiple intelligences. Participants were asked to read, before session 1, the first 8 pages from the introduction to Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) that introduced formalist, child-centred and disciplined-based, towards issues-based, philosophies in art education. Discussion was aligned with Miller & Seller’s (1985) transmission, transaction, and transformational theories, as outlined in the introduction to chapter 2.

I introduced Gardner’s (1973, 1999) theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) involving eight identified intelligence domains (spacial/visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and emotional). The group discussed the domains that appeared most relevant to them as learners. Spacial and visual knowledge were the traditionally assumed intelligences of visual art. However, the diverse in-school programme of the NFAG melds with the Public, Catholic, and French Board’s curricula to involve such areas as math, history, social studies, and an integration of drama, music, and literature. I asked participants if they thought consciously about these intelligences when they plan their workshops. What kind of learner did participants consider themselves to be? Did they think more children could be reached through Gardner’s MI theory?
2. Intuitive problem-solving. The second discussion introduced the duality of formalist versus child-centred art education, then took the question into the realm of play, flow, and risk taking. I wondered how these factors might motivate children in their art workshops.

What did participants think about Morman Unsworth’s (2001) child-centred argument for art not being a product arrived at by following directions, copying or conforming to a given model, but rather a process of thinking, imagining, risking, seeing connections, inventing, and expressing in unique visual form? How did they react to the converse, formalist argument offered by Duncum (1999), who argued that children can learn to make pictures from studying other pictures, not from life?

I presented participants with the following three concepts in written form, which they were asked to read and consider. First, Göncü et al. (1999, p. 154) identified play as having three levels of consciousness. At first “activity and its motive [all italics original] exist at the most global level. . . . second level involving actions and goals. . . . The third level is parallel to goals and actions. This level involves conditions and operations. . . automated actions that no longer require conscious attention.” Göncü et al. elaborated: “Imaginative play is a leading activity because it allows children to appropriate from a given imagined situation in question, as well as enabling children to rehearse adult roles in which they must engage in the future” (p. 155). I asked participants if they considered “play” to be a legitimate form of learning, and if so, how might play be incorporated into their workshops.

Second, in discussing flow, an advanced state of play, Csikszentmihalyi (1993, p. 176) recognized that “concentration, absorption, deep involvement” and “joy, a sense of
accomplishment – are what people describe as the best moments in their lives. . . provided one is using psychic energy in harmonious pattern.” This energy “stretches our skills in new directions, when we recognize and master new challenges” (p. 175). Did participants experience flow in their teaching practice? How might flow be induced in their workshops?

Third, I presented the idea of risk taking through the lens of Sergiovanni (1994, p. 41) who reminded us that we must seek, “the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to approach problems in an open and systematic manner.” I asked if participants took risks in their workshops. If so, what benefits did risk taking have to educators? How might risk taking affect children and were there any benefits to be gained?

3. **Informal presentation.** The third group discussion encompassed the notion of *poiesis* as discussed by Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002). Essentially, *poiesis* is creating poetry from life. Heidegger described poiesis as the interplay of processes and concepts rooted in the notion of *physis* in the natural world, of “movement, change, transformation. . . .” The bringing forth of this “Being,” through “doing” (p. 2) results in poiesis. Ultimately, Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) saw poiesis as a means to narrating our life story. Symbolically, he envisioned this “bringing forth” process as the unfolding spiral of creative development. It is a transformative process through which Fleener (1997) saw the ability to discover oneself within the community and hence, a self-directed “truth.” I was interested in how participants might relate to these philosophies. Did they have any conscious awareness of their personal “being”? If so, did they consider it important to help
children realize their beings? And, was this process possible in the Art Gallery programmes?

Furthermore, Young (2002, p. 6) said: “In capitalism, the product of physis is abstracted from its original earth and World and becomes a commodity. . . . a curious mix of use-value and exchange-value, ‘magically’ calculated, reified, and accepted into the realm of Being.” Marx (Young, p. 6) believed that commodification “estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and spiritual essence, his human being.” How might participants view art as a means to reconnecting children with their bodies, external nature and spiritual essence? How much more could art educators offer of themselves in terms of process, and not just the product itself?

4. Formal presentation. The fourth meeting brought ideas together through the concept of holism in the creative educative process. The discussion allowed thoughts to be formally presented as the final stage of creativity. In this respect, education combines a myriad of possible realms through transformational means within the classroom and beyond, where the teacher is but a facilitator toward an educational experience that prepares the child for life in an increasingly globalized, commodified, and technological world.

Did participants view their work externally as it relates to the socio-ecological realm and/or internally as insight into the psychological functions of human beings? Could they see a holistic balance between both realms? Vygotsky (1997) melded his philosophy with the social environment by viewing education as a means by which children could be empowered and liberated within capitalist society. He saw teaching as a profession that could transform one’s reality into a socially useful and creative tool. Hutchison (1998)
added a practical component from an ecological perspective. Connecting with the environment allows the child and educator to share histories that help sustain communities. Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000) looked to cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions in their search for understanding the self within the world. In this way, the child is able to explore interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions of his or her reality. Could participants see the world in which they teach as a resource that might empower them as effective and affective educators, connecting mind and spirit?

The diversity of cultures that exist in the Niagara Region opens avenues for rich and rewarding teaching experiences. However, these cultures are complex in their philosophical teachings and can be vulnerable to those of a Eurocentric world. Do the NFAG educators seek the advice of Elders and experts before imparting information handed down from one educator to the other? Do they include children of various cultures in discussions to complete a holistic vision of their particular workshop? What might the benefits be to the student and to themselves as educators? Manicom (1992) related transformations, standpoints, and politics of feminist education. She validated personal knowledge by looking at learning in a holistic way. Concrete, contextualized, relational, subjective modes of teaching were her preferred methods. These methods, however, must relate to the child him or herself.

Connectedness and inclusion is the key to transformational education in this respect. Noddings (1992, 1995, 2003) spoke of caring relationships that go beyond empathy into the zone of proximal development, the space between students' independent problem solving and their potential under adult guidance, or in collaboration with capable peers. In this way, caring becomes a meeting of 2 minds (perhaps more) through the
transformational process. Did participant educators allow students to offer ideas that led towards more creative art workshops?

Entering the realm of mind, soul, heart, and spirit of all life forms provides means to personal growth, learning styles, and critical thinking, and ultimately the transformational outcome of holistic education. Bosacki (2001) looked to the mind and soul of learners through spiritual education in the sense that nature, and an understanding of its holistic existence, can become a form of knowledge. Narration and spirituality are thus intertwined. Nielsen (2001) looked to Steiner’s concept of hands, heart, and head as the basis for holistic education within the Waldorf schools. Could art educators look to themselves as resources who have lived these experiences? Was it possible to give children the tools by which they might narrate a personal story that could enable them a place within a commodified world?

Journaling

The fourth area of data collection resulted from my research journal entries. During the period of research, I kept a journal that recorded classes and events that tied into the topics of discussion. Relevant excerpts and quotations were included in the final chapters of the research paper to add an experiential and reflexive dimension.

Following interviews and group discussions I noted any comments or concerns. They included feelings of discomfort that, upon reflection, allowed me to transform my interviewing methods. Meta-reflection is a powerful tool in this respect that mediates reflection and action. van Manen (1990, p. 125) wrote: “Writing fixes thought on paper. It externalizes what in some sense is internal: it distances us from our immediate lived involvements with the things of our world.” He continued on the notion of praxis: “And
thus reflectively writing about the practice of living makes it possible for the person to be engaged in a more reflective praxis. . . action full of thought and thought full of action” (p. 128). On authorship, van Manen wrote: “Writing, true writing, is authoring, the exercise of authority. . . . Writing exercises us in the sense that it empowers us with embodied knowledge. . . realized into action in the performance of the drama of everyday life” (p. 130). Although I did not expect participants to keep journals, I did, however, inform them as to how the process benefited my own transformation.

**Research Design**

As a member of the NFAG educational team for 1 ½ years at the time of research, I had become aware of the problems facing myself and others. It was apparent that creativity is sometimes minimal in the curriculum-based, in-school component of the educational programme, when compared to the extracurricular, Gallery workshops.

Literature research provided the basis for this study. However, primary data were necessary to provide a new vision to the creative aspect of art education. Qualitative action research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, pp. 18, 19), with its “view to improving the quality of action within,” was an appropriate methodology for this research study. The components of individual and focus group interviews provided a means of gathering information from the participant educators. As well, my research journal reflections from classroom workshops, and interview and focus group discussions provided additional perspectives. The result was insight into the creative educative process from participant, personal (experiential), and literature sources.
Selection of Participants

Participants were recruited from 7 full-time art educators employed by the NFAG and Children’s Museum (myself being the 7th). I aimed to have as many of the educational staff as possible participate in the study. One of the 6 participants was in training. All but one of team was female. Ages ranged from mid-20s (recent Brock Graduates) and late-20s, to mid-40s (educators from other university and college programmes). Participation was entirely voluntary and without financial remuneration. One part-time educator declined participation due to family commitments. (See appendices D and E, information letter and consent form.)

Data Collection

Research Procedures

Following Ethics Board approval of my research proposal, permission was gained from the Director of the NFAG and from its Board of Governors (Appendix E, request and approval). The NFAG Board of Governors was asked if they wished the Gallery’s identity to be revealed. They agreed that this was desirable. Staff were asked verbally if they wished to participate in the study. Formal written consent followed. Each person was given written information on the procedures and invited to discuss any questions or concerns. Those who agreed to participate returned their signed forms and were given information regarding the first group meeting and arrangements were made for personal interviews.

Literature: Theoretical content

The first component of my research design comprised largely published literature, with selected unpublished papers and Web site information. A summary of all literature
sources in the three areas of action research, collaboration and creativity is shown in Tables 2 and 3 titled Literature Theories and Four Phases of Creativity.

Action research, collaboration, and creativity provided theoretical categories. Action research was chosen as a means of gathering data from a social situation with the goal to improving the action within (Elliott, 1991). Lewin (Elliott, 1991) coined the term with the understanding that reconnaissanced fact-finding, plans, and implementation make up the process of action research. However, Rossman and Rallis (2003) believed that it is only through the reflective process that practices can be improved. Group research of this nature is only effective, said van Manen (1990), if participants are open and forthcoming of their knowledge. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) contributed to the tenets of action research: long-term engagement, voluntary connection, jointly chosen projects, trust, and negotiation. Rossman and Rallis (2003) categorized action research into:

a) instrumental use – whereby knowledge is only potential
b) information acceptance – when the individual or group understands the knowledge
c) symbolic use – the world is interpreted through various patterns and narratives

Drake (1997) included teaching who we are as a means of reconceptualization
d) emancipatory use – inquiry, understanding, and reconceptualization lead to transformation and empowerment

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Theories</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Practices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies conducive to successful teaching and learning: student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, collaborative (Zemelman, Daniels, &amp; Hyde, 2003)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Action Research</strong></th>
<th><strong>Collaboration</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reconnaissance, plans, implementation → Action Research (Lewin in Elliott, 1991)</td>
<td>Boundary permeability, interconnectedness, mutability (Brooks, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social situation → improving action (Elliott, 1991)</td>
<td>Flexibility, spontaneity, responsiveness (Tucker, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection → improving practices (Rossman &amp; Rallis, 2003)</td>
<td>Listening, caring, understanding, servanthood (Fennell, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group openness → knowledge gathering</td>
<td>Transformational care incurs modeling, dialogue, practice, confirmation towards happiness in education incurring ecstasy and place (Noddings, 1992, 2003)</td>
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**Stages:**

**Instrumental Use**
Knowledge is potential → practice must follow (Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

**Information Acceptance**
Information acceptance → understanding (Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

**Symbolic Use**
Symbolism → making sense of the world through patterns and narratives (Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

Reconceptualization → teaching who we are (Drake, 1997)

**Emancipatory Use**
Inquiry, understanding and reconceptualization → transformation and empowerment of individuals and workplaces (Rossman & Rallis, 2003)

*table continues*
### Table 2 (continued)

### Creativity

**Stages:**
1. Logical analysis → gathering knowledge
2. Intuitive problem solving → intuitive exploration
3. Defining and verbalization → informal presentation
4. Formal and verbal description → formal presentation (Ponomarev in Dorfman, 2000)

Learning to know, to do, to live together, to be (Delors, 1996)

Expressive form → creation of self (Dewey, 1934)

Children create self-knowledge (Piaget, Vygotsky in Sawyer, 2003)

Prerequisite, product, tool, result → method (Vygotsky in Moran & John-Steiner, 2003)

Constructivism → childhood development (Sawyer, 2003)

Scaffolding → cognitive development (Bruner in Wood, 1989)

Zone of proximal development → motivation and learning (Vygotsky, 1971)

Concrete operational thought (Piaget in Tudge & Rogoff, 1989; Gardner, 1982)

Children seek to do things in adult ways → Literalism (Gardner, 1999)

Appropriation of human culture and history → Survival (Bruner, 1997)

Durable categories → concrete world (Kegan, 1994)

Skills and domain-relevant knowledge → creativity (Simonton, 2000)

Creativity → innovators and revolutionizers (Winner, 2000)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gathering Knowledge</th>
<th>Intuitive Exploration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The phase of logical analysis in which actual knowledge is used to solve a task.”</td>
<td>In “Intuitive problem-solving. . . one is not aware of the ways by means of which the problem is solved . . . the person’s unconscious experience contains a key to it.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methods of teaching:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Learning Through Play</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Broad spectrum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transmission, “Back to Basics”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transaction, “child-centred”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Transformation, “holistic perspective”</strong></td>
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<td>(Hutchison, 1998)</td>
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<td><strong>Art Specific</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Formalism – theory based</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Child-Centred – individualistic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Discipline-based into Issues-Based – aesthetics, criticism, history, production moving into socio-ecological consciousness (Gaudelius &amp; Speirs, 2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Intelligences</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Healing Experience</strong></td>
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<td>(Williams &amp; Wood, 1975)</td>
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<td><strong>Product and process → experience</strong></td>
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<td>(Dewey, 1934)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dialectic viewpoints:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Child-centred/transactive → experiential (Morman Unsworth, 2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transmissive/formalist → skills development</strong> (Dumcum, 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Through Play</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual, inner harmony (Carpenter, 2001)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socially functioning children (Vygotsky in Moran &amp; John-Steiner, 2003)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriation of imagined situation Rehearsal of adult situations → role-play (Göncü et al., 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 levels: activity and its motive; actions and goals; conditions and operations (Göncü et al., 1999)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reasoning, multiple perspectives, creativity, risk taking, openness, systematic behaviour → growth (Sergiovanni, 1994)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Error and risk taking → learning (Postman, 1995)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perserverance, caring, concern for others, flexibility, social responsibility → goals of teaching (Drake, 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flow</strong></td>
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<td>Concentration, absorption, deep involvement → advanced stage of play (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation of brain energy (Goleman, Kaufman &amp; Ray, 1992)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Taking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Divergent thinking, openness to new, learning from failure → risk taking (Morman Unsworth, 2001)</td>
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"The third phase is when the intuitive problem-solving process begins to be described formally and verbally." (Ponomarev, 1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10)

Interplay of processes and concepts → physis
Bringing forth of the “being” through “doing” → poiesis (Heidegger, 1977; Young, 2002)

Ecozoic vision → transformative perspective
connecting with the ecosystem (O’Sullivan, 1999)

Self discovery within the community → “truth”
(Fleener, 1997)

Living systems → autopoietic systems (Maturana & Varela in Fleener, 1997)
Communication of individuals → autopoiesis of social organizations (Luhmann in Fleener, 1997)

Marginal voices → connectedness between educational systems and communities (Carr, 1997)

When “process and/or the product of problem-solving can be described formally and verbally.” (Ponomarev, 1983, cited in Dorfman, 2000, p. 10)

Potential energy → social and creative usefulness (Vygotsky, 1997)

Connection with the environment → sharing histories, sustaining communities (Hutchison, 1998)

Cognitive, affective, spiritual dimensions → connecting self and world holistically (Hutchinson & Bosacki, 2000)

Search for meaningfulness and purpose in physical and cultural world → holistic philosophy

Relationships with extended family, friends, community → understanding self (Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996)

Balance between physical, spiritual, emotional, mental elements → “living in a good way of life” (Kulchyski, McCaskill & Newhouse, 1999)

Culturally sensitive research → ethical research (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)

Modeling, dialogue, practice, confirmation → caring relationships towards happiness in education involving ecstasy, place and spiritual encounters (Noddings, 1992, 2003)

Relative zone of proximal development → application of empathy (Vygotsky, 1978)

Caring, empathy → affect, volition, cognitive development (Goldstein, 1999)

Spirituality and stories about self → meaningfulness and purpose

Connectedness between teachers and learners → caring community (Bosacki, 2001)
Head, hands, heart → imaginative teaching (Steiner in Nielson, 2001)
Listening, caring, understanding, and servanthood were other ideas added by Fennell (1997). Noddings’s (1992) research found transformational care incurred modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. To participate in the classroom, school and community offered potential for personal growth and happiness (Noddings, 2003). If successful, the outcome of collaborative action research is growth of identity and self-esteem (Flannery, 2000).

The third theoretical category was creativity. I used Dorfman’s (2000) research as a means of inquiry. The four stages of creativity: logical analysis, intuitive problem solving, defining and verbalization, and formal and verbal description allowed me to systematically break down the data collection process. Delors (1996) contributed learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be to the inquiry behind my interview questions. Dewey (1934) confirmed that the expressive form contributed to the creation of self. Aligned with this concept, Vygotsky (Sawyer, 2003) added that children create self-knowledge. Further, creativity is not a singular concept said Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003), but rather a process that involves a prerequisite, product, tool, and a result. The method itself is key.

Further understanding of creativity was enabled through Sawyer’s (2003) notion of constructivism leading to childhood development. Scaffolding, the link between child and adult, said Bruner (Wood, 1989) allows for cognitive development. Closely aligned, Vygotsky’s (1978) understanding of the zone of proximal development leads to motivation and hence, learning. Concrete operational thought, initially researched by Piaget (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) led me to further understand the process of learning in children. In this crucial stage of development, Gardner (1999) found that children seek to do things in adult-like ways. Behaviour that appropriates human culture and history, said
Bruner (1997), is the key to survival. Further research in this field was undertaken by Kegan (1994). He found the order of children’s minds, which he termed “durable categories,” conformed to the concrete world from ages 7 or 8 to early adolescence. With this knowledge in mind it was possible for me to understand the concept of skills and domain-relevant knowledge, pointed out by Simonton (2000), as part of the creative process. The purpose of understanding our own creativity as educators and students, led to the concept espoused by Winner (2000), that creative people have the potential to become innovators and revolutionizers in their fields.

Table 3, Four Phases of Creativity: Gathering Knowledge, Intuitive Problem-solving, Informal Presentation, and Formal Presentation, identifies four theoretical areas of creativity. This table is elaborated on in Data Processing and Analysis. The literature component offered me scholarly research upon which I formatted questionnaires and focus group discussion topics. As well, it allowed material to reflect against data from interviews, focus group discussions, and research journal entries.

**Interviews**

Individual interviews were conducted at a time and place of mutual agreement, taking approximately 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted between November 5 and December 5, 2003. A private, quiet corner of a school staff room, accessible to staff, was used for interviewing. As well, the public spaces of the Art Gallery itself were used. Participants took a few minutes to read the questionnaire, and when comfortable, the interview began. Interviews were tape-recorded, as agreed to in the research consent form. Transcripts were transcribed by me. Tilley and Powick (2002, p. 292) found that when transcription is carried out by someone other than the researcher, he or she is more likely to
“influence what appears in text and what researchers use for analysis.” When researchers are distanced from the practice of research, their credibility is questionable. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. These names were borrowed from non-living artists whom I knew each participant had an affinity with. Participants approved their names. Transcripts were available approximately 1 week after the interview. Participants were asked to review the transcription and respond over the following week. Any concerns were edited. Information was categorized and collated in preparation for analysis. Transcripts were analyzed against the thesis of this research - that art workshops that rely on transmission/formalist methodology alone may overlook the creative potential of their educators and students – and compiled as chapter 4. This section of the thesis was made available for participant review. Changes were made. Transcripts and tapes were securely stored in my home and will be destroyed after a 5-year period.

**Focus Group Discussions**

Four focus group discussions were arranged by mutual consent between October 31 and December 5, 2003; a make-up for 3 participants was arranged for December 18, 2003. A follow-up focus group discussion was conducted on March 25, 2004. Each discussion lasted between 45 minutes and no longer than 1 hour per session. Some meetings took place on professional development days and others at the end of the school day. These sessions took place in a congenial location at the Art Gallery. As in the interviews, each session was audio-taped, transcribed, member checked, categorized, collated, and analyzed as part of chapter 4.

Each participant was given an outline of focus group topics prior to each session (see Appendix G). These outlines contained the major theories relating to each of the four
phases of creativity, as outlined in Table 3. Participants were asked to read the short outlines in preparation for discussion. Preparation did not always take place, which often meant these participants did not participate fully. Transcriptions show that particular names appear less frequently as a result. Theories were sometimes difficult to grasp. I did my best to explain or use analogies. Theories that were misinterpreted or misread led to discussion that did not appear fruitful at the time. The best I could do was wait until the following session and begin afresh using analogies or more succinct explanations. During the week I sometimes conversed one-on-one with participants to reiterate or clarify the theories in question. This process was useful in helping me to further understand my research direction. Research journal reflections enabled me to understand and reinterpret discussion topics. Sessions, following the first, started with a review of the preceding discussion that segued into the current topic. Theories appeared to become clearer from one week to the next. Certain participants tended to dominate the discussions at times. This behaviour sometimes resulted in less dominant participants being less vocal. Most meetings, however, were very lively with full participation and interaction at the discussions. All transcripts were kept in a locked, secure location at my home and will be destroyed after a 5-year period.

*Agenda for focus group meetings.* The first meeting introduced the nature and reasons for the research, and addressed any questions from participants before proceeding with the first topic.

a) Greeting.

b) Any concerns or afterthoughts from the transcriptions of the previous meeting brought forward for second and subsequent meetings.
c) Introduction of topic and breakdown of components.

d) Open-ended questions introduced with an opportunity for participants to use their artwork produced for workshops, in turn. The opportunity to use artwork was declined.

e) After each participant had a turn, a final opportunity to raise any questions or to conclude with thoughts was offered.

g) Date for the following session was set at this point, or during the following week.

h) Thanks and closure of the session.

i) Information regarding the following meeting was distributed during the following

Research Journal – Classes Taught and Reflections on Interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

My research journal allowed an opportunity to keep an ongoing record of classes taught during the research period. These data were recorded and later reflected upon. I chose excerpts relevant to topics of discussion, based on Ponomarev’s (Dorfman, 2000) four phases of creativity, for inclusion in the final chapter of this study.  

Secondly, the research journal provided useful insight into my response to interviews and group discussions. Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002, p. 2.) described the process of bringing forth of the “Being,” through “doing” as poiesis. This process allowed voice for each participant. Symbolically, Heidegger (Young, 2002, p. 2) saw this “bringing forth” process as the unfolding spiral of creative development. Reflection on these notes
became invaluable toward adjusting methods of interviewing or conducting focus group sessions. Excerpts were used in the final chapters of this study.

**Data Processing and Analysis**

Table 4 outlines sources and means to data collection that allow for data processing and analysis. Data were collected through experiential sources, enquiry means, and examination. Participants’ experiences of life, education – both formal and informal – and classroom experiences provided holistic insight, what Rossman and Rallis (2003) identified as the instrumental phase of action research. Activating this knowledge became the next step towards transformation. Enquiry through individual interviews and focus group discussions enabled rich data sources. Here the process of information acceptance (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) began to take place among the participants. In my research, tape-recorded information was transcribed without censorship, information was categorized using colour codes for analysis under the four headings of creativity, as described under Categorization of Data and Comparison (section to follow). Rossman and Rallis (2003) said that transforming this information into symbolic use must follow if participants are to make sense of their world. Examining literature theories, interview data, focus group discussions, and my research journal began the emancipatory phase (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) where inquiry, action, followed by reflection, led to empowerment.

Research journal entries allowed reflective analysis of the interviews and discussions, and enabled reflection on classes that I taught during the research phase. I recorded my thoughts regularly without editing them. However, selection of appropriate sections was made for the final thesis writing. With these data sources gathered, analysis
was begun for chapters 4 and 5. van Manen (1990, p. 26) quoted from Gadamer, “when we interpret the meaning of something we actually interpret an interpretation.” Further, by naming something (categorizing it) we give meaning to it. This use of symbolic patterns and narratives (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) led to the emancipation of individuals and workplaces.

**Data Transcription**

Data were transcribed from interviews and focus group discussions. I attended to this process personally to ensure accuracy. Excerpts were later chosen to provide evidence relating directly to this study. Tilley and Powick (2002) discussed unfamiliarity with research material and participants, which can lead to important data being omitted from the transcription document. I edited word repetition and expressions such as “um.” Grammatical tense errors, for example “they was,” were changed to preserve the professionalism of participants. Each educator was given a pseudonym to ideally preserve anonymity. However, because participants worked in close relationship with each other, this ideal could not be ensured. Confidentiality was asked of each. These given names remained with participants throughout the entirety of the research into the written thesis. Transcripts were distributed within 7 days and participants were requested to read and respond to the data for accuracy. A full version of all edited transcripts was given to each participant at the close of research.

**Categorization of Data and Comparison**

Transcriptions from interviews and focus group discussions were completed and edited before being categorized and collated. Information was sorted according to the four stages of creativity (Table 3) using the computer search engine to find key words and
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<td>Experiencing through</td>
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<td>Individual interviews</td>
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<td>Personal journal entries</td>
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phrases. This component, as well, aligned research journal excerpts specific to these areas of creativity. Far from a straightforward process, references were collated into a grid format, which provided accessible information for evaluation. Chapter 5, Conclusion and Implications, was able to draw from this data chart. Research journal observations were reflected upon in a hermeneutic fashion (van Manen, 1990) to provide my personal viewpoint to each area of discussion. This reflexive source was incorporated into chapters 4 and 5 of the study. Table 3, Four Phases of Creativity, encapsulates gathering knowledge, intuitive problem-solving, informal presentation, and formal presentation.

