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Teaching for artistic behavior: A collective case study

Caroline L. Nesmith
James Madison University

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Teaching for Artistic Behavior:
A Collective Case Study
Caroline L. Nesmith

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
In
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

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FACULTY COMMITTEE:
Committee Chair: Karin Tollefson-Hall, Ph.D.
Committee Members/ Readers:
Roger D. Tomhave, Ph.D.
William H. Wightman, Ph.D.
Katherine A. Schwartz, Ph.D.
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my first teacher. Thank you, Mom.
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To the Faculty of the Art Education Program at James Madison University: Dr. Katherine Schwarz, Dr. Karin Tollefson-Hall, Dr. Roger Tomhave, and Dr. William Wightman. Thank you for your steady support, generous encouragement, and thoughtful reflections as this project evolved. The collaborative approach you take in running the Art Education Program is outstanding; it was a pleasure to teach alongside each of you, and I hope to emulate your commitment to excellence in my future classroom. Thank you for feeding the fish, discussing Virginia viticulture, and helping me remember the forgotten Oxford commas.

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Abstract

Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) is a choice-based art education pedagogy gaining attention from art educators interested in orienting their classrooms, teaching practices, and curriculum goals around developing “artistic behaviors” in their students. This thesis documents the history of the TAB organization and philosophies that influence the pedagogy, which include historical definitions of constructivism in education and early theories on child development. Collective case study research methodology was used to investigate four practicing art educators’ adaptations and implementation of TAB strategies to suit the needs of their students, school, and community, with particular attention given to how individual educators’ personal philosophies of education influence their interpretation of TAB pedagogy. Resources from the research findings include recommendations for educators interested in implementing TAB in their classrooms.

Keywords: Teaching for Artistic Behavior, TAB, choice-based art education, constructivism, Studio Habits of Mind, makerspaces, art education, pedagogy, Discipline-Based Art Education
Chapter One: Welcome and Introduction

On a sunny autumn afternoon in 2012, I sat in my art studio/office reading an article on encouraging creative expression in children by Marvin Bartel (Teaching Creativity, updated 2014). In the article, Bartel discussed teacher-caused hindrances to students’ creative expression, and strategies that can be used to alleviate teaching methods he called “creativity killers” (Bartel, updated 2015). While reading this article, I was simultaneously experiencing a paradigm shift. Defined by the University of Southampton’s preparatory research course, a paradigm is a “belief system or theory that guides how we do things” (2014). As I reflected on my program in light of reading Bartel’s article, I realize the art education curriculum I had developed in my five years as an elementary art teacher was more programmatic than I had ever intended. My students enjoyed coming to art, and I enjoyed developing art lessons for them. My efforts to learn how to run an elementary art classroom had caused me to unintentionally prioritize “teacher-solved problems” (Tomhave, personal communication, 2015) instead of offering opportunities for students to skillfully express their unique creative voice. As I sought to bring balance to my art curriculum, I wanted to carefully and methodically determine what would carry over from my original training and successes in the classroom, in reflection of new or new-to-me teaching strategies.

Through several professional development activities, I was introduced to a pedagogical approach within the field of art education called Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB). A choice-based pedagogy with roots in constructivist educational theory and child development (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009), TAB is described as a “grassroots movement developed by and for art teachers,” (Teaching for Artistic
Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB), 2015). According to Douglas & Jaquith (2009), TAB reorients the locus of control in the content, materials, and processes of art-making to the child, regarding each “student as an artist” (p. 9). The samples of artwork and descriptions of classroom activities shared by educators implementing TAB display the qualities of an art program wherein student creativity and personal expression is paramount, aspects of my own program I was looking to strengthen.

This investigation of an emerging pedagogy in my field with the expectation of reimagining my own practice is motivated by what Dweck (2014) calls a growth mindset. Individuals who maintain a growth mindset approach learning with the expectation that they are capable of acquiring the skills needed to gain new knowledge. Differentiating between fixed and growth mindsets, Dweck (2006) posits that a “growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic [traits] are things you can cultivate through your efforts...everyone can change and grow through application and experience” (p. 7). Dweck also notes the importance of assuming a growth mindset when it comes to teachers’ perspectives on teaching: “So, are great teachers born or made? ...It starts with the growth mindset - about yourself, and about children” (p. 195). The motivation to deeply understand TAB comes from a desire to acquire another set of skills I can use in my classroom to foster authentic and engaged student learning.

Research by Christiansen (2007) documents similar curricular transitions made by other art teachers at various stages in their teaching careers. Participants in the study were graduates of a university art education program structured on the tenets of Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) (Clark, Day, Greer, 1987). By Interviewing practicing art teachers, Christiansen sought to learn if and how their personal curriculum changed,
shifted, or departed from their original training, and what new elements were introduced to their curriculum.

The purpose of this study was to carefully document adaptations and applications of choice-based art education (CBAE) pedagogies in art classrooms, like TAB. Using collective case-study methodology, I identified the strategies and habits of two practicing art teachers who integrated student choice into their personal pedagogy. I intended to articulate how they planned for student learning, interacted with students during the art-making process, and documented and assessed the resulting artwork. These case studies were further informed by interviews of each art teacher and their respective administrators. I visited and interviewed two additional art teachers integrating CBAE, observing their classrooms and interactions with students for shorter periods. Findings from the two secondary research sites support my observations from the two primary sites.

**What is amiss?**

As a novice educator, my conception of what it meant for my students to “be creative” and express their “individual creative voice” was expressed through specific, individual lesson plans, rather than being viewed as a foundational concept inherent to my art curriculum. My undergraduate art education program was based on DBAE, a framework designed to “reform [art] education so a more comprehensive arts-integrated curriculum is taught to all students (DBAE, n.d.). Christiansen (2007) notes that current perspectives of DBAE view it as a theoretical approach to developing curriculum, rather than interpreting the framework as a singular approach to teaching the visual arts in schools. Visual culture art education (VCAE) (Gude, 2007; Duncum, 2010) also
influenced my undergraduate art education program. These two frameworks encouraged lesson design that introduced students to traditional disciplines inherent in the arts, interpreted through the lens of the students’ visual culture. My application of these theories in my own practice, however, resulted in a curriculum where student creativity and personal expression were compartmentalized as separate entities, rather than integrated, foundational concepts.

Several “special” projects developed during this time in my teaching career reflected my desire to prioritize student self-expression and individual meaning-making through an examination of the students’ individual experience with visual culture. I mentally categorized these projects as “unique experiences,” and therefore separate from my regular art curriculum, and sought additional funding for them from several educational grant organizations.

One project, called “Persuade-Me Tee,” had third grade students select a habit of behavior, and create a logo and catchphrase to either motivate others to start or maintain a “good habit” and quit or change a “bad habit.” Their resulting designs were printed onto transfer paper and affixed to t-shirts enabling students to spread their persuasive message around their community. As my students developed their ideas for their persuasive t-shirts, they followed Sandell’s (2014) recommendation to analyze an artwork based on Form, Theme, and Context (p. 199). Sandell explains the method as describing the traditional conception of “how the artwork ‘is’” (Form), interpreting “what the artwork is about” (Theme) and understanding “when, where, by/for whom and why the artwork was created” (Context) (p. 199). By integrating these three approaches in this project my students were able to make art using a familiar form (a t-shirt) to address a meaningful
theme (their message about a habit) in the context of their daily lives (wearing their shirt in their community).

Another “special” project I developed for fourth grade students integrated music objectives with visual art objectives. Called “Aleatoric Explorations,” this project introduced students to aleatoric music composition and painting with acrylics. Aleatoric music has been called “chance music” (Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2003), where a performer’s interpretations of the score are just as important as the composer’s notations and intentions. Aleatoric scores use non-traditional notation schema to codify sounds and expressive qualities, with visual strategies determined by the composer. Students began the project in their music classes by exploring instrument families, and composed an aleatoric musical score using shapes and symbols that overlapped a “conductor line.” Students brought their composition to the art classroom, and turned them into acrylic canvas paintings, refining their visual composition and trying various painting techniques. For their concluding activity, students used their painted musical scores in the music classroom to conduct their classmates’ performance, and wrote a statement about their experience that was later displayed with the paintings.
Figure 2. Aleatoric Explorations Samples. These compositions are representative of the various student interpretations for an "Aleatoric Exploration" painting.

While these two projects demonstrated my desire to provide students with open-ended art experiences, by considering these lessons to be supplementary to the art curriculum, I inadvertently kept individual creative expression on the periphery of the curriculum. Ever-evolving, my art curriculum included my own lessons, lessons from the school’s previous art teacher, and those shared with me by other art teachers. My investigation into TAB and its interpretations comes from a desire to learn about another method for teaching the visual arts, and to acquire more techniques for integrating student creative autonomy in my future curriculum. Other art teachers have noted a desire to make similar shifts in their curriculum and are finding support from their peers through Internet chat forums. A vibrant community has developed on these forums, as teachers discuss their experiences implementing TAB with one another

(https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TAB-ChoiceArtEd/info, n.d.;
https://www.facebook.com/groups/178282718971259/, n.d.; and
https://www.facebook.com/groups/136900489846140/members/, n.d.).

Why TAB?

CBAE pedagogies like TAB are currently being implemented in art classrooms around the country, and this teacher-led movement has prompted a rich, informal
dialogue between practitioners. However, there is a limited number of formal research studies on TAB itself; a sample of recent studies addressing CBAE reflect a trend toward action research studies documenting personal applications of choice-based pedagogy (Moczerad, 2015; Bae, 2014; Dahlheimer, 2012). Additional studies list CBAE as an emerging trend influencing current applications of art education (Smith, 2014; Lewis, 2008). There is much research in the field of constructivist theory in practice through the likes of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Victor Lowenfeld, however, formal research-based analysis of choice-based pedagogy in art classrooms prior to implementation has yet to be documented. Additionally, while there is growing interest in CBAE, descriptions of the strategies “in action” are limited to teachers’ descriptions of what’s happening in their own classrooms. Through case-study research documenting practicing educators’ adaptations and applications of choice-based pedagogy in the art classroom, this thesis will provide timely, critical analysis of a currently espoused pedagogy in art education.

**Research Questions**

Experiencing this paradigm shift, of wanting to offer more student creative autonomy but feeling apprehensive of the process, instigated this research project. Expanding my conception of what a comprehensive visual art education experience could be at the elementary level, without letting go of effective management strategies and lesson structure, would require a clear plan of action. To enact meaningful change in my practice, I wanted to learn as much as possible about a new-to-me approach to teaching and learning in the arts.

As previously stated, the CBAE community is a rich, but informal network of
contributors sharing anecdotal findings through various Internet forums. The goal of this thesis is to conduct research-based analyses of interpretations of choice-based teaching strategies, with a focus on TAB. Informed by relevant art education theory and the examination of other teachers’ application of choice-based strategies through case-study methodology, this thesis aims to answer the following:

1. What are the curricular elements informing choice-based pedagogies like TAB?
2. How are art teachers adapting and implementing choice-based pedagogy in their art classrooms?
3. How do these strategies reflect their personal values as an art educator and the values of the community in which they teach?
4. How can I incorporate choice-based teaching strategies into my own curriculum while honoring the effective strategies that already exist in my own teaching? Of the observed strategies, which do I find specifically relevant and applicable to my school and community?

Limitations and Assumptions

Excellence in the planning and implementation of qualitative research studies has garnered respect for this approach for studying human behavior (Bailey, 2007; Horvat, Heron, Agbenyega and Bergey, 2013). As Horvat (2013) explains, “Qualitative research is particularly well suited to the describing and understanding of processes or problems. Once we have this understanding, we can begin to build theories related to the roots of the problem or to devise solutions to the problem” (p.8). As a specific qualitative research methodology, case study research requires attentive field research to gain intimate
knowledge of the culture, practices and habits of a site or individual. It is not meant to be
generalized across the field of study.

By choosing this research methodology, and including rich descriptions of each
research site, readers of this thesis will be invited “into the classroom,” offering them the
opportunity to draw their own conclusions from the findings. Patton offers 16 purposeful
sampling strategies for identify research sites, as careful attention to the selection leads to
cases that will be information rich, (as cited in Bailey, 2007, pp. 64-65). The research
sites for this study were chosen to represent a variety of school settings including urban
and suburban, high English Language Learner (ELL) and low ELL student populations,
elementary and secondary instruction levels, and affluent and low-socio-economic
communities. While these sites have been selected in part due to their proximity to my
home, an attempt has been made to identify sites that reflect the variety of students served
by a public school art room (critical case sampling) and whose art teacher is integrating
student choice in authentic, consistent ways (theory-based sampling). By selecting
research sites with a variety of influencers on school and community culture, implications
for the findings of this thesis will describe a variety of settings where choice-based
pedagogies could be implemented by other art educators.

During my visits to each site, I am assuming the art teacher has included
“traditional” lesson planning strategies in their curriculum (identifying lesson objectives,
selecting relevant vocabulary, assessment strategies, etc.) and that teacher interventions
to prompt and maintain student engagement with the art activities will be required. I am
also assuming that students will individually participate to the fullest extent possible and
enjoy their time in the art classroom.
I designed a detailed data collection instrument (see Figure 23) to track consistent data points during my research visits. I realize that regardless of the scope of the instrument, researcher bias influences the selection of data points to be collected. Teacher and administrator interviews were conducted at each site to further enhance my understanding of each case. Triangulating the data gathered at each site with the site interview responses, resources referenced by each teacher, with comments on the various web forums broadened the scope of the instrument.

**How did the study work?**

Connections with art educators through my professional networks helped me identify teachers implementing choice-based pedagogy in their curriculum. Those teachers and their building administrators were contacted to determine their interest in participating in the study. The project was submitted to my university’s Institutional Review Board for approval of the research protocol. Two schools (art teachers and their administrators) agreed to a long-term study, which included weekly or bi-weekly site visits, lasting two to three hours at a time, over a period of three to four months. These schools are referred to as the “primary research sites.” The art teachers agreed to interviews, and their building administrators also agreed to be interviewed. Teacher responses to the interview questions were transcribed and then coded to determine trends, as well as similarities and differences between the sites. In order to best understand their interpretations of choice-based pedagogies, a data collection instrument (Appendix 1) helped to track similar data points during each visit. Once enough data was collected, meaning that experiences in the classroom begin “repeating” themselves at the primary research sites (Pfeiler-Wunder, 2013, p. 218), emergent coding techniques (Horvat, 2013)
were applied to the data determine trends and divergent themes as demonstrated between sites.

Triangulating the data across a variety of classroom settings helped make similar phenomena observed at the primary sites more predictive in other settings (Yin, 2009). Two additional schools agreed to a short-term study, consisting of an entire day of observation in the classrooms. These schools are referred to as the “secondary research sites.” No identifying information was shared about the individual schools, art educators or administrators to protect participant identity. Student responses were included in this study, as the intention of the project was to examine the art educator’s application and interpretation of the various choice-based strategies.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the following terms will be used throughout as defined:

Case study methodology - research centered on a specific individual, group, or site. In this study, there are four cases, or art classrooms, where teacher implementation of CBAE teaching strategies was observed and pertinent data was collected over a period of time (Horvat, Heron, Agbenyega, and Bergey, 2013, p. 9).

Choice-based art education (CBAE) - educational experiences designed by the teacher where student choice drives the curriculum. TAB founders Douglas and Jaquith (2009) view CBAE as synonymous with TAB (p. 3).

Constructivism - theory of learning, wherein individuals, through social interactions, “construct” meaning of objects, concepts, and events through
Teaching for Artistic Behavior


Creativity - I am adopting May’s definition for creativity, as it is defined in relation to how children acquire it as a thinking process. Creativity is “the ability [for children] to construct something new out of things or ideas that already exist” (May, 2009, p. 5).

Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE) - comprehensive art education strategy, in which teachers include four specific disciplines of visual art in curriculum development: art production, history and culture, criticism, and aesthetic judgment (Arts for All, n.d.).

Pedagogy - the art, science, and profession of teaching; overall guiding philosophy of a particular school or group of educators; procedures that lead to methods, used in a strategy, that become a pedagogy.

Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) - a choice-based teaching pedagogy based on the philosophy that artistic behaviors embodied by artists can be developed in students by providing opportunities to make independent choices in content, materials, and processes of art-making, supported by a trained art educator. (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

The terms art teacher, art educator, teacher, and educator are used interchangeably throughout this document.

Unless explicitly stated, TAB and CBAE are used interchangeably throughout this document.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

A variety of theories have influenced the development of TAB in public school settings. The following review of literature begins with a brief history of TAB’s organizational development and description of the foundational philosophies. I then present the philosophical and theoretical influences informing TAB, making the case that TAB is itself a pedagogy based in constructivist theory. This assertion is supported by a section on the emergence of constructivist theory in art education, followed by a discussion of various perspectives on creativity in art classrooms. Additional educational theories that influence TAB and the educators who self-affiliate with the organization are described, including a short discussion of their theoretical relationship to choice-based art education. While some readers may feel TAB is a complete departure from DBAE, I describe how the stated goals of DBAE have informed the development of TAB, and how training in DBAE has impacted the philosophies of educators who implement choice-based art education in their classrooms. To conclude, a description of current perspectives on curriculum in art education is given, and a discussion of how TAB philosophy aligns with and perhaps ultimately influences current trends in art curriculum and pedagogy is presented.

History of the Organization

As stated on the organization’s website (http://teachingforartisticbehavior.org, 2015), TAB is an approach to art education founded on the idea that by regarding students as artists, teachers offer authentic opportunities for students to choose their own content, materials, and processes in self-directed art-making (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; 1

1 A typical TAB classroom layout, described as a “Full” TAB Setting, will be discussed at length later in
Teaching for Artistic Behavior

Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012). Nearly 40 years ago, art educators in Massachusetts gathered informally to develop this philosophy as a response to “top-down pedagogy [which] seemed at odds with authentic artistic exploration and innovation fueled by the creator’s own passions and curiosities” (Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012, p. 7). With the advent of the Internet, like-minded educators were able to simultaneously share their experiences and find support in an international, digitally-networked learning community. In 2001, TAB became an officially named entity, in efforts to make the pedagogy more easily searchable. In 2007, it was incorporated as a non-profit in Massachusetts so that the leadership could apply for research grants (Douglas, personal communication, November 18, 2015). The TAB organization is supported by several universities and is listed as a teaching resource on the National Art Education Association’s website.

What is TAB?

Douglas and Jaquith (2009) define TAB as “choice-based art education” (p. 3), emphasizing the importance of creating a learning environment where students can explore their individual artistic expression by developing a variety of “artistic behaviors” (p. 3). These behaviors, viewed as habits of working, are grouped into 9 categories (Figure 3). The impact of pedagogical philosophies founded on creative self-expression as the basis of art education can be noted in the recommendation of orienting a classroom around individual student choice. Lowenfeld (1975) advocated for a learning environment where students explore and discover new knowledge independently. By “providing resources, time and space,” Douglas and Jaquith state “art educators can support and encourage students as they develop their own creative process” (p. 2). Teachers implementing this pedagogy are encouraged to determine where their teaching
practices fall on the “choice spectrum” (Figure 4) or on the “continuum of choice-based teaching and learning” (Figure 5) as a means for understanding their interpretations of student-directed learning in the art classroom.

Douglas and Jaquith (2009) describe in detail four interdependent practices that both define TAB’s implementation and suggest its influence within the educational environment. The practices are: personal, pedagogical, classroom, and assessment (p. 9). Suggestions of the pedagogical roles for the teacher, the student, and the classroom are described in detail.

**Personal.** Regarding the students as the artists in the art classroom posits that students will be in full control in choosing the content, media and processes for their artwork. This reorientation of the classroom and curriculum allows students to make their own decisions about what they make, how they make it, and the meaning of their work.

**Pedagogical.** “By teaching for artistic behavior, educators facilitate authentic choices for students and honor their ideas for art-making. This is the core of our pedagogy” (Douglas and Jaquith, 2009, p. 9). The practical means for enacting the pedagogy described in *Engaging Learners Through Artmaking* requires full participation of the art teacher and the students, and thoughtful inclusion of visual references in the classroom. In an article written for *Arts & Activities*, Hathaway (2008) describes 10 strategies for teaching in a choice-based art classroom, making suggestions for actions in the following three realms of teaching and learning.

**Teacher.** Efficient use of class time when the teacher is at the “center” of the activity is emphasized in much of the literature on TAB (Hathaway, 2008; Douglas &
Jaquith, 2012; Bedrick, 2012). Anecdotal discussions on the “challenge” of limiting
direct instruction to 5 minutes are frequently discussed on TAB Internet forums
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/178282718971259/; https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/TAB-ChoiceArtEd/info). By committing to this
time limit, teachers are able to consistently open up the majority of class time to student-
directed art-making.

At various points during the block, the TAB teacher may employ whole group,
small group, and one-on-one instructional strategies that include demonstrations and
modeling, while providing curriculum content and adjusting the content as a result of
observations made during the class period (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). This adjustment of
content is defined by Hathaway (2012) as “emergent curriculum” (p. 87), and is inspired
by or follows the interests of the students. Teachers in student-centered settings
encourage student questions, and guide students through “translating those questions into
insights and understandings” (Gaspardi, 2012, p. 101). The teacher’s role is one of
advisor, catalyst, and guide in the process of making an artwork.

Eisner (2012) writes about the importance of having trained art teachers preparing
and guiding students’ experiences in the art classroom. Their pedagogical training is
specific to the visual arts, a curriculum that supports a vast array of materials, processes,
and traditions of learning in the arts. Art teachers are familiar with highly specialized
tools and materials, and can effectively teach relevant skills to their students. The
aesthetic sensibility developed by art teachers through their own art-making experiences
can offer insight to students at critical points. Eisner also specifically notes that a trained
art teacher is equipped to broaden students’ perspective of artistic expression, helping
students “understand that artists [and students] have something to say,” (p. 51) and that there is a purpose in their artistic experimentations.

Van Manen (1986) discusses the unique relationship teachers have with their students, noting the importance of a teacher’s ability to observe the child’s growth over time, and thoughtfully intervene as students need support. This disposition, maintained by a trained art teacher, offers students expanded understanding of how their work as a student fits into and contributes to a wider cultural and historical scope. The subtleties of teaching the visual arts demands nuanced and sensitive awareness of the learning process; a highly-trained art educator has these skills and the experience to employ them as needed throughout the teaching day. It is also essential that a “reflective practitioner” (Van Manen, 1991, p. 105) be leading an art classroom, in order to make adjustments to classroom and curriculum, accounting for students’ growth over time.

**Student.** When students are regarded as artists, there is an understanding that they have a unique perspective of the world, and an expectation they will intuitively pursue their own ideas for art-making in their visits to the art classroom (Szekely, 1988, 1991). It is important to note Lowenfeld’s influence on this expectation. In the sixth edition of his text, *Creative and Mental Growth* (1975), he recommends teachers focus class objectives on art-making as it “is the best preparation for future creative action” (p. 5). This supports the perspective that having students pursue their individual artistic ideas intensifies their interest, thus prompting higher levels of achievement (Hathaway, 2012). Additionally, students are taught how to care for the classroom space and materials, and assist in the
maintenance of the various studio centers\(^2\) in the classroom.

Therefore, in a choice-based art classroom, it is expected that students will gravitate towards materials and subject matter that are personally relevant (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). In doing so, students have the opportunity to become experts, specializing in materials through perseverance (Hathaway, 2012). Through long-term exploration of materials, students become “peer coaches” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 11) and act as mentors to other students. In this way, students simultaneously act as teacher-learners. This notion of the students learning and sharing information from a variety of sources beyond the teacher is supported by the research of Wilson and Wilson (Freedman, 2003). Dewey recognized the power of social interactions in the [art] classroom, a place where students experience a sense of empowerment by honing their ability to investigate, create, and communicate in the context of peer relationships (Goldblatt, 2006).

**Visuals.** Students and teachers make use of ample visual references in the classroom space. These visuals are employed to reinforce uses of various media after teacher demonstrations, deepen students’ understanding of their art-making in context of art history or contemporary art practices and reinforce procedures in the classroom (Bedrick, 2012; Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Menus, or procedural posters, becomes a “silent lesson plan/teacher” (Hathaway, 2008, p. 37), and are consistently formatted with necessary information about corresponding media so students can access selected materials and resources independently. Menus will be described in detail when a “full” TAB classroom setting is described.

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\(^2\) Studio centers are modeled after learning centers in grade level classrooms, and consist of specific media grouped together, with a visual “menu” of suggestions for using the media and directions of clean up. Studio centers will be described in detail later in this chapter.
Classroom. As mentioned above, in a TAB classroom, the concept of classroom flow regarding use of time, physical space, and management of materials is given careful consideration (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Teacher-led activities are shortened in order to give students ample time to create and share their discoveries at the end of class. The arrangement of the classroom has a significant impact on the students’ ability to work independently or in small collaborative groups, as does the availability of art media in the studio centers. Bedrick (2012) makes practical suggestions for thoughtfully arranging the art classroom and developing studio centers that allow students to work independently. Studio centers are organized so that the students can access needed media and help maintain the space easily. Papanicolaou (2012) posits that careful classroom and studio center set-up allows students to essentially differentiate learning tasks for themselves as they select materials and content that is personally appropriate and relevant. This topic will be discussed in more detail in the following sections of the text.