**Evaluation of all Data Sources**

Evaluation of the data in qualitative research remains a subjective process in large part. van Manen (1990, p. 33) discussed the process as asking, “What is it?” from the meaning of the term, *qualis* “whatness.” He explained: “Interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and writing talent” (p. 34) must all be taken into consideration. Literature resources and research journal entries provided an invaluable means for evaluating collected data from interviews and focus group discussions. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 414) talked about “voice” emergence as an important function of reflexive practice. I found their advice of particular value when working with participants who sometimes appeared to be dominated by more assertive personalities. For less assertive participants in particular, interview questions, which correlated with discussion topics, provided a valuable source of data to fill “silent” gaps in the discussions. The 2 collection sources also provided invaluable data when participants were absent from discussions. Although a make-up session was held, it did not generate the same degree of thick data as when all participants were interacting together.
Limitations

Data on the perspectives of collaborative creativity in art education were collected from 6 participants. McMillan and Schumacher, (2001, p. 404) stated that “The insights from qualitative inquiry depend more on the information-richness of the cases and the analytical capabilities of the researcher than on the sample size.” This group did allow for more in-depth research into each participant’s perspective on creativity. What I was able to glean from my research was dependent on interpersonal subjectivity: the building of trust, the maintenance of good relations, being nonjudgmental, and being sensitive to ethical issues of the research. My involvement in the study somewhat limited my researcher status, but at the same time it showed that I reflected along with my colleagues as I modeled the research process in my own teaching practice, and was open to scrutiny. My journaling allowed me critical reflexivity. I tried to be a thoughtful listener and be open to different perspectives. I believe this self-monitoring practice helped establish credibility with the participants.

In the initial research proposal I had incorporated an alternate method of participant expression to verbal language. Participants were asked to bring to discussions a work that they had created in one of their workshops, through which they could interpret the discussion topic. My rationale was that spacial/visual language (Gardner, 1999) would provide an accessible means of expression, especially as these participants had visual arts backgrounds. However, all but one participant declined this opportunity; therefore, I did not pursue the proposal further. I subsequently found, through the thick data collected in interviews and group discussions, that all participants were fluent in expressing themselves verbally.
The outcome of this research is limited in its practical application, in that new teaching concepts cannot always be put into practice unless educators are receptive and willing to make transformational shifts in their teaching methodologies (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Ecclestone (2005, p. 1) states: “for those working with adult learners, some of these top-down ideas about good quality teaching and learning are new and, in many cases, unwelcome.” Educators have an opportunity during school holiday and Saturday programming to experiment with new and creative ideas; however, changes to the school programmes must pass through a due process of consideration by peer instructors and Directors before being implemented. The reason for this process is, in part, due to the uniformity of the programmes’ instruction and consistency of end product.

**Specific Fields of Concern**

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and no participant suffered adverse repercussions if she or he wished not to participate. The Board of Governors was asked to address this concern in their letter of approval (Appendix E). Confidentiality was another important concern in this study. Interviews took place in privacy, yet in a publicly accessible location. Information given to me by each participant was kept confidential and secure. During research, Noddings’s (1992, p. 23) ethics of care, including “modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation” was kept foremost in mind.

Allowing each participant a voice was important in this research; at times dominant voices were difficult to subdue. This advice was especially important as the research group included the single male educator on staff. At times he appeared to be on the periphery in the presence of a predominantly female group. I afforded him invitations to voice his thoughts. This advice was also valuable for the one participant in training.
participants opportunity to speak their mind was important. Although I tried not to impose my ideas, it was difficult at times to remain at a distance. This observation concerned me and was addressed in my research journal reflections.

The interviews and discussions remained confidential. However, the issue of confidentiality among participants was addressed in the participant consent forms. Because of close working relationship between participants, their identity was not always possible to conceal from one another. However, each was asked, and agreed to preserve confidentiality beyond the group setting.

*Establishing Credibility and Trustworthiness*

When I entered this research I already knew each of the participants and had spoken about some of the former work I had done with my Master of Education studies. I was not fully aware of their perspectives on creativity in art education, however, and gained a sense that some participants were eager to participate for this reason. I felt I was treated as a person knowledgeable in my field as I spoke about my preparation for this research study. Keeping the relationship at a professional level during research was important towards a study that would ultimately benefit not only each educator, but the programming and NFAG art education business itself.

All formal paperwork was prepared and presented to participants. These documents can be viewed in Appendix C, Information Letter to Potential Participants and D, Consent Form. Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 148) offered the following checklist to researchers for professionalism, which I tried to follow: Allow your participants to know why you are there, explain why you are there, articulate your strategy, be aware of the participants, give
them opportunities to speak in a free and open atmosphere, and pay attention to their body language.

I established trust by using a verbal and written agreement that all information disclosed would be kept confidential. Interviews, focus group discussions, a literature research base, and my research journal reflections allowed for triangulation and the assurance that data would be coming from a variety of sources. To maintain my credibility as I proceeded with the research, I kept to my word and promptly followed through on transcripts. I was open to suggestions for any requested changes and acted upon them. I was conscious of modeling what I professed to believe in: that each member of the art education team of the NFAG had within him or her, the ability to provide a highly creative programme that serves the needs of elementary school children from diverse ages and cultures within the Niagara Peninsula. Following McMillan and Schumacher’s (2001) suggestions, the interpersonal skills of building trust, keeping good relations through the research, being nonjudgmental, respecting the “norms” of the situation, and being sensitive to ethical issues were adhered to. I noted these aspects in my research journal reflections and deliberated on them in preparation for the next interview or focus group discussion.

Because I designed this research study, I realized that there was potential for bias on my part. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 412) advised that potential research bias could be minimized if multiple data collection strategies are employed, and if participants are given the opportunity to respond to the data. For this reason I tried to conduct focus groups discussions and individual interviews in a manner that allowed each individual to speak from the heart in response to ideas presented in the section, research methodology, interviews, and focus group discussions. Interesting and relevant data went beyond my set
parameters to find a place in the research. Member checking of transcriptions and informal follow-up discussions between focus group discussions helped allay fears that data would be used in a negative way.

**Summary**

A summary of chapter 3, Methodology and Procedure, provides the reader with a procedural understanding for the study, *Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education.*

Research Methodology: Literature theories provided a framework to this thesis. The qualitative methodology of action research involving interviews and focus group discussions, allowed a means to primary data collection. Research journal entries enabled me the opportunity to reflect on the above processes, and related classroom practices.

Research Design outlined the qualitative method of action research. A selection of 6 participant educators, 5 female and 1 male, engaged in interviews and focus group discussions with the view to improving the quality of creativity in the educational programming of the NFAG.

Data Collection from interviews and focus group discussions employed audio tape recordings, followed by transcription of the data over a 5-week period between late October and early December, 2003. Transcripts were analyzed by me, categorized and collated. A follow-up focus group discussion in March 2004, provided feedback on the initial research. Literature theories and research journal entries augmented the participant data source. Research procedures followed the Ethics Board protocol, approval from NFAG Board of Governors, and written participant consent.
The above methodology and procedure allows a data source from which chapter 4, Findings, is compiled.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Data research employed a triangulation of methods designed to enhance the validity of the findings in this study. Interviews and focus group discussions were chosen to disclose perceptions of creativity in art education, at first to reveal best practices that might be in use, and secondly, to discover whether other teaching strategies were being used. According to van Manen, (1990), my perspective as researcher could also be brought forth through action research involving a collaborative process. Focus group discussions aimed toward the common goal of enhancing creativity in the Niagara Falls Arts Gallery's programming. This reason provided the underlying structure of the research component of Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education. Chapter 4 covers interviews and focus group discussions, dilemmas of an interviewer, profiles of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery educators, data analysis, follow-up discussion, reflections along the way, and summary.

Six full-time art educators of the NFAG programmes agreed to participate in this research study (I made up the complement of 7 educators in the education programmes). The 5 women and 1 man all shared an arts background; however, additional education and life experiences allowed for more holistic research findings. Participants spoke about their educational backgrounds and teaching philosophies during interviews, and disclosed their experiences and opinions during focus group discussions. Variations in age and culture, as well, contributed to the diversity of perspectives.

Participants were assigned pseudonyms aligning with compatible artists’ (deceased) or, in one case, artist’s subject: Letendre, Rubens, Mona, Daumier, Picasso, and Escher. These names were given by me, at the request of participants. Participants
kept their names throughout the research and into the final thesis document. Data were collected through one-on-one interviews and collaborative focus group discussions. When asked if she thought collaboration was a useful tool toward her development as an art educator, Picasso responded:

Absolutely, I do. And I think a perfect example of that is through this discussion, this researching that you’ve brought to the Niagara Falls Art Gallery. I think it’s opened up a tremendous amount of collaboration between us. Just in terms of sharing ideas and expressing our experiences and our thoughts and feelings. And I’ve been feeling a lot more confident in my teaching and what I’m feeling in myself, and what I’ve been doing in the classroom since we’ve been able to have this opportunity. And I think it’s a great opportunity for all of us to learn from each other and to just share ideas and points of view. And I hope we can continue that after this is done because I don’t think a lot of us have considered these questions before. I think it will make us better instructors, and a better team for bringing these thoughts and issues to the surface. That’s what comes to mind when I think of collaboration right now, is just the idea of sharing ideas, talking. Yes, I definitely think it’s beneficial to teachers’ development. (interview, Nov. 20, 2003, pp. 4, 5)

The Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Each of the 6 participants in the study was interviewed, either in a school staff room or in a publicly accessible space of the NFAG. Questions were uniformly asked of each from the interview questions (Appendix F). In addition, there were some instances when I felt additional questions would enhance data. For example, when interviewing
Mona (December 2, 2003, p. 2) about what attracted her to art education, she raised the topic of art therapy. Knowing that I would be including information in this area, I pursued the question further with her verbal permission. Participants were first asked for their consent in all cases. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and was tape-recorded; each tape was stored in a safe location at my home. These tapes were subsequently transcribed by me verbatim, whenever possible. Tilley and Powick (2002, p. 297) commented on the difficulty of “muffled” tapes and background “noise.” There were occasions when such problems arose. I tried to avoid physical settings, such as areas of staff rooms where background noise was an obstructing factor. If necessary, I chose to omit sections that were unclear. Additional paralinguistic comments were added in parentheses to indicate emotional response such as (with laughter or with agreement). Tilley and Powick (2002, p. 297) noted that it is important for researchers to listen to their tapes and note “emotional responses such as laughter or shouting, and punctuating text.” In their paper (2003, p. 11) they noted that the researcher should “hear the alliteration... hear the rise and fall of the tone of voice and the laughter,” and to make note of these nuances.

Copies of the transcripts were distributed to participants within the week following the interview. Member checking took place and comments were attended to by me. Each participant received a full set of edited transcriptions. Key words and phrases were searched by computer, data were coded and categorized. Reference information was placed in a grid format for easy access. Each transcript was later analyzed for the purpose of chapters 4 and 5.
Findings from focus group discussions were similarly tape-recorded; however always at the NFAG in a meeting space. Muffled tapes and background noises were more problematic in these tapes as participants were further from the microphone and background noises were unavoidable at times. Rather than guess at what was inaudible, I chose to fill the gaps with ellipses in the transcription documents. Transcription procedure followed that of the interviews. Initially I had proposed to use the participants' artwork, produced for classroom instruction, as a means through which participants could express their thoughts in focus group discussions. This method was offered as an alternative to verbal language. However, participants declined this opportunity. Participants accepted the invitation to return in March 2004 with their reflections on the study. These transcriptions follow the initial discussions conducted from late October to mid-December 2003, in this chapter.

*Dilemmas of an Interviewer*

As an interviewer I have much to learn about the process. Following the interview discussion I faced a dilemma concerning personal involvement in research of this nature. My research journal entry for November 11, 2003 read:

*I find it very difficult to avoid becoming engaged in the discussion process on a personal level. Because we work together and share many of the same dilemmas I want desperately to add my opinions and feelings. Is this the wrong thing to do in research? My instincts tell me "yes," but because I am one of the educators involved and know each participant on a personal level, I find myself engaged in the interview process.*
Upon further reflection, I wonder, had I not responded in a heartfelt way to participants' comments, would I have been privy to truthful opinions and disclosures? Reactions of 1 participant often set in motion a chain of responses, which at times veered away from the original thought, but added a rich and unexpected dimension to the research. For example, Picasso (discussion 4, December 5, 2003, p. 11) addressed Daumier with a question regarding "care." Her question set off a chain of responses leading to the issue of whether or not maternal instinct is innate in women. These findings are included, along with other unexpected data, in chapter 4.

This collection of data allows for the following participant profiles, followed by a more in depth analysis of the Making it "Click": Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice, relating to the four stages of creativity (gathering knowledge, intuitive exploration, informal presentation, and formal presentation), follow-up discussion, reflections along the way, and summary.

Profiles of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery Educators

Letendre

Letendre approaches her educational work with the NFAG programmes from a critical perspective that takes into consideration the community as a whole. Although her undergraduate degree in art history and studio gives her the necessary skills to work in the classroom, it is her postgraduate work which allowed her to say, "it gives me a bit of a different insight... more of a medium, more of a critical analysis into education, as opposed to just going out and teaching art... product" (interview, 2004). Her education is being continually updated, through interest courses related to visual art, and through
her pursuit of knowledge within the education field. She teaches beyond the Gallery programmes at all age levels.

However, it is community outreach that particularly interests Letendre. The Gallery becomes a medium through which her interest in popular arts and culture might ensue. She expressed her belief that "Maybe they'll get interested from a backdoor approach" (interview, Nov. 17, 2004, p. 3). Organizing educational opportunities that reach into the areas of health and wellness, culture, and more popular forms of visual art have enabled her to realize that

The arts aren't just for one part of the population, that everyone needs the arts....

So somehow we have to be responsive to the community.... That's a huge part of what education in art galleries should be about, is being responsive to community needs. Yeah, you want to educate them in a way to look beyond Robert Bateman, and that kind of stuff, but maybe Robert Bateman is the hook to get them in to do that. (interview, Nov. 17, 2004, p. 4)

This philosophy spills over into Letendre's work within the Art Gallery programmes as she reaches towards issues-based art education through the channel of popular culture. She believes, "Popular culture is huge, it's huge for kids, it's huge for adults, and it's big for me. I get inspired by popular culture all the time.... I do that in my high school (referring to her complementary work outside the NFAG); (interview, Nov. 17, 2003, p. 5). Letendre felt that cartooning workshops is one area that lends itself to this powerful means of reaching children. As well, her background in drama has allowed her to develop workshops within the programmes that incorporate this expressive means of self-discovery.
Rubens

Rubens has been with the NFAG for over 3 years and has taken a keen interest in watching the programmes develop and expand. Her background in visual art blends university and college education with an experience gained from travel through some of the richest art resources of Europe. She brings her excitement for art into the classroom as she related through the excitement in her voice:

If I’m talking about a real art piece I tell them what it looks like in real life. . . . with the Greek and Roman it’s been very helpful. And I have those great textbooks too that we can refer back to. I’m always going back to my textbooks that I used in university. (interview, Nov. 24, 2003, p. 2)

Rubens’s experience was enriched by her community work as well:

I was a program coordinator for the Welland Festival of Arts. And I got to help restore the murals in Welland. And coordinate an event called Kids’ Art Day and that was just talking to artists, like musicians, dancers, artists. . . . and put together a whole day-long event for kids to experience art, and just to get a chance to do things hands-on that they might not get a chance to do. That was a lot of fun. . . . a lot of coordinating, a lot of telephone and paperwork, but it had a practical side too. (interview, Nov. 24, 2003, p. 2)

Her self-confidence as an artist working in the 2-dimensional field comes from her positive experiences in art as a young child. She said of these:

I had pretty good art background in elementary school. . . . and teachers really got me excited about learning. For example, drawing a portrait. . . . she showed us how
to do it and we followed her and made our own portraits. We got to make clay faces, a relief. . . . (interview, Nov. 24, 2003, p. 4)

Rubens's educational experiences in visual art have given her an energy that drives the NFAG programmes, especially in the skill-development area. Expressing these thoughts, she said:

I want kids to have a good experience with art, I want them to know that really anybody can do art in their own way. . . I want to really teach them that it can be fun, that they [can] have a good experience. And just touch on the side that they might not have a chance to explore very often. (interview, Nov. 24, 2003, p. 3)

Her philosophical goals, that blend the formal aspect of learning with a more playful, child-centred side, are what have given the NFAG in-school programme its foundations.

Mona

Mona joined the NFAG in October of 2003 and has worked effectively towards becoming a practicing member of the education team. Her university focus in visual art included psychology, which motivated her interest in art therapy. With this experience she spoke of art as,

The ability to just express yourself. . . . I just wanted to be able to help people, to talk. I've never had a problem talking and I know hundreds of people who have . . . and are very shy. And if I can put at least 1 voice to that person then that made it even better for me. It was that thrill that I got. (interview, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 3)

Mona's personal philosophy extends to her photographic art form that explores the public and private aspects of human identity. This questioning spills over into her work as an
art educator. When asked what she considered important about her work, she responded that she believes it allows

me that voice, that escape, that expression, and I think that for what the Gallery offers, the service that we provide for the students... we’re not giving them a voice, but we’re giving them tools to develop that voice, and to understand where they want to go with it. And if it’s art it’s art, if it’s phys-ed, some type of track, or something like that, then they can understand that they can do whatever they want and be able to express themselves in whatever way... they desire. I think that’s why. That’s why I find it important. (interview, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 3)

Children with special needs in the art education programme are, therefore, of special interest to her. Also, Mona brings with her experience in the retail field, which allows her to see a very practical side to this curriculum-based art programme.

My first retail job was in a kids’ clothing store, so I’ve always had to relate to kids, in that sense. So I know, I understand the importance of children going home with something. You’re not selling to the children, you’re selling to the parent. And no matter how you look at it, if you’re selling clothes, food,... art to them, you have to please the parent or they won’t come back. That was definitely a good thing that I’ve always learned, that you have to please the mom.

(interview, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 1)

Mona’s desire to enable children a “voice,” together with a keen sense of the business world that presently surrounds art education, gives her an important voice in this research study.
Daumier brings to the NFAG educational programmes a university background in visual arts and education. However, the limitations of the classroom have directed him into the Children’s Museum programmes where he is able to fulfill a desire to teach and have freedom to explore education creatively. Expressing this perspective he said:

Some of the limitations that I found in the classroom . . . the size of the material I have to work with here, the shapes of the material, being able to create these things for the kids, working with something that’s a little more interesting, something again based upon the curriculum, stuff that you can’t get in a 20 x 20 classroom and with desks . . . and the books and everything else . . . I think that’s what . . . a little more creative freedom I think here than what you can get in the classroom. (interview, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 2)

Daumier’s day-to-day role with the NFAG alternates between the Children’s Museum and in-school art education components of the programme. He said of the energy created during the archaeological enactment that takes place at the museum site, “I get to have the fun spurts with the kids. I think that’s probably what attracts me the most, especially with the dig.” Play is at the heart of Daumier’s personal artistic expression and is an integral part of his work with children although, “more passive. . . . But I like to play and have fun there, too” (interview, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 2).

His philosophy in education grows out of his childhood experience of learning through “role-playing.” Daumier said of this method, “I think that’s my ultimate goal. . . is trying to make it like an environment so that kids can come in and are not only working, but they’re learning at the same time” (interview, Dec. 5, 2004, p. 3). For
Daumier, this means introducing “real-world” experiences that might lead to a child being able to “see different things and... perhaps that gives them an inkling to go in a certain direction” (interview, Dec. 5, 2004, p. 7). These thoughts hark back to his memories of teachers’ college where,

I think I did most of my learning... in the school portions. Some of the stuff that we talked about during class time... was okay. There were certain tools we were verbally given, in like, little lectures. You never really know how these things are going to play out until you’ve actually used them. You gather here and there, but I’ve found the most important part for me was the experience, getting in that classroom for a month at a time, basically, and having the class playing out the different things and seeing how you work with them, (interview, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 1)

For Daumier, education is a journey of discovery through experience, one in which he enables children through the varied and creative hands-on components of the NFAG programmes.

Picasso

Picasso has been with the NFAG for approximately 1 year. She joined the educational team with a background that blended college and university studies in studio and art history, the latter of which is presently ongoing. As well, she brings with her experience in the business world. Her philosophy in life extends to that of art education:

I think that every experience that you have just makes you a stronger person, a well-rounded person. And I try and look at everything that I’ve done as taking little pieces from those experiences, whether it’s positive or negative and learning from them and taking from it to my next step, whether it’s a job or life. So I feel
that, even at jobs that I’ve had that don’t necessarily relate directly to education.

(interview, Nov. 20, 2003, p. 1)

Picasso’s personal motivation as an adult student and a practicing visual artist, primarily in 2-dimensional media, spills over into her teaching, as she expressed:

The most important thing is awareness, awareness of not just art in terms of knowing artists, names... what I’m talking about is the awareness that children do have a creative element in them. They do have a creative ability. And making kids aware of that fact is very important. Just letting them know that they can create a picture, that they can express themselves creatively if they choose to. It’s important to let them know, and just also awareness of the fact that art is all around us. And I hope that some of these workshops help them to see that art is part of everyday life, whether it’s just the way we look at things. It doesn’t mean we have to paint a picture every day, or draw every day, just in seeing and looking at things differently. (interview, Nov. 20, 2003, p.2)

Through both the classroom experience and the teaching team’s collaboration, Picasso continues to learn in the field of art education.

*Escher*

Escher has been an integral part of the NFAG for over 2 years. Prior to this job she was involved in related education programming for 6 years. She has a university background in studio and art history. Her personal art form is three-dimensional exploring non traditional sculptural media that bridges the gap between the “high” and “low” art forms, or what has been traditionally termed art and craft. Her experience allows her to relate to the children, as she believes crafts are “what children are more
exposed to. And so if we can draw them into the art through something they already know, that's a good way of reaching them” (interview, Nov. 5, 2003, p. 1).

Escher's childhood and young adult struggles with technical subjects and rote memorization enables her to empathize with the children. For her, the “hands-on” approach allowed her to say, “I feel confident that I have something to share with them and so it prompts me to help them out” (interview, Nov. 5, 2003, p. 1). In addition, Escher's ethno-cultural background enables her to have a familial perspective on school and classroom community. She admitted, “When I go into a classroom I feel that they're my kids... I think it’s a good thing because it gives me the patience to be able to deal with... children who have difficulty. She added with a laugh of modesty, “And hopefully it makes me a better teacher because of it” (interview, Nov. 5, 2003, p. 2).

**Data Analysis**

As has been discussed in chapter 2, literature provided a database for this study; my research journal entries provided a reflexive data source. Thick data gathered by means of interviews and focus group discussions involved six full-time art educators with the NFAG programmes. To enable an insightful study of “creative practice,” it was necessary to initially investigate the term “creative” in its various components. To these ends, the creativity research of Dorfman (2000) provided a format upon which to organize the data and their analysis. The following interview and focus group discussions, together with literature research and reflections from my research journal entries, aimed to further reveal the perspectives of each participant concerning his or her perceptions of creative practice in art education. I sectioned my research into,
a) gathering knowledge, b) intuitive exploration, c) informal presentation, and d) formal presentation.

Gathering Knowledge: Towards Motivation

The first group discussion focused on gathering knowledge, a process that I perceived as holistic in that knowledge is accumulated from every source possible and reaches back into time immemorial. As a researcher I was interested to know what motivates people to learn. Zemelman et al. (2003) listed student centred as a tenet of best practices. I thought back to Piaget and Vygotsky (Sawyer, 2003) who believed that children are creators of their own knowledge. Towards understanding the role that the educator might play in this process, the study looked through the lens of three philosophical paradigms: formalist, child-centred, and disciplined-based, the latter of which has evolved into an issues based methodology, especially in the last decade of the twentieth century (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). I wondered which method had been more successful in the motivation of children’s learning, or did all merit their place in education? Gardner (1973, 1999, 2004) brought to this discussion the theory of multiple intelligences. This study questions whether it is possible for a child, who might not be innately intelligent in a specific domain such as art (spacial/visual), to become motivated through a channel in which he or she is intelligent. Other intelligence domains might include history, nature science, drama, music, or math. Escher gave us insight into the field of multiple intelligences when she said:

I think for sure, that if someone had taught me the Plains of Abraham or New France, and done a drawing like that with me, I would have retained a lot more of my history, learning about history, whereas for me history was a painful subject to
broach because it was all words, names, dates, and no visual. You had the odd little picture in the book and that was how they taught it. It was very painful, and I think if it had been taught to me this way I would have been inspired to look a little further because that's the kind of learning person I am. (discussion 4, 2003)

Towards self-discovery as creative educators, I wonder about motivation and repetition through practice. Can these factors broaden the field of creativity for educators into developed intelligences? Reciprocally, can visual art education that incorporates multiple intelligences provide this conduit?

**The Process**

**Methodologies.** When asked for her reflections on schooling experience, relating to methodologies of art education as discussed by Gaudelius and Speirs (2002), Picasso recalled:

I felt I was taught the child-centred approach when I was in school. In art I was taught to express what I wanted to express and choose colours I wanted to choose; and for the most part, up until Grade 7 and 8 it was a child-centred approach I was being taught. Then in Grade 7 and 8 you started learning the more formalist approach to teaching, actual technique and concepts and paying more attention to subject matter. . . . there was a part in the article [Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002] that said “that children’s natural artistic development ends around age 14, and it is at this age that it is hoped that children should be helped in developing their artistic skills.” That's what this Lowenfeld believed, and so I think around that age, grades 7 and 8, and especially going into high school at age 14, that I could relate to that, that your natural artistic development ends. I don’t think I necessarily
agree with that, but at that point, the technical side started happening for me.

(discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 1)

For Picasso, this progression from child-centred art education in the formative years to Grade 7, took on a more formalist course during the concrete phase (Kegan, 1994). This combination of methodologies appears to have been a positive experience for Picasso. As well as a motivating school environment, possibly enhanced by her Grade 7 and 8 teacher who was an artist, Picasso felt her father played a crucial role in her appreciation of art:

My dad was a graphic artist and he came from that time when everything was done by hand. There were no design computer programmes, and he was a sign painter as well. And from a very young age I was aware of the concept of “artist” and always had art in my life. . . . in Grade 2 I did a speech in front of the entire school, on artists. And so I think that shows that even from a very young age it’s been in my life all along. (interview, Nov. 20, 2003, p. 3)

Daumier’s art education followed a similar path that included both child-centred and formalist methodologies, as he related:

Before Grade 7 I can hardly remember an art class. I remember music through from Grade 1, kindergarten. But art? I can think of a handful of maybe projects, crafts that I might have made before that period. Grade 7 I think we started into things on a little more formalist scale. I remember being introduced to pointillism in Grade 7. . . . sometimes you would be able to draw, maybe if you were making a story, so it was kind of integrated that way - very small, though. My exposure to anything artistic came out of my exposure, from home, because I was always
into comic books. . . . And so that's where I started into sort of training myself.
And my parents were always fairly supportive, helping me out. They've been buying me sketchbooks, charcoal, pencils, that sort of thing. When I came home, that's where I spent most of my time. . . . and I started looking up art history books, things like Janson. I remember going to a public library and so I'd look at art that way. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 3)

Reading this statement, it appears that Daumier was drawn to discover the self through a visual art medium. With encouragement from familial sources, he found this opportunity independently from formal schooling.

Escher’s story reveals frustrations resulting from a school environment that appears adverse to visual art and to children’s individuality in learning:

All I can recall is that if I could do something that was realistic [in the figurative sense] people were so impressed, and for me that was relatively easy. I could do it. . . . no problem, and so I tried to do that and so I never really got much assistance. . . . except from my mother because she was an artist, and yet she'd get very frustrated with me very quickly. So it kind of created conflict, and then come Grade 7 and 8, where you said for you [referring to Picasso] it started changing. It was the one thing that was removed from me because I was in one of those horrible classes. . . . and unfortunately everything that I loved got taken away. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 1)

Within Escher’s testimonial are 2 observations of note: discouragement brought about by disciplinary methods that withhold pleasurable domains of learning such as visual art, and “realism” being a quality expected by the external adult world. Daumier’s
concluding statement similarly attests to this phenomenon of realistic interpretation in drawing:

And not until high school [did] we start getting a little more formalist in terms of perspective and being really grounded again in terms of being technical. I found that I was doing that kind of, I kind of found it even though they were coming at it from something formalist. I was finding a kind of freedom because I was going back into it but I would agree with Escher. If you got something that looked liked something you’d get the praise, if you did not, then (negative sound) oh well, “draw me a tree.” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 3)

Daumier and Escher’s words reflect the enjoyment each felt when performing to the expectation of adults. As well, the freedom that resulted from the learned skills of formalist art education allowed Daumier to move creatively within the domain of visual art. Whether for these reasons, or others, for both Daumier and Escher, there was self-driven motivation to continue their art education, albeit independent of the school setting, even from a young age.

In contrast to all other testimonials, Rubens offered her experience that exposes the result of an early art education, which incorporated a formalist approach within an integrated, child-centred setting delivered by an artist teacher:

In Grade 5 we really gobbled up the art and our art teacher taught us how to do portraits. And until then nobody had ever taught us how to do portraits, and I remember that day how I just ate that up. And then we got into clay and I just ate that up, and we got into all kinds of stuff. And in Grade 7 we got into art appreciation and we started looking at this piece of art and we talked about it as a
class: what we saw in it, what this meant, and it was completely new and then I ate it up. I think we needed that. We hadn’t been taught that before and until somebody points it out to you in a certain way... oh yeah, and then after that, “I know how to draw faces.” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5)

As in Daumier’s previous statement, Rubens alludes to a confidence that exudes, even from as young as 5 years. She was able to connect to a world of not only concrete realization (Kegan, 1994), but of adult expectation. By contrast, Escher revealed her feelings of inadequacy regarding a presentation artwork:

There was one thing that really embarrassed me, and yet I never said anything to anyone and I didn’t know what to do about it. I didn’t put a single person in there because no one had ever taught me how to do people and I just had no idea, so I just left the people out. It was just the object and I remember feeling bad inside of me because of that and yet I couldn’t help it. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5)

However, it is important to realize that schools have had increasing pressure placed upon them to prepare children for a technically driven world in which computers have an integral part. To these ends Mona related her experience:

I was never offered art in elementary school, because that’s when the computer age came in. So everything we did dealt with computer, nothing to do with the arts. I received art in primary grades, so Grades 1 and 2, and then again in Grade 5, and then that was it. . . . “Well everybody needs to know about this.” That was our art time. Anything that was taken away from us was that: any type of music, any type of drama, anything like that. You had to come in after school, lunch hours. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 2)
High school fortunately gave her the opportunity to pursue visual art. Her voice lifted as she spoke:

I had a phenomenal art teacher in Grades 11, 12, and OAC and he did it. . . . We did a lot of still lifes, we did a lot of life drawing, and things like that. Plus, on top we had a lot of art history, but we worked up until the Impressionist period. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 3)

Letendre similarly recalled a less enriched elementary school experience than in the secondary school years, which prepared her for the critical analysis path she was to take in later years:

And I don’t remember like Picasso, much of my early childhood. I might remember if I had that drawing that I was so proud of, but I remember doing a lot of crafts from Grade 8. . . . Not until I hit high school that I remember a lot of brilliant art teachers who combined formalism and child-centred in whole art history and art studio. That was just incredible and it was do what you want to do within structure and experiment and art history, and it was an incredible experience. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 4)

**Multiple Intelligences.** Gardner’s (1973, 1999, 2004) theory of multiple intelligences (MI) expands the question of motivation into domains of learning that have direct relevance to the curriculum-based art education programme of the NFAG. Escher recalled the frustrations of her high school years during the 1980s when MI research was in its formative years.

When I went to high school I went to a high school that was science oriented. . . . We/I had a very little bit of art history, and for me being a visual person I couldn’t
grasp the art history because it was mostly people and dates, and we’d have a few slides and that was it (discussion 1, 2003). But the studio work was really what inspired me and that’s got a lot to do with why I do this job. (interview, Nov. 5, 2003, p. 1)

Realization that she was a spacial/visual learner gave Escher an advantage in Grade 8 biology class, where “the hands-on was extremely important. . .I really latched onto that and actually considered a medical career, just because I really loved it so much” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 4). However, these talents would eventually find their place not only in her own art expression, but as a means to her career as an arts educator.

Finding one’s potential is not necessarily a single-handed task. Vygotsky (1978) identified this gap between the potential and actual cognitive development as the zone of proximal development. In this theory, the 2 phenomena meet through the caring capacity of the educator. As attested to by Rubens and Letendre, Daumier also talked about such a teacher:

I had a Grade 10 science teacher who I thought was really good. On the surface the guy seemed like a complete bubble-head, but when you sat down and talked to him . . . when he saw that you had interest, that you were really keen on what you were doing, he’d sit down with you, he’d spend the time with you. It was fabulous . . . but I ended up going into physics class and then I got into doing. . . . theatrics and stage designs on the side . . . that teacher, inspiration, definitely.

(discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5)

When participants were asked if they applied personal intelligence to their work as art educators, other than the spacial, which directly assumes its place in visual arts,
they responded with uncertainty. Some recognized that they did possess intelligences in other domains, but were uncertain as to how these talents could play a role in the Gallery’s programmes. Letendre’s voice alludes to this reticence: “I used to be a dancer and for years I studied dance and I was going to do it professionally as well. But do I include any of that into my workshops? Not a bit” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5). When asked if she could find ways to incorporate her talents she responded, “I don’t know” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5). Escher recalled that the art and drama workshop could present such an opportunity. Letendre responded, “I like art and drama, but we don’t do a lot of movement. There’s not a lot of place to do movement” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5). When asked if she could find a place to incorporate movement in a regular spacial/visual workshop Letendre replied? “Sometimes I get kids to warm up before we start working and we do some warm-up exercises and stretches and that, but I don’t really count that as movement” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 5).

Daumier offered his thoughts on the inclusion of kinesthetic intelligences:

When we were working on our old cartooning workshops at [previous place of employment]. . . I still do it when I’m working on that workshop, or end up doing some cartooning workshop. . . I get the children to get up. . . . It gets them excited to do it and then the kids begin to personalize it. Not only are they familiar with this person and it just kind of grounds it for them; they all make the face. Oh, Charlie’s doing it. It must be OK. . . funny, ha, ha, ha. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 6)

The successful application of kinesthetics to these workshops allows the children to become engaged and to personalize the workshop toward effective teaching and hence
learning. Effective use of intelligence domains was also observed in evidence provided by Escher in the domain of natural sciences: "The peregrine falcon. I’ve talked about the fact that it’s an endangered species. And we have it here, and what are we doing to help propagate the species, and is it successful? That kind of thing..." (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 5).

Rubens was the only participant to respond in the domain of music:

In elementary school we got to play the recorder, we got to... we learned the scales and notes, we’d play and sing. I took clarinet, I sing in Church. So that’s very much as equal as art. We never learned Drama. But music... (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 4)

When asked if she incorporated any of these talents into her workshops, she replied:

Well, let me just see... kindergarten, that’s just because there’s the musical in me. I really enjoy their reactions to the music and how that leads to art, but um... No, not really, not on a conscious level. There’s nothing that I can really connect. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 4)

Further to these identifiable spacial/visual, kinesthetics, natural sciences, and music intelligences, is something more intuitive and less tangible in the intrapersonal domain. This ability to understand the needs and further, the emotions of others is identifiable in Mona’s testimonial. She spoke about the therapeutic usefulness of art:

I always saw it as an escape, not always an escape but more a basis for communication... something that if a person couldn’t speak or they were too shy or afraid or, whatever it was that caused them to be less verbal about their situation, that they were hiding from or distancing from, they could use art as their
means of communication and you can hide yourself in it too. (interview, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 3)

She explained the way in which she takes this philosophy into her teaching practice: “for how I’ve been taught in art, what I understand, and I think that has a lot to do with how I speak to the children, do things with them” (interview, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 4). Mona provided the following evidence for her deeper emotional intelligence of self and of the other (Averill, 2000; Gardner, 1999, 2004):

“Oh yeah, that looks really good,” they get so proud of that personal one-on-one that you’ve given them that it doesn’t matter what you say to them afterwards, because they take that as a group thing and the class did good, and you centre them out, “You did a good job. Oh yours looks great, I love that, and oh that’s fabulous.” And you go around to each of them, that just makes their day, and they just love it, you can see it and they get all proud and, “now you can look at it.” (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 7)

Picasso’s intelligence skills connect interpersonal domains that demonstrate emotional intelligence and intrapersonal skills where thoughtfulness has gone into the structure of her workshop. Through engagement with her students she displayed a successful means to motivation. Additionally, Picasso exhibited skills in linguistic areas as she spoke evocatively with young students:

I’ve asked their opinion on what they know about a certain topic. For example, the Pioneer Life one [workshop]. I went in and said, “Tell me what you know about pioneer life,” and they raised their hands. . . they get excited about it because we know about what they’re talking about, or what subject it is we’re
drawing, and it just gets them interested in the topic and it helps me understand where they’re coming from in terms of what they know and what they don’t know. Lots of times they know more about the topic than I do (laughs). So that’s a good way to get a discussion going about it. They like to add their knowledge, I think. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 2)

The first phase of creativity, the gathering of knowledge towards motivation is exemplified by participant educators’ reflections of education and practice in classrooms. The range of formalist, to child-centred and issues-based (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002) methodologies in these combined experiences provided a diverse window of data.

Drake’s (1997, p. 39) philosophy of “teach[ing] who we are,” to this point identified in the work of Daumier, Escher, Mona, and Picasso, alluded to personalized worldviews in education, authenticity, and self-motivation. If the NFAG programmes were to look to Drake’s words for guidance, could its programmes become a direct beneficiary of the diverse experiences and intelligences that all its educators possess? This advice follows the tenet of authenticity in best practices (Zemelman et al., 2003). Opportunities to teach authentically lie first in the extracurricular workshops, and secondly, the school programme.

**Intuitive Exploration: Experiential and Process Learning**

The second phase of creativity was discussed by Dorfman (2000) as the coming together of knowledge and experience to effect the actual process of art-making. Related to the NFAG in-school programme, this concept might be seen as the actual making of the product in the classroom environment. Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) described this tenet as the experiential and believe that “students learn more by doing than by any other
method." I was interested to discover each participant’s perspective regarding formalist versus child-centred art education, and whether he or she could offer solutions that blended both methodologies. Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) discussed discipline-based into socio-ecological (issues-based) art education in this light. I used Morman Unsworth’s (2001) child-centred, process oriented philosophy and Duncum’s (1999) formalist, product-centred (see chapter 1) arguments as a lead-in to the discussion. From this point the concepts of “play,” through the eyes of Gõncü et al. (1999), “flow,” researched by Csikszentmihalyi (1993), and “risk taking,” as presented by Sergiovanni (1994) were incorporated into the discussion in an attempt to assess whether process was, indeed, a valued part of art-making in the NFAG programmes. Letendre spoke first on “product”:

No, I totally disagree with Unsworth because art’s not a product. . . [not a product arrived at through following directions, copying, or conforming to a given model]. Well for us, product is a big thing and what we’re doing in the schools. Yes, I mean, in the big concept of art, when you think about it, your own artwork, the process is important. And ideally, as an art teacher you’d want the art process to be important for kids. But when we go into a school, we know that that teacher is looking for product and every kid should have a good product, if possible, because that’s what they get to show the parent, and the parent is the one that pays the money. It has to do with getting the money for the workshop. Yes, absolutely (agreement from Daumier). So I’m having a bit of a problem with that.

(discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 1)
In Letendre’s statement there appears to be a discrepancy between the reality of a programme that is not only driven by the school curriculum, but by the necessity to be financially self-supporting as a business. As a result, “money” is the bottom line. The overarching question still remains, however. Can the NFAG teach its children’s programmes using a methodology that incorporates child-centred philosophies within a formalist framework geared to the marketplace?

Towards answering the aforementioned question, and in response to Duncum’s (1999) argument that children can learn to make pictures from studying other pictures, not from life, Letendre made the following statement:

I know that’s how the old apprentices used to study in the Renaissance, but you still have to look at life and you have to be observant. And those of us who’ve done studio arts know that you can’t do a portrait of somebody without looking at the subject... you can’t just do it from studying another portrait. You have to look at what you’re drawing, so....(discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 1)

Rubens offered her adaptation in the classroom setting:

I’ll say... “Look at your neighbour’s eyes and see if you can see the black circle,” or I’ll say, if I’m drawing the eyelids or eyes, “you don’t see the whole iris, unless your eyes are really wide like this” (indicates humorously, opening her eyes wide with her fingers). I say, “when your eyes are relaxed,” and I’ll demonstrate that with my eyes so that they can see, but they also have to watch, you know, how I draw it on the board, so that if they’ve never drawn an eye before, they may not know exactly where the lines go. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 2)
However, the curriculum includes areas of study such as "ancient civilizations" that lend themselves to visual art interpretation. When asked if the ethics of working from pictures, rather than life was of concern, Letendre responded with an amendment to her original experiential perspective:

I mean we don’t have any choices, any options to take them to the Coliseum, so we have to do with what we’ve got. But given the option to use human life? You use a still life or bring in triangles and shapes to do shadows. Even just to use yourself to do shadows, or things – or when we’re doing cartooning expressions. I think we try as much as we can to use life things, but I don’t think we have a lot of choices. But, do I think I’m going against my ethics? Naah. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 2)

This ability to switch back and forth between the actual subject and a facsimile allows for the broadening of the learning experience as explained by Daumier: “It’s just the eclectic nature of education, you’re going to draw from life and pictures, and all the other experiences are going to be drawn in. . .so I don’t see a problem with that. It’s not an issue” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 2).

Picasso added to this notion of alternating between one means and another with reference to artists in a historical framework:

I think it’s really how artists throughout time have always worked. They either work from a model or they work on site doing a landscape or a portrait. But if they haven’t been to a certain place they’ll go to other sources and find that out, see what something looks like. For example, if you think of an artist like Michelangelo doing scenes, the Sistine Chapel ceiling, he didn’t really witness
these events taking place. He used his imagination, and put creativity into it. But, he could also take a model and do a beautiful sculpture, so realistically. . . .And so . . . artists can work both ways, and children can work both ways too. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 2)

Mona concluded this discussion by looking at the argument from the perspective of creativity:

The whole point of creativity is to step outside of what’s in front of you and to figure out what’s going on. . . . And that also helps them [children] learn to look specifically towards a picture to find inspiration, or to figure out how to do a drawing. They can look at a life drawing, someone, a landscape and figure out how to do it from that point. So I think that that’s a good thing too. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 2)

These final perspectives allow us to see teaching as a combined process that is not strictly transmission/formalist, nor purely transactive/child-centred in its need to cater to the child’s interests, abilities, and expressive needs (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002). Rather, children can work successfully with combined methods that allow them choices. In this way they learn not only visual art technique, by that they are part of a community that respects their perspective, and in return they learn reverence for the perspectives of others. In this way their methods become transformational or discipline-based, socio-ecological (issues-based).

Play

I was interested to know if the participants viewed the concept of “play” as an integral part of the creative process at this intuitive level. I offered Göncü et al.’s (1999,
rationale of consciousness for day-to-day activities. The first level sees that “activity and its motive exist at the most global level. . . . the second level involving actions and goals. . . . The third level involves conditions and operations. . . . automated actions that no longer require conscious attention.” For children, play becomes the learning ground for adult activities. Was there opportunity within a curriculum-based programme, perceived as primarily formalist, for any form of play? In their struggle to come to grips with the concept of play and how it applied to the NFAG programmes, “fun,” “imagination,” “pretend,” “choice,” “ownership,” and “role-playing” were words most frequently used by the participants. Göncü et al.’s (1999) first 2 concepts (activity and motive, and actions and goals) are discussed in this section on play. The third, regarding automated actions, is taken up in the succeeding discussion on flow.

Letendre spoke about the workshops in regards to non-formal play:

There may be some workshops that are play, like the comic strip where they get to think of their own character. Or Art and Drama that involves a sense of play. And maybe part of Draw and Colour our World. . . . the music part, that has an aspect of play to it. But for the most part, we’re very formalist. . . . an exercise in technique. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5)

Solidifying this formalist approach, but at the same time adding a sense of the child’s need in reflection to the conflict of expectation, Rubens added:

And I think also, like when you go into a classroom with our time limits, you kind of need that structure to get your lesson done, then to come up with a nice product. Because you’re also going in with expectations from parents and from teachers that these kids. . . . because money comes into it, too. Kids are paying for
...their lessons and they want to learn...the teacher wants them to be learning something, but the parents expect that there's a product, that...(discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5)

Picasso noted the goal-oriented methodology of the NFAG workshops:

I think they're more formalist, like we discussed last session...I don't see it as play so much, I don't think. I never considered that when thinking about our workshops. I considered it more as "learning" as opposed to "playing." I don't even really...I don't even really like that term being used, "playing." Because we're learning and working...A fun form of learning...but that's not play.

Fun learning... (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5)

Daumier began to see "play" from a pedagogical perspective: "There's a little choice in there, but not enough to constitute play...No, I don't necessarily agree that play and learning isn't the same thing. I mean, kids when they're playing are learning, definitely. But whether or not it's what we do" (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5).

Escher offered her thoughts on creativity in the classroom:

I use the word [imagination] I think fairly often, because I think it's a way for me to feel like I can connect with the kids. So I often say "imagine" or "pretend that," to try to lead them into trying to think about...or creatively about something and because it is a word that they can connect with or personalize with. ...yeah, so I do use it a fair bit that way. And it's just because I feel really comfortable doing that too> (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 1)

Daumier recounted imaginative play within the Children's Museum birthday party programme: "I mean there's no linear thought to this (sympathetic laughs from Rubens). I
mean 1 minute... kids on dragons, and then they’re driving cars across the bridge before the dragon gets them, and then they’re Superman and then... there’s no [structure]...” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 6). Here is evidence not only of children at play, but of the absence of adult expectation in a non-schooling environment. In this example there are no products expected other than that of unconditional “fun.” Daumier elaborated on this aspect of ownership in play: “I think to engage it into play they would need to take a certain amount of ownership to the work. That’s where it becomes their own. They’re putting in their own, sort of creative juices, rather than following certain steps and adhering to certain things (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5). Letendre agreed that “Maybe play is a choice, and what we do is not a choice. Their parents make the choice for them (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 5).

Letendre’s inquiry into Göncü et al.’s (1999) consciousness levels questioned the author’s notion of structure:

I don’t like this definition of play. This definition of play implies, automatically, that it’s conscious, that play is a conscious kind of thing. And sometimes I don’t think it’s conscious, and I hope that it’s not conscious. To me, to get them excited about learning so that they’re having fun doing the learning, as well as doing learning unconsciously, some of that stuff is sinking in, that’s a great thing, but play, I’m not sure how to relate that to play... (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 9)

On the other hand, Letendre felt conscious thought could exist in play: “It could be like kids playing specific role-playing within a very structured environment, like I’m going to be the princess, you’re the king, you’re the dragon, and that’s the way it is. And that’s very structured kind of play” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 6).
Is the purpose of goal-oriented role-playing a rehearsal for the real stage of adult life as suggested by Göncü et al. (1999)? Daumier’s childhood experiences may well have paved the way for methods that he now employs in his Children’s Museum programmes:

I had a Grade 7 . . . history teacher. . . . that’s how we learned about the Plains of Abraham and the beginning of Canada. We role-played the whole way through . . . One of us took one side and the others took the other side and we reenacted wars, we reenacted battles. They had us rolling around the classroom. We sat down and played the government end of things and we waged debates based upon what they were talking about at the time. I thought that was like, the greatest thing for me. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 3)

Daumier offered role-playing insight into his archeology programme:

And they get this whole feel for. . . how their skills might be applied in a true working field or, with a little bit of elaboration because of me. I guess the Indiana Jones feel of things, with the enlarged stuff and the actual artifacts that they find. Not everyone’s going to find the cross of . . . or whatever. . . . that’s what my goal for them is. Make it really fun, build it up. That works out, especially when you’re outside. You get a little bit of conflict. . . especially when you start designating roles, because everybody wants to be a digger, everybody. That’s the famous role. Everyone wants to find the artifact itself. But, yeah, yeah, it’s fun. (interview, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 3)

Do activity and motives, actions, and goals indeed exist in play? If this is the case, children assuming revered adult roles, such as the “digger” that Daumier described
above, might well be experiencing satisfaction, even self-esteem if they were to find the elusive artifact. However, what are the emotions of children who do not have that same “success” in the dig? One might attempt an answer akin to that of “losing” at a game in that “not everybody can be a winner.” These are questions worthy of further research that are discussed to some extent in the succeeding section on risk taking. A second negative perspective of play was raised, however. Escher recalled her schooling experience where:

Different people’s idea of play... differs. Because I can remember when I was in primary school, when we had free time, we had boxes of cards that you could pull out, and they were mind puzzles – move the sticks around so that you could form 2 squares with so many sticks – and so for me this was play, I loved it. Some kids just, totally, for them it was a chore, it was not play, it was torture to have to do those. For me it was just a relief and I just loved them. So I think 1 person’s idea of play is not necessarily someone else’s. (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 2)

The question was asked by Letendre, “So then again, how do you facilitate everyone’s learning styles with one person, and that’s assuming that it’s the teacher’s definition of play, when it works for some people and it doesn’t work for other people, when everyone has a different definition of play...?” Towards understanding this query, further discussion from participants lead to the notion of “flow,” as researched by Csikszentmihalyi (1993).

Flow: Play at its Peak

Discussion 2 took the concept of “play” to a more involved state, what
Csikszentmihalyi (1993, p. 176) discussed as “concentration, absorption, deep involvement” becoming a state of flow. Daumier was able to relate to the idea in relation to the Children’s Museum programme:

The only thing that I can really relate to in my work is sometimes when I get them working in a certain workshop. . . and they we’re working together to put together a structure. And it just so happened that everybody at that same moment was working together for the same goal, to get somewhere, and I just didn’t want to stop it because you knew what they were trying to do, and it was like. . . if I stop this now then I finish. I don’t know if that’s necessarily play, but it was something that just looked like a process that I didn’t want to stop right then, because they wouldn’t be able to complete it. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 6)

However, some participants had doubts as to whether the 1 ½ hour to 2-hour school programme allowed for flow to develop. Although she agreed that flow was a desirable goal in arts education, Escher expressed her reservation:

Unfortunately I do think we have to set some time boundaries because as human beings in a society we have to. We have deadlines but our deadlines for the workshops are a little too restrained. . . yeah, I like to take up as much time as I have available to me. (interview, Nov. 5, 2003, 4)

Rubens noted some of the obstacles that the arts educators contend with:

You have to stay on top of your class . . . and I think your teacher really needs that too because they really have a schedule. And in school, school is schedule, school is routine, and if you knock their routine, especially in kindergarten, oh my goodness. If they don’t get their snack time it’s just chaos and you have to make
sure that... you give yourself enough time so that they can get dressed for going out for recess, especially in the winter time. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 7) Letendre raised the point that “because we’re so focused on time and we are so structured within that time frame, that before we know it recess is here. I, and maybe it’s lacking in me, but I have never experienced that flow in a workshop” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 7). Picasso related her perspective of the child-educator relationship:

I think that the children experience that flow... but we’re there to do a job. Like Letendre said, we’re on a time schedule. We know where we have to be by a certain point... so it’s a different level of thinking for us. Whereas with the kids... they can get really into their work, they can be really focused, and all of a sudden it’s time, it’s finished. And they say, “oh, are you finished. Are you coming back, what else are we doing?” So I think that kids can experience that flow, the same way all of us as artists can, in our own artwork, or in our school-work, or whatever it is. But for us I think it’s a job, and when you are doing a job it’s hard to get in that flow, that mindset. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 7) Rubens expressed her feelings concerning the arts educators becoming involved in their own demonstration artwork to the point of blocking out the class.