Assessment. Tracking student growth in a TAB classroom takes a variety of forms, involving participation from the teacher and the students (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Rubrics allow teachers to assess artistic behaviors on individual projects, while student portfolios demonstrate growth over time. Assessment tools such as rubrics, portfolio reviews, student-produced art exhibitions, and reflection journals support Lazear’s (1992) suggestions for holistic, authentic assessment based on Gardner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences. Using a variety of assessment strategies provides students multiple avenues for sharing what they know and how they acquired that knowledge. Studio Thinking II (Hetland, Winner, Veenema & Sheridan, 2013) is frequently referenced as a resource for helping students reflect at every point in the art-making process. Students are
encouraged to self-select artwork for exhibition and contribute to the exhibition layout (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). By including students in the exhibition process, Burton (2004) argues art teachers are able to shift students’ perspective from that of “introspective creator to outwardly-oriented viewer” (p. 42), broadening their understanding of art, its role in society, and their contribution as artists.

In summary, I describe the four practices of TAB pedagogy as they relate to one another. Students’ personal expression of their own artistic ideas are fostered through a variety of pedagogical tools employed by the art teacher, adapted to the learning needs of individual students. The art teacher also carefully arranges classroom time, space, and materials to promote individual student expression and maintains a variety of assessment tools to document student progress and inform future instruction. Proponents of choice-based pedagogies believe that development of these four practices fosters growth in students’ artistic behaviors.

**What is Learned in a TAB Classroom?**

Walk into a TAB classroom and you’ll see students independently and/or collaboratively working in a variety of media, often at different points in the art-making process. How do teachers ensure that actual learning is happening in a setting where student decisions guides content, materials and process? Referencing Perkins’ description of what happens in a learning experience, Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2012) say, “Teachers decide what students should learn and how to teach them” (p. 141). This section of the literature review discusses how teachers use TAB pedagogy to help students determine the content, media techniques, and methods to make art (the what described above by Perkins) through carefully organized studio centers, art-making
procedures, and reflection strategies (the *how* described above by Perkins).

**Artistic behaviors.** Douglas and Jaquith (2009) write that “that the main focus of TAB is to facilitate and encourage the generation of art ideas” (p. 5), and to create an environment where art-making will thrive by reflecting on the artistic processes modeled by working artists (p. 3). These processes become the focus of activity in the TAB classroom, ultimately guiding student art-making. Careful analysis of the listed artistic behaviors (recreated in Figure 24) reveals that students will engage with all aspects of the art-making process in a TAB classroom, effectively creating conditions recommended for developing creativity in children (May, 2009; Heid, 2008). In Figure 25, I have reorganized Douglas and Jaquith’s chart of artistic behaviors (p. 4), grouping them together based on where they typically fall in the art-making process. Several of these artistic behaviors are exhibited at more than one point in the artistic process, and therefore are listed under multiple headings. Its important to note that at all points in the process, Douglas and Jaquith (2009) emphasize the importance of the art teacher and the students working together to generate ideas, provide feedback, and make recommendations throughout the art-making process. The artistic behaviors are italicized within each description that follows.

**Planning for art-making.** As students are learning to use the classroom and developing their ideas for art-making, the art teacher introduces classroom routines and procedures students will follow. As students grow more confident with the routines, their abilities to develop personally relevant, interesting, and challenging art projects will increase. During this stage in the process, the teacher discusses production ideas with students and makes recommendations of materials, techniques, and procedures. The
behaviors most frequently exhibited during this beginning stage in the artistic process are: *Problem Finding, Problem Solving, Experimenting, and Connecting.*

**Production.** As students are preparing to make art, the art teacher demonstrates a variety of materials and processes available for students to use. These demonstrations can include discussions of artists who use similar methods and how these methods have been used throughout history, explore potential challenges that may arise during production, and suggest tips for success with the materials demonstrated. During this part of the art-making process, the art teacher becomes a coach, guide, cheerleader, and mentor as students work to bring their ideas to life. When needed, the art teacher will step in, recommending a student restart or refine their original plan, prompt elaboration on a particular element, or spend some time reflecting on their current work. During the production stage of the art-making process, students will most frequently demonstrate *Problem solving, Experimenting, Working Habits, Representing, and Constructing Knowledge.*

**Reflection and analysis.** No matter their age, all students benefit from reflection. Whether it is a guided self-assessment, an informal discussion, or participating in a group critique, reflection and analysis help students realize the impact of their art-making decisions on their final product. In *Arts and the Creation of the Mind*, Eisner (2002) states that these assessments can be used by art educators to inform directions of future learning. Through reflection, students determine how their final artwork shifted and changed from their original plan, potentially giving them a starting place for their next piece. This stage in the process provides opportunities for students to view their work in light of the work of other artists, both peer and professional. Additionally, as Lankford
(1984) notes, by participating in art criticism activities involving peer and professional artwork, students can develop a nuanced appreciation of, and value for art. Strategies for engaging students of all ages in critical discussions of artwork (such as Sandell’s (2014) “Form+Theme+Context” tool) enhance their ability to understand and decode visual imagery, a necessary skill in the highly visual environment of 21st century global culture. Students will be exposed to the behaviors of Reflecting, Constructing Knowledge, and Connecting at this point in the art-making process.

**Determining future work.** How do artists decide when they’re finished with an artwork and move to their next idea? As students complete artwork, discover new materials or processes, or find new inspiration, they are forming their aesthetic sensibility. As they discover procedures, materials, styles, and subject matter that appeal to them, the art teacher can help them set goals for developing skills to better communicate their ideas. Frequently, as students are concluding one idea, they are simultaneously planning and developing their next project. This stage in the artistic process restarts the cycle. The behaviors most frequently displayed at this transitional stage are Connecting, Valuing, and Constructing Knowledge.

**“Full” TAB Setting**

Two of the four educators participating in this project described their pedagogy as “full TAB,” with the others being more comfortable using the term “partial TAB” or “partial choice” to describe their pedagogy. For the purposes of this thesis, it is helpful to understand how a “full TAB” classroom would operate. I referenced the texts *Engaging Learnings through Artmaking: Choice-Based Art Education* by Douglas and Jaquith (2009) and *Choice without Chaos* by Bedrick (2012) to describe a full TAB setting.
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These descriptions assume the art educator has a permanent classroom with sinks, a space for storage, and a kiln closet.

**Classroom layout.** Studio centers form the basis of the TAB classroom layout. Typically, studio centers are dispersed around the classroom, with those centers needing access to water placed close to the sinks. Educators are encouraged to think like “architects, [anticipating] issues of space, traffic flow, proximity to resources and arrangements of supplies, and lighting” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 17).

**Studio Centers.** Organized by media type, studio centers could be a designated area of the classroom, a curated box of materials, small moveable carts, or sets of shelves containing related supplies. The form a studio center takes is secondary to the way it is organized to allow students to access, use, and return materials as independently as possible. Douglas and Jaquith (2009) state that predictability of materials and organization of the studio center, with consistent expectations for maintenance and care of the materials, fosters independent use of the studio centers without requiring the teacher to follow along behind to constantly clean up. This expectation exemplifies the Studio Habit of Mind *Develop Craft* (Hetland, Winner, Veenema and Sheridan, 2013).

Prior to students using the studio centers, Douglas and Jaquith (2009) recommend teachers “open” the studio center with a “five-minute demo” (p. 25). This time is used to explain the materials and tools students will find in the center along with suggestions for

Figure 3. Mariposa Elementary School's drawing center. A table designated for drawing is behind this shelf, filled with drawing media and resources.
use, and clean up procedures. At the educator’s discretion, discussions of artists or artworks relevant to that media can be included in the demonstrations, along with suggestions for content themes. Bedrick (2012) encourages educators to carefully observe student use of a studio center to refine menu wording and material access as necessary. Several elements are always present at the studio center, regardless of the form it takes: menus, materials, tools and resources (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, pp. 17-18).

Figures 7 and 8 depict studio centers from two participating research sites.

**Menus.** Similar formatting of menus across the art classroom assist in building predictability, and Douglas and Jaquith (2009) recommend that small images illustrate the menu for very young students. A title for the studio center is prominently displayed on the menu, such as “Drawing,” “Painting,” or “Sculpture.” A list of materials students need to prepare for themselves is included on the menu along with simple directions for returning materials to their proper places with accompanying images. Supplemental visuals with suggested methods of how other artists (both peer and professional) have used those materials previously can be posted in the same area. Figures 5 and 6 depict TAB menus from two participating research sites.
Logical organization of the materials found in studio centers allows students to easily maintain the center, and helps art teachers quickly identify what needs replenishment. Storage solutions such as labeled drawers, baskets, and boxes foster independent student access, and resources like books and technique samples are kept at the studio center. Both permanent and consumable materials relevant to that media are made available.

Douglas and Jaquith (2009) recommend starting with basic materials, and as students become more comfortable and confident with a center throughout the year, incorporating specialized materials into the center. If interest has waned in a particular studio center, they suggest that a simple addition of a new material or process to the area will remind students of potential possibilities. Anytime new materials or processes are added, teachers should use the five-minute demonstration time to inform students of how those materials work.

**Resources.** Relevant supports like step-by-step process demonstrations, well-
known artworks in that studio’s media and student-generated ideas for using the studio are also displayed. These resources can be referenced by the students and art teacher during class time when interventions are needed to clarify techniques, generate ideas or interpret how others have used materials to communicate meaning. Figures 7 & 11 show supplementary resources available to students at Nandina Elementary School.

**Commonly provided studio centers.** Many TAB classrooms will have a drawing center, collage center, painting center, and sculpture center available to students throughout the year. Materials provided within those centers will change, but having these centers consistently available allows students to plan ahead for future art-making prior to arriving to the art classroom. As students demonstrate the ability to responsibly use these basic centers, the teacher announces the opening of a new center or specialized materials added to existing centers. Douglas and Jaquith (2009) recommend that if reminders for studio center maintenance need to be made for students or entire classes that those studios be “closed” and unavailable for student use until appropriate maintenance habits can be reestablished.

**Adaptations for “challenging learning environments.”** Adaptations quickly develop in TAB pedagogy as art teachers negotiate classrooms lacking basic necessities, or needs for additional teaching supports arise. TAB founders Douglas and Jaquith acknowledge that in some schools, art classroom space is sub-par. They encourage
educators to establish logical limits to support studio centers in such environments. For example, if the classroom is very small, have a size limit for any sculptural works or allow only impermanent pieces to be built.

**Structuring class time.** TAB philosophy regards students as artists and understands they have many ideas for what to create. By entrusting students with a majority of their time in the art classroom for self-directed art-making, Jaquith (2012) points out that class time itself becomes a choice for students as they learn how to pace their art-making. She recommends educators keep in mind a percentage scale of how time is allotted in the art classroom to promote deep exploration and interaction with the studio centers:

- 10-15% devoted to whole-group instruction
- 70-80% devoted to self-directed studio work
- 10-15% remaining time devoted to clean-up, sharing and self-assessment.

(p. 19)

**Foundational Philosophies Informing TAB**

TAB literature frequently references constructivist influences in classroom layout, student use of the space, and the reorientation of teacher and student roles. Constructivism is a philosophy of how people learn (Wiggins, 2015a), wherein individuals, through social interactions, “construct” meaning of objects, concepts and events through direct, hands-on experiences (Lansing, 1966 & Prater, 2001). Based on the cognitive development research of child development physiologists Piaget and Vygotsky; theories of constructivism were preceded by the early educational reforms of Froebel and Cane (Efland, 1990). Additional influences on constructivist theory come
from Dewey’s (1934) theory that learning through art is a formative, human experience. Bruner’s research of what captures a student’s interest and drives their motivation also influences constructivism in educational settings (Walker, 2014).

**Constructivism.** According to Piaget, children create meaning in their world by engaging in symbolic play (Schwartz, 1973). As children make connections between their perceptions and their environment, these experiences prompt cognitive growth. Piaget further states that children progress through three stages of cognitive development: the sensori-motor period, the concrete operations period, and a period of formal operations (Lansing, 1966). Throughout their cognitive development, children continually negotiate their experience of objects with their understanding of how those objects can be used. During these negotiations, children develop structures for relating those real objects to their mental images. Piaget called these structures “schema,” which children use in their artwork to represent their understanding of their world (Hardiman & Zernich, 1980, p. 14). Piaget’s research primarily focused on how individuals construct meaning over time, a phenomenon Maxine Greene called “becoming what we are not yet…” (The Maxine Greene Center for Aesthetic Education and Social Imagination, 2014).

Vygotsky and Bruner expanded upon Piaget’s theories by reminding us that learning does not happen in a vacuum. As children build upon their sensory experiences and create new knowledge, they do so in relation to those around them. Engaged in the learning process, children constantly “test” what they have learned against their peers, building awareness of differing perspectives (Prater, 2001). Vygotsky is careful to note that the socio-cultural systems of a child’s community, physical learning environment, and previous knowledge impact their construction of new knowledge. Bruner developed a
complementary theory of the social dimension of learning, wherein novice learners “rely on the expertise and support of more experienced others,” a term he calls “scaffolding” (Wiggins, 2015b). Founded on the idea that all people can learn, Bruner identified three intrinsic motivators that thoughtful teachers design instruction around: curiosity, a desire to succeed, and learning in a community (Walker, 2014). TAB pedagogy encourages this social construction of learning, allowing students to share discoveries and new knowledge with their peers and teacher, and encouraging collaborative art-making (Hathaway, 2012).

Piaget’s stages of cognitive development share similarities to Dewey’s (1934) philosophy of art functioning as a learning experience. As children participate in the artistic process, imbuing images with meaning as their developmental age allows, they have what Dewey referred to as a “transformational experience” (as cited in Goldblatt, 2006, p.18). Dewey advocated for the arts in public schools, as he believed these transformational events could be fostered in art classrooms, an environment he believed to nurture thoughtful reflection (Goldblatt, 2006). Dewey and Piaget share the idea that when children are invited to be curious learners, and are given opportunities to problem-solve, they experience a shift in their understanding of the world. These types of learning experiences are supported in constructivist settings (Milbrandt, Felts, Richards & Abghari, 2004).

**Constructivism in art education.** A criticism of the DBAE framework for art curriculum (and a related concern to this thesis topic) was that a focus on Western European “masterworks,” and directives by misinformed art teachers to have students engage in copy work without discussion of artist intent, sterilized and depersonalized art
learning. Additionally, art teachers feeling pressure in classroom environments where time limits, budgetary constraints, and teacher agency are compromised meant that disciplines other than art production were rarely included in art curriculum. Unfortunately, this ultimately led to art curricula where teacher-solved problems became the norm, with limited opportunity for students to engage in personal expression. Hathaway (2009) reflected that in these settings, “it is routinely the teacher, not the student, who maintains creative control of the project, manages the materials, works out problems, assigns subject matter, and dictates technique toward a predetermined result” (p. 84).

In a TAB classroom, students are responsible for presenting and solving problems of personal interest, and are introduced to the skills and strategies they need to produce a creative solution to those problems. As the thoughtful art teacher observes the creative work of their students, s/he introduces relevant techniques, shares similar themes from art history, and provides opportunities for students to self-reflect on their artwork: this cycle repeats itself, becoming “emergent curriculum” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009 & Hathaway, 2012). The responsive nature of this pedagogy allows teachers to tailor their curriculum based on the interests and needs of their students, engaging intrinsic motivations identified by Bruner (Walker, 2014). Giving children the chance to generate and respond to their own ideas aligns with Piaget’s philosophy of children making sense of their world through symbolic play (Schwartz, 1973).

In honoring the TAB foundational philosophy of the student as artist, Wiggins (2015a) states that in a constructivist arts space, children will “feel empowered enough in the [art-making] to be willing and able to bring their own ideas to the process” (p. 116). This concept is supported by the reflections of art educator Maggie Ann Leysath (2015),
who writes about reorienting her philosophy of learning and art-making around empowering her art students to be independently motivated to bring their own ideas to life. As Thompson (2015) states, the foundation of constructivism is grounded in the idea that “children are capable of constructing meaning, understanding without being told, and can master content and recognize connections without overt adult guidance” (p. 125).

Educational Philosophies Influencing TAB Educators

While attending the 2015 TAB Institute in Boston, I was made aware of several alternative education models that influenced TAB pedagogy, as well as a framework TAB educators reference as a tool for understanding what students are truly learning in an arts classroom. These models and framework are frequently referenced in the online forums where TAB-affiliated art teachers share ideas and solutions for problems that arise in the art classroom, in both public and private school settings, and were noted by several teachers participating in this research study.

Waldorf model. This back-to-basics model of education was developed by Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner for the children of factory workers in Stuttgart, Germany after World War I (Oppenheimer, 1999). Influenced by the cognitive development theories of Piaget, Steiner believed that children learn through sensory experiences. Lesson activities are designed to integrate “head, heart, and hands,” an idea adopted by an early advocate for TAB, John Crowe (TAB, 2015). Waldorf classrooms and learning materials are carefully organized by the teacher to encourage students’ imagination, and hands-on learning in the arts is central to the curriculum. For example, students develop journals that function as hybrid visual journals and self-generated textbooks.
Both the Waldorf Model and TAB affiliated educators emphasize the importance of open-ended play to nurture creative thought processes and self-motivation (Petrash, 2002, Szkeley, 2012). There is a shared influence of constructivist theories on how children acquire and organize knowledge (Oppenheimer, 1999, Douglas & Jaquith, 2009), as well as a focus on promoting collaboration (Petrash, 2002; Hathaway, 2012). Art is used both as a teaching tool and a means for expressing knowledge across a variety of subjects in Waldorf classrooms (Petrash, 2002).

**Montessori model.** Developed by Dr. Maria Montessori through her work with children in 19th and early 20th century Italian asylums and slum neighborhoods, this approach to education held to the (at the time) radical notion that all children are natural, capable learners (Gitter, 1973). Montessori advocated for a carefully designed learning environment, where the children would be taught to help care for the space. This would develop a non-competitive, collaborative atmosphere allowing children to function in the role of teacher-learner. Sharing Piaget’s theory that children learn and construct meaning through sensory experiences, Montessori designed educational tools and curricula around “sensory education,” which would “help the child know what he sees” (Gitter, 1973, p. 29). A central tenet in Montessori classrooms is the notion of “process over product,” stemming from her belief that a desire to draw develops in the child naturally as a means for expressing knowledge.

A thoughtfully designed classroom space is a shared concept in TAB classrooms and Montessori settings, wherein the teacher intentionally selects materials that foster student cognitive and creative development (Gitter, 1973; Longmore, 2012). Another shared characteristic of TAB and Montessori classrooms is the relative freedom of
movement students enjoy (Gitter, 1973; Sesto, 2012). Douglas (2009) advocates for providing ample time for students to work through the “scribble stage” in a variety of media, reflecting Montessori’s “process over product” mindset.

**Preschools of Reggio-Emilia, Italy.** The northern Italian town of Reggio-Emilia has become world-renowned for their community-based approach to preschool (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012). Developed in collaboration between parents and educator Loris Malaguzzi in the years after World War II, this approach to learning emphasizes personal expression and reflection on the learning process. Advocating for what is termed “the hundred languages of children” (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012, p. 7), children are encouraged to explore their environment, expressing their acquired knowledge through multiple and varied modalities. Artistic expression is highly valued, and teachers maintain individual portfolios to document children’s learning.

Several foundational values informing what researchers call “the Reggio Emilia experience” (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012, p. 6) are shared by TAB educators such as: subjectivity, difference, participation, and play (Rinaldi, 2001; Douglas & Jaquith, 2012). Central to both TAB pedagogy and the Reggio Emilia experience is a profound respect for children.

**Studio habits of mind.** What began as an advocacy tool emphasizing the importance of maintaining the arts in public schools during the early years of No Child Left Behind became one of the most thorough descriptions of what is actually learned by students in visual art classrooms (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013). Studio Habits of Mind (SHoM) developed out of a nation-wide research partnership, including the John Paul Getty Trust (which also funded the development of DBAE), researchers
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from Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, and several high school art classrooms. The SHoM is a framework of procedures and actions art teachers observed in their classrooms while students were engaged in the art-making process; what the researchers call the “core” of learning in the arts (p. vi). Because the framework focuses on the thinking strategies students use when making art, as opposed to methodological recommendations for content delivery, successful adaptations for all subject areas have been applied in classrooms around the country (p. v).

The SHoM are frequently reference by TAB educators as a strategy used to help students navigate the art-making process (https://www.facebook.com/groups/17828718971259/search/?query=SHoM). The authors make special note that these habits function as “dispositions,” in that they require students to not simply know the skills, but have the “inclination to use these skills and alertness to opportunities to deploy particular skills” (p. 39). What follows are descriptions of the eight habits and the suggested points during the art-making process when students in a TAB classroom might use the habits.

**Develop craft: technique and studio practice.** In the first Habit of Mind, students learn methods for using materials and tools, and why artists maintain their studio space. Developing Craft is often the starting point for students as they learn about the art-making process, giving students skills they need to begin effectively communicating their ideas in a visual way. The authors caution against explicitly teaching Developing Craft independent of the other habits, as this eliminates the point of why an artist would want to develop their craft in the first place, which is for “meaningful art-making” (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013, p. 51). Students in a TAB setting would use this
habit as they explore new media and assist in maintaining the classroom studio.

**Engage and persist: committing and following through.** As students begin the task of making meaning in their artwork (Walker, 2001; Davis Publications, n.d.), they will frequently run into challenges. As they *Engage and Persist*, their personal investment in the artwork motivates their efforts of finding a solution to the problems that inevitably arise. Sticking with a task, as interest and appeal wane, teaches the value of seeing a task through to a conclusion. Consistently providing access to materials and methods through studio centers in a TAB setting allows students to delve deep with their art-making, while teacher encouragement motivates competition of challenging pieces.

**Envision: thinking in images.** To employ this SHoM, students use their imaginations to think about what form their final work might take, as well as the skills and materials they’ll need to complete the work. *Envisioning* is essentially making a plan for how to go about developing an artwork. Again, consistent access to materials and methods encourages students to preplan their work. “Idea centers” and project-planning sheets can be developed by teachers to help students begin the process of creating meaningful artwork. Art teachers introduce students to relevant artists and artworks from history during the five-minute demonstrations and at critical points in the art-making process to further expand a student’s ability to think with images.

**Express: finding meaning.** Learning to communicate feelings, concepts, and ideas through an artwork is a skill artists at any level of proficiency are constantly honing. Students learn to use cultural symbols as metaphors to convey meaning, demonstrating an ability to separate themselves from the role of artist (maker of meaning) to viewer (receiver/interpreter of meaning) (Ballrio, 2013, in Hetland, Winner, Veenema, &
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Sheridan, p. 70). Through strategic discussions in TAB settings, students are encouraged to think about the implied or intended meaning in both their artwork and that of others.

**Observe: really seeing, not just looking.** Learning to carefully notice the world around them helps students “learn to see with new eyes” (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, p. 73). *Observation* gives students the skills to reference visual resources, analyze their artwork in progress, attend to demonstrations, and interact with the art made by other artists. By practicing the habit of *Observing*, students develop an awareness that helps inform their decisions throughout the art-making process. Students have ample resources available to them in a TAB setting; the thoughtful teacher helps students identify those that will be most helpful at a given point in the art-making processes.

**Reflect: question and explain, evaluate.** Through reflective processes, students learn to analyze the success and quality of their intended meaning making. As they think about their choices in the art-making process, they are both developing an aesthetic sensibility and a sense for how effective their studio efforts ultimately are. Teachers use effective questioning strategies to help students develop the habits of *Reflection* and thoughtful *Self-Evaluation*. Group and individual reflection is vital to students’ understanding of how their work influences and is influenced by that of others. TAB pedagogy recommends every class session ends with a time for reflection and response.

**Stretch and explore: taking a leap.** Letting go of expectations when trying new materials or methods can come naturally to some students, while others may struggle with feeling like they’re “doing it wrong.” Developing the habit of *Stretch and Explore*, to reach beyond their perceived limits, gives students the chance to find the new material or method they need to move to the next level in their art-making. This habit develops an
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attitude of playful experimentation. TAB settings are designed specifically for student experimentation. The thoughtful teacher will notice, celebrate, and help students build upon these explorations to develop more advanced work.

**Understand art worlds: domain, communities.** Art does not happen in a vacuum. As students develop the habit of *Understanding* time, place and culture, and how artists have engaged with these domains throughout history, they gain a better sense of their contribution to the art world. Arguably the biggest gap in TAB pedagogy, the cognizant art teacher will help students understand their place and role in the continuum of the art world, contextualizing and elevating student’s individual experiences in light of art from the past and present.