The other thing is too, if you’re lost in your own flow, you’re caught up in that. There is a danger then too that the kids aren’t always on the same flow as you and they might be really struggling, and they don’t get what you’re talking about, because you’ve got blinders on. I think you have to connect with how the kids are doing, as opposed to your flow. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 7)
I posed the question of whether it might be possible for educators to experience flow in relating information, responding to students' needs and successfully finding a way to induce flow within the students. Picasso responded:

I think you can feel it when it happens. That's when a class is really great, when everybody's on that same wavelength, on that same level. And you can...it makes for a really successful class and you leave feeling like you've accomplished something. Because they've all put that energy into their work, they've all had that focus, and the room kind of has that focus and feeling.

(discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 8)

Here it is possible to witness flow as both a child-and educator-related phenomenon. Picasso referred to this energy as "that flow and that 'vibe' that you get with certain classes" (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 4). Letendre expressed her view that:

You hope that that would happen all the time... But if there were a recipe for that they'd teach it in teacher's college... I don't think there is a recipe for that... Sometimes some teachers have it with a class and sometimes we can have it with a class, but I think it's idealistic to think we could have it with classes all the time. I don't think there's a way to teach it either. (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 4)

Picasso was optimistic: "if there's a way, let's find out. Let's do it, (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 4)

The discussion group had earlier raised the factors of repetition and reinforcement in the Gallery's programmes. Escher noted that, "We're providing tools and confidence, and then what they do with those tools... whatever they go on to do that inspires them... to feel secure in their creative ideas, that they can execute them, get them across to other
people” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 6). In the school programme children learn to
work with various media from oil and chalk pastel to clay, learning the limitations,
techniques, and potential of each. Daumier related his thoughts on these factors:

I’m wondering though... where do we fall in terms of follow-up? I know the
more popular we are, the more repetition. And I guess that a part of assimilating
that process is being able to see it being done in different ways and then they get
to know, OK, then I can break things down in more than one way using sort of
this basic method. Whereas, if we go into the classroom once with this [workshop
example] they see it, but if it’s foreign to the way they’re being taught in the
classroom? But if it bounces off them then they’re never back with it. So I think
it’s repetition. And the fact if we’re in the classrooms on a repetitive basis, the
same classroom, I think we become more effectual, but if we’re not. How do we
stretch those boundaries? I don’t know if you’ve thought about those ideas.

(discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 6)

In talking with Picasso outside the focus group environment, we agreed that children who
have had either numerous Art Gallery visits at school, or who take regular extracurricular
programmes, build a confidence towards art and exude their creative talents. We see this
not only in their work, but in the way they are attentive and engaged in the classroom.

Evidence of Göncu et al.’s (1999) third level of consciousness, automated actions,
might be observed in the following reflection from my research journal. After teaching a
Grade 8 class, I wrote:

*I saw the value of the art gallery programme and how repetition is able to instill
in students a sense of confidence. The class was able to get to work immediately*
with clay. They not only felt comfortable with the medium, but knew the skills of joining and shaping it. Somehow this allowed them to let their imaginations rule the day. (Journal, March 8, 2004)

Letendre offered evidence to solidify this observation: “There are some kids now in high school that are now going off to art college that I know, from here... one of the adults’ class people is a high school pupil who is getting a portfolio ready to go to NASCAD. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 7)

Play, then appears to take at least three forms of consciousness as suggested by Göncü et al. (1999): first, activity and its motive, which suggests conscious awareness of the act of play. Second, play assumes actions and goals in preparation for an adult world beyond. Third, when play becomes focused to the point of “flow” it may no longer require a conscious level of reasoning. However, Göncü et al.’s conscious levels of play were questioned by the group in the belief that play might also exist at the unconscious level as a release of creative energy either linked to formal education or not at all.

Risk Taking in Art Education

Is it the avoidance of “struggle,” in teaching and learning that teachers seek in their role as educators? Towards finding this path I asked the question of risk taking and how each participant perceived its role in their work. Sergiovanni (1994, p. 41) reminded us that we must seek “the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to approach problems in an open and systematic manner.” Each educator eagerly offered his or her point of view. Daumier spoke about risk taking in his work:
Any time I make a mistake I say, “Oh, look at that.” And the kids go, “and were making mistakes too.” One thing, I know, it sounds corny saying it, but I’ll say it anyway. There’s never any mistakes, there’s only learning opportunities. And half the time I say “we can learn from this, and if I work with this one and it doesn’t turn out as well as it should at the end, then I’ve learnt from it. I can do it better next time. I know what to do the next time. So let’s go with it and see where it leads, and then move on.” Usually it’s a non-issue for the kids at that point because they see that you’re screwing up so (makes a sound of ‘so what’) “so I don’t care if I’m screwing it up.” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 10)

Deflating the error to a non-issue appears to lessen the tension in the classroom caused by expectation and demonstrates to the students that teachers can make errors as well.

Letendre related her experiences in this regard:

If they make a mistake I go, “You know what, it’s going to make it different from mine. If I wanted to have 27 of the same drawings I would have done 27 last night and handed them out and gone home.” But if you have a little mistake and it’s a little different...and that’s what art’s all about... Incorporating mistakes into the lesson becomes part of the process. (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 10)

As Letendre alluded, risk taking can provide the instructor with an air of confidence that wins the children over. Rubens demonstrated this idea with her anecdotal example:

We were worried about making it look just right, as you’re demonstrating it in front of the class, because they’re all watching you and I said “yeah, you know, you have all these eyes on you and you’re expected to be the artist, and you’ve
got to get it just perfect,” and she said, “ah, I didn’t like the way you were
drawing butterflies.” I drew my wing, and I was looking at it and thinking that’s
not quite right and all the kids were drawing it. And I said “I use that as part of
my lesson.” If I didn’t... I used to be really worried that the teacher’s going to
look at that and think it’s crap. . . . Then I’ll say to the kids, if I stand back and
say, “Mmm, not quite right.” I’ll actually make that part of my lesson. I’ll say,
“Okay.” I’ll often say kids are so worried about making mistakes. . . . And I want
them to be relaxed about that so I’ll say, ‘That’s why we’re drawing our lines with
a light colour. You don’t have to worry. You can always start over.” And then
I’ll say, “Look, I didn’t draw this line quite right. I’m going to fix it.” They’ll
watch me fix it. When we get all the colours on it’s going to go away (discussion
2, Nov. 13, 2003, pp. 9, 10).

Realizing that even the most experienced instructors make errors and have found
ways to work around them offered Picasso, educator for approximately 1 year,
reassurance. She spoke about the inner turmoil that she had been afraid to disclose and
how the discussion regarding risk taking had offered her a means to discuss her feelings:
“Well, I’m glad everyone’s saying that [they make mistakes] because I thought it was just
me being new” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 9). When asked what she felt at the end
of the workshop when the product was successfully completed, she stated:

I feel satisfied with it, and it makes me feel more confident for the next time. But
I think, “cause I am new, it leaves me feeling I’m on shaky ground.” And right
now I want everything to work out, how it’s supposed to. But I’m slowly getting
more comfortable I think with the risk taking and learning how to do that.”

(discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 9)

For both instructor and student, the courage to take risks and to resolve errors is part of the creative process of discovering something from a new perspective. Mona offered her schooling experience on this point:

They need to appreciate the fact that they are different and they can make mistakes and it’s not going to be the end of the world. Because I know from when I was in school that everybody was fixed into this same mould, that you all have to do the same thing, receive the same grades and everything’s going to be fine, in elementary school. You were never allowed that creativity. So perhaps that’s a part of creativity that you allow for. “Here you’ve made a mistake. It’s not really a mistake, it’s just stuff that’s different from your neighbour, the instructor. . . .” (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 10)

In summary, the combined methodologies of formalist and child-centred art education have the potential to expose children to holistic subject matter, which might lead them into the intuitive process of creativity. Play, in the form of “fun,” “imagination,” “pretending,” “choice,” “ownership,” and “role-playing” might allow the child to not only enjoy the process of art, but to prepare him or her-self for the world beyond the classroom. But, dominant behaviour in role-play might enable some children to feel superior while leaving others to feel inferior. Play, in the formal sense of motive and goal orientation, has the potential to prepare children for a world of competition and work-related experiences. However, it is important to realize that children learn through multiple intelligences, and what might appear as play to one may pose itself as a painful
ordeal to another. A well-rounded blend of all intelligence domains might present the best means to reaching the majority of children.

Flow, although an ideal state of concentration, absorption, and deep involvement, is something that cannot always be attained in the relatively short periods of time that the NFAG educators have with their classes. Some educators, however, have experienced this phenomenon in the classroom and in the Children’s Museum setting. Adding to the potential for flow in students are the factors of repetition and reinforcement that result in automated actions. Although flow was deemed to be an important goal for students to reach, the educator must guard against becoming personally engaged in his or her own demonstration artwork, to the detriment of students seeking direction or help. However, when flow is attained, in the true sense of involvement as an educator, a certain “vibe” results within the learning environment.

Risk taking was deemed by all the NFAG educators as a necessary part of classroom creativity, one that can lead to confidence building within the educator, and serve as a positive learning experience for students. If the teacher can admit to making mistakes when taking risks, then there is no reason for students to see error as a sign of inferiority, weakness, or failure. Risk taking can lead to creative artwork.

**Informal Presentation: The Process of Creativity Explored**

The third group discussion took participants into an analysis of the process of creativity through the avenue of poiesis. I described this analytical phase of creativity as the aftermath of “doing” in which the one creating begins the process of reflection and realization. Some participants found this discussion topic unfamiliar and, therefore, uncomfortable. I took the advice of Zemelman et al. (2003) in best practices that
authenticity in teaching should work on the premise that students can learn on deep levels. As well, reflection became a second area of investigation in best practices. To begin session four, the topic of poiesis was resumed, but with the word “discovery” as a substitute. Discovery elicited more comfortable responses. Poiesis was introduced through the research of German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1977; 1935, p. 168, cited in Young, 2002, p. 1). Young’s analysis of Heidegger described poiesis as the interplay of processes and concepts rooted in the notion of physis in the natural world, of “movement, change, transformation. . . .” The bringing forth of this “Being,” through “doing” that results in poiesis. Ultimately, Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) saw poiesis as a means to discovering existential “truth” through the narration of our life story. Symbolically, he envisioned this “bringing forth” process as the unfolding spiral of creative development. It is a transformative process through which Fleener (1997) similarly, saw the ability to discover oneself within the community and hence, a self-directed “truth.”

Poiesis: Discovering the Unconscious

I asked the participants whether it was possible for the experience of poiesis (essentially the “poetry” of life) to have a beneficial role in art education, both for the NFAG educators and for the children that they work with. Letendre had earlier made some profound statements regarding play that began to unfold this spiraling notion of poiesis:

To me, to get them excited about learning so that they’re having fun doing the learning, as well as doing learning unconsciously, some of that stuff is sinking in,
that's a great thing. . . . Sort of think about learning sometimes as an unconscious release of energy and excitement and creativity, and it can be linked to education . . . . (discussion 2, Nov. 13, 2003, p. 4)

These multiple concepts of “fun,” “learning,” “unconscious,” “energy,” “excitement,” and “creativity” all tie into the holistic concept of life being a journey that the individual (or group) makes towards the narration of the personal life story. When asked about the poetic effect that art educators might have on their students, the answers signaled either an objective or subjective perspective. Rubens was uncertain as to whether it was possible to do more than effect on a surface level:

I don’t think that our workshops are set up or designed to really go with that. I think we teach them how to do this, which they can apply later on in another art lesson, or later on in their life. I think, and it’s different too. If you have a group of kids and you’re an art teacher in the school, and you have those kids throughout the whole year, that might happen, but not here, with us. (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 2)

Daumier reified this objectivity in his statement:

We do a lot more questioning inside in the morning, getting them started up for the afternoon. I always ask them what they’re studying in class, and I get them to do about . . . just things that make up culture in general and the importance of study and accuracy, and being able to record and getting an idea of what culture, whatever civilization they maybe looking at. . . . We’re looking at reinforcing the accuracy of their skills while they’re outside there by questioning them about what they’ve already learned. Otherwise. . . in terms of creativity, what are we
looking at? Are we looking at its appearance, of its impact? (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 2)

His response to the question of poiesis brought this response: “I think it’s an important thing. I don’t think we’re there long enough for us to do that. Not unless… just little impacts… as long as they’re nurtured.” (make-up discussion 5, Dec. 18, 2003, p. 18).

Bridging the gap between the objective and the subjective rationales of art education, Letendre argued that, “… we’re giving them the tools… not just practical hands-on type of tools… but it can be very esoteric, psychological tools that we’re weaving them through… feeling good about art, successful about art so they won’t be afraid, perhaps, to try something else in another class at a future time” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 3). However, she felt it arrogant to believe it would be possible for the NFAG educators to make any profound impact on the children. The notion of confidence building was also raised by Escher as she too discussed “tools”: “We’re providing tools and confidence, and then what they do with those tools…whatever they go on to do that inspires them…to feel secure in their creative ideas, that they can execute them, get them across to other people” (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 6).

These tools were demonstrated in Escher’s response to the question of whether it was the role of the arts educator to open children’s eyes to the awe and wonder of nature through a process of discovery, identified by Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) as physis transforming into poiesis.

Sometimes it’s just bringing it to a conscious level. They know that there’re shadows and light, trees, and that. But when it comes to drawing it they just don’t really think about it, it’s just something that’s there. But when you actually point
it out to them they realize, “Oh yeah,” and then you put it on their drawing and they go, “that’s what was missing, that’s why it didn’t look quite right before.” So for them it’s a discovery of something that they already knew, but bringing it to life. So yeah, it is a discovery, but like I say, they already knew that and now it’s just come to a conscious level. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 1)

Picasso expressed her uncertainty as to the concept of discovery, “At kindergarten level, when that’s part of discovery. Not who they are, they’re not discovering who they are, but what they look like and learning terms about our arms, parts of . . .” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8). Rubens continued with her own thoughts on formalist art education at this early age: “And that’s a state of development, making kids realize that they don’t have arms coming out of their neck . . . they come out of their shoulders. That’s body awareness” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8). Letendre introduced child psychology into the discussion: “That goes back exactly to Piaget, a state of development in those early years. It’s not self-awareness. They’re not self-aware in kindergarten” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8).

Piaget (cited in Gardner, 1982, pp. 8, 9) identified the preschool years as: “Intuitive or symbolic thought” (in its static versus manipulative form) which is used through various forms of language and mental images. However, in the years that follow from age 7, children begin their passage into the “concrete operational” phase. Here the child is able to manipulate internal actions or mental operations from the perspective of another person. Rubens questioned the value of formalist methodology when applied to children of such a young age:
And even after they have a lesson they might go back to drawing their bodies with their arms coming out here (she indicates the neck). That’s a stage, we can start opening their eyes to what they look like, but that’s a whole stage that they have to go through and I don’t know how much that is... at kindergarten level, “I am discovering myself.” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8)

The transformation of thought from the unconscious to the conscious level appears to be an objective function of the Art Gallery educator. However, the question of its value, when applied to children who have not undergone the transformation from intuitive or symbolic thought to the concrete operational phase (Kegan, 1994), still remains. With the earlier phase being so close to transition in kindergarten, the real question is whether there is any harm in introducing new concepts to the few very young children to whom it pertains. However, there is the more important question of whether the art educators are able to penetrate to an esoteric layer in the short period that they have with their classes. At this juncture it is necessary to point out that many children in the Niagara Region experience the same instructor several times during the year in the school programme; some over the entire period of their elementary schooling. As well, school holiday and Saturday programmes within the Gallery setting itself allow children to bond closely with their educators. Picasso’s response to this deeper layer alluded to the existence of something more esoteric: “But we could touch someone in a way that it stays with them, and it stays with them throughout their other experiences, and...they might not realize it at the time. I think the kids that we were with today might not think, ‘that was a great teacher, she’s affected my life.’ But down the road she might” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 3).
Daumier had used the word “nurture” in his thoughts regarding educators making an impact on the child. Several participants had, in fact, related some experience where children had indicated some form of transformation through language or gesture. Using formalist tools, Rubens indicated her students’ response:

If they come in and we say “draw a tiger” and they’ve never looked at a tiger and don’t have the skills to...they might be overwhelmed with this...“we can’t do this, oh wow.” I say, “yes you can, we’re going to do this together.” We just break it down into shape and line...and even the worst kids. Teachers will come to me and say they are not really strong, their hand-eye co-ordinations. And they can produce this thing. I think it does instill confidence in them, especially kids who I know “hate art.” And then at the end of the class, “hey look at my tiger.” And it’s such a lesson, a really cool experience for them. And whether those 25 kids are going to remember that, probably not. But one or two will—who have those skills might. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, pp. 6, 7)

Such experiences may not be profound in the sense of being life-altering, but may be small steps that allow children to move forward on a journey towards discovery of the being; its capabilities, its likes and dislikes.

However, in the area of cultural exploration, a unit that is included in the curriculum and hence NFAG workshops, educators have noted their caution in imposing Eurocentric values. Mona responded with the following thoughts concerning Aboriginal art workshops:

If you present them [Aboriginal children] with tools to do something and “you know what, if you were to do something, look inside yourself,” or whatever,
“examine your lifestyle or your heritage,” or whatever the case may be, then they
don’t have to do it at that given moment, but they can do it later on and realize
that it’s acceptable behaviour to do so. (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 7)
Letendre replied with a cautionary note. “But you also have to be careful... why am I
as an upper class white woman, or a middle class woman, giving you, as an Aboriginal
student, permission to think about your heritage. ... I mean, that’s something that they
should be learning from their elders, or their culture” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8).
Rubens’s response was emphatic: “I don’t think that I would have the right or the place
to tell someone to... in a classroom” (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 8). When being
instructed as to how to teach these workshops, the advice from management is to focus
on formalist aspects such as design and symbolism.

As previously mentioned, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) advised, when working cross-
culturally participants should ask if the spirit is clear, if the heart is good, what baggage is
being carried and most of all, what use is the outsider to those they are working with.
She suggested that for these questions to be answered honestly and sensitivity, skill,
maturity, experience, and knowledge must all play a critical role. The question is, should
workshops that involve cultural identity be included at all in the Art Gallery, in-school
programme. If they are taught on a level where instructors feel reluctant to discuss
beyond the decorative aspects of design, is that not just as colonialist in its superficiality?
At this level, is personal narrative, as suggested by Rossman and Rallis (2003), able to be
developed? The answers to these questions go beyond the parameters of this research
study, and, therefore, remain unanswered.
Capitalism

The second section of the discussion on informal presentation briefly entered the area of capitalism in relation to arts education. Young (2002, p. 6) said, "In capitalism, the product of physis is abstracted from its original earth and World and becomes a commodity. . . . a curious mix of use-value and exchange-value, 'magically' calculated, reified, and accepted into the realm of Being." Marx (Young, p. 6) believed that commodification, "estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and spiritual essence, his human being."

The immediate question from Rubens was: "Are you saying that our workshops are capitalist?" (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 5). Letendre responded: "They are," (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 5), to which everyone shared the humour. Although not the intended direction of this discussion, this statement allows an opportunity to remind the reader that the NFAG programmes do operate from a business perspective and financial sustainability is important. The Gallery is not funded through any Government programme, although the business has received some monies from the Provincial Trillium Granting agency to seed programmes. Attracting customers to the Gallery's programmes is, therefore, important. Management keeps a day-to-day record of numbers of children (and adults) served by the NFAG programmes. These statistics are used in public and private sector presentations in an attempt to win financial and other support.

Letendre spoke with vision for the future of the Art Gallery programmes as she referenced the role of popular culture:

If you can't tap into kids' culture, first of all you're not going to get the students to come to the workshops, so you can't get them through the back door. . . some
of these art experiences that we want to give them in the arts. And it’s a kind of a
hook, popular culture, to get kids interested. But also to provide them with the
know, the “knowing how to look at things” and the “being able to be critical about
looking at things.” I think that’s what we don’t do that we’re going to try and do
because Daumier’s right into popular culture and he has huge experience with
popular culture and critical theory and B. [Director] too. Because both of those
are going to influence the direction that the children’s museum... and I would
hope that the workshops would... And it’s not just the discovery of self, but the
discovery of life. (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003, p. 6)

The integration of “language arts, media literacy, and the arts stuff,” as expressed by
Letendre (discussion 3, Nov. 25, 2003), makes it plausible to think that the NFAG
programmes have the potential to strengthen its interdisciplinary workshops, and become
transformational in its teaching methodologies. The present formalist means of providing
children with skills and confidence towards their self-discovery, has the potential to
develop into a more child-centred means of exploration, and further into issues-based art
education. Through this transformative avenue, children might discover their bodies, the
nature around them, or their spiritual beings. The fourth discussion entered this deeper
analytical layer involving the creative process.

Formal Presentation: A Holistic Exploration of

Transformative Practices in Education

In this fourth discussion the primary aim of my research was to connect all that
had previously been discussed in the previous three sessions. Best practices (Zemelman
et al., 2003) listed holistic, expressive, and collaborative along with the previously
discussed student-centred, expressive, authentic and experiential tenets towards successful teaching and learning. Hutchinson and Bosacki's (2000) holistic view regarding cognitive, affective (emotional), and spiritual dimensions as means toward connecting the self and world provided a basis for this section. Here, the second aim of research was to analyze the creative process at a deeper level considering Hutchison's (1998) views on social and ecological aspects of learning with Noddings's (1992, 2003) perspective on modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation and happiness in education.

**Connecting the Self to Society and Environment**

This final section of the creative process begins with the relationship between the child and the world beyond the classroom. Through integrated programming, the NFAG workshops do endeavour to expose children to their society and environment. Preparing the groundwork for children to enter secondary school, able to look beyond the classroom into social and ecological spheres, is an area that, although an integral part of the programme, I believe has much potential for development. Rubens expressed her thoughts on how the mind works at the challenge of integrating information holistically:

> I think our programme is able. It's art integrated learning. So I think that’s a part of it; that’s what we have to be doing, integrating art into other subjects. It’s not just the art that we’re teaching. That’s why teachers pick our programme because if they’re studying a habitat, they’re doing habitats, they can use the art to enhance or work on something they’ve already studied, like an animal or something like that. . .(discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 3)
Daumier furthered this understanding of how connections between the internal and external world within the Children’s Museum programme are made:

Whether or not we recognize they’re bringing in their own connections, and we bring in connections here and there. That’s basically how you sell it to the kids. You give it to them so they can associate their own information with what you’re doing with them. . . . Have we looked at how far our impact goes past. . . . We bring in sparks of creativity. Whether those sparks turn into roaring fires would. . . . I’m not sure if that’s what we’re looking at in terms of how far this creativity. . . .like bringing into the social dynamic? (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 3)

The programme’s existing workshops such as “Drawing Occupations,” introduce children to firefighters, police officers, and other professions. They link to Letendre’s belief that “Somehow we have to be responsive to the community” (interview, Nov. 17, 2003, p. 4).

Escher offered examples from an ecological perspective:

Oftentimes in those particular workshops we encourage them to think about where these creatures live, what the environment’s like. And so they usually do their background. . . . I talk a little bit about horizon line in their background, but then I say, “if this is a tree frog, where is it going to live,” and get them thinking about the environment itself, and what’s the foliage going to look like. Is it going to be rounded, things like that. So I think in that way we do touch on the broader ideas and that, and we do give them that chance to become aware of things that they know? (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 1)

However, these workshops require an ecological element of a different nature, one that provides a physical setting conducive to learning. Noddings (2003, p. 33)
discussed the familiarity and comfort of “place” as an important aspect of education. In this respect, Daumier expressed his feelings towards a holistic notion of arts education:

I’m a strong believer that the support at home helps to sell anything, which is what we do. . . . It just has to work into that triangulation. . . . co-educators like ourselves, if we’re going to get into the circuit we kind of have to work it as a circuit, as a team. If any one part breaks it isn’t complete (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2004, p. 5). That has to do with an ecological factor. Would they have done that if their parents at home had absolutely disliked art . . . maybe the teacher hated art . . . . We do not make that impact unless there’s that supporting environment. . . . We’re part of an enriching environment, and that’s it. That’s as far as we can take our responsibility. (make-up discussion 5, Dec. 18, 2003, p. 3)

Does building this environment conducive to learning encompass more than just the art educator and the children? Picasso built on this question:

You have to have those connections, support systems all around and it starts with the teacher and it can branch off from there. But if we walk into an environment where the teacher is genuinely supportive of Art Gallery and wants to see the children do a good job, and wants the kids to feel proud of their work, then when we walk in; it’s just that much better for us. We can just pick up on that and then take it from there. But if the teacher’s just looking at it as a break for an hour and a half to do some marking, and we’re there to watch her class. . . . It really sets the tone, I think. Kids pick up on it too, I think. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 5)

Daumier pointed out the learning experience of his Museum programmes from a teacher’s perspective:
The one thing here I like to see is group dynamics. . . . Here I can really see where kids, who in the classroom. . . I don’t get to see the classroom side of it, but I can get the feedback from the teachers who say, “Look at this. This child is really quiet in the classroom, but here he’s really taking the leadership role. He’s taking over the group and look what they’re doing, Look, here, here, here. Let’s get this up. Let’s give them the chance to do it.” It’s nice to see the teacher’s face too, then they can see a side of a child that they don’t necessarily see behind the desk.

(discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 10)

Towards framing a programme that further strengthens this notion of the holistic environment, rubrics are offered as a follow-up service. Teachers frequently express their gratitude at receiving them so that the Gallery workshop can be expanded in different directions (2005, www.niagarafallsartgallery.ca). Letendre expressed her ideas on the future of the NFAG in-school programme:

I also think, and I’ve been asked “65” times this year, about some kind of teacher education. How many teachers have asked us how to teach basic art (interview, Nov. 17, 2003). That’s actually the direction that we might be going in, teacher training, having those workshops on how to teach basic art technique: colour theory, a one-day, an in-service PD day on how to teach elements of design. But of course it’s tying it in. (discussion 1, Oct. 31, 2003, p. 7)

In addition to what has been discussed, can a caring environment enable the learning process to penetrate to a deeper, even spiritual level where soul and heart become involved? Picasso opened the way to this discussion in what she expressed as “the mystery in learning” (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 11):
I think it depends on that whole thing we were talking about last session and about the vibe you can get, the interest in the children. If you can create a certain rapport with them, right off the bat. But the class I had this afternoon, there’s no way they’d give me any of that, they wouldn’t, as much as I tried, they wouldn’t. Their teacher stopped them and told them, “Our guest is having to talk over you” . . . . It just sometimes doesn’t click. And as much as you want it to, and you go in there with the best intentions and you want that to happen. But for whatever reasons, it just doesn’t happen. It can’t always click. I don’t know why

Letendre added her thoughts to the concept of “click”: “You know I find it very rarely clicks, but when it clicks it’s brilliant. Like maybe once every 2 weeks you get a click, and it’s brilliant. But, I don’t find it every day” (dialogue 3, Dec. 25, 2003, p. 4).

**Caring Through Modeling, Dialogue, Practice, and Confirmation**

Taking the notion of holistic learning to this deeper level allows the concept of “care” to enter this analysis. Letendre expressed her feelings on care:

Going in there and just being able to share with kids, that has an aspect of caring. Going in there, even if they’re crappy kids and even if you have to start out really heavy with them, be able to say, “you’re doing a great job,” even if they’re not.

That is a part of that aspect, (make-up discussion five, Dec. 18, 2003, p. 4)

Care shown by the art educator and the classroom teacher comes both through actions and other more intangible energy that might later be described at “spirit.” Picasso related her thoughts:
I think positive reinforcement is a big part of that caring part of teaching. Just encouragement and positive reinforcement, I think is what we’re talking about in this section. Just having... caring towards the work that the kids produce, and wanting to see them do a good job. Also wanting them to enjoy themselves. So I think that going in with those things in mind, the children’s feelings and also their wanting to have a sense of accomplishment is a big part of that whole thing we were talking about before, like flow. If you can establish those things in a classroom, or if they’re already established before you get in there, I think that you can tell. Because sometimes you can walk into a classroom and it’s just not happening in there. There’s not good energy in there, there’s not a good vibe, and I think it might come from their teacher who is with them every day. And maybe their teacher doesn’t have that caring or that empathy or that desire to see them. . . (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 4)

This “energy,” which has the potential to generate an optimum learning environment, appears to be affected from beyond the classroom, however. Parents that require “product” and the demands of assessment have the potential to stand in the way of children benefiting esoterically from the art workshops. Escher conveyed her reactions to teachers whose final objective was to comparatively rate their students’ artwork:

I’ve had a few teachers ask me at the end of the class, especially if we have the pictures laid out in a painting class, “Well which do you think is the best?” . . . just a couple of times it’s happened and I distinctly remember turning to the teacher and saying, “well I don’t know the students”. . . I tried to explain myself.
You watch the kids, and some of them, their product maybe very mediocre if you’re judging in terms of the final product. But for this child, in watching them do it, you know this is absolutely amazing for them, and they’re so proud. And I’ve seen some pieces where I’ve watched the child struggle to feel successful and I’ve just thought, now this is really good, because they feel really good about it and they’ve done their absolute best. And you say that, “Do your best. I’m not asking for perfection. I want to see your best, not my best, not Joe Smoe’s best, yours.” And I think that’s one thing with the care, we have to emphasize . . . .

(discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 7)

Gaudelius and Speirs (2002) discussed the basis of Kant’s eighteenth century formalist philosophy as the way in which people respond to works of art and how they interpret and judge on nothing more that the work itself. This “competition” was noted by Rubens in her views on strict formalist education:

Art is so subjective and I would find it very difficult to mark it. You could mark. . . technically, “did they follow the steps,” but the end result, the end product is so theirs. . . if I walk around I would never say, “That sucks,” (laughter from everyone). . . far from that. I would look at kids. . . when we’re doing a tiger it’s all wonky and I wish I could draw like that. . . (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 6)

Rubrics from the NFAG provide the following guidelines for marking:

Ability to follow instructions/directions; use materials properly, as taught; did the students require assistance to complete the workshop; can students use the appropriate vocabulary to define textures; can students identify textures beyond those taught in the workshop; do students incorporate many textures in different ways; do students
understand what a landscape is and where a horizon is located (2005, www.niagarafallsartgallery.ca).

In the preceding examples, both Escher and Rubens exhibited the notion of “modeling” as described by Noddings (1992, p. 23). The principles of design such as line, shape, colour, value, texture, form, and space, which instructors are taught to adhere to in their workshops, denote the formalist aspect of this instruction. However, opportunities for creative completion of the work in choosing backgrounds and colours from the child’s imagination, bridges into what Bruner (Wood, 1989) described as “scaffolding,” and towards cognitive development. This process, in turn, links Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of proximal development where the child’s potential and actual accomplishment meet through the caring capacity of the art educator. Mona displayed modeling in her one-on-one caring within the classroom:

When I’m going around and showing the kids and working with them and making sure they understand the concept. Well, I know I’ve done it with Escher, that when she’s been doing something I’ll see that one child’s been struggling. Maybe they’re not learning fast enough or they’re not understanding what she’s been saying, I’ll come over and say something else and okay, now they’ve got it, they can understand it and it’s just that reinforcement to what they’re learning, or showing them like, oh, “Remember, she did that line there.” “Oh, yeah, that line.” So they’ll put that line in. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 4)

However, curriculum demands do necessitate a certain amount of formalist approach as Rubens went on to discuss:
I know a lot of teachers do reinforce staying inside the lines and I do that, especially in kindergarten, because that is something that they find. . . . hand-eye coordination and want to be developing and that’s part of their curriculum and their grading and they have to. . . . and they’ll be looking for that as they’ll be listening and colouring their own art, that they are be able to have that control.

(discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 6)

From a personal perspective as researcher, reflecting on my own experience in the classroom, I find myself saying, “Mrs. so-and-so will be marking these artworks, so do your very best.” This appears to motivate children who are not working to their potential. By producing both a creative and well-executed demonstration artwork, while at the same time being attentive to the needs of students, I aim to model the behaviour I expect from them. Daumier pointed out the need to assess the child from an individualistic perspective:

And they have to judge the student on the progression of their skills throughout the year. So they look at how they did in the beginning, whether it’s good artwork or not, and see how they’ve done by the end, by the skills that they’ve learned during that time period. And that’s not what teachers look at. They want to see the pretty picture that they have in their head and they go for it, and that has to do with our teamwork. . . . and kind of show them, listen, are they progressing, how are their skills building, what are they doing with them? (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 6)

Despite curriculum demands, is there a place in the NFAG programme for a child-centred philosophy that allows children to “dialogue” and “practice”? Escher was able to
relate to the second and third of Noddings's (1992) concepts of care from the perspective of her Saturday programme:

Yes, definitely. Two weeks ago ... I was doing a cartooning class and I had stuff planned and they [the children], were doing some exercises and the kids got hooked on talking about elevators. And all of a sudden that's all they could think of was elevators, and it was driving me crazy because I couldn't get them to do what I had planned. And I said, "OK, this is the way you want to go, this is the way you're thinking, fine, we're going to do elevators." And so I sat down with them and we drew a box, a three dimensional box on a piece of paper and we just created perspective and I said, "Here's you elevator." We did a panel, "so there's your buttons; create an elevator filled with people. What's happening in this elevator? Who's in there? What's in there?" And they loved it. ... and I still got the things done that I wanted to. It just took a different path. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 9)

Picasso was able to draw on an example from the school workshops:

Even a suggestion that they have for a background or something in the sky, they say, "Can we do this, can we put this in?" And I say, "Oh sure, you can do that. ... You give them a little bit of creativity and they get excited, or you give them an option. You could do that or you could try this or that." So I've done that too, let them, or I've gone with a suggestion that they've had, an idea that they've had and incorporated that into the work. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 9)

Both examples provide evidence of the workability of reciprocal dialogue between educator and students, and display a degree of risk taking that stretches a formalist lesson
into a child-centred workshop. Here is evidence of the spirit receiving nurture and educators caring for the children with which they are entrusted. At the same time, children must trust the Gallery educators as “outsiders,” especially when assessment is the final outcome of what they have been asked to produce.

Noddings (1992) presented a fourth concept of caring in “confirmation.” Picasso enabled us to see this behaviour in practice:

I always make sure... to do a closing remark as I’m leaving the classroom before I pack up and say goodbye. I always try and say something like, “You did a great job today boys and girls, you should be very proud of yourself. You were great artists today.” And I say goodbye and do some kind of positive reinforcement at the end... I’ve never really thought of it before in terms of doing a positive reinforcement with them. But I think I just do it because I do want to make sure they all understand that they did do a good job, whether their technical skills were the best or not, they all put effort and time into it and I appreciate them trying. So I always try and do that at the end of my class, unless it’s a really horrible class and I just want to get out of there (said with humour). But most of the time that doesn’t happen. And they usually say, “Thank you”... “Let’s thank the instructor.” So it’s a nice give and take there... I’m telling them that they did a good job and they’re telling me I did a good job. So it makes us, all of us, feel as if we’ve accomplished something. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 7)

Picasso indicated that it is not only the child who looks for confirmation, but the educator also.
As well as caring for her students, Mona allowed us to see the benefits of realizing that her work (one of the first workshops that she taught independently) was appreciated when she received a specially made card of thanks for her work:

It was a shock, it was a big shock. Like, what is this? First I thought it was money. I thought they were giving me money (laughter). . . . She had never had the art gallery come in before, so this was her first experience with them. . . . She gave me [guest educator] a tour around her classroom and showed me all of the work that the children had done, in art. . . . So she was more than thrilled and excited that we wanted to come in. And the kids were just wonderful to work with. And I, 100 percent, fully agree with Picasso that the kids benefit from – and you all do it, whether you admit it or not, I see it – you go up there and you thank the kids, and they’ve done a great job and everything. And I know from being with you and I go round and look and go, “Oh yeah, that looks really good.” They get so proud of that personal one-on-one that you’ve given them, that it doesn’t matter what you say to them afterwards, because they take that as a group thing and the class did good, and you centre them out, “You did a good job. Oh yours looks great, I love that, and oh that’s fabulous.” And you go around to each of them, that just makes their day, and they just love it, you can see it, and they get all proud and, “now you can look at it.” (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 7)

From my own perspective as a researcher and art educator, I have often commended the classroom teachers for their excellent teaching skills. I identify such classes by the ambience of how they behave and respond to my workshops. I most often find that these teachers seldom discipline their students, but rather speak highly of them,
and in front of them, to me as a guest. The children discipline themselves, are treated with respect and reciprocate respect in turn. At the end of the day it is this notion of "care," in the most holistic of senses, which allowed Escher to remark:

My family laughs at me because when I do my Saturday classes, when I come home, sometimes I’ll talk about the kids and I’ll refer to them as “my kids,” because when they’re in my care they’re my kids. That’s how I view them and that’s the kind of air [sic] that I feel for them. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 7)

This example of caring, however, is distinct to the “over care” that is sometimes witnessed. Escher made note of such an example:

And we see that in the kindergarten classes when we get a lot of parents in.

Sometimes they’re very helpful. Sometimes. . . actually I had a mom yesterday helping with her child, and all of a sudden I hear a child go, “Mom, let me do that.” And I went, “Oh, does Mom need her own piece of clay”? (laughter) Mom just pushed it over to the child and smiled at me. She cared for her child and the end result, but too much. She became interfering rather than helping. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 12)

In the children’s museum programmes, interference can become problematic to the point that it destroys not only the flow of the workshop, but the actual learning itself. Daumier was able to provide an example of such adult behaviour that undermines the authority of the Gallery educator:

I think you run into more support in the classroom, I’ve found, than coming here [to the Gallery] . . . . But sometimes you find that the teacher comes by and even contradicts some points like this, and sends the student out for a 5-minute count.
You can’t even go away for a minute to get back to where we were discussing. When you come back the teacher’s already moved, given them her say and puts them back in, because that’s how she would have handled it in the classroom. But when you set up certain parameters here, this is how we have to deal with things here. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 8)

Interference on the part of the classroom teacher may or may not be appropriate. Undermining the authority of the Gallery educator, as in the case above with Daumier, contrasts to an appreciated voice, as relayed in the conversation by Picasso, below. Caring does not mean losing respect for either one’s self as an educator, or for engaged students who are disrupted by the actions of others. Picasso pointed out:

I had an experience at . . . school; and it was a horrible Grade 8 class. . . and I said to the class a couple of times. . . “I can stop, I don’t have to be here.” I really had had it and said, “I’ll leave if you. . . I already know how to do this.” And the teacher actually stepped in and said, “Thank you for saying that. I’ve told them that. . . I need them to know that they can’t act that way.” So she was glad, I think, that I spoke up about how they were behaving. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 8)

Rubens added:

I think the majority of the time you’re going to get teachers who appreciate that because. . . you’re their visitor and their guest, but also, I think a lot of the time they appreciate if you have a command of the classroom. . . . They also often use that opportunity to look and see how their classroom behaves, listening to other instructors’ instructions. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 8)
Bringing all notions of care together sets the stage for art education that not only “clicks” but leaves the child with feelings deep within, that touch the heart and soul. But, are these feelings of care specific to only the female gender or can they extend to male educators as well? Although gender was decentralized as an inquiry of the study (because of the mixed participant genders), this issue was raised and therefore, was addressed. The discussion took a path towards answering Daumier’s question:

Is this a concept that women have taken on, is it that they have the more maternal? I’m asking that fact, I don’t know. . . . I think it has more so to do with class size. The [archaeological] digs sometimes tend to be between a smaller size to getting large ones. Sometimes we just have even a class size, whereas in the museum programmes it’s between 40-45 kids, and growing. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 11)

Picasso was able to relate her experience:

I think when they come up at the end of the class, and on their own they thank you for coming today. . . . I always think that’s special when a child on their own comes up. They can thank you as a group, but if on their own will, walk up to you, someone that they don’t know, and say, “Thank you for teaching us art today,” that’s really special I think. And I feel really special when that happens. I like that. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 10)

However, Daumier also stressed his caring ethics in that, “I also try to make my rounds so that I make sure where at least the groups are going. . . .” (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 10). In recollection of art camps, Daumier was able to relate to caring in a more certain way:
I have done the weekend and summer camps. I find I get more out of it. I guess it’s that repetitiveness; having the same kids, I can get to know what they’re like. That’s for me, I can feel a stronger bond, just because you’re there so much with the kids, you get to know them, you get to know how they work, how they are socially, what they want to talk about, what they want to gab about. You just get a different dynamic with the kids when you’re there for an extended period of time. (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 12)

When asked if he experiences the customary hugs that so many of the female instructors get, he admitted, “Oh, I get them; I get them here too on the way out the door” (gesturing). (Everyone laughed, perhaps in recognition of Daumier as “one of them.”) (discussion 4, Dec. 5, 2003, p. 12). Daumier’s testament indicates a connection greater than the physical brain itself, one that enters what might be identified as the heart and soul of the mind (Bosacki, 2001; Nielson, 2001).

The composite of these four discussions on creativity are the testimonials of six NFAG educators who teach throughout the Niagara Peninsula within Public, Catholic, and French Schools, and from the Niagara Falls Art Gallery and Children’s Museum. Their work finds them in situations where they may receive support from their communities, schools, teachers, parents and students. This collaboration, of society’s whole, contributes to art workshops having the ability to “click.” Through not only formalist instruction, but creative, child-centred education that extends learning to discipline-based, and social and environment domains, education enters the realm of a holistic and transformational experience. However, returning to the philosophy of Rossman & Rallis (2003), instrumental use of knowledge must be followed by its
practice. Information acceptance, symbolic use of that knowledge (Rossman and Rallis, 2003), and reconceptualization in teaching who we are (Drake, 1997) are the interim steps towards emancipation of both educators and their workplace environment (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). To assess this process a follow-up discussion took place on March 25, 2004.

Follow-up Discussion

Participants approached me to share their excitement at having made realizations about themselves as educators. We agreed to conduct a follow-up session to gather these data. The meeting was held 3 months after the initial research. One group discussion was held with 5 participants. The 6th participant relayed his thoughts to me in a separate interview. The same procedures as for the interviews and focus group discussions were observed. The interview and discussion were taped and transcribed. Participants received their transcripts for member check 1 week later and revisions were made by me. The following analysis recalls the words of Rossman and Rallis (2003) who spoke of action research in terms of its instrumental, enlightenment, symbolic, and finally emancipatory use of knowledge. Sharing information is only the first step towards emancipation. Knowledge must be transformed into the utilization domain, before it is beneficial. This process must align with the recipient's educational philosophy.

Letendre spoke first, with much energy, about the realization of her intelligence domain of drama:

I realized as I was doing some work that, my God, I use tons of drama in my performances. Like I'm always dramatizing with kids... when things are close up they're bigger and I stand right on top of them [children], and when things are far
away I move to the other side of the room. Tons and tons of. . . Now I’m noticing them all the time. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 1)

Through the process of poiesis, Letendre had begun to transform the unconscious into conscious realization. This process may or may not continue in a spiraling motion as described by Young (2002), as more of her hidden potential is uncovered.

Mona, a recent member of the educational team, related her enthusiasm for teaching after having taken part in the thesis research:

I find that a lot of what I do, I mimic a lot of what everybody else does too. . . Letendre’s authority, I portray that quite well. I use a lot of drama, especially today, with the little ones, like, “would Little Miss Muffet have been, would she have been happy?” And I give them a big smiley face. “Nooo.” “Or would she have been scared. . . and her eyes pop out and her mouth drop open?” And I make the facial. . . “Yeees,” things like that. I try to be silly with them so if they know I’m having a good time, then they’re going to be more forth-coming. And especially as the kids get older, “Oh I can’t do that, I can’t do that.” I tend to tell them the story of how I was their age, and up until Grade 1 I hated art. . . it’s something you grow into and you find yourself. And once you say that a couple of them go, “Oh, okay, I get it. That makes a little bit of sense. And now look at you, you’re teaching us.” I try to relate to them one on one, rather than stand there and just say, “relate to this.” (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 1)

Mona took Rossman and Rallis’s (2003) suggestion of experimenting with knowledge that is meaningful and tried it in her workshops.
Escher was uncertain as to how her teaching had transformed. Her intuitive understanding of education in its holistic principles had already shown itself in the initial discussions. She simply put it now:

And sometimes I think back to it . . . but I feel I was doing that already and it’s just making myself aware that I am doing it . . . I was doing it already, but I use it even more now because the kids really latch onto that. They really . . . this is something they can relate to already and . . . knowing an adult is relating in that way. “Pretend, let’s pretend.” It makes them feel more comfortable . . . I tend to use things even more like, “imagine,” “pretend” I use that word a lot (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 1).

Escher too was entering into the realm of self-discovery. Lentendre was able to relate to the concept of “imagining” and added:

And I do too, now. I imagine a lot. Like if we’re doing the horizon line. “Stop at the head, imagine the line going through the head.” I’ve done a lot of that since we’ve talked. . . . It’s real interesting the things that I think, I’m sure we all think about, since we’ve talked with you about processes. The things I think about when I’m teaching that come from that discussion that we had with you. I think it’s been really beneficial. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 1)

As a researcher, I as well, was learning through this process. Flannery (2000) had remarked that the growth of identity and self-esteem of the female researcher was an important component in the learning process. My own transcribed words read:

Well, my goal is to find what you said: If they knew a way they [educators] would teach it in teachers’ college. Are we finding that way? Are we putting lots
of ideas together in a holistic way? These [ideas] are from all of our experiences, how it works. We can generate what you [Letendre] and [Picasso] called "the click." Making it click. That's what I'm going to use for my title . . . . So it is. That's in essence what has happened. I didn't realize what I was doing until it happened. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 2)

Daumier, as well, was uncertain as to how the research had changed his teaching. I don't know if it's changed too much of the way that I've been doing things so far. The programme itself allows for a little more free choice on the part of the children. . . . I've thought a little bit more in terms of interacting with the kids. I think I recognize more things. . . . Some of the things I think I was already doing . . . just the realization of it. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 2)

When asked about his use of role-play, an identifiable characteristic of the earlier research, Daumier answered: "I think the size of the exhibits alone allow for that. The kids get engulfed in it. It just seems a natural medium for it . . . . I think we have to work on more exhibits" (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 3). He also expressed a belief in integrated teaching of all subjects, not only from his perspective, but as a mediator, for the many teachers he had spoken with.

Identification of symbols, such as the need to incorporate play, has allowed each educator to make sense of their world and educational role within it. That which had been familiar since childhood, has now begun to be realized in a new light. Participants' beliefs and values have begun to crystallize and narrative has been the outcome of this discovery. Rubens found that formalist and child-centred philosophies had joined into a more discipline-based methodology to enable "a little bit of both" for her. Play, flow and
risk taking hadn’t made too much of an impact, but had made her think about the effectiveness of what she does do in the classroom. In the time frame we have, there wasn’t a lot that she felt we could do in the area of poiesis or discovery. But to come back to the same classroom or child over a period of time, this would be possible. On holistic art education – the notion of mind, soul, heart, and spirit – Rubens said “yes,” it was possible for art educators to touch these deeper dimensions of the child. She hoped that would be the case, and “yes” you could see evidence of this caring reciprocated with children who made an effort to show the educator their appreciation. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 3)

Picasso concluded this research with words that took Rossman and Rallis’s (2003) research into the emancipatory realm.

I definitely think it’s made me think about my role as a teacher going into the classroom and how I can impact the children that I’m with that day . . . . it’s brought out an awareness of that relationship that you can develop with the kids within an hour and a half, or 2 hours. And I think it’s really important to develop that relationship and be aware of it. . . . In that sense we can make a difference in that short time. And I go in every time trying to catch that, it doesn’t always work . . . . it’s that “click.” I try and go in with that click, or looking for it . . . . Sometimes it’s there and it happens and sometimes it doesn’t. But when it does happen I find it’s most fulfilling to me and to the kids. Yeah, it’s really just brought a whole different outlook on what we do, for me. And I’m very thankful for that.
And giving the children some creative freedom. I like being able to say to them, in certain instances, “you can use that colour” . . . A lot of the time they want to try using that colour or they want to add a little feature of their own. And before I was hesitant to do that. I thought we had to be “by the book” and very strict, rote, looking a certain way, which I didn’t necessarily agree with, but I thought that was the best way to do my job . . . but this has just opened up the door for me, to let them have that kind of freedom in their work and I enjoy that. I can’t always let them choose that colour or add a certain something. But if I find that it’s appropriate and that they’re really excited by that I like to say, “sure, give that a try, see what happens. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 2)

It’s brought a different level to my job in terms of satisfaction for myself. Hopefully, in terms of satisfaction for the kids and just a more . . . deeper understanding of that impact that we can have. I really enjoy having those days when things click and the kids respond. That’s really the best part of this job . . . I know if I’m ever not in this job . . . I know I would really miss that part, interaction with the kids and the satisfaction that it gives me that they’ve come away with something . . . but I’ll take it with me. . . . If you want satisfaction you’ll find a way to find it. Maybe for some it’s through the children or for some it’s through the artwork. (follow-up discussion, March 25, 2004, p. 3)

For all these participant educators, the process of collaboration has followed Brooks’s (2000) notions of permeating boundaries, holistic learning, interconnectedness and mutability (change). Further, the discursive process appears to have begun to transform ideas for female and male participants in the study, as indicated by their
changing responses to topics of discussion. The resulting narration of each educator's journey has commenced, and in the process Drake's (1997, p. 39) wisdom of "teach [ing] who we are" has begun to take effect.

**Reflections Along the Way**

Being a researcher can be an emotional roller coaster. To begin, there are "highs" when you feel the energy and flow that your participants bring to the interviews and discussions. My research journal entry for November 12, 2003 on the topic of "intuitive exploration" reads:

> I wanted to end the discussion at the 45-minute point; however, everyone was so engaged that we continued informally without being taped for an extra 10 minutes or so. I heard Daumier comment that the discussions were "very interesting." I feel more relaxed about the discussion process [than the first discussion] and that the participants are feeling the same way.

By contrast, there are the "lows," which my entry for November 25, 2003, on "informal presentation" indicates:

> Our topic was "poiesis." I felt from the onset that there was some strain. I went back to the previous discussion to add the concepts of "imagination" and how that might relate to "play" and to the struggle in education. There were some interesting thoughts that filled out the last discussion.

> On poiesis though, . . . had a lot to say, a lot of it negative, although I agree that it's important to get that other side of perceptions. The others are a little hesitant to start any argument and . . . was a bit distanced. . . . Daumier was not there and I think could have added an important voice. I just felt there
wasn’t a lot of energy in the discussion and people weren’t with me on the notion of poiesis. I would like to reword the term “poesis” as “discovery” for the sake of a more familiar understanding of the concept (see glossary, Appendix A). The next and last group meeting will have to be a positive one that should be scheduled when everyone is energetic. (Research Journal, November 25, 2003)

Interviews allowed me to understand each participant’s perspective concerning the process of creativity in art education. I felt the atmosphere was often relaxed during interviews. I noted in my reflections that participants laughed or smiled as they relayed their thoughts. Sometimes we shared ideas such as in Escher’s interview (November 5, 2003, p. 3.), when we discussed creative practice and the way in which it influenced our teaching. Excerpts from my research journal comments read:

November 17, 2003: The interview went well . . . Letendre has some interesting philosophies about her work that will add a deeper perspective to my research.

November 20, 2003: Picasso said some very flattering and inspiring words at the end, which made me feel that all this research is beneficial, not only for me but for her as well. I’m wondering how this [research] is affecting the others.

December 4, 2003: I enjoyed Mona’s interview immensely. She is always so up-front and open.

The data gathered in this follow-up discussion provided a back-up for the discussions, which became invaluable when participants were either absent or chose not to participate fully in the discussion. Moreover, the data from interviews and focus group discussions over the total research period revealed “the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life” (Vygotsky, 1971, p. 249). Together,
they provided evidence for my belief that the NFAG educators have the knowledge and experience to instill a personalized form of creativity into their workshops.