“**Kid Aesthetic.**” Another topic of frequent discussion in the TAB community is learning to be comfortable with unrefined results of student-directed art-making. What has been anecdotally referred to as “kid aesthetic” on TAB forums, has been discussed at length by Efland (1976), Wilson (1974), and Wilson and Thompson (2004). These researchers noticed a difference in aesthetic quality in the artwork made by children in school settings and the “spontaneous artwork” (Efland, 1976, p. 37) made by the same children outside of school. Efland termed this phenomenon “school art style” (as cited in Wilson & Thompson, 2004, p. 300) and noted it as being inherently different in process and result from images produced by children independent of the school environment. This notion of a possible “school-art style” is concerning to Douglas and Jaquith (2009), who hope that art educators can promote cross-site influences in student art-making by implementing TAB.
The Role of Discipline-Based Art Education

Adopted by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts in the 1980s (Duke, 1988), DBAE as a curriculum development strategy was taught by many university art education programs across the country (Delacruz & Dunn, 1996). Aspects of the strategy continue to be used by many art educators to develop comprehensive K-12 art curricula (Christansen, 2007), however new perspectives on the goals of art education (TAB included) have prompted art educators to implement curriculum that specifically addressing student creativity and autonomy in recent years (Delacruz & Dunn, 1996). The introduction of DBAE into art curriculum elevated the work of art teachers, emphasizing the various disciplines inherent to the art world beyond making, namely art criticism, art history, and aesthetics. However, as stated previously, misinterpretation of DBAE contributed to curricula filled “teacher-solved” art problems, meaning that few opportunities were given to students to authentically respond to open-ended prompts. Additionally, art teachers “implementing” DBAE tended to focus on the production discipline of the framework (Christiansen, 2007). Elements of DBAE can still be included in a TAB setting, perhaps with even greater student engagement, as opportunities for drawing authentic connections between students’ studio experiences to those of artists from cultures around the world and throughout time arise through emergent curriculum. Engaging students in aesthetic discussions is a natural elaboration to reflecting on their own artwork. As teachers observe and carefully intervene at pivotal moments in the art-making process, thoughtful discussions addressing intended meaning, interpretations, and judgment about the work can be included in the reflection time at the end of class.
Addressing Learning Standards

It is tempting to assume that because students are choosing their content, materials, and methods in a TAB classroom that learning standards are ignored. I will discuss ways in which TAB pedagogy addresses the 2014 National Visual Art Standards (NCCAS, 2014) and the 2013 revision of the Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning (VADOE, 2013). Several factors must be taken into account when determining how choice-based art curricula address the standards. Interpretations of an individual teacher’s identification on the choice spectrums (refer to Figures 26 and 27) will impact the role standards play in their curricula, as will their interpretations of those standards. Additionally, teachers’ decisions of how to best introduce standards to their students affect how assessments and evaluations will be designed, implemented, and interpreted.

**National visual art standards.** The new National Visual Arts Standards were developed by the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards Writing Team and released for use in the 2014-2015 school year. Changes in the standards reflect an effort to address 21st century processes in art education, focusing on “things we wish students to understand deeply,” rather than rote knowledge or technique (Stewart, 2014, p. 6). Each “performance standard” or behavior students will demonstrate in the art classroom is directly linked to an “enduring understanding,” described as “represent[ing] ideas and processes we want students to integrate, refine, and keep as they move through the art program and eventually into adulthood” (ibid, p. 6). The four standards are listed, with a discussion of how TAB pedagogy supports each standard.

*Creating: conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.* TAB pedagogy is particularly suited to developing a classroom environment where creative thought and
innovation are expected outcome of learning, and children’s individual motivations guide the art-making (Longmore, 2012). Experimentation with art forms, concepts, and materials and processes is also supported in a TAB classroom, as children are encouraged to thoughtfully communicate personal meaning in their art (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

**Presenting: Interpreting and sharing artistic work.** Time for reflection is an integral part of the TAB class procedures, where newly acquired knowledge about art-making, intended meanings in artwork, and suggestions for growth are shared amongst children and teacher (Douglas, 2013).

**Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning.** TAB encourages teachers to set aside time for students to reflect on personal, peer, and “professional” artwork in a supportive setting, allowing them to make relevant connections to intended meaning through their personal experiences with art-making.

**Connection: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context.** In TAB classrooms, students are encouraged to input personal meaning into their artwork. With careful planning on the part of the teacher, students engage in thoughtful reflection at the end of each class period, helping students identify and interpret meaning in their artwork and that of others (Bartel, 2012).

**Virginia visual arts standards of learning.** Approved by the Department of Education in June 2013, the Virginia Visual Arts Standards of Learning were revised through the collaborative efforts of various community arts organizations, educational institutions, and professional artists (Department of Education, p. v). Among the listed goals of a visual arts education include expressing personal meaning through selected content, materials, and methods of art-making; developing techniques; and acquiring
knowledge for creative production and awareness of the role the visual arts plays in contemporary life. The Department of Education encourages teachers to “go beyond the standards” (p. vii), using their professional judgment to determine the best approach for introducing their students to the standards. Instruction strategies inviting students to express their learning in a variety of ways; through art production, reflective writing, and discussions on relevant topics and are used extensively in TAB classrooms. (Papanicolaou, 2012).

**Assessment strategies in TAB classrooms.** As noted above, an individual teacher’s interpretation of their place along the choice-based spectrum will significantly influence both their methods for assessment and how data from assessments are used to adapt the learning environment. A foundational perspective of the focus for assessment in a TAB setting is demonstrated in this quote from Nan Hathaway: “The student is the product - not the painting” (in Bedrick, 2012, loc. 968). While student artwork is not ignored, it is their development of artistic behaviors that is focus of the assessment. Rubrics have been developed to indicate artistic behaviors students demonstrated throughout the art-making process. Refer to Appendix 2 for a sample rubric. A similar rubric, developed by Hathaway (2012), is designed for educator use in tracking individual student growth in the Studio Habits of Mind. This chart is recreated in Appendix 3.

Requirements for assessment vary among schools and communities, therefore TAB practitioners are encouraged to develop assessment tools that are manageable and useful for demonstrating the artistic growth occurring in their classrooms. TAB literature suggests tools such as “rubrics...photographs, journals, note-taking, examples of student work, and one-on-one conferences” (Gaspardi, 2012, p.105). These tools can be further
elaborated into comprehensive program assessments and teacher evaluations. As children develop and mature as artists in the TAB classroom, independent and guided self-reflection becomes a valuable tool to track progress (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009), providing insight into the children’s thought processes, knowledge of techniques, and motivations for art-making. Further discussion of assessments strategies used in TAB classrooms will be described as observed at each case study site.

**Current perspectives: Curriculum and Pedagogy**

Before a discussion of how TAB supports creativity in art classrooms can be addressed, we must discuss the aims of an art education for children, as a teacher’s perspective on those purposes directly correlates to his/her chosen curriculum and pedagogy. Perhaps signaling a shift in the foundations of the art education community, Bolin and Hoskings (2015) discuss this issue and offer several questions art teachers can reflect upon to determine their beliefs of the purpose of an art education program:

> What do I want those who encounter my program to know about art? What should these participants be able to do artistically because of the experience provided to them? How do learners value the arts as an outcome of my care and effort with them? (p. 40)

These are questions all art teachers must continually address throughout their career in response to the changing needs of their students and school, new research in the field, and personal interests in curriculum.

The record of Western art education practices reveals a cyclical trend of the purposes of art education (Efland, 1990; Efland, Freedman & Stuhr, 1996; Walker, 2001). At times, a focus on “creative self-expression” has had a greater impact on art teachers’ decisions for the content of their curriculum. Conversely, at other times, a “knowledge-based comprehensive approach” (Walker, 2001, p. xii) has been the prevailing
philosophy for art education. The influences of child psychology, scientific research on how we learn, political perspectives, and changes in cultural paradigms also affect our perspectives of the purpose for an art education. Based on research of current literature and analysis of case study interviews, creative self-expression as a primary objective for an art education is receiving renewed attention. However, this does not necessarily signify a return to Lowenfeldian-era teaching practices, a topic that will be addressed in chapters four and five.

**TAB pedagogy supports 21st century skills.** Going beyond the traditional subjects of math, reading and writing, science, and social studies, 21st century skills refer to “a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed...to be critically important to success in today’s world” (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015). The term “21st century skills” is intentionally nebulous, encompassing many overlapping, cross-curricular ideals for the outcome of the American public school system. Three main categories of skills are listed, with specific behavior traits displayed in each area: learning and innovation, communication, and collaboration, and life and career. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) (2015a) describes four categories of learning and innovation skills, all of which are accounted for in TAB literature: creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012; Bedrick, 2012).

In short, the drive behind incorporating 21st century skills and the corresponding habits into public education is a response to the era of direct instruction and standardized testing prompted by the No Child Left Behind Act (Glossary of Education Reform, 2015). Efforts to rewrite education goals to better prepare all students for life as a “21st century
citizen” (P21, 2015b) show an inclusion of skills exposure to the visual arts can instill in students. The reorientation of a TAB classroom around the students promotes self-direction, collaboration, and decision-making (Gaspardi, 2012), all skills listed as imperative for success in the 21st century community (P21, 2015a).

**TAB supports creativity.** Texts such as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s “Creativity” (1997), Elliott Eisner’s “Arts and the Creation of the Mind” (2002), and Daniel Pink’s “A Whole New Mind” (2006) discuss research in creativity and its elevated role in our information-based economy. Review of the new National Visual Art Standards (National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, 2014), or a perusal of topics discussed in recent issues of *Art Education* (Hetrick, 2015; Gude, 2010) and other journals in the field (Thompson, 2015; Leysath, 2015) reveal a returned interest to individual creativity and creative self-expression in art education.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) deals with the tricky task of defining creativity, by distinguishing between three instances in which people in society experience creativity. The second instance, in which an individuals display “personal creativity” (p. 25), by reflecting their interactions with the world in unusual ways, is most relevant to our discussion of creativity in the classroom. May (2009) provides a practical definition of creativity, neatly linking it with children’s imaginative capabilities, stating “creativity can be usefully thought of as the ability to construct something new out of things or ideas that already exist. Imagination is an integral part of that process, as it is crucial in picturing what does yet exist” (p. 5)

**Conditions that foster creativity** Regarding the “child as an artist” is central to TAB pedagogy, therefore it follows that art teachers ought to reflect upon the processes
artists use to go about the work of making art, and create conditions that support those processes. Developing a classroom environment that inspires, challenges, and encourages students’ creative development involves inclusion of what Torrence and Safter (1999) call creative thinking skills: fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (in Heid, 2008). According to Bedrick (2012), “Anyone with time to practice finding and solving problems can learn to be creative” (Idc 185), and “A good art education is about process, not product. A choice classroom gives children the gift of time” (Idc. 215). As previously noted, it is imperative that a trained art teacher be the designer of such a space. Their embodied knowledge in the domain of art and art-making allows for critical and timely interventions as students mature in their art-making.

**Studio centers are learning centers.** When students are asked to determine the content, methods, and media used in their artwork, their art teachers provide them with opportunities to develop their artistic behaviors through the studio habits of mind. Providing logical and clear procedures for how students will access, use, and care for the materials, as well as offering a variety of methods for using those materials allows for interesting art learning to occur.

The “studio centers” described earlier in this review and by Douglas and Jaquith (2009) provide continuity and structure to the plethora of media students have available to them. The studio center can take many forms: a designated area of the classroom for sculpture, a box of curated drawing supplies, or a shelving unit containing the materials needed for fiber arts (Bedrick, 2012). Brown (2001) reminds us that “the principle idea is that a [studio]center is a defined physical space where children are actively engaged in
their own learning” (p. 95). The art teacher determines what materials are contained within each center, how those materials may change throughout the year, or by grade level. Demonstration of processes or concepts students will find in that center introduces methods and media they can use in future projects. Teachers can adjust the contents of the studio center and the signage as necessary to help students develop confidence and independence in the art classroom.

TAB literature states that studio centers allow students to “self-differentiate,” to access materials and methods at a level that is individually and developmentally appropriate (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Bedrick, 2012; Gaspardi, 2012). Essentially, a studio center assists art teachers in individuating instruction, providing opportunities for children to integrate new learning with prior knowledge (Brown, 2001). This methodology has been successfully applied within other subjects as well, e.g., The Daily 5 framework offers a choice of 5 learning activities focused on literacy, and has been adapted for math instruction (Boushey and Moser, 2015).

The teacher’s role in a classroom oriented around learning centers is highly nuanced. Throughout the class period, the teacher offers large and small group instruction, meets with individual students, assesses in-progress and completed work, replenishes studio centers, and reminds students of procedures for maintaining the space. They must strike a balance between providing enough structure for students to create high quality meaningful artwork, while having enough freedom for the students to make truly independent choices in the content, materials, and methods they employ to create that art. Hathaway (2012) and Hetland, Winner, Veenema, and Sheridan (2013) reflect that

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3 I have substituted “studio” for “learning” in this quote for conceptual continuity.
students are more motivated and engaged when working on projects that are personally relevant. By giving students access to a variety of materials through studio centers, they have a selection of materials available to them to aid in producing meaningful artwork. 

**Contemporary issues in art education.** Efland (1990) and Stankiewicz (2001) researched and documented the evolution of art education, identifying trends and themes affecting perspectives on art curricula throughout history. A perusal of readings for a university graduate course addressing influences on contemporary art education curricula include writings on school art style, creativity, critical theory art education, social justice art education, and visual culture art education (Tollefson-Hall, 2015). Art educators are also encouraged to design lessons and curriculum around a “Theme” or “Big Idea” (Walker, 2001), a concept based on Boyer’s list of shared cross-cultural human experiences (Morrison, n.d.). As mentioned above, it is imperative that art educators determine their purposes and goals of an art education for their students, as it will dramatically affect their choices in developing their personal curriculum. The decision of how and to what extent art educators are implementing TAB pedagogy is the purpose of this study; such considerations are encouraged by Douglas and Jaquith (2009), as art educators make curricular and methodological decisions for their students.

**Literature Review Summary**

This review of literature gives a brief history of the TAB organization and pedagogical approaches that guide implementation of TAB in art classrooms. Influences on TAB philosophy, which are grounded in a historical definition of constructivist learning theories, include several alternative education models and a visual art curriculum framework. The description of a “full” TAB setting provides a background for
understanding the various interpretations of TAB strategies by the educators participating in this research study. To conclude, a discussion of how TAB strategies allow art educators to incorporate DBAE, current art education standards, and contemporary issues in their personal pedagogy.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Questions & Purpose for the Study

The purpose of this study was to better understand TAB pedagogy specifically, examining how educators implemented TAB in their classrooms, and develop recommendations for other educators interested in implementing TAB in their own classrooms. Research questions focused on the motivation to change current teaching practices (Dweck, 2014), various interpretations of choice-based teaching strategies and how practicing teachers implemented them in elementary and middle school art classrooms. It was assumed that the participating educators had been trained in DBAE, and therefore TAB pedagogy would be a significant departure from their initial preparation for teaching.

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are the curricular elements informing choice-based pedagogies like TAB?
2. How are art teachers adapting and implementing choice-based pedagogy in their art classrooms?
3. How do these strategies reflect their personal values as an art educator and the values of the community in which they teach?
4. How can I incorporate choice-based teaching strategies into my own curriculum while honoring the effective strategies that already exist in my own teaching? Of the observed strategies, which do I find specifically relevant and applicable to my school and community?
Research design

Things seemed extraordinary and outstanding to visitors at each participating school were simply the “way things [were] done here” in the eyes of the study’s participants. As a type of qualitative study, field research makes “systematic study of ordinary activities in the settings in which they occur” (Bailey, 2007, p. 1). This systematic approach allows researchers to deeply understand what is observed and its significance to those participating. Field research illuminates what may be habitual, daily, and therefore mundane activities of a particular group, which can be transformative information for others. Having been trained in DBAE and visual culture art education strategies, simply hearing descriptions of TAB classrooms was arresting, and immediately prompted observation visits. These visits further piqued my interest, and after some initial informal research, it quickly became apparent this unfamiliar pedagogy warranted formal observation through structured research design.

TAB pedagogy is entirely dependent upon the educators’ vision for its implementation, and therefore, it is highly individuated.¹ Case study methodology was selected for this project, as its structure allows the researcher to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristic of real-life events” in a specific setting (Yin, 2009, p.4). Since the goal of the study was to document interpretations of TAB pedagogy, collective case study methodology was determined to be best suited for the task of learning about TAB pedagogy in a variety of school settings (Tollefson-Hall, 2013). Collective case study design, which is also called multiple-case study design, contains more than one case.

¹ This statement could be applied to most art classrooms, as many art educators retain control over their chosen pedagogy. Budgetary and scheduling constraints, and administrative support most certainly affects individual art educators’ agency in implementing their pedagogy, but on the whole, art educators enjoy relative freedom to determine what to teach, and how to teach it.
Similar phenomena are documented across a variety of settings, “facilitat[ing] later cross-site analysis” (Stake, 1995, p. 25). Previous research projects documenting TAB have been limited to single-case participant-researcher studies (Moczerad, 2015; Bae, 2014; Dahlheimer, 2012). By conducting a collective case study of several educators adapting and integrating TAB pedagogy, readers can identify commonalities in different educational settings from the data (Tollefson-Hall, 2013).

**Identifying research sites.** Due to logistical constraints, schools located within a reasonable distance from my home whose art educators implemented CBAE strategies were approached for participation. This type of selection for samples in research is termed “convenience sampling” (Bailey, 2007, p. 65). Eisner (2008) points out that researcher intuition in selecting convenience samples is an advantage in the field of arts-based research, as selecting a research site with relevance to the questions at hand are essential for gathering useful data. Professional connections within the regional education community allowed for connection with educators implementing variations of CBAE to garner interest in participating in the study.

Two local educators agreed to participate in long-term research study, with two additional educators located further away agreeing to a short-term research study. All participating educators assisted with contacting their building administrators for approval of the research sites. Given TAB’s flexible pedagogy, educators implementing the teaching methods and strategies determine what structures and procedures work best for their school, students, and community’s needs. To gain greater understanding of the variety of interpretations of TAB pedagogy, diverse research sites were intentionally sought out. What follows are descriptions of the participating educators, their
philosophies of art education, and their classrooms, and school communities. Names of
the schools and educators have been changed to maintain anonymity.

**Case one: “Mariposa Elementary School.”** A medium-sized public elementary
school, located in an affluent, suburban community, Mariposa enrolls 435 kindergarten
through fifth grade students. The school recently received recognition for excellence in
academic achievement (SOL pass rates for reading and math are in the low 80th
percentiles), and listed project-based learning and “maker-infused work” on their website
as a guide for the curriculum. Choice-based art was also listed on the website as a
distinguishing characteristic of the school culture.

Formerly a graphic designer, “Aiden” has been teaching for seven years, all of them
at Mariposa. He attended a large urban college for his teaching licensure where he first
encountered TAB pedagogy. An Internet search for “student-driven art’ led him to
Marvin Bartel’s website and from there onto the TAB website. His educational goal for
his students is that they “value themselves as artists…and be good, creative problem
solvers.” Play-based art education theorist Szkeley is influential to his teaching
philosophy, as is his interest in “makerspaces,” and the “gamification” of learning.

Studio centers lined the walls of the classroom, and included fibers, origami,
cardboard and basic wood construction, clay, and digital art. Drawing, painting, and
printmaking studios had designated tables where students accessed and used materials.
Third through fifth grade students had full access to the studio centers, with kindergarten
through second grade students having limited access to the materials and centers.

**Case two: “Sheffield Middle School.”** Sheffield is a large public middle school,
were 783 students are enrolled in fifth through eighth grades. Sheffield is located in a
 racially, linguistically, and economically diverse small city. Seventy-three percent of student body is economically disadvantaged, receiving free or reduced lunch, and 26% are English Language Learners. Images of students and teachers working together were prominent on the school’s website.

“Hannah” has been teaching art for 21 years at both the elementary and middle school levels, and is in her third year at Sheffield. She successfully funded a digital learning lab for her art room and developed a digital media display in the hallway outside her classroom. Her stated goal for art education was that “I believe every kid has something they want to say, [and it is my goal is to] help them say it.” She frequently referred to her students’ “visual voice,” which she defined as their ability to communicate with images. Her desire to increase student interest in art-making led to her to integrate student choice of materials into her lessons, and cites the Studio Habits of Mind (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2012) as an influence on her perspectives of teaching and learning in the visual arts.

Seventh and eighth grade students had access to supply cabinets containing supplies such as pencils and erasers, crayons, colored pencils, markers, paints and brushes, and iPads. Tools like drawing grids, computers, and iPads were available to these students each day. Basic materials for various projects were loaded into “toolboxes” and placed on student worktables. Higher quality art materials were made available to advanced students.

Case three: “Nandina Elementary School.” Nandina is a medium-sized, affluent suburban public elementary school, with 482 students enrolled in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. “Mary,” the school’s art teacher, led the effort to develop Nandina’s
arts integration program. This program was featured on the school’s website, as were high academic achievement in reading and math SOL scores (pass rates were above 90%).

Mary has been teaching for 17 years, first as a classroom teacher, then as a gifted-resource teacher, as an instructional coach, and finally as an art teacher. Her initial career goals were to become an art therapist, and she referenced Montessori and Reggio-Emilia approaches to learning as influencers on her personal philosophy of art education.

Studio centers lined the classroom at Nandina and included drawing, painting, a book center, inventor center, art games, blocks, puppet-making, origami, mask-making, and print-making. Second through fifth grade students had full access to the centers, and pre-kindergarten through first grade students had guided access to the centers. Older students had the option to work outdoors in warmer months, in an enclosed courtyard accessed through a door in the back of the classroom.

**Case Four: “Hopewell Elementary School”**. Hopewell is a small urban elementary school, with 302 students enrolled in kindergarten through fifth grade. Families living outside the school’s boundary lines can apply placement at Hopewell. Student-choice is an integral aspect of the school’s culture, with student needs figuring largely into preparations for learning. Statements on the school’s website emphasized “education in the arts” and instilling a perspective of life-long learning in students, and hosts a Reggio-Emilia inspired pre-kindergarten program.

“Phoebe” has been teaching art for 19 years, 17 of which have been at Hopewell. She believes that every student “has a voice they are trying to express, [and] my role is to help them see their voice using art materials.” Studio center menus lined the perimeter of the classroom and include a “resource binder.” Tables in the center of the classroom were
designated for specific studio centers and contained additional materials. Visible from the hallway was a small gallery space, which also connected to the art classroom via a pocket door. Phoebe saw “half-groups” of classes, meaning that half the class attended art, while the other half attended science, and then switched after an hour. Phoebe frequently used the phrase “we believe” when describing curriculum or methodological structures at Hopewell.

**Internal Review Board Approval.** While contacting local educators implementing CBAE strategies about interest in this project, submission of the research protocol was made to my university’s Internal Review Board (IRB) for approval of the study. The process of writing the IRB application helped prepare initial research questions, develop interview questions for participating administrators and teachers, and create a data collection instrument to use on site visits.

Once IRB approved the research study, confirmation for the start of the study was shared with participating schools, and preparations began for initial research visits. All building administrators signed a consent form, agreeing to a research study being conducted in their school. At every introductory interview, all participating members of the study signed consent forms guaranteeing their privacy during the interview, anonymity in the reporting, and opportunity for them to review the final report prior to its publication. This consent form also informed teachers of the anticipated risks and benefits of participating in the project.

**Risks.** Educators were assumed to feel initial discomfort in sharing potential frustrations that led to integrating CBAE strategies into their curriculum. Those feelings were expected to dissipate over the course of the research project. Administrators were
thought to potentially feel uncomfortable assessing an individual staff member’s pedagogy to an outside observer. To alleviate these risks, each research site, educator, and administrator were given pseudonyms and the locations of the schools were generalized.

**Benefits.** Participating educators were expected to enjoy the opportunity to reflect on their teaching practice, affording them insight into things they may miss in the flurry of activity during a typical art block. By participating in this research study, expectations that they would appreciate knowing their individual efforts to interpret and adapt TAB pedagogy to their specific school contributed to a growing body of research on TAB pedagogy.

Because this research project was focused on teacher action in adapting to a new pedagogy and observations of how the student and teacher interact with and use the classroom space, the researcher never formally interviewed students. Any identifying information in images of student artwork photographed throughout the project were blurred or blocked out.

**Initiating the study.** Bailey (2007) describes qualitative research as a “systematic study,” with Philliber, Schwab, and Samsloss recommending researchers develop a research plan addressing four areas: “What questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results” (as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 26). These recommendations helped focus this study to document how participating art educators arranged their classrooms and lesson procedures to encourage independent student decision making, and to observe how their interactions with students during class time supported independent student art-making. Of particular interest was learning how the
educators integrated student independence into their preparations for teaching, what resources they used, their pedagogical training, and current philosophy of art education. In addition to regular observation visits, supplemental interviews of the educators and their building administrators would help contextualize the activities observed in the classroom (Stake, 1995).