Summary

In summary, this analysis of the creative process looked back to Dorfman’s (2000) outline of creativity as a four-stage process that seamlessly flows from one into the next. At first there was the gathering of knowledge that accumulates through all phases of learning, and from all sources experienced by the participants. Zemelman et al.’s (2003) best practice checklist allowed a backdrop of methods conducive to effective teaching and learning. Formalist and child-centred methodologies were found to be teaching models most frequently experienced by participants. However, some of the younger participants were able to relate to the combination of both in what might be identified as a discipline-based paradigm. In secondary school, some participants experienced issues-based art education that employed a more holistic vision that incorporated the environments of society and its physical surrounds.

The funneling of this knowledge and experience leads to the intuitive moment of exploration: creation itself. In the NFAG school programme all comes to this point in either the classroom or the Gallery, or its satellite extracurricular venues. Through the avenues of “play,” “flow,” and “risk taking,” some participants and their students were able to experientially realize their creative potential. “Fun,” “imagination,” “pretending,” “choice,” “ownership,” and “role-playing” served as means through which these avenues were opened.

In the aftermath of “creation,” the reflection assumes, first at the informal level, which I visualized as poiesis. Participants preferred the use of “discovery” as a concept
to initiate discussion. Some participants were able to relate to this notion of “awe” and “wonder” that students feel when the moment of realization takes place. Others felt that the limitations of time and unfamiliarity with students in the classroom kept both sides at a distance. The notion of negative energy within a capitalist environment became a stumbling block that I did not perceive to any degree. Arguments for popular media becoming an avenue to draw an audience to art programmes could be seen in a positive light. Media literacy has the potential to become a means to educating children of social issues within a globalized world.

At the fourth stage of creativity, the analysis assumed a deeper level of spirit in which soul and heart are affected. By connecting the child with society and his or her physical environment, participants realized the potential for issues-based art education. However, they pointed out that the holistic nature of such education necessitates a relationship beyond educator and children. The classroom teacher, the child’s family, as well as the community at large, must play an integral part in the educative process.

Caring, from all perspectives, is the fuel for this energy that nurtures the child through his or her elementary school years. Preparing for the more demanding issues-based challenges of secondary education appears to require not only the development of mind, but the spirit in which soul and heart are deeply connected through these creative avenues of art education.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 5 compares data from literature research, outlined in chapter 2, with the primary data sources of interviews and focus group discussions documented and analyzed in chapter 4. The analysis is ordered by the four themes (with subthemes) of creative practice, as outlined by Ponomarev (Dorfman, 2000): gathering knowledge, intuitive exploration, informal presentation and formal presentation. Follow-up discussion data from participants complete the conclusion of this analysis. Implications for research and recommendations follow to conclude chapter 5.

Summary: Comparative Data Analysis

Gathering Knowledge: Towards Motivation

Methodologies. In best practices, Zemelman et al. (2003) listed student-centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective and collaborative as effective means to teaching and learning. Towards exploring these concepts, Piaget and Vygotsky (Sawyer, 2003) provided a key factor in learning by concurring that children are creators of their own knowledge. Two participants provided evidence to attest to this theory when they spoke about the way in which their experiences in early elementary art education had failed to satisfy their pedagogical needs. Each had found alternative ways to learn, in both cases supportive family had provided a means, especially so for one. In her search for happiness in education, Noddings (2003, p. 1) asked, “Why is it that so many bright, creative people have hated school?”

Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) had identified method as one of the most important means toward understanding human psychological activities. Miller and Seller’s (1985) general educational philosophies, together with Gaudelius and Speirs’s
art-specific philosophies provided means towards understanding effective methodologies in teaching. When paired, transmission/formalism allowed for the first paradigm that succinctly defined a theoretical, teacher-dominated classroom.

Transaction/child-centred philosophies outlined a more democratic situation in which the child shapes the learning environment to his or her needs. Transformation/discipline-based towards socio-ecological (issues-based) philosophies took the most effective of both former paradigms to allow the educator and child to meld as one in the sharing of knowledge and experience.

Whereas child-centred art education allowed participants to explore areas of arts and crafts in their primary grades, the missing formalist elements were also identified. One participant spoke about her frustrations concerning the inability to draw realistically. Two issues arise at this juncture, first the need to be taught what the child seeks to learn, and secondly, performing to the expectations of the external world for acceptance. Piaget (Gardner, 1982, p. 8; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) recognized the ability of children to step beyond their internal world at around age 7 and to enter the external world in a process he described as “concrete operational thought.” The second participant provided insight into this dilemma as he spoke about the formalist elements, which he taught himself from comic books and history texts, and from the actual experimentation of the techniques and theories that he encountered. Rubin (1984) had discussed the therapeutic function of art as a means towards building self-confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-growth. The second participant admitted that self-taught formalism allowed him freedom to move at will within the domain of visual art. Another participant provided support for this need to ground the child in formal knowledge. Her primary grade teacher, also an
artist, saw the need to include a formalist element in her teaching. In her art classes children learned to draw faces and to experiment with various media. Her own art education went beyond into discipline-based art education where analytical skills were introduced into art lessons. It is possible to identify the onset of the instrumental phase (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) of action research at this point where knowledge is still potential.

Through either self-taught or teacher directed avenues, skills development in art education appeared to provide the child with the ability to move from what Piaget (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) recognized as symbolic or intuitive thought in pre-school children, into the concrete world at about age 7. Gardner (1999) described this middle childhood phase as the skill-building years where children seek to do things in adult-like ways. Bruner (1997) viewed such skills as tools of the mind. All participants found this formalist, skill-building avenue in the form of discipline-based art education, either during their latter primary years or in secondary school, some less so than others because of visual art strengths in the particular schools they attended. Few, however, came from an era when issues-based art education was being taught. Two educators who are presently continuing their post-secondary education, and a third who has recently graduated from university, realized the importance of issues-based art education and have consciously put this pedagogical practice to work. A fourth participant who has a deep knowledge in the natural science domain, has intuitively initiated her individual ecological methods of education.
Multiple Intelligences. Gardner (1973, 1999, 2004) continues to work in the field of multiple intelligence research uncovering new domains of intelligence. His present work identifies spatial/visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and emotional intelligences. This body of knowledge encompasses both learned (empirical) and innate (tacit) forms. Averill (2000) looked specifically into the field of emotions as they relate to the interpersonal and intrapersonal domains. Discussion with participants in this field of research uncovered a wide array of skills in addition to spatial/visual that each educator possesses as a university or college (or combined) graduate in visual arts. I have added a further area of natural science to this analysis.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence was identified in at least 2 educators, but used only minimally in their workshop instruction. Music was also an area of skill for 1 participant, but again not used to its potential. Interpersonal skills (the ability to understand another’s feelings) were identified in at least 2 participants. As educators, it is reasonable to assume that interpersonal skills are either innate or learned over time and through experience with children. These perceptive abilities become invaluable as they enter into the domain of Noddings’s (1992, 1995, 2003) “caregiving,” to be discussed in the fourth, formal analysis phase of creativity. Emotional intelligence enters both interpersonal and intrapersonal (the ability to understand one’s self) domains of intelligence. Linguistic skills were identified in at least 1 participant; however, this is not to say that other educators do not possess such skills. Depending on particular curriculum areas of interest, I believe each and every participant is capable of entering into this domain. The amount and clarity of data collected from interviews and focus group discussions
suggests each educator has an ability to express him or her-self through language. In speaking with other participants since the period of research, I have learned that the logical-mathematical domain plays an important role in some of their workshops. M.C. Escher’s work is highlighted in the Gallery’s “Math and Art” workshop, which is of especial interest to one participant who was fascinated by mathematical games and puzzles as a child.

The experience of teaching art in the classroom brings to fruition innate and learned intelligences (Gardner, 1999, 2004) and allows for new skills to be developed and put into practice. Drake (1997) advocated that educators practice with authenticity and self-motivation, in congruence with best practices. Some participants were not aware that they could use their innate intelligences (Gardner, 1999, 2004) towards developing creativity in the their workshops. Others did realize that they had more creative potential to offer themselves as educators, and their students. Time, however, was cited as a reason for not exploring creativity to any degree.

**Intuitive Exploration: Experiential and Process Learning**

The second phase of creativity, the actual “creation” of the product, was explored through the duality of formal and child-centred philosophies. In best practices Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) listed student-centred teaching where “students’ interests and concerns are taken into account when planning lessons.” As well, Zemelman et al. included experiential learning “by doing” (p. 1). And again, in an attempt to understand motivation, this analysis returns to Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) and his belief that method is the most important problem towards understanding human psychology. Dewey (1934) professed that product and process were one and the same. The areas of
“play” (Göncü et al., 1999), “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) and “risk taking” (Sergiovanni, 1994) entered into the focus group discussions.

Morman Unsworth (2001) presented the argument that art is not a product arrived at through following direction, copying, or conforming to a given model. However, she opposed her statement with the observation that children who are passing through the concrete phase look critically at their artwork and if it is not up to the achievement level of their other subjects, or up to the adult criteria imposed on them, they stop. One participant disagreed with Morman Unsworth’s first argument, using the example that product made through following direction, copying, and conforming to a given model was very much a part of the NFAG programmes. She believed that ideally, in the larger scheme of art process, self-discovery is desirable. However, given the restraints of an in-school programme that conforms to curriculum guidelines, teacher and parental expectations, and time constraints, this form of exploration is not always possible. But conversely, some participants believed that formal experiences in the classroom could provide the child with skills that lead to confidence and self-esteem. Heidegger (Heidegger & Nietzsche, 1979) discussed technē as the knowledge that is brought forth through guidance.

Duncum’s (1999) formalist argument brought rebuke as well from some participants. He argued that children can learn to make pictures from studying other pictures and not from life. Observation of actual objects, including the self, was deemed to be an extremely important tool for children and often used by them in workshops. However, areas of study such as “ancient civilizations,” where models for pertinent
architecture or ancient artifacts were not at hand, necessitated a more formal, educator
directed approach.

With the two arguments in mind, participants agreed that a combined approach
may allow the child to develop skills in both formal and child-centred areas. By so
doing, both empirical and tacit areas of knowledge are utilized in a holistic, issues-based
methodology, which allows the child to explore independently when desired and to grasp
technical expertise when needed. Dewey (1934, p. 3) professed to the "doings and
sufferings" that are universally recognized as experience. Whether the child copies from
the work of the educator or observes from life, the actual process of doing incurs an
experience through which learning may or may not ensue. Ultimately, however, the child
is the creator of his or her own knowledge.

Play. The notion of play was introduced to the participants via Göncü et al.'s
(1999, p. 154) three levels of consciousness. At first "activity and its motive exist at the
most global level. . . . second level involving actions and goals. . . . The third level is
parallel to goals and actions, which involves conditions and operations. . . automated
actions that no longer require conscious attention." I did not want to impose any
preconceived definition of play on participants, but rather, was interested in their
individual perceptions. "Fun," "imagination," "pretend," "choice," "ownership," and
"role-playing" were words most frequently used by participants in this discussion of play.
Göncü et al. (1999) had described play as imaginative activity that allows children to
appropriate from a given situation, and allows children to rehearse adult roles for their
future.
In focus group discussions, several of the cartoon-based workshops that involved identifying and drawing expressions were used as examples of play. However, formalist methodology involving technique was deemed as an overriding factor in the majority of workshops that negated play to any extent. The words “time limit,” “structure,” “product,” “expectations,” “money,” “lessons,” and “learning” were all used in a participant’s statement. The notion of play, in the formalist setting, was initially looked at negatively on the part of a participant. However, she acknowledged that learning and working could involve the concept of “fun.”

Dialectically, Carpenter (2001, p. 168) noted the importance of play in her statement that it is “the soul of the nation and Canada’s continued well-being.” As well, Carpenter believed that play encompasses a spiritual dimension that brings inner harmony and realizes our dreams. This positive role of play in education was realized by a participant who felt comfortable when she used the word “imagination” and “pretend” in her workshops. For her, the use of these words personalized the workshop and led children into creative thought. Play was also integral to the Children’s Museum component of the Gallery where children have the freedom to explore without the constraints of adult expectations. Play often took the form of imagining the impossible. Here “ownership” and “choice” were deemed important factors.

Play was questioned in terms of its level of consciousness. Is the state of play conscious or unconscious? Göncü et al. (1999) believed activity and its motive exist everywhere. Can motive exist as fun, imagining, choosing, and owning? If interpreted this way, consciousness does enter into actions and goals, what Göncü et al. identified as a conscious level of play. Noddings (2003) identified the merits of play in classrooms
through a variety of games including board games, playing cards, and puzzles. Such tools provide opportunities not only for student interaction, but for developing reading and other learning skills. Play allows teachers to observe their students to identify and assess their intrapersonal and interpersonal development. Art gallery workshops were similarly identified as opportunities for children to “play” and for teachers to observe and assess their students.

Participants agreed that role-playing was a definite function of play, frequently observed, even in the imaginative play of the Children’s Museum. Dressing up to be a princess or dragon may appear innocent enough, but when observed closely, some children take leading roles and delegate others to subservient positions. In goal-oriented workshops such as the archeology programme, role-playing allowed children to become the imaginary “hero” and to enact the dream vision. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) saw role-play as a means toward creating socially functioning individuals. By being able to imagine in any given situation, the child is able to internalize signs in a symbolic way. This behaviour, in turn, leads the child towards self-narration (taken up in the third, informal presentation phase of creativity.

This focus group discussion ended with 2 unanswered questions. What might be perceived as play by 1 child, may be perceived as torture to another. How does the educator structure play in a way enjoyable to all children? Gardner’s (1973, 1999, 2004) multiple intelligence theory remains a possible avenue to explore in this regard.

Secondly, in role-playing situations where authority figures emerge, should the educator intervene to enact diplomacy and equity, or should this role-play be left to instill in
children their social roles in adult life? Here again, there is further opportunity for research.

**Flow.** Csikszentmihalyi’s (1993) research found that play could progress to a level, which he identified as “flow.” Here the activity was seen to take on an automatic state in which there is concentration, absorption and involvement. There was intense energy and the child enjoyed a sense of accomplishment and skill development. Some participants in this study engaged readily in the discussion on flow and were able to personally identify with it. One felt, however, that she had not experienced flow in any workshop. Time restrictions and adherence to routine factors were given as reasons.

However, other educators believed flow was possible for children, and believed they had recognized it in their workshops. Csikszentmihalyi (1993) found that stress, even beyond the classroom environment, can be relieved if flow becomes a regular occurrence. Goleman, Kaufman and Ray (1992) found that the brain uses less energy while in a state of flow. These are positive aspects of flow that are worthy of further investigation.

Participants identified a noteworthy factor involving flow and educators. If they became absorbed in their demonstration artwork to the point of deep involvement, they ran the risk of isolating themselves from the needs of the children whom they were there to serve. However, I posed the question of whether the skilled educator could engage in flow as an integral player in the class. One participant felt that it was possible and described this classroom phenomenon as that “vibe.” Some participants were eager to know how an educator could be taught such a skill, but doubted if there were any set formulae. One participant felt that these skills were not being taught at teachers’ college.
Towards answering these dilemmas, the notion of repetition and reinforcement was offered as a means for children to find a level of skill through which they could gain confidence in themselves. Locke (Miller & Seller, p. 18) spoke of the mind as a tabula rasa, that begins with sensations, which lead to ideas. Ideas become actions, that lead to habits. Habits form a person’s character. Repetition aligns with Göncü et al.’s (1999) third level of consciousness that brings with it, automated actions. I was able to observe this phenomenon at work in a Grade 8 class that engaged almost immediately in the creative aspect of their work, bypassing the formal steps of technical instruction. The end result of this process left me feeling that the workshop had consumed little to no energy on the part of either myself, or the children. This example rekindles the words of Simonton (2000, p. 152) who realized that creativity does not mature until children reach puberty when “new ideas must arise from a large set of well-developed skills and a rich body of domain-relevant knowledge.” Flow appeared to be a goal worthy of pursuit, despite time and other constraining institutional factors.

**Risk Taking.** Of all three sections of intuitive exploration that participants discussed, risk taking was the most productive in terms of energy and reinforcement. I had entered into a territory that Postman (1995) had advised teachers and students to examine in terms of themselves and their authorities. He felt that error is part of learning, and risk taking tantamount to creativity. Morman Unsworth (2001) and Sergiovanni (1994) had both professed to the need for risk taking towards effective learning.

One participant described the way that he lessened the tension in workshops by discussing mistakes as learning opportunities. Building a level of comfort in the classroom by allowing mistakes to occur, and teaching children how to correct or use
mistakes to their advantage, may build rapport between educator and student. Another educator put her students at ease by encouraging them to take the risk to make their work a little different; she added, with humour, that if she had wanted 27 artworks all the same she would have prepared them ahead of time, and gone home.

The reality, however, is that risk taking can be a terrifying experience. Most educators admit that they suffer some degree of anxiety before a workshop that is new to them. However, admitting that error can occur, both to him or herself, and to the children, minimizes the anxiety. By so doing, the educator can build confidence with each new experience. New instructors found the idea of admitting error and taking risks a comforting thought. It helped them to be themselves and to align with the philosophy of Drake (1997), when she advised teaching who you are. Drake also believed in flexibility, often a difficult tenet to practice in a transmission dominated environment. However, when transmission and transactive methods combine to create a transformative setting, the wisdom of Averill (2000) might be realized. Novelty, effectiveness, and authenticity in the teaching environment, allow the individual and group to benefit from teaching and learning.

Informal Presentation: The Process of Creativity Explored

“movement, change, transformation and ‘peaceful islands’ of stability.” Here there is a need to reference Bruner (1997) and his notion of intellectual power that depends upon our capacity to appropriate human culture and history as tools of the mind. Through the process of poiesis, Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) believed the individual or group, makes certain discoveries internally in a “bringing forth” (p. 2) or enlightenment process. This poetic process, in turn, enables the individual or group to narrate their life’s story.

One participant responded to this discussion on poiesis with a narrative that included words such as “fun,” “learning,” “unconscious,” “energy,” “excitement,” and “creativity.” These words begin the third analysis at the point of “play” and into its advanced state of “flow.” She went as far as to say that the work of the NFAG educators was in giving children esoteric, psychological tools, that they might feel good and successful about art and want to take risks, and pursue art further.

However, the same participant was uncertain as to whether her presence could make a lasting impact on children, especially children infrequently encountered in the school programme. For some participants, the unfamiliarity of the term poiesis left them feeling uncomfortable. The word “discovery” was substituted and responses came forward more readily. “Discovery” incorporates both levels of consciousness: the experience itself and the realization of what exists. Piaget (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) identified preschool intuitive or symbolic thought that unfolds into the concrete operational phase at around 7 years of age.

Another participant pointed out that teaching external formalist information ahead of the child’s development (such as body awareness that involves positioning of limbs in relation to the body) may leave no lasting impression at all. However, if taught in an
exploratory fashion, as suggested by Morman Unsworth (2001), can such a workshop open an avenue towards discovery of the self? But, a more important question presents itself for further exploration. Is teaching information of this nature harmful to the child on the threshold of transformation from one developmental phase into the next? How does an instructor cater to a class of 20 or more students at various levels of cognitive development?

This information, when translated symbolically, may well align with Rossman and Rallis's (2003) understanding that symbolism and narration allow humans to make sense of their world. Furthermore, they have the potential to add credence to Fleener's (1997) understanding that the narrative process is a discovery of "truth." This last concept presents the notion of symbolism along with intuition as not a passing phenomenon, but one that has the potential to continue. Poiesis is, thus, a 2-part process that, at first involves the act of "being," which through the creative process of "bringing forth" or discovery, leads to understanding. However, poiesis is not static, but rather repeats itself continually throughout life in what Heidegger (Young, 2002) described as an unfolding spiral of creative development.

A further question arose concerning whether educators were able to achieve the integration of cognition and affect, what (Bogoyavlenskaya (Dorfman, 2000) called a deeper source layer. In group discussion, this concept was seen as the bridging from simply understanding what was being taught to feeling something deeper and more personal, what Bosacki (2001) referred to as spiritual meaningfulness and purpose in this world. Participants agreed that the limiting time factor of the programme negatively affects this goal. However, repetitive visits to schools and extracurricular programmes at
the Gallery (and its satellite facilities) allow instructors to get to know children. The word “nurture” was used in discussion, along with the notion that educators might have the ability to affect a child’s life in a positive way. Guiding a child through a discovery process, not just once, but repetitively over a period of time, may enable the child to go beyond the surface layer into what Bogoyavlenskaya (Dorfman, 2000) termed the deeper source layer.

A secondary discussion ensued concerning Aboriginal students and a parallel journey of discovery. Carr (1997) believed that connectedness between educational systems and communities was essential for marginal voices to be heard. As non-Aboriginal educators, some participants felt uncomfortable with the responsibility of acting as authority figures. Under these circumstances, should this curriculum-based unit be taught superficially (as it is at present by the NFAG) in terms of symbolism and design, or be left entirely to Elders and knowledgeable people from within the culture? For answers I turned to Tuhiwai Smith (1999), who advised that in cross-cultural research (or applied here as art education) self-examinations of tenets such as clarity of spirit, goodness of heart, baggage in tow, and usefulness of yourself as the outsider, should be made. In other words, there is space for collaboration between Eurocentric education and Elders, or knowledgeable members of the cultural group itself. These questions have reciprocal relevance when applied to the diverse multicultural population of the greater Niagara Region.

**Commodity in Poiesis.** An adjunct discussion looked at poiesis through the lens of capitalism. Young (2002) saw the transformation of poiesis from its original Earth and World meaning to one of commodity in which the worker loses his or her creativity to the
end product. Marx (Young, 2002) believed commodification estranges man from his own body, and from external nature and his spiritual essence. Although the NFAG programmes are in essence a “commodity,” they, at the same time, have the potential to enter a deeper level of cognition and affect. The appeal that popular media has to many children (and adults) may offer an avenue into the arts, and once there, arts education. Media literacy can then become a means to educate children using issues-based methods. O’Sullivan (1999, p. 3) professed that the transformative perspective in education connects us to a total ecosystem and planetary consciousness, “that energizes our imagination well beyond a marketplace vision.” This avenue, then, offers a powerful means towards discovery and narration of one’s self and, in turn, the community as a whole. Fleener (1997) saw this process as autopoiesis, brought about by communication between individuals within social organizations.

**Formal Presentation: A Holistic Exploration of Transformative Practices in Education**

The fourth phase of creativity is, in essence, the culmination of all that has taken place at a deeper, analytical level, hence the tightening of Heidegger’s (Young, 2002) spiral of creativity. Dorfman (2000) perceived this stage as the formal and verbal analysis of the process and its resulting product. Taking the “being” into account, Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000) understood education as a holistic and transformational process that involves the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of the self in connection with the world. Hutchison (1998) added a social and ecological dimension to the notion of holism. Noddings’s (1992) notion of “care” and its understanding of modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation led to her (2003) theories of ecstasy in
discovery of the concrete and familiarity of place. Together with Nielson’s (2001) concept of “hands, heart, and head,” these concepts and theories completed the multidimensional analysis of art as it was, and as it might be taught through the NFAG programmes.

Towards understanding the complexity of transformative education, participants described the interdisciplinary capabilities of the in-school program to integrate art into other subjects. In best practices, Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) listed holistic education as “Thematic units of study [which] build greater overall understanding and appreciation.” More than 32,000 students in the Niagara Peninsula were exposed to the NFAG, interdisciplinary, curriculum-based programmes during the 2002-2003 school year. Another participant talked about connections between subject areas and allowing children to integrate personal knowledge, connecting again to Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s (Sawyer, 2003) understanding that children do create their own knowledge. Simonton’s (2000, p. 152) belief that creativity does not mature until children reach puberty when “new ideas must arise from a large set of well-developed skills and a rich body of domain-relevant knowledge,” appears to have need of nurture. Furthermore, unless nurture does take place, children may lose what Piaget (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989) recognized in preschool children as intuitive or symbolic thought and the potential to become what Winner (2000) described as innovators and revolutionizers of a domain.

The ecological factor concerning the place and ambience of learning was raised in focus group discussions. Here the notion of holism was seen as a crucial factor in connecting not only educator and children, but as well, the greater community of guardians, administrative staff of both school and art gallery, and the community at large.
Holism, in this respect, is poignant insofar as Aboriginal and other minority cultures are concerned. Bosacki (1995, p. 20) discussed the need for Aboriginal students to be knowledgeable of their culture towards building a “positive self-concept.” However, some participants expressed their timidity in entering this sensitive area to any degree of depth. Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996) felt that aboriginal peoples might be helped to understand the self through relationships with family, friends, and community, and values that are transmitted through not only family, but institutions such as church and school. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) similarly agreed that with knowledge and ethical scrutiny of self, researchers (who might then become teachers) outside the culture were welcome to enter. As an example, Kompf and Hodson (2002) sought advice from an Elder when designing the Bachelor of Education in Aboriginal Adult Education degree at Brock University. The notion of Medicine Wheel as a social tool in all its cultural and other multi dimensions, including physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental, allowed these ideas to be conceived of with credibility. Kulchyski et al. (1999) saw this powerful, circular symbol as a means to bringing balance to one’s life.

Some participants were forthcoming with examples of social and ecological workshops in which children had been engaged in empirical and tacit capacities. By making sense of Noddings’s (1992, 2003) caring concepts of modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation, and happiness in education, the analysis of participants’ classroom experience could be understood from a social and ecological perspective. Democratic dialogue that allowed for children’s knowledge and opinion led to successful workshops, where students felt ownership and pride in the products they had created. Conversely, classroom teachers who judged children’s artwork purely on their aesthetic

By using a combination of modeling techniques to demonstrate ideas and life drawing observation that allowed for students' own perception, children learned principles of design such as line, shape, colour, value, form, texture, and space. Opportunities for creative completion by the child in what Bruner (Wood, 1989) described as "scaffolding," became means to cognitive development. This process, in turn, linked to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development where the child's potential and actual accomplishment met through the caring capacity of the art educator. Approaching instructors at the conclusion of class to verbally pass on their personal appreciation, confirmed the effectiveness of educators' work. These Art Gallery teachers had, as well, been given drawings and thank you cards, which were made by children. Others in the educational team, male and female, related similar experiences of confirmation (Noddings, 1992). It is important, as well, to understand the notion of caring from a holistic perspective. Participants related the pride that they felt when complimented by teachers for their teaching excellence. I have personally complimented teachers for the wonderful work they have done with students and the response has been positive.

Classroom teachers learn as well from examples created by art instructors. I have had teachers tell me how they did not realize how much went into the creation of a particular image. Some teachers participate with the students, to the delight of children who gather around the teacher to admire the artwork. Zemelman et al. (1998, p. 1) list collaboration as an important aspect of best practices: "In all grade levels, cooperative
social relationships can be a powerful aid to learning” and in this way developing the interpersonal skills that Vygotsky (1971) deemed important towards building the social within us. Noddings (2003) advocated a sense of place and companionship towards happiness in education. Many teachers ask questions with the intent of following through with the particular workshop into other aspects of their classroom instruction and in this way creating a more holistic avenue towards learning. Art Gallery rubrics are an aid in this regard. Experiences that bring all factors of successful teaching together were described by 1 participant as the “click.” This concept was adopted by the group as a symbol of excellence in education.

Physically engaging the mind, emotions and spirit of the child in “process” to end “product,” not only allows the child to discover the self, but places the child within a larger social context. Nielsen (2001) provided a model for imaginative teaching through Steiner’s (Nielson, 2001) philosophy of head, hands, and heart in a holistic concept of teaching. O’Sullivan (1999) saw spirituality as the non-physical dimension of our being that could be reached through the earth’s landscape. Bosacki (2001) spoke as an advocate of spiritual learning that brought meaningfulness and purpose to the self, and to the universe, through the process of storying. Towards understanding these realms, participants provided a holistic package of data that included formalist techniques that encourage skills development. They also disclosed child-centred experiences that allowed for emotional and spiritual response within workshops, towards the poietic/poetic discovery of self. Together, this knowledge and experience combined to form a discipline-based methodology that has the potential to reach beyond into the realm of issues-based art education.
Gablik (1991) spoke with conviction against solitary Cartesian and Kantian traditions in the belief that art, in a postmodern context, should fulfill socio-ecological purposes towards building an ethically conscious community. O’Sullivan (1999) took holism beyond its notions of harmony and integration to a perception where “stress” becomes a necessary element of change. Thus, the role of critical analysis in an issues-based art education philosophy allows for the notion of stress, in both positive and negative capacities, to become a tool towards transformation of society and ecology. In this way, care extends beyond the classroom itself to what Averill (2000) perceived as a global sphere.

Although participants presently do not practice issues-based art education to a large degree, the seeds of this methodology are being sown when social and ecological factors are brought into discussions and consequently translated into art process and product. Plans to include media literacy may further the goal of an issues-based programme. As well, broadening the programme’s outreach to include elementary teachers in basic theory workshops, allows scope for the holistic growth of the NFAG art education programme.

**Follow-up Discussion**

Three and a half months after the initial research, participants came together to relay their feelings concerning the effects of this study. Rossman and Rallis (2003) discussed action research and its progression from instrumental use of knowledge, through the stages of enlightenment, symbolism, and emancipation.

Participants were excited to tell me about their discoveries of self. One participant realized she routinely employed her intelligence in the domain of drama to
motivate children. In the initial research she had told me that there was little opportunity in the school programme for her talent. The process of technē had brought forth poiesis, which had enabled her to reflect upon herself, thus unfolding a narrative that she would add to, even during this short follow-up discussion. The process of imagining was realized as another participant spoke of discovery. For this second participant there was initial hesitance. She felt that she had already been practicing much of what we had discussed. However, she had yet to discover that her natural science and intrapersonal talents are intertwined with imagination and play.

Uncertainty also clouded the male participant’s response. Interaction and recognition of the function of role-play, a symbolic and innate part of his life, his personal art expression, and his teaching, allowed him to feel more confident in his role as an art educator. Others in the education team had similarly found a symbol of their identity. A combination of play and drama was a discovery that one of the team’s new instructors spoke about. With much animation she related her feeling of joy and accomplishment in motivating children through this symbolic avenue. Still another participant felt that reflection on her abilities as an art educator had proved beneficial, but did not feel that the limited time available during school workshops enabled her to become involved to any degree in the discovery process. However, given the same classroom or student over a period of time, she felt she could make a difference. She believed, wholeheartedly, that reaching the mind, soul, heart, and spirit of the child was a goal both worthy and possible of achieving. These participants had provided evidence for Zemelman et al.’s (2003, p. 1) best practices tenet of “expressiveness,” where teaching should allow students to express their thoughts and ideas.
Towards emancipation in art education, another participant believed that reflection upon her abilities and self had provided a freedom that enabled her to educate with confidence. Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) believe time should be “set aside for students to consider what they have learned, how they have learned and how it applies to what they already know.” In turn, the participant was able to pass this emancipation on to her students by allowing them choice when appropriate. The end result was job satisfaction and, she hoped, satisfaction for her students. She aimed for and looked forward to workshops in which she would achieve the “click.”

As a researcher, I too realized the transformation of my own identity and self-esteem in a process that Flannery (2000) had described. My goal was to find that “click” that some educators had alluded to and questioned. Why wasn’t it being taught at teachers’ college if it existed? Could this then be the real purpose of my research? And why not title this research in honour of the participants who provided inspiration and data?

Brooks’s (2000) notions of collaboration summarize the usefulness of this study. For both male and female participants, permeating boundaries, holistic learning, interconnectedness, and mutability are all factors that have been uncovered through the collaborative process of action research. Towards authenticity in best practices, (Zemelman et al., 2003), transformation had begun to occur, enabling the teaching team of the NFAG to follow the wisdom of Drake (1997) in teaching who they are.

Implications for Practice and Research

Six art educators working for the Niagara Falls Art Gallery education programmes became the source of experiential knowledge through the action research of
this study. Their classroom practice, coupled with their education and relevant life experience, provided a rich data source in support of transformative practices in art education. Literature and my research journal reflections provided further insight into this holistic field of knowledge. The research experience itself provided an opportunity for these educators to move forward as enriched and creative practitioners in their field of visual art. As well, availing themselves of the resource of creative educators, the NFAG has the opportunity to meet the art education market with a competitive edge, thus helping to ensure sustainability of the business practice itself.

In conducting this research numerous doors were opened without full disclosure. The closing comments in this section reveal areas worthy of further investigation towards the betterment of educative practices in art education. *Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education*, thus provides implications for practice and for research.

**Practice**

Research in art education indicated a gap exists, in some instances, between transmission/formalist and transaction/child-centred philosophies. An art programme that serves the elementary level of education within the Niagara Peninsula has demands of accountability placed upon it by concerned authorities, including teachers and parents. Because it is not publicly funded, art instruction is paid for either by the school or parents. Product, in the physical sense, is often the determining factor toward repeat business. The consequence of this rationale is predominantly curriculum-based, formalist programming that caters to the physical and even mental aspects of learning, but negates, to a large extent, the emotional and spiritual needs of the child. As a consequence, the
holistic development of the child in art education may or may not be nurtured. Heidegger (Young, 2002) believed that nurturing the love to discover may lead to discovery of self. Noddings (2003, pp. 32, 33) as well, looked to “place” as a means of finding oneself and hence, creativity. O’Sullivan (1999) viewed the earth’s landscape as a means to nourish the human spirit. Winner (2000) believed that creative children often go on to become innovators and revolutionizers of a domain and in so doing, offer great wealth to a community in the most global of senses. Educators who afford children these enriching opportunities also stand to benefit. By searching within and by collaborating with others, educators have the potential to build their own self-esteem and confidence. The result is a team of professional art educators able to serve all levels of their community.

Views from both male and female perspectives, of varying ages and experiences, were needed to bring transmission and transaction philosophies together. Evidence to support transformative/discipline and issues-based programming was gathered towards finding a viable means for making art education “click.” Participants shared a wealth of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1973, 1999, 2004); some had discovered this resource as a motivational tool. The collaborative discussions of this research enabled participants to reach into the reservoirs of their abilities to bring forth innate talents. By so doing, many reported an awareness that carried over into their workshops, building more enthusiasm for their work and enjoyment for their students. Furthermore, additional domains of intelligence could be learned through shared knowledge and experience. In this way, the implications of interdisciplinary education have the potential to reach a broad spectrum of students with long-lasting rewards.
Skills development in formal and child-centred areas allow the child to grasp technical expertise and to explore independently in the creative field. Together, they provide motivation for the child toward becoming the creator of his or her personal knowledge (Dewey, 1934). Zemelman et al. (2003, p. 1) said of experiential learning: “Students learn more by doing than by any other method.” This objective can be met through play, flow, and risk taking. Play allows the child to have fun, to make choices, and to take ownership of creating. This process allows the child to discover his or her spiritual dimension that Carpenter (2001) believed brings inner harmony and realization of dreams. One participant indicated that teaching in this way was very comfortable and brought joy and satisfaction to her work. Play in the form of “imagining” or “pretending” enabled children to internalize signs and symbols, and hence self-narration. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) saw role-play as the means to becoming social human beings. Role-play was an important aspect of a second participant teaching what he felt was motivational to both him and his students. However, educators must be aware of children who may not find enjoyment in the spacial/visual domain of intelligence. An interdisciplinary approach may be a more effective means of reaching a broad spectrum of children.

Continuing play into its most concentrated level can induce a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) and with it the rewards of enjoyment, achievement, and stress relief, for educators and students. Another participant indicated that flow may offer a “vibe” to the classroom that brings positive energy to the learning environment. However, another participant noted that educators must be aware of their students’ needs at all times and not become absorbed in their own personal flow. Flow may involve the
factors of repetition and reinforcement. One participant indicated that formalist
instruction provided tools and confidence to children. When brought to a workshop that
enables creativity, children appeared able to engage in flow more readily than children
without good technical skills (Research Journal, March 8, 2004)

Risk taking and acceptance of error have implications which relieve the educator
and child of anxiety and promote creativity. The second educator spoke of learning
opportunities through risk taking. Another participant indicated that mistakes allow
children’s work to look different, and in so being, allow for creativity. Risk taking can
provide the instructor with an air of confidence and the ability to win children over. New
instructors found it comforting to know more experienced educators made errors. For
them especially, believing they were alone in making errors was a demoralizing thought.
The courage to take risks and to resolve errors is an important aspect of the creative
process that allows individuals to discover new perspectives and have confidence in their
abilities and talents.

The spiraling process of poiesis discussed by Heidegger (Young, 2002), allowed
for discovery and, in turn, narration of the self and group. The first educator discussed
the implications of awe and wonder when children discover such phenomena as light and
shadow. Noddings (2003) spoke of such an experience as a spiritual discovery. The
intuitive or symbolic thought, which Piaget (Gardner, 1982; Tudge & Rogoff, 1989)
recognized in preschool children, takes an external dimension as concrete operational
thought at around age 7. Discoveries that well from personal experience bring children a
sense of amazement and wonder, and offer great motivational tools. For educators in the
art gallery programmes, the follow-up discussion revealed that there was a profound
sense of joy and excitement at the personal discovery of unused abilities. This resource must not go to waste.

When researching multicultural areas, educators indicated a sense of hesitance. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) advised researchers (who may become teachers) to enter into culturally sensitive areas with knowledge and ethical considerations. Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996) felt that schools were a place to learn about the self. However, Elders and knowledgeable people from within the culture must always be sought for guidance.

As an adjunct discussion to poiesis, the capitalist argument was raised by Marx (Young, 2002). He believed commodification estranges man from his body, external nature and spiritual essence, and his human being. One educator believed popular culture may offer means to attracting children and adults to art. Media literacy is a projected possibility for programme extension that will take art education into an issues-based dimension.

Integrated learning, in a more holistic sense, becomes a means to reaching more children in a more profound way. Connecting children not only to the external world, but to themselves, allows for social and ecological dimensions to enter the NFAG programmes. However, holistic connections exist beyond the art educator-student relationship. Classroom teachers, guardians, administrative staff, and the community as a whole become key and supportive players in education. Children stand to benefit by their elders’ knowledge and experience, and they, in turn, might reap the rewards of children who participate in their community. These benefits may be realized more and more as children become adolescents and young adults.
Noddings’s (1992, 2003) notions of care and happiness in education brought further insight to a holistic view of art education. Caring can be seen through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. The educator who cares receives care. These esoteric lessons have implications that extend to all human beings. Teaching relationships through emotional and spiritual avenues (Bosacki, 2001; Noddings, 2003) extended the child’s knowledge of the self further into a global community. These benefits are far-reaching to all forms of life. It is at this point of arts education that the notion of “click” might be realized, when all components come together in holistic unison.

**Research**

Gathering data for this study answered three primary questions:

What is the effect of reflecting upon our creative practice as art educators? What is the effect of discovering new creative practices, on the ideas and practices of art educators? What is the effect of exploring the self within a social and ecological dynamic, and the way in which the process impacts art educators’ workshops? However, in the process of action research, many more questions arose. Further understanding creativity has far-reaching benefits, as discussed in the preceding section on implications for practice. Many of these findings agreed with Zemelman et al.’s (2003) best practices checklist for successful teaching and learning: student centred, experiential, holistic, authentic, expressive, reflective, and collaborative. However, research for this thesis indicated that the provision of “care” (Noddings, 1992, 2003) extends teaching into a new dimension that realizes and attends to the diversity in intelligence domains, culture, and learning abilities of children.
Two participants provided insight into their childhood struggle to move forward in the domain of visual art addressing what Noddings (2003, p. 1) asked of schooling, "Why is it that so many bright, creative people have hated school?" The success of these participants today makes me question motivation itself. If the child is motivated from within, will he or she reach further for knowledge and experience than the child who is motivated by external forces? Do these self-motivated children go on to become innovators and leaders in their field? And further, do they become lifelong learners and creative people?

The notion of holistic education was at the basis of this research and manifested itself even in the initial phases. Coming from an interdisciplinary background in Canadian Studies, I felt an integrated approach to the study was important. Additional investigation might lead researchers to the outcomes of teaching interdisciplinary practices by employing multiple intelligences, and to the questions of whether and how educators and students stand to benefit by engaging in holistic education.

Play was an area of great interest, especially as it moved into the higher areas of concentration identified as flow. Are children who receive regular play in their education motivated and creative? Can achievers in adult life recognize role-play as an important aspect of learning during their childhood? Furthermore, do these people still use imagination in their lives, including their daily work? If stress in children can be relieved by reaching a state of flow, might educators also benefit in the same way? Does admitting error to one’s self and to children reduce anxiety for both educators and children? Can energy reduction be recognized while in a state of flow? What are the
potential benefits of play, flow, and risk taking in terms of the actual art product? These are areas that warrant further research.

As research entered the phase of informal presentation and process in creativity, a much deeper level of consciousness was explored. In the study of poiesis (Heidegger 1977; Young, 2002) are those who are aware of the process of discovery more creative in their approach to teaching, and consequently, are the children they teach more creative in the way in which they explore? When looking at commodity, poiesis entered a further dimension. Can art therapy positively affect children with learning challenges? Does media literacy lead the way to better understanding the world? Can educators who teach with authenticity escape the commodity market? My research opened these doors; however, answers were beyond the scope of this thesis.

In the field of holistic education many avenues were opened. What benefits might be found in educating through issues-based art education? How does the art educator involve the community? When crossing into multicultural education, can issues-based art education serve a culturally diverse community? Can holistic learning be enriched through Medicine Wheel teachings? Entering the field of caring in the classroom, what are the benefits of confirmation for both educators and students? Where do intellectually challenged students fit in this picture? What impact would issues-based art education have on the Niagara Falls Art Gallery in-school programme?

These questions imply that a greater understanding of holistic art education might benefit both educators and students towards a greater understanding of self, and consequently of their communities. Could it be that people who are actively involved in their communities find place and purpose within themselves? This understanding may
foster a nurturing ground of inclusion that could have positive consequences as the child enters the adolescent years. Underpinning all, however, is the notion that creativity allows for an active and innovate mind, capable of adapting and acting ethically and morally in a twenty-first century, global world.

**Recommendations**

This research study set out to learn about the perception of creativity through the collaboration of six NFAG educators. The goal was to find ways that art educators could improve the creative components of their art workshops.

All participants in the study agreed that collaboration was the only feasible way for the Art Gallery programmes to develop. The rich resource of experience, knowledge, and skill that each educator possesses, contributes to the interdisciplinary dimension of the programmes. Educators must endeavour to use this opportunity to upgrade skills on a continual basis, but as well, they stand to grow further if they reflect upon their own multiple intelligences, knowledge, skills, and experience, using each as a rich resource towards motivation of self and students.

Educators have the opportunity to use the tools of play and flow as a means by which they might recreate by imagining and role-playing. Enjoyment, stress relief, and the use of less energy are possible outcomes. Risk taking is an additional tool that educators might employ towards the lessening of anxiety in both themselves and students.

Time constraints in programming are unavoidable; however, educators must take time to complete all workshops holistically. Dewey (1934) wrote that process and product were one and the same. Discovery of self is an important goal for both educator
and students based on knowledge deep within each individual. Giving students the opportunity to interact within the workshop in a social and ecological capacity allows for mental, emotional, and spiritual growth. Caring and nurture are useful tools towards these ends. If Aboriginal and multicultural workshops are to be included in the school programme, consultation with appropriate representatives from the respective culture is advisable. The result of these factors should be a creative product that children have taken time and care to produce.

The physical product should not, however, be the primary goal of art education programmes. Classroom teachers and parents must be educated to realize the value of the art process itself. However, this being said, educators must take care to prepare a well-presented product, which includes issues-based ideologies whenever possible. Privately funded institutions such as the NFAG struggle with such dilemmas that separate transformational practices from those of a transmission-based, commodified product. However, with well-educated and trained staff who are creative in their practice, the duality of process and product can become, as Dewey (1934) said, one and the same. These are the challenges that research into creative practice have disclosed towards programming that might serve the needs of elementary children within Niagara’s schools, and enable art and other educators to be creatively inspired.

Through transformational education, the twenty-first century sees no limits insofar as creativity is concerned. Through visual art (or any means of expression) all disciplines can be creatively interwoven. Educators and students have the opportunity to explore their creative potential through the discovery of innate fields of intelligence, and quite possibly others. As well, they have the opportunity to discover social and
ecological spheres of the world beyond. With nurture, the average students of today have the opportunity to become the innovators and transformers of tomorrow.
References


Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Best Practices

Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2003) created the following checklist of best practices most conducive to successful teaching and learning:

Student centred: students interests and concerns are integral to planning lessons.

Experiential: students learn by doing.

Holistic: thematic units of study promote overall understanding and appreciation.

Authentic: students have the ability to learn on deep levels. Drake, (1997) added that teachers must be true to their own philosophies in teaching.

Expressive: students must be given opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas.

Reflective: time should be set aside for students to consider what they have learned, how they have learned and how it applies to what they already know.

Collaborative: cooperative social relationships can be a powerful aid towards learning.

Cognitive Development: Relationship with Study

Gardner (1982) wrote that cognition in humans involves the mental processes of thinking, problem-solving, and creating. As well, regularity and structure are identifiable characteristics. Metacognition involves developing a plan of action, maintaining/monitoring the plan and evaluating the plan (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003).

Piaget (Gardner, 1982, pp. 8, 9) identified four major stages of development from birth to adolescence. Stage 1, birth to 2 years, relates to “sensorimotor intelligence” in which the child understands his world though his own perceptions and actions. Stage 2,
the pre-schools years, identifies "intuitive or symbolic thought" (in its static versus manipulative form) as it is used through various forms of language and mental images. Stage 3, age seven to adolescence, is the "concrete operational" period in which the child is able to manipulate internal actions or mental operations from the perspective of another person. Stage 4, beginning in early adolescence, the child is able to perform mental action upon both symbols and physical entities. Scientific problem solving is now within the child's capability.

Especially of relevance to creativity in elementary art teaching, Kegan (1994, p 24) developed Piaget's work and looked into the order of mind, which he termed "durable categories." The child of seven or eight years moves from the egocentric world into a more "concrete world that conforms for the first time to the laws of nature, and they are interested in the limits and possibilities within that world. . . . and come to recognize that people have separate minds, separate intentions, and separate vantage points" (p. 20). Gardner (1982, p. 88) viewed this period as one of "literalism." He conceded that this phase represents "the time for mastering rules which "gifted artists have all apparently passed through" (p. 90). Morman Unsworth (2001) supported this theory by noting that children by age eight or nine may view their art critically if it is not up to the adult criteria placed upon them, especially compared to other subjects. Some may stop creating as a result. Vygotsky (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003) saw adolescence as a stage where school progress might decline and established habits weaken. This observation was of particular concern regarding creativity, especially in the area of imagination.
Emotional Intelligence

Research into emotional intelligence was pioneered by Goleman (1995). As an intelligence domain it links to Gardner’s (1973, 1999, 2004) interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence domains to include: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and handling relationships. Teaching relationships through emotional and spiritual avenues (Bosacki, 2001), extended the child’s knowledge of the self further into a global community.

Holistic


Medicine Wheel

Medicine Wheel teachings (known also as The Great Mystery) are based on traditions that have their origins in megalithic physical phenomena found especially throughout the Prairies and Mid-West in North America (similar phenomena can be found throughout the world). As a tool of healing, the concept of the Medicine Wheel is divided into four directions. Each Nation has its own interpretation of the various layers that take into account the four directions of the world’s original cultures (One interpretation views Tibetans as the yellow direction to the East; Hopi, the red direction...
to the South; Kenyans, the black direction to the West; Celts, the white direction to the North): four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter), four elements (air, earth, water, fire), and state of human being (spiritual, emotional, mental, physical). Balance is achieved when all four quadrants are in harmony. Layers are infinite and take a lifetime to begin to discover. See Nabigon and Mawhiney (1996) and published thesis (Hildebrand, 2000). Kulehyski et al. (1999, p. xix) discussed the power of the world always working in circles. "A circle is the symbol of completeness and perfection."

Kindness, honesty, sharing, and strength are further aspects of the Medicine Wheel that are used to guide an individual's behaviour. Kompf and Hodson (2002) interpreted Medicine Wheel philosophy for their Bachelor of Education in Aboriginal Adult Education Degree program as a four-part transition from vision, relationship, knowledge, to action.

**Methodologies in Teaching**

Hutchison (1998, pp. 28-31) from the groundwork of Miller and Seller (1985), outlined three basic methodologies found in North American Schools:

**Transmission**

This technocratic, "Back to Basics" methodology is, in essence, a positivist, logico-scientific method that dates to the mid-eighteenth century. Product is the end result of this teacher-centred philosophy. The foremost aim is to help students develop knowledge, skills, and values that will assist in securing productive jobs in a competitive marketplace. Transmission methods are in conflict with holistic ecological beliefs in that nature is extrinsic to the human and viewed as a resource. In terms of society, successful
individuals hold the power to effect change for the economic well-being of the human species. Such leaders drive technological development.

In education, cognitive dimensions are foremost. Learning is one-way from teacher to student. Memorization, and critical thinking skills are stressed. Curriculums are subject based and allow for little cross-disciplinary integration. There is little or no values education. Standardized, quantitative assessment and product are the signposts of transmission-based education.

Transaction

This philosophy is, in essence, progressive and "child-centred." It aims to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to shape citizens who will participate effectively in a democratic society. Transaction methodology first arose in the early twentieth century in reaction to Dewey's pragmatic philosophy of education. It became popular again in the early 1970s with the rise of humanistic psychology and against the backdrop of Western social revolution. The earliest stages of holistic learning could be seen in whole-language practices. In viewing the natural world, humans are viewed as stewards and are seen as a means to solving ecological problems.

Education is a two-way interaction between student and the curriculum, teacher, and peer group. Problem-solving skills, learning strategies, cooperative learning, and social skills act toward building self-esteem. Although the curriculum is subject based, it allows for interdisciplinary and theme-based subject integration, especially at the elementary level. Children are assessed using anecdotal qualitative observations and combined individual and group evaluations. Process is stressed above product.
Transformation

The goal of transformative philosophy is to view the world from a holistic perspective in developing knowledge, skills, and values needed to further personal growth in a world beyond formal schooling. Transformation also prepares the child to be effective in an increasingly globalized world. Historical roots reach into the nineteenth century to Froebel and from there to Montessori and Steiner. Aboriginal philosophy is, as well, integral and dates to pre-history. Transformative philosophy is organic and views the universe as interconnected parts and systems. In relation to the natural world, humans are one of many parts. Social change must be enacted to improve functioning of the whole system.

In education, transformation aims to balance the cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions and interconnect the whole. There is an emphasis on the spiritual development of the child. The natural world is deemed most important and influential. The curriculum is structured such that learning occurs through a combined process of personal and social development. Critical thinking skills lead to social and attitudinal changes. The curriculum is theme-based and interdisciplinary. Values look to an ethic of caring that extends beyond the classroom to the community and world as a whole. The natural world becomes a part of this environment. Evaluation is less formal but still focuses on anecdotal qualitative observations in the younger grades. Self and group evaluations are used.
Traditions of Art Education

Formalism

Gaudelius and Speirs (2002, p. 6) explained formalism as originating from the aesthetic theory of Immanuel Kant in the eighteenth Century. In essence, Kant based his aesthetic judgement on “how people respond to works of art, how they interpret art, and how they judge it based on nothing but the work itself.” In 1899 Dow (Gaudelius & Speirs) introduced the elements and principles of design that included line, colour, shape/form, texture space, value, and the way in which they are organized (composed) through balance, emphasis, proportion, movement, rhythm, repetition, pattern, contrast, variety, and unity. The elements and principles of design are still the essence of the visual language of art. The teacher is primarily in control of the learning environment.

Child-Centred Approach

Lowenfeld (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002) is synonymous with the child-centred approach in art teaching. The child and his or her interest, abilities, and expressive needs are central. These needs change as the child grows. The child is an individual whose expression reflects his or her development and the environment in which he or she lives. The child controls and manipulates the art materials as an expression of self. This approach is grounded in developmental psychology, which is the basis for the development of the curriculum.