**Data collection instrument.** A prominent criticism of case study methodology is what Yin (2009) calls a “lack of rigor” (p. 14), a judgment coming from research projects undertaken without adequate preparation. In an effort to eliminate such criticism of this research study, and to ensure similar phenomena were recorded at all four research sites, a data collection instrument (Figure 23) was created to collect field notes. Based on research of TAB classroom layout and class structure, the instrument was divided into “teacher use” and “student use” of the classroom environment. When observing the teacher, the focus was to watch for introductory procedures, skill demonstration with materials, discussion of artists, artwork, or terminology, class objectives for the day, assessment activities, and closure procedures. When observing the students, the focus was on student use of the classroom space, what art materials attracted their attention and use, the content of artwork made by students, and how students navigated independent decision-making. Significant blank areas on the instrument allowed space to write the rich, descriptive notes that Horvat (2013) recommends for developing “a sense of who these people are” (p. 68) in case study research methodology.

Prior to initial site visits at participating school, the data instrument was piloted in a colleague’s art classroom. Adjustments made from the pilot included a specific space to track activity in the classroom at five-minute intervals, and duplications of the chart
where student and teacher interactions were tracked and described. A specific chart to document activity other than art-making during observations was included at the recommendations of the thesis committee. Practical considerations such as taking notes in a variety of ink colors helped to visually organize notes, and using a clipboard to support the data instrument during research visits allowed for easy movements as students and teacher positions shifted throughout the class blocks (Horvat, 2013).

Initial research visits were made to the sites to connect with the teachers and get a feel for the flow of the classes. In addition to the data instrument, extensive notes were typed after visits. These notes contained recalled information, personal thoughts on the gathered data, and allowed space for reflection of the role of the researcher in the project. Reflexivity helps the researcher maintain a level of self-awareness during the research process, given that the nature of field research involves active participation on the part of the researcher (Bailey, 2007). “Reflexive note-taking” encourages consideration of the researcher within the context of their study, and how their role may change throughout the project.

_Coding the data._ According to Bailey (2007), emergent coding is a misnomer, as the researcher’s preparations and actions of enacting the research project require direct intentions. Instead, she suggests that the process of coding is more about carefully and subtly organizing the gathered data rather than “happening” upon themes. Coded data from the instrument were paired with the additional field notes, interview transcriptions, and photographs of each site, along with coded images of student art to support recurring categories. A common code was applied to all gathered data from research sites, photographs, and the researcher’s notes. Specific data points from each site were then
tracked and analyzed to note commonalities across all research sites and frequently recurring categories were identified and further analyzed.

**Interviews.** Careful observations of teacher and student interactions with the classroom space provided much insight into how CBAE strategies functioned at each site, but to understand why educators were interested in the pedagogy required direct conversation. As opposed to simply recording anecdotal comments that arise during research visits, Bailey (2007) writes “in an interview, the field researcher asks questions for the purpose of seeking information directly related to the research” (p. 95). A semi-structured interview process was developed, which allowed the educators to elaborate on motivators and philosophies they found personally important, while simultaneously ensuring responses could be compared across sites. This structure allowed the same topics to be discussed during each interview, while maintaining a natural, conversational flow (Bailey, 2007).

At Mariposa Elementary School and Sheffield Middle School, face-to-face interviews were conducted prior to the start of data collection visits. Scheduled on staff work days, these interview with Aiden and Hannah provided insight into their decisions on classroom layout and pedagogical choices that streamlined data collection on future visits. At Nandina Elementary, Mary’s interview was cut short due to a scheduling error, and was concluded on a second visit. Phoebe preferred to respond via email to the questions prior to visiting Hopewell Elementary. Appendix 4 lists the questions and topics covered in educator interviews.

Administrator interviews were intentionally brief out of respect for their time, and were scheduled at their convenience. Interview questions addressed their understanding
of TAB pedagogy and their impressions of community response to the changes. The administrator at Sheffield was new to the school, and therefore was not interviewed, as they were unfamiliar with nuances of the school community and would have a limited frame of reference for any observed changes. Appendix 5 lists questions and topics covered in administrator interviews.

**Transcription and coding.** Each recorded interview was transcribed and annotated with any hand written notes taken during the interview. The questions provided initial categories for organizing the educators’ answers, but after frequent and careful reading of each transcription, similar themes or concepts shared across interviews were identified to establish connections between the educators’ perspectives of TAB pedagogy. Divergent themes or categories from the interviews added deeper understanding as to how their pedagogy and philosophy was suited to the needs of their school.

**Research visit calendar.** After receiving IRB approval, research visits to Mariposa Elementary School and Sheffield Middle School began in November of 2015 and continued weekly or bi-weekly through February 2016. These visits lasted at least 2 hours, and were scheduled on days where the teachers had back-to-back classes. Full day visits to Nandina Elementary School occurred in November 2015 and January 2016, and a full day visit to Hopewell Elementary School occurred in January 2016. Data analysis began in January 2016 with coding of the collected data. Visits to all sites ended in March 2016, with data coding and implications written in February and March 2016.

**Validity and Reliability**

Yin (2009) reminds researchers that valid research requires continual attention to the design throughout the project, stating, “the ‘design work’ for case studies may
actually continue beyond the initial design plans” (p. 41). At various points in the project, several tests were applied to the design to ensure the quality and repeatability of the study, and are described here.

**Construct Validity.** Yin (2009) recommends three methods to increase construct validity of a study: gathering evidence from several sources, developing a chain of evidence, and sharing the draft study report with critical advisors. In addition to field notes on the data instrument, images of student artwork were taken. Any preparatory sketches for artwork were also be photographed, in addition to artist statements written about the finished piece. Teacher and administrator interviews were conducted specifically to provide greater insight to the school culture. Drafts of each primary case description were shared with my advisor for suggestions and revisions.

**External Validity.** The goal of this study is to document specific educators interpretations of choice-based art education pedagogy, TAB in particular. In order to make these findings reliable, additional sources for comparison of the data came from daily review of the Internet forums hosting discussions about TAB during time of the study, November 2015 - March 2016. Participation in an online webinar hosted by NAEA in January 2016 focused on TAB pedagogy and with review of an earlier webinar on the same topic offered additional insight into various interpretations. Notes and documents gathered at the 2015 TAB Institute were also referenced during data collection and case descriptions. Triangulating the evidence between these additional sources increases the potential repeatability of similar phenomena in other settings (Yin, 2009).

**Reliability.** Yin (2009) recommends that qualitative researchers “make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct research as if someone was always
looking over your shoulder” (p. 45) to increase the repeatability of their study. The data collection instrument was designed to include documentation of visit dates, class times, grade levels, and class size, in addition to data addressing the research questions. Every effort was made to arrive 5-10 minutes before students, to “debrief” with the educators prior to the start of each observation. Additional notes from informal conversations with the participating educators were written on extra note sheets, and stored in an expandable portfolio. This portfolio was stocked with extra data instrument forms, and contained folders to collect worksheets and handouts produced by each educator. Reflective notes were typed as soon as possible after each site visit (within 24 hours) to ensure recall would be as accurate as possible. Coding categories for the primary sites were identified then digitized to allow for more accurate comparisons within each site, with similar coding categories identified at the secondary sites. After digitation, categories were compared across all sites and included interview transcriptions. Case descriptions were written in a similar format, allowing readers to find similarities and make comparisons between sites easily.

**Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed the careful and methodical research plan outlined by the researcher prior to the start of this study. Appropriate measures were taken to ensure participants were protected and treated with respect. Interview questions and a data instrument were developed and reviewed prior to use, with ample records kept during the duration of the study. Emergent coding techniques were applied to all data collected, which included 39 annotated data instruments, seven interview transcriptions, photographs of each classroom, and student art samples from each site.
Chapter Four: Case Descriptions

This chapter describes the primary research sites for this project. To review, Mariposa Elementary is a medium-sized elementary school in a suburban, affluent community. Aiden has been the art teacher at Mariposa for seven years. Sheffield Middle is a large middle school in a diverse small city. Hannah has been the art teacher at Sheffield for three years, and has been teaching for 21 years. Conclusions from these cases will be shared in chapter five, along with findings from Nandina Elementary and Hopewell Elementary.

Case One: Mariposa Elementary School

When I first arrived at Mariposa Elementary School, I was struck with the peacefulness of the setting. The single-story school building is nestled on a large lot, with playgrounds, sports fields, and several trailer classrooms visible from the winding, country road that provides access to the school. The property is surrounded by mature forest, providing privacy to both the school and the well-maintained, residential neighborhoods that surround it. Concrete planters filled with groomed evergreens flank the sidewalk leading to the main entrance, and mature, well-maintained landscaping surround the perimeter of the building.

It is evident the school community values presenting themselves as a reputable and friendly place, where children and families can take pride in being part of the school. A professional mural depicting regional historical figures is prominently displayed in the front breezeway, with signage directing parents and visitors to enter the school through the main office. Professionally framed student artwork lines the walls of the office. Each year, the school purchases and frames a piece of artwork from a student (typically a fifth
grader) to add to this collection. This tradition was established prior to the arrival of the current art teacher, Aiden, to the school. The building administrator also has student artwork hanging in his office, and has made an effort to make his office welcoming and comfortable for visitors, with plush seating and table lamps. Close to the main entrance, a large magnet board is mounted low to the ground with geometric magnetic shapes available for student play. Display cabinets and bulletin boards are available to teachers in hallways around to the school, and are filled with examples of student work.

Completed student artwork is also hung in the main corridor in the school; a handwritten student statement about the piece accompanies each artwork. Aiden does not have a specific format for the statements, but students frequently write about their choice of media, intended meaning of the work, and specific inspirations behind the piece. During several visits to Mariposa, I observed students, parent visitors, and even the building administrator viewing the displayed artwork and reading the accompanying statements. It was not clear when these pieces are cycled out for new displays, but the large bulletin board outside the art room Aiden uses to display theme-inspired artwork was changed at least once during my research visits. When students shared completed artwork with Aiden, he would offer the option to publicly display their pieces before taking them home. When they would share experimentations with a new media, he would complement their exploration and ask them to store it in their portfolio or their sketchbook to use as a reference for future artwork.

The main building is a lively, bright, and busy place. When arriving for my research visits, I would often hear parents or volunteers chatting with a member of the office staff before heading to their destination in the building. As I walked down the main
hallway to the art room, I would pass homeroom classes animatedly chatting with their teachers as they headed to their daily “Special Class.” “Specials” is the term given to elective classes at Mariposa and include Music, Art, P.E., Library, and Guidance. The P.E. program is a prominent characteristic of the school’s culture: students receive 3 blocks of P.E. in their six-day Specials rotation, and can participate in morning movement activities throughout the school year. The Mariposa building also hosts a popular sports day camp for elementary students that is run by local P.E. teachers, but is unaffiliated with the school district. I saw many students wearing the logo t-shirts from this camp program during my research visits. Because of the influence and popularity of the P.E. program at Mariposa, Aiden intentionally uses sports analogies to encourage student persistence when they struggle in their art-making.

The “maker movement” is another notable characteristic of this school district. Every school has at least one area in the building designated for “making,” outfitted with tools and materials for hands-on play and exploration (Sheridan, et. al, 2014). According to the Makerspace Playbook, a makerspace serves “as a gathering point where communities of new and experienced makers connect to work on real and personally meaningful projects, informed by helpful mentors and expertise, using new technologies and traditional tools” (Maker Media, 2013). Mariposa’s main makerspace is located in the library, and each kindergarten classroom is outfitted with a makerspace for students to use throughout the school day. Aiden is personally interested in makerspaces,
particularly the crossovers and differences of “making” and “art-making,” and welcomes influences from students’ explorations in school’s makerspaces in their artwork.

_Responsive Classroom_ (2016) is a system of teaching and learning used at Mariposa and other schools in the district. It is an “approach to teaching emphasizing academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong school community” (Responsive Classroom, 2016). Teachers are encouraged to design lessons that are engaging and interactive, offer meaningful choices to students that promote independence and self-efficacy. Aiden used techniques from the approach during my classroom visits to make announcements to the students, refocus attention during art-making, and reinforce positive communication skills. Individual classes responded differently to the techniques advocated by system. For example, to non-verbally get students’ attention, the teacher hits a chime and students are taught to stop what they’re doing, quietly turn towards the teacher and raise one hand. When Aiden used this cue, some classes immediately turned towards him with their hand raised, while other classes would continue in their work or conversations until the chime was sounded a second time. Based on my own experience with school-wide management systems, elementary elective teachers’ success with the systems are partially reliant on the homeroom teachers’ commitment to the system to help establish the routines.

**Teacher Background and Pedagogy**

Throughout my visits to Aiden’s art classroom, I was struck by how his personal philosophy of education and views on child development impacted the way he interacted with his students and his perspectives on teaching art. We would often chat before and after my observations about his evolving thoughts on assessment methods, the use of themes in his curriculum, the role of makerspaces in his school and the challenge of
encouraging his students to become reflective artists. From these conversations, it became clear to me that he is constantly looking to improve his craft and offer meaningful, relevant, and challenging art-making opportunities for his students. He willingly adapts and adjusts his methods and perspectives based on what he perceives will meet the needs of his students. He has taught at Mariposa for seven years and intimately knows the school and community culture.

Before returning to school to earn his teaching license, Aiden previously worked as a professional graphic designer. He often referenced design concepts when giving feedback to students during informal critiques, such as making recommendations to increase visual contrast, manipulate gaze, or create emphasis in the artwork. Students respected and appreciated his feedback; when stumped with a visual problem, students actively sought out his opinion. Upon completing his art licensure, he immediately started teaching art at Mariposa without completing a traditional student teaching placement. During his interview, he reflected on his own frustrating experiences at school, stating, “I think its kind of ironic that I’m here…[but] at the end of the day, I know that kids want to enjoy learning. You don’t want to be stuck at school, sitting on your hands, looking at the blackboard in front of you, and just listening, listening, listening” (Personal communication, 2015).

His methods courses were informed by DBAE methodology and various courses on child development. In his opinion, his training in DBAE provided an initial structure for developing lesson plans and classroom routines, aiding his successful transition to TAB pedagogy. He first encountered TAB pedagogy during his training to become an art teacher. A simple Internet search of “authentic, student-driven art-making” led him first
to Marvin Bartel’s website, and then eventually on to the TAB website. He reflected that the philosophy behind TAB pedagogy resonated with “what he wanted to do” as an art teacher. He maintained an interest in developing a student-driven art curriculum, even though he felt like he was going “against the grain” in his methods courses.

When Aiden first started teaching at Mariposa, he recalls that his lessons and student projects were more teacher-directed, with opportunities for student choice limited to the media they used to complete their artwork. After several years of teaching in this way, Aiden felt these opportunities for students to explore media and method were insufficient. He was frustrated with the “boring” and “identical” results of these projects and sought a solution that would allow students to “do more” independent art-making. In 2013, he revisited the TAB website and was reminded of his affinity for the pedagogy, and mid-year, rearranged his classroom into studio centers and began experimenting with giving students more independence in the content, materials, and methods for making their artwork. A significant motivator that led to his transition to TAB was a desire for his students to become “better stewards of their own learning,” a perspective that directly impacts how he works with and responds to student needs in the classroom. He encourages an attitude of reflection in his students, asking them to think about why they

Figure 9. Problem solving in artwork. The student working on this collage was troubled by the blank space in the picture plane below the buildings. Aiden referenced the fireworks in the sky and discussed with the student her experiences watching fireworks. Their conversation resulted in the addition of a collaged crowd of people watching the fireworks, which also served to fill in the negative space below her buildings.
make certain choices with media, method, or content. I observed 42 distinct conversations between Aiden and his students where he encouraged reflection in their art-making.

Around the time Aiden introduced TAB strategies into his teaching, his district began discussing how teachers could provide more choice and comfort to their students. The district explicitly states “choice and comfort” (defined as students demonstrating their knowledge and understanding through choices in curriculum, tasks, technologies, and media) as a “pathway” for “developing lifelong-learner competencies” (School division website, 2016). Aiden found natural connections between TAB pedagogy and ideas discussed in these conversations, and was further motivated to continue refining his expression of TAB pedagogy. Consciously integrating TAB strategies into his personal pedagogy has reignited his passion for teaching art and has given a name to his desire to focus on developing problem solving skills, independence, and a sense of perseverance in his students. Throughout my visits to his classroom, I observed 66 different interactions between Aiden and his kindergarten through fifth grade students that dealt with problem solving. The building administrator is very supportive of Aiden’s inclusion of TAB strategies into his art curriculum, and stated Aiden’s pedagogy as the model for excellence in teaching at Mariposa.

Another theory informing Aiden’s philosophy is play theory. He recently read Play and Creativity in Art Teaching (Szkeley, 2015), and was intrigued with Szkeley’s recommendations to “captur[e] the spirit of play and mak[e] it educational for students.” He has focused on including elements from play theory in his kindergarten curriculum, as he wanted to build on children’s natural inclination towards play at that age. He credits
his students’ use of their classroom makerspaces for developing a familiarity with “putting things together,” which has helped them become “really good makers.” I was able to observe one kindergarten class during my research visits, and observe a whole-group collage lesson. I did not observe outright “playing” with materials to develop new or unique solutions to the collage project, but the children were flexible in finding solutions for unintended cuts and adding textures with their scissors. However, during a first grade observation, I noted Aiden encouraging the class to “play with finding and making patterns.” In his interactions with this class, he encouraged them to experiment and try new methods for making patterns. For example, he stepped into a discussion where students were correcting a peer’s use of a paintbrush. He encouraged both the “correctioners” and the “experimenter” to expand their vision for how a tool could be used by artists for making art in new ways.

Aiden’s interest in “making” and what it means for his students to “be a maker” is another concept informing his personal philosophy. Identifying the “boundaries between making, the making culture, and art-making” is something he thinks about often. He expects the students artwork coming out of the art room to be aesthetically pleasing (he did not specifically say “pleasing to him,” but it was implied by his tone), but he is comfortable with the raw appearance of student creations coming out of the school’s makerspaces. If he moves into a larger space, he has considered offering to move the school’s main makerspace into the art classroom. He followed up this thought by stating that he’d have to really emphasize to the students the nuances between “experimenting” and “art-making.” The sculpture station is popular with his students (I noted 23 instances of students using materials and tools from the sculpture studio in 9 upper-elementary
 classroom observations), phenomena I attributed to their access to makerspaces. Artworks produced with materials and tools from the sculpture station include a DJ turntable, a “mailbox,” and a Ghostbusters backpack. It is evident in the way students interacted with their sculptural work that they were using their creations to “try on adult roles” of musician, “hero,” and adult forms of communication.

Aiden has addressed the Studio Habits of Mind (SHoM) with his students, most frequently Engage & Persist, as he feels his students need to be challenged to specifically develop this habit. Throughout my research visits, he encouraged students to persist through frustration and carefully asked questions to generate solutions for their art-making. Additionally, student reflection on decision-making and metacognition is a topic of interest for the building administrator. He asked teachers to participate in book studies that discuss techniques for getting students to communicate their thought processes. By referencing SHoM with students in the art classroom, Aiden offered opportunities to reflect on their choices and thinking within the domain of art-making. Throughout my observations, he had 54 different conversations with students dealing with envisioning next steps in art-making, and persisting through frustration. For example, in conversations with students in these instances he would use phrases such as “What are the next steps you need to take?” and “Let’s think about this as a creative problem to solve,” or “Let’s step back and see what your artwork needs” and “How can you use this tool in a different way?”

When asked directly about his perspective on how TAB has influenced his pedagogy, Aiden very comfortably stated that he doesn’t consider himself to be “a full choice teacher.” He says he has a “50/50” approach to students’ time in his art classroom.
He interprets “50/50” as 50 percent of the time, he is leading teacher-directed performance tasks, hosting discussions on art criticism or art history, and 50 percent of the time students are working on what he calls “choice art.” I will discuss in detail Aiden’s intended use of themes in his curriculum later, but using themes to guide his curriculum comes from struggling with the “DBAE side of [himself].” His struggle comes from wanting to “maintain a certain amount of control over students’ understanding of the artistic process,” while also including opportunities for intentional play and authentic student art-making. His building administrator supports his decision to incorporate performance tasks into his art curriculum, stating, “I think...the greatest complement I can give him is that I trust him.”

During his interview, Aiden shared a conversation he had with the art teacher at the middle school where his students will attend. Aiden asked what strengths and weaknesses she saw in students coming from Mariposa who went on to take art classes at the middle school level. The teacher complemented Mariposa students’ ability to “think creatively and abstractly” and “problem-solve,” but reflected a need for Mariposa students to learn basic art techniques. As a result of that conversations, Aiden has since included “performance task” technique exercises at the beginning of each third, fourth, and fifth grade class period. These exercises are based on the state standards for visual art. Aiden uses this time in the class period to introduce a technique and an element or principle of art. The performance tasks are essentially a teacher-directed mini-project, and take three to four class periods to complete. Performance tasks I observed have included grid drawings to teach proportion in fifth grade, observational drawings of owl photographs to introduce shading techniques in fourth grade, and mixing and using tints in third grade. In
general, students seemed to enjoy the performance tasks, and several fifth grade students asked to continue working on them during their choice art time. Aiden encourages students to upload their performance tasks onto the school’s Artsonia page, in addition to their choice art projects.

Artsonia is an “online museum of children’s artwork” and is popular among art teachers around the country. It is a website where teachers and students can safely upload images of artwork, and anyone can view a digital “gallery” of the students’ work. Aiden was piloting Artsonia for his teacher evaluation documentation, and set a goal for all third, fourth, and fifth grade students to upload a certain number of “W.O.W.” artworks throughout the year. “W.O.W.” stands for Wonderful, Original, Work-of-Art, and is a term widely used in the TAB community. Definitions of what constitutes a W.O.W. piece varies; Aiden defined it as artwork made by the students that is personally meaningful and for which that they are proud. The galleries are organized by studio center, so students uploading a sculpture project would select the “Sculpture Gallery” on the Mariposa’s Artsonia page. Students self-select what artwork is uploaded, but Aiden attempts to discuss with all students their thoughts for selecting pieces. Students are required to include an artist statement with their images.

Aiden required all artwork going on display, either digitally or in the hallways of the school, to be accompanied by an artist statement. This requirement served several purposes. First, this exercise reinforced the importance of reflection Aiden believes is necessarily for all artists to improve in their work. His students are asked to reflect on their motivation for producing the artwork, reference any skills or techniques they learned while making it, anything that may have influenced the imagery, and any
intended meaning. Secondly, the statements provide context and explanation to viewers who may not immediately understand the piece.

Including artist statements with displayed work is recommended in TAB literature (Douglas and Jaquith, 2009), to help the community adjust to “kid aesthetic” and understand students’ thought processes during the production of the piece. As stated previously, I would frequently see parents, students, and volunteers pausing to read artist statements that accompanied displayed artwork.

**Curriculum and preparation for learning**

Aiden understands the vast range of fine-motor skills, interests, and developmental levels seen in elementary-aged students. Therefore, he has divided his curriculum and pedagogical approach into upper-elementary and lower-elementary methodologies. He maintains a similar philosophy of learning for kindergarten, first, and second grade classes, and has informally grouped these grades together in his preparation for teaching. I refer to these grade levels as “lower-elementary classes” throughout this section. Third, fourth, and fifth grade classes are also grouped together pedagogically, and are referenced as “upper-elementary classes.”

Aiden feels lucky to see all grade levels for 60-minute blocks. This is a change from previous years, where all classes received 45-minute blocks of art. Both the building administrator and Aiden felt the greatest challenge of introducing TAB into the art

*Figure 10. Example of a written reflection accompanying artwork. This student wrote about the inspiration for this image, "A dog’s life" in her artist statement.*
Teaching for Artistic Behavior

curriculum was the limited time students had to work with Aiden in the art room. They agreed that increasing students’ specials time by 25 percent was a small solution to that problem. His building administrator explicitly stated that he feels like Aiden would be able to “open a number of other doors” for students if art was given the same priority as language arts or math in the schedule.

**Lower-elementary methodology.** Aiden’s kindergarten, first, and second grade curricula focus on specific techniques and skills he feels the students will need to be successful, independent artists in upper grades. He wants them to “know there are specific practices that artists adhere to” that will help them be successful artists. Techniques and basic skills are introduced through teacher-directed projects, with brief inclusions of artists and culture groups who have used the techniques in their art-making. For example, I observed a kindergarten lesson that introduced collage techniques based on the popular picture book *Brown Bear* by Eric Carle. Aiden introduced helpful “tricks” to neaten the students’ cutting into tight angles. He also introduced the concept of layering to add depth, detail, and interest to their artwork. Aiden stated that he builds student choice into these directed activities, offering a variety of media with which to explore a specific concept. I saw this demonstrated in a first grade lesson, where Aiden prepared materials for making patterns using paint, blocks, stamps, markers, and crayons. Additionally, if students complete the teacher-led art-making activity planned for the day, Aiden gives them limited access to materials from the drawing center and blocks from the sculpture center to explore their own ideas.