Discipline-Based Art Education

The mid-1980s saw a shift in educational theory and practice. Aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production were the means to developing critical-thinking skills and inquiry processes. DBAE aimed to do more than just produce art; it set out to
connect other subjects in the school curriculum. According to Wilson (Gaudelius & Speirs, 2002, p. 10), DBAE should “transform the way students create and understand art.” Further, DBAE began to look outward beyond the school environment to include socio-environmental concerns as part of the transformational process. Art educators commonly use “issues-based” as a term that denotes combined discipline-based and socio-ecological entities of this paradigm.

**Multiple Intelligences**

Gardner (1973, 1999, 2004) continues to develop his Multiple Intelligences theory. His work has encompassed spacial/visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic and logical-mathematical, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence fields, and emotional intelligences. Gardner’s (1973, 1999) methodology and areas of intelligence were the main topics of discussion in Roper and Davis (2002). Here, implications for applying Gardner’s theory allowed for enriched learning environments.

**Scaffolding**

Bruner (Wood, 1989) recognized scaffolding, the process whereby the educator would begin a task, perhaps even having the child follow in a transmissive manner. The child would eventually complete the task transactively, using his or her own skills or creativity. Bruner saw this method as a means to cognitive development.

**Zone of Proximal Development**

Vygotsky’s (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development was driven by the child’s interaction with the external world. The zone was identified as the connecting point between the child’s knowledge and experience, and someone more knowledgeable and experienced.
DATE: October 8, 2003

FROM: Joe Engemann, Chair
Senate Research Ethics Board (REB)

TO: Alice Schutz, Education
Greta Hildebrand

FILE: 03-039, Hildebrand

TITLE: Perceptions of Creative Practice: Researching Art Education from a Collaborative Perspective

The Brock University Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above research proposal.

DECISION: Accepted as clarified.

This project has been approved for the period of October 8, 2003 to December 08, 2004 subject to full REB ratification at the Research Ethics Board's next scheduled meeting. The approval may be extended upon request. The study may now proceed.

Please note that the Research Ethics Board (REB) requires that you adhere to the protocol as last reviewed and approved by the REB. The Board must approve any modifications before they can be implemented. If you wish to modify your research project, please refer to www.BrockU.CA/researchservices/forms.html to complete the appropriate form REB-03 (2001) Request for Clearance of a Revision or Modification to an Ongoing Application.

Adverse or unexpected events must be reported to the REB as soon as possible with an indication of how these events affect, in the view of the Principal Investigator, the safety of the participants and the continuation of the protocol.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and approvals of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of any research protocols.

The Tri-Council. Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored. A Final Report is required for all projects, with the exception of undergraduate projects, upon completion of the project. Researchers with projects lasting more than one year are required to submit a Continuing Review Report annually. The Office of Research Services will contact you when this form REB-02 (2001) Continuing Review/Final Report is required.

Please quote your REB file number on all future correspondence.
Appendix C

Information Letter to Potential Participants

Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Information

Introduction and Purpose of Research:

The Niagara Falls Art Gallery Education Programme, both in the Gallery and schools of the Niagara Region have grown over the past 11 years. Starting with 1 instructor, the Gallery presently has a team of 7 fully trained educators and 1 to begin training in September, 2003. The total number of children served through the Gallery Programme in 2003 was over 32,000. An anticipated increase of 10,000 students is projected for the current school year. What makes this programming so valuable is its ability to meld with the curriculum, and its diversity and creativity. The latter two of these characteristics come from the varied and vibrant backgrounds of its educators. However, it is my belief that only a portion of this resource is currently being employed. Workshops could be further enhanced, creatively, by a collaborative effort to better understand the nature of education in the 21st Century. Educators stand to benefit by identifying personal strengths and by realizing that these can be used to enhance their workshops. The ultimate goal is to increase creativity in the Art Gallery Programme as a whole. Remaining competitive in Art Education is dependent, I believe, on the growth of the creative component of workshops.

This Fall I plan to begin research into the above thesis. The study is titled Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education, which reflects each person’s individual perception of his or her creative practice and the knowledge that each brings to the education programme through his or her experience.

Research is to be conducted by Greta Hildebrand, educator with the Niagara Falls Art Gallery, as a partial requirement of completion of the Master of Education programme through Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario. The research study has been approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board (REF 03-039), which can be contacted regarding any question dealing with participants’ rights, and by Brian Smyliski, Director of the NFAG and its Board of Governors. The final report will be available through the Brock University library system and a summary will be submitted to the NFAG Board of Governors.

Study Overview:

This study is qualitative in nature, which means that the research will explore individual experiences and themes as opposed to a quantitative study, which is normally based on statistical data collection. Participation in the study is voluntary. All
participants are required to give written consent to participate and may withdraw their consent at any time.

The following method will be used as a means towards this research, keeping in mind that the burden on your time will be kept to a minimum. We will meet for 4 focus group sessions, each of approximately 45 minutes. This time will be incorporated into the regular work-day. In addition, each participant will be interviewed over a 30-minute period during the course of the study at a time convenient to the participant. Participants will be asked to read the first 9 pages of an 18-page article outlining the philosophy of art education during the past century and be encouraged to bring to group discussions 1-2 examples of artworks created in their workshops that exemplify each of the 4 themes of discussion, in turn. Sessions will be audiotaped and photographs taken of the artworks.

Privacy:

Every attempt will be made to ensure that participants’ information is kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be chosen by participants and will be used in place of participants’ names in all written materials. All efforts will be made to reduce the likelihood of participants being identified through focus group, discussion quotations; however, because of the close working relationship between each educator, anonymity cannot be guaranteed. It is requested that participants maintain confidentiality for their colleagues. All data will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. Photographs will be returned after the research is completed in 2004. In a case where data may be applicable to a secondary study, written consent will be required from participants to approve such use. Communication following the fall research will be through individual meetings in person. As well, the identity of the art gallery itself will remain anonymous.

The Final Product:

Upon completion of the final paper, participants will be provided with a copy of an executive summary and have access to the final research paper, which they can choose to download from the internet.

For Further Information Contact:

Principal Researcher  
Greta Hildebrand  
Master of Education Student  
905-937-4329  
hildebrand@sympatico.ca

Faculty Supervisor  
Dr. Alice Schutz  
Faculty of Graduate Studies  
905-688-5550 ext. 3784  
aschutz@dewey.ed.brocku.ca

Ethics Review Board  
Deborah Van Oosten  
Research Ethics Officer  
905-688-5550 ext. 3035  
dvanoost@spartan.ac.brocku.ca
Appendix D

Consent Form

Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Niagara Falls Art Gallery Educator Consent Form

Welcome to the study Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. For those who choose to participate, please accept my sincere appreciation for your willingness to be involved in this valuable thesis research.

This research study has been reviewed by the Brock University Research Ethics Board and has received approval to be conducted, REB File No. 03-039.

Participant Informed Consent:

I have been given and have read the Information Sheet provided to me by the researcher. I understand that the purpose of this research is to explore the creative potential of individual educators in a collaborative setting.

I understand that my participation does not entail any risks or harm to myself and that my participation in this study is voluntary, that I may withdraw from the study at any time, and for any reason.

I understand that I may ask questions of the researcher at any point during the research process, and I understand that there is no obligation to answer any questions that I feel are invasive, offensive or inappropriate. I understand that there will be no payment for my participation.

I understand that this study involves reading 8 pages of a 16-page article on art education practice during the 20th century, and gathering, before each discussion session 1-2 examples of thematic artwork produced in Gallery workshops, which will aid in discussion.

I understand that following each group discussion and my interview, I will be given a transcript copy of the proceedings. I may add or delete information and make changes to that transcript if I do not feel the transcript correctly reflects my viewpoint.

I understand that I may be contacted during the period January 12 to April 5, 2004 and be asked follow-up questions to clarify a point from my group discussion or personal interview. However, if I do not wish to be contacted I simply have to check the box marked “Please do not contact me for questions during the winter.”
I understand that interviews will be tape-recorded and that the audiotapes will be subsequently transcribed by the researcher. Further, I understand that these tapes will be kept strictly confidential and maintained in a safe, secure location at the researcher's home.

I understand that all personal information will be kept strictly confidential and that my identity will be coded, through the use of a pseudonym known only to the researcher. I also understand that my name will not appear on any research data, project report or related document. I realize that, although anonymity will reduce the likelihood of any of my focus group discussion statements being identified, there is no guarantee of absolute anonymity due to the small number of educators involved in the arts education programme and their close working relationship with one another. It is requested, therefore, that each participant maintain confidentiality for each of his or her fellow colleagues.

I understand that only the Principal Researcher, the researcher's Advisor and Thesis Committee will have access to the research data and reports and that all information contained therein will not include my name or any identifying information or characteristics. I understand that the results of this study will be published as a thesis and may be published in academic journals, or presented during a conference or workshop.

I understand that I may request, and obtain a copy of the research results and/or thesis report.

Please retain one copy of this form for further reference and return the completed second copy to Greta Hildebrand, Principal Researcher. If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in the study, you may contact any of the individuals listed below.

As indicated by my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the information provided, that I am participating freely and willingly, and that I am providing my consent.

Participant’s signature: __________________________ Date:

Tick if you do not wish to be contacted for follow-up questions after the fall of 2003  □

Please Print:

First and Last Name

Full Mailing Address

Phone Number
Email Address (if applicable and if you wish to correspond by this method)

The above information explains the parameters of this thesis to the participant.

Researcher’s signature

Principal Researcher
Greta Hildebrand
Master of Education Student
905-937-4329
hildebrand@sympatico.ca

Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Alice Schutz
Faculty of Graduate Studies
905-688-5550 ext. 3941
aschutz@dewey.ed.brocku.ca

Ethics Review Board
Deborah Van Oosten
Research Ethics Officer
905-688-5550 ext. 3035
dvanoost@spartan.ac.brocku.ca
Appendix E

Letter Requesting to Conduct Study
With Approval

Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Letter Requesting Authority to Conduct Study and Reply Letter

Greta Hildebrand
235 Scott Street
St. Catharines, Ontario
L2N-1H6
Phone: 905-892-6974

September 1, 2003

Brian Smylks and the Board of Governors of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery
Niagara Falls Art Gallery and Children’s Museum
8058 Oakwood Drive
Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6S5

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PROJECT

This letter asks permission from the Niagara Falls Art Gallery’s Board of Governors and its Director Brian Smylkski to conduct research with Gallery educators toward increasing the creativity of education workshops. The research study is titled, Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Aim of Study:

My desire is to conduct research into the educative creativity of the teaching team from the NFAG children’s programming, both in the Gallery and schools. What makes this team so interesting is its diversity of backgrounds. I believe this resource is already being used to some extent, but potentially, more could be utilized toward furthering the creativity of our workshops and programmes. My aim is to gain the assistance of at least 5 of the 8 educators, myself not included, to explore this potential. The Board is requested to relay assurance to any employee who declines participation, including any in training, that their position not be jeopardized.

Methodology:

As suggested, encumbering the NFAG educators with more work than they already bear, is not advisable. Therefore, the following is proposed as a means towards this research. Encapsulated, I propose to conduct 4 focus group discussion sessions, each of approximately 45 minutes, and individual interviews, each of about 30 minutes. Focus
group discussions and interviews will be conducted during lunch intervals or at the end of the workday during regular work hours. Participants will be asked to read 9 pages of an 18 page article outlining the philosophy of art education during the 20th century and be encouraged to bring to group discussions 1-2 examples of artworks created by the educator in his or her workshops that exemplify each of the respective 4 themes of discussion. Permission will be asked to audiotape the discussions and to photograph the artworks. Photographs will be returned upon completion of the research. Tapes will be held in security and destroyed after a 5-year period. The following steps outline the research plan in detail.

Step 1. A brief information session (30 minutes) will allow potential participants to understand the nature and purpose of this study. Consent will be asked for at this time. It will be made known that participation is voluntary and any participant may withdraw at any time during the study. Issues of confidentiality of data will be discussed. Upon consent, at this time or during the following week, each participant will be given an outline of the group discussion topics and individual interview questions. Some brief background information on art teaching philosophy will be provided from the introductory chapter of Gaudelius and Speirs (2002), pp. 1-18. Participants will be asked to gather art workshop products produced by themselves (paintings, sculptures etc.) and thoughts that exemplify each of the 4 topics of discussion during the week/s prior to each of the 4 focus group meeting (see step 2).


Step 2. The first of 4 focus group sessions on gathering knowledge will be held to discuss the 4 phases of creativity, (followed by intuitive exploration, informal presentation and formal presentation) based on Dorfman’s (2000) research as it relates to educators and students within the arts programme. This 45-minute session will be audiotaped. The concepts of multiple intelligences and motivation will provide material for discussion. Participants will be encouraged to use their own educative artworks produced in the week/s prior to evoke discussion. Educators’ own artworks will be photographed with their permission.


Step 3. Transcribe audiotape, changing names for anonymity. Participants will be given an opportunity to review and comment on the transcriptions by printed copy 1 week after the group discussion. They will be asked to respond privately prior to or at the following group session (approximately 2 week period).

NB This procedure applies to all transcriptions.

Step 4. Each participant will be interviewed at a time convenient to them (approximately 30 minutes) to gather information on background experience, education and personal worldviews in art education, as they relate to concepts presented by Gaudelius and Speirs (2002). Formalism, child centred, discipline-based learning, leading to issues based art education form the basis of this interview. Interviews will be audiotaped.
Step 5. Transcribe audiotape. Each participant will be given the opportunity to review a hard copy transcription of his or her interview.

Step 6. The second of 4 group sessions focusing on intuitive exploration will take place. Approximate time is 45 minutes. This focus group session will be audiotaped. The notions of creativity and experiential learning, risk taking, play and "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993) will be discussed. Participants will be encouraged to use their own educative artworks produced in the week/s prior to evoke discussion. Artworks will be photographed with permission of individual educators.


Step 7. Transcribe audiotape, changing names for anonymity. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions of the second discussion.

Step 8. The third of 4 group sessions focusing on informal presentation will take place. Approximate time is 45 minutes. This focus group session will be audiotaped. The notion of "poiesis" Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002) as the essence of the process of creativity will be discussed. Participants will be encouraged to use their own educative artworks produced in the week/s prior to evoke discussion. Artworks will be photographed with permission of individual educators.


Step 9. Transcribe audiotape, changing names for anonymity. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions of the third discussion.

Step 10. The fourth of 4 group sessions focusing on formal presentation will take place. Approximate time is 45 minutes. This focus group session will be audiotaped. The notions of holism in the creative experience will be discussed. Holism, in this respect, will include concepts of Aboriginal and minority perspectives, environment and social conscience, caring relationships, and mind, soul, heart and spirit. Participants will be encouraged to use their own educative artworks produced in the week/s prior to evoke discussion. Artworks will be photographed with permission of individual educators.

Step 11. Transcribe audiotape, changing names for anonymity. Participants will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions of the fourth discussion.

Step 12. A thesis report will be prepared from interview and focus group discussion to be submitted to advisor and committee. Participants may request a copy.

Research Ethics:
All research studies will be approved by the Brock University Research Ethics Board before being conducted. A request for such approval will be submitted, if you approve this study. No research will be conducted without REB approval. Before commencement of the study you will be provided with a copy of the REB approval.

Each of the participants from the education team will be provided with information on the study and a consent form before any research is commenced. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Conclusion:

I would appreciate your and the Board’s consideration towards allowing this study to take place during the autumn of 2003. I believe the results of this research may benefit the creative component of the children’s programming. Upon deliberation of this request I would request a letter from you authorizing me to conduct this research study. This letter will be forwarded to my Advisor, Dr. Alice Schutz, and my Advisory Board, Dr. Sandra Bosacki and Dr. Michael Kompf.

Your assistance on this request is appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to ask.

Yours sincerely,

Greta Hildebrand, NFAG Educator
Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Letter of Approval
Appendix F

Interview Questions

Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Background Information Questionnaire – Niagara Falls Art Gallery Educational Programming Participant

Series 1.

a) What formal education do you feel contributes toward your position as art educator?

b) What informal experience do you feel contributes toward your work as an educator?

c) What other work positions have you held prior to your current position that you would care to share with me for this research?

d) How long have you been with the Niagara Falls Art Gallery?

Series 2.

a) What attracts you to this particular work with children?

b) What do you feel is the most important reason for teaching art?

c) Do you feel your own creative practice has a bearing on your work with the Gallery?

d) If so, explain this correlation.

Series 3.

a) Can you recall your own schooling in visual art and how you were taught according to, or differing from, the first 13 pages of the Introduction chapter by Gaudelius and Speirs, (2002, pp 1-18) ?

b) Have your ideas changed as you have experienced the classroom as an educator?

c) What worldviews (according to the article by Gaudelius and Speirs, 2002) do you feel are most relevant to your own teaching philosophy?

d) How would you like to see the Gallery programme changed (if you do) to accommodate a more creative dynamic?
e) Do you think collaboration is a useful tool toward personal development as an educator?
Appendix G

Preliminary Focus Group Discussion Topics and Questions

Master of Education Student: Greta Hildebrand, 9756552
Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Focus Group Discussion Topics and Questions

Session 1:

Introduction to the Research Project

- Focus group discussions are designed to be informal and to allow each participant an opportunity to express his/her thoughts.
- The purpose of this study is, through the collaborative process (working together towards a common goal, which is to further the creativity of the NFAG Educational Programme) to enable each participant to discover his or her potential as creative arts educators. Experience and multi-cultural backgrounds give each of us a unique perspective on visual art.
- Over the four discussion sessions knowledge, intuitive behaviour in the creative process, informal presentation toward an end product and formal presentation of the product will be discussed.
- Each participant is encouraged to bring 1 or 2 works of his/her art produced for art workshops to aid in discussion.

Theme: Knowledge

What lies beneath the creative impulse?

- What methods do you, as individuals, use to disseminate background knowledge to students?

- How do you personally motivate children to work?


- Do you feel it important for children to participate in knowledge sharing process prior to and during an art workshop?

- How do you facilitate this process?

- What benefits do you feel participation might effect? (self-esteem, discipline?)
Session 2:

Theme: Intuitive Behaviour in the Creative Process

What is the intuitive process?

- Can you describe what “intuition” in creativity means to you?
- Is personal experience a factor of importance in your teaching practice?
- Do you feel risk taking is important in the creative process, and if so how do you encourage it?
- How great a factor is play in your teaching practice?
- Do you ever reach the state of “flow” in your workshops?

Session 3:

Theme: Informal Presentation Toward the End Product

I would like to introduce the term “poiesis” used by Heidegger (1977; 1935, cited in Young, 2002, p. 2)

- When you are “doing” art, either for yourself or in an educational role, do you ever think about your “being” as a human? What does this process mean to you?
- Do you feel that teaching children to author their life story can be valuable toward living in a globalized and technological world?

Session 4:

Theme: Formal Presentation

The notion of holism lies behind these discussion questions.

- Do you connect appropriate workshops with environmental or social factors? How do you feel these connections could be important for children?
- How would you describe the concept of “care” in your teaching?
- Can you make any connections to the mind, soul, heart and spirit as factors in learning?
Appendix H

Focus Group Discussion Topics and Questions

Greta Hildebrand, Master of Education study:

Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Session 1

Outline:

Ponomarev (Dorfman, 2000) identified four components to the creative process:

Gathering knowledge ----- intuitive exploration-----informal presentation-----formal presentation

Each of these phases might be identified in the creative teaching process

Gathering knowledge: We gather knowledge in different ways. Traditional approaches by teachers were primarily language based. This single means of communication reached only a portion of the students.

Howard (1973, 2004, 1999) opened the way to nine different intelligences and is still researching more. Many people possess more than 1 of these intelligence domains. Some are innate; however, others can be learned over a period of years. Seven years of concentrated study in 1 area allows for specialized knowledge in that domain.

Language, mathematics, music, spatial/visual, movement/kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, emotional and moral (the latter three will be discussed in session 4). If a diversity of these domains can be employed by teachers, more children will be reached by their teaching.


Methods of teaching over the last 50 years have shifted from

- transmission or formalist-based to
- transaction or child-centred to
- transformational or discipline-based with a recent shift into socio-environmental consciousness.

Miller & Seller (1985), and Gaudelius and Speirs (2002)
Greta Hildebrand, Master of Education study:

Making it "Click": Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Session 2: Consider the following arguments and concepts for our next discussion, tentatively, Thursday, November 13, 3:30 (45 minutes max.). Please bring any relevant artworks produced for classroom workshops to use in discussion.

Outline:

Session 2: Intuitive Behaviour in the Creative Process

Morman Unsworth (2001, p. 6) wrote about formalism: "Art is not a product arrived at through following directions, copying, or conforming to a given model. Art is not just skill. It is the process of thinking, imagining, risking, seeing connections, inventing, expressing in unique visual form." Conversely, Duncum (1999, pp. 35, 36) suggested that the formalist method is plausible, based on rationales presented by Gombrich and Wilson & Wilson. Children can learn to,

...make pictures from studying other pictures, not from life. . . . the emphasis here is on adapting graphic equivalents. . . . The long history of image-making does not need to be denied children on the basis that it may contaminate their creativity. . . .since knowledge is discipline specific, mastery of adult images can only be gained by examining the conventions of adult imagery. It is desirable, then, to introduce children to the illusionistic and compositional 'tricks of the trade' that have been employed by professional artists for centuries.

Consider the following three concepts as part of the intuitive process:

- **Risk taking** - Sergiovanni (1994, p. 41) reminds us that we must seek, "the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives, to be creative and take risks, and to approach problems in an open and systematic manner."
• **Play** - Göncü (1999, p. 154) discusses play as having three levels of consciousness. At first "activity and its motive exist at the most global level. . . . second level involving actions and goals. . . . The third level is parallel to goals and actions. This level involves conditions and operations. . . . automated actions that no longer require conscious attention."

• **Flow** – said to be the most advanced stage of play involving "concentration, absorption, deep involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993, p. 176).

Greta Hildebrand, Master of Education study:

**Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education**

**Outline:**

**Session 3: Informal Presentation: The Process of Creativity**

I would like to introduce you to German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1977) and his notion of *poiesis*. Young's (2002, p. 1) analysis of Heidegger describes *poiesis* as the interplay of processes and concepts rooted in the notion of *physis* in the natural world, of "movement, change, transformation. . . ." The bringing forth of this "Being," through "doing," results in *poiesis*. Ultimately, Heidegger (1977; Young, 2002, p. 2) saw *poiesis* as a means to narrating our life story. Symbolically, he envisioned this "bringing forth" process as the unfolding spiral of creative development. It is a transformative process through which Fleener (1997) saw the ability to discover oneself within the community and hence, a self-directed "truth."

I will provide the discussion group with a selection of workshop examples through which this discussion might ensue. However, I invite you to select any workshop examples that might speak to this notion of *poiesis*. 
Consider the following thoughts:
Is it possible that experiencing poiesis (essentially the “poetry” of life) might have a beneficial role in art education – both for us as educators and for the children that we are educating?

And further:
Young (2002, p. 6) says, “In capitalism, the product of physis [poiesis] is abstracted from its original earth and World and becomes a commodity. . . . a curious mix of use-value and exchange-value, ‘magically’ calculated, reified, and accepted into the realm of Being.” Marx (Young, p. 6) believed that commodification, “estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and spiritual essence, his human being.”
Greta Hildebrand, Master of Education study:

Making it “Click”: Collaborative Perceptions of Creative Practice in Art Education

Outline for Session 4: Formal Presentation – ongoing analysis of the creative process

Our last discussion covered the notion of “discovery,” but centred largely on the “self.” However, many of you have related to me the sense of awe that can be observed when the child realizes, perhaps in a new way, the phenomena of the world around. For instance, how a light source can affect, even create a form in terms of light and shade, or the wonder of creatures in a pond or under the sea. Using the concept of “discovery” in this external sense, I would like to bridge into the final stage of creativity, where ideas are forever transforming as we make new sense of them.

In the following questions, try to think outside the school classroom and to all settings where we educate children in our Art Gallery and Children’s Museum programmes. Feel free to bring any examples of workshop art to aid in our discussion. We will try to set time aside during the late afternoon of December 5.

Hutchinson and Bosacki (2000) looked at education holistically as a transformational process. For them, holism incorporated cognitive, affective (emotional) and spiritual dimensions as a means toward searching for connection between self and world. Hutchison (1998), drawing on Miller & Seller (1985), outlined the principles of holistic philosophy, which emphasized the child’s search for meaningfulness and purpose in the physical and cultural world. This purpose extends beyond the school itself and responds to dramatic global change. Holism’s philosophy sees the universe as composed of interconnected parts and systems. The human is an implicit part of the natural world, inescapably connected to the way in which it works, functions and is destined to be.
Visual art education, in this paradigm, has transformed from a discipline based ideology into one that is environmentally and socially conscious or “issues based.” This process of transformation focuses on personal growth, learning styles, and critical thinking. The whole places an emphasis on the ethic of caring beyond the self.

1) Hutchison (1998) viewed the world through a social, environmental lens. Connecting with the environment allows the child and educator to share histories that help sustain communities.

- Do you personally connect appropriate workshops with environmental or social factors? If so, how do you feel these connections could be important for children?

2) Noddings, (1992, p. 23) outlined the ethics of care as, “modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation.” Modeling is the “showing” rather that the “telling.” Dialogue is open-ended in that neither party knows what the outcome will be. Dialogue can be “playful or serious, logical or imaginative, goal or process oriented” (p. 23). Practice is the “experience” (p. 23), which we are all able to bring to the discussion. Confirmation is the act of “affirming and encouraging the best in others” (p. 25). Bosacki (2001, p. 164) discussed “caring as the ability to step out of one’s own personal perspective and into the other’s.” Care, connection and concern, together with “wonder and mystery in learning,” are key factors in holistic, transformative education.

- While teaching, do you ever find yourself engaged in any of the above tenets of “care”?

3) Nielson’s (2001) reflection on Steiner’s Waldorf schools saw hands, heart and head combine in an imaginative method of teaching.

- Can you make any connections to the mind, soul, heart and spirit as factors in art education?