Aiden’s Kindergarten art curriculum focuses on building foundational skills students will use and refine throughout their time at Mariposa. The first grade curriculum
elaborates on the skills learned in kindergarten, and deepens students’ understanding of how artists choose and use art media, techniques, and tools to share stories and ideas. His goal for first grade students is that they deepen their understanding of the “work of an artist.” I was able to observe two first grade classes. With one section, Aiden discussed methods for weaving with students, and communities of weavers, before student created their own paper weaving. Aiden’s interactions with students during this lesson emphasized problem solving (particularly when measuring and cutting their paper loom) and identifying and following a pattern. In another section, I observed Aiden working collaboratively with the class to design and create a backdrop for their classroom’s play. Throughout this lesson, Aiden’s interventions with students focused on developing the class’s sense of community. He complemented effective collaboration between students and modeled appropriate communication skills with students. For example, when the class gathered to measuring looms, he complemented students helping one another hold rulers steady, saying “we can share ideas and help each other problem solve” and “I appreciate how you shared your ideas using kind words.” At the conclusion of the teacher-directed activities, both first grade classes had limited access to the drawing center and sculpture center to engage in choice art until the end of the block.

Aiden’s second grade curriculum emphasizes how artists share and celebrate their culture through art and artifacts. Students are also allowed more access to the studio centers: Aiden stated that he alternates between teacher-directed art projects and choice art time to slowly introduce students to the studio centers. Due to time constraints, I was only able to observe one second grade class completing a teacher-directed project. During that observation, Aiden led a discussion on the importance of scarab imagery in ancient
Egyptian culture. Students then completed a project demonstrating their understanding of symmetry and contrast through collage. Aiden discussed color choices with students that would heighten visual contrast, and reminded students of the demonstrated “folding trick” to ensure symmetrical elements were added to their beetle. After students completed their scarab collage, they had access to the drawing center, sculpture center and electronic tablets for choice art. Most students used about 20 minutes of class’s work time to complete the scarab collage, spending the remaining 20 minutes of work time on choice art.

**Upper-elementary methodology.** Over the summer, Aiden planned for this year’s upper-elementary curricula to be centered on sequentially introduced themes. The themes were intended to offer guidance to the students’ individual art-making, with the expectation that each student would complete a project from five of the nine themes. The themes selected for this school year were: Identity, Nature and Life Cycles, Narrative Art, Community and Personal Heroes, Fantasy, Installation Art, Rites of Passage and SCAMPER (substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, erase and reverse).

As the school year progressed, he decided to adapt the sequence to follow the interest of individual classes, and shifted the focus of the themes to the performance tasks and center demonstrations rather than requiring students address them in their choice art. This is an example of emergent curriculum, an element of TAB pedagogy, in which the teacher adapts curriculum plans to follow the interest level of the students (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). During my visits of upper-elementary classes, I did not observe Aiden explicitly addressing themes in a whole-group setting. However, I did observe him discuss themes one-on-one with students during their choice art time. For example, one fifth grade
student worked on illustrations for a comic book for several observations. At various points, Aiden would ask her about the story line, and offer suggestions for how her illustrations could help “emphasize the conflict” between heroes and villains. This is a project the student conceived on her own, (implying it was not inspired by Aiden’s “Heroes” them), developed from an interest in writing and illustrating her own comic book. She cited “Harry Potter” book series and “Young Justice” television show as influences on her storyline and characters.

As I mentioned previously, upper-elementary students complete short performance tasks at the beginning of each art class, based on the state’s visual art production standards. The tasks focus on the elements and principles of art, and expose students to new media techniques, tools or methods for creating their art. The inclusion of these tasks in his curriculum is designed to strengthen students’ basic art-making skills. These performance tasks function as warm-up exercises to focus the students. Again, the inclusion of these tasks in the curriculum is a direct result of the conversation he had with the middle school art teacher. When I asked the building administrator’s perspective of Aiden’s constant reflection on his teaching method, he immediately assumed I was asking about this conversation between Aiden and the middle school teacher. The building administrator implied skepticism
about the need for Mariposa students to increase their technical skills, and stated later in the interview how he feels its more important for students to “be able to understand what it means to be an artist, and ultimately feel like an artist, than it is to create art.”

Additionally, Aiden plans his instruction for upper-elementary classes in a loose four-week cycle. The cycle is intentionally flexible to allow student interest and engagement with a particular media or idea to guide when the class “moves on” to the next stage in the cycle. Therefore, the cycle can be lengthened as necessary. This reflects his philosophy of remaining flexible to respond to student interest, a quality that he views as imperative to being a “good art teacher.” During my visits, I did not observe him directly discussing the progression of the cycle with students; however, several classes were told that part of their class time “would be used to review work in your portfolios.”

*Upper-elementary instructional cycle.* The first day of the cycle is reserved for “opening” a new studio center or demonstrating a new technique at a familiar center. I was able to observe Aiden “open” the print-making center with a third grade class, where he used mudcloth as inspiration for making patterned foam printing plates. The whole class gathered at the printing center (a designated table in the classroom with a shelf of supplies at one end) to watch Aiden demonstrate marking a foam plate, inking it with a brayer, and then printing onto paper. This stage in the cycle is set aside to share how-to’s, techniques, and new resources available to the students. Once a demonstration has ended, which typically lasts between 10-15 minutes, students have the remaining class time that day for “choice art”. Choice art is the term Aiden uses with students to differentiate between the performance tasks, demonstrations, and their self-initiated artwork. Aiden calls this first day of the cycle “Demonstration.”
The following stage is called “Practice,” where Aiden plans for students to complete a 10-15 minute performance task or work on an ongoing teacher-directed project before transitioning to choice art time. Six of the nine upper-elementary classes I observed started their class time with a performance task, and then moved into choice-art time. I did not observe any teacher-directed projects in upper-elementary classes.

The third stage is called “Check-In,” and Aiden plans for group discussion of an art history or art appreciation component, and for students to review their own artwork before transitioning to choice art time. Aiden was flexible on the timing of these discussions: in one class period, the discussion was at the beginning of class to help set his expectations for their work habits. For another class, the discussion occurred at the end of class, with opportunities for students to reflect on SHoM habits they demonstrated or observed in their peers.

The last stage in the cycle is a “Work Day” for students, and the entire class period is choice art time. Of the nine upper-elementary classes I observed, 2 classes had the entire block for choice-art time. Student interest and engagement plays a major role in transitioning from each stage in the cycle, and Aiden is constantly informally assessing when each class is ready or needing to move on or restart the cycle.

**Typical flow of a class period.** Aiden’s pedagogical approach to teaching differs to accommodate the needs of upper- and lower-elementary students. Therefore, he has adjusted the typical flow of a class period accordingly.

*Lower-elementary.* Kindergarten, first, and second grade classes arrive to the art room and gather in a loose circle on the floor for a demonstration or discussion of their work for the class period. Students have the opportunity to ask questions during these
demonstrations and readily share anecdotes related to the task. At the conclusion of the demonstration, Aiden has students gather materials, which have been previously prepared, and are allowed to choose a space in the classroom to complete their work. During this time, Aiden circulates throughout the room, answering questions, reinforcing concepts or techniques introduced during the demonstrations, and providing support if needed. In the five lower-elementary classes observed, most students used the entire hour block to complete the project developed by the teacher. The few students who completed their work early had limited access to the drawing center and sculpture center, or reviewed artwork in their personal portfolios. Aiden allots about 10 minutes for clean up, and if time allows, has students gather together at the end of the period to discuss their discoveries and work completed during the block.

_Upper-elementary_. Third, fourth, and fifth grade classes typically start class with a performance task, which is usually proceeded with a discussion of how and why professional artists have used the demonstrated technique in their own artwork. However, if Aiden opens a new center or introduces a new technique at an already opened center, students will not work on a performance task that week. Most students will work on the performance task for about 15 minutes before moving on to their choice art projects. Aiden will indicate a “stopping point” for the task each day to ensure that students have their choice art time. Students will then move to the studio center of their choice to begin working on their choice artwork. Sometimes students have worked on art at home and bring that in to complete or continue to work on. Aiden uses this time to assist with uploading artwork to Artsonia, consulting on design decisions, helping define roles in collaborative projects, recommending an artist for students to research that works in
similar methods, redirecting unfocused students, and watching the clock. About 10 minutes before the end of class, students begin cleaning up. Aiden will end class with a group discussion of SHoM observed during the class period, a quick assessment of the performance task or material demonstration, or an opportunity for students to share what they’ve been working on.

**Classroom layout & student use of space**

The layout of the art room at Mariposa is specifically designed to foster easy access for the students to gather needed materials and tools to complete their work. Originally a homeroom classroom, Aiden fully converted the space to function like an art classroom. The cubby area has been converted to hold paint smocks, extra fiber and sculpture materials, and a clay cart. The door has been removed from the only closet in the room, allowing students access to a variety of papers. Tables are spaced out around the room with about 12 chairs available for seating, and two tables lowered so students can sit on the floor to use the surface. He has given careful attention to the “flow of traffic” in the classroom, a recommendation made in *Engaging Learners Through Art-Making* (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). Four of the six tables in the classroom are designated for a specific studio center but students are encouraged to find space to work that suits their

![Figure 12: Idea Center. This image will be replaced with one showing the general layout of the classroom in the final edit of this document. This image shows the “idea center” used by Aiden and students to generate ideas for art-making.](image-url)
needs, even if they need to move materials away from a specific center’s table.

Each homeroom has a designated storage cubby within the art room, and every student has a portfolio for two-dimensional artwork and a sketchbook that is stored in their class’s cubby. Students choose where to complete their work on a daily basis, and Aiden will give permission to upper-elementary students to work outside in the hallway during their choice-art time. Throughout each class period, Aiden is constantly moving around the classroom (and into the hallway) to check on students’ progress. Because of the size of his classroom, storage is a significant challenge for Aiden. He takes advantage of the wide hallway outside the art room to store in-progress artwork. Throughout my observation visits, I often saw students and Aiden walking in and out of the classroom to store or find in-progress work.

This storage solution has served several functions for the art program at Mariposa. Primarily, it has served as an advocacy tool for Aiden, as it has demonstrated the need for more adequate space for the art room. The school’s administrator has been working with district building engineers to site a more appropriate setting for the art room in the school building. Aiden credits his willingness to publicly present his needs for a more adequate space prompting the engineers’ visits, and noted with pleasure that his administrator’s awareness and support for improved classroom space. Additionally, having the students’ in-progress work spill out into the
main hallway has prompted conversations between students from different grade levels about artwork made in other grades. Finally, the presence of student work in the hallway promotes this school as a space where student work is a valued characteristic of the school’s culture. The building administrator even mentioned hoping to see more student work displayed in the hallways “all over” the building in future years.

Aiden has high expectations for student participation in maintaining and caring for the art room. This is a direct example of Aiden’s commitment to teaching students the Studio Habit of Mind (SHoM) \textit{Develop Craft: Studio Practice}. Every upper-elementary student is in charge of storing their own artwork and portfolios, and participating in the daily maintenance of the classroom. These responsibilities were an area where I observed Aiden refining his process to encourage independence in students while demonstrating his expectations. Throughout the visits, he consistently played a “clean up song,” to help keep track of time, even as student roles changed during the clean up process.

During initial visits to Mariposa, a few students in each class would participate in cleaning, while others wandered around the room until the music stopped. By the final visit, each student had a specific role to perform during clean up. Aiden suggested jobs based on student interest and skill; for example, students who frequently used specific studio centers were given the option to volunteer for care of those areas. During the final research visit, the clean up process was efficient, thorough, engaged all students, and helped Aiden reset the classroom for the next class.

**Trends from Classroom Observations**

The following section discusses trends observed during my visits to Mariposa Elementary.
Impact of teacher philosophy on teaching. Aiden’s philosophy of education informs every aspect of his teaching: from how he prepares for teaching, his interactions with students to promote problem solving and persistence, to how his curriculum adapts and changes to reflect student interest. Primarily, he wants his students to “value themselves as artists,” to “think about the role of an artist and the job they do,” and to “realize that when they sit down to make art, they’re...not sitting down with an empty head, they really have to think and go through these steps that real artist practice on a daily basis.” He followed up this statement by saying he wants his students to “be good, creative problem solvers, [know] they can look at things objectively, and not always think logically,” and “appreciate the world as a beautiful place” (Personal communication, 2015). His interactions and conversations with students throughout my visits consistently reflected his philosophy.

Discipline-based Art Education. Aiden has an interesting perspective on what he calls the “interdisciplinary” nature of his philosophy of art education. At the beginning of the school year, when he reflected on introducing themes to upper-elementary students, he gave the students a worksheet with steps to follow to complete the project. The worksheet introduced how-to videos for art-making, artists from history through Youtube videos, and had spaces for students to sketch a plan and write out inspirations for the new project. In his perspective, this worksheet allows him to address the various disciplines in visual art with his students, however I only saw Aiden use this worksheet one time with a student. This particularly student was “stuck” and couldn’t figure out what he wanted to work on, so Aiden gave him the worksheet in an effort to help him focus on a direction. The student didn’t end up filling out the worksheet, but did end up deciding to work on
finger puppets at the fibers stations.

However, Aiden frequently referenced art history with students that directly related to individual student artwork, both performance task projects and choice art projects. Aiden intentionally shows artist examples at the conclusion of a class period in order to prevent students from comparing their work to that of a professional artist. He is comfortable with the amount of time he allots to covering art history, as the school’s PTO sponsors regular art history lessons in homeroom classrooms through a program called “Art Prints.” Aiden was not sure exactly what is covered in these activities, but was pleased to feel like he could focus his time with students on meaningful art-making.

Students are not explicitly introduced to aesthetics or art criticism during their art blocks. However, Aiden does require each upper-elementary student to write an artist statement before putting his or her artwork up for display, either digitally or at school. He asks them to address processes, meaning, and influences in the statement, covering aspects of art criticism he feels are relevant to their developmental level. Critical discussions happen more informally, as students ask him for feedback on their artwork. He will share his thoughts, and then follow up with “you can now make your own decision for the next step,” which I find to be an appropriate level of evaluative discussion for elementary-aged students.

**Role of assessment.** During our interview, Aiden mentioned assessment as an area where he was looking to improve. He shared three different assessment rubrics with me during my visits that he found on the online TAB forums that he hoped to use to evaluate student artwork. However, he didn’t feel that having a student use a rubric would necessarily “shift their mindset” about how they make their work. I did not see him use
rubrics with students during my visits; however, he noted that he and the building administrator were developing a list of assessment strategies he could use. When asked about grading, (this district gives grades for Specials two times per year) Aiden said he grades on behavior and willingness to work, as he doesn’t feel the grading system allows him to accurately share with parents what the children are learning in the art room. He does use a web-based multiple-choice response system called “Plickers” to quickly assess if students know information from the performance tasks, but he does not track the results.

**Lack of themes.** After finishing Szkeley’s text, *Play and Creativity in Art Teaching* (2015), Aiden decided that his students didn’t need the added “assignment” of a theme to influence their choice artwork, as it would interfere with their limited time to work on their choice art. Therefore, he said he shifted the themes to inform the performance tasks given to upper-elementary students. I did not observe any themes explicitly introduced during performance tasks, rather he focused on elements and principles and technical skills in the performance tasks. However, during his conversations with students throughout their choice art time, he would identify themes professional artists would address in their artwork that he saw students also addressing. In a follow-up interview with Aiden at the conclusion of the observations, he said he plans use the themes more directly in his curriculum next year.

**Use of tablet computers.** In every observed upper-elementary class, students used tablets as a research tool. Students would look up images for drawing references, upload images of their work to Artsonia, watch how-to videos of art techniques, or view Pinterest pages of resources created by Aiden. When using the tablets for drawing references, students focused on cartoon characters from popular kids television shows,
sports figures, or other images from popular visual culture. Students used these images as references for favorite characters to practice their observational drawing skills. Throughout the observations, Aiden introduced uploading images to Artsonia, eventually creating a step-by-step written guide so upper-elementary students could learn to independently upload their work. Aiden provided direct support for several weeks until students grew comfortable using the app, and by the end of the research observations, students were helping each other upload images. Only one time was a student observed using a tablet to watch how-to videos or review Pinterest pages, as most students participated in direct experimentation with materials from studio centers.

**Popular studio centers.** During choice art time, students easily used the classroom space, gathering materials needed to produce their art and finding a space to work. The most popular studio centers for choice art with upper-elementary classes were the drawing (58 instances of students using the studio center during choice time), fibers (32 instances), sculpture (23 instances), and printmaking (22 instances). Upper-elementary students also had regular access to a painting center (with watercolor and tempera paint), an “idea” center outfitted with books and brainstorming games, Arduino software kits, and various “makerbots.” The tablets did not function as a studio center as defined by Douglas and Jaquith (2009), as students tended to use the tablets as a tool rather than a media. Students frequently combined methods and media to produce their choice art;
phenomena prompted by Aiden’s modeling of mixed media during “Demonstration” days. Aiden created a “Mixed Media” gallery on the school’s Artsonia page to accommodate this interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student use of Studio Centers During Choice Art</th>
<th>Upper elementary</th>
<th>Lower elementary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Whole group, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Whole group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printmaking</td>
<td>Whole group, 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makerbot/Arduino</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origami</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. This table shows the instances of students using the various studio centers available at Mariposa.

A concern voiced by members of the online TAB forums (myself included) is what to do with students who only want to work with one media in a TAB setting. Aiden stated that he is comfortable with students “becoming experts” with a particular media, but I noticed him encouraging students to try new media, emphasizing that it was ok to make mistakes and feel like an experiment didn’t work. He does not track students’ use of studio centers during their choice time, but through his performance tasks, he is able to ensure that all students are at least trying out a range of media throughout the year.

Creating a sense of community. During the interview, Aiden did not directly discuss building community with his students. However, in 18 separate instances, across all grade levels, I observed him working on developing a sense of community between the students in each class. It is clear from these interactions that he values each student and wants them to feel like s/he are an integral member of the class. Aiden modeled and reinforced positive communication skills and appropriate responses when students were
frustrated or upset. He frequently complemented students on behaviors he observed that contributed to them “behaving like artists.”

Successes and Challenges

Aiden referenced concern that TAB is hard for students who struggle with generating ideas, noting he puts in more effort “to get those kids to find their voice.” I observed several instances where students were unsure of what they wanted to work on. In one instance, Aiden offered the planning sheet to students. In another instance, he directed a small group to the “idea center” to get ideas. He also would suggest that students review work in their portfolio to see if they were inspired by their own previous efforts. Myself, and teachers on the TAB Forums share this concern. Solutions suggested by others are variations on planning worksheets, having students participate in studio maintenance activities (like reclaiming clay), or partnering students to start a collaborative project. I surmise Aiden’s decision to intentionally include themes into his curriculum next year maybe to help alleviate this challenge for his students.

Students visibly enjoy coming to art. I would see lots of smiles and felt a sense of excitement as students entered the classroom. Student engagement is one of the criteria the district uses to evaluate teachers: the building administrator excitedly pulled up Aiden’s data charts during our interview to point out that in 70% of Aiden’s walkthrough observations, he observed students demonstrating “full engagement” (meaning the teacher could leave the classroom and the students would continue to work). He shared that 20-30% is typical for a teacher.

I interpreted student engagement in a variety of ways during my observations. I noted instances where students seemed to produce personally relevant (Aiden’s definition...
of authentic) artwork. Instances where students elaborated beyond teacher-defined expectations in teacher-directed art-making, and when student succeeded independently in a given task were noted as student engagement. Throughout my visits, I noted students frequently asking if they could check out tools to complete choice art at home or return to the art room to during lunch or recess breaks later in the day. Aiden noted that one of the strengths of TAB was that “great things could happen without a lot of oversight” on his part. This reflects comments I read on the TAB forums where teachers implied pride in being able to “get out of the way” of their student’s art-making.

Both Aiden and his administrator shared the only “deficit” of incorporating TAB into the art curriculum at Mariposa is lack of time. His administrator noted that he “trusts” Aiden to prioritize what the students need most from their time in art. Aiden noted that because of the relatively small amount of time students have in art; he chooses to focus on skills that will be helpful to them beyond art-making, skills that will help them “be good learners.” However, they both approach this problem as a “challenge” and have successfully implemented changes to the schedule in efforts to alleviate that problem.

**Final Reflections**

Aiden is a thoughtful, reflective teacher who has worked to create a learning environment for his students where they feel safe to take risks and engage in authentic art-making. He frequently asks for feedback from students, his administrator, and other art teachers in the district, and uses their responses to quickly adapt his curriculum and plans for instruction. Nearly every conversation Aiden has with his students about art are informed by his previous experience as a working artist, and by his desire for them to be curious, engaged, problem-solvers. During one observation, as second grade students
were experimenting with symmetry and contrast, I overheard a group of students talking about “geniuses.” They reflected that little kids “can’t be geniuses yet” because they “don’t have a lot of different ideas.” One little boy piped up and said “Am I a genius, then? Cause I have lots of different ideas!”

**Case Two: Sheffield Middle School**

Even though Sheffield Middle School is centrally located within the community it serves, it is easy to drive past the school without realizing. On my first few visits to the campus, I missed the turn for the school’s main driveway, as signage for the building was not prominently displayed. Sheffield’s property hosts two schools: Sheffield Middle and one of the community’s elementary schools. Built in 2008, the school buildings are connected, with the main entrances to both schools facing a shared bus loop. This makes the facade of the structure quite large, and unless a visitor knows where they are going, it can be confusing to know how to enter either school. Within the building, both schools have access to a shared auditorium, and all teachers have access to a shared workspace.

Sheffield is located in a unique community. While parts of the greater region are quite rural, with many small and large farms just adjacent to the school (on some visits, cows were grazing on a hillside behind the school), other areas served by the school feel more urban. The access road to the school campus passes by hotels, restaurants, and shopping areas. Directly across the recess fields outside the art room is a large asphalt plant. The aromas from the plant are distinctive and at times can be smelled within the school building.

Sheffield’s glass-walled entrance atrium is flooded with natural light, and signage directs all visitors to enter through the school’s main office. This is a busy area of the
school; a staff member while checking in always greeted me. On my research visits, I would often see students sitting in the chairs, and parents signing students in or out. The main hallway of the school is open and airy; clerestory windows line the ceiling and a student common area is visible from the entrance. Artfully arranged portraits of the teaching staff were displayed across from the office door, and student artwork hung in professional-looking frames lined the other side of the hallway.

![Image](image.png)

_Figure 15. Sheffield's smART Spot. This area serves as a hybrid gallery space and area for student and teacher collaboration._

The art classroom is located at the far end of the school building, and Hannah noted several times how lonely she feels on her “end of the school.” She has worked hard to bring attention to the art program at Sheffield: several of the school’s display cases host “sculptures” of art supplies when not filled with student artwork, and four bulletin boards line the hallway outside her classroom. Hannah recognized the potential of an open area across from her classroom and was awarded a large grant to transform this unused space into what she calls a “smART spot.” It is outfitted with professional gallery lighting, a wireless TV that can connect to teacher computers, a large rug and worktable, and more professional frames to hang student artwork. She is hopeful that students and teachers will begin using this area as a “flexible learning space” (personal communication, 2016).
I surmise this is an effort on her part to bring some of the activity of the school community down to her end of the building, and alleviate her feelings of isolation.

Sheffield’s large student body is culturally diverse. As of February 29, 2016, 24% of the 842 students on campus received English Language Learner (ELL) services (School Division Data Sets, 2016). Division-wide, students come from 46 different countries (including the U.S.), and speak 51 different languages. School division goals for the current school year focus on increasing student literacy and cultivating a sense of social-emotional wellbeing for students and staff (School Division website, 2016).

Hannah has been teaching art at Sheffield for three years, and would frequently remark upon the diversity of the students in her classes. She felt a particular need to educate herself on methods to effectively and empathetically increase her students’ cultural awareness. Over the summer of 2015, she received an international travel grant that included a month-long trip abroad and developing multicultural art lessons (personal communication, 2015).

Prior to starting this research project, I had visited Sheffield on several occasions to take part in professional development activities, so I was somewhat familiar with the layout of the building. Thanks to professional relationships I previously developed with teachers in the division, I have used some of the school’s “larger” tools (a heat press and clay slab roller) for projects I developed for my own students. Additionally, I personally knew a number of the students in the classes I observed and therefore, I was able to form collegial relationships with the students quickly. This afforded me a depth in conversations with students about artwork that was extremely personal. Students quickly and readily began to interact with me in ways similar to how they interact with Hannah,
asking for artistic advice or instigating casual conversations.

Because leadership at Sheffield was new this year, I determined that interviewing the building administrator would offer a limited perspective of the role of the art program within the overall school community. I made specific effort to talk with the eighth grade students about their perspective of the art program, as they would have had more interaction with Hannah during their schooling at Sheffield. Due to scheduled school holidays, weather cancellations, and family events for Hannah, there was a four-week gap in the middle of my observations at Sheffield. During this time, I maintained contact with Hannah, and regularly checked on the school’s Artsonia page to track student projects.

**Teacher Background and Pedagogy**

Hannah’s passion for art education is palpable. In the interactions I observed, she found a way to relate the conversation to meaningful experiences she’s had or her students have had with the arts. She has actively pursued professional development opportunities that will expand her skill set to meet the needs of her students, and has willingly taken on leadership roles to promote both her program and art education in general. She is currently the Encore Team leader at Sheffield, and is representing Sheffield on a district-wide “leadership team” where representatives from each school and the central office gather to share information and ideas for improving instruction across the district. She is also active in the state’s leadership organization for art teachers.

Hannah has had a varied career spanning 21 years. Over the course of her career, she has taught at 10 schools in rural, suburban, and urban communities, in two different states. She has taught both elementary and middle level art, in a variety of settings including “art on a cart” and at a school with a suite of art rooms. Hannah attended a
large public university, graduating with a double major in printmaking and art education. The university’s art education classroom was set up like an art studio, and they had open studio time to figure out how to teach media on “a kid level.” Initial lesson plan development included art history, contemporary art, and cross-curricular connections, and Hannah said she felt pushed to become “proficient in materials and problem solving strategies.” Reflecting on the program, she shared that while the “verbiage” of the program was “very DBAE,” she felt the professors encouraged their students to “find their own voice as a teacher,” and “gave us a lot of different options of ways to teach,” and “changed the curriculum to help each student develop in the best way to become a teacher” (personal communication, 2015). She summarized her initial training by saying that “I didn’t leave college saying ‘I teach this way,’ [instead], I left saying ‘I teach art’.”

She has since earned her M.F.A. in Painting, and is a National Board Certified Teacher.

The open-minded attitude modeled by her professors for methods of teaching, and perspectives of what could be included in art curriculum seems to have had a significant impact in her own interests as a teacher. Throughout her career, she has collaborated with music teachers, science, math, and technology teachers, and groups outside the school to making learning come to life for her students. At various points during my research visits, she referenced “STEAM” (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math), makerspaces, SHoM, and interdisciplinary learning as influences on her current pedagogy. On my last research visit, she excitedly shared that she received a grant to purchase three 3D printers and a laser cutter for Sheffield’s students. Hannah’s philosophy of art education centers on providing her students with the skills, tools, and confidence to communicate with what she called “their visual voice,” and readily uses her diverse background knowledge to
recommend connections that she feels will resonate with individual students.

Hannah is very attuned to the skills of her students, and has thoughtfully adapted her teaching to best meet their needs. Throughout my research visits, she would remark upon the differences between Sheffield and her previous school and community, and how she has had to adapt herself and her teaching to students at Sheffield. For example, at her previous school, she remarked that her students had more exposure to art and culture in the community, and had more background knowledge of a variety of art media. Students would regularly arrive to school, having purchased all the materials they needed to complete their next art project. She then followed up with an interaction she had with a new eighth grade student who had recently immigrated to the United States. She and the student were discussing his ideas for a project about a significant memory, and she suggested painting would be a good media for him. It quickly became apparent to Hannah that he didn’t know what she was referring to, and that day, she ended up introducing this student to paint and a paintbrush for the first time.

Hannah implied that conversations like this with students were common at Sheffield, and that has changed how she approached implementing her art curriculum. In wanting to help her students at Sheffield learn to effectively communicate with “their visual voice,” she has explicitly worked on developing trust in order to “push” them to “open up…[to be] more flexible with what they can visually say in their artwork.” During

*Figure 16. Home in Eritrea. This painting was made by a student whose first introduction to paint as an art medium was at Sheffield in the eighth grade.*
my research visits, the mutual trust and affection between Hannah and her students was evident, which I interpret as a reflection of her efforts to make her art room a safe place for students. On 18 different occasions, I noted a conversation, comment, or recommendation made between Hannah and a student that signified a relationship of mutual trust. When a student wasn’t performing to the level she expected, behaviorally or artistically, she had created an environment where she could have private, quiet conversations one-on-one with the student, while the rest of the class would continue working independently. In the instances observed, the student would eventually respond to Hannah’s gentle encouragement.

When asked about how she learned about TAB pedagogy, Hannah replied that she had to “go back really, really far…[to] the early stages of the Internet.” When she first started teaching, she was “very isolated,” and felt she lacked a local community of art teachers with whom to share ideas. In those early years of the Internet, she shared lesson plans and ideas on a website where she found resources that helped her tailor her art curriculum to the interests and needs of her students. She shared how “funny” it has been for her to read about TAB, and “the names [given] to things, when it’s been how I’ve sort of had to develop, to do what I thought was best for the kids.” Hannah reflected that her classroom set-up and her personal pedagogy differs from that of TAB, because she doesn’t have studio centers set up around the classroom. This is because she wants her students to “appreciate what a material can do,” and due to limits of time and the number of students in her classes, she doesn’t feel she can help students achieve the “skill base they want” if all media options were available at all times. She also specifically wants to challenge students to try media that they may not be inclined to try on their own. She
reflected that “if [they] don’t try it (meaning different media), [they] won’t know if [they] like it.” We also discussed at length the philosophical difference between offering students “choice” in their artwork and setting up a classroom with TAB pedagogy guiding teacher and student interactions. Hannah’s opinions on these differences will be discussed later. She does not feel that “what [she] does is TAB,” but she does offer her seventh and eighth students choice in their media and visual responses to project prompts.

Related to her focus of developing students’ technical skill in a variety of art media, Hannah was constantly engaged in some sort of informal critique with students. It was such a habitual and integrated element of her pedagogy that it became hard to catch as I documented students working. Of the 78 individual conversations directly focused on student artwork, 31 involved some sort of critical reflection from Hannah. I also noticed that she rarely gave a complement without also giving a qualifier for some sort of improvement. For example, a student asked for her opinion on a portrait of his sister he had spent the weekend working on. Hannah complemented the texture differences in the hair and skin, and said, “Look at her hands...what do you think of the proportion of her hands? Look at your face in the mirror and hold your hand next to your face. Look at the size of her face, compared to the size of her hands. Do you think you can improve the proportions?” The student replied with “Oh, yea!” and immediately started resizing the hands. This reflects her philosophy that every student has something specific and unique that they want to share, and her job is to help them do so, to the best of their ability. Her students clearly desired her approval and were willing to rework or improve their pieces to meet her expectations for excellence. Even students who were reluctant to complete their artwork clearly enjoyed being in the classroom, and were tolerant to her
affectionately persistent reminders to get back to work.

This habit of informal critique is also related to Hannah’s perspective on grading and assessment. She reflected that her “early middle school philosophy” on grading supported student exploration of elective subjects. She was able to easily watch for what she calls “affective growth” in their interactions with her, and document improvements in their portfolio of work over time. She reflected frustration with contemporary grading expectations for middle school students, and has tried her best to educate her administrators on how she tracks student progress. Her methods for grading will be discussed in detail later.

Curriculum and Preparation for Learning

The Encore class rotation and grade level schedule is quite complex at Sheffield. Encore classes include art, general music, band, technology education, chorus, library, family and consumer sciences, keyboarding, drama, and Spanish. Hannah teaches two sections of fifth grade every nine-weeks, one section each of sixth and seventh grade for an 18-week semester, and two sections of eighth grade for the entire school year. The fifth grade class was so large this year that 1/5 of the student body did not get to take art. Hannah also noted that she had 150 seventh grade students sign up to take art this year, but the schedule and classroom only allowed for 50 students on her roster. She asked to combine her eighth grade classes together (one section had 8 students), but the administrators preferred to maintain the schedule to “preserve class space for next school year.” Hannah shared that several students and/or parents specifically asked for schedule switches, which she was happy to accommodate if the administration was willing.

Throughout my visits, I noticed several new students joined her eighth grade classes.
Hannah also noted that Encore classes were previously on an A/B schedule, making it difficult to build habits and routines with her students. However, through strategic and persistent conversation, Hannah’s schedule was changed this school year, and she sees all her classes every day.

Due the pace of rotation of the Encore classes at Sheffield, Hannah feels that she needs to offer guided explorations of specific materials to the fifth and sixth grade students, to be most efficient with the limited time these students have in her class. Seventh and eighth grade students are given more creative freedom with the content of their artwork, with eighth grade students required to address a specific theme with their projects. By eighth grade, students are able to choose from a variety of media to complete their work.

**Choices versus TAB.** Recent conversations on the TAB forums have discussed whether there is a philosophical difference between choice-based teaching strategies and TAB. According to Douglas and Jaquith (2009), in *Engaging Learners through Artmaking*, TAB “is choice-based art education” (p.3). Hannah’s perspective is that there is a difference between choice and TAB, and that she is offering “modified” choice for her students at Sheffield. Reflecting on her previous teaching position, she noted that differences in the two communities required her to significantly change her teaching methodologies to adequately meet the needs of the students in both communities. At her previous school, students came to art with a more developed background in visual arts, where as at Sheffield, she saw a need to build up “the basics” (she did not specify basics in content or technique, but I assumed she meant both) due to the students’ lack of exposure. While she has tried “mini centers” at Sheffield, she reflected that her students
“needed more guidance to understand the media.” This opinion reflects her experience of 14 years working with middle school students, and knowing their desire for recognition of success from their peers. Hannah wants art to be a place where students can receive positive recognition for producing highly developed, content-rich artwork, and “feel proud of their finished piece.” Pride for her program and the quality of her student’s artwork drives Hannah’s efforts to help her students.

Hannah also reflected her opinion of the success of TAB pedagogy at the elementary level, where students are “truly just exploring and trying things out.” However, in her opinion, as students desire more skills and refinement in their imagery, adapting her pedagogy so she can teach more basic technical skills like proportion, value, shading, color theory, and the like, allows her students to feel more successful than if they were exploring with media. On teaching technical skills with media, Hannah reflected “If they don’t know how to use a material, how much will they be willing to risk saying something, and how successful will it be? Will it be what they wanted?” She followed up this comment with a reflecting of the apprenticeship model of art education, saying “here’s nothing wrong with that, and building off that and making it your own. And I think there should be an appreciation for that. And to separate [TAB and teacher-directed methods] firmly is missing the benefit and beauty of both styles.” Of the 21 documented instances where Hannah was involved in some sort of direct instruction with a student, 16 instances involved teaching a specific technique with an art media. Hannah readily used a variety of teaching techniques for direction instruction, including hand-over-hand, referencing teacher and peer examples, suggesting artists from history as inspiration, or personal practice in sketchbooks. By implementing an “adapted choice”
Curriculum structure for her students, she felt better able to adequately prepare her students for the rigor of a high school art program.

Curriculum. Hannah does extensive curriculum planning in the summer months, “laying out a map of the things I want them to experience by the end of the year,” preparing goals for the upcoming year based on her roster of returning students. Therefore, general content topics will remain from year to year in her curriculum, such as teaching radial symmetry to sixth grade, but her methods for introducing the concept will change. She accounts for student needs and exceptionalities in her planning, adapting teaching methods to ensure the success of all students. She also addresses state and national standards, the district’s goals and the students’ personal goals as she is preparing her curricular goals. Her district required all teachers to incorporate literacy into their subject area this year; Hannah’s solution was to have students write about art from history using her “T.H.I.N.K.” acronym (Tell, How, Interpret, Now, Know), with the expectation that their personal artwork and artist statements would improve as they looked at and wrote about another artist’s work. This is an element from her personal pedagogy that she adapted to meet the needs of her district, serving to increase students’ art criticism skills and meet the requirements of the district. However, it was evident from her tone of voice and facial expressions discussing this topic in the interview that she doesn’t feel 42 minute teaching blocks allow her to address these goals to the depth she desired.

All students were asked to provide their own sketchbooks for the class, to be stored in the classroom, while Hannah used her budget from the school to provide all the art materials. When showing me around her classroom, I remarked upon the amount of
watercolor refills she stored in a cabinet. She replied that her budget had been frozen last year, and she didn’t want to risk running out of watercolor paints. It was clear to me that she feels her budget at Sheffield is low for the number of students in her classes, as she implied during several informal conversations that she could offer more options to students if she had a bigger budget.

**Fifth and sixth grade art curriculum.** Hannah’s curriculum for fifth and sixth grade focuses on basic techniques using a variety of media and familiarizing students to the classroom and procedures for using the space. The content of the projects students work on may change each rotation, but basic techniques will remain the same. She is able to introduce more content and media with sixth grade, but frequently will welcome new students who could not fit art into their rotation in fifth grade. These students therefore need more teacher support in learning materials and procedures.

![Figures 17, 18, & 19. Radial Symmetry Prompt. This series of images shows Hannah's various prompts for teaching radial symmetry to her sixth grade students.](image)

**Seventh grade art curriculum.** There are many ways Hannah incorporates TAB philosophy while maintaining a modified-choice curriculum for her seventh grade students. She begins the semester-long class with a project where the students practice using six different types of media. This project starts with an observational drawing, then Hannah gives a short demonstration of each media, and students then
practice with each media in a defined area of the drawing. These short media
demonstrations, which Hannah referred to as “mini lessons,” function like the five-
minute demos recommended by Douglas & Jaquith (2009). In subsequent projects,
Hannah incorporates limited choice in content (for example, students could draw an
animal of their choice for one project) and offers more media choices for future artwork.
Students are taught how to access and care for supplies from her student supply cabinets.
As discussed previously, the supply cabinets contain a variety of materials and tools
students can use as needed, and reflects the TAB philosophy of making materials
available to students in a logical and accessible way.

Eighth grade art curriculum. Because of the amount of time allotted for eighth
grade art, Hannah’s eighth grade art curriculum allows for the greatest amount student
independence in content, media, and methods for art-making. She reflected that the first
nine weeks of the eighth grade curriculum is structured to review and reinforce basic
skills with media, which allows her to ensure that all students (both returning and new)
have a “skill-base” that will allow them to “feel proud [of their work].” Hannah
interchangeably uses the terms “themes” and “big ideas” to discuss over-arching concepts
she wants students “to speak to” in their art-making. Her “theme cycle” (my term), begins
with concepts with which Hannah anticipates they have direct personal experience, in
order to promote a sense of self-reflection in their art-making. She gradually asked eighth
grade students to address more complex concepts in their artwork, as she also began
introducing more advanced art media. Aligning my personal schedule to Sheffield’s
school hours dictated that all of my observations at Sheffield were in eighth grade art
classes.
Typical flow of an eighth grade art class

Small groups of students arrive together to the classroom, fondly saying hello to Hannah and other classmates as they entered the classroom. Hannah greets students at the door, monitoring students walking in the hallway as well. Students put their belongings next to their seat (chosen by the students, with Hannah’s permission) and get out the materials needed to continue working on their current projects. Once the passing time concluded (there are no bells at Sheffield), Hannah shuts the door and if needed, draws students’ attention to a specific goal for the day. These goals are written on the “front” white board. Unless she introduces a new project, students have the entire class block to continue their work. Hannah is in constant motion while the students are in the classroom, checking in with students, helping others find a needed material, making a recommendation at a critical stage for another. Hannah typically allows about five minutes for clean up, by announcing “Ok, guys, time to clean up” to the entire class. If a specific media needs “special” instructions for storage, Hannah shares those procedures, but otherwise, students were familiar with where media and projects are stored and how to clean up. If Hannah feels students are slacking in their clean up efforts, she threatens to play a popular children’s television show clean up song (and did on one observation) to motivate them.

When Hannah introduces a new theme or project rotation, she loudly asks for the class’s attention using a school-wide call and response phrase, has students who were ready to move on to the next project turn their attention to the front white board. I observed two introductions to a new project during my observations, one of which focused on the theme of “Play.” Hannah spent about five minutes discussing the goal of
their next project while the introduction of an Art21 video addressing the theme played in
the background. In this introduction, she stated that artists will sometimes play with their
materials to inspire them to work in new ways. She shared that starting a new project by
“experimenting with materials” instead of dealing with an image or idea would be a
different starting point for them, but that she wanted them to not feel like they had to
make something “recognizable today. I just want you to get comfortable experimenting
with the materials.” Students then moved to designated tables in the classroom supplied
with specific materials she wanted them to “play” with that day: monoprinting using
foam plates, markers, and water, or using acrylic paints to do the “100 Color Challenge,”
where one attempts to mix 100 different hues. It is clear that Hannah’s classroom
procedures allowed for flexible use of space, as students amicably adapted their work
spaces to accommodate these temporary “media centers.”

Hannah and I spoke at length about this project before the introduction. Her end
goal for students was that they’d create an image of a “memory of play” from their
childhood, using all their experiments in a collage artwork. Since she wanted students to
approach the theme with a “playful” attitude, and therefore introduced the idea of playing
with materials as a way of introducing the theme. She specifically waited to introduce
this lesson and theme until she felt the students were ready to approach the concept of
“Play” and “playing with media” with a mature attitude. Based on our discussions, I
interpreted her definition of what students would do with the materials as “intentional
experimentation.” Throughout this observation, she encouraged students to “see what
happens when...” and “don’t be afraid for something unexpected to happen!”

Hannah is flexible on due dates with her eighth grade students: while she did set
deadlines for each project, if the class was demonstrating intense interest and needed more time to complete the project, she would extend the deadline. I observed this during my visits: the eighth grade two-part memory project that was planned to last two weeks was extended into about five weeks due to student interest. Hannah also has “open studio” (my term) Tuesday through Friday in the mornings before school available to all grade levels. Students use this time to continue working on projects if the rest of their class has moved on, try out new media, or upload artwork to Artsonia. Throughout my observations, she would remind students they could “come in morning and keep working.”

The included chart shows the variety of teaching and learning activities observed during the eighth grade art classes during my observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities in Eighth Grade Art Class</th>
<th>Instances Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of project</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students work independently</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Instruction (media techniques, elements &amp; principles of art)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique (Informal with small group)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student uploads artwork to Artsonia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student free time</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. This table notes the tallies the types of learning activities observed during research visits to eighth grade art classes at Sheffield.

**Classroom use and layout of space**

Even though Hannah’s classroom is not set up with TAB-style studio centers, with materials available to all students at all times, Hannah has made several cabinets with supplies available to her seventh and eighth grade students as needed. One cabinet is decorated to look like an element of a popular television show, demonstrating Hannah’s effort to personally connect with her students. Signage on the cabinet door states that the materials are available to all students at Sheffield, and Hannah has taught students how to
keep the bins of supplies maintained. All supply cabinets are conveniently located in a visible area, so she can easily monitor materials as accessed by the students. Seventh and eighth grade students regularly have access to a variety of drawing media and tools, adhesives, and scissors, the iPad cabinet, and a variety of paints and brushes. A large drying rack is available to students as well as a networked printer, and six desktop computers. One classroom wall is lined with windows, which overlooks a recess field and part of the asphalt plant next to the school building.

*Figure 20.* Tardis Cabinet. This cabinet has bins of materials seventh and eighth grade students have access to as needed.

*Figure 21.* Sheffield’s Art Classroom. Behind the photographer is a whiteboard where Hannah writes announcements for students as needed.
The front and back walls of the classroom are lined with magnetized white boards, where Hannah writes daily announcements or step-by-step media instructions. A projector is also connected to the front white board, which Hannah uses to show videos from Art21, examples of projects, and examples from art history. Hannah uses the back white board to write out daily objectives for each grade, along with vocabulary words, artists for study, or parts of content students will journal about in their sketchbooks. All students write the objectives and answer any questions for analysis into their sketchbooks prior to starting a new project; Hannah will change out prompts and objectives as projects are completed. Various classroom procedural posters are hung around the room, along with examples of projects Hannah’s students have completed over the years.

There are seven student worktables with four or five stools each in the middle of the classroom, two supply tables, and bins for student sketchbooks. Hannah has an additional supply cabinet in the main classroom that contain materials she provides to students as needed, such as professional quality art materials, clay supplies, and basic office supplies. Hannah has access to a kiln room and a large storage room from inside the main classroom area however; students are not given access to these spaces. The “smART spot” space is right outside the classroom door, and is arranged for student and teacher use.

**Trends from classroom observations**

The following section describes trends observed in Hannah’s teaching and interactions with students.

**Impact of teacher philosophy on teaching.** Hannah’s stated philosophy of art education is “I want my students to have the skills that will help them best express their
visual voice” (Personal communication, 2015). Her understanding of what motivates middle school-aged students and how she can best teach basic technical skills that allow students to feel successful drive her pedagogy. The following trends were discussed in her introductory interview and were observed throughout my research visits.

Student agency. Hannah’s interactions with her students revolved around helping them develop confidence, decision-making skills, and persistence to consistently produce the best work they possibly could. She regularly asks students to share what they are want to learn with media, process, or content and will adjust her curriculum to include their interests. Hannah’s willingness to adapt her curriculum reflects the TAB pedagogy concept of “emergent curriculum.” For example, one student specifically noted that she wanted to “get better at skin tones,” while another said they wanted to get “better at drawing real.” Throughout my visits, Hannah included opportunities for these students to accomplish their individual goals into the thematic projects she introduced.

Regardless of a student’s ability, Hannah believes that “every student has something they want to say, and my job is to help them.” She treats every student in the

*Figures 22 & 23. “Bad Bath” & “My Box”. This pair of images shows Hannah’s flexibility to work with students at their ability level, dealing with similar thematic content.*
classroom with the same high regard, and is able to successfully challenge both gifted artists and students who simply enjoy being in her classroom to produce meaningful and significant artwork. During one observation, a student who has a developmental delay and physical handicap was expressing disappointment in his final artwork, stating, “I suck at this stuff.” Hannah’s response to this student was “Well, this is you, this is your idea. Thank you for sharing that. And you’ll keep working and keep getting better.” In this same class, Hannah had another student experiment with various lighting techniques to emphasize the emotional feeling a sculpture piece dealing with her memories of immigrating to the USA. Hannah is reflecting the TAB philosophy of documenting student growth on an individual level, and reviews students’ Artsonia portfolios to look for individual growth to inform their final grades each quarter.

**Assessment.** All art students at Sheffield “turn in” their work by uploading an image to Artsonia using the Artsonia app. Hannah provides several questions about the project, and students select one to address in the accompanying artist statement. Hannah uses what she calls the “Five C’s” for evaluating their work: Craftsmanship, Creativity, Criteria, Composition, and Communication. By looking for these five elements in the students’ artwork, she is able to assess technical development in art skills, what she calls “affective development” (a student’s willingness to include personally meaningful content in their artwork), and their willingness to try new materials or content. Hannah’s interpretations of these five elements are complementary to the “Artistic behaviors” referred to in TAB literature for evaluation of student artwork (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009).

As mentioned previously, Hannah regularly checks in with students during the art-making process, offering informal assessment of their art-making decisions and technical
Teaching for Artistic Behavior

skill. During my research visits, I documented 35 informal critique conversations between Hannah and her eighth grade students. These conversations also help students develop their art criticism skills as Hannah models vocabulary use and process for evaluating artwork. She discussed several methods for group critiques she’s used at Sheffield, however I did not observe a group critique during my visits due to scheduling conflicts and weather cancellations.

**Balance of direct instruction and student choice.** Hannah uses themes to give students a starting point for their projects, and then asks them to write a media goal they’d like to accomplish in the project. Students then share their responses to the theme with Hannah. She will make suggestions for their media selection, recommends artists for them to research who have worked in similar ways or with similar content, and gives “approval” for the student to begin working. By having students “defend” their ideas to her, she is able to help them refine their ideas before they begin their projects and can begin thinking of ways to help streamline their art-making process. Hannah knows her students well, and is able to make recommendations based on personal interests, family background, and desire for artistic growth.

During my final visit to Sheffield, all students were working on a self-portrait in graphite showing high contrast with value, with a grid to help work on proportion. Hannah informed me that this whole group lesson was in response to several needs. First, their previous memory projects appeared flat because they didn’t understand how to use value to show depth. Secondly, several student requested learning how to “get better at portraits,” and she felt this skill would be helpful to everyone. Finally, Hannah revealed needing more structure in the flow of the class period because of an incident that
happened while she was away from school. She felt the students needed to earn her trust again before she felt comfortable with them accessing materials freely. I was impressed that she was able to positively incorporate a skill the students wanted to learn, while she simultaneously reestablished expectations for behavior in the classroom. The emotional feel in the room during that observation was subdued, however students were clearly willing to participate in a whole group lesson and seemed to enjoy the results of their efforts. They actively asked for assistance from Hannah, shared discoveries with their peers regarding using the media, and responded to Hannah’s recommendations for improving the final drawing.

*Use of tablet computers.* Hannah was awarded a grant to purchase a class set of iPads, a charging station, and styluses her first year at Sheffield. Students are assigned an iPad to use during their class time, with the iPads serving two primary functions. Hannah introduced them like another art media; fifth through seventh grade students used them to complete teacher-directed projects, and eighth grade students could use them like any other media choice to complete their thematic projects, typically using a drawing app and an app that simulated throwing on a potter’s wheel. The iPads also served as a research tool for students and as a method for uploading images of their personal artwork to Artsonia. As students would ask for assistance or recommendations for next steps in their projects, Hannah would frequently recommend they “use [their] iPad” to prompt students to find the answers out for themselves.

*Popular media.* In addition to her efforts in the classroom, Hannah is also a working artist. Her current work has been in illustration: she has contributed to two collaboratively produced picture books, and regularly produces poster illustrations for a
public gathering space. It is clear the media she enjoys using in her own work influences the media her students use. Drawing media are very popular with her students, including graphite and colored pencils, as are varieties of paint. Below is a chart showing observed instances of students using available media during classroom visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Used by Eighth Grade Students</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>In Final Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - graphite</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - colored pencil</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - pen &amp; ink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - oil pastel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing - chalk pastel</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint - watercolor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint - watercolor pencil</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint - tempera</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint - acrylics</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printmaking</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPad - drawing app</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaving (paper)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 Color challenge</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrait showing value &amp; proportion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole Group, 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. This table charts eighth grade student use of media during observations.

*Building anticipation.* Hannah is particularly good at building anticipation in her students. She specifically noted that she has brought in her personal art supplies to share with the eighth grade students, to show them the difference between student and professional materials. Once students demonstrate a willingness to care for those advanced materials, she would show them where she kept similar professional art materials for them in the art room. Additionally, she will have students experiment with new methods or media before specifically telling them how they will use the methods or
media in the upcoming project. She has worked hard to build trust with her students so they are willing to take these calculated risks for her. At one observation, a student was frustrated with how water was making a monoprint appear blurry. Her response to him was “Yes, it’s going to get blurry. See what happens when you use less water next time. And don’t be afraid for the image to change on you. You might find you like the unexpected.”

**Sense of community.** It was clear from the introductory interview that Hannah has been working hard to build trust with her students, knowing that once they trusted her, they would be willing “to open up in their art-making.” Additionally, Hannah specifically planned to incorporate more “global themes” into her curriculum this year, as the student body at Sheffield is culturally diverse. In her words, she wanted to “push the conversations” about heritage and cultural backgrounds. She noticed that while the school is very diverse, her Asian students seemed to feel culturally marginalized. She was awarded a travel grant to study in Asia, to learn about the cultural heritage of the region, and has been incorporating elements from Asian culture into her fifth through seventh grade curriculum this year.

**Advocacy.** Hannah is extremely involved in the life of her school, in part because she knows that by being visibly present, she can advocate for her program. She is the Encore team leader and represents Sheffield at the district level. She actively looks for ways to collaborate with teachers to develop interdisciplinary experiences for students who may never take an art class at Sheffield. The “smART spot” was developed to offer students and teachers another common space for learning in Sheffield. Hannah spoke directly about feeling “isolated” from the rest of the school community, a feeling she
frequently shared with me during our informal conversations after observation visits. Her efforts to be an active member of the faculty demonstrate her willingness to network and make connections with her peers.

The popularity of the art program at Sheffield has grown exponentially in the last three years, a trend I attribute to Hannah’s commitment to promote her program. She regularly applies for grants to fund projects and tools she thinks will meet the needs of her students, and offers school-wide opportunities for students to engage with visual art. In addition to the grants previously mentioned, Hannah was awarded a grant this year to create portfolios students could check out and take home. She realized students lacked art supplies at home and has filled the portfolios with a mini lesson plan translated in several languages, materials, visuals, and resource books so students can share art-making with their families. She mentioned that these portfolios help her introduce more art history to her students, as she doesn’t address art history to the depth she would prefer. She annually puts on an event she calls “A.R.T: Art Read Think Day,” where teachers can bring their classes to a common area of the school and community readers volunteer to read an “art themed book” and discuss it with the gathered students. As previously mentioned, student interest in her classes are dramatically increasing: 150 seventh grade students signed up for art last year, and there were 50 allotted spots on her roster. She is hopeful that if she can maintain sustained interest in the classes, the division would consider adding a second art position at Sheffield.

It was also evident to me that Hannah values networking with other art teachers. She has intentionally developed rich and meaningful relationships with teachers across the country through her involvement with various web-based forums. She reflected that
even though each art teacher in the group is in a different community, she can “see the power in what they’re able to get their students to do...and together, we make every learning environment...better by being associated together.” During our introductory interview, she noted with emotion the importance of her “ArtsEdPLN” team, remarking that she “wouldn’t be the teacher [she is] without them” (personal communication, 2015). She shared some ways this group has contributed to her growth as a teacher, such as mentorship with students, various collaborative projects, and joint presentations at several National Art Education Association conferences.

**Successes and Challenges**

Opportunities for formal criticism activities and direct instruction of art history were limited at Sheffield. However, Hannah’s recommendations to individual students for artists to research based on their projects and her daily interactions with students during their personal art-making process allows her to address these disciplines in her short art periods. It is clear that Hannah sees the value and necessity of all her students to be able to communicate with their “visual voice,” and this belief guides all her preparations for and interactions with students.

While Hannah referenced wanting to expose students to sculpture techniques as a preparation for high school art classes, I did not see any direct instruction in three-dimensional work. I saw the results of two students who chose to build small clay sculptures for their memory projects and Hannah referenced a mask project students completed before my research project started. On my last visit to the school, I saw several examples of an eighth-grade altered book project. Beyond clay projects at the sixth and seventh grade levels, I am unaware of any other three-dimensional media for fifth, sixth,
and seventh grade students. There is a preference for two-dimensional media in Hannah’s curriculum, and students who “think three-dimensionally” and enjoy working sculpturally miss out on opportunities to develop those skills. Fine handcrafts like weaving, embroidery, or jewelry making offer other modes of thinking and learning that may attract another type of art student to the program. I did not observe any specific requests from the students about including those types of media, however Hannah demonstrates a willingness to incorporate students’ interests into her curriculum. She shared that a project students will be working on next year is a piece of jewelry, designing it on an iPad app and then printing it using the new 3D printers.

Final Reflections

Hannah is an extremely reflective, empathetic, and motivated teacher. She is attuned to her school community and has adapted her pedagogy and curriculum to specifically address interests and needs of her students. She lives and breaths art education, approaching her work with the same intensity and drive of an artist in the midst of improving their artistic process. Even in the face of challenges, both personal and professional, her commitment to her childhood desire to be an art teacher has helped her maintain a palpable joy for teaching art.
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Reflections

A strength of TAB pedagogy is its flexibility. While Aiden and Hannah’s interpretations of CBAE and TAB pedagogy clearly differed, their decisions for implementing CBAE in their classrooms are made in reflection of student, school, and community needs. In this section, findings are organized as they relate to the research questions that guided this project. Common and divergent findings from Mariposa and Sheffield are shared, with additional findings from Nandina and Hopewell included to support and further elaborate my conclusions. Trends from the review of literature relevant to the case studies are also included. Each question is addressed separately, and key findings from the research study that pertain to each question are italicized for clarity.

I conclude the chapter with additional reflections that are general to TAB pedagogy and philosophy, my recommendations for other art educators considering TAB strategies for their curriculum, areas for growth and consideration regarding TAB, and opportunities for future research. An extensive list of resources I found particularly helpful throughout this research project is also included.

Question 1: What are the curricular elements informing choice-based pedagogies like TAB?

Constructivist theories of learning provide the philosophical underpinning of TAB pedagogy. Constructivism in education has been referred to as “student- or child-centered learning” (Simpson, 1996), as opposed to theories based on adult-centered teaching. In constructivist learning environments, learning activities provide students with opportunities to connect new knowledge to previous experiences, through hands-on learning (Prater, 2001). Other educational models influencing TAB teachers such as the
Waldorf model, Montessori model, and the Reggio-Emilia Experience, share a similar philosophy, that children learn best through direct, hands-on experience. Wiggins (2015a) reflects that constructivist approaches in the art classroom encourage student empowerment, and promote deeper levels of authentic engagement. TAB literature recommends that teachers interested in the pedagogy embrace constructive approaches in their classroom set-up through studio centers, lesson preparation in the five-minute demos and emergent curriculum, student interactions in collaborative art-making, and group reflection (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Hathaway, 2012; Sesto, 2012; Bedrick, 2012; Longmore, 2012; Gaspardi, 2012).

*Studio Habits of Mind* (2013) are frequently referenced by teachers implementing TAB. SHoM has been a helpful tool for advocacy, as the concise and common terminology of the eight dispositions has helped art teachers share with their administrators, school communities, and parents what is actually being taught and learned in the art classroom. SHoM has functioned as an assessment tool for teachers, encouraging reflection upon how their curriculum is (or is not) designed to engage students in rigorous, meaningful, and comprehensive learning in the art classroom. Some art teachers use the SHoM as a tool for reflection on their own practice, while others explicitly introduce the dispositions to their students during instruction. Teachers have shared a variety of assessment rubrics referencing SHoM that can be used to evaluate in-progress and completed artwork.

*Assessment* is integral to TAB pedagogy and takes many forms. Formal assessments include portfolio reviews (digital and tangible), journaling, rubrics, and student artist statements. Informal assessments include critiques, exhibitions, and
conversations between teachers, students, and peers during art-making. Teachers have designed various media “tests,” where students must demonstrate adequate knowledge with a medium before being granted access to a certain studio center or material process.

Aspects of *Discipline-Based Art Education* (Clark, Day & Greer, 1987) also inform TAB. In addition to studio production, art history is taught in reference to student art-making, with the expectation students will find connections to artworks, art movements, or artists from the past if they have displayed an interest in similar topics in their own artwork. Alternatively, some art teachers include an art history center in their classroom, supplied with books on artists and movements, and visuals for inspiration, while others use their five-minute demo time in the class block to introduce an artist, movement, or artwork to students. Art criticism is also taught in reference to student art-making, through teaching students how to write artist statements. Some art teachers also include visual analysis activities into their curriculum, either through discussion or journal prompts. Aesthetics is less frequently explicitly taught, however teacher interactions with students during critiques model aesthetic principles.

Teachers implementing TAB are continuing to include the *elements and principles of art* in their teaching and conversations with students. During my observation at Nandina Elementary, Mary implemented assessment tools in second and fourth grade classes designed to help prepare students for an upcoming “Share Day.” The second grade assessment tool asked students to specifically identify elements of art they used in their artwork, while the fourth grade tool asked students to discuss “details” and “techniques” they used in their artworks. Aiden specifically asks students at Mariposa to reference the elements and principles used in their artwork in their artist statements.
Aiden also based his third, fourth, and fifth grade performance tasks on the elements and principles. During conversations with students at critical moments in their art-making, Aiden would often refer to an element or principle like “contrast” or “line quality” in his recommendations to students. At Sheffield Middle, Hannah used a similar approach, using both direct instruction and conversations with students as a means for introducing the elements and principles.

State or national standards for art education served as a guide for material demonstrations at each school. The standards were also used as framework for selecting relevant media to include as studio centers, or determine whole-group projects led by the teacher. The standards also helped teachers set appropriate expectations for student learning in the TAB art room.

While not directly referenced in published TAB literature, teachers implementing the pedagogy will frequently ask students to address a “Theme” or “Big Idea” as a prompt for their artwork. Teachers will introduce the concept through a discussion, sometimes referencing an artist or artwork addressing the theme, before students begin developing their artwork. Students have also been asked to write about how their artwork reflects the given theme in artist statements. At Nandina Elementary, Mary asked students to address the concept of “community” in their artwork, asking students to reflect on their interoperation of the theme in their assessments.

While not directly influencing TAB pedagogy, makerspaces have been referenced on forum posts. The art teachers at Mariposa Elementary and Sheffield Middle also listed makerspaces as an influence on their teaching, with Aiden at Mariposa welcoming “overlap” of his school’s makerspace into his art classroom. During my research visits,
he was considering ways to integrate the school’s main makerspace into his future classroom and curriculum.

**Question 2: How are art teachers adapting and implementing choice-based pedagogy in their art classrooms?**

Across all four research sites, the art teachers intentionally integrated student choice into their curriculum. At Hopewell Elementary and Nandina Elementary, the teachers allowed the most freedom to the students in determining the content, materials, and methods they used for producing their artwork. During my research visits to these schools, students were engaged in “full” student-directed art-making with limited guidance from the teacher. However, Phoebe, art teacher at Hopewell, began her fourth grade classes with a teacher-directed project, asking students to create a collaged character to include on a bulletin board display. Aiden, the art teacher at Mariposa Elementary, also allotted a portion of the art block to student-directed art-making after a teacher-directed “performance task.” Hannah, the art teacher at Sheffield middle, offered the least amount of class time for student-directed art-making, instead designing her curriculum to focus on introducing skills and techniques with art media, introducing more freedom to students as they advanced through the art program at Sheffield.

The art classrooms at Mariposa, Nandina, and Hopewell were each arranged with studio centers as recommended by Douglas and Jaquith (2009), however organizational strategies varied dramatically. At Mariposa and Hopewell, centers were stationary, meaning that students moved to a designated table or area of the classroom to use a specific media. At Nandina, centers lined the perimeter of the room, and students brought needed materials an empty worktable. While the classroom at Sheffield did not have
studio centers, seventh and eighth grade students had access to a wide variety of art materials in classroom cabinets. Available studio centers or media also varied dramatically from school to school, reflecting the interests and needs of teachers and their students. The following table lists observed centers and media from each school, sorted by their occurrence across the elementary sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studio Centers and Media Use Across Sites</th>
<th>Mariposa</th>
<th>Nandina</th>
<th>Hopewell</th>
<th>Sheffield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Erasers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Collage</td>
<td>Pencils</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(drawing,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>colored,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>watercolor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Drawing</td>
<td>Markers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibers (Stitching, Weaving)</td>
<td>Weaving/</td>
<td>Fibers</td>
<td>Paint</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stitchery</td>
<td>(Stitching,</td>
<td>(tempera,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>weaving</td>
<td>acrylic,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>watercolor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makerbot</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pastels</td>
<td>(oil, chalk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origami</td>
<td>Origami</td>
<td></td>
<td>Printmaking tools &amp; ink</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printmaking</td>
<td>Printmaking</td>
<td>Printmaking</td>
<td>Tape (masking, transparent, colored)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculpture (cardboard, wood)</td>
<td>Sculpture (cardboard, wood)</td>
<td>Pens</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tablets</td>
<td>Digital Art (tablets)</td>
<td>Glue (sticks, liquid)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art Puzzles</td>
<td>Graphite transfer paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artist Cards</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inventor Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>Color wheels, value scales, drawing grids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stamping</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brushes, palettes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masks &amp; Hats</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rulers, compasses, drawing grids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Puppet Making</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bookmaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art History</td>
<td></td>
<td>Art History</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. This table shows the variety of media available to students across research sites.

I observed a flexible balance of teacher-led direct instruction and student-instigated art-making during my research visits. Depending upon the planned learning goals for the day, each teacher adjusted the allotted time for direct instruction. On some
observations, teachers would spend up to half of their block time leading instruction, while on other days direct instruction was limited to allow for more student work time. None of the teachers participating in the project fully adhered to the five-minute demo recommended by TAB literature, but were efficient in their information delivery. I also noticed a balance between whole-group activities and independent work time for students. Some whole-group activities introduced specific technique (referred to as “do-nows” by Mary and “performance tasks” by Aiden), or resulted in a complete project for students. Examples of whole group art-making included collages at Hopewell and Mariposa, memory projects and self-portraits showing value at Sheffield, and card-making at Nandina.

It was evident that each teacher had well-established classroom routines and procedures that were simple to follow. These management strategies allowed the teachers and their students to focus their energy on learning and making in a safe, welcoming, and predictable environment. All teachers began their class time with an introduction that set the expectation for work habits that day, and clean up routines were consistently reinforced (or in Aiden’s case, adapted to be more efficient).

**Question 3: How do these strategies reflect their personal values as an art educator and the values of the community in which they teach?**

Observed interactions and conversations between teachers and students at each school demonstrated mutual respect and implied trust in the relationships. During several instances at Hopewell, I observed Phoebe using reflective language with students who were visibly upset. She repeated their stated feelings, thanked them for sharing, and shared her perspective as the teacher. At Sheffield Middle, when students asked for
Hannah’s opinion on their artwork, typically they implemented her recommendations or followed her suggestions for elaboration. Mary began each of the observed classes at Nandina with a centering activity, asking students to focus their mind in preparation for the “hard work” they’d be doing during their art block. A frequent phrase Aiden used with his students at Mariposa Aiden was “I believe in you, and know you are capable.” These examples demonstrate a reflection of the “core [philosophy] of [TAB] pedagogy” (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 9), of teachers regarding their students as artists. Value for their students’ interests, and a desire to see them develop as an artist engaged in authentic art-making drove their decision to integrate elements of TAB pedagogy into their personal pedagogy.

Elements of Dweck’s (2006) growth mindset were observed in every classroom, both in teacher expectations of their own performance, and in the ability of their students. All of the teachers participating in the project possess dispositions of a highly skilled teacher: knowledgeable of the field, reflective in their pedagogy, motivated by student growth (VADOE, 2011). All were engaged members of their school faculty, and participated in professional organizations associated with art education.

From observed conversations between teachers and students, it was clear that their own experience as artists significantly impacted their teaching. Three of the four teachers are actively working artists; their personal experiences in art-making precipitated an empathy demonstrated in conversations with students, introduction of new materials and methods, and appropriate support during critical points in students’ art-making. Additionally, Hannah and Mary have a background in art therapy that impacted their perspective for how art could be a therapeutic activity for their students.
Throughout the course of this research study, it became evident that administrator support was a significant factor contributing to the success of a teacher’s implementation of TAB pedagogy. Administrators interviewed referenced a specific student artwork that stood out to him or her, and spoke of their belief in the pedagogy. Two administrators were very familiar with the vocabulary and philosophy of TAB and shared how they felt TAB reflected similarities of their personal philosophies of education. Aiden and Mary noted that while parents have expressed concern that “students just do whatever they want,” their administrator has supported the pedagogy, and helped educate concerned parents about the art program at their school. All teachers discussed the importance of sharing both student thought process during art-making in conjunction with the final artwork as a means of advocating for their program. Aiden, Mary, and Hannah specifically noted positive affirmation from their parent community about the ability to share their child’s artwork with distant relatives through their Artsonia galleries.

**Question 4: How can I incorporate choice-based teaching strategies into my own curriculum while honoring the effective strategies that already exist in my own teaching? Of the observed strategies, which do I find specifically relevant and applicable to my school and community?**

As I anticipate returning to my own classroom, I am carefully considering what elements to include from TAB pedagogy. Inspired by the TAB literature, I am planning to introduce “Makerdays” as a regular part of my curriculum. At regular intervals, students will be presented with a familiar media (such as paper) and asked to approach it in a new way. These makerdays will introduce students to the idea of “intentional play,” and offer opportunities for experimentation with reflection at the conclusion of these
activities. These makerdays will function in a similar way to the “20 percent time” companies have implemented to allow employees to pursue ideas and projects outside of their regular responsibilities (Pink, 2011) A sample lesson plan for my first makerday is included in the Appendices.

Students will be offered more opportunity to choose media they are familiar with to complete their artwork. Initially, as I begin to grow more comfortable with a variety of media being used in the classroom simultaneously, their choices will be limited. I piloted a TAB style classroom at a community art camp and realized I am not ready to have a huge variety of media available to my students at this point. However, I am hoping to have “open studio days” throughout the year. After familiarizing students with classroom procedures and routines, and a range of themes, techniques, and processes, they may choose from a pre-selected variety of media, and decide on content, meaning making, and process for making their own artwork. Additionally, I will include the use of themes or challenges to guide student learning and advance thinking, innovation, or technical skill in the art classroom. These concepts have been transformative for me, as I have reconsidered my curriculum. By structuring curricula to address “themes,” students will find that art-making is more than creating an interesting design, or learning a particular technique with a specific medium, rather art-making also becomes an expression of important ideas related to their own life and the lives of others (Mayer, 2008). Doing so will help me reframe my perspective of writing art lessons that encourage individual student creativity without inadvertently encouraging what Lowenfeld called “an egocentric approach that would distort their conception of the world by continuous[ly] emphasis[ing] what matters to the child’s own self” (as cited in Arnheim, 1983). I will
also integrate the SHoM into my lesson preparation, as using this framework will provide additional perspective to my understanding of the interconnected nature of art learning.

As a consistent inclusion of student choice in my classroom, I will elaborate on the options students have when they have completed their work for the day. I plan to pilot a drawing center and non-permanent sculpture center, prepared with the menus and media organization recommended by the literature. Picture supports to the written menus will be made for my student body, which includes many ELL students, and students with low reading levels.

Artsonia was an extremely effective advocacy tool for all four participating teachers. I plan to start my school’s Artsonia gallery next year, building in opportunity for older students to upload artwork independently. I would also like to actively seek out parent volunteers, and envision an opportunity for them to assist with uploading younger students’ work to the galleries.

**Helpful resources for inclusion.** Appendix E includes specific books, websites, and documents I have found particularly helpful, as I have considered my curriculum changes.

**Additional reflections**

A question frequently posed in the literature and observed between students and teachers at the participating schools was “What is the purpose of making art?” Pondering this question in the classroom context, naturally led to a follow-up question: “What is the purpose of an art education?” It is imperative that all educators ask question of themselves as they adapt and change their personal pedagogy to meet the changing needs of their student, schools, and communities. Art teachers enjoy relative freedom in
designing curriculum and choosing their methodological approach they feel will best meet their students’ needs. With this freedom comes a responsibility on our part to ensure that these decisions are well informed and supported by the community in which we teach. Before making any curricular changes, it is imperative that practicing teachers are attuned to the skills, strengths, and needs of their students. Interests of the school and community should also be considered in this assessment. Enthusiasm of the teacher and success of a methodology in another setting does not ensure success in your own school and classroom. If a chosen methodology or curriculum element is not adapted for your school, success will be compromised. All four teachers observed during this project knew their students well, had established relationships with their administration and parent community prior to making changes to their curriculum, and were therefore able to tailor adaptations to their specific situation.

They also worked hard to build strong professional relationships with their administrations: all interviewed administrators explicitly stated their trust in their art teacher, in both their pedagogical choices and their embodied knowledge of the school and community. It is imperative that teachers interested in implementing curriculum change inform their administrator of their interest, share reasons for the change, and ask for administrator input. By inviting administrators into this conversation, art teachers demonstrate a respect for the administrator’s perspective. Support from administration, at both the building level and district level, is imperative for the growth and longevity of a visual art program.

Teachers I met at the TAB Institute last summer shared their own interpretations of TAB pedagogy and adaptations they made to suit the needs of their particular
communities. The interpretations were as varied as the educators present, however they all demonstrated a high level of involvement, as they accounted for the needs of their community in their personal interpretation. I had the opportunity meet Kathy Douglas and Diane Jaquith, authors of *Engaging Learners Through Artmaking* (2009), and they also encourage teachers to adapt and interpret the pedagogy as needed (p. 92). A frequent discussion at the Institute revolved around “kid aesthetic,” a term referring to child art that may appear sloppy, unformed, or juvenile to an uninformed adult. This topic is discussed at length by Efland (1976) and Wilson & Thompson (2007), and is a perpetually relevant topic for art teachers, particularly for those implementing TAB. Educating parents about why artwork coming home will look different is essential, and offers opportunity to share reasons for changes in the curriculum.

**Areas For Growth and Researcher Concerns**

TAB pedagogy as it is written (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009; Bedrick, 2012; Jaquith & Hathaway, 2012) clearly oriented around student-making. However, based on my observations at the four research sites, opportunities for reflection are intentionally planned by the teachers, and artworks from history related to emergent themes students demonstrate interest in are frequently and readily shared. I noticed an absence of formal instruction in criticism and aesthetics, however, Hannah’s T.H.I.N.K. journal activity asks students to engage in critical analysis appropriate to their abilities. Several educators experienced with TAB at the TAB Institute noted they felt their students needed to “get more art history” and “to understand their place as an artist.” These educators gave presentations on the innovative methods they’ve incorporated into their curricula and lesson cycles that allow them time to focus on these topics. One method, shared by a
middle school teacher on block scheduling, was that every Wednesday, her students “produced thoughts instead of visuals,” and were engaged in a variety of critical discussions, writing responses, and visual analysis activities. Teachers participating in this study, and those I met at the Institute specifically spoke about “ignoring” the five minute demo recommendation, simply because they wanted to address media in relation to an artwork, or a given theme.

Another noted absence in both the literature and the cases observed was attention to critical theory and social justice art education. I understand the limited exposure to critical theory and social justice art education at the elementary level, as these concepts are complex and elementary students are developing the ability to decipher these topics in artwork. In the research study, both the teachers and the students actively reference students’ visual culture, but rare were the opportunities to analyze and “unpack” images from culture with understanding of their implied meanings. I suggest educators interested in implementing TAB pedagogy give careful consideration to addressing visual culture effectively in their five-minute demos. Duncum (2010) offers helpful suggestions for incorporating visual culture art education into art curriculum.

When reviewing the TAB forums, I noted several teachers sharing concerns about low quality in student artwork and student behavior issues as they implemented TAB pedagogy in their classrooms. Art teachers implementing TAB with the expectation that their students will immediately thrive in a self-directed environment may misinterpret the growing pains of adapting their teaching methods, classroom procedures and expectations to a new methodology. It is absolutely essential that art teachers interested in implementing choice-based art education (CBAE) like TAB develop logical, clear, and
appropriate classroom procedures that allow for success in a learning environment where students are working independently. They must be prepared to teach and reteach these processes and procedures consistently and frequently.

A concern that developed from following the TAB forums throughout this project is that TAB should not be regarded as a panacea for the ails of teaching today. While TAB does encourage teachers to reconsider the role of students in the classroom, successful implementation is still directly dependent upon the efforts of a highly trained, motivated, and reflective art teacher. Posts in which teachers expressed concerns in student motivation, inappropriate behavior, or low-quality results appeared to imply that issues rested in students, and not their implementation of the pedagogy. Conversely, many successes with TAB shared on the forums disregarded (or at times, even actively dismissed) the role of the teacher. In my opinion, the success or failure of the pedagogy is not a result of the implied “either-or” dichotomous relationship between the teacher and student, but rather a reflection of a symbiotic relationship built on mutual trust and respect. In Engaging Learners in Artmaking (2009), a foundational pillar of the pedagogy is regarding “students as the artist” (Douglas & Jaquith, p.9); who better to model the artistic behaviors, habits, dispositions we hope to grow in our students than the art teachers in the room with the students?

Opportunities for Future Research

When I began this project to document individual teachers’ adaptations and implementations of CBAE and TAB pedagogy in their classrooms, the body of work addressing this topic was relatively small (Moczerad, 2015; Bae, 2014; Dahlheimer, 2012; Smith, 2014; Lewis, 2008). Several posts on the TAB forums made during this
research project came from other researchers’ requesting input from teachers currently implementing the TAB pedagogy for their projects. I interpret that these requests reflect an increased interest from other researchers to learn more about the methodology and offer refinements of TAB. Additionally, there were three sessions at my state’s professional development conference regarding TAB pedagogy and philosophy (VAEA, 2015), and 14 sessions at the national conference directly referencing choice-based art education pedagogy and strategies (NAEA, 2016). At the 2016 Delegates Assembly at NAEA, Choice-Art Educators was approved as an NAEA special interest group (Facebook forum post, 2016), offering another way for interested teachers to learn more about TAB.

There is a disagreement in the TAB community regarding the term “choice-based” and “TAB.” Some art teachers ardently argue that TAB is not synonymous with CBAE, even though TAB founders Douglas and Jaquith (2009) explicitly define TAB as “choice-based art education” (p. 3). Based on my understanding of the pedagogy as defined by the literature, TAB is an expression or interpretation of CBAE. This topic is ripe for formal research, as many art teachers are anecdotally sharing their personal opinions regarding this topic. Investigation into the differences in these terms will lead to deeper and more nuanced suggestions for teacher implementation of TAB.

Writing on makerspaces has focused on spaces outside educational settings, such as community centers and museum spaces (Sheridan, Halverson, Litts, Brahms, Jacobs-Priebe, & Owens, 2014) and those housed in school libraries (Luthy, 2015). As more schools develop a makerspace for the building, many art teachers are finding connections with their curriculum. Several sessions at the 2016 NAEA National Convention dealt
with incorporating makerspaces into the art curriculum or classroom (NAEA, 2016). Influences and interactions between makerspaces and art curriculum in schools is another potential area for future research. Sheffield Middle, Nandina Elementary, and Mariposa Elementary all contain makerspaces, and the art teachers noted interest to incorporate makerspace philosophy into their art curriculum.

Quantitative research on TAB pedagogy has yet to be developed or implemented, and is a potential future step to deepen our understanding of TAB. Interested researchers should bear in mind the dearth of quantitative research in general in the field, particularly regarding evaluating teaching methods, as they prepare for such a project. Careful preparation of such research projects should account for all factors that influence art teaching and learning in today’s classroom.

**Final Reflections**

I was continually impressed with the passion for teaching and learning demonstrated in the teachers participating in this research study and those met at the TAB Institute in Boston. Their drive to make learning in the art classroom an engaging, relevant, and meaningful experience for their students propagated professional growth as they considered and reevaluated their personal philosophies and curriculum. I am also inspired by the passion in teachers networking with one another via the various web-based forums. CBAE like TAB is truly a living curriculum, and has inspired many educators to reconsider and reflect upon their curriculum and teaching methods, myself included.
**Figures**

**Data Collection Instrument**

*Figure 24.* Data Collection Instrument. Duplicate copies of this instrument were used for individual class observations. 30-40 copies of the “student struggles/student succeeds/teacher interventions” matrix were stapled to each copy.
### Artistic Behaviors Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Finding</th>
<th>Representing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identifying questions</td>
<td>• Observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research</td>
<td>• Compose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visualize Possibilities</td>
<td>• Express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think Divergently</td>
<td>• Communicate ideas visually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Solving</th>
<th>Reflecting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Revise, refine, or reinvent ideas</td>
<td>• Perceive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intuit</td>
<td>• Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infer and understand</td>
<td>• Interpret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ponder</td>
<td>• Assess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Knowledge</th>
<th>Connecting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Apply concepts to work</td>
<td>• Connect with other disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Synthesize understandings in new situations</td>
<td>• Make associations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimenting</th>
<th>Valuing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Play</td>
<td>• Embrace freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improvise</td>
<td>• Appreciate ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore media</td>
<td>• Open up to possibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Innovate</td>
<td>• Make choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Habits</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Plan and sketch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persevere</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate or not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collect objects, data, materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take risks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practice and repeat skills and techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rework mistakes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work in a series or not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 25. Artistic Behaviors. Viewed as a ever-changing and expanding, this list of actions students may display while engaging in art-making in a choice-based classroom setting is found in Engaging Learners Through Artmaking: Choice-Based Art Education in the Classroom (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 4).*
Artistic Behaviors as Manifested During the Artistic Process

Figure 26. Artistic behaviors manifest during artistic process. This figure reorganizes the main headings found in the chart of artistic behaviors at points when they might manifest during the artistic process. (Artistic behaviors from Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, p. 4, process headings are the author’s own).
Figure 27. Choice spectrum chart. Referenced on TAB online discussion forums, this chart is used a tool to help teachers identify where their approach to curriculum and pedagogy lies in relation to variations of constructivist teaching strategies. (Balsely, 2014).
Continuum of Choice-Based Art Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit Curriculum</th>
<th>Emergent Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Directed</td>
<td>Student-Directed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No Choice</th>
<th>Modified Choice</th>
<th>Full Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Teacher assigns content and media</td>
<td>- Teacher chooses content, student chooses media or</td>
<td>- Students are problem finders and problem solvers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Student choose content, teacher chooses media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teacher is flexible with curriculum in response to student interests and needs</td>
<td>- Students select content and media all of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Students have full ownership of process, direction, outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 28.* Continuum of choice-based teaching and learning. Like the choice spectrum, this continuum is meant to help teachers identify how their individual interpretation of curriculum and pedagogy relate to TAB pedagogy (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009, 12).
Appendix A

Artistic Behaviors Rubric. Recreated and consolidated by the author from art educator Marianne Galyk’s rubric. The original rubric is available on her website: http://ridgemontart.blogspot.com/p/rubric-for-advanced-art-artistic.html

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artists...</th>
<th>Beginning - 1</th>
<th>Progressing - 2</th>
<th>Meeting - 3</th>
<th>Exceeding - 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create Original Art</strong></td>
<td>1 - Ideas are unoriginal, copied or plagiarized.</td>
<td>2 - An attempt has been made to use original ideas that is somewhat unsuccessful, low level changes are made.</td>
<td>3 - Ideas are original - unique to the artist or borrowed ideas are merged/changed to create something new.</td>
<td>4 - Ideas are original and creative. A personal style develops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td>How did you use your own unique ideas in your work? Did you use a source for inspiration, then combine it with your own ideas to make it original?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop Art-Making Skills</strong></td>
<td>1. Artist stays at their current skill level.</td>
<td>2. Artist attempts to learn new skills but gives up when presented with challenges.</td>
<td>3. Artist puts forth needed effort to develop new skills successfully.</td>
<td>4. Artist's development/ effort exceeds expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td>Did you learn new techniques or processes as part of the work for this project? Did you gain skill with familiar materials? In what way(s) has your craftsmanship improved?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solve Problems</strong></td>
<td>1. Artist gives up when confronted with problems.</td>
<td>2. Artist can solve problems with help.</td>
<td>3. Artists is self-directed in seeking out and attempting solutions</td>
<td>4. Artist generates solutions to problems independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td>How did you respond to challenges that occurred as you worked? Did your work take an unexpected turn due to a mistake or did something happen that was unplanned? Did you research or plan at the beginning of or during the process?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicate</strong></td>
<td>1. There is no original message or meaning in the artwork.</td>
<td>2. An original message is attempted but it becomes lost or confused.</td>
<td>3. The work has a discernible message that is accessible to the viewer.</td>
<td>4. The work has impact and makes a personal connection with the viewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td>What is this artwork intended to say? What issues are you examining through your artwork? How is this artwork about who</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teaching for Artistic Behavior**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take Risks</th>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Exhibit Global Awareness</th>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>you are or what you like?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Analyze work and process</strong></td>
<td><strong>art in history and current artists</strong></td>
<td><strong>pay close attention to visual contexts</strong></td>
<td><strong>works</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Take Risks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plan: generates a variety of possible solutions to the problem</strong></td>
<td><strong>how technology affects art</strong></td>
<td><strong>see things that otherwise might not be seen</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Artist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>try new media or processes experiment</td>
<td>When did you step back and analyze you work during this project?</td>
<td><strong>art community</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Artist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding questions for reflection:</strong></td>
<td>Did you consider how ideas would work before you tried them?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Did you find inspiration from another artist or culture?</td>
<td><strong>4. Artist</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you try something that you weren’t sure about as part of this project?</td>
<td>Did you work out multiple ideas in thumbnail sketches prior to beginning?</td>
<td>Did you use technology as a tool?</td>
<td>Did you observe something more closely than normal?</td>
<td>takes on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you pick a material or technique that was new or different over something that was familiar?</td>
<td>If you were to do this project over, what would you change?</td>
<td>Did you work as a member of an arts community?</td>
<td>Did your observations help you create something that causes the audience to look more closely or in a new light?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Artist selects familiar options with predictable outcomes.</td>
<td>2. Artist needs help to analyze work.</td>
<td>3. Artist can independently analyze artwork and apply observations to past, present and future work.</td>
<td>1. Artist understands art in a personal context.</td>
<td>1. Artist works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Artist takes limited risks where the outcome is somewhat predictable.</td>
<td>3. Artist understands awareness of art outside of their personal experience.</td>
<td>4. Artist understands and takes inspiration for art making from current/historical global sources.</td>
<td>2. Artist has to be prompted to look more closely and see details.</td>
<td>2. Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Artist selects options where the outcome is unsure.</td>
<td>4. Artist moves beyond ordinary “looking” and notices things that might otherwise be overlooked.</td>
<td>4. Artist attends to details, pays close attention in visual contexts.</td>
<td>1. Artist does not closely observe - just ordinary “looking.”</td>
<td>3. Artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Artist embraces the potential of risk to take work to the next level.</td>
<td>4. Artist can independently analyze artwork and apply observations to past, present and future work.</td>
<td>Artist applies and highlights these details.</td>
<td>2. Artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Guiding questions for reflection:**

- When did you step back and analyze your work during this project?
- Did you consider how ideas would work before you tried them?
- Did you work out multiple ideas in thumbnail sketches prior to beginning?
- If you were to do this project over, what would you change?
- Did you find inspiration from another artist or culture?
- Did you use technology as a tool?
- Did you work as a member of an arts community?
- Did you observe something more closely than normal?
- Did your observations help you create something that causes the audience to look more closely or in a new light?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>share ideas and knowledge</th>
<th>teach</th>
<th>help</th>
<th>Critique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Guiding Questions:**
Did you ask another student for feedback during your process?
Did someone help you understand important information or inspire you?

| alone, sitting quietly by one’s self and not sharing/caring about others. | collaborates passively. Only interacting with those in our art studio. | actively collaborates. Learning to interact as an artist with other artists. | leadership roles within groups. Searching out other art communities, or starting one when others can’t be found. |
Appendix B

Studio Habits of Mind Rubric. This is a sample form used to record individual student progress in a specific “Episode” or event as observed by the art teachers. This form is meant to be used as a data collection tool to document instances of an individual student’s growth in the Studio Habits of Mind framework (Hathaway, 2012, p. 126).

Studio Thinking Form:

Student: Date: Teacher:

**What’s an episode?:** Anything students make, do, or say that reveals thinking. *Examples:* portfolios of student work, observing students as they’re working, interviewing students about their work or working behaviors.

Description of what teacher intended to be understood (learning goals):
Description and observations of the episode of learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studio habits: consider and add to your observations in these categories</th>
<th>Understanding: What do your observations suggest the student understands and doesn’t?</th>
<th>What do you want to do next with and for the student?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Craft</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage &amp; Persist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Envision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Express</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stretch &amp; Explore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Art World</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Participating Teacher Interview Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. How did you learn about Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB)?
   a. What attracted you to this method of teaching?
   b. What does your curriculum look like? If you don’t have a curriculum, do you follow a pacing guide?
   c. What specific learning goals do you have for your students? How do they change by grade level?

3. If you remember your original methods classes, what kind of training did you receive to become an art teacher?
   a. In what ways has your teaching style changed since introducing choice-based methods?
   b. What aspects of your original training are still integrated into your teaching?

4. Are there other methods or strategies you include in your teaching in addition to TAB?
   a. What other resources have you found helpful?

5. Describe your process in writing lesson plans, preparing for the teaching day and planning for assessment.

6. How you track student growth?
   a. Have those methods changed since introducing choice-based strategies into your classroom?

7. What do you believe are the strengths of choice-based student learning in the art room?
   a. What specific growth do you see in your students that you feel this method allows for? (e.g. wider scope of creative ideas, persistence with challenging materials, deepening understanding of art concepts)

8. What do you believe are the limits in using choice-based teaching strategies?
   a. How have you adapted your implementation to alleviate those frustrations?

9. Where have you found professional support for TAB and choice-based learning?

10. What is your impression of the responses from parents and students regarding choice-based teaching strategies?

11. How do you prepare for “opening” a new center?
    a. How do you prepare students for using a new center?

12. What is your philosophy of art education?

13. How do you define creative art-making in your students?
Appendix D

Participating Administrator Interview Questions:

1. How did your art teacher approach you about implementing Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB) in the art classroom?
   a. What was your initial response?

2. Based on your observations, what are the benefits of including choice-based practices in the art classroom?
   a. What specific growth have you seen in the students? (e.g. wider scope of creative ideas, persistence with challenging materials, deepening understanding of art concepts)

3. What do you believe are the limits in using choice-based teaching strategies? What, if anything, would you like to see changed about this pedagogy or how its implemented at your school?

4. Based on your observations and conversations, what has been the community’s response to implementing choice-based strategies in the classroom?
Appendix E

Resources for Educators. This list includes resources I found to be particularly helpful as I considered curricular changes for my students while researching TAB.


TAB Institute @ MassART, Boston: network with other educators, both experienced and novice with TAB. [http://pcecatalog.massart.edu/tab/tab2016.html](http://pcecatalog.massart.edu/tab/tab2016.html)

Midwest TAB-Choice Art Teachers Forum on Facebook: connect with other educators interested in TAB. [https://www.facebook.com/groups/178282718971259/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/178282718971259/)
Lesson Theme: Transformation. Every human experiences and observes changes in their bodies, their family make-up and in their culture. This lesson places the action of transformation literally in the hands of the student, as they experiment with transforming flat paper in a variety of ways.

SHoM: Reflection, Stretch & Explore, Observe

Grade level: 3rd grade (adaptable to all elementary grades)

Time: One 60 minute block (potentially could be split into two Makerdays: first day focusing on procedures, use of the space, and experiments with paper manipulations and 3D connections; second focusing on applying those experiments to producing a wearable or vehicle with their group.)

Lesson Overview: This lesson will serve as an introduction to the art room’s “Makerdays,” the once-per-month block allotted for open-ended experimentation and elaboration with familiar materials. The focus for this Makerday is to introduce students to the procedures they’ll use each Makerday to start, produce and reflect on their projects, where and how to store their work, and how to utilize the classroom in a different way. This Makerday focuses on a familiar material, paper, and asks students to think about new or unexpected ways to use paper, and to experiment with various transformation techniques. Students will learn the procedures for “Group Shareout,” sharing with the class what changes they produced, something they would do differently, and a reflection of their experiments in light of artwork by contemporary paper artists presented.

(Potential extension: Students will work in groups of three to produce either a vehicle or wearable from paper, using transformation techniques learned during the previous Makerday. Each group will start with a bag of similar materials, and will have access to a “toolbox” containing joining materials, scissors, and hole punchers. “Golden Tools,” managed by parent volunteers, are tools students can use only once in the production process. Students will use discussion procedures learned on the previous Makerday for Group Shareout, presenting the object’s function, a process used, and their group’s decision of whether they’ve created “art”.

Visual Culture Component: We encounter paper everywhere, to the point where its presence is ubiquitous and unremarkable. Efforts to recycle or limit paper use may draw our attention for a few minutes, but otherwise, paper is present and we use it. However, when an artist turns their attention to transforming (changing) paper using simple techniques combined in new ways,
what was once common becomes unexpected. In reflection of their own experiments with transforming plain paper, students will be asked to form an opinion about the difference between “making” and “art-making.”

Describe: Observe this piece of paper, then quietly with a partner, describe its physical qualities.

The idea of transformation, of changing from one state to another, is a concept children encounter in science (think of planting seeds, and watching them grow, or watching a caterpillar become a chrysalis, then butterfly), in the home (baking a cake), or even in their bodies (arms, legs, facial features are slowly changing as they grow).

Analyze: Think back to a time in your life when you experienced a transformation (when you saw a change).

What are some ways we could transform (or change) this piece of paper? What tools do you think I might need? Can I break it apart? Can I put it back together?

VA Art SOLs:

The student will:
3.1 Identify innovative solutions used by artists to solve art-making problems.
3.4 Use imaginative and expressive strategies to create works of art.
3.15 Examine the relationship between form and function in the artifacts of a culture.
3.19 Analyze personal works of art, using elements of art and principles of design.
3.21 Describe the difference between art and non-art objects.

English, Oral Language:
3.1 Use effective communication skills in group activities, to c) Explain what has been learned.

Lesson Objectives:
The student will:
1. Define the term “transform,” and relate the term to a personal (or closely observed) experience of change through class discussion.
2. Be introduced to “Makerday” procedures, and practice methods of using the art classroom like a maker’s studio.
3. Apply SCAMPER techniques to plain paper in order to experiment with changing paper, and elaborate on various transformation techniques at will.
4. Reflect on their experiments using “Group Shareout” procedures, using appropriate art vocabulary,
5. Answer the question: Is what I did today art-making? Why or why not?

(Extension Objectives)
1. Identify role they and group members will perform during collaborative worktime.
2. Produce, with their group, either a wearable object or a vehicle, using only items and tools provided, in order to engage in working within prescribed limits.
3. Describe their object using appropriate art vocabulary, its uses (if it has any) and again, answer the question (independently of their group): Is what I did today art-making? Why or why not?

**Vocabulary Words for Visual Analysis:**

*(WBT) Transform* (ASL “T”, rotate hands around) - to observe (hands like binoculars) or experience (hands to heart) change (turn around)

*(WBT) Elaboration* (tap finger to brain, with arm across body) - “add on to, expand, add details to” (arms move in gradually larger circles)

**SCAMPER** - Substitute, Combine, Adapt (make different), Modify (maximize/minimize), Put to another use, Eliminate, Rearrange

**Makerday** - class period set aside in art class for specifically for experimenting with familiar materials

**Historical/Cultural/Artist Information:**

A brief overview of the “history of paper” will be shared with students, specifically noting that cultures around the world use paper, or paper-like surfaces sourced from materials local to their regions. Relevant and engaging imagery will be included with this description, along with a short “timeline” to help students relate the time periods discussed:

- Ancient Chinese invented paper 2000 years ago, and the process was passed along to the west as traders traveled. Muslim cultures invented paper mills (to make more paper, faster) Medieval Europe mechanized paper-making with water mills (make even more paper, even faster). Invention of printing press by Gutenberg made paper even more popular. Paper is still made from wood or rags even today!
- Recall: Can you think of another ancient culture that used a paper-like substance (ancient Egypt)

(Potential Extension: Teacher will share information via slideshow with names of artists and examples of paper art):

 Artists have been using paper as an art media for a long time, too. Artists in Asia developed special folding patterns to make 3D forms (origami), while artists in Europe learned to cut paper very carefully with sharp scissors to cut out pictures (Scherenschnitte - German for “scissor cuts”). Artists making art today, called “contemporary artists,” use paper, both flat (2D) and “in the round” (3D).

On our next “Makerday,” we’ll learn more about several of these artists

Analysis: What did you notice was similar in the process for making paper? Was anything unexpected? (use of water, perhaps?)

Evaluation: Does seeing the way paper is made make you think differently about waste?

Synthesis: How many things can you name made from paper?
Lesson Procedure:

**Prep for Day:** stacks of 5.5x8.5 paper on tables (various weights, if available), “tool boxes” for Makerdays (caddy with listed items), paper lunch bags (one per student), “Paper Transformations” slideshow, display SCAMPER poster

**Intro: 7 min**
1. Welcome students to their first “Makerday,” discuss quality of paper, history of its production and their ideas of transformation, asking the following:
   - Think back to a time in your life when you experienced a transformation (when you saw a change).
   - **Apply concept of transformation to paper, asking:** What are some ways we could transform (or change) this piece of paper? What tools do you think I might need? Can I break it apart? Can I put it back together?
2. Discuss SCAMPER with students and brainstorm ways to apply to paper.
3. Introduce students to the toolbox, reminding them about their “built-in” tool (hands), and goal to create 8 transformations in 25 minutes.

**Independent Work Time: 20 min**
4. Circulate as students work, asking: “What happens if...”; “How can you make ____ bigger or smaller?”; “Challenge yourself to...”
5. Ask 3 students if they would be willing to share their process for transforming paper with the whole group to demonstrate “Group Shareout.”
6. Prep students for discussion with prompt: “Is what I did today in class “art-making?”

**Clean-up: 5 min**
7. Students will return materials to tool box, set up their transformations for viewing and meet at carpet.
   (While class is cleaning-up, coach volunteers through Shareout strategies: evaluating quickly, select one transformation to share with group. Share process for transforming paper, why they selected this one to share with group, something they noticed, and a possible artist’s use for this transformed paper.)

**Share-out/Evaluation: 12 min**
8. Shareout: How? Why? Possibilities? Student group demonstrates Shareout in front of class. Teacher makes suggestions for how to select transformation for Shareout (one they feel is unique/innovative, they worked hard to achieve, etc)
9. Ring bell to get attention. Have students place all transformations in their bag, leaving at table to return to carpet. Display questions and read aloud with class: “How is the work you made today different from how we typically work in the art studio? How was your process different?” Ask for student answers, writing down their responses on the interactive board (to save for future Makerdays). Then display: “Is what I did today art-making? Why or why not?”
Dismissal: 1 min
As students are dismissed to line up, have them gather bags to take with them.

Evaluation:
Teacher will note number of unique transformations achieved by each student on the class roster (emerging - 0-3, beginning - 4-6, proficient - 7-8, exceeds - 9+), Students additionally will be evaluated on “complexity” of transformations, which can supersede quantity if deemed appropriate by teacher. Simple transformations, moderate transformations and complex transformations will also be noted on their evaluation. During share-out time, Teacher will note with an exclamation point students who shared particularly thoughtful reflections. The class responses saved on the interactive white board will be saved to the class folder to reference in future discussions, as students evaluate the difference work habits and outcomes of exploratory “Makerday” experiences and planned/intentional art-making work.

Materials and Preparation:
Fliers asking for donations of recyclable materials will go home to families one month prior to Makerday. A request for parent volunteers from each homeroom will be made 2-3 weeks prior to the first Makerday.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper Bag (1 per group)</th>
<th>Toolbox Materials (4)</th>
<th>Golden Tools (Volunteers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copy paper</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>Hot glue gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsprint</td>
<td>Hole punch</td>
<td>Masking tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crepe paper</td>
<td>Paper clips</td>
<td>Alligator clip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cereal box</td>
<td>Brads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8x10 Corrugated cardboard</td>
<td>Rubber bands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Paper Towel Tube</td>
<td>Glue sticks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envelope (ideally with plastic window)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources:


**Extra Materials:**
- Poster with SCAMPER terms (with small visuals)
- Poster with 3D connection samples
- Clothes pins with student names
References


Lifelong Learner Competencies. (n.d.) Under *Division.* Retrieved from [https://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/division/Pages/Lifelong-Learner-Competencies.aspx](https://www2.k12albemarle.org/acps/division/Pages/Lifelong-Learner-Competencies.aspx)


Teaching for Artistic Behavior


Seven Pathways to Lifelong Learner Competencies. (n.d.) Under Digital Learning. Retrieved from https://www2.k12albermarle.org/dept/dart/digital-learning/Pages/Seven-Pathways.aspx